



Comparative Analysis Of Emotional Intelligence Among Secondary School Children: Exploring Gender And Locality Differences

¹Ch.V. Lalitha Kumari, ²Dr. C. Grace Indira

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University, A.P, India

² Associate Professor, St. Joseph's College of Education for Women, Guntur, A.P, India.

Abstract:

This study delves into the multifaceted realm of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as distinct from IQ, drawing from the seminal works of Goleman (1995) and Salovey and Mayer (1990). Five significant elements of EI are identified: self-awareness, handling feelings, self-motivation and control, empathy, and social competence. The research seeks to assess the EI of secondary school students in self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and handling relationships while also investigating variations based on gender and locality.

Methodologically, a survey approach is adopted, encompassing a stratified random sample of 201 secondary school students from Vizianagaram district. The Ekta Sharma Emotional Intelligence Test, recognized for its robust Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.9, serves as the assessment tool.

The findings shed light on the distribution of EI levels among students, revealing that 14% exhibit low, 72% moderate, and another 14% high EI. Moreover, the majority of students demonstrate moderate EI across the five components, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. The study uncovers noteworthy disparities in EI between male and female students and between urban and rural school settings.

These results underscore the significance of cultivating emotional intelligence among students and advocate for tailored interventions to bolster emotional skills. The study's implications extend to educational practice by emphasizing the necessity of EI-focused curricular integration, teacher training, and parental involvement to foster a more emotionally intelligent learning environment.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence, self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and handling relationships.

I. Introduction:

Emotional intelligence (EI) has gained significant recognition as a fundamental aspect of human psychology that profoundly influences how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to their emotions and the emotions of others. It encompasses a range of interconnected skills that contribute to effective emotional management and social interactions.

The first component of emotional intelligence is the **ability to perceive emotions accurately (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, Cherniss et al., 2016)**. This component involves being attuned to one's emotional states and recognizing the emotions of others through verbal and non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language and heightened awareness of emotions can be particularly crucial for adolescents as they navigate the complexities of identity formation and peer interactions during their secondary school years.

Understanding emotions, the second component of emotional intelligence, involves comprehending the causes and consequences of different emotions. Adolescents who possess a good understanding of their emotions are better equipped to cope with the challenges and stressors they encounter in academic settings and social environments. This understanding enables them to make more informed decisions and respond more thoughtfully to various situations.

The third aspect of emotional intelligence is the **regulation of emotions**. It refers to managing and controlling one's emotional responses appropriately. Adolescents with well-developed emotional regulation skills can effectively cope with frustration, disappointment, and other negative emotions, allowing them to maintain focus on their academic endeavours and establish healthy relationships with their peers.

Expressing emotions constructively and empathetically is the fourth component of emotional intelligence. Adolescents who are skilled in expressing their emotions can effectively communicate their needs and concerns, fostering open and honest communication in their social interactions. Empathy, which is closely related to emotional expression, allows adolescents to understand and share the feelings of their peers, promoting more positive and supportive relationships.

According to **Ashkanasy & Battel's research in 2023**, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a unique mental ability, as defined by Mayer and Salovey, involving the capacity to perceive, utilize, comprehend, and manage emotions in oneself and others. Currently, EI is acknowledged as a distinct form of intelligence, and it is approached through three main streams of thought:

1. It is conceptualized and measured as a mental ability.
2. It is conceptualized as an ability measured using self- or peer-reported data.
3. It is approached through other conceptualizations and measures.

The existing research highlights that EI can be enhanced through training and has been linked to various positive life outcomes. These include better mental health and overall well-being, improved social relationships, enhanced academic achievement, and increased work performance.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become a topic of interest and relevance in the context of educational reform. Educational reform refers to deliberate changes and improvements to enhance the education system's effectiveness, relevance, and outcomes. The integration of emotional intelligence into educational reform stems from the recognition that emotions play a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, as well as in overall student development and well-being.

According to **Goleman (1995)**, emotional intelligence should not be viewed as the opposite of IQ; rather, it represents a distinct and independent sphere of competency. Based on **Salovey and Mayer's (1990)** initial definition, Goleman identifies five significant elements of emotional intelligence:

1. **Self-awareness:** The ability to recognize and understand one's emotions.
2. **Handling feelings:** The skill to effectively manage and regulate one's emotions.
3. **Self-motivation, mastery, and control:** The capacity to motivate oneself and demonstrate emotional self-control.
4. **Empathy:** The ability to recognize and understand emotions in others.
5. **Social competence:** The adept at handling relationships and interactions with others.

Over time, the definition of emotional intelligence was expanded to include four core components:

1. Perceiving and expressing emotions accurately and adaptively.
2. Understanding emotions and emotional knowledge.
3. Using emotions to facilitate thought and decision-making.
4. Regulating emotions in oneself and others.

According to **Salovey and Pizarro (2003)**, emotional intelligence holds significant value as it provides a theoretical framework to address individual differences in emotional areas. Additionally, it expands traditional notions of intelligence by integrating cognitive and emotional human ability domains.

In essence, emotional intelligence is a comprehensive construct that encompasses the understanding, expressing, and managing emotions in oneself and others. It complements cognitive abilities and offers insights into how emotions influence human behaviour, relationships, and well-being.

Critical aspects of the relationship between emotional intelligence and educational reform:

1. **Understanding Emotions in Education:** Emotional intelligence involves recognising, understanding, managing, and utilising emotions effectively, both in oneself and others. In educational reform, there is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of emotions in the learning environment. Emotions can impact students' motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. The educational system aims to create a more supportive and conducive learning atmosphere by fostering emotional intelligence in students and educators.
2. **Teacher-Student Relationships:** Emotional intelligence is closely related to empathy, social skills, and communication abilities. Teachers with higher emotional intelligence can better understand their student's emotional needs and build strong, positive teacher-student relationships. This positive rapport can improve student engagement, trust, and academic performance.
3. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs:** Educational reform often involves implementing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. These programs aim to develop students' emotional intelligence by teaching them essential skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and effective communication. SEL programs help students develop emotional resilience and interpersonal skills that are valuable for academic success, personal growth, and future success in their careers and relationships.
4. **Classroom Management:** Emotionally intelligent teachers can effectively manage their emotions and respond appropriately to students' emotional expressions and behaviours. This skill is vital for creating a positive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel respected, valued, and safe.
5. **Student Well-being and Mental Health:** Educational reform that addresses emotional intelligence also considers students' well-being and mental health. By promoting emotional intelligence and teaching coping strategies, students are better equipped to manage stress, anxiety, and other emotional challenges, which can positively impact their overall mental health.
6. **Cultivating a Positive School Culture:** Emotional intelligence can influence the culture of an educational institution. When emotional intelligence is valued and promoted among students, teachers, and administrators, it fosters a positive and supportive school culture that enhances the learning experience for everyone involved.

Emotional intelligence and educational reform go hand in hand as educators recognise emotions' significant impact on teaching, learning, and overall student development. By incorporating emotional intelligence into educational practices and curricula, schools can create more emotionally supportive and effective learning environments, improving academic performance and well-being for students and educators alike.

II. Need and Significant of the Study:

In **Neophytou's (2013)** exploration of educational reform, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is examined within the context of the modernist-postmodernist debate. The paper argues that by integrating EI into contemporary societies, a new wave of reform emerges, granting science a normative power over individuals' emotional realms. This reform primarily focuses on maximizing performance and utilizes various methods to judge, select, and regulate emotions.

This educational reform aims to align teachers' emotions with the goals of the reform itself. Emotions become subject to scrutiny and control, intending to ensure that teachers' emotional expressions align with the reform's desired outcomes. In other words, emotional responses that support the reform's objectives are encouraged and rewarded. In contrast, those that challenge or deviate from the reform's agenda may be met with sanctions or penalties.

This approach suggests that emotions are seen as a measurable and controllable aspect of the teaching process. The reform seeks to create a standardized and predictable environment for educators and students by prescribing specific emotional responses.

However, **Neophytou** raises concerns about the potential consequences of this modernization movement. Ethical and moral questions about manipulating emotions and the potential for emotional coercion are raised. The emphasis on maximizing performance through emotional regulation might overlook the complexity of human emotions and the value of authentic emotional experiences in the teaching and learning process.

While emotional intelligence can positively impact educational settings, it is essential to carefully consider the ethical implications and potential drawbacks of exerting normative power over emotions. Additionally, an overly reductionist approach to emotions may neglect the importance of teachers' and students' genuine emotional engagement in the educational process.

Calls for a thoughtful and critical examination of the use of Emotional Intelligence in educational reform. It emphasizes the importance of considering epistemological, ethical, and moral aspects before applying new reforms that heavily rely on regulating and standardizing emotional experiences in educational settings.

During adolescence, emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in shaping various aspects of a student's life. In academics, students with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to display greater academic engagement, better time management, and improved problem-solving skills. They tend to have a more positive attitude towards learning and are better equipped to handle the academic challenges that arise.

Socially, emotional intelligence influences the quality of relationships adolescents form with their peers, teachers, and family members. Those who excel in emotional intelligence are often viewed as more approachable, understanding, and supportive, contributing to a sense of belonging and connection within the school community.

Exploring emotional intelligence proficiency among secondary school children is paramount as it sheds light on the factors that influence their emotional development during this critical phase of life. By understanding the intricacies of emotional intelligence in adolescence, educators, parents, and policymakers can implement targeted interventions and support systems to foster emotional competencies, promote mental well-being, and facilitate positive socio-emotional growth in secondary school students.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in education and has garnered increasing attention in recent years due to its impact on student's academic success and overall well-being. EI refers to the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in oneself and others. It involves being aware of emotions, expressing them appropriately, and using emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour.

In the context of education, EI influences various aspects that contribute to a student's overall development and learning experience:

- 1. Academic Performance:** Students with higher levels of EI tend to perform better academically. EI helps them manage stress, stay focused, and cope with challenges effectively. Emotionally intelligent students are also more motivated, engaged, and persistent in their learning endeavours.
- 2. Relationships and Social Skills:** EI enhances interpersonal relationships and social skills. Emotionally intelligent students better understand others' emotions, empathise, and communicate effectively. They build healthier relationships with peers and teachers, creating a positive and supportive learning environment.
- 3. Problem-Solving and Decision-Making:** EI facilitates better decision-making processes. Students who can identify and manage their emotions are more likely to approach problem-solving with a balanced perspective, considering both rational and emotional aspects.
- 4. Classroom Behaviour and Management:** Emotionally intelligent students are generally better behaved and more self-disciplined. They can regulate their emotions, leading to improved classroom behaviour and reduced disruptive incidents.
- 5. Emotional Well-being and Resilience:** Developing EI helps students handle emotional challenges more effectively, such as anxiety and frustration. This, in turn, improves their overall emotional well-being and resilience to cope with life's ups and downs.
- 6. Teacher-Student Relationship:** Teachers who exhibit high EI can better understand and respond to their students' emotional needs. This fosters a positive teacher-student relationship and encourages a supportive learning environment.
- 7. Conflict Resolution:** EI enables students to manage conflicts constructively, promoting a peaceful and cooperative atmosphere in the classroom.

Educational institutions increasingly recognise the importance of EI and incorporate it into their curriculum and teaching practices. Implementing emotional intelligence training and programs can equip students with the necessary skills to navigate their emotional landscape, improve their learning experiences, and prepare them for success in both their academic and personal lives. Moreover, teachers and educators can benefit from EI training to effectively support their student's emotional needs and create a more positive and conducive learning environment.

III. Objectives:

1. To evaluate the Emotional Intelligence of Students and to classify them.
2. To evaluate the Emotional Intelligence of students in the following skills.
3. Self-awareness, Managing Emotions, Motivating Oneself, Empathy, Handling relationships.
4. To evaluate the Emotional Intelligence of Students with respect to the following variables.
Gender and Locality.

IV. Hypotheses:

1. There would be no significance difference between Male and Female students in their Emotional Intelligence.
2. There would be no significance difference between Urban and Rural students in their Emotional Intelligence.

V. Methodology:

In the current research, the survey method will be adopted. A stratified random sample of 201 secondary school children will be chosen exclusively from the Vizianagaram district. The assessment tool to be employed is Ekta Sharma's Emotional Intelligence Test, which demonstrates a high Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.9.

Objective-1

To evaluate the Emotional Intelligence of Students and to classify them.

Table 1 Emotional Intelligence of Students

Sample	Mean	S.D	Percentage %
201	202	19	77%

Interpretation:

From the above table 1, it can be observed that, the overall mean of students pertaining to their Emotional Intelligence is 202. The obtained percentage is 77%, it is revealed that the students are having high level of Emotional Intelligence.

Table 2 Classification of the total sample on Emotional Intelligence

Sr. No	Scores	Size of sample (N)	%	Verbal Description
1	< 183 (M - 1 SD)	28	14	Low Emotional Intelligence
2	In between 183 and 221 (M \pm 1 SD)	145	72	Moderate Emotional Intelligence
3	> 221 (M + 1 SD)	028	14	High Emotional Intelligence
Total		201	100.00	

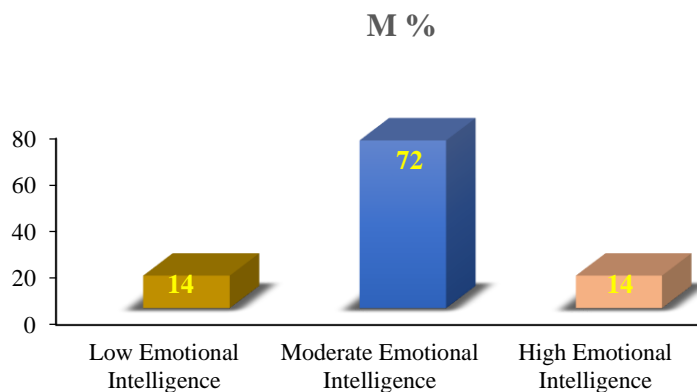


Figure 1 Classification of the total sample on Emotional Intelligence

Discussion:

The data analysis based on the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) reveals valuable insights into the Emotional Intelligence (EI) levels of the students in this study. The overall mean score of Emotional Intelligence is 202, with a standard deviation of 19. The sample was then categorized into three groups: low, moderate, and high EI, based on their scores relative to the mean.

- Low Emotional Intelligence:** Students whose EI scores are less than [$\text{Mean} - 1\text{SD} = 202 - 19$] 183 are classified as having low Emotional Intelligence. This group comprises 28 students, accounting for 14% of the total sample. Identifying students with low EI is crucial, as they might face challenges managing their emotions, impacting their academic performance and social interactions.
- High Emotional Intelligence:** Conversely, students with EI scores above [$\text{M} + 1\text{SD} = 202 + 19$] 221 are classified as having high Emotional Intelligence. This group also comprises 28 students or 14% of the total sample. Students with high EI have demonstrated a strong ability to understand and manage their emotions, positively influencing their academic achievements and interpersonal relationships.
- Moderate Emotional Intelligence:** Most students, approximately 72% of the total sample, fall under the moderate Emotional Intelligence group. These students scored within the range of [$\text{M} - 1\text{SD}$, $\text{M} + 1\text{SD}$], indicating a balanced emotional awareness and regulation level. Moderate EI levels imply that these students have the potential to further enhance their emotional skills with appropriate guidance and support.

It is interesting to note that the findings of this study contrast with **Kumar's (2020)** research, which reported that higher secondary school students' Emotional Intelligence was average. The divergence in results might be attributed to various factors, such as differences in sample characteristics, assessment tools used, or even changes in emotional development over time.

Objective-2

To evaluate the Emotional Intelligence of students in the following dimensions.

Self-awareness, Managing Emotions, Motivating Oneself, Empathy, Handling relationships.

Table 3 Emotional Intelligence of Students In different Dimensions

S.No.	Component	Sample	Mean	S. D	% M	Rank
1	Handling relationships	201	44.6269	6.27416	77.736	1
2	Motivating Oneself	201	47.1493	5.65576	76.141	2
3	Managing Emotions	201	35.0249	5.07291	76.047	3
4	Empathy	201	20.8657	3.34019	74.520	4
5	Self-awareness	201	52.8607	6.55214	70.836	5

Interpretation:

The table no. 3 presents data on various Emotional Intelligence (EI) components for 201 individuals. Each component's mean score, standard deviation (SD), percentage of the mean (M), and their corresponding ranks are provided. Let us interpret the findings:

1. Handling Relationships:

The "Handling Relationships" component has the highest mean score of 44.6269 and a standard deviation of 6.27416. The percentage of the mean (77.736%) indicates that, on average, the sample scored relatively high in this aspect of EI, ranking it as the highest among all components.

2. Motivating Oneself:

The "Motivating Oneself" component obtained the second-highest mean score of 47.1493, with a standard deviation of 5.65576. Although the percentage of the mean (76.141%) is slightly lower than the top-ranked component, it still indicates a considerable level of EI in this area, making it the second highest-ranked component.

3. Managing Emotions:

"Managing Emotions" obtained a mean score of 35.0249 and a standard deviation 5.07291. The percentage of the mean (76.047%) suggests that the sample, on average, demonstrated a relatively high level of ability to manage their emotions, ranking it as the third component of EI.

4. Empathy:

The "Empathy" component scored a mean of 20.8657 with a standard deviation of 3.34019. The percentage of the mean (74.520%) indicates a reasonably good level of empathy among the sample, ranking it as the fourth-highest EI component.

5. Self-awareness:

The "Self-awareness" component scored the lowest mean of 52.8607 with a standard deviation of 6.55214. The percentage of the mean (70.836%) suggests that, on average, the sample's self-awareness is relatively lower than other EI components, making it the fifth-ranked component.

Discussion:

The interpretation of the data indicates that the sample, on average, demonstrates a relatively high level of Emotional Intelligence. "Handling Relationships" and "Motivating Oneself" emerged as the two highest-ranking components, reflecting strong skills in managing interpersonal relationships and self-motivation. "Managing Emotions" and "Empathy" also obtained high scores, suggesting adeptness in emotional regulation and understanding others' emotions. However, "Self-awareness" scored comparatively lower, indicating the potential for improvement in self-awareness skills within the sample.

Table 4 Classification of the total sample on Emotional Intelligence based on Dimensions.

Components of Emotional	Scores	Size of sample (N)	%	Verbal Description
Handling relationships	< 46 (M - 1 SD)	27	13	Low
	In between 46 & 60 (M ±1 SD)	146	73	Moderate
	> 60 (M + 1 D)	28	14	High
	Total	201		
Motivating Oneself	< 30 (M - 1 SD)	35	17	Low
	In between 30 & 40 (M ±1 SD)	145	73	Moderate
	> 40 (M + 1 D)	21	10	High life
	Total	201		
Managing Emotions	< 41 (M - 1 SD)	37	19	Low
	In between 41 & 53 (M ±1 SD)	138	67	Moderate
	> 53 (M + 1 D)	26	14	High

	Total	201		
Empathy	< 18 (M - 1 SD)	32	16	Low
	In between 18 & 24 (M ±1 SD)	134	67	Moderate
	> 24 (M + 1 D)	35	17	High
	Total	201		
Self-awareness	< 38 (M - 1 SD)	23	11	Low
	In between 38 & 51 (M ±1 SD)	153	76	Moderate
	> 51 (M + 1 D)	25	13	High
	Total	201		

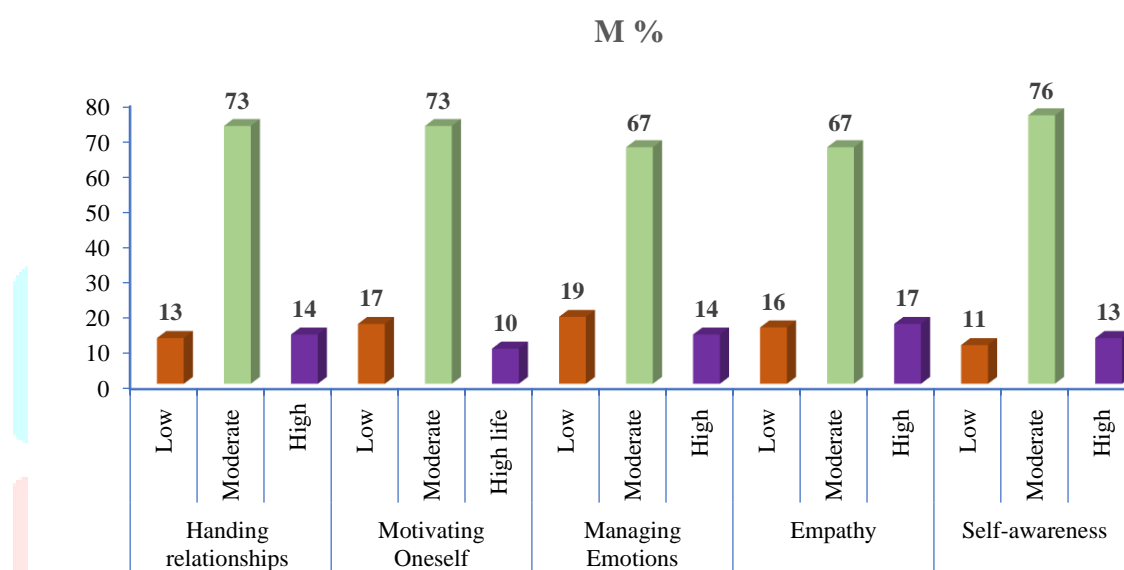


Figure 2 Classification of the total sample on Emotional Intelligence based on Dimensions

Interpretation:

Interpretation of the Data on Emotional Intelligence Components:

The data presented the scores and percentages for five components of Emotional Intelligence (EI): Handling Relationships, Motivating Oneself, Managing Emotions, Empathy, and Self-awareness. The sample size (N) for each component is 201.

1. Handling Relationships:

The data shows that 27 participants (13%) scored below 46, considered low EI in handling relationships. On the other hand, 146 participants (73%) scored within the range of 46 to 60, representing moderate EI in this aspect. Furthermore, 28 participants (14%) scored above 60, indicating a high level of EI in handling relationships.

The majority of the sample demonstrates moderate EI in handling relationships, with a considerable number exhibiting high EI. However, a small proportion falls into the low EI category, suggesting there might be room for improvement in their ability to handle relationships effectively.

2. Motivating Oneself:

For motivating oneself, 35 participants (17%) scored below 30, reflecting low EI in this area. A more significant portion of the sample, 145 participants (73%), fell within the range of 30 to 40, indicating moderate EI in self-motivation. Additionally, 21 participants (10%) scored above 40, representing a high level of EI in motivating oneself.

The majority of the participants display moderate EI in self-motivation, while a notable percentage shows high EI. However, a significant proportion falls into the low EI category, indicating the need to improve their ability to motivate themselves effectively.

3. Managing Emotions:

Regarding managing emotions, 37 participants (19%) scored below 41, representing low EI. A more significant portion, 138 participants (67%), scored within the range of 41 to 53, indicating moderate EI in managing emotions. Moreover, 26 participants (14%) scored above 53, indicating a high level of EI in this domain.

The majority of the sample exhibits moderate EI in managing emotions, with a considerable number showing high EI. However, a significant percentage falls into the low EI category, suggesting the need for enhancing their emotional management skills.

4. Empathy:

In the empathy component, 32 participants (16%) scored below 18, indicating low EI in empathy. A more significant portion of the sample, 134 participants (67%), fell within the range of 18 to 24, representing moderate EI in empathy. Additionally, 35 participants (17%) scored above 24, reflecting a high level of EI in this area.

Most participants demonstrate moderate EI in empathy, with a notable proportion showing high EI. However, a significant percentage falls into the low EI category, suggesting there might be room for improvement in their ability to understand and empathize with others.

5. Self-awareness:

For self-awareness, 23 participants (11%) scored below 38, representing low EI. The majority of the sample, 153 participants (76%), scored 38 to 51, indicating moderate EI in self-awareness. Additionally, 25 participants (13%) scored above 51, indicating a high level of EI in self-awareness.

The majority of the participants display moderate EI in self-awareness, with a considerable number showing high EI. However, a significant percentage falls into the low EI category, suggesting the need for enhancing their ability to understand and recognize their emotions and behaviours.

The data suggests that most of the sample demonstrates moderate EI in most components, while a substantial proportion shows high EI in some areas. However, there is room for improvement, as a significant percentage falls into the low EI category for each component. These findings highlight the potential areas where individuals could focus on developing their emotional intelligence skills to enhance their overall emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships.

Objective:3

To evaluate the Emotional Intelligence of Students with respect to the following variables.

Gender and Locality.

Hypothesis: 1

1. There would be no significance difference between Male and Female students in their Emotional Intelligence.

Table 5 ‘t’ value in the Mean Score on the Level of Emotional Intelligence of Male and Female Secondary School Students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	S.E.D	“t” Value
Male	96	198.54	14.07	2.711	2.375*
Female	105	204.98	22.90		

*Significant at 0.05 level.

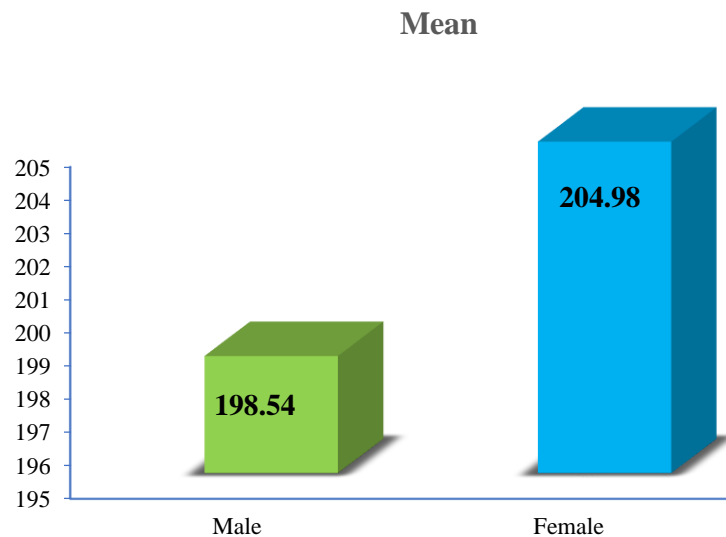


Figure 3 Mean Score on the Level of Emotional Intelligence

Table 5 compares the mean scores on Emotional Intelligence between male and female secondary school students. The study includes 96 male and 105 female students, with respective mean scores of 198.54 and 204.98. The standard deviation for male students is 14.07, while for female students, it is 22.90, indicating a higher variability in female students' scores. The calculated "t" value of 2.375 is significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a statistically significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between the two genders. These findings suggest that, on average, female students exhibit higher Emotional Intelligence levels than their male counterparts.

Discussion:

The data analysis reveals a noteworthy disparity between male and female secondary school students concerning their Emotional Intelligence levels. Specifically, the female students demonstrate higher Emotional Intelligence scores compared to their male counterparts, and this difference is statistically significant. These findings align with a study conducted by Arshad Ali Bhat in 2017, which also reported a significant distinction between the emotional intelligence levels of male and female students. However, it is essential to acknowledge that the results contradict the findings of Kumar's 2020 study. In his research, Kumar reported no significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female higher secondary school students.

Hypothesis-2

There would be no significance difference between Urban and Rural students in their Emotional Intelligence.

Table 6 't' value in the Mean Score on the Level of Emotional Intelligence of Urban and Rural locality Secondary School Students

Locality	N	Mean	SD	S.E.D	"t" Value
Urban	72	197.04	14.90	2.813	2.694*
Rural	129	204.62	21.10		

*Significant at 0.05 level

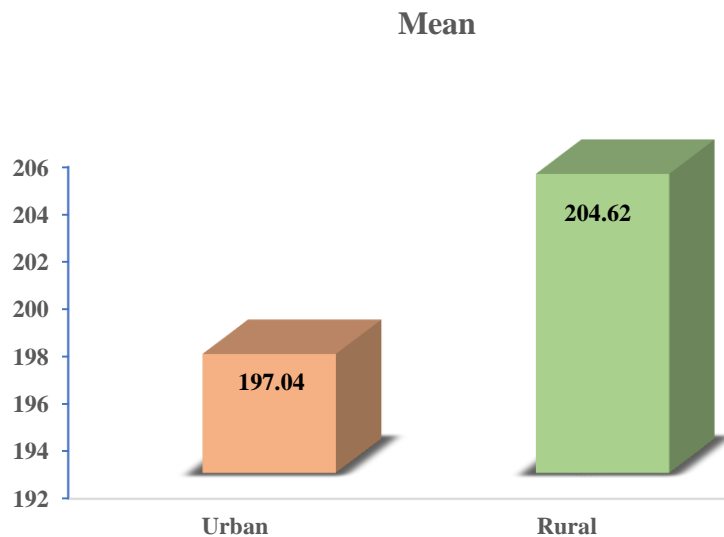


Figure 4 Mean Score on the Level of Emotional Intelligence of Urban and Rural locality Secondary School Students

Interpretation:

The data presented in Table 5 suggests a significant difference in the emotional intelligence levels of secondary school students between Urban and Rural localities. The "t" value of 2.694 for the Urban locality is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that the mean emotional intelligence score of the Urban locality (197.04) is significantly different from that of the Rural locality (204.62).

Therefore, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in emotional intelligence levels between Urban and Rural secondary school students. The findings suggest that the emotional intelligence levels of students in Urban and Rural localities are not equal and are influenced by the location of their schools.

Discussion:

The results indicate a notable distinction in Emotional Intelligence between secondary school students from Urban and Rural localities. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Nishi & Komal in 2018, where they also observed a significant difference in emotional intelligence among adolescents from urban and rural areas attending senior secondary schools. This alignment suggests that students' emotional intelligence is influenced or shaped by their locality.

However, these results diverge from those reported by Kumar in 2020, whose study yielded different conclusions. Kumar's research seemingly did not find a significant difference in emotional intelligence between students from Urban and Rural areas. Such inconsistencies in the literature warrant further investigation and could be attributed to variations in sample size, research methodologies, or the specific Emotional Intelligence measures used in each study.

It is essential to acknowledge the significance of location in understanding emotional intelligence development among secondary school students. Factors related to urban and rural environments, such as educational resources, social support networks, cultural influences, and exposure to diverse experiences, could play crucial roles in shaping emotional intelligence abilities.

VI. Findings:

1. The study reveals that approximately 14% of students exhibit low Emotional Intelligence, while an equal percentage display high Emotional Intelligence. The largest segment, constituting around 72% of the sample, falls within the moderate EI range.
2. The data indicates that the majority of the sample exhibits moderate levels of Emotional Intelligence across all five components: Self-awareness, Managing Emotions, Motivating Oneself, Empathy, and Handling Relationships.
3. There is a significant difference between Male and Female students in their Emotional Intelligence.

4. There is a significant difference between Urban and Rural area school students in their Emotional Intelligence.

VII. Educational Implications:

1. **Tailored Interventions:** Identifying students with low Emotional Intelligence (EI) scores in specific components highlights the need for targeted interventions to enhance their emotional skills. Schools can implement customized programs to address areas of weakness and provide students with tools to manage emotions, build empathy, and handle relationships effectively.
2. **Incorporating EI in Curriculum:** Given the significance of EI in academic and social success, integrating Emotional Intelligence education into the curriculum can be beneficial. Educators can design lessons and activities that promote self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills, fostering a more holistic approach to learning.
3. **Teacher Training:** Educators play a crucial role in modelling and nurturing Emotional Intelligence. Training teachers on EI concepts and strategies equip them to create a supportive and emotionally intelligent classroom environment. This, in turn, can positively impact students' emotional development.
4. **Peer Support Programs:** Recognizing students with high EI scores presents an opportunity to leverage their strengths. Peer mentoring programs can be established where emotionally intelligent students guide and support their peers in developing better emotional awareness and management skills.
5. **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):** Schools can adopt comprehensive Social and Emotional Learning programs that systematically teach emotional competencies. SEL initiatives can empower students to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and cultivate empathy, fostering a positive school climate.
6. **Counseling Services:** Students with low EI scores may benefit from access to counselling services focusing on emotional well-being. Trained counsellors can provide guidance, coping strategies, and emotional support, helping students navigate challenges and improve their mental health.
7. **Parental Involvement:** Educating parents about the importance of EI and its impact on academic and personal growth can lead to a collaborative effort between schools and families. Workshops and resources can empower parents to reinforce emotional skills at home.
8. **Assessment and Progress Tracking:** Regular assessments of students' EI levels can help monitor their growth. Schools can establish benchmarks, track progress, and adjust interventions based on individual or group needs.
9. **Promoting Emotional Expression:** Creating a safe space for students to express their emotions openly can foster emotional development. Encouraging discussions and activities that allow students to share their feelings can contribute to a healthier emotional climate within the school.
10. **Integration with Character Education:** Integrating Emotional Intelligence with character education initiatives can promote values such as empathy, respect, and responsibility, nurturing well-rounded individuals equipped for academic and personal success.

VIII. Conclusion:

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a pivotal cornerstone in human psychology, profoundly impacting individuals' emotional perception, interpretation, and responses. Acknowledging its significance, integrating EI within education has garnered widespread recognition for its transformative influence on students' multifaceted development and learning journey.

The research findings underscore the spectrum of EI representation among students, highlighting that 14% exhibit low, 72% moderate, and another 14% high EI. Furthermore, the majority demonstrates moderate EI levels across diverse components, emphasizing the need for nuanced interventions.

Significant gender-based and urban-rural disparities in EI are unveiled, accentuating the importance of tailoring approaches to accommodate diverse sociocultural contexts. As educational institutions increasingly embrace EI, its inclusion in curricula and teaching strategies becomes more pronounced. EI-focused programs facilitate students' emotional navigation, enriching their learning journey and arming them for triumphs across academic and personal spheres.

This study's implications extend beyond students to educators, underlining the value of EI training for teachers to optimally address students' emotional needs and create an enriched and harmonious learning milieu. Ultimately, this study cements the pivotal role of EI in education and underscores its potential to shape the trajectory of holistic student development, transforming educational landscapes into nurturing spaces of emotional growth and academic excellence.

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