

Introduction

- Emotional competency: knowledge and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others and establish and keep positive relationships (Weissberg et al., 2015).
- Emotional competence has been associated with social, behavioural and academic outcomes (Domitrovich et al., 2017).
- Teacher ratings of emotional maturity were a predictor of later emotional well-being (Guhn et al., 2016).
- Gender differences have been reported in the relation between emotional understanding and prosocial behaviour for younger children: this relation was greater for girls than for boys (Kuhnert et al., 2017).

Current Study

- What is the relation between teacher ratings of emerging adolescents' emotional competence and emerging adolescents' self-reported emotional competence?
- How does gender relate to emerging adolescents' emotional competence?

Method

Participants

- 104 Grade 8 students (69 girls, 35 boys), mean age = 13.6 years
- 13 teachers from 9 schools in Southern Ontario

Measures

- Children's Emotional Competence Scale (CECS; Denham, 1998)
- Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980), with the following subscales:
 - Perspective Taking
 - Fantasy
 - Empathetic Concern
 - Personal Distress

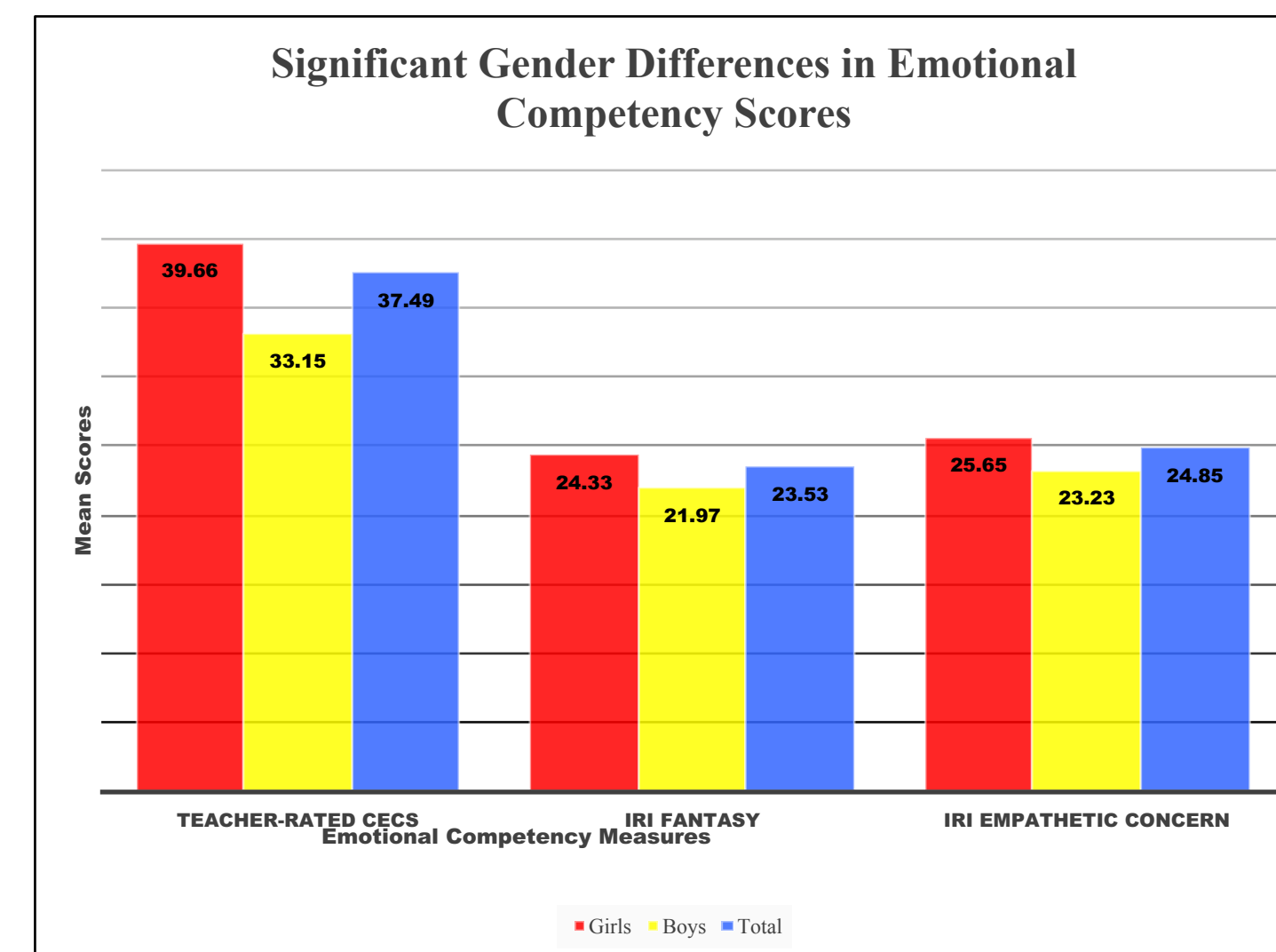
Procedure

- Data taken from Year 1 of five-year longitudinal study on theory of mind development in emerging adolescence.

Results

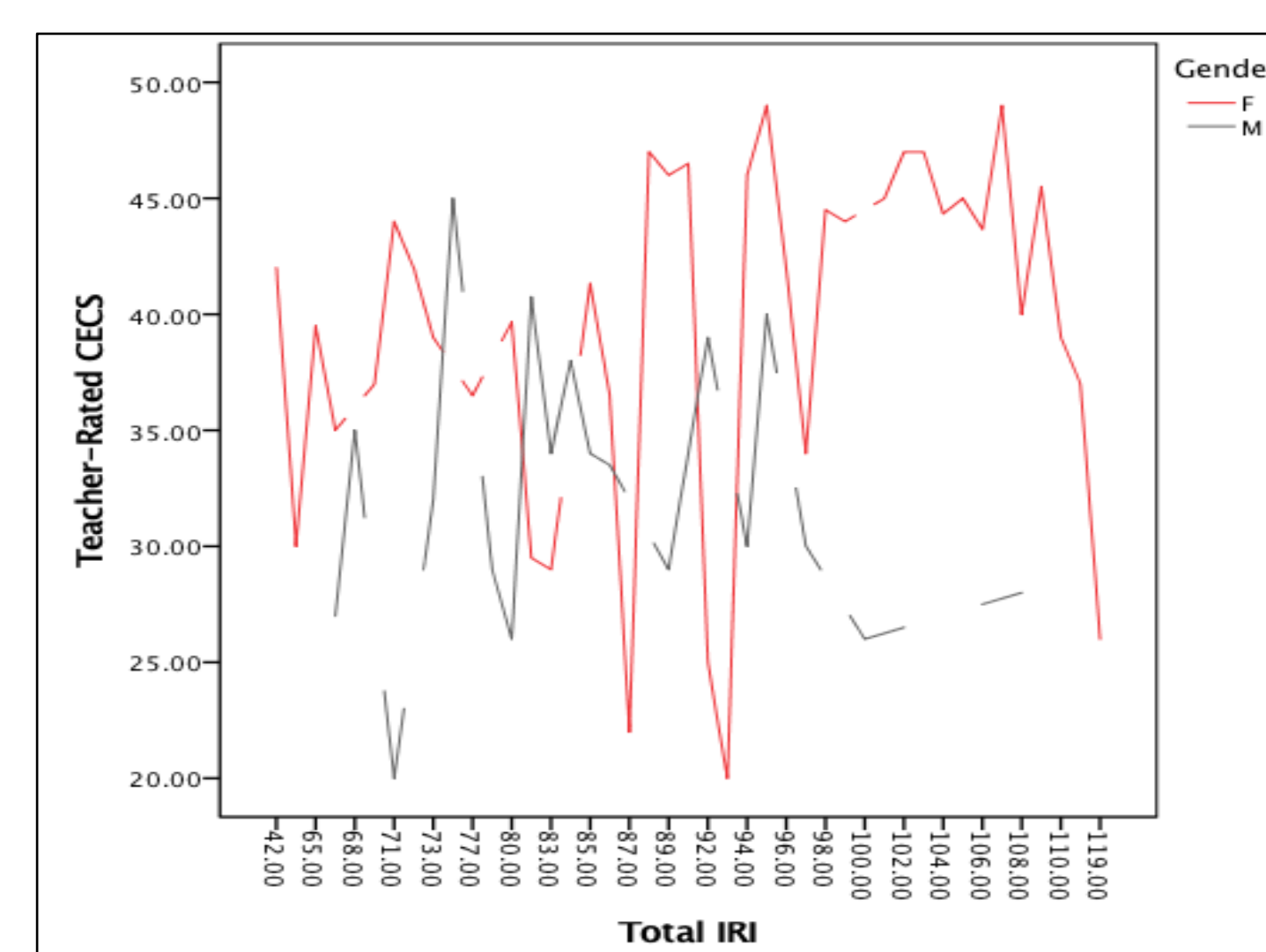
Preliminary Analyses

- Higher teacher-rated emotional competency scores were associated with higher self-reported empathy on the fantasy subscale.
- Gender was associated with teacher-rated emotional competency and self-reported empathy on both the fantasy and empathetic concern subscales, suggesting that girls had a tendency to score higher on these measures than did boys.



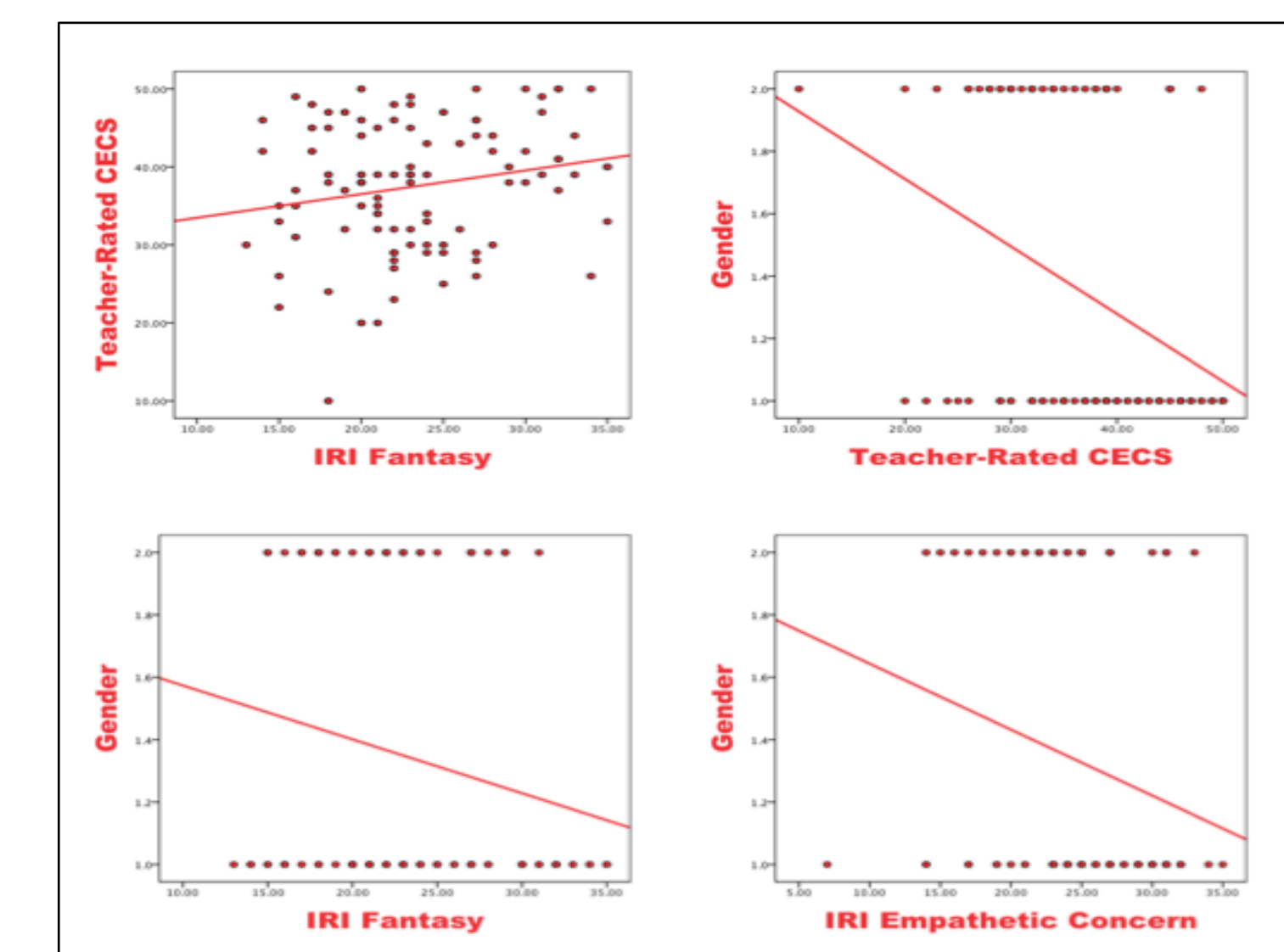
Gender Differences

- Girls received higher teacher-ratings of emotional competency than did boys.
- Girls reported higher levels of empathy for both the fantasy and empathetic concern subscales than did boys.



Regression

- Gender significantly predicted teacher-rated emotional competency scores, suggesting that teachers felt there was a notable difference between boys' and girls' emotional competency.
- IRI scores did not significantly predict CECS scores and the relationship between self-reported IRI scores and teacher-rated CECS scores did not vary according to participant gender.
- This finding, suggests that there is a discrepancy between how teacher's view emerging adolescents' emotional competency and how adolescents' view their own emotional competency, regardless of gender.



Discussion

- Emerging adolescents' viewed their emotional competencies differently compared to their teachers.
- Compared to boys, girls were rated by their teacher as more emotionally competent, and rated themselves as more emotionally competent in fantasy and empathetic concern.

Implications

- Results of this study highlight the need to integrate emotional understanding skills such as empathy into teaching practice and curriculum.

Limitations and Future Directions

- Sample size and limited geographical area – future research should aim to recruit participants from various parts of Canada to control for socio-economic and geographical factors.
- Correlational design – no causation or directionality can be inferred in the relations reported. Future research should consider a longitudinal design to determine the direction of the relationships found.