

Emotional Intelligence Among Undergraduate Students in Howrah District: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to see the emotional intelligence (EI) of undergraduate students in Howrah district, West Bengal. Using a cross-sectional survey method, data was collected from 450 students with the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire by K.V. Petrides (2009). The sample was taken with simple random sampling. Results revealed that the mean EI score for the students was 119.02. Male students possessed higher EI as compared to female students. Furthermore, students belonging to Joint Families and Urban habitats scored higher as compared to their counterparts belonging to Nuclear Family and Rural habitats respectively. First year current students scored higher in EI as compared to second and third-year current students. While differences among habitats were significant ($p < 0.05$); differences among gender, family type, and current class were not ($p > 0.05$).

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Undergraduate students, Cross-Sectional Survey, Statistically Significant*

Being an important concept of the present society, emotional intelligence (EI) is found in the spheres of both personal and professional relationships. Emotional intelligence denotes those abilities to identify, comprehend, manage, and judiciously use emotions in both social and personal scenarios (Goleman, 1998). This skill is now a sought-after one; more so in today's globalized and interconnected workplaces wherein they are taken for granted. Today's workforce expects employees to be emotionally intelligent with each other and to collaborate better (Druskat & Wolff, 2001).

Outside of work, EI plays a major role in the quality of life in our information-rich, technologically advanced, and multicultural society (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). Schools have recognized EI as an important area of development because research has indicated that EI is related positively to academic achievement, to positive relationships with peers, and to psychological adjustment (Qualter et al., 2012). As a result of this understanding and cultural shift in thinking, educators are recognizing the need for early intervention and school-based programming.

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As the world moves ahead with digitalization and automation (Cherniss, 2000), the relevance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) is also increasingly being understood. EI, in contrast to technical skills, is not likely to go out of practice, rather if anything, it's only going to become more important.⁶ It's a trait that a human needs to lead through the many social nerve-racking rigors and also keep himself/herself sane at the same time. Hence, the present study in the Howrah district tries to contribute a part to this discussion by identifying levels of EI among undergraduate students which could be utilized by policymakers, educationists, and students themselves while welding research with benefits for all using the application-based approach as an intervention tool both for better theoretical understanding and institutional handling regarding EI.

Concept and Meaning of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to a range of cognitive abilities that help individuals understand and utilize emotions in themselves and others, extensively studied by psychologists and educators (Mayer et al., 2004). For instance, Emotional Intelligence includes elements like emotional reasoning and knowing how emotions can influence cognitive functions (i.e., recognizing and managing emotions), as indicated by Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997).

In 1995, Goleman expanded the concept of Emotional Intelligence to include aspects like self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which are seen as vital for personal and professional growth. In the same way, Bar-On's theory highlights the various components of EI (such as intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, stress control, adaptability) that help individuals deal with external stressors (Bar-On, 1997).

Despite different explanations, research shows that Emotional Intelligence (EI) greatly influences human mental functions, decision-making, social interactions, and overall health. EI allows individuals to efficiently navigate social interactions by integrating both cognitive and emotional factors to form informed decisions and cultivate connections with compassion (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995).

Significance of the study

In the workplace, EI has been shown to strengthen collaboration, general transferable skills (needed by potential employers), and human relationships - qualities that are highly sought after in our respective markets. Sound research on levels of EI among undergraduate college students in Howrah can help us understand the educational programs, processes, and practices that cater to the student population there to suggest appropriate interventions for enhancing student well-being. It provides important information for employers across the region looking to hire more emotionally intelligent graduates. Emotional Intelligence (EI) goes beyond cognitive skills and focuses on the capacity to recognize and harness our emotions (Goleman, 1995). After entering college, students are faced with numerous challenges like academic stress and fitting in socially, highlighting the importance of time management. Elevating emotional intelligence levels could help youth navigate transitions better by enhancing self-awareness, emotional control, empathy, and interpersonal abilities (Durlak et al., 2011). Likewise, the residential and geographical contexts within the Howrah district can either block or make emotional intelligence more complex among students, according to Das & Nath (2017). Research focused on specific regions provides additional valuable insights that global narratives often struggle to capture: the unique emotional challenges and rewards experienced in that particular location.

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Emotional Intelligence (EI) goes beyond cognitive abilities and centers on understanding and managing emotions in one's life. In the context of intentional behavior, Goleman (1995) explains that emotional intelligence consists of components like self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. When students move to a higher level of education, they experience a lot of pressure, including academic demands, fitting in socially, and managing their time, in higher education settings. Having a high emotional intelligence will help the student easily handle transition challenges because it improves self-awareness (Durlak et al., 2011). Indeed, the socio-cultural background of the Howrah district adds complexity to comprehending EI in students, as it is influenced by local norms and educational settings (Das & Nath, 2017). The research also possesses advantages when viewed through a geographical perspective, offering distinctive perspectives on emotional obstacles and abilities.

There has been a lot of research conducted on the correlation between emotional intelligence and academic success.

Objectives of the study

1. To evaluate the current level of emotional intelligence among undergraduate students in the Howrah district.
2. To explore the differences in emotional intelligence among undergraduate students based on gender.
3. To investigate how habitation affects the emotional intelligence of students.
4. To determine if family type influences students' emotional intelligence.
5. To explore if the current academic class affects students' emotional intelligence.

Delimitation of the study

- The study acknowledges certain limitations and focuses on specific aspects:
- The study is limited to the Howrah district in West Bengal.
- The study focuses on undergraduate students in Howrah.
- The sample consists of 450 students from Howrah.
- The study includes students from Bengali and English medium backgrounds in Howrah.
- The study examines demographic variables such as gender, habitation, family type, and current class.
- Only descriptive and parametric tests were used to represent data and methodology accurately.

Hypotheses of the Study

- **H01:** There is no significant difference in average emotional intelligence scores between male and female undergraduates.
- **H02:** Emotional intelligence scores do not vary significantly among undergraduate students depending on their habitation.
- **H03:** Emotional intelligence scores do not vary significantly among undergraduate students depending on family type.
- **H04:** Emotional intelligence scores do not differ significantly among undergraduate students based on their present class of study.

METHODS

A cross-sectional survey technique was used to quantitatively describe the beliefs, trends, attitudes, opinions, or values of a population by examining samples from that population. This design is economical and saves time, especially when examining various subgroups within a population across different age ranges (Mangal & Mangal, 2013). The research was conducted in the Howrah district of West Bengal, where information was collected from six government-aided colleges chosen for their appropriateness and ease of access. There were a total of 450 undergraduate students in the sample.

Data collection tool

The TEIQue-SF is a self-constructed assessment tool that aims to evaluate different facets of trait emotional intelligence. The revised version of the original Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), created in 2009, includes 30 items. Every element includes a five-point Likert scale, with values from 30 to 150. Participants provide feedback by rating each statement on a scale ranging from Completely Agree to Completely Disagree.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistic

Table 1 Descriptive statistics regarding Emotional Intelligence of students.

Variable	Category	Number of Students	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	249	119.58	17.405
	Female	210	118.33	18.383
Habitation	Rural	230	116.72	18.881
	Urban	220	121.44	16.378
Family Type	Joint	200	120.22	16.881
	Nuclear	250	118.07	18.548
Present Class	First Year	229	120.32	17.791
	Second Year	164	117.59	16.225
	Third Year	57	117.95	21.962

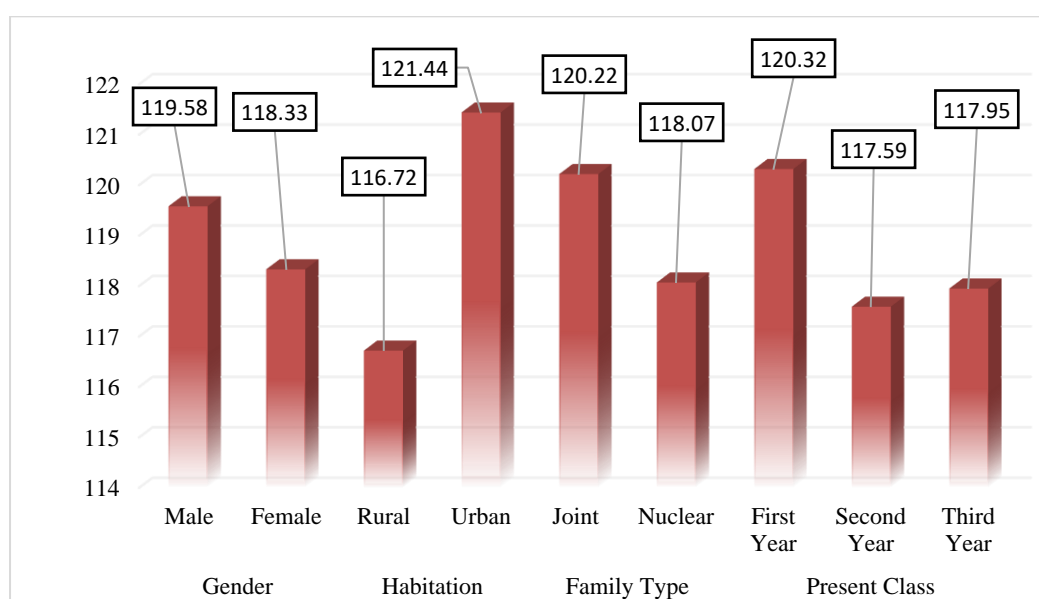


Figure 1

Emotional Intelligence Among Undergraduate Students in Howrah District: A Cross-Sectional Study

This study examines the mean differences in Emotional Intelligence among undergraduate students in the Hooghly district, West Bengal, across four independent variables. Male students had an average score of 119.58, compared to 118.33 for female students. For habitation, rural students scored an average of 116.72, while urban students scored 121.44. When considering family type, students from joint families had an average score of 120, while those from nuclear families scored 118.07. Regarding the academic year, first-year students had an average score of 120.32, second-year students scored 117.59, and third-year students scored 117.95.

Testing Hypothesis

Table 2 Inferential statistics were conducted based on hypotheses H₀₁ to H₀₄

Dependent Variable	Independent variable	t	df	Std. error Diff.	p-value	Remarks	Hypotheses Testing (95%)
Emotional Intelligence	Gender	0.738	448	1.692	0.461	Not significant	Failed to Reject
	Habitation	2.827	448	1.669	0.005	Significant	Reject
	Family Type	-1.267	448	1.691	0.206	Not significant	Failed to Reject
One-way ANOVA							
Dependent Variable	Independent variable	f	df	Mean Square	p-value	Remarks	Hypotheses Testing (95%)
Emotional Intelligence	Class	1.246	2,447	317.876	0.289	Not Significant	Failed to Reject

Results of H₀₁: As shown in Table 2, the gender-based t-value for emotional intelligence is 0.738 ($p=0.461$). The p-value is greater than 0.05, so, there is no statistically significant difference in the means. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) is failed to rejected, indicating that the observed differences are likely coincidental.

Results of H₀₂: Table 2 indicates that the t-value for emotional intelligence based on habitation is 2.827 ($p=0.005$). the p-value is less than 0.05. So, the mean difference is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H₀₂) is rejected, suggesting that the differences are not due to random chance.

Results of H₀₃: According to Table 2, the f-value for emotional intelligence based on family type is -1.267 with a p-value of 0.206. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in the means. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₃) is not rejected, implying that the differences are likely coincidental.

Results of H₀₄: Table 2 shows that the f-value for emotional intelligence based on the current class is 1.246 ($F(2,447) = 0.289$). Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in the means. Hence, the null hypothesis (H₀₄) is not rejected, indicating that the observed differences are likely due to random chance

Major Findings

- The overall EI score for undergraduate students in the Howrah district was 119.02.
- Male students (M=119.58, SD=17.405) scored higher than female students (M=118.33, SD=18.383) in EI, but the difference was not statistically significant ($P>0.05$).
- Urban students (M=121.44, SD=16.378) scored higher than rural students (M=116.72, SD=18.881) in EI, with a statistically significant difference ($P<0.05$).
- Students from joint families (M=120.22, SD=16.881) scored higher in EI than those from nuclear families (M=118.07, SD=18.548), But there was no statistically significant change ($P>0.05$).
- First-year students (M=120.32, SD=17.791) demonstrated higher EI compared to second-year (M=117.59, SD=16.225) and third-year students (M=117.95, SD=21.962), but their were no statistically significant ($P>0.05$).

DISCUSSION

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is important in today's society, influencing various fields. In professional environments, EI improves team dynamics, leadership, and job performance, with leaders creating positive work atmospheres. The shift to remote work has highlighted the need for emotional understanding in communication. Schools stress the importance of EI, incorporating it into their curricula to boost academic success, relationships, and well-being. In healthcare, EI is essential for effective patient-doctor communication and empathy, especially during crises. Overall, EI is vital for success in work, education, healthcare, and personal relationships, underscoring its significance in our interconnected world.

The study discovered that female students had higher EI levels, consistent with research by (Shahzad & Bagum 2012) and (Gorgich et al.,2016). However, other studies by (Joshi & Dutta 2021), (Lankashini et al. 2017), and (Austin et al. 2005) found that female students have higher EI. This study found no statistically significant gender differences in EI, aligning with (Mitrofan and Cioricaru, 2014) and (Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2008), while other studies, like those by (Adeyemo, 2008) and (Dhani & Sharma,2017), noted gender as statistically significant.

Rural students showed higher EI, consistent with past research. Rural communities often emphasize strong social bonds and empathy, potentially enhancing EI. In contrast, urban areas' faster pace and individualistic nature might limit deep emotional development opportunities. However, individual EI varies greatly, making broad generalizations insufficient. Students from nuclear families had higher EI, similar to the findings (Suthar, 2014). These students often experience more autonomy, developing EI through independent decision-making and relationship management.

Science students exhibited higher EI than arts students, possibly due to the analytical and problem-solving focus of their studies. However, this observation is supported by limited research. Arts students might develop EI through creative expression. The study found no significant EI differences based on the academic year.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, emotional intelligence significantly impacts the college experience in various areas, including academic performance, interpersonal skills, self-perception, adaptability, leadership abilities, psychological well-being, and professional readiness. Given these

effects, higher education institutions need to incorporate emotional intelligence training into their curricula and support services. This strategic approach will better prepare students for success in their academic journeys and future careers.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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