



Perceptions of Adolescent Behaviour in School: Comparing Student Self-Reports and Teacher Assessments

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is one of the stages when students become vulnerable to diverse types of emotional discomfort, behavioral disorders, social disputes that is why the correct diagnosis of the psychosocial problems becomes especially significant in the school setting. The research question in this paper was to analyze the degree of congruency between the self-reports of adolescents and teacher-reported socio-emotional and behavioural problems based on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Data was collected from 59 students aged 12-19 years enrolled in grades 9-12 at an under-resourced school in Gurugram, India, along with corresponding teacher reports from 4 faculty members. The study made use of the SDQ which was administered physically to the students during the school hour. The questionnaire assessed emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behaviour. Statistical analyses included paired-samples t-tests, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC), Bland-Altman plots, and multiple regression analyses to evaluate differences and agreement between informants. The results of the study indicated that most of the SDQ domains did not have significant student and teacher ratings. For prosocial behaviour the students rated higher than teachers. Poor agreement was shown in all domains of the ICC results even though the mean scores were similar. Thus, it signifies low cross-informant agreement on adolescent difficulties of students and teachers. In addition, regression analyses revealed that teacher ratings were not predicted by students' self report, age and gender. This study highlights the significance of using multiple informants to improve the understanding of adolescent mental health issues in an altruistic school.

Keywords: *Conduct; Hyperactivity; Prosocial Behaviour; Strengths and Difficulties; Teachers; Students; Education*

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period of development characterized by multifaceted and interrelated social, emotional and cognitive changes that propel adolescents toward greater autonomy and increased vulnerability to risk and injury. While adolescence clearly involves the influence of peer relationships and

a multitude of problems the adolescent must learn to deal with (León et al., 2020), it is equally a time of considerable emotional and conduct distress and hyperactivity as well as a multitude of other problems causing great stress and negative consequence for the lives of adolescents (Brown & Larson, 2009). Thus the problems that adolescents contend with during adolescence include emotional disturbances such as persistent worries, depression, excessive fear and somatic symptoms that reduce energy levels and decrease attention and interest in others and activities (Midgley et al., 2021). Additional difficulties encountered by adolescents in this developmental stage of the life span include various conduct problems such as disobedience, tantrums, misbehavior, lying and theft which are increasingly negatively valued by others such as parents and peers and lead to negative reactions and considerable psychological and social strain in important relationships (Lochman et al., 2019). A further category of psychological problem dealt with during this stage include hyperactivity and attention deficits characterized by restlessness, impulsiveness and poor concentration or difficulties maintaining an oriented state of alertness, especially during periods of inactivity which cause behavioral problems as they disrupt learning processes and lead to negative evaluations from important others (Barami et al., 2025). Additional forms of psychological problems also involve interpersonal conflict and rejection including social bullying, rejection, social exclusion by peers and victimization experienced at the hands of other adolescents which, in turn, negatively affect psychological functioning including increased feelings of solitude and lowered self-esteem or as a response to victimization including withdrawal or retaliation against victimizers which occur within a social environment of great importance due to the increased sensitivity and the highly interpersonal nature of adolescence that make the effects of these negative interactions significant (Pingault et al., 2015). School and psychological problems associated with the period of adolescence are also many and are due to the various structural changes involved at this developmental stage. For example other than dealing with more school work or assignments, increased number of examinations or problems concerning body changes and life changes that stress family and school relations (Steinberg, 2005) – adolescents must navigate the struggles inherent in dealing with many new changes at the same time, many that must be addressed through the school or family institutions such as coping with hormonal changes which negatively affect sleep as well as dealing with the need to assert more independence, which, in turn adds considerable strain to important institutional relationships such as those between a teen and her or his parents or teacher at the school, at the same time it is important to remember that the numerous problems adolescents must cope during this developmental stage often tend to be interactive and thus one type of problem or set of problems often positively relate to other issues present at the same time such as that dealing with emotional problems such as the myriad psychological and behavioral reactions following trauma (Intergenerational Trauma) also increase the occurrence of similar external behaviors in relation to victimizers of adolescents with behavioral difficulties that, as a result, add significantly to interpersonal conflict among peers and at school (Pingault et al., 2015). This tends to be even more evident in low-socioeconomic circumstances (Cui et al., 2023). In these circumstances these problem behaviors and attitudes are exacerbated as they occur in more impoverished environments with the exacerbation of social problems such as poverty, poor housing conditions, and the use of substances - including as an attempt to help to cope with physical pain or trauma - all of which add to the various and multifaceted mental health issues adolescents encounter during this time.

1.1 Core Adolescent Challenges.

Emotional difficulties are widely observed amongst adolescents (Long et al., 2020). There are many reasons including the changes that take place in the brain and hormones that cause our worry to develop into anxiety of actual future events. Alternatively our worries might be about trivial events (with no real-life impact) such that we start to worry and then we start to cry in a manner that is quite “out of character” or feel unconfident in relation to our loved ones without quite being able to understand the origin of our apprehensions. Other worries might be described as vague, unquantifiable physical symptoms with, again, little overt life impact that prevent us fully engaging with events. Over time all of these types of “silent symptoms” can affect our confidence to engage fully with others in the activities we

take part in in a bid to communicate effectively, join in a team or sport to learn a new skill set and make new social connections. Should these symptoms go untreated, we can become listless, lacking energy and motivation, causing us to neglect our studies and our friends thereby losing our previous enjoyment and causing ourselves to become “-less-like-us” (Hankin et al., 2015; Deighton et al., 2020).

1.2 Peer Relationships in Adolescence

Sometimes, amidst the chaos of school life, peer relationships seem to be a crucial factor that influences how children adjust their behavior to gain social approval, conform to social norms, and adapt their stress management strategies. These relationships can provide emotional support and play a role in many situations where calming behavior can disrupt chaos in a busy environment. For example, in a classroom during class change, where the teacher can maintain composure amidst the hustle and bustle (Wang et al., 2020), or during recess, where activities that might have been disruptive are less so because they fall within the framework of what is considered "fun" in that context. Social relationships, especially unfavorable ones, can become a major problem, even if they might seem like a minor risk. They can encourage friends to commit acts of vandalism or break school rules in order to do something "exciting" and "unnoticed" (Brown, 2004), to be completely excluded from the group and end up suffering emotional pain or a , or to normalize such behavior within a group attached to the same old thing. School days are shaped by a pair of little-known forces: One is that popular cliques of students tend to reinforce prosocial behaviors like kindness towards classmates with strong adherence to social norms; as well as the opposite: that bad cliques may honor misbehavior as proof of a student's formidable toughness—thereby turning impulsive, potentially risky misbehavior into a temptation they cannot resist—despite the warnings from teachers or parents that threaten the pain of rejection or the pleasure of belonging which can undermine rational thinking and become the pathway to the development of lasting habits and behaviors from the playground to the rest of life. And finally, the effects are long-lasting: Positive social groups at an early age result in a social network of caring people who are there to help the child throughout their lives—whereas negative groups can lead to increased invincibility cognition and increased sense of isolation which are key peer influences that can either support or hinder developmental progress for years to come by shaping everyday social interactions that are not always directly observable such as attention and level of engagement from peers (Steinberg and Monhnan, 2007).

1.3 Discrepancy Between Teacher and Student Perceptions

A key challenge in assessing adolescent behaviour lies in discrepancies between informants. Research consistently demonstrates low agreement between adolescent self-reports and external assessments, particularly teacher ratings (De Los Reyes & Kazdin, 2005). These discrepancies arise due to differences in contextual exposure and attribution processes. Adolescents have direct access to internal states such as anxiety and social distress, whereas teachers primarily observe overt behaviours within structured classroom settings. Consequently, internalising difficulties may be underreported by teachers, while adolescents may provide more comprehensive accounts of subjective experiences. Student/teacher ratings indicate considerable pockets of blind spots (or discrepancies) between students' self-concept ratings and teachers' ratings (Karst et al., 2018). Students have an unobstructed view of bodily tension as they stand in front of class to announce their group project; they can readily recall feelings of hurt or humiliation they experienced in the play area; and they can clearly acknowledge when sadness starts in their home and shows up in the classroom. And while their self-concept ratings may optimistically portray hyperactivity as just a special type of energy or intend to reinforce a positive social behaviour by describing it as nice, or mitigate the behavioural infractions by downplaying their impact, this indicate positive illusory bias (Owens et al. 2007)

The teacher has to be keen on the physical signs that the behavior of students being aggressive in the hallways drastically increases, kids are playing with pencils on the desks, students are sitting slouched in their chairs and the reason behind it is not just that they are lazy but have pulled back socially due to

emotional issues. De Los Reyes & Kazdin (2005) describes the ways that teacher's views on class behaviour reflects their underlying 'practical' lens of viewing and evaluating classroom and behaviour issues. In order to address the needs of the class, issues that are easily noticed by the teacher have to be taken into consideration. The morning tiredness that masks the micro behaviours that reveal more underlying issues, the schedules that may have to be maintained in order not to disturb the student's hyperactive behaviour, that leads to teachers underestimating or overestimating the level of underlying or surface level issues. Therefore, in complex settings such as an underprivileged school, using a range of assessment sources can help to build a detailed picture of the student's emotional-peer relationships and the inner flows and how the teacher's behaviour and attitudes can shape the action and dance behaviour patterns and consequently produce detailed maps of the student's social behaviour to inform and improve intervention strategies, repair and strengthen the teacher/student relationship and illuminate the pathways that students tread in social interactions in under-resourced school environments.

1.4 Peer Influences in Underprivileged Schools

Children in low resource schools experience more view gaps and peer flows over crowded, scarce materials, inconsistent attendance and high levels of family dysfunction which mean that a same-age peer can become the primary source of support (Garcia et al., 2023). A positive group can become a safe space where group discussions or social exchanges of materials and resources support the reduction of emotional barriers and channel hyperactivity through short, simple games that can be played in the space of a few metres (Colquhoun et al., 2025) Unchecked, deviant behaviour spirals out of control as deviant groups create the illusion that rebellion is a form of street wisdom and that bullying can become a widespread activity that is spread through the process of social diffusion where the original confrontation between peers is copied by others who were not directly involved (Cui et al., 2023).

As they make their way through the difficult mixture, teachers are given the opportunity to move towards straightforward peer reviews free of pedagogical guidance, but with the risk of biases arising from heterogeneous groupings (Karst et al., 2018). Despite extensive research on adolescent socio-emotional functioning, limited attention has been given to cross-informant discrepancies in under-resourced school settings, where contextual stressors and peer dynamics may further influence behavioural expression and perception. Understanding these discrepancies is essential for accurate identification and intervention.

2. METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a cross-sectional, multi-informant design to examine discrepancies and agreement between adolescent self-reports and teacher assessments of socio-emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used to compare ratings across informants within an under-resourced school context.

2.1 Hypothesis

H1: No significant differences will be observed between student and teacher SDQ ratings across domains (emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, and total difficulties), except for prosocial behaviour, where students are expected to report higher scores.

H2: Cross-informant agreement between student and teacher ratings will be low.

H3: Student self-reports will not significantly predict teacher-rated outcomes.

H4: Demographic variables (age and gender) will not significantly predict teacher-rated SDQ scores.

2.2 Instrumentation

Demographic information such as age, gender, number of best friends etc. were collected. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a widely validated, 25-item screening tool for children aged 3–17, demonstrating strong reliability and validity for identifying emotional and behavioral problems (Goodman, 1997). It offers parent, teacher, and self-report versions, with strong, multi-informant, five-factor structural validity across diverse cultures. The SDQ reports a high internal consistency, with Cronbach's α of 0.70 and has high test-retest reliability. It consistently confirms a five-factor structure (emotional, conduct, hyperactivity, peer, and prosocial) across multiple studies. The brevity of the instrument (5–10 minutes administration time) makes it suitable for school-based assessments.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

Surveys occurred over two weeks (December 2025) using pen-and-paper format for accessibility. 10-20 minute student briefings covered purpose, confidentiality, and queries. Administered in-class during quiet slots (~60 minutes each), overseen by researcher/staff for support, not interference.

Teacher-report SDQs were completed independently by class teachers based on their observations of student behaviour in the classroom context. Each teacher completed the questionnaire for multiple students within their respective class, allowing for parallel evaluation of several adolescents by the same informant. Care was taken to ensure that teacher responses were not influenced by student self-reports.

2.4 Participants

Participants comprised 59 adolescents (aged 12-19, grades 9-12; ~50% girls, ~50% boys) from Diksha School in Gurugram, Haryana, catering to low-income communities (e.g., laborers, migrants). A convenience sampling method was employed based on student availability during data collection. Additionally, four class teachers participated in the study, each responsible for one grade level (IX–XII). Teaching experience ranged from 11 to 30 years, ensuring familiarity with student behavioural patterns.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Consent from school management and principal was obtained, and students were given voluntary freedom to opt out whenever. Instructions and guidance was provided before they began filling the questionnaire as well as the students were provided with the ability to ask any doubts. The students' identity was kept anonymous and the questionnaire forms were kept in a safe place and their answers were not viewed by anyone except the researcher. The students were debriefed after they finished with the questionnaire.

3. RESULTS

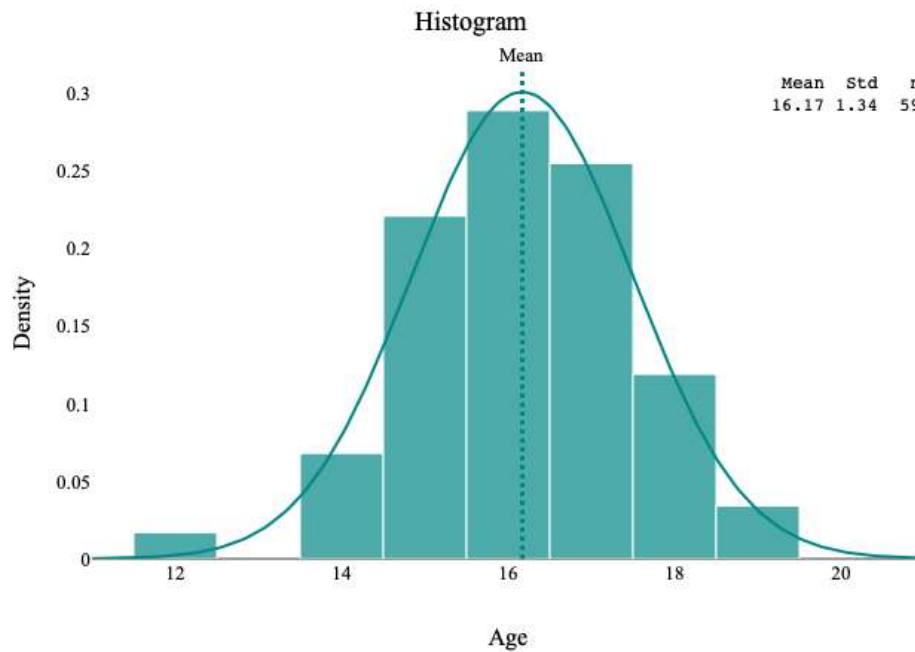


Figure 1 shows the age distribution of respondents (N = 59)

The distribution of age was examined using a histogram with an overlaid normal density curve. The mean age of participants was 16.17 years (SD = 1.34, n = 59). Visual inspection indicated that age was approximately normally distributed, with the majority of participants clustered between 15 and 17 years. The distribution appeared symmetric around the mean, with no substantial skewness or kurtotic distortion. Although there was a slight extension in the lower and upper tails, no pronounced outliers were evident.

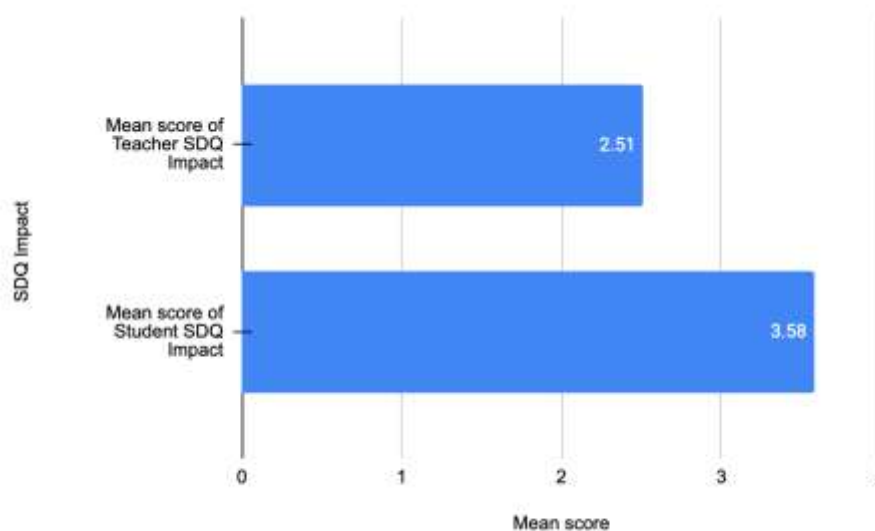


Figure 2 shows the mean SDQ Impact score from the questionnaire for students and teachers

The SDQ impact score, part of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, assesses the burden of emotional or behavioral difficulties through a few targeted questions. These typically highlight the extent of distress (e.g., "Does the child get a lot of headaches, stomachaches, or sickness?"), interference with daily life (e.g., at home, school, or with peers), and overall impact on the child and others, rated on scales of "not at all," "a little," or "a great deal."

Table 1 shows *Paired-Samples t-Test Comparing Student and Teacher SDQ scores*

SDQ Domain	Student M (SD)	Teacher M (SD)	Mean Diff (S – T)	95% CI for Mean Diff	t(58)	p	Cohen's d
Emotional Symptoms	5.07 (1.61)	5.02 (1.76)	0.05	[–0.59, 0.69]	0.16	.875	0.02
Conduct Problems	5.03 (1.84)	5.03 (1.71)	0.00	[–0.63, 0.63]	0.00	1	0.00
Hyperactivity	5.14 (1.88)	5.31 (1.77)	–0.17	[–0.82, 0.48]	–0.53	.601	0.07
Peer Problems	5.19 (1.80)	4.76 (1.78)	0.42	[–0.25, 1.10]	1.25	.216	0.16
Prosocial Behaviour	5.00 (1.23)	4.46 (1.22)	0.54	[0.10, 0.99]	2.44	.018*	0.32
Total Difficulties	20.42 (3.37)	20.12 (2.89)	0.31	[–0.78, 1.39]	0.56	.575	0.07

***Note.** Mean difference = Student – Teacher. CI = confidence interval. SESS = Student Emotional Symptoms Scale. TESS = Teacher Emotional Symptoms Scale

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to examine differences between student self-reports and teacher reports across all scales. The results indicated no significant differences for most domains. For emotional symptoms, student (M = 5.07, SD = 1.61) and teacher reports (M = 5.02, SD = 1.76) did not differ significantly, $t(58) = 0.16$, $p = .875$, with a negligible effect size ($d = 0.02$) and a confidence interval that included zero [–0.59, 0.69], suggesting strong overlap between raters. Similarly, conduct problems showed identical mean scores for students (M = 5.03, SD = 1.84) and teachers (M = 5.03, SD = 1.71), with no significant difference, $t(58) = 0.00$, $p = 1.000$, and a zero effect size ($d = 0.00$). No significant difference was found for hyperactivity between student (M = 5.14, SD = 1.88) and teacher reports (M = 5.31, SD = 1.77), $t(58) = -0.53$, $p = .601$, with a small effect size ($d = 0.07$). For peer problems, students reported slightly higher scores (M = 5.19, SD = 1.80) than teachers (M = 4.76, SD = 1.78), but this difference was not statistically significant, $t(58) = 1.25$, $p = .216$, with a small effect ($d = 0.16$). In contrast, a significant difference emerged for prosocial behaviour, where students (M = 5.00, SD = 1.23) rated themselves higher than teachers (M = 4.46, SD = 1.22), $t(58) = 2.44$, $p = .018$, with a moderate effect size ($d = 0.32$), indicating a meaningful discrepancy between raters. Finally, no significant difference was observed in total difficulties between student (M = 20.42, SD = 3.37) and teacher reports (M = 20.12, SD = 2.89), $t(58) = 0.56$, $p = .575$, with a negligible effect size ($d = 0.07$), suggesting overall consistency in average ratings between students and teachers.

Table 2 shows Intraclass Correlation Coefficients (ICC) for Agreement Between Student and Teacher SDQ Scores (N = 59)

SDQ Domain	ICC	95% CI	F	df1	df2	p
Emotional Symptoms	-0.07	[-0.33, 0.19]	0.86	58	58	.711
Conduct Problems	0.07	[-0.20, 0.32]	1.14	58	58	.310
Hyperactivity	0.08	[-0.18, 0.33]	1.17	58	58	.271
Peer Problems	-0.06	[-0.30, 0.20]	0.89	58	58	.664
Prosocial Behaviour	0.03	[-0.20, 0.27]	1.07	58	58	.397
Total Difficulties	0.13	[-0.14, 0.37]	1.28	58	58	.172

Agreement between student and teacher ratings was examined using the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC). The results indicated poor agreement across all domains. For emotional symptoms, agreement was very low (ICC = -0.07, 95% CI [-0.33, 0.19], $F(58, 58) = 0.86$, $p = .711$), suggesting that student self-reports and teacher reports did not consistently identify the same individuals as having higher or lower emotional symptoms. Similarly, conduct problems showed poor agreement (ICC = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.20, 0.32], $F(58, 58) = 1.14$, $p = .310$), indicating discrepancies in perceptions of behavioural conduct. Hyperactivity also demonstrated weak agreement (ICC = 0.08, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.33], $F(58, 58) = 1.17$, $p = .271$), suggesting that students and teachers differed in identifying levels of attention and impulsivity. For peer problems, agreement remained poor (ICC = -0.06, 95% CI [-0.30, 0.20], $F(58, 58) = 0.89$, $p = .664$), indicating inconsistencies in perceptions of social relationships. Prosocial behaviour similarly showed low agreement (ICC = 0.03, 95% CI [-0.20, 0.27], $F(58, 58) = 1.07$, $p = .397$), suggesting differences in how positive social behaviours were perceived by students and teachers. Finally, total difficulties also demonstrated poor agreement (ICC = 0.13, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.37], $F(58, 58) = 1.28$, $p = .172$), indicating that the two informants did not consistently identify the same students as experiencing higher or lower overall psychosocial difficulties. Overall, these findings highlight substantial cross-informant discrepancies between student and teacher perceptions across all SDQ domains.

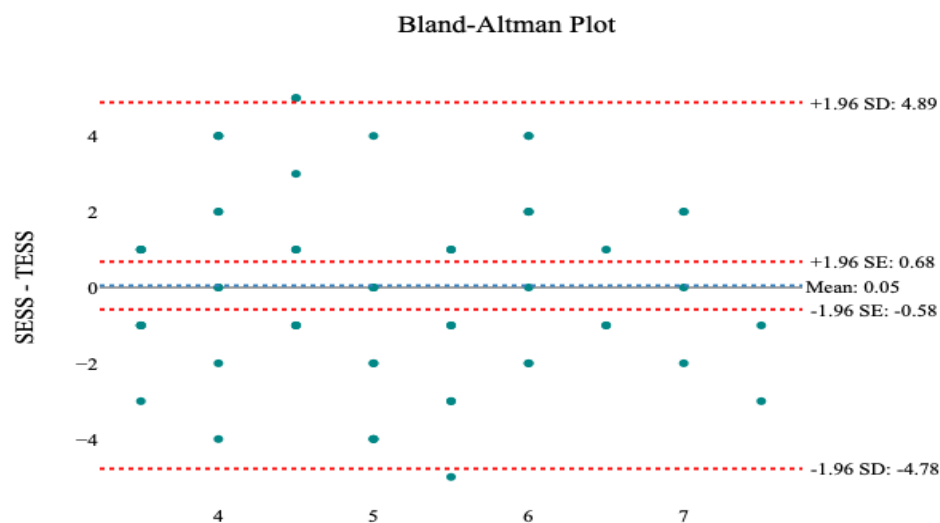
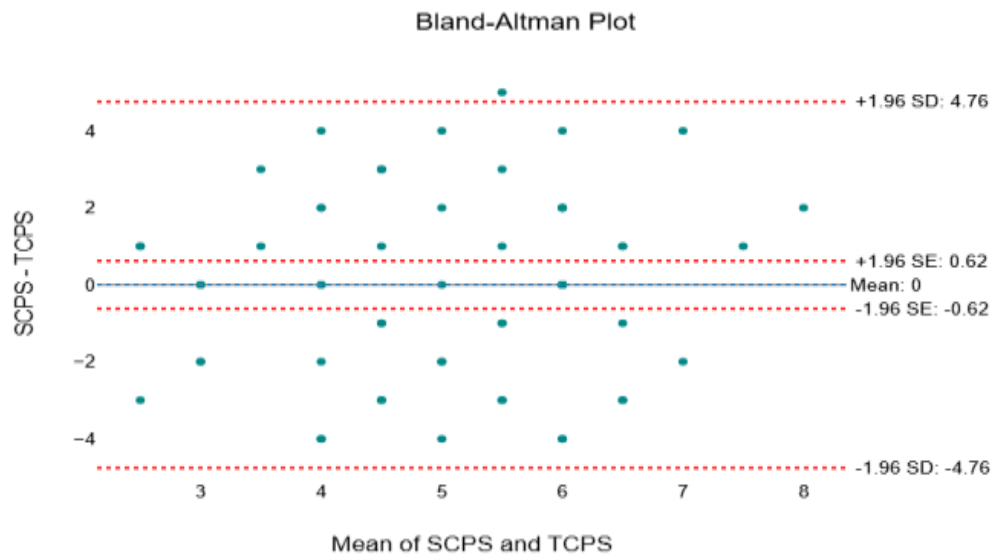


Figure 3 shows the Bland–Altman Plot Showing Agreement Between Student and Teacher Ratings of Emotional Symptoms

A Bland–Altman analysis was conducted to examine agreement between student self-reports and teacher reports of emotional symptoms. The mean difference between ratings was close to zero ($M = 0.05$), indicating no systematic bias between informants. However, the limits of agreement were wide (approximately -4.78 to 4.89), suggesting substantial variability in ratings at the individual level. This indicates that although student and teacher reports were similar on average, agreement between informants varied considerably across individual students.



* SCPS = Student Conduct Problem Score, TCPS = Teacher Conduct Problem Score

Figure 4 shows the Bland–Altman Plot Showing Agreement Between Student and Teacher Ratings of Conduct Problem

A Bland–Altman analysis was conducted to examine agreement between student self-reports and teacher reports on the conduct problems scale. The mean difference between ratings was exactly zero ($M = 0.00$), indicating no systematic bias between student and teacher reports. However, the limits of agreement were relatively wide (approximately -4.76 to 4.76), suggesting substantial variability in individual-level ratings. This indicates that although student and teacher reports were identical on average, agreement between informants varied considerably across individual students.

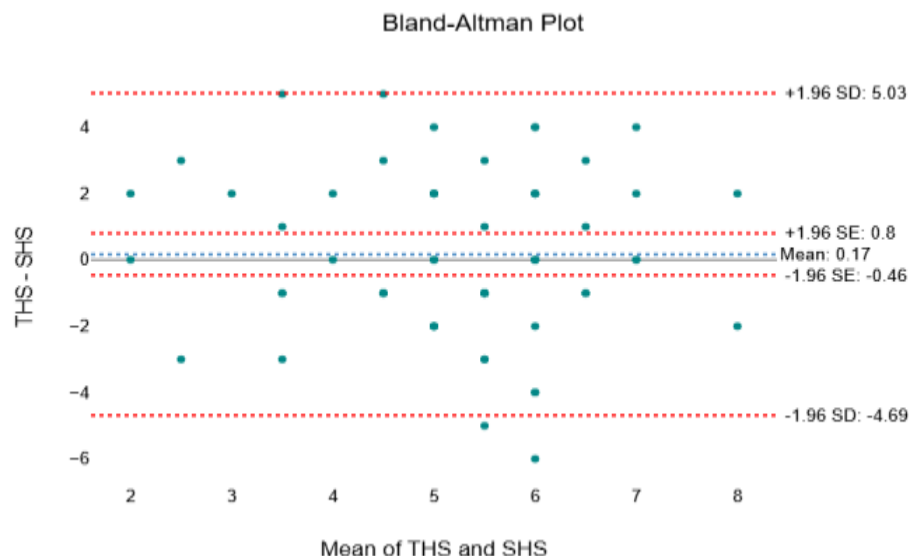


Figure 5 shows the Bland–Altman Plot Showing Agreement Between Student and Teacher Ratings of Hyperactivity Scale

A Bland–Altman analysis was conducted to examine agreement between student self-reports and teacher reports of hyperactivity. The mean difference between ratings was small and positive ($M = 0.17$), suggesting that, on average, student ratings were slightly higher than teacher ratings but with minimal systematic bias. The limits of agreement were wide (approximately -4.69 to 5.03), indicating substantial variability in informant ratings at the individual level. Thus, while student and teacher reports of hyperactivity were broadly similar on average, agreement between informants showed marked fluctuation across individual students.

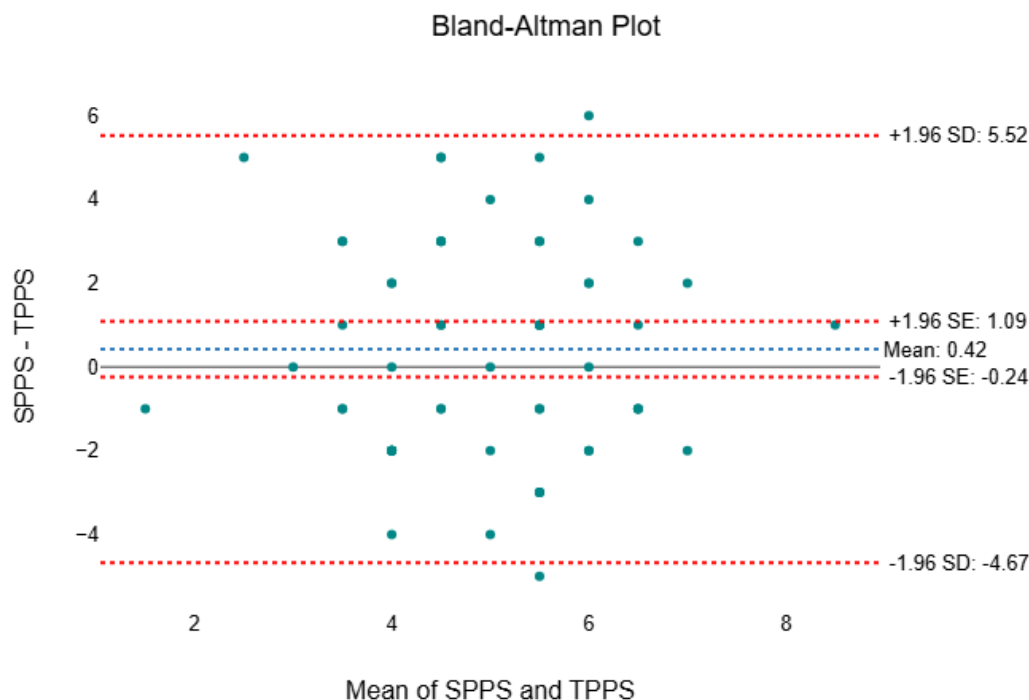


Figure 6 shows the *Bland–Altman Plot Showing Agreement Between Student and Teacher Ratings of Peer Problem Scale*

A Bland–Altman analysis was conducted to examine agreement between student self-reports and teacher reports of peer problems. The mean difference between ratings was slightly positive ($M = 0.42$), indicating a small tendency for student reports to be higher than teacher reports, with limited systematic bias overall. Nonetheless, the limits of agreement were wide (approximately -4.67 to 5.52), pointing to substantial variability in ratings across individual students. This suggests that, despite broadly comparable average scores, the degree of agreement between student and teacher reports of peer problems differed considerably at the individual level.

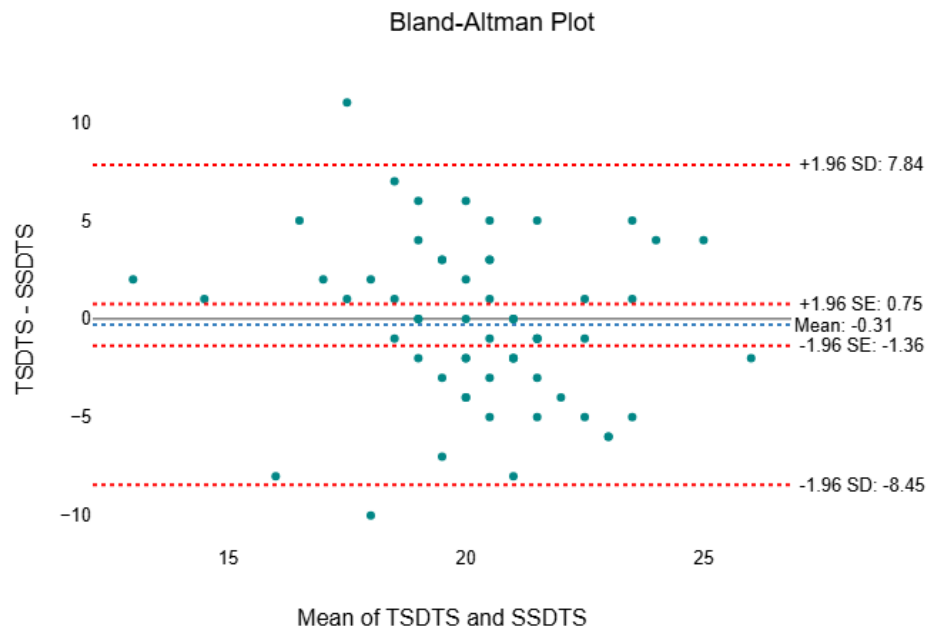


Figure 7 shows the Bland–Altman Plot Showing Agreement Between Student and Teacher Ratings of Strengths and Difficulties Scale

A Bland–Altman analysis was conducted to examine agreement between student self-reports and teacher reports on the total strengths and difficulties score. The mean difference between ratings was slightly negative ($M = -0.31$), suggesting a small tendency for teacher ratings to be higher than student ratings, but indicating minimal systematic bias. However, the limits of agreement were very wide (approximately -8.45 to 7.84), reflecting pronounced variability in agreement at the individual level. This pattern indicates that, although student and teacher total difficulties scores were similar on average, the level of agreement between informants varied greatly from one student to another.

Table 3 Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher-Rated Emotional Symptoms from Student Emotional Symptoms, Age, and Gender ($N = 59$)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	7.83	3.24	—	2.41	.019	[1.33, 14.32]
Student Emotional Symptoms	-0.09	0.15	-0.08	-0.59	.555	[-0.38, 0.21]
Student Age	-0.14	0.19	-0.11	-0.77	.444	[-0.52, 0.23]
Student Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female)	-0.09	0.50	-0.02	-0.17	.862	[-1.09, 0.91]

Note. $R = .13$, $R^2 = .02$, Adjusted $R^2 = -.04$. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.30$, $p = .824$.

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether student self-reported emotional symptoms, age, and gender predicted teacher-rated emotional symptoms. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.30$, $p = .824$, $R^2 = .02$. Student self-reported emotional symptoms did not significantly predict teacher ratings ($B = -0.09$, $\beta = -0.08$, $p = .555$). Neither age nor gender emerged as significant predictors.

Table 4 shows Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher-Rated Conduct Problems from Student Conduct Problems, Age, and Gender (N = 59)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	3.65	3.24	—	1.13	.265	[-2.85, 10.14]
Student Conduct Problems	0.08	0.13	0.09	0.63	.530	[-0.18, 0.34]
Student Age	0.05	0.18	0.04	0.27	.789	[-0.32, 0.42]
Student Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female)	0.31	0.50	0.09	0.61	.541	[-0.70, 1.32]

Note. $R = .11$, $R^2 = .01$, Adjusted $R^2 = -.04$. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.21$, $p = .892$.

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether student self-reported conduct problems, age, and gender predicted teacher-rated conduct problems. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.21$, $p = .892$, $R = .11$, $R^2 = .01$, adjusted $R^2 = -.04$, indicating that the predictors collectively explained only 1% of the variance in teacher-rated conduct problems. Student self-reported conduct problems did not significantly predict teacher ratings, $B = 0.08$, $SE = 0.13$, $\beta = .09$, $t = 0.63$, $p = .530$, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.34]. Neither student age ($B = 0.05$, $SE = 0.18$, $\beta = .04$, $p = .789$) nor gender ($B = 0.31$, $SE = 0.50$, $\beta = .09$, $p = .541$) emerged as significant predictors. Overall, the findings indicate minimal shared variance between student and teacher reports of conduct problems, suggesting weak cross-informant agreement for this domain.

Table 5 shows Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher-Rated Hyperactivity from Student Hyperactivity, Age, and Gender (N = 59)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	0.08	3.09	—	0.02	.980	[-6.12, 6.27]
Student Hyperactivity	0.04	0.13	0.05	0.35	.727	[-0.21, 0.30]
Student Age	0.29	0.19	0.22	1.58	.121	[-0.08, 0.67]
Student Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female)	0.44	0.50	0.12	0.89	.377	[-0.55, 1.43]

Note. $R = .23$, $R^2 = .05$, Adjusted $R^2 = .00$. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 1.00$, $p = .398$.

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether student self-reported hyperactivity, age, and gender predicted teacher-rated hyperactivity. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 1.00$, $p = .398$, $R = .23$, $R^2 = .05$, adjusted $R^2 = .00$, indicating that the predictors collectively explained approximately 5% of the variance in teacher-rated hyperactivity. Student self-reported hyperactivity did not significantly predict teacher ratings, $B = 0.04$, $SE = 0.13$, $\beta = .05$, $t = 0.35$, $p = .727$, 95% CI [-0.21, 0.30]. Student age also did not emerge as a significant predictor, $B = 0.29$,

$SE = 0.19$, $\beta = .22$, $t = 1.58$, $p = .121$, nor did gender, $B = 0.44$, $SE = 0.50$, $\beta = .12$, $t = 0.89$, $p = .377$. These findings indicate limited shared variance between student and teacher reports of hyperactivity, suggesting weak cross-informant convergence for this domain.

Table 6 shows *Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher-Rated Peer Problems from Student Peer Problems, Age, and Gender (N = 59)*

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	5.27	3.17	—	1.67	.102	[-1.07, 11.61]
Student Peer Problems	-0.02	0.13	-0.02	-0.15	.881	[-0.29, 0.25]
Student Age	-0.05	0.19	-0.04	-0.27	.787	[-0.42, 0.32]
Student Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female)	0.71	0.50	0.20	1.41	.163	[-0.30, 1.72]

Note. $R = .22$, $R^2 = .05$, Adjusted $R^2 = .00$. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.92$, $p = .437$.

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether student self-reported peer problems, age, and gender predicted teacher-rated peer problems. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.92$, $p = .437$, explaining approximately 5% of the variance in teacher ratings ($R^2 = .05$). Student self-reported peer problems did not significantly predict teacher ratings, $B = -0.02$, $\beta = -.02$, $p = .881$. Neither age nor gender emerged as significant predictors. These findings indicate minimal shared variance between student and teacher reports of peer problems.

Table 7 shows *Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher-Rated Prosocial Behaviour from Student Prosocial Behaviour, Age, and Gender (N = 59)*

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	3.11	2.24	—	1.39	.171	[-1.39, 7.61]
Student Prosocial Behaviour	0.03	0.13	0.03	0.23	.817	[-0.24, 0.30]
Student Age	0.07	0.13	0.08	0.56	.577	[-0.19, 0.33]
Student Gender (0 = Male, 1 = Female)	0.02	0.35	0.01	0.06	.951	[-0.68, 0.72]

Note. $R = .08$, $R^2 = .01$, Adjusted $R^2 = -.05$. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.13$, $p = .940$.

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether student self-reported prosocial behaviour, age, and gender predicted teacher-rated prosocial behaviour. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F(3, 55) = 0.13$, $p = .940$, $R^2 = .01$, indicating that the predictors collectively explained only 1% of the variance in teacher-rated prosocial behaviour. Student self-reported prosocial behaviour did not significantly predict teacher ratings, $B = 0.03$, $SE = 0.13$, $\beta = .03$, $t = 0.23$, $p = .817$. Neither student age nor gender emerged as significant predictors. These findings suggest minimal shared variance between student and teacher reports of prosocial behaviour.

4. DISCUSSION

The SDQ was used to analyze the extent of consent achieved between the ratings of socio-emotional difficulties as indicated by students and teachers in a deprived environment. The findings showed that there were poor cross-informant agreement overall even though there were no significant mean differences between student and teacher ratings across most of the domains. The levels of intraclass correlation coefficients across domains were low indicating a lack of consistency between students and teachers in identifying the same individuals as higher and lower in terms of socio-emotional difficulties. In such a way, mean scores were similar, but the agreement on the individual level was low. The significant difference in the mean level was noted only within the prosocial behaviour domain where students rated themselves higher than their teachers. This inconsistency in prosocial behaviour could be due to a tendency of self-enhancement or variations in viewing circumstances, whereby in a peer or home setting, adolescents can show prosocial behaviours, but this behaviour is not always apparent to teachers. Importantly, this difference does not affect total difficulty scores, as prosocial behaviour is not included in the overall SDQ difficulty index.

The occurrence of the similar mean scores and the low levels of agreement is similar to the multi-informant literature. Such lack of consistency in student self-reports and teacher ratings is probably due to the context and informant-specific perspectives in the reporting of symptoms (Achenbach, 2006). Teenagers are constantly susceptible to thoughts of anxiety and sadness and rejection by their peers at various locations, and thus are more likely to report increased internalising and social problems (De Los Reyes et al., 2015). Conversely, teachers detect behaviour mostly in the organised classroom setting, where internalising symptoms might not be as noticeable and behavioural expression is limited by the situational conditions (Levkovich & Stregolev, 2025). Such differences can be further caused by differences in attribution styles. Adolescents can attribute their behaviours more to being stable and intrinsic (e.g., that is how I am), but teachers are more likely to explain their behaviours as depending on the situation or the context (e.g., task demands or peer interactions) and are more likely to attribute their behaviours to situational or contextual factors, which is consistent with informant-specific attribution bias (De Los Reyes and Kazdin, 2005).

The insignificance of the effect of age and gender in the current research is also in line with the fact that previous studies have proposed that cross-informant discrepancies are more contextually and perceptually-oriented than demographically-oriented (Goodman et al., 2000; Van Roy et al., 2010). The evidence of the existence of the systematic discrepancies between the informants is further supported by findings of the wider SDQ literature. It has been demonstrated in the previous literature that students are more likely to report high prosocial behaviour levels than teachers, and high levels of internalising and externalising symptoms (Wang et al., 2021). Azad et al. (2021) also reported differences between parent and teacher reports especially in clinical populations and this variation depended on the severity of the symptoms and not on demographic factors

The lack of meaningful predictive relationships between student-self-reports and teacher ratings in the current study further supports the lack of shared variation between informants, saying that each informant furnishes a unique and situation-specific data on adolescent functioning. In general, these results demonstrate that a multi-informant assessment strategy is to be adopted, especially in schools that lack resources, as contextual stressors and peer influences can have an additional impact on behavioural expression. Reliance on a single informant may lead to incomplete or biased assessments, whereas integrating multiple perspectives allows for a more comprehensive and ecologically valid understanding of adolescent socio-emotional difficulties.

5. CONCLUSION

In this study, researchers concluded that the peer relationships of the at-risk adolescents were important to the emotional and behavioral outcomes they experienced in a poverty-stricken school. As mentioned above, in these settings, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) were very low or negative, which indicates poor cross-informant agreement. This means that students and teachers did not consistently identify the same individuals as having higher or lower difficulties. The authors suggest that the peer relationships of adolescents are a major determining factor in the classroom social environment that promotes the development of positive interpersonal behaviors through friendly and supportive relationships but at the same time exaggerates adolescent vulnerabilities (such as withdrawal or delinquent behavior) in troubled relationships.

In most cases, there was little indication of significant disparity between the two sets of ratings except in the case of prosocial behaviour where students' increased self-esteem may be the result of a self-enhancement strategy or of a better awareness of the non-academic environment where teachers may tend to focus more on behaviour and on their need to manage students' daily conduct. This disparity has no effect on the total difficulties score as it is the case of the prosocial scale that is excluded. The systematic bias between the two sets of raters is in line with the multi-informant models which state that self-report can be the sole way to access the internalized suffering that adolescents can live in their home, school and community environments; whereas other raters are limited to describing the circumstances that adolescents need to cope with and the observable behaviour that they display. The attributes that students and teachers give to behaviours also play a crucial role in accounting for the type of symptoms being reported and the way that these symptoms are perceived, and which, here, seem to override the socio-demographic characteristics of the raters such as age and gender. The peers' relationships appear as key relationships in low-supervision contexts and provide a means of extending current theories of development, with peer social relationships being essential for adolescents' coping with stressful environments and for the promotion of fairness in such contexts.

5.1 Limitations

1. The sample was restricted to a group of 59 adolescents from a single school, which may preclude broadening the scope of research to other adolescent age groups.
2. Data was collected in the middle of winter during a period of two weeks when all school attendance was compulsory, resulting in large amounts of absence that may have caused a bias in favour of regular attendees.
3. While providing valuable information that can shed light on the scope of bullying behavior in schools, the study leaves out one very important factor – parental reports. Without the parent reports, the study neglects to incorporate information on students' behavior in the home and community environment which can enrich our understanding when combining multiple sources of information.

5.2 Future Recommendation

Future research should include longitudinal studies to collect the data over several periods of time to enhance the stability of comparisons between informants and decrease time bias. Parent reports should be included also with student and teacher assessment as this would allow a multi-contextual view of adolescent behaviour. Additionally, experimental or intervention-based research, e.g. peer mentoring programmes in low-resource contexts, can be a source of valuable information on the impact of peer structures on internalising/externalising outcomes in the long term. It is also important that future research should investigate possible moderating factors of cross-informant discrepancies such as demographic factors (e.g. age, gender), cultural norms, and contextual factors that mediate peer interactions. Greater sophistication of methods of analysis, including multilevel modelling, would be able to include clustering

effects (e.g. teachers rating many students) and would give a more accurate picture of the differences between informants. Last but not least, stratified studies on various school settings and socio-cultural backgrounds would be useful in clarifying the mechanisms that determine adolescent behaviour and in making specific and context-based interventions.

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