

A Study on Relationship between Peer Relations and Social Intelligence among Graduating Emerging Adults

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ABSTRACT

A study on relationship between peer relations and social intelligence among graduating emerging adults was carried out in Dharwad, Hubli and Ranibennur cities, Karnataka state. The sample for the study comprised of 659 graduating emerging adults among them 198 respondents from medical stream, 164 respondents from engineering stream and 297 respondents from agriculture streams were selected. General information schedule was used to collect background information. Peer relations index developed by Hudson was used to assess peer relations and Social intelligence scale by Mathur²⁰ was used to assess social intelligence among graduating emerging adults. Results revealed that around 45 per cent of the engineering graduating emerging adults had clinically significant peer relations problem and majority of the agriculture graduating emerging adults were observed in high level social intelligence. Higher per cent of male graduating emerging adults had clinically peer relationship problems in all subject streams. Female graduating emerging adults poses high social intelligent than male graduating emerging adults. There was significant association between peer relationship and social intelligence among emerging adults in all subject streams. Around 54 per cent, 61 per cent and 52 per cent of medical, engineering and agriculture graduating emerging with presence of clinically significant peer relations problem had low level of social intelligence.

Key words: Emerging adults, Peer relations, Social intelligence, Subject stream.

INTRODUCTION

Emerging adulthood is a state of cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioural transformation and establishment. This group is of particular interest because of the great changes and exploration that occur for individuals within this age group. It is a phase of the life span between late adolescence and

early adulthood². Arnett^{3,6} provides a useful outline of the important qualities of this newly recognized developmental stage of emerging adulthood, which extends from age 18 to 25 years of age. Emerging adulthood is a phase of identity exploration and self - focus, as well as of possibilities in terms of career and relationships^{5,9,24}.

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However, this bridging time is also characterized by instability and change and is often experienced as the age of feeling in-between, which is distinctive from the traditional adult status attainment of three decades ago^{4,5}.

The social environment during adolescence consists of relationships with both family and peers⁸. These two social systems continue to evolve during emerging adulthood. Over the course of adolescence, youth become increasingly independent from parents and continue to evolve in relationships with peers¹⁸. Although peer influence is said to peak during early/middle adolescence²⁶ emerging adults spend the majority of their time with others of their own age. In addition to peer groups, close dyadic relationships with peers also increase during the transition from childhood to adolescence.

According to developmental theory, the establishment and development of relationships with peers serves as an important function in different aspects of psychosocial adjustment^{7,27,28}. Peer relationships include both positive and negative features. Positive features of friendships include trust, communication, and a willingness to help, while negative features include characteristics such as disloyalty and rejection. These features create conflict-ridden relationships that can negatively influence individual's trajectory²³. Peer relationships can function as emotional and cognitive resources, providing intimacy, security and trust, helps in the development of autonomy and identity and function as forerunners of subsequent relationships. They involve a broad range of people who surround person's everyday lives from early childhood until old age. Persons of the same classroom, community, and work or sports team comprise important and highly salient peer group contexts. About 75% of preschool children are involved in reciprocal friendships with their peer, which rises to 80-90% when adolescents enter larger peer ecologies during the transition to middle high school¹⁷. When adolescents shift their attention from parents to peers, peers become a centre influence for

their development¹⁶. This is in accordance with group socialization theory that proposes that peer groups play a most important role in children and adolescents' socialization, which goes beyond dyadic relationships¹⁵.

The relationship between social intelligence and popularity appears to be positive for both boys and girls. Sociometrically popular students are pro-social, caring and supportive to their peers. They have a behavioural repertoire (social problem-solving skills, positive social actions, pro-social traits) that promotes success in friendships. During adolescence, when the individual is ready to step into wider world, acquiring social intelligence becomes an important prerequisite as it helps an individual to develop ability to understand his or her environment optimally and react properly for socially successful behaviour. The concept of social intelligence was first introduced by Thorndike. Social intelligence is the person's ability to understand and manage other people and to engage in adaptive social interactions. Social intelligence has two key constituents which are distinctly personal and social in nature, one is intrapersonal intelligence and other is interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence is the person's ability to gain access to his or her own internal, emotional life while interpersonal intelligence is the individual's ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals. Several definitions of social intelligence have been accessible by theorists, but all share two common components (a) the awareness of others (b) their response and adaptation to other and the social situations¹³. The socially intelligent person has the ability of getting along well with people and makes friends easily and is sensitive and understanding in human relationship. Socially intelligent people behave tactfully and prosper in life. Thus social intelligence is an important developmental aspect of education. It is difficult to lead a successful life in a society without social intelligence. Good interpersonal and social skills not only indicate the success a person achieves in his human relationships but

also in his job pursuits as one needs to be socially skilled particularly with jobs that involve direct contact and communication with other people²⁵. Overall, sociometrically popular students show high levels of sociability and low levels of withdrawal. Adler *et. al.*¹ found that adolescents' perceived popularity reflects social intelligence in that they seem to have some kind of social control. It can be expected that social intelligence will always have a positive effect on popularity, no matter what the nature of the peer group is. Literature reveals the influence of peer relationship on social intelligence. So the present study made an attempt to explore the relationship between peer relationship and social intelligence of graduating emerging adults with the following objectives:

1. To assess peer relations and social intelligence of graduating emerging adults.
2. To know association and relationship between peer relations and social intelligence.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The target population of the study was medical, engineering and agriculture graduating emerging adults studying in Dharwad, Hubli and Ranibennur cities. SDM Medical College Dharwad, Karnataka Institute of Medical sciences, Hubli, SDM College of Engineering and Technology Dharwad, Sri Taralabalu Jagadguru Institute of Technology, Ranibennur, College of agriculture Dharwad and college of agriculture Hanumanamatti, were selected purposively. The details were informed clearly about the process of giving their responses to the items and statements of the questionnaires. The clarifications were made whenever the students raised the doubts. The students had taken 60-80 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The sample for the study comprised of 659 graduating emerging adults among them 82 male and 116 female respondents from medical stream, 89 male and 75 female respondents from engineering stream and 130 male and 167 female respondents were from agriculture streams. General information schedule was used to

collect background information of the graduating emerging adults. Peer relations index by Hudson was used to assess peer relations and Social intelligence scale by Mathur²⁰ was used to assess social intelligence among graduating emerging adults.

Table 1: Association between peer relationship and subject stream among graduating emerging adults

Association between peer relationship and subject stream among graduating emerging adults are presented in Table 1. With regard to peer relationship, in case of medical stream, 61.10 per cent did not have clinically significant problems while 38.90 per cent of medical graduating emerging adults had clinically significant peer relationship problems. Among engineering stream, 54.90 per cent did not have clinically significant peer relationship problems and 45.10 per cent had clinically significant peer relationship problems. As far as agriculture stream is considered, 68.40 per cent of the graduating emerging adults did not have clinically significant peer relationship problems and 31.60 per cent had clinically significant peer relationship problems. The chi square value of 8.56 was significant at 0.05 level of probability. The chi square value of 8.56 was significant at 0.05 level of probability. The peer relation index (Table 1) clearly revealed that the presence of clinically significant problems of peer relationship was experienced by around 32 per cent to 45 per cent of the graduating emerging adults. Specifically, the engineering graduating emerging adults had higher extent of presence of clinically significant peer relationship problem compared to medical and agriculture graduating emerging adults. There was significant association between peer relationship and subject stream of the graduating emerging adults. The reason might be lot of change is experienced by college students and these changes can be a reason of stress as they have to deal and adjust with new environment. The freshman is particularly depends on peer groups because they are new to the college environment and are trying to

adjust to the college lifestyle. Making friendships is not always easy and is especially difficult in the crucial first few weeks of college. College years are often deemed one of the greatest transition periods of a student's life with least parental involvement and substantial opportunity for gaining independence. Having friends to share these changes and new experiences is very important. Although peers may be an essential coping mechanism during this transitional period, the increase of peer involvement in a student's life may influence the increase of peer pressure and peer relationship problems.

Around 41 per cent and 35 per cent of the engineering graduating emerging adults had low and average level of social intelligence. This might be the reason for higher clinically significant peer relationship problem among engineering graduating emerging adults. Social intelligence helps an individual to develop healthy co-existence with peers. The socially intelligent person knows how to play different social roles, allowing him or her to feel comfortable with all types of persons and they are also well versed in the informal rules, or norms, that govern peer interaction. Not many studies have reported the relation of subject stream and peer relation.

Table 2: Comparison between the classes, gender and subject stream on peer relationship

Results from Table 2 shows that there was no significant difference between classes with regard to peer relationship. Male graduating emerging adults had higher mean score (59.78) on peer relationship when compared to female graduating emerging adults mean score (58.97). Engineering graduating emerging adults mean score (60.04) was significantly higher from medical (57.86) and agriculture graduating emerging adults (59.11).

The results of Table 2.a indicate analysis of variance. It was found that there was no significant effect of class on peer relationship. Gender and subject stream was found to have significant effect on peer relationship. There was no significant interaction effect of class and gender on peer relationship ($F=1.44$).

There was no significant interaction of class and subject stream on peer relationship ($F=1.35$). It can be observed that not significant interaction effect of gender and subject stream was found ($F=.64$). There was no-significant effect of class and gender and subject stream on peer relationship ($F= 1.7$).

Results revealed (Table 2 and 2.a) that there was no significant main effect of class on peer relationship. Gender and subject stream had significant effect on peer relationship. There was no significant interaction effect of class and gender on peer relationship. There was no significant interaction of class and subject stream on peer relationship. It is proved that no significant interaction effect of gender and subject on peer relationship was found. There was no-significant interaction effect of class, gender and subject stream on peer relationship. Male graduating emerging adults had experienced more peer relationship problems compared to female graduating emerging adults. As indicated by McGill women typically describe their friendships in terms of closeness and emotional attachment. What characterizes friendships between women is the readiness to share important feelings, thoughts, experiences, and support. Women offer a good deal of time and intensity of involvement to friends. Women's friendships are usually defined as self-revealing, accepting, and intimate, men usually shy away from intimacy and closeness. Functionalist perspective and social role theory would clarify that men are expected to assume an instrumental role such as providing for the family and career accomplishment, while women are assigned to fulfil the expressive role such as maintaining pleasant-sounding relationship¹⁰. Perez *et al.* found that female tend to yield higher score in perceived support and care from peer relationships and report more satisfaction in peer relationships.

Table 3: Association between social intelligence and subject stream among graduating emerging adults

Association between social intelligence and subject stream among graduating emerging adults are presented in Table 3. In case of

medical stream, with respect to social intelligence, 36.40 per cent were in average level followed by 34.8 per cent in high and 28.8 per cent were in low level. Subsequently, 41.50 per cent, 34.80 per cent and 23.80 per cent of engineering graduating emerging adults were observed under low, average and high category of social intelligence, respectively. While for agriculture stream, 37 per cent, 36 per cent and 26.90 per cent were in high, average and low level, respectively. The chi square value of 13.6 was significant at 0.01 level of probability.

Table 3.a indicated that, around 29 per cent to 37 per cent of the graduating emerging adults were observed in high level of social intelligence. Specifically the agriculture graduating emerging adults had high social intelligence. Subject stream showed significant association with social intelligence. Hamidifar¹⁴ reported that emerging adults are matured enough to convey ideas to people, confident and adaptable in presenting their ideas and effectively utilize a variety of modes to present the ideas, such as face to face/remote, written/spoken, public/private, group/individual. They have the capacity to construct reasonable, rational, logical arguments and to arrange evidence appropriately to support an argument, moreover listen and read others communications and understand in better way¹¹. Gnanadevan¹² found that higher secondary students had high level of social intelligence. Agriculture stream students communication is improved formally and informally by agricultural extension and is considered related to science communication. The academic field originated from communication courses that taught students in the agricultural sciences how to communicate. The students of agriculture stream are greatly concerned with the study of rural life, attitude and behavior of people. Agriculture graduating emerging adults study social situations and collect the knowledge pertaining to farmers, groups, organizations and leaders to achieve the objective or agricultural development. This helps in identify problems of farmers and

develop an extension programme for solving the problems of farmers. Based on the social facts they develop educational programmes. This helps the agriculture students to build relationships, share information, and connect with diverse audience of people.

Table 4: Comparison between the classes, gender and subject stream on social intelligence.

From the Table 4, it is found that first year graduating emerging adults had higher social intelligence compared to graduating emerging adults from other classes. The comparison of mean score of social intelligence revealed that female graduating emerging adults (66.83) had higher mean score than male graduating emerging adults mean score (62.33). Agriculture graduating emerging adults (66.23) had higher social intelligence compared to graduating emerging adults from medical (64.96) and engineering stream (61.94).

Perusals of Table 4.a indicate analysis of variance. It was found that that there was significant effect of class on social intelligence ($F=6.18$). Gender and subject stream had significant effect on social intelligence ($F=18.37$, $F=5.76$). There was no significant interaction effect of class and gender on social intelligence ($F=1.49$). There was no significant interaction effect of class and subject stream on social intelligence ($F=1.14$). Not significant interaction of gender and subject stream on social intelligence ($F=1.55$). There was no significant interaction effect of class and gender and subject stream on social intelligence ($F=0.97$).

From the results (Table 4 and 4.a) there is evidence that there was significant effect of class, gender and subject stream on social intelligence. There was no significant interaction effect of class and gender on social intelligence. There was no significant interaction effect of class and subject stream on social intelligence. No significant interaction of gender and subject stream on social intelligence. There was no significant effect of class and gender and subject stream on social intelligence. First year graduating

emerging adults had high level of social intelligence when compared with other classes. Female graduating emerging adults had high social intelligence. The results are in line with study conducted by Snehlata and Narayan concluded that female students had high social intelligence than male students. Patel²² reported that gender and subject stream had significant impact on social intelligence of college students.

Table 5. Interrelationship between peer relationship and social intelligence among graduating emerging adults

A perusal of Table 5 examines the interrelationship between peer relationship and social intelligence. Among medical stream, 49.60 per cent of graduating emerging adults with absence of clinically significant peer relationship problems had high social intelligence followed by average (38%) and low (12.40%). As for as graduating emerging adults with presence of clinically significant peer relationship problems concerned, 54.50 per cent were in low level of social intelligence while 33.80 per cent in average and 11.70 per cent were in high category. The chi square analysis showed significance at 1 per cent level (48.6). The correlation analysis was also negatively significant at 1 per cent (-0.52).

In engineering stream, 37.80 per cent of graduating emerging adults with absence of clinically significant peer relationship problems were observed under average level of social intelligence, followed by high (36.70%) and low (25.60%). Majority of graduating emerging adults with presence of clinically significant peer relationship problems fell under low (60.80%) level of social intelligence, followed by average (31.10%) and low (8.10%). The chi square value of 26.6 was found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability. The correlation analysis was also found to be negatively significant at 0.01 level of probability.

In case of agriculture stream, 46.30 per cent of graduating emerging adults with absence of clinically significant peer relationship problems had high social intelligence followed

by average (38.40%) and low (15.30%). As for graduating emerging adults with presence of clinically significant peer relationship problems concerned, 52.10 per cent were in low level of social intelligence while 30.90 per cent average and 17 per cent were in high level. The chi square value of 48.30 was significant at 0.01 level of probability. The correlation coefficient value of -0.53 was found to be negatively significant at 1 per cent. There was significant association found between peer relationship and social intelligence. Results also indicate that there was negative correlation found between peer relationship problems and social intelligence. The reason could be peers provide a protective group, which helps to establish independence from parents, develop social knowledge, awareness and competence. Intense attachment to the peer group allows adolescents to begin to develop their sense of direction for adult life. Peer group serve as socialization agents, they provide an arena for learning and practicing a variety of social skills. Peer relations also strongly influence both positive aspects; include trust, communication, and a willingness to help, while negative features include characteristics such as disloyalty and rejection²³. Peer relations help the individual to develop social skills that focus on basic communication and social skills that deal with stress management, coping and more complex social interactions. Peer relations helps to boost happiness, self confidence and sense of belongingness, this intern help to improve social intelligence. The result of the finding is support by many studies conducted by; Kokkinos *et al.* revealed that Children who reported few peer relations obtained higher scores in shyness. Ciencia and Coletiva reported that friendships with deviant peers, involvement in bullying and the experience of rejection from the overall peer group are related to adjustment problems, whereas friendships with pro social and academically oriented peers and social acceptance in the peer group are related to healthy social development. Meijs *et al.*¹⁹ noted that perceived popularity among peers

was significantly related to social intelligence. Ogden²¹ found that socially competent students are less engaged in problem behaviour, are better at making friends, have

more effective ways of dealing with authority and are more able in conflict resolution and problem solving than their more disruptive peers.

Table 1: Association between subject stream and peer relationship among graduating emerging adults

Peer relationship index	Subject stream				χ^2
	Medical (n=198)	Engineering (n=164)	Agriculture (n=297)	Total	
Absence of clinically significant problems	121 (61.10)	90 (54.90)	203 (68.40)	414 (62.82)	8.56*
Presence of clinically significant problems	77 (38.90)	74 (45.10)	94 (31.60)	245 (37.18)	
Total	198 (100)	164 (100)	297 (100)	659 (100)	

Figure in the parenthesis represents percentage, *=0.05 levels of significance

Table 2: Comparison between the classes, gender and subject stream on peer relationship

Variable	Category	Medical (n=198)	Engineering (n=164)	Agriculture (n=297)	Total
		Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD	Mean \pm SD	
Class	First year	25.33 \pm 15.23	26.74 \pm 10.75	21.52 \pm 13.88	24.08 \pm 13.79
	Second year	24.62 \pm 16.58	34.49 \pm 11.94	27.10 \pm 15.44	27.86 \pm 15.49
	Third year	30.29 \pm 15.25	30.30 \pm 14.61	27.06 \pm 13.92	28.89 \pm 14.52
	Fourth year	25.40 \pm 16.49	29.90 \pm 16.21	27.49 \pm 14.77	27.62 \pm 15.63
Gender	Male	30.01 \pm 15.69	35.02 \pm 14.40	30.83 \pm 15.01	31.85 \pm 15.13
	Female	23.87 \pm 15.67	24.73 \pm 11.17	22.33 \pm 13.32	23.34 \pm 13.74
Subject stream		26.04 ^a \pm 15.93	30.32 ^b \pm 13.96	26.05 ^a \pm 14.68	27.23 \pm 14.99

Mean value with different superscript indices differ significantly

Table 2.a: Analysis of variance for peer relationship among the respondents

Source	F value	C.D
Class	2.46 ^{NS}	-
Gender	45.24**	-
Subject stream	2.91*	1.63
Class*gender	1.44 ^{NS}	-
Class *subject stream	1.35 ^{NS}	-
Gender*subject stream	0.64 ^{NS}	-
Class*gender*subject stream	1.17 ^{NS}	-

Table 3: Association between subject stream and social intelligence among graduating emerging adults

Social intelligence levels	Subject stream				χ^2
	Medical (n=198)	Engineering (n=164)	Agriculture (n=297)	Total	
High	69 (34.80)	39 (23.80)	110 (37.00)	218 (33.08)	13.6**
Average	72 (36.40)	57 (34.80)	107 (36.00)	236 (35.81)	
Low	57 (28.80)	68 (41.50)	80 (26.90)	205 (31.11)	
Total	198 (100)	164 (100)	297 (100)	659 (100)	

Figure in the parenthesis represents percentage, * *=0.01 levels of significance

Table 4: Comparison between the classes, gender and subject stream on social intelligence

Variable	Category	Medical (n=198)	Engineering (n=164)	Agriculture (n=297)	Total
		Mean ±SD	Mean ±SD	Mean ±SD	
Class	First year	68.50 ± 12.23	66.40 ± 9.25	69.80 ± 10.02	68.54 ^b ±10.68
	Second year	66.37 ± 12.22	61.34 ± 12.06	65.04 ± 12.79	64.70 ^a ±12.53
	Third year	60.56± 11.87	61.41 ± 12.09	66.10 ± 11.70	63.18 ^a ±12.07
	Fourth year	64.22 ± 13.34	59.60 ± 9.09	64.81 ± 10.90	63.22 ^a ±11.30
Gender	Male	63.82 ± 13.43	59.50 ± 10.02	63.31 ± 11.98	62.33±11.98
	Female	65.75 ± 12.08	64.81 ± 11.22	68.48 ± 10.77	66.83±11.38
Subject stream		64.96 ^b ± 12.67	61.94 ^a ± 10.88	66.23 ^b ± 11.59	64.78±11.87

Mean value with different superscript indices differ significantly

Table 4.a: Analysis of variance for social intelligence among graduating emerging adults

Source	F	C.D
Class	6.18**	1.27
Gender	18.37**	-
Subject stream	5.76**	1.47
Class*gender	1.49 ^{NS}	-
Class *subject stream	1.14 ^{NS}	-
Gender*subject stream	1.55 ^{NS}	-
Class*gender*subject stream	0.97 ^{NS}	-

Table 5: Interrelationship between peer relationship and social intelligence among medical, engineering and agriculture graduating emerging adults

Peer relationship index	Medical(n=198)					Engineering (n=164)					Agriculture(n=297)						
	Levels of Social intelligence					χ ²	Levels of Social intelligence					χ ²	Levels of Social intelligence				
	High	Average	Low	Total	High		Average	Low	Total	High	Average		Low	Total			
Absence of clinically significant problems	60 (49.60)	46 (38.00)	15 (12.40)	121 (100)	48.6**	33 (36.70)	34 (37.80)	23 (25.60)	90 (100)	26.6**	94 (46.30)	78 (38.40)	31 (15.30)	203 (100)	48.3**		
Presence of clinically significant problems	9 (11.70)	26 (33.80)	42 (54.50)	77 (100)		6 (8.10)	23 (31.10)	45 (60.80)	74 (100)		16 (17.00)	29 (30.90)	49 (52.10)	203 (100)			
Total	69 (34.80)	72 (36.40)	57 (28.80)	198 (100)		39 (23.80)	57 (34.80)	68 (41.50)	164 (100)		110 (37.00)	107 (36.00)	80 (26.90)	297 (100)			
r	-0.52**						-0.42**						-0.53**				

Figure in the parenthesis represents percentage

*=0.05 levels of significance, **=0.01 levels of significance, NS-Non Significant

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, the present study shows that peer relationship among graduating emerging adults differ by subject stream where in engineering graduating emerging adults had higher peer relationship problems than the medical and agriculture graduating emerging adults.
- Male graduating emerging adults had experienced more peer relationship problems compared to female graduating emerging adults.
- The social intelligence among graduating emerging adults differ by subject stream

where in agriculture graduating emerging adults had higher social intelligence than graduating emerging adults from medical and engineering.

- Female graduating emerging adults had high social intelligence compared to male graduating emerging adults.
- There was significant association observed between peer relationship and social intelligence. There was significant negative correlation observed between peer relationship and social intelligence such that higher the peer relationship problem, lower was the social intelligence.

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