



A Comparative Study On Emotional Intelligence And Stress In Team And Individual Adolescent Athletes

Mallika Sharma Research scholar, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, SGT University Gurugram.

Dr. Vikas Punia Assistant Professor, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, SGT University Gurugram.

Dr. Arjun Mittal Assistant Professor, Shri Ram College of Commerce, Department of Commerce. University of Delhi, (Corresponding Author)

Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to understand if there is a difference in Emotional intelligence and Stress between adolescent athletes who play individual sport (e.g. gymnastics, chess, diving) and team sport (e.g. Basketball, hockey). The research sample consisted of 160 young adults between 15 to 18 years from various schools of Delhi, out of which 80 were individual game young athletes and 80 team game young athletes, the participants were selected through random sampling method and they were assessed on emotional intelligence scale by Singh and Narain and perceived stress scale (PSS) by Cohen. The data was analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation and t test, which showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups (individual and team adolescent athletes) in terms of emotional intelligence ($p < 0.05$). Adolescent athletes who played a Team game scored higher on emotional intelligence compared to adolescents who played Individual games, mental health benefits of participation in team oriented or single player sports may vary between individual sport athletes and those playing team sport, gender difference was also observed girls reported significantly higher on emotional intelligence compared to boys ($p < 0.05$) It was also seen that there was no significant difference in the level of stress experienced by individual and team athletes, but there was a significant difference in the level of stress experienced by males and females athletes, it was observed that the male athletes experienced more stress as compared to female athletes. The data also suggested that there was a significant relationship between Stress and Emotional Intelligence ($p < 0.01$) the paper gives an insight in understanding that team sport participation plays a factor in enhancing emotional intelligence which will further help in reducing stress in adolescents as well.

Keywords – Emotional Intelligence, Adolescents, Stress, Team athletes, Individual athletes.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence was coined by Peter Salovey and John Mayer, they defined it as "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to distinguish amongst different emotions and categories them, and to use emotional information to understand, guide and monitor thinking and behavior". In contemporary times it has gained significant attention since a lot of research has been done on the same as it emphasizes how important it is to understand, perceive, manage, and experience your own emotions as well as those of others, it has become one of the most imperative research topics to have an enhanced understanding about human development and emotions.

Emotions and how to deal with them is a part of the human personality and it is assumed that psychological characteristics like Emotional Intelligence have an influence on the behavior and performance of the individual in different spheres and the various stages of life be it in the growing years of children, adolescent age, adulthood or even old age

Adolescents, also known as the stage of stress and storm which approximately ranges from 16 to 20 years is considered as an important stage of personality development since a lot of physiological and psychological changes take place during this stage, It is the transition from childhood to early adulthood hence being very crucial, this is the stage where the child has to learn the roles he will inhabit as he or she grows older. It is also the stage where children learn to become independent and start to see the future in terms of careers, relationships, families, etc. It is through this phase that the adolescent will review his personality and try to comprehend who they are.

There has been emergent interest in Emotional Intelligence among adolescents in contemporary years due to evidence from certain studies about its significance in early ages for variables such as performance in various spheres like academics and sports (Bar-On, 2003; Ferrando et al, 2010), social interaction and adaptation (Bar-On, 1997; Lópes, Salovey, & Gil-Olerte, Mestre, Guil, 2006; Serrano & Andreu, 2016) and also consumption of lethal substances and products (Limonero et al., 2006), their self-esteem and concept (Coelho, Marchante, & Sousa, 2016) Adolescents' confidence in their aptitude to understand and regulate their emotions may also decline in the aspect of the greater emotional sensitivity which comes with the onset of puberty (Somerville, Jones, & Casey, 2010).

Stress is the key of success as well as of fall. It can be well-defined as any kind of change that leads to psychological, physical, and emotional tension, it is the body's physical, mental and chemical reaction and can be of various types and can impact each individual in a different manner and their way of coping with the same also differs. Stressor is any situation or event that evokes negative thoughts and feelings in a person. Keeping the Individual differences in

consideration the same stressful situation is not stressful for all people, and all people do not experience the same negative thoughts and feelings when stressed. Epstein (1998), found that children who are emotionally intelligent are happier, adaptable, and experience less stress further these traits result in their academic achievements and performance in various fields like sports (Goleman 1995).

High emotional intelligence among adolescents is also associated with less passive coping, low social anxiety and depressive symptoms, more usage of active coping techniques, they might experiencing a low level of stress. However, in contrast in various instances low level of emotional intelligence is often associated with an amplified degree of violent crimes and high rate of teenage suicidal ideations and suicides, they also experience episodes of major stress and worry, depression, aggressive and socially anxious behavior, school dropouts, and lack of interest in various activities (Salovey et al., 2002) Another study showed that emotional intelligence was positively linked with problem-focused and positive emotional focused coping styles, and emotionally intelligent individuals cope better with stressors (Noorbakhsh, Besharat, and Zarei, 2010). A recent research on 505 adolescents 12 to 18 years old, support the existence of a positive relationship amongst emotional intelligence and subjective well-being and adverse relationship amongst emotional intelligence and stress (Cejudo et.al 2018)

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial factor in terms of the performance of an individual be it in academics or sports (Epstein 1998). Emotional intelligence impacts every athlete differently a lot of different factors are responsible for the same, like the personality of the individual and the type of game he or she plays, the benefits of participation in a team-oriented sport like cricket, football, etc., or single player sport like chess, gymnastics, etc. may vary. We also need to consider the qualitative differences that may exist in adolescents experiences of team sports involvement or the exclusive effects of individual sports involvement. However, team sports involvement may lead to an exhilarating, stimulating environment where the adolescent develops social and athletic skills, foster solid support systems, form networks, and create positive relationships with fellow teammates and coaches, as interpersonal dynamics can affect team performance, teammates also learn to support each other through good games and bad, something that might be most important during a losing streak, fostering self-confidence and positive self-perceptions. further, team sports involvement where one fails to learn skill development, stresses unhealthy or extreme comparison and competition amongst teammates, peer rejection, inadequate coaching or relationship with the coach and exclusion can something also frustrate players who feel they are doing more than their teammates to achieve a shared goal may impact adolescents self-image and increase risks for stress, anxiety and depressive symptom which in turn effects their performance and overall wellbeing. Excessive stress can have severe psychological

symptoms, such as depressed mood, anxious feelings, and even suicide (Sun, Dunne, & Hou, 2012)

Similarly by playing an individual sport the adolescent might experience and learn skills and mental toughness, being independent, confidence, and responsibility. The same way playing a solo sport can also be very draining and psychologically stressful you might feel a lot of pressure to perform, there is a sense of loneliness that they might experience (Gore, et al., 2001; Vilhjalmsson & Thorlindsson, 1992; Steiner, McQuivey, et al., 2000; Richman & Schaffer, 2000) Researchers and sport psychologists (Feltz & Ewing, 1987) have shown that psychological profile of team sports and individual sports players differs evidently. Studies also indicate that emotional intelligence is certainly positively associated to their function in the game and the successfully enhancement performance function of people's ability in the managing and control emotions. (Zizzi, Deaner & Hirschhorn 2003; Rogerson & Hrycaiko, 2002; Prlini & Halverson; 2006; Ajayi & Fatokan, 2006; Mayer & Fletcher, 2007; Saklofsak, 2007; Lane & et al, 2009) Research by Daniel & et al. (2002) suggested that athletes of team sports are more win-oriented than the individual sport athletes

Research also suggests that there is a gender difference between female and male adolescent athletes in terms of emotional intelligence. Boone and Leadbeater (2006) established that positive experiences in team's skill development, and support by peers, a good relationship with the coach gives a feeling of social acceptance, belongingness and eventually fewer depressive symptoms, reduced body dissatisfaction and stress amongst adolescent players. 150 students of the 10th class from diverse government schools in Chandigarh were assessed and the findings revealed that girls were found to have higher emotional intelligence than boys (Katyal, S., & Awasthi, E. 2005). Researchers also found that emotional intelligence was reliably assessed in adolescents, was much higher for females compared to the male counterparts, and was positively related to identifying emotional expressions, the level of satisfaction with support, and less stressful mood management behavior. (Ciarrochi, et al. 2001).

Vaez Mousavi (2000) found that the happiness and life quality of women athletes in team sports is better than the ones of individual sports, but some researchers also believe that there is no significant difference between the mental skills of individual and team sports.

Objectives

- To compare the level of emotional intelligence between team and individual adolescent athletes
- To compare the level of stress between team and individual adolescent athletes

- To compare the level of emotional intelligence between male and female adolescent athletes
- To compare the level stress between male and female adolescent athletes
- To understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress

Hypotheses

H01: There will be no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence between team and individual adolescent athletes

H02: There will be no significant difference between the level of stress between team and individual adolescent athletes

H03: There will be no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence between male and female adolescent athletes

H04: There will be no significant difference between the level stress between male and female adolescent athletes

H05: There will be no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress

Methodology

Sample

The sample for study was selected through random sampling method it consisted of 160 adolescents between 15 to 18 years from schools of Delhi in the year during 2021 out of which 80 were individual game athletes (40 Males and 40 females) Chess(n=12), boxing(n=12), archery(n=10), yoga(n=13), weightlifting(n=10), diving (n=13), gymnastics(n=10) and 80 team game athletes (40 Males and 40 females) Cricket(n=12), football(n=12), basketball(n=10),kabbadi(n=12), kho-kho (n=12), volleyball (n=10), hockey(n=12). It was ensured that the adolescent were between the age group of 15 to 18 and has at least played their respective games till national level and that the individual game adolescent athletes do not play any team game and vice versa.

Tools

Emotional intelligence scale by Singh and Narain

The Emotional Intelligence Scale consists of 31 items, it is developed by Dr. Shruti Narain and Dr. Arun Kumar Singh (Singh, A. K. & Narain S. 2014). is used in the current study to measure the Emotional Intelligence of the participants. It measures four different areas of emotional intelligence - Understanding Emotions, Understanding Motivation,

Empathy and Handling Relations. The scale is meant for use from 12 years and above of age. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.86 alpha coefficients significant at 0.01 level

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

PSS created by the psychologist Dr. Sheldon Cohen, (Cohen 1994). is one of the more far and widepreferred measure in scientific research for evaluating the perception of stress. It consists of 10 items, The questions in this scale ask about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. Here, you will be asked to specify how regularly you felt or believed in a certain way. Internal consistency for this scale was 0.829 alpha coefficients

Administration and Procedure

The Aim of the study is to understand if there is a difference in emotional intelligence and stress between adolescent athletes who play individual sport (e.g. gymnastics, chess, diving) and team sport (e.g. Basketball, hockey, cricket). The research sample consisted of 160 adolescents, both males and females currently studying in different schools of Delhi between 15 to 18 years of age out of which 80 were individual game adolescent athletes and 80 team game adolescent athletes, the participants were selected through random sampling method. It was ensured that the adolescent were between the age group of 15 to 18 years and has at least played their respective games till national level and that the individual game adolescent athletes do not play any team game and vice versa, the ones that fit the inclusion criterion they were assessed on emotional intelligence scale by Singh and Narain and perceived stress scale (PSS) by Cohen, A pilot testing was also done wherein a random sample of forty participants that fulfill the inclusion criteria additional to the original sample population were assessed on the above mentioned tools. This was done to understand the various indicators of construct validity of the same

The Participants were asked to answer each item according to the response format provided in the questionnaire, they were explained how to fill out the questionnaire, and were asked not to skip any question and they were further encouraged to approach the investigator whenever they needed clarification for any doubt. The attained data was analyzed with the help of statistical package for social sciences using t test and Pearson product moment correlation.

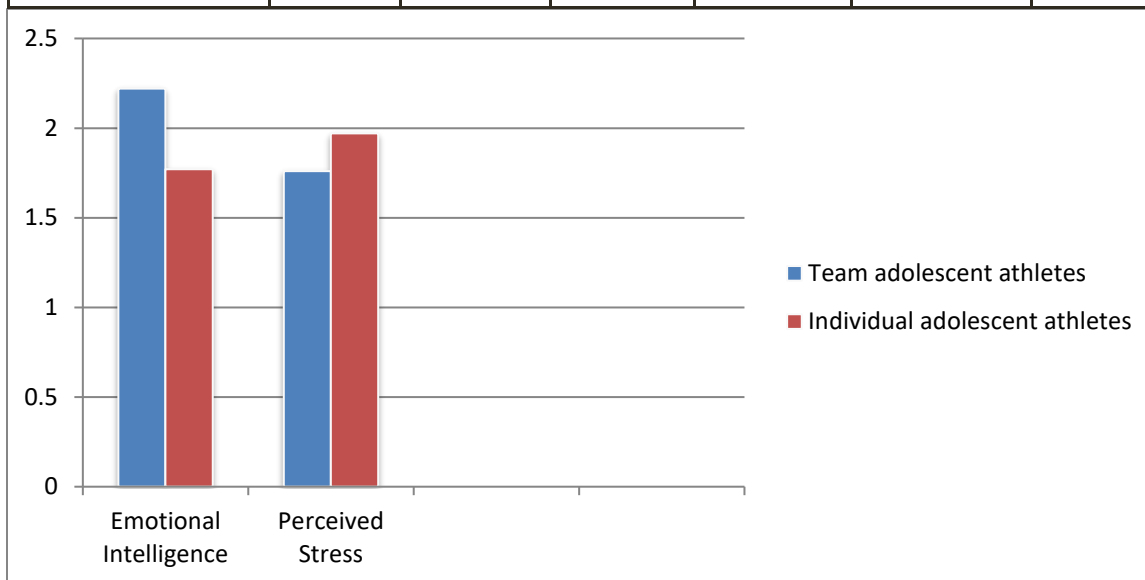
Result and Interpretation:

Table 1 - Means, SD and “t” scores on emotional intelligence & stress between team and individual adolescent athletes

Note * Significant at .05 level (2-tailed). Source - authors computation

Figure 1 - Bar graph representing the mean score emotional intelligence & stress between team and individual adolescent athletes

Variables	Team athletes (n = 80)		Individual athletes (n = 80)		t	Probability
Emotional Intelligence	mean	SD	mean	SD	3.816	.001*
	2.22	.745	1.77	.74		
Perceived Stress	1.76	.799	1.97	.810	1.66	.097



Source : authors computation

The Above table 1 (fig.1 of bar graph) indicates the means (2.22 and 1.77) and SD (.74, .74) of team and individual adolescent athletes on emotional Intelligence, the means (1.76 and 1.97) and SD (.799, .810) of team and individual adolescent athletes on stress respectively.

The “t” score of 8.216 on Emotional Intelligence is significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the H01: “There will be no significant difference between the level of emotional intelligence between team and individual adolescent athletes” is to be rejected. It can be observed that team adolescent athletes who play a team sport scored significantly higher on emotional

intelligence ($p < 0.05$) that further indicates that they have significantly higher emotional intelligence in comparison to their counterparts.

However, the “t” score of 1.66 on Stress is not significant which indicates that H02: “There will be no significant difference between the level of stress between team and individual adolescent athletes” is accepted which signifies that there is no significant difference in the level of Perceived stress experienced by team adolescent athletes and Individual adolescent athletes respectively

Vaez Mousavi (2000) in a research with Female adolescents found that the happiness and life quality of Female athletes of team sports is better than those of individual sports, but some researchers also believe that there is no significant difference between mental skills of individual and team sports. Research suggests that children who are emotionally intelligent are happier, adaptable, and experience less stress, which in addition leads them to the desired achievements and performance in various fields like sports (Goleman 1995). Hence, team sport athletes are more satisfied and have a positive wellbeing.

Daniel & et al (2002) in his study also found that athletes who play team sports have a win orientation compared to individual athletes and are better adaptable which also means that they manage their emotions better compared to individual game athletes. Sports psychologists (Feltz and Ewing, 1987) have shown that the psychological profile of athletes of team sports and individual sports players differs evidently. Studies also show that emotional intelligence is positively associated to their function in the game and performance

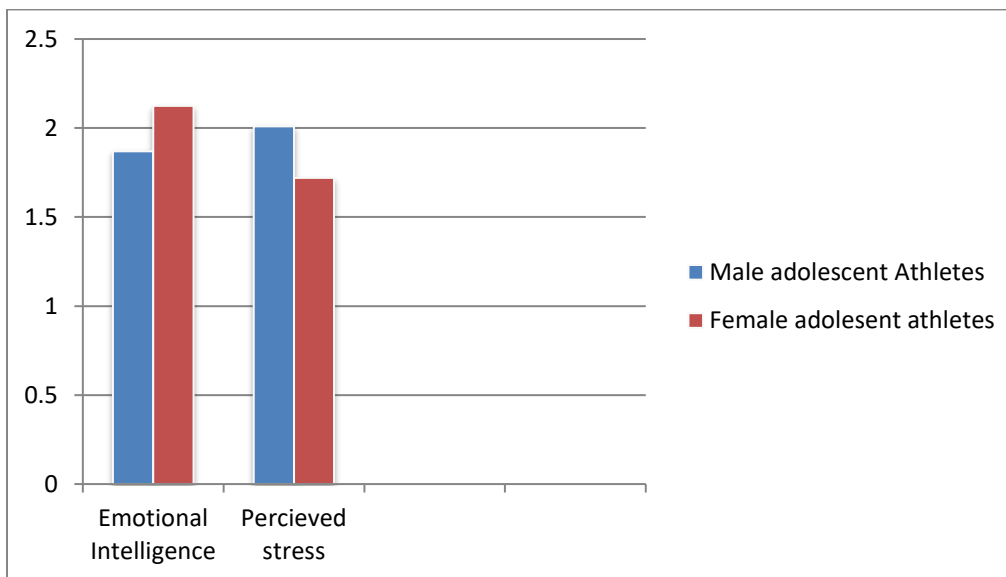
Hence, the result suggests that emotional intelligence not just helps you to manage, understand your emotions and articulate the emotions better but also understand and perceive emotions of others, which in turn helps the team athletes to perform better by maintaining good relationships, supporting the team and its members through good times and bad and being more empathetic, when we talk about perceived stress the result shows no significant difference between the stress experienced by team and individual adolescent athletes as sports performance and stress go hand in hand, there needs to be a certain amount of stress or what we call eustress for them to be motivated to perform and give results, excessive stress can be responsible for severe psychological symptoms, such as depressed mood, anxious feelings, and even suicide (Sun, Dunne, & Hou, 2012) various researchers suggest that athletes irrespective of what game he or she plays manage stress better than non-athletes since stress has a major influence upon sports performance individuals who are able to manage their emotions better automatically deal with stress better (Bhunia 2020; Bali 2015). Another study exhibited that emotional intelligence was positively linked with problem-focused and positive emotional focused coping styles, and Emotionally intelligent individuals cope better with stressors (Noorbakhsh, Besharat, and Zarei, 2010)

Table 2 - Means, SD and “t” scores on emotional intelligence & stress between male and female adolescent athletes

Variables	Males (n = 80)		Females (n = 80)		t	Probability
	mean	SD	mean	SD		
Emotional Intelligence	1.870	.785	2.125	.752	2.05	.041*
Stress	2.01	.818	1.72	.779	2.27	.024*

Note * Significant at .05 level (2-tailed).Source - authors computation

Figure 2 - Bar graph representing the mean score on emotional intelligence & stress between male and female Athletes



Source - authors computation

The Above table 2 (fig.2 of bar graph) indicates the means (1.870 and 2.125) and SD (.78 .75) of male and female adolescent athletes on emotional Intelligence and the means (2.01 and 1.72) and SD (.81, .77) of male and female adolescent athletes on stress respectively

The “t” score of 2.05 on Emotional Intelligence is significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, it indicates that H03: “There will be no significant difference between the level of Emotional Intelligence between Male and Female adolescent athletes” is to be rejected. It is observed that female adolescent athletes scored significantly higher ($p < 0.05$) on emotional

intelligence that further indicates that they have significantly higher emotional intelligence as compared to male adolescent athletes

On the other hand the “t” score of 2.27 on Stress is significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, it indicates that H04: “There will be no significant difference between the level stress between male and female adolescent athletes” is rejected which signifies that there is a significant difference in perceived stress experienced by male and female adolescent athletes (p <0.05). Male adolescent athletes experience more stress in comparison to its counterparts respectively

Hence, the above result suggests that female adolescent athletes scored higher on emotional intelligence than males and they also experience less perceived stress in comparison to their male counterparts. In a study by Katyal and Awasthi (2005) of 150 students of 10th class from divers schools in Chandigarh were assessed. The findings suggest that females were found to have higher emotional intelligence than that of males. Researchers found that emotional intelligence amongst adolescents, was greater for females than their male counterparts, and was positively related to skill of understanding and recognizing emotional expressions, level of social support, degree of satisfaction, social support, less stress and mood management behavior. (Ciarrochi et al., 2001). In a study with athletes from secondary schools in Enugu, South-east, Nigeria, with a mean age of 15.46 years indicated that athletes with high self-efficacy and emotional intelligence reported the more adaptive coping techniques than athletes with low self-efficacy and EI. Also, female athletes used very adaptive coping strategies compared to their male counterparts (Nwankwo and Onyishi, 2012)

Table 3 – Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress

Correlations

		STRESS	EI
STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.630**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	160	160
EI	Pearson Correlation	-.630**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	160	160

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2tailed). Source - authors computation

Correlation was computed through Pearson’s Product Movement method. It was aimed at examining the degree of relationship between emotional intelligence and stress. The above table 3 indicates that the inter-correlation between Emotional intelligence and stress is -.630, which is significant at 0.01 probability level. Which indicates that H05 “There will be

no significant relationship between Emotional intelligence and stress” is rejected which further denotes that there is a significant inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and stress($p < 0.01$).

A recent research on 505 adolescents supported that there is a positive association between emotional intelligence and well-being and a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and stress (Cejudo et al. 2018). Another study indicates that emotional intelligence was positively linked with problem-focused and emotional focused coping techniques; individuals with low emotional intelligence experience more stress (Noorbakhsh, Besharat, and Zarei, 2010). Research also suggests that low emotional intelligence is characterized by amplified violent criminal cases and teenage suicide they also experience episodes of major stress, depression, increased aggressive behavior, social anxiety issues, school dropouts, and disinterest in activities (Salovey et al., 2002). Hence, the above data shows that emotional intelligence and stress has an inverse relationship which means that individuals who have high emotional intelligence will experience less stress and will be able to cope with stressors better than their counterparts.

Conclusion and Suggestions

From the present study it can be concluded that adolescents who play team sport or games like cricket, football etc. where there are more than one members they have higher emotional intelligence compared to adolescents who play individual sport like chess or gymnastics, which shows that playing a team sport has a very important role to play specially in a factor like emotional intelligence which is responsible for a better wellbeing for adolescents as well as adults. There is ample research that states that individual specially children who are active and participate in sports have a healthier life both physically and mentally and they deal with stressors better, they also report less cases of suicide, perform better in all aspects of life compared to Individuals who don't take part in any kind of physical activity or sports.

The present study helps us in understanding that the type of sport that you play is also very important, all kind of games have their own kind of advantages and disadvantages but playing a team sport at an age like adolescent which is the stage of stress and storm helps in understanding, perceiving, manage and express their own emotions and of others better because when you play in a team you need to be more considerate and play as team player, think about others and not just yourself, learn to share, learn to express your emotions in a better way, you have support when you are dealing with failure, you also learn to be more empathetic, all of which impacts your overall personality, wellbeing and development and impacts who you are and what you are going to be as you move towards adulthood. The study also showed that female adolescent athletes have higher emotional intelligence and less perceived stress compared to the male adolescent athletes, which shows that females are able to perceive, understand, manage and express their own emotions better and are also

able to understand, manage and perceive emotions of others, since the study also suggested that there is an inverse relationship amongst emotional intelligence and perceived stress hence, females are also experiencing less stress or are able to cope and deal with stress better.

Hence, It can be suggested to the educational boards, sports board, schools and parents to encourage your child to play a team sports and schools should motivate their students to play and indulge in physical activities by providing a proper time, facilities, coach, equipment's and introducing male centric sports like football and cricket for girls as well, as it helps in enhancing the child's emotional quotient and reducing perceived stress which further impacts their mental health and wellbeing, there also needs to be readiness of availability of help in schools in form of school counselors or psychologist, since adolescents experience various psychological stress caused by multiple underlying sources like peer pressure, problems with teachers and coaches, academic pressure, pressure to perform, breakups, financial issues, issues related to parents and family or career related and its very important to address them because if not addressed they can lead to stress, anxiety, depression and even suicidal ideation. Moreover, it is also suggested that more awareness campaigns, seminars, class talks and assembly talks should be conducted so that there is less hesitation in reaching out for help. The skills related to EI should also be taught by the experts who can help the adolescents in dealing with emotional issues in day to day life while keeping in consideration the individual differences as well.

This study has a few limitations as well, for further research in the same area, sample size can be increased, data can also be collected from different age groups like higher education students, professional players etc. and not limited to just adolescents, different aspect like socio economic background, background of the parents, area from which the child belongs etc. can also be considered for a better result, data can also be collected from various other regions or counties in order to understand the cultural difference and trends followed in different places, and to have a more conclusive data also more variables that have correlation with emotional intelligence and stress can also be evaluated to comprehend the evolution of this construct in adolescence better, Research in the area of EI also suggests that it changes with age, few also suggest that EI increases with age hence encouraging future longitudinal study in understanding and analyzing emotional intelligence can also be done. Different interventions can be made and introduced for team sports, individual sports athletes and non-athletes in order to motivate and encourage them further.

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