

# Emotional Maturity of Internet Users

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**Abstract** Internet has been emerged as a most powerful tool for communication and exchange of information all over the world. More recently the web 2.0 tools has provoked a revolution and unlocked a new dimension in the field of communication and technology; this ongoing digital revolution has touched and turned almost every sphere of life of its users whether its physical, social, emotional, moral or ethical. For internet users it is the need of hour to be emotionally mature to manage and monitor their own emotions, to assess the emotional state of others, to deal with the situations accordingly and purposefully. Quite often it has been observed that young internet users get emotionally involved in this virtual world and act in that emotional flow which sometimes results in an emotional trauma leaving its impression for long. The purpose of this study was to investigate about the emotional maturity of internet users and to find out that is there any gender difference in their emotional maturity. Findings revealed that the young internet users are not emotionally mature. Results showed that there is significant gender difference in emotional stability, independence and total emotional maturity of internet users under study. Females who use emailing along with chatting are more emotionally stable in comparison to males.

**Keywords** Emotional Maturity, Internet, Online Communication, Networks

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## 1. Introduction

Present era is the era of technology more precisely information and communication technology; Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has important implications. Internet is the most widely used element of ICT, It has been emerged into a major source of information which has extensive coverage and rapid access. Internet is a big network which connects large number of computers. These networks can share the variety of information and can communicate with each other. More recently the web 2.0 tools has provoked a revolution and unlocked a new dimension in the field of communication and technology as the previous passive users are now turned into active and creative participants in this techno world. It is helping in the

creation of a collaborative and constructive environment and providing a platform for the development of reflective space for today's digital natives (Srivastava & Dangwal, 2015). Internet is very popular in today's young generation, to publish information. It is an innovative form to transact text or information from one place on globe to another fairly, quickly, cheaply and easily. Internet communication, especially instant messaging has become an essential feature of young generation's social lives. It is emerging as a tool to attract young children. Face-to-face interaction and some telephone conversations have been partially replaced with email and instant message communication. Most of the youths are seeing internet as an easy way to communicate with friends and be entertained. Social networks are the hallmark of the modern age. This is the first time in history, when peoples are connected via electronic social networks that are unlike anything the world have ever seen. What started out as a hobby for some computer literate people has become a social norm and way of life for people from all over the world (Boyd and Ellison 2007).

The Internet culture was developed by early computer user (male scientists, mathematicians and technologically sophisticated computer users). Earlier the Internet was dominated by males but now the use of internet by females has increased over the years, from a ratio of 9:1 to 2:1, females use the Internet less and in different ways to men. With Internet interactions, research has found that males' online communication is status enhancing and adversarial while females' online communication is supportive and tentative. Often males dominate mixed-gender online discussion groups and when females try to dominate, they are ignored, trivialized or criticized by the males. Most of the times, it is seen that the young internet users involve themselves emotionally in virtual world.

## 2. Emotional Maturity

The role of emotions in each and every individual's life is an important as life itself. The term emotions refer to feelings and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states and range of propensities to act (Goleman, 1995). The concept mature emotional behavior at any level is that which reflects the outcome of emotional development.

Emotional maturity is an internal development of

balancing the mind and intellect with the external reality. If a person is truly emotionally mature, he or she has and acts with integrity. If a person has integrity, his or her attitudes and behaviors are emotionally mature. Emotional maturity is the ability to understand reality and facts and the quality of response to a situation by detaching from the pulls and pushes of pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

According to Chamberlain (1960), an emotionally mature person is one whose emotional life is well under control. It is the need of everyone who would like to have right understanding. A right understanding makes a person matured. Emotionally matured person sees the world as it is without distortion of perception. It is about understanding facts. For an emotionally matured person, there is always a way out in any circumstances. An emotionally stable child has a capacity to make effective adjustments with himself, members of the family and his peers (Smithson 1974).

### 2.1. Characteristics of Emotional Maturity

1. The ability to experience and understand own deepest feelings and needs, and to be able to act on and express these feelings and needs in appropriate and constructive ways. 2. The ability to act on and react to life circumstances with intelligence, sound judgment and wisdom.

3. The ability to recognize, empathize with and respect the feelings and needs of others.

4. The ability to delay the immediate satisfaction of our own needs, so that one may attend to other more pressing needs or actions.

5. The ability to love - to allow another's needs, feelings, security, and survival to be absolutely paramount - just as if these were our own.

6. The ability to adapt flexibly and creatively to life's changing circumstances and conditions.

7. The ability to channel one's energy, both positive and negative, into constructive contributions to oneself, to others, and to communities.

8. The willingness and ability to be responsible and accountable for our own circumstances and actions in life, and the ability to differentiate our responsibilities from those of others.

9. The ability to relate comfortably and freely with others, to like and be liked by others, and to maintain healthy and mutually satisfying relationships.

10. The ability to choose and develop relationships that are healthy and nurturing, and to end or limit relationships that are destructive or unhealthy.

Emotional maturity predicts ability to manage and monitor own emotions, to assess the emotional state of others and to influence their opinions while effectiveness reflects emotional intelligence. The most outstanding mark of emotional maturity is the ability to deal with the situations accordingly and purposefully and even in the extreme conditions be emotionally stable and under control. Individuals who are emotionally mature generally find that they are more comfortable with themselves, and find those things in life that include other people more enjoyable and

much less chaotic than people who are emotionally immature.

According to Ellison 2013, these days the use of internet in our society as well as in our colleges has bloomed. The new generation which is growing up with these new technologies can work more effectively with these technologies than the old generation. The youth are highly engaged in using internet. There are many reasons for which internet and other digital technologies are used, but communication is still the number one. With the emergence and increased usage of web 2.0 tools and social networking sites its effect on various aspects of individual's personality. Although as all other things internet use also has positive and negative effects sometimes it can be used as stress busters but on the contrary use of internet to the addictive level can cause various health disorder. While investigating the Effects of Personality on Social Network Disclosure: Do Emotionally Intelligent Individuals Post Inappropriate Content? Newness et al (2012) found that individuals scoring high on emotional intelligence and honesty/integrity disclosed less inappropriate social network content. Honest and emotionally intelligent individuals seem to understand the negative implications of disclosing inappropriate social network content. Emotional maturity and stability of today's young generation internet users is also one of the important issues we should be concerned about but not much researched. Whether today's young generation internet users are emotionally mature or not and if yes what is the level of their maturity? Is there any gender difference in emotional maturity of internet users? What is the level of emotional stability, social adjustment, personality integration and related dimensions of emotional maturity of male and female internet users? In this paper researcher focused on the investigation of gender difference in emotional maturity and its five different dimensions of today's internet users.

### 3. Objectives

- (1) To study the emotional maturity of Internet Users.
- (2) To compare the Emotional Maturity of male and female Internet Users.
- (3) To compare the various dimensions of Emotional Maturity of male and female Internet Users.

### 4. Hypothesis

Based on the above objectives the following hypotheses were derived:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the emotional maturity of male and female internet users.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in emotional stability of male and female internet users.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in emotional development of male and female internet users

Ho4: There is no significant difference in social adjustment of male and female internet users.

Ho5: There is no significant difference in personality integration of male and female internet users

Ho6: There is no significant difference in independence of male and female internet users.

## 5. Delimitations

The sample of the study is limited to students having age between 18 to 25 years and who use internet (emailing along with chatting) one hour daily or four times a week, from at least last one or more years. Thus the Conclusions of the study cannot be extended beyond this population sampled.

## 6. Design of the Study

The present study was a Descriptive Research as information was gathered from a sample of internet users drawn from a cross section of population of students within the age group of 18 to 25 years and who use internet (emailing along with chatting) one hour daily or four times a week, from at least last one or more years.

**Sample and Sampling Technique** - The sample for the present study was selected randomly from college students using internet. 250 students were surveyed who were using internet but among 250 surveyed students only 95 students were found who were using email along with chatting from at least one year regularly. Thus data collected from only these 95 students were taken for the study.

**Tools used** – Two questionnaires were used as a survey instruments for this research-In order to measure emotional maturity, Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Singh and Bhargava (1990) was used.

To get the information related to working on internet a self-made questionnaire “Internet information based questionnaire” which included different demographic questions, was used.

**Analysis of Data**- The data was analysed through descriptive as well as inferential statistics. In order to study the significant differences in emotional maturity and its various dimensions (five dimensions) of male and female internet user students’ gender, t-test was employed.

## 7. Results and Findings

**Result- 1 Emotional maturity of internet users** - The analysis of data revealed that the mean value of emotional maturity of students using email along with chatting from at least one year regularly was 131.04 as shown in table (1). This mean value falls under the high side which indicates that the internet users are not emotionally mature.

Table 1. Emotional maturity of internet users

S.No.	Number	Mean	Interpretation
1	95	131.04	Not Emotionally Mature

### Result-2 Difference in Emotional maturity of internet users with respect to genders

While studying the difference in terms of gender on the Emotional maturity of internet users analysis of the data indicated that the mean score of male Student was found to be higher 140.40 in comparison to mean score of female

Student teachers 121.67 (tab 2).

Hence, it could be inferred that female internet user students are more emotionally mature than male internet user students but the mean values of both male and female internet users fall under the high side which shows that both genders are not emotionally mature.

Table 2. Gender-wise difference in emotional maturity of internet users

S.No.	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	SE.D	Value of T-Test
1	Male	62	140.40	24.90	5.33	3.51*
2	Female	33	121.67	24.70		

The ‘t’ value obtained 3.51 (tab 2) is significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance thereby, rejecting the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in emotional maturity of male and female internet users. It shows that there is significant difference in the emotional maturity between male and female internet users. The reason behind this may be that the young generation when chat online with virtual friends, or make new acquaintances in virtual spaces where nobody has a prefabricated assumption about their personalities.

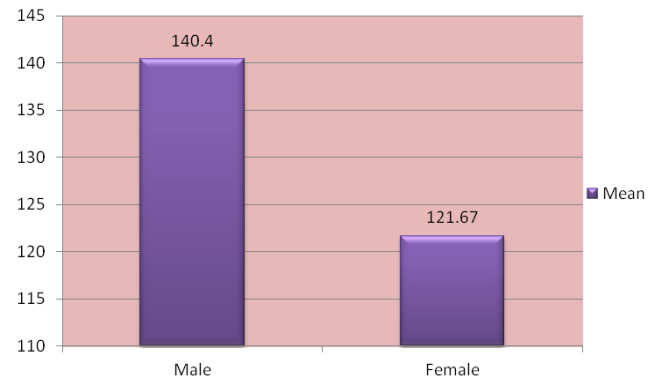


Figure 1. Graphical representation of Gender-wise difference in emotional maturity of internet users

### Result-3 Gender-wise difference in Different Dimensions of Emotional Maturity of internet users

The data analysis for different dimensions of emotional maturity of internet users showed that students in the study were not emotionally mature. An examination of Table 1 depicts that there is significant gender difference in emotional stability, independence and total emotional maturity while there is no significant difference in emotional development, social adjustment, and personality integration. Mean in the table shows that females who use emailing along with chatting are more emotionally stable in comparison to males. High score of mean value shows that males are emotionally unstable. More and more, children grow up with digital fantasies and computers act as both their playmates and their original friends when it comes to life’s mysteries and secrets. In many cases it was observed that the girls who have continuous communication with their net friends (for last one year or more) they are too much involved emotionally with them. Generally female don’t make too many net friends while male make more than five friends and chat at the same time with all.

**Table 3.** Gender wise difference in Different Dimensions of Emotional Maturity of internet users

Dimensions of Emotional Maturity	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE.D	CR value
Emotional Stability	Male	62	28.13	10.45	1.55	6.75*
	Female	33	17.18	4.08		
Emotional Development	Male	62	28.68	10.99	2.47	0.47
	Female	33	29.85	11.73		
Social Adjustment	Male	62	28.60	11.47	2.28	1.62
	Female	33	24.88	10.13		
Personality integration	Male	62	28.11	11.99	2.58	0.80
	Female	33	26.03	11.97		
Independence	Male	62	26.89	10.00	2.10	2.44**
	Female	33	21.76	9.62		
Total Emotional Maturity	Male	62	140.40	24.90	5.33	3.51*
	Female	33	121.67	24.70		

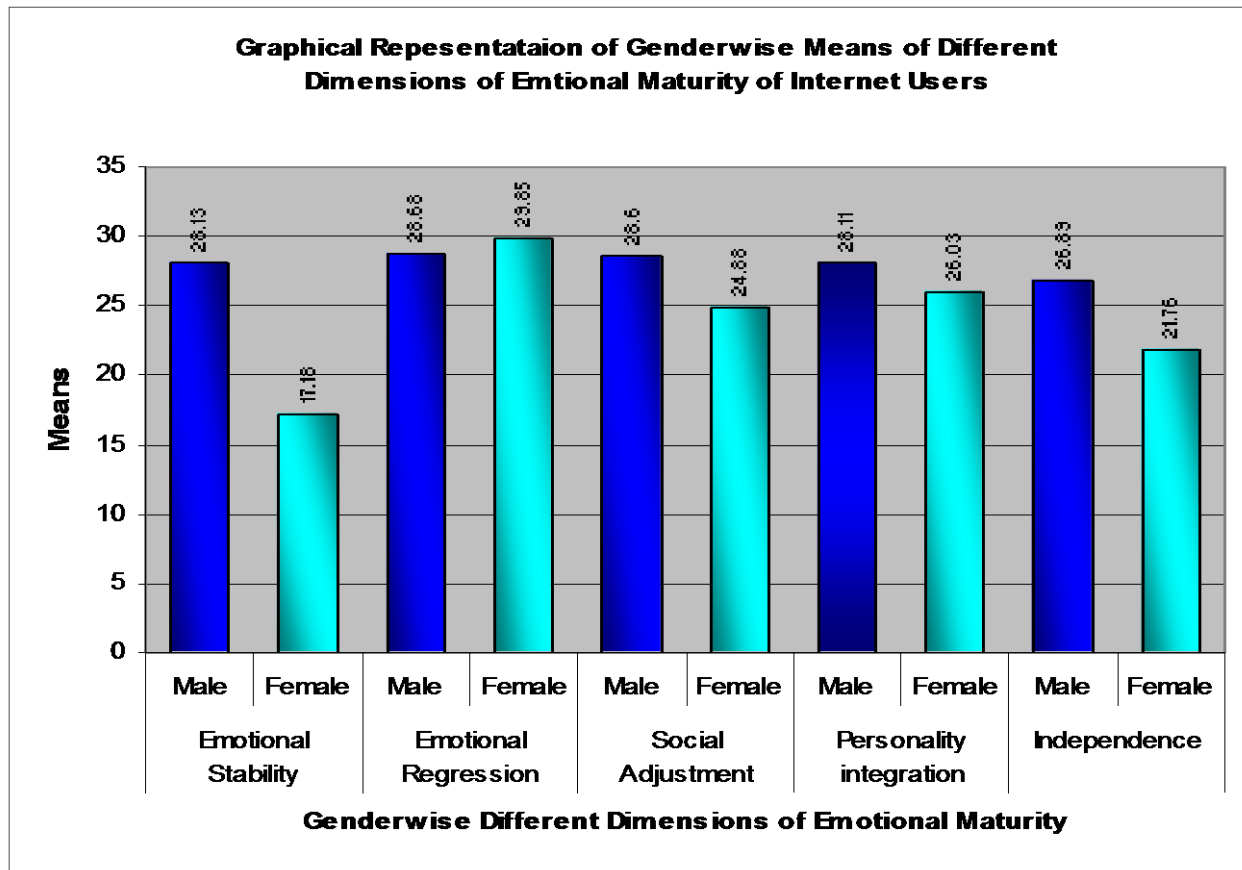
\* = Significant at .05 level

\*\* = Significant at .01 level

- 3.1 Analysis of result on dimensions of emotional maturity of students in Emotional Stability reveals that the mean score of male student is higher 28.13 in comparison to mean score of female student 17.18 (tab 3). Hence, it could be inferred that female internet user students are more emotionally stable than male internet user students. The ‘t’ value obtained 6.75 (tab 3) is significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance thereby, rejecting the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in emotional stability of male and female internet users. It shows that there is significant difference in the emotional stability between male and female internet users.
- 3.2 Analysis of result on second dimensions of emotional maturity of internet users i.e. Emotional Development showed that the mean score of female student is higher 29.85 in comparison to mean score of male students 28.68 (tab 3). Hence, it could be inferred that male internet user students are more emotionally develop than female internet user students. The ‘t’ value obtained 0.47 (tab 3) is neither significant at 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance thereby, accepting the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in emotional development of male and female internet users. It shows that there is no influence of gender on the emotional development of internet users.
- 3.3 Analysis of result on social adjustment the next dimensions of emotional maturity of internet users depicts that the mean score of male students is higher 28.60 in comparison to mean score of female students 24.88 (tab 3). Hence, it could be inferred that female internet user students are more socially adjusted than male internet user students. The ‘t’ value obtained 1.62 (tab 3) is neither significant at

0.05 or 0.01 level of significance thereby, accepting the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in social adjustment of male and female internet users. It shows that there is no difference in the social adjustment of both male and female internet users.

- 3.4 Analysis of result on next dimensions of emotional maturity of internet users i.e. Personality Integration showed that the mean score of male student is higher 28.11 in comparison to mean score of female student 26.03 (tab 3). Hence, it could be inferred that male internet user students have better personality integration than female internet user students. The ‘t’ value obtained 0.80 (tab 3) is neither significant at 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance thereby, accepting the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in personality integration of male and female internet users. It shows that there is no influence of gender on the personality integration of internet users using email along with chatting from at least one year regularly.
- 3.5 Further analysis of data on independence the last dimension of emotional maturity of internet user students reveals that the mean score of male student is higher 26.89 in comparison to mean score of female student 21.76 (tab 3). Hence, it could be inferred that male internet user students are more independent than female internet user students. The ‘t’ value obtained 2.44 (tab 3) is significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance thereby, rejecting the null hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in independence of male and female internet users. It shows that there is significant difference in the independence between male and female internet users.



**Figure 2.** Graphical representation of Gender-wise difference in different dimensions of emotional maturity of internet users

The analysis of findings clearly depicts that there is no significant difference in social adjustment, personality integration and independence of male and female internet users. The mean scores of the above three dimensions (tab 3) fall under the high category, which shows that the social adjustment, personality integration and independence of male and female internet user students are not very good. The reason behind this may be that when young generation gets constant attention and sympathy from their virtual friends then the digital world becomes their natural surroundings, locales where they feel comfortable in, places where they do not have to mold their actions and behaviors to meet a specific norm.

## 8. Suggestions

### For Students

It is important to create real social and emotional assistance to improve social interaction abilities among young generations. Following are the suggestions to develop emotional maturity among young generation internet users:

- Try to make face to face interaction with people don't throw yourself into the virtual world without cautions.
- Keep an eye on your digital footprints.

- Try to see yourself as others see you. Ask important people for feedback about your behavior. Face your reality and deal with it.
- Use internet not only for enjoyment but take it also as a learning platform
- Try to make it a part of your life not your life
- Consider before making emotional relations with virtual friends.
- Practice acting selfish and unselfish, and notice how people react.
- Search for a meaningful sense of life and find worthwhile goals. As you find your sense of life and you'll find a joy that is reserved for the emotionally mature.

### For Parents

- Share your child's email account and password
- Always keep an eye on what your child is following on internet
- Keep a friendly relationship with your child.
- Talk with your child about the people he or she is meeting online
- Set a rule that your child never arranges an in-person meeting without your presence
- Place the computer in a busy part of the house, like the family room, so you can see what your child is doing.

There is need to help teachers to shift their role from knowledge providers, likely to be taken over by computers, to tutors and facilitators that help individuals take advantage of the inexpensive knowledge sources that will be on the Internet and learn the social and emotional competencies necessary for success. And also there need to create life-long learning opportunities for youths that take advantage of different time, different place education made possible by e-learning. Those opportunities need to reinforce social and emotional learning, as well as knowledge acquisition, as opposed to further isolating from each other.

## 9. Conclusions

In our daily life we are becoming more and more technology friendly. While talking about the technology, Information and Communication technology has become a buzzword. Digital natives; who are growing up with these new technologies are more effectively work with these technologies and remains highly engaged with internet. In their leisure time they prefer communicating with their net friends rather than going in social parties or meeting with their real friends. Virtual spaces become places where these youths can experiment with different options without taking the risk of punishment, social exclusion, or even ostracism. This all shows that when young generation frequently use internet they starts traveling in the sky of virtual world which take them away from real world and attach themselves emotionally with their virtual friends. Sometimes it becomes a matter of great concern when this emotional attachment leads them to a state of emotional dilemma and results in higher level of mental and emotional trauma. The purpose of this study was to investigate about the emotional maturity of internet users and to find out that is there any gender difference in their emotional maturity. Findings revealed that the young internet users are not emotionally mature. Results showed that there is significant gender difference in emotional stability, independence and total emotional maturity of internet users under study. Although female internet users who use emailing along with chatting are more emotionally stable in comparison to males. These young internet users take advantage of the Internet's ability to interact virtually with anyone around the world. As visual, touch, and voice modalities become prevalent and instantaneous language translation becomes a reality, there will be even more and diverse opportunities to learn social interaction skills. E-mail and instant message systems also allow children and teenagers to maintain long-distance relationships if they move or when students go away to different schools and colleges. However, recent studies show that the Internet is causing many people to spend less time with friends and family. Sara Kiesler, a professor of social and decision sciences at Carnegie Mellon's

Human-Computer Interaction Institute, hypothesizes, "Many users may be substituting Web browsing or chat rooms for their stronger, real-life relationships."

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