

Unraveling the Nexus: Emotional Abuse, Emotional Competence, Self-concept, and Academic Achievement among Adolescents

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Abstract

This research delves into the intricate relationship between emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement among adolescents in Kashmir, with a specific focus on gender differences. Adolescence, marked by vulnerability, witnesses the profound impact of emotional abuse on cognitive, emotional, and psychological development. A comprehensive survey involving 300 high school students reveals significant gender disparities in emotional abuse experiences, emotional competence levels, self-concept, and academic achievement. Boys are shown to be more susceptible to emotional abuse, particularly in dimensions such as rejection, terrorizing, isolation, ignoring, and corruption. Conversely, girls exhibit higher emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement, emphasizing the role of societal and familial dynamics. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions recognizing gender-specific nuances, aiming to mitigate the adverse effects of emotional abuse and foster a conducive environment for the emotional and academic well-being of adolescents. The findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by adolescents in the context of emotional well-being and academic success.

Keywords: academic achievement, gender, emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept

Introduction

During adolescence, individuals are particularly vulnerable to experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual abuse or harassment, with potentially more profound and enduring consequences (Van Tu et al., 2020). Emotional abuse is one of adolescents' most significant challenge (May et al., 2022; Simmel et al., 2016). Emotional abuse can be characterized as a consistent pattern of conduct displayed by parents or caregivers that substantially hinders an individual's cognitive, emotional, psychological, or social development and may influence later development (Crawford & Wright, 2007; Madhlopa et al., 2020; Vahl et al., 2016). Emotional abuse encompasses a spectrum of behaviors such as rejection/ignoring, loneliness/isolation, intimidation, and coercive influence toward criminal activities. When a child is subjected to a combination of these emotional abuses, it can precipitate a myriad of detrimental effects that persist into adulthood. Some notable examples of these adverse consequences include the emergence of social, psychological, and behavioral challenges, heightened aggression, a propensity for violence, increased susceptibility to substance abuse (alcohol and drugs), elevated risks of health issues like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, and obesity. Additionally, emotional abuse can precipitate the deterioration of one's social relationships, engender feelings of depression, and even contribute to

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suicidal tendencies (Dinleyici & Dağlı, 2016). Furthermore, it has a profound impact on an individual's mental well-being and emotional maturation.

Emotional abuse is a globally pervasive issue affecting the lives of countless children worldwide, with an estimated prevalence of 363 cases per 1,000 children under the age of 18 (Unicef & others, 2020). In other words, this distressing form of abuse affects just over one in every three children. In the context of India, more than 40% of its populace is below the age of 18 and it stands as the global epicenter of childhood with an expansive population of children (Seth, 2015). Alarming figures suggest that up to 74% of Indian children have reported instances of physical abuse, with 72% experiencing emotional abuse and approximately 69% disclosing incidents of sexual abuse (Fernandes et al., 2021). The prevailing issue of child abuse and neglect within Indian society is a complex phenomenon shaped by an amalgamation of contributing factors. These factors encompass high population density, poverty, economic disparities, political inequities, the enduring caste system, patriarchal structures, gender biases, and societal norms that, regrettably tolerate specific manifestations of violence directed at children (Unicef & others, 2020). Notably, the use of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children is deeply ingrained in Indian culture, with a staggering 29% of parents acknowledging the employment of severe physical disciplinary measures (Govender & Bhana, 2023; Runyan et al., 2010). This acceptance of physical discipline extends beyond the confines of home, as just over two-thirds of children report instances of being subjected to physical chastisement by teachers in school (Kacker et al., 2007). Based on the findings from the largest national survey (involving 12,447 participants) conducted across 13 Indian states, it was observed that boys exhibited a higher likelihood of reporting both physical abuse (72.6%, compared to 65.0% for girls) and sexual abuse (52.9%, compared to 47.1% for girls). However, with regard to emotional abuse, there was little disparity between genders, with 50.0% of both boys and girls reporting instances of it (Kacker et al., 2007).

Emotional abuse poses a significant threat to mental health, as highlighted by a recent comprehensive meta-analysis. The findings revealed that individuals who have experienced any form of maltreatment, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse or neglect, were 2.48 times more likely to develop a depressive disorder and 1.68 times more likely to experience an anxiety disorder (Gardner et al., 2019). Emotional abuse affects every economic stratum of the adolescent population, irrespective of gender, age, race, and religion (Babu & Fatima, 2022; Kwok et al., 2019). Studies have found that children who have endured adverse early-life circumstances, such as growing up in an unsupportive family environment or experiencing childhood maltreatment, often grapple with emotional challenges (Bierman et al., 2010; Moreno-Manso et al., 2016). These difficulties can constrain their ability to both express and comprehend their own emotions, as well as those of others.

There is robust evidence that emotional abuse is linked to academic difficulties (Sloan et al., 2020) and negatively associated with academic achievement (Romano et al., 2015). Additionally, it has the potential to destroy self-concept, self-esteem, psychological well-being, and mental health. An abused child begins to question themselves, their values, and their overall worth and can undermine their achievements. It is a direct attack on one's self-concept and, over time, diminishes their self-esteem (Gesinde, 2011). Emotional abuse leads to the downfall of self-concept, which further causes emotional incompetency and the failure to execute their emotions carefully according to the situation (Choe et al., 2020; Izuchi & Onyekuru, 2017). Abused children exhibit negative cognitive distortion about themselves.

Studies have broadly examined the association between emotional abuse and academic functioning from a Bronfenbrenner ecological systems approach (Bronfenbrenner & others, 1994; Romano et al., 2015). Emotional abuse may disrupt adolescents' ability to properly develop problem-solving strategies and self-regulation abilities according to a developmental psychopathology framework (Valentino et al., 2006). This may, in turn, negatively influence cognitive abilities and intellectual development and increase the risk for childhood behavioral or mental health problems (Romano et al., 2015).

A general idea of literature addresses how the variables taken in the present research topic have been considered independently in connection to different variables; however, these variables have not been studied simultaneously in relation to the present problem. The present study reports on the findings of a self-report questionnaire presented to adolescents in Kashmir. Considering the specific gaps in the existing evidence base, the objectives were to examine (1) gender based differences regarding emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement; (2) gender based differences in the various dimensions of emotional abuse and competence; and (3) whether there is a relationship between emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement among boys and girls.

Methods

This research used the correlation design appropriate according to the research questions.

Participants

As per the need and demand of the study, stratified random sampling was used, and 300 high school students were selected, among which 150 were girls and 150 were boys. The data was collected from various district High schools in Kashmir. The age of the participants ranged from 11 to 19 years, with an average age of 16. The high schools included both government and private schools. Furthermore, as the questionnaire used for data collection was in English, participants had to meet the prerequisite of being able to read and comprehend the language.

The general criterion of samples was as follows:

1. Participants between 11 and 19 years were included in the sample.
2. The sample included private and government schools.
3. The participants must be able to read and understand English because the questionnaire used for data collection was in English

Procedure

An initial approval was obtained from the State Education Administration. The researcher approached the Heads of selected schools and presented them with a debriefing of information regarding the research. Additionally, written consent was sought from the participants and their parents, and essential information pertaining to the research was provided to them as well. Following approvals, three scales, namely the Emotional Abuse Scale, Emotional Competence Scale, and Mohsin Self-Concept Inventory, were administered to participants, as per their availability. The participants were debriefed about the questionnaires and were asked to read each statement carefully, answer each item, and not leave any

item unanswered. A time frame of 30 - 40 minutes was given for the completion of the questionnaires, along with an assurance that responses would be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Following the completion of participant responses, the researcher acquired the academic achievements of each participant from the concerned teachers and the respective school records. The Academic Achievement measurement survey was then attached to each participant's response scales for further evaluation.

Once the data was collected, it was scored and uploaded on the SPSS software package for analysis. As per the demand of the problem, a correlation method was used to find the relation between variables, and independent t-tests were used to examine the difference between boys and girls. Multiple Regression Analysis was used, which helps assess the relationship of several independent variables simultaneously with dependent variables.

Measures

In this study, the following tools were used for data collection.

Emotional Abuse Scale

Nesheen & Alam, (2015) developed a scale to measure adolescent emotional abuse, consisting of 42 items with a response format of a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale comprises five dimensions: corruption, ignoring, isolation, rejection, and terrorizing. The lowest and highest scores determining emotional abuse levels on the scale were 101 below and 123 above, respectively. The reliability coefficient of correlation between forms, Spearman-Brown and the unequal-length Spearman-Brown, is 1 each, and Guttman Split-Half is .995.

Emotional Competence Scale

Paiva & Kumar, (2009) developed a scale to assess emotional competence. It consists of 35 items ranging from "always" to "never" and consists of eight dimensions: love, fear, sympathy, interest, happiness, sadness, anger, and jealousy. The lowest and highest scores on the scale determining the level of emotional competence were 38 below and 76 above, respectively. The Guttman Split-Half reliability and the unequal-length Spearman-Brown are 0.719, respectively. The equal-length Spearman-Brown is 0.721, and the reliability coefficient of correlation between forms is 0.712.

Mohsin Self-Concept Inventory (MSCI)

Mohsin, (1979) developed a scale to measure variation in self-regard consisting of 48 items with equally positive and negatively phrased statements. These statements relate to an individual's abilities and strengths in their affective, cognitive, and native areas. The correlation of this scale with the Maslow SI test was -0.351; with MPCRI, it was 0.396. The reliability of the scale was found to be 0.73.

Academic Achievement Measurement Survey

In order to access the academic achievements of the sample group, school records were accessed with authorization from the administration and students.

Demographics

The demographic survey sheet consists of information such as age, gender, class, school, etc.

Findings

The results of a simple t-test evaluating the difference between boys and girls regarding emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Showing the Mean, SD, and t value of Boys (N=150) and Girls (N=150) concerning their emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement

Variables	Groups	Mean	SD	t	p-value
Emotional Abuse	Girls	115.07	12.351	3.542**	.000
	Boys	119.59	9.581		
Emotional Competence	Girls	54.340	16.3456	7.992**	.000
	Boys	42.527	7.7803		
Self-Concept	Girls	33.99	5.754	3.462**	.001
	Boys	31.82	5.062		
Academic Achievement	Girls	49.827	7.6595	5.609**	.000
	Boys	45.580	5.2268		

* $p < .05$

Table 1 shows that boys and girls significantly differ with regard to emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement. In-depth analysis also reveals significant statistical evidence pointing to boys being more prone to emotional abuse than girls. For the remaining three factors, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement, girls are revealed to be more vulnerable than boys.

For further analysis, the t-test was used to understand the difference between various dimensions of emotional abuse and emotional competence, and the results are reported in Table 2.

Table 1

Shows the Mean, SD, and t value of boys and girls concerning the different dimensions of emotional abuse and emotional competence

Emotional Abuse					Emotional Competence				
Dimensions	Group	Mean	SD	t	Dimensions	Group	Mean	SD	t
Rejection	Girls	28.99	4.266	3.724**	Happiness	Girls	6.85	1.165	10.452**

	Boys	30.57	2.968			Boys	4.77	2.141	
Terrorizing	Girls	17.88	2.229	4.198**	Love	Girls	6.75	1.301	7.630**
	Boys	18.73	1.235			Boys	5.11	2.289	
Isolation	Girls	22.08	5.169	5.162**	Interest	Girls	6.63	1.336	6.263**
	Boys	25.10	4.961			Boys	5.31	2.206	
Ignoring	Girls	23.79	5.662	2.051*	Sympathy	Girls	7.08	1.197	6.741**
	Boys	25.03	4.771			Boys	5.67	2.272	
Corruption	Girls	23.39	6.053	1.490*	Fear	Girls	5.59	2.162	7.752**
	Boys	24.39	5.569			Boys	7.15	1.183	
					Anger	Girls	5.20	2.140	7.384**
						Boys	6.71	1.311	
					Sadness	Girls	5.10	2.333	6.320**
						Boys	6.45	1.197	
					Jealousy	Girls	5.27	2.183	6.739**
						Boys	6.65	1.209	

** $p < .01$

Table 2 represents the t-test statistics evaluating the difference between boys and girls in terms of the dimensions of emotional abuse and emotional competence. The t-test indicated that boys are susceptible to each dimension of emotional abuse as compared to girls. All of the t-statistics assessing the difference between boys and girls with different dimensions of emotional abuse are significant, at least at a 10% level of significance. As reported in Table 2, girls are revealed to be more vulnerable with regard to emotional competence than boys. However, in an in-depth analysis done by taking eight dimensions of emotional competence, girls are surprisingly revealed to more vulnerable in half the dimensions with boys being more vulnerable in the latter half. Girls are more vulnerable to four dimensions (Happiness, Love, interest, and Sympathy) of emotional competence as compared to boys at a 1% level of significance. These four dimensions represent positive/healthy emotions; the negative emotions are represented by fear, anger, sadness, and jealousy. With regard to dimensions of emotional competence, the boys are much more vulnerable as compared to girls at a 1% level of significance.

After the in-depth analysis of the differences between boys and girls with regard to the various dimensions of emotional abuse and emotional competence, the impact of these, along with self-concept on academic achievement, has been assessed by using a regression model for boys and girls separately, the results of which are reported in Table 3.

Table 2

Showing coefficient of regression for boys and girls regarding their Emotional Abuse, Emotional Competence, and Self-Concept

Variables	Gender	Standard Coefficients β	t	p-value
Emotional abuse	Boys	-.431	-7.570	<.01
	Girls	-.320	-5.581	<.01
Emotional competence	Boys	.169	3.001	<.05
	Girls	.129	1.957	<.1
Self-concept	Boys	.486	8.837	<.05
	Girls	.602	10.504	<.01

Table 3 represents the slopes of Emotional Abuse, Emotional Competence, and Self-Concept on academic achievement in both boys and girls. The results exhibit that for boys, emotional competence and self-concept are positively significant determinants of academic achievement at a 5% level of significance. In contrast, emotional abuse is a negative determinant of academic achievement with a 1% significance level measure. Similarly, for girls, emotional competence and self-concept are positive determinants of academic achievement at 10% and 5% levels of significance, respectively. At the same time, emotional abuse is a negative determinant of academic achievement with a 1% level of significance.

Discussion

Gender-based comparisons regarding emotional abuse reveal a significant contrast between boys and girls. The findings indicate that boys experience higher levels of emotional abuse than girls. This disparity may be attributed to boys exhibiting more confrontational and aggressive behavior toward parents, teachers, elders, and peer groups, potentially leading to abusive interactions (Khan et al., 2015). Additionally, parental humiliation in public, lack of additional care, constant comparisons with others, ongoing threats, being reprimanded for minor errors, and irresponsible behavior can all develop internal conflicts within boys. Studies have found that male pupils have a higher prevalence of emotional abuse than females (Harvey et al., 2021; Theoklitou et al., 2012).

Comparing levels of emotional competence also reveals a significant difference between boys and girls. The results concluded that girls are more competent than boys, with highly emotionally competent girls being good at internalizing and externalizing their negative emotions. Girls are also more expressive than boys, owing to the fact that boys are typically punished for being negatively expressive and told that their emotions are unacceptable. They are taught to be ashamed of the emotions they experience and, thus, become emotionally confused. Studies have found that women are more emotionally expressive than men (Brody, 2000; Parkins, 2012). Since girls tend to be more emotional and intimate in relationships than boys, their emotional competence ought to be higher than that of boys. This can be

attributed to the Kashmiri society, which socializes the two genders differently. Studies have found that girls score higher on measures of empathy, social responsibilities, and interpersonal relationships than boys (Alcaraz-Muñoz et al., 2023; Lam et al., 2012; Tapia, 1999). There was also an increased sensitivity in their relationships with parents, friends, and siblings. All these traits make them more emotionally competent than boys.

A comparison in the perception of their self-concept revealed a significant difference between boys and girls with boys displaying lower self-concepts than girls (Rahe et al., 2023). In the contemporary world, boys often navigate a profound sense of insecurity, primarily due to frequent comparisons within their classrooms and homes. Whether measured against younger or older siblings or based on academic achievements, these constant comparisons can deeply wound their self-esteem and sense of individuality. On the contrary, girls tend to exhibit higher levels of self-concept, suggesting that they receive greater encouragement and enjoy moral and social support from their parents, teachers, and peer groups.

In terms of academic achievement, a considerable difference was revealed, as boys are significantly lower in academic achievement than girls. Boys and girls do not have the same perspective regarding what determines success. Generally, boys place much more importance on intelligence than effort with a belief that being intelligent relieves them of making an effort, while girls perceive intelligence as an indispensable ingredient of success. The fact remains that girls naturally tend to attach more importance to school than boys do, and also devote more time to homework and studying. In their study, Ghazvini & Khajehpour, (2011) demonstrate that cognitive-motivational functioning differs between boys and girls in the academic environment, with girls having a more adaptive approach to learning tasks. Female students use attitude, motivation, time management, anxiety, and self-testing strategies, whereas male students use learning strategies more.

In terms of comparison between boys and girls with regard to the five dimensions of emotional abuse, i.e., rejection, terrorizing, isolation, ignoring, and corruption, and the eight dimensions of emotional competence viz; (Happiness, Love, Interest, Sympathy, Fear, Anger, Sadness and Jealousy) the results indicated that both boys and girls exhibit differences.

There is a significant difference between boys and girls when compared on the dimension of emotional abuse. Boys were observed to be more rejected, terrorized, isolated, ignored, and corrupted than girls. The possible reasons for this difference are that parents or caregivers may sometimes show dismissive behavior towards their children, either consciously or unconsciously, while being unaware of the psychological impact of such behavior. Apart from this, lack of emotional support and responsiveness towards their needs and health are the main factors that create a sense of rejection and undesirability in boys. It demonstrates that boys are more susceptible to emotional abuse than girls. The finding of the present research work is consistent with earlier studies, which reveals that males reported higher levels of rejection sensitivity than females at age 16 and 17 (Kellij et al., 2023; Webb et al., 2014). Another study on Gendered Socialization suggests that adolescent males have a more challenging time transitioning to more emotionally complex, heterosocial friendships and romantic relationships than females (Homroy, 2023).

Furthermore, a significant correlation was found between boys and girls with regard to the second dimension of emotional abuse, terrorizing, with boys being more terrorized than girls. Boys frequently

experience various threats in their day-to-day activities from within the family and from outside. Boys are threatened by their parents, particularly their fathers if they commit mistakes or fail to meet their rigid and unrealistic demands. These threats are detrimental, and make them feel traumatized even at school, in peer groups, and in other social gatherings. Threatening involves verbal and physical torment, including hollering, yelling, beating, prodding, reviling, and frightening. In 2019, among the approximately 53,600 child and youth victims (17 years of age and under) of violent crime, about 16,300 (31%) were victims of family violence perpetrated by a parent, sibling, extended family member, or spouse (Clark et al., 2020). The majority of these victims (61%) were victimized by a parent.

Abusive parents and parents obsessed with their child's career have tendencies to keep them isolated from the social world. They generally forbid their sons from engaging in any social gathering or any social activity with their peer groups. Exclusion from social life leads to loneliness, absence of friendship, and lack of interaction with peers. These are the primary reasons that boys feel isolated. It has been found that friendship-related loneliness has a stronger association with depressive symptoms among adolescents than parent-related loneliness. One possible explanation is that friends are the preferred source of social support during adolescence (Lau et al., 1999; Millwood & Manczak, 2023). Studies have revealed that isolation from peers leads to lower estimations of self-worth and self-confidence (Prizeman et al., 2023).

On the fourth dimension of emotional abuse, namely, ignoring, the results revealed a significant correlation between boys and girls, with boys appearing to be more ignored than girls. Many parents are biased against their male children (Ware, 2023). They do not attend to them and show less interest towards them, ignoring their daily needs because they feel that they can make decisions and need less parental advice. As a result, boys' achievements are not generally acknowledged and are taken for granted. The results are consistent with earlier studies, which found that male children were more likely to experience various kinds of maltreatment than girls (Wan et al., 2023).

Finally, a significant difference was discovered between boys and girls with regard to corruption, the final dimension of emotional abuse with boys being revealed to be more corrupted than girls. Many parents also encourage their male children to engage in acts of stealing, lying, drugs, violence, etc., which are illegal and detrimental. Furthermore, they are generally rewarded by their parents and peer groups for their ill and aggressive behavior (Kuay et al., 2023). Various researchers have tried to determine the causes of corruptive behavior in children. Fatherly involvement (as measured by frequency of contact and relationship quality) is also associated with a lower frequency of externalizing and internalizing symptoms such as acting out, disruptive behavior, antisocial behavior, depression, sadness, and lying (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002; Luk et al., 2023). Boys who live without their fathers consistently score lower on various moral indexes - such as measures of internal moral judgment, guilt following transgressions, acceptance of blame, moral values, and rule conformity (Colaguori et al., 2023).

Comparing boys and girls across the eight dimensions of emotional competence (i.e., Happiness, Love, Interest, Sympathy, Fear, Anger, Sadness, and Jealousy) revealed a significant difference between them in terms of happiness. Boys are found to be less happy than girls. One of the reasons behind the unhappiness is that, although they are good at internalizing their negative emotions, boys have fewer social relationships and also receive less support from family and teachers. Additionally, conflicting

relationships with parents, teachers, and peer groups may become causes of distress. Since the study was conducted on Kashmiri adolescents, it was found that boys in Kashmir were greatly affected by the political unrest as it affects employment opportunities. As a result, they are anxious regarding their careers and do not anticipate a bright future.

Boys and girls were found to be significantly different concerning the second dimension of emotional competence, i.e., love. Girls are observed to be more lovable than boys. A possible reason for this could be that boys' behavior towards others is mostly indifferent. They usually disobey their parents and hurt others, and poor parenting styles may sometimes make them feel less loved (Shanine et al., 2023). In addition, it is customary in Kashmir to take good care of girl children as they are considered temporary family members because they leave their parental home upon marriage (Gupta, 2023) resulting in girls being more loved than boys. A significant difference was found between boys and girls in terms of the third dimension of emotional competence, i.e., interest. Based on the mean value of both groups, girls are observed to be more interested than boys. Since they are more sociable, girls show more interest in any social activity, whether participating in school activities or other social gatherings (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022). Boys, being antisocial, exhibit minimal interest in any social activity. Girls also have a greater sense of responsibility than boys, with boys attempting to avoid taking family responsibility. As a result, girls scored higher on this dimension.

Furthermore, there is a significant difference between boys and girls in terms of the fourth dimension of emotional competence: sympathy. Results reveal that girls are more sympathetic than boys. Due to being good at externalizing their negative emotions, girls elicit sympathy from others. Their sociable behavior and affable feelings also make them sympathetic toward others. Di Tella et al., (2020) demonstrate that women have a greater capacity for interpersonal relations and empathy than men. Girls are more interested in social stimuli of all kinds (Gartland et al., 2022), are more responsive to the nuances of relationships as implied by social cues and more sensitive to the reactions of others toward themselves and one another (Trigueros et al., 2019).

Furthermore, a significant difference was found between boys and girls with regard to fear, the fifth dimension of emotional competence. Upon comparing the group means of both groups, boys were found to be more fearful than girls. Fear is prevalent among both sexes, with girls generally being more fearful (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978), but our results show that boys are more fearful than girls. This may be because boys have fear regarding their careers, fear of failure, rejection, and fear of being punished by their parents or teachers. Boys are also generally good at internalizing their behavior and tend to hide most of their negative emotions (Thepsourinthone et al., 2020).

Similarly, there is a significant difference between boys and girls in terms of anger, the sixth dimension of emotional competence. Boys were found to exhibit more anger than girls. Everyone experiences anger, but the responses to anger differ from person to person. Boys are prone to anger on trivial matters and are easily provoked. Strüber et al., (2020), found differences between sexes concerning the level of aggression. While physical violence was rare among children (ages 6-10), boys engaged in more rough and tumble play (mock fighting), more verbal insults, and were more likely to counter-attack if aggressed against verbally or physically, than girls (Geniole et al., 2020).

A significant correlation was found between boys and girls in terms of sadness with boys being found to be sadder than girls. As explained in our previous findings, boys experience significant social and

personal challenges. They have fewer social contacts than girls and do not share their concealed issues resulting in being confined within themselves. If experiencing a family or peer-related problem, they do not bother discussing it with others. Boys' aggressive behavior that makes others indifferent to them also contributes to their sadness. Additionally, being unable to meet parents' high expectations also adds to their distress.

Finally, a significant difference was found between boys and girls in terms of jealousy, i.e., the eighth dimension of emotional competence. Boys exhibit greater levels of jealousy than girls. The findings are rather inconsistent. Generally, it is considered that girls are more jealous than boys, however this study's findings show the contrary. As we have observed, boys face several challenges at a young age, either with regard to being compared academically or any other form of comparison with their younger or elder peers and family members. This may directly or indirectly cause them to be jealous of the one to whom they are compared. Extra care for girl children at home, girls being appreciated in classrooms, the comparison made by teachers, and girls' academic success, can all contribute as reasons to elicit jealousy among boys.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the complex interplay of emotional abuse, emotional competence, self-concept, and academic achievement among adolescents, with a specific focus on gender differences. The findings emphasize the importance of recognizing and addressing emotional abuse as a significant factor in adolescents' lives, with profound effects on their emotional competence, self-concept, and academic success. Additionally, understanding the gender-specific dynamics of these factors can inform targeted interventions and support systems to promote healthy emotional development and academic achievement among adolescents.

Ethics statement

The Aligarh Muslim University Ethical Committee board reviewed and approved the studies involving human participants. The participants provided written informed consent to participate in this study.

Competing of interest

The author declares that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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