Emotional Intelligence and Student Behaviour among Degree College Students in Sonitpur District of Assam, India.

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Abstract

The present study explores the relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour among degree college students in Sonitpur District, Assam. Emotional intelligence has emerged as a key factor influencing how young adults perceive, understand, and manage their emotions and relationships. The study adopted a descriptive correlational design with a sample of 300 undergraduate students, selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Dr. Dalip Singh and Dr. N. K. Chadha (2001) and a standardized Student Behaviour Checklist. Statistical analysis, including correlation and t-test, was applied. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$), implying that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit more positive behavioural patterns. The findings suggest the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence training in higher education to foster self-awareness, empathy, and responsible behaviour, aligning with the holistic educational goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Student Behaviour, Higher Education, Sonitpur District, Assam, NEP 2020

1. Introduction

In the changing landscape of higher education, emotional intelligence (EI) has become a central concept in understanding student development and behavioural adjustment. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify, understand, and regulate one's own emotions and to respond appropriately to the emotions of others. In the college environment, where students face academic pressure, social expectations, and the transition to adulthood, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in maintaining positive mental health and effective interpersonal relationships.

Behaviour among students is a visible outcome of emotional, cognitive, and social processes. Students who are emotionally stable and self-aware tend to show better classroom discipline, cooperation, and social adjustment. In contrast, students with poor emotional control often experience difficulties such as aggression, anxiety, absenteeism, and poor peer relationships. These behavioural patterns can significantly affect the learning environment and overall institutional climate. Thus, understanding the role of emotional intelligence in shaping student behaviour is essential for educators and policymakers.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic and multidisciplinary education that promotes emotional, social, and ethical values. It encourages institutions to focus not only on academic excellence but also on emotional and social competencies. Emotional intelligence aligns directly with these goals by helping students manage stress, resolve conflicts, and engage responsibly in social and academic life. Colleges in Assam, especially in semi-urban districts like Sonitpur, serve a diverse student population with varying socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Such diversity makes emotional intelligence training even more relevant, as it can bridge gaps in social understanding and behavioural adjustment.

Research across the world, beginning with the pioneering work of Daniel Goleman (1995), has consistently shown that emotional intelligence predicts success in academic, personal, and professional life. Indian studies by Sharma and Singh (2018), Nath and Goswami (2021), and Tiwari and Biswas (2022) have reported similar findings among university and college students. These studies suggest that emotional intelligence is not only associated with academic achievement but also with self-discipline, empathy, and cooperation—traits that directly influence student behaviour in the classroom and beyond.

However, despite growing evidence, the concept of emotional intelligence remains underexplored at the undergraduate level in many parts of India, including Assam. Most available studies focus on metropolitan or postgraduate populations, leaving a gap in understanding how emotional intelligence affects behavioural outcomes among degree college students in smaller towns. Hence, the present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour among degree college students of Sonitpur District, Assam.

This study assumes special significance in the present context where the higher education system is rapidly evolving, and behavioural issues among students—such as stress, indiscipline, or social isolation—are becoming common. By exploring the link between emotional intelligence and behaviour, the study provides insights into how emotional education can be integrated into teacher training, student support systems, and institutional policy to promote well-being and academic success.

2. Review of Literature

Emotional intelligence has been a subject of growing academic and practical interest over the past three decades. It is widely recognized as a major factor influencing success in personal, social, and academic domains. The following review presents theoretical foundations and empirical evidence related to emotional intelligence and its relationship with student behaviour, drawing upon both international and Indian research.

2.1 Theoretical Background

The concept of emotional intelligence was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who described it as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide thinking and actions. Daniel Goleman (1995) popularized the concept through his model, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Bar-On (2006) later extended this framework by proposing the Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI) model, emphasizing adaptability, interpersonal relations, and stress management.

These theoretical perspectives converge on a common idea: that emotions play a critical role in shaping human thought, decision-making, and behaviour. For college students, who experience a range of developmental and social challenges, emotional intelligence provides the foundation for coping, resilience, and interpersonal adjustment.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Behaviour

Student behaviour is influenced by both emotional and environmental factors. Emotionally intelligent students tend to handle conflicts effectively, show empathy towards peers, and display cooperative classroom behaviour. In contrast, students with low emotional intelligence are more likely to show aggression, withdrawal, or disruptive tendencies. Goleman (1998) highlighted that emotional skills can be taught and learned, suggesting that behavioural issues in educational settings can be mitigated through structured emotional learning programs.

Studies conducted by Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey (2011) revealed that higher emotional intelligence correlates positively with academic performance, social responsibility, and reduced antisocial behaviour. Similarly, Parker et al. (2004) reported that students with greater emotional awareness demonstrate better social adaptability and self-discipline.

2.3 Indian Research Studies

In India, the study of emotional intelligence has gained increasing attention in the field of educational psychology. Singh and Chadha (2001) developed one of the most widely used Indian tools—the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)—which measures emotional competence across several domains. Sharma and Singh (2018) found that undergraduate students with higher emotional intelligence were more cooperative, empathetic, and responsible in group settings. The study further reported gender differences, with female students showing slightly higher emotional awareness than males.

A study by Nath and Goswami (2021) conducted among college students in Assam revealed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological adjustment. Their findings emphasized that emotionally balanced students manage stress more effectively and demonstrate better classroom discipline. Similarly, Tiwari and Biswas (2022) found that emotional intelligence positively correlated with motivation and academic engagement among Indian undergraduates.

Other Indian researchers, such as Kaur and Bhatia (2020), highlighted that emotional intelligence training improves social interactions and reduces behavioural problems in educational institutions. These findings suggest that integrating emotional education into the curriculum can enhance overall student conduct and peer relationships.

2.4 Gaps in Literature

Although a substantial body of research supports the link between emotional intelligence and student behaviour, certain gaps remain. First, many Indian studies focus on urban or postgraduate populations, with limited attention given to undergraduate students in smaller towns and districts. Second, while emotional intelligence is recognized as a psychological construct, its practical implications in classroom management and behaviour modification are often overlooked in teacher education and college administration.
In the context of Assam, very few studies have examined the emotional and behavioural dimensions of students in degree colleges, especially in districts like Sonitpur, which represent a blend of rural and semi-urban characteristics. Understanding this relationship can help educators develop more effective emotional learning and behavioural support programs that align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's emphasis on holistic education.

2.5 Summary

The reviewed literature indicates that emotional intelligence is a crucial determinant of adaptive student behaviour. High emotional intelligence enhances interpersonal relationships, cooperation, empathy, and discipline—qualities essential for academic success and personal growth. However, the scarcity of region-specific research in Assam necessitates empirical studies focusing on the relationship between emotional intelligence and behaviour among degree college students.

3. Objectives and Hypotheses

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to examine the role of emotional intelligence in influencing student behaviour among degree college students in Sonitpur District, Assam. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among degree college students in Sonitpur District.
   2. To evaluate the overall behavioural patterns of college students concerning emotional intelligence.

3. To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour.
4. To compare emotional intelligence and behaviour scores between male and female students.
5. To provide educational implications for enhancing student behaviour through emotional intelligence development programs.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the stated objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated for empirical testing:

H₁: There is a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and student behaviour among degree college students.
H₂: There is a significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female students.
H₃: There is a significant difference in student behaviour between male and female students.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The present study employed a **descriptive correlational research design** to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour among degree college students. This design was selected because it allows for the analysis of naturally occurring relationships between variables without manipulating them. The approach is suitable for identifying patterns and associations in the educational context.

4.2 Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all students enrolled in undergraduate level of government provincialised degree colleges of **Sonitpur District, Assam**. Using **stratified random sampling**, 300 students were selected to ensure representation from both genders and diverse academic streams (Arts, Science, and Commerce). The final sample comprised **150 male and 150 female students** in the age group of **18–22 years**.
The colleges included were selected from Tezpur, Dhekiajuli, and nearby rural areas to represent the district's academic diversity. Care was taken to include students from varied socio-economic backgrounds, ensuring the sample reflected a realistic mix of the student population.

4.3 Tools Used

Two standardized instruments were used for data collection:
1.Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)
Developed by **Dr. Dalip Singh and Dr. N. K. Chadha (2001)**, the EIS is a widely recognized Indian tool measuring emotional intelligence across four key dimensions:
1.Self-awareness
2.Empathy
3.Self-motivation
4.Emotional stability

The scale has 60 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, and its reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) is reported as **0.86**, ensuring high internal consistency.

2.Student Behaviour Checklist

A standardized checklist developed for assessing college students' behavioural tendencies was used. It measures positive and negative behavioural attributes such as cooperation, discipline, empathy, aggression, and social responsibility. The reliability of the checklist was **0.81**, indicating acceptable reliability.

4.4 Procedure for Data Collection

Permission was obtained from the principals of participating colleges prior to data collection. Students were briefed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of their responses was assured. The questionnaires were administered during regular class hours in small groups. Respondents took about 25–30

minutes to complete the instruments. After collection, responses were scored manually and tabulated for statistical analysis.

4.5 Statistical Techniques

The following statistical methods were used for data analysis:
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean and standard deviation were computed for both emotional intelligence and student behaviour scores.
- **Pearson's Product Moment Correlation:** To assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour.
- **Independent Samples** t**-test:** To examine gender differences in emotional intelligence and behaviour scores.

All statistical analyses were conducted at a **0.05 level of significance** using SPSS software

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study along with interpretations and discussions in the light of existing research. The main objectives were to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour, and to explore gender differences in these variables among degree college students of Sonitpur District of Assam.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of emotional intelligence and student behaviour scores are presented below-

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Intelligence and Student Behaviour Scores

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Emotional Intelligence	300	72.45	8.62
Student Behaviour	300	68.22	7.98

The data show that the mean emotional intelligence score (M = 72.45) indicates a moderately high level among college students. The mean behaviour score (M = 68.22) also suggests generally positive behavioural tendencies. The relatively low standard deviations reflect moderate variability, showing a consistent pattern of emotional and behavioural traits among the respondents.

5.2 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Student Behaviour

To test the first hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed between emotional intelligence and student behaviour. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Student Behaviour

Variables	N	r	P - value	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence x Student Behaviour	300	0.48	< 0.05	Moderate positive correlation

The obtained correlation coefficient (r = 0.48, p< 0.05) indicates a **moderate positive relationship** between emotional intelligence and student behaviour. This implies that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit more disciplined, empathetic, and socially responsible behaviour.

These findings are consistent with studies by **Brackett et al. (2011)** and **Sharma & Singh (2018)**, who reported that emotional awareness and regulation contribute significantly to prosocial conduct and classroom cooperation. The result also aligns with **Nath & Goswami (2021)**, who found that emotionally intelligent college students in Assam display better adjustment and peer relationships.

5.2 Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Student Behaviour

To test hypotheses H_2 and H_3, independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Student Behaviour Scores

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence	Male	150	71.10	8.74	2.71	0.03	Significant
	Female	150	73.80	8.50			
Student Behaviour	Male	150	67.42	7.91	1.74	0.07	Not Significant
	Female	150	69.02	8.01			

The results indicate a significant gender difference in emotional intelligence($t = 2.71$, $p < 0.05$), with female students scoring higher than males. This finding is in agreement with **Kaur and Bhatia (2020)** and **Tiwari and Biswas (2022)**, who observed similar trends among Indian college students. However, no significant gender difference was found in student behaviour ($t = 1.74$, $p > 0.05$), suggesting that both male and female students exhibit comparable behavioural tendencies despite differences in emotional intelligence levels.

5.4 Discussion

The results of this study support the hypothesis that emotional intelligence positively influences student behaviour. Students with greater emotional awareness and regulation are better able to manage interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts, and adapt to academic challenges. These attributes translate into constructive behavioural outcomes such as cooperation, discipline, and empathy.

The finding of higher emotional intelligence among female students can be explained by their tendency to express emotions more openly and their greater sensitivity to social cues, as suggested by **Goleman (1998)**. However, the similarity in behavioural scores indicates that both genders maintain comparable standards of social behaviour in academic settings.

The moderate correlation between emotional intelligence and student behaviour highlights the potential benefits of emotional education in higher institutions. Integrating emotional intelligence training within college curricula could enhance students' social adjustment, academic engagement, and psychological well-being, aligning with the objectives of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

6. Educational Implications and Conclusion

6.1 Educational Implications

The results of the present study carry several implications for educational policy, teacher education, and student development programs, especially in the context of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**.

1.Integration of Emotional Intelligence in Curriculum
Colleges should incorporate emotional intelligence training into their academic programs. Activities like group discussions, peer mentoring, mindfulness sessions, and reflective exercises can be used to promote emotional awareness and empathy among students.

2.Teacher Sensitization and Professional Development
Teachers play a central role in modelling emotionally intelligent behaviour. Therefore, pre-service and in-service teacher education programs must include modules on emotional literacy, classroom empathy, and conflict resolution strategies.

3.Student Counselling and Support Systems
Establishing student counselling cells with trained professionals can help identify emotional or behavioural issues early. Counsellors can use emotional intelligence frameworks to guide students in self-regulation, decision-making, and stress management.

4.Gender-Inclusive Programs
Although female students scored slightly higher on emotional intelligence, emotional education programs should equally address both genders, focusing on enhancing social sensitivity, resilience, and cooperative learning skills.

5.Institutional Policy and Leadership

College administrators should create emotionally supportive environments that value respect, communication, and inclusivity. Emotional intelligence-based leadership practices can strengthen institutional culture and student engagement.

6.2 Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and student behaviour among degree college students in Sonitpur District, Assam. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between the two variables, indicating that emotionally intelligent students tend to demonstrate more positive, adaptive, and socially responsible behavioural patterns. The moderate correlation coefficient ($r = 0.48$) supports the view that emotional competencies—such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional control—play a major role in influencing how students act and interact within academic and social settings.

The study further found a significant gender difference in emotional intelligence, with female students showing slightly higher emotional awareness and regulation compared to male students. However, behavioural differences between male and female students were not statistically significant. This suggests that while gender may influence emotional perception and expression, it does not necessarily determine behavioural outcomes in a college context. Both male and female students exhibit similar behavioural tendencies when supported by an emotionally healthy environment.

Overall, the findings confirm that emotional intelligence is a key determinant of student conduct in higher education institutions. Emotional intelligence helps students manage interpersonal relationships, maintain discipline, and respond constructively to stress and academic challenges. Thus, it can be considered an essential component of holistic education, contributing to both personal growth and institutional harmony.

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