

## Qualitative Assessment of Temperament among Adolescents

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### Abstract:

*The entire lifespan of an individual encompasses significant advancement. Humans pass through various stages of life viz. from infancy to childhood and through adolescence to late adulthood. However, adolescence is a period when this growth, development as well as learning are believed to be at pinnacle due to transition from childhood to adulthood. During adolescent phase, there are rapid physiological, psychological, emotional, social changes as well as demands for new social roles take place. Temperament of an individual makes a great difference in how life turns up. Temperament preference as a component of the individual's cumulative tendency of perception, retention, and organization is a characteristic indication of the individual's natural tendency of responding to and using stimuli. It is an individual's character, disposition, and tendencies as revealed in his reactions. This gender based study has been done with an objective to compare the temperament among adolescents across gender. 140 girls & 80 boys from (three purposively selected schools) Lucknow city were selected randomly by using random number table and Dimensions of Temperament Scale (Dr. N.K. Chadha and Sunanda Chandra, 2005) was employed to elicit their temperament (Sociability, Ascendance, Secretiveness, Reflective, Impulsivity, Placid, Accepting, Responsible, Vigorous, Cooperative, Persistence, Warmth, Aggressiveness, Tolerance, Tough minded). Majority of the respondents*

*irrespective of gender had very high to high temperament. However, proportion of very high temperament was more common in males as compared to females. It was observed for sociability, responsibility, persistence, warmth and tolerance males had higher scores as compared to females whereas for dimensions; reflective, impulsivity, acceptability, vigorousness and aggressiveness, females had higher scores as compared to males. Similar study can be replicated to explore the impact of socio demographic and socio-economic variables on the temperament of adolescents. The findings would also facilitate psychologists and counselors to develop individualized programmes for those, who are in a dire need of it.*

**Key words:** Temperament, Gender, Adolescents

## **Introduction**

Life of a person is a beautiful gift awarded to him by the almighty God. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of growth, development and learning. Although variation in pace may be encountered at different stages, this process continues to influence human being at every stage of life, right from conception till birth, infancy, childhood and extending throughout adulthood till old age.

However, adolescence phase of human life is believed to be the most important one with respect to all these aspects of life since it is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. The term adolescence is derived from the Latin verb *adolescere* which means –to grow up that is adolescence is a period of life during which individuals begin to assert themselves as a distinct human being (**Grinder, 1973**). During this phase there are rapid physiological, psychological, emotional and social changes as well as demands for new social roles take place. Thus, the period of adolescence is a period of dramatic challenge, during which an individual is in the

process of establishing relatively permanent, life lasting *temperament* for effective participation in a society.

Temperament of an individual makes a great difference in how life turns up. Temperament is the characteristic phenomenon of an individual's emotional nature, including his susceptibility to emotional stimulation, his customary strength and speed of response, the quality of his prevailing mood, and all the peculiarities of fluctuation and intensity of mood. It determines and is the result of unique combinations of personality preference. It can denote a moderation or unification of otherwise disparate forces, a tempering or concession of opposing influences, an overall coloration or tuning, a kind of the maturation of the whole, a uniformity of the diverse (**Chess & Thomas, 1991**).

Temperament preference-as a component of the individual's cumulative tendency of perception, retention, and organization-is a characteristic indication of the individual's natural tendency of responding to and using stimuli. It is an individual's character, disposition, and tendencies as revealed in his reactions.

From at least classical times, temperament has been referred to an individual's or a group's consistent and stable pattern of behaviour or reaction, one that persists across time, activity, and space. It is a representative indicator of the distinctive behaviours of how a person learns and seeks from and adapts to the environment. Temperament is the behaviour style or *how* of behaviour as contrasted with the abilities, or *what* of behaviour, and the motivations, or *why* of behaviour.

**Chess and Thomas (1991)** identify three temperaments in relation to their "goodness of fit" concept. *Easy temperament* comprises a combination of regularity, positive approach responses to new stimuli, quick adaptability to change, mildly or moderately intense mood that is preponderantly positive. *Difficult temperament* comprises of irregularity in biological functions, negative responses to new stimuli or people, slow adaptability to change and intense mood

that is frequently negative. *Slow-to-warm-up temperament* comprises negative responses of mild intensity to the new, with slow adaptability after repeated contact.

Whatever their origin, it is widely accepted that temperaments both help to shape, and are themselves shaped by, the social environments in which an individual develops and lives, and that they represent styles of thought and behaviour that are both personal and consistent. As an individual develops, it is his or her temperament that helps to orient that development, influencing the growth of both intellect and character along particular lines.

Temperament can be defined as an individual's behavior style and characteristic way of responding and it forms the foundation of personality. Temperament evolves and becomes thoroughly specialized during childhood as personality traits, and demonstrates evidences of continuity and association from early childhood to adolescence (**Galambos and Costigan, 2001**). While there has always been interest in the connections between early temperament and adolescent functioning, interest in adolescent temperament itself is more recent and less advanced. However, there is increasing evidence of the role of temperament-based individual differences in explaining socio-emotional functioning in adolescence.

## **Objective**

The aim of the study was to assess & compare the temperament among adolescents across gender.

**Null Hypothesis (Ho):** There was no significant difference in the temperament of adolescents across gender.

**Alternate Hypothesis (H1):** There was a significant difference in the temperament of adolescents across gender.

## **Methodology**

A systematic methodology is an important step to any research because it directly influences the validity of the research findings. This precisely describes the methodology tools and instrument adopted in conducting the research.

**Locale & samples of study:** Three schools from Lucknow city were selected purposively and then 220 adolescents (140 girls & 80 boys) aged 13 – 18 years were selected randomly by using random number table.

**Research tool:** Temperament of the respondents was assessed by using Dimensions of Temperament Scale (Dr. N.K. Chadha and Sunanda Chandra, 2005). The scale was meant for assessing the temperament of 13-18 year old adolescents. 15 dimensions of temperament were assessed in terms of very high, high, average, low & very low temperament.

**Pre- testing of the research instrument:** Dimensions of Temperament Scale (Dr. N.K. Chadha and Sunanda Chandra, 2005) was standardized scale for Indian context, so no pre-testing was required before employing them in the present study.

### **Variables:**

1. Temperament – Dimensions are as follows;

- **Sociability:** It refers to the relative tendency or disposition to be sociable or associate with one's fellows.
- **Ascendance:** It refers to the state that exists when one person or group has power over another.
- **Secretiveness:** It refers to the trait of keeping things secret. It is characterized by lack of openness (especially about one's actions or purposes).
- **Reflective:** It is characterized by being persistently or morbidly thoughtful.

- **Impulsivity:** It is characterized by actions based on sudden desires, whims, or inclinations rather than careful thought.
- **Placid:** This means having an easygoing and cheerful disposition; "too good- natured to resent a little criticism". It is characterized by having an equable temper, not being easily irritated.
- **Accepting:** This is characterized by tolerating without protest and to endure resignedly or patiently.
- **Responsible:** This means having a capacity for moral decisions and therefore being accountable for one's actions. It is characterized by being able to discharge obligations or pay debts.
- **Vigorous:** This refers to being strong, energetic, and active in mind or body.
- **Cooperative:** This refers to the willingness to adjust to differences in order to obtain agreement. It is characterized by working together willingly for a common purpose or benefit.
- **Persistence:** This refers to the act of persevering, continuing or repeating behaviour.
- **Warmth:** The trait of being intensely emotional or a quality proceeding from feelings of affection or love.
- **Aggressiveness:** This is characterized by a feeling of hostility that arouses thoughts of attack.
- **Tolerance:** This refers to the capacity for or the practice of recognizing and respecting the beliefs or practices of others.
- **Tough minded:** This is characterized by facing facts or difficulties realistically and with determination.

**2. Gender** - It suggested whether an individual is a male or a female.

- Male
- Female

**Collection of data:** Hindi version of the scales was used as per the convenience of the respondents. Each subject was given questionnaire individually for limited time and was asked to fill it under the strict supervision of the researcher.

**Statistical analysis of data:** The collected data was classified and tabulated in accordance with the objectives to drive the meaningful and relevant inferences. The data was analyzed by using statistical technique; Mann Whitney U test.

## Results

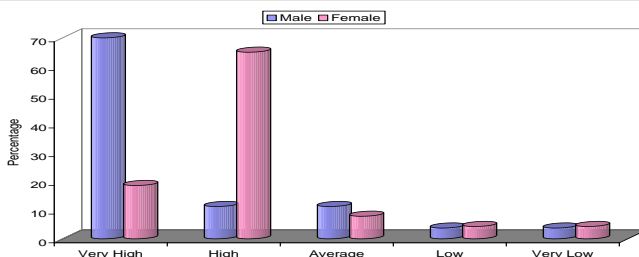
The existing dimensions of temperament among respondents across gender are presented in terms of frequency and percentage. Assessment and comparison across gender in terms of mean scores and standard deviation.

### Assessment of Temperament among Adolescents across Gender

**Table no. 1: Comparison of Temperament Scores between Male and Female adolescent**

Temperament	Male Adolescent		Female Adolescent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very High	56	70.00	26	18.57	82	37.27
High	9	11.25	91	65.00	100	45.45
Average	9	11.25	11	7.86	20	9.09
Low	3	3.75	6	4.29	9	4.09
Very Low	3	3.75	6	4.29	9	4.09
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.60	1.07	2.11	0.90	-5.534	<0.001

\*Mann Whitney U test



**Graph 1- Graphical presentation of temperament among adolescents across gender**

Majority of the respondents irrespective of gender had very high to high temperament. However, proportion of very high temperament was more common in males as compared to females. Mean temperament scores of Male adolescents were  $1.60 \pm 1.07$  as compared to  $2.11 \pm 0.90$  for Female adolescents, thus showing the difference between two groups to be significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table no. 2: Comparison of dimensions of temperament’s Scores between Male and Female adolescents**

Dimensions of Temperament	Male Adolescents N = 80		Female Adolescents N = 140		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Sociability</b>						
Very High	24	30.00	40	28.57	64	29.09
High	15	18.75	85	60.71	100	45.45
Average	31	38.75	12	8.57	43	19.55
Low	3	3.75	1	0.71	4	1.82
Very Low	7	8.75	2	1.43	9	4.09
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	2.43	1.21	1.86	0.72	-3.684	<0.001
<b>Ascendant</b>						
Very High	5	6.25	24	17.14	29	13.18
High	64	80.00	83	59.29	147	66.82
Average	5	6.25	19	13.57	24	10.91
Low	3	3.75	4	2.86	7	3.18
Very Low	3	3.75	10	7.14	13	5.91
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	2.19	0.76	2.24	1.01	0.062	0.951
<b>Secretiveness</b>						
Very High	17	21.25	30	21.43	47	21.36
High	58	72.50	84	60.00	142	64.55
Average	4	5.00	19	13.57	23	10.45



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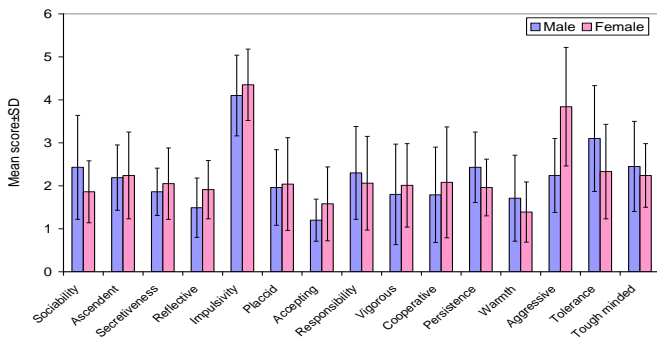
Dimensions of Temperament	Male Adolescents N = 80		Female Adolescents N = 140		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Low	1	1.25	3	2.14	4	1.82
Very Low	0	0.00	4	2.86	4	1.82
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.86	0.55	2.05	0.83	-1.402	0.161
<b>Reflective</b>						
Very High	50	62.50	38	27.14	88	40.00
High	21	26.25	77	55.00	98	44.55
Average	9	11.25	24	17.14	33	15.00
Low	0	0.00	1	0.71	1	0.45
Very Low	0	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.49	0.69	1.91	0.68	-4.554	<0.001
<b>Impulsivity</b>						
Very High	2	2.50	3	2.14	5	2.27
High	5	6.25	3	2.14	8	3.64
Average	4	5.00	5	3.57	9	4.09
Low	41	51.25	60	42.86	101	45.91
Very Low	28	35.00	69	49.29	97	44.09
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	4.10	0.94	4.35	0.83	-2.205	0.027
<b>Placid</b>						
Very High	23	28.75	57	40.71	80	36.36
High	43	53.75	35	25.00	78	35.45
Average	11	13.75	41	29.29	52	23.64
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Very Low	3	3.75	7	5.00	10	4.55
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.96	0.88	2.04	1.08	-0.219	0.827
<b>Accepting</b>						
Very High	67	83.75	93	66.43	160	72.73
High	10	12.50	13	9.29	23	10.45
Average	3	3.75	34	24.29	37	16.82
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Very Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.20	0.49	1.58	0.86	3.160	0.002
<b>Responsibility</b>						
Very High	12	15.00	52	37.14	64	29.09
High	50	62.50	51	36.43	101	45.91
Average	8	10.00	18	12.86	26	11.82
Low	2	2.50	15	10.71	17	7.73
Very Low	8	10.00	4	2.86	12	5.45
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	2.30	1.08	2.06	1.09	-1.985	0.047

Shruti Singh- Qualitative Assessment of Temperament among Adolescents

Dimensions of Temperament	Male Adolescents N = 80		Female Adolescents N = 140		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Vigorous</b>						
Very High	49	61.25	42	30.00	91	41.36
High	9	11.25	72	51.43	81	36.82
Average	15	18.75	12	8.57	27	12.27
Low	3	3.75	10	7.14	13	5.91
Very Low	4	5.00	4	2.86	8	3.64
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.80	1.17	2.01	0.97	2.642	0.008
<b>Cooperative</b>						
Very High	44	55.00	66	47.14	110	50.00
High	20	25.00	30	21.43	50	22.73
Average	9	11.25	22	15.71	31	14.09
Low	3	3.75	11	7.86	14	6.36
Very Low	4	5.00	11	7.86	15	6.82
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.79	1.11	2.08	1.29	1.559	0.119
<b>Persistence</b>						
Very High	16	20.00	27	19.29	43	19.55
High	15	18.75	96	68.57	111	50.45
Average	48	60.00	13	9.29	61	27.73
Low	1	1.25	3	2.14	4	1.82
Very Low	0	0.00	1	0.71	1	0.45
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	2.43	0.82	1.96	0.66	-5.024	<0.001
<b>Warmth</b>						
Very High	42	52.50	98	70.00	140	63.64
High	29	36.25	35	25.00	64	29.09
Average	1	1.25	2	1.43	3	1.36
Low	6	7.50	5	3.57	11	5.00
Very Low	2	2.50	0	0.00	2	0.91
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	1.71	1.00	1.39	0.70	2.720	0.007
<b>Aggressiveness</b>						
Very High	9	11.25	12	8.57	21	9.55
High	53	66.25	21	15.00	74	33.64
Average	11	13.75	10	7.14	21	9.55
Low	4	5.00	31	22.14	35	15.91
Very Low	3	3.75	66	47.14	69	31.36
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	2.24	0.86	3.84	1.38	7.738	<0.001
<b>Tolerance</b>						
Very High	6	7.50	27	19.29	33	15.00
High	24	30.00	74	52.86	98	44.55
Average	20	25.00	13	9.29	33	15.00

Dimensions of Temperament	Male Adolescents N = 80		Female Adolescents N = 140		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Low	16	20.00	18	12.86	34	15.45
Very Low	14	17.50	8	5.71	22	10.00
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	3.10	1.23	2.33	1.10	4.732	<0.001
<b>Tough Minded</b>						
Very High	5	6.25	7	5.00	12	5.45
High	55	68.75	106	75.71	161	73.18
Average	7	8.75	19	13.57	26	11.82
Low	5	6.25	3	2.14	8	3.64
Very Low	8	10.00	5	3.57	13	5.91
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>z*</b>	<b>P</b>
Score	2.45	1.05	2.24	0.74	0.969	0.333

\*Mann Whitney U test



**Graph 2- Graphical presentation of dimensions of temperament among adolescents across gender**

On dimension wise analysis, significant differences between two genders were observed with respect to dimensions; sociability, reflective, impulsivity, acceptability, responsibility, vigorousness, persistence, warmth, aggressiveness and tolerance. It was observed for sociability, responsibility, persistence, warmth and tolerance males had higher scores as compared to females whereas for dimensions; reflective, impulsivity, acceptability, vigorousness and aggressiveness, females had higher scores as compared to males.

## **Conclusion**

There was a significant difference in the temperament of adolescents across gender. Kim, Sooyeon, Brody, Gene H. *et al* (2003) also found a significant gender difference emerged at the latent mean level: Boys were rated high in high-intensity pleasure and activity level, and girls were rated high in attention. Windle, Michael (2002) examined the temperament; girls reported more adaptability/ positive effect, whereas boys reported more attention focus and general rhythmicity. Singh, Shruti & Mishra, Sunita (2014) also concluded in their study that gender did not influence optimistic-pessimistic attitude of the adolescents.

## **Implications of the Study**

- The findings would enable the families and teachers to identify their adolescents in a real sense, including their strengths and weaknesses. This may in turn force them to create an atmosphere by which they can help an adolescent to overcome his weaknesses and thus, develop into an ideal adult.
- The results would also help human development personnel understand the role of gender in determining the temperament of adolescents and accordingly formulate strategies for creating conducive environment in families to positively influence them.
- The findings would also facilitate psychologists and counselors develop individualized programme for those, who are in a dire need of it.

## **Scope for Future Studies**

- Comparative studies across different socio economic and demographic variables as well as different cultures and their effect on temperament can be examined.

- Similar study can be replicated on differently able adolescents as well as on orphan children.

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