

LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG B.Sc. NURSING STUDENTS

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Abstract : The level of emotional intelligence among B.Sc. nursing students has gained increasing importance in recent years, as it plays a vital role in shaping interpersonal relationships, communication skills, stress management, and overall professional competence in nursing practice. A higher level of emotional intelligence contributes positively to academic achievement, clinical decision-making, teamwork, and patient outcomes, whereas a lower level may lead to increased stress, emotional instability, burnout, and reduced quality of care. A quantitative descriptive research design was done to assess the level of emotional intelligence among B.Sc. nursing students. The objectives were to assess the level of emotional intelligence among B.Sc. nursing students and to find an association between level of emotional intelligence with selected sociodemographic variables of nursing students. The sample size was 30 nursing students of the selected nursing college selected by using convenience sampling technique. The tool used for the study was socio demographic variables and Modified Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test to assess the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students. Findings revealed that 25 (83.33%) students had a moderate level of emotional intelligence, while 5 (16.67%) had a high level; none exhibited a low level of emotional intelligence. Chi-square analysis showed no significant association between emotional intelligence and most socio-demographic variables, including age, gender, family type, residence, academic performance, academic stress, and interpersonal relationships. However, a significant association was found between emotional intelligence and the reason for choosing nursing as a profession. The study concludes that the majority of B.Sc. nursing students possess a moderate level of emotional intelligence, highlighting the need for strategies to further enhance emotional competencies essential for effective nursing practice.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, nursing students.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as an important area of research due to its significant influence on personal, academic, and professional success. Salovey and Mayer defined emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others to guide thinking and behavior². Nursing students, who predominantly belong to the adolescent and youth age groups defined by the World Health Organization as 10–19 years and 15–24 years respectively, undergo substantial emotional, cognitive, and social development that shapes their identity, interpersonal relationships, and career choices¹¹. Emotional intelligence among nursing students is influenced by various factors, including demographic characteristics, stress levels, coping mechanisms, reflective capacity, and self-esteem¹⁵. In the nursing profession, emotional intelligence is particularly important as it contributes to effective communication, empathy, teamwork, clinical decision-making, and the delivery of quality patient care in emotionally demanding situations. Therefore, assessing the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students is essential to identify areas requiring support and development, thereby enhancing both academic performance and professional competence in future nursing practice.

Need and Significance of the study

Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as an essential competency in nursing education and practice, particularly due to the complex emotional demands associated with patient care. Nursing students are required not only to acquire clinical knowledge and technical skills but also to develop the ability to understand, regulate, and appropriately respond to emotions in themselves and others. The need for the present study on the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students in Kerala arises from the growing realization that emotional competencies play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of healthcare delivery. The World Health Organization emphasizes in its “Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030” that a competent health workforce must possess interpersonal and psychosocial skills in addition to technical expertise to ensure quality, safe, and people-centered care¹⁶.

Nursing students with higher emotional intelligence are better able to understand patients' emotional needs, provide compassionate care, and maintain professional composure in stressful situations. Furthermore, emotional intelligence contributes to improved decision-making and critical thinking, which are vital for safe and effective clinical practice¹⁹.

The effect of emotional intelligence among nursing students is multifaceted, influencing both educational and clinical outcomes. Studies have shown that emotional intelligence is significantly associated with academic performance, clinical competence, and patient satisfaction²¹. Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate better communication skills, teamwork, and leadership abilities, which are critical components of nursing practice. Moreover, emotional intelligence enhances empathy and caring behaviour, enabling students to deliver holistic and patient-centered care¹⁸.

By assessing the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students in Kerala, the study not only identifies existing gaps but also provides direction for improving educational strategies, student well-being, and quality of patient care.

Statement of the problem

A descriptive study to assess the level of emotional intelligence among students of the selected College of Nursing in Pathanamthitta District.

Objectives

- To assess the level of emotional intelligence among students of selected College of Nursing in Pathanamthitta District.
- To find out the association between level of emotional intelligence and selected sociodemographic variables of the nursing students.

Operational Definitions

1. **Assess:** In this present study assess refers to the evaluation of level of emotional intelligence among nursing students using Modified Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale.
2. **Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others and it includes components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills and it is measured using Modified Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale.
3. **Nursing Students:** it refers to individuals enrolled in nursing educational institutions for acquiring knowledge and professional training. In the present study it denotes the first semester B.Sc. nursing students in selected College of Nursing in Pathanamthitta District.

Assumptions

- a. Emotions play a significant role in influencing an individual's thoughts, decisions and behavior.
- b. Sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, area of residence, educational background, type of family may have an influence on the level of emotional intelligence of nursing students.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research approach: A quantitative research approach was adopted for the present study

Research design: A descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted in the present study

Population: In this present study the target population comprised all B.Sc. Nursing students studying in nursing colleges of Pathanamthitta district.

Sample: The sample consisted of B.Sc. Nursing students of the selected nursing college who fulfilled the inclusion criteria and were available during the period of data collection.

Sample size: The sample size for the study consisted of 30 students from the selected college of nursing in Pathanamthitta district.

Sampling technique: Non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select the participants.

Tool/ Instrument:

The data collection tool consisted of two sections:

Section A: Socio-Demographic Data

This section included items related to demographic characteristics such as age, gender, type of family, area of residence, reason for choosing nursing, participation in extracurricular activities, relationship with family, academic stress level, percentage of marks in 12th standard, adjustment to college environment, and comfort in communicating with teachers.

Section B: Modified Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

Emotional intelligence was measured using the Modified Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). The scale consists of 33 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

Three items are reverse scored. The total score ranges from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating higher emotional intelligence.

Interpretation

- 33-99 -Low Emotional Intelligence
- 100-132 -Average / Moderate Emotional Intelligence
- 133-165 -High Emotional Intelligence

Data collection process

Data collection is gathering the address of a research problem. The data collection period for this study was from 23/2/2026-28/2/2026. The data was collected from MGM Muthoot College of Nursing, Kozhencherry. After obtaining a formal permission from the concerned authority, the college was selected as the setting for data collection. The nursing students were selected on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria by non-probability convenience sampling technique. The study was conducted among first semester BSc nursing students. The purpose of the study was explained and obtained written informed consent from the students. Data was collected using 5-point Likert scale. Confidentiality of the information was maintained. The subjects were cooperative during the study.

Data analysis

Data analysis is planned based on the objectives of the study. After data collection the data was organized, tabulated, and summarized by using descriptive and inferential statistics manually in MS Excel 2007 version.

- Frequency and percentage were used to describe socio-demographic variables.
- Chi-square test was used to determine the association between the level of emotional intelligence and selected socio-demographic variables.
- The level of significance was set at 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Section A: Description of samples according to socio-demographic data

- In the present study, distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on age revealed that majority 17 (56.70%) of students were at the age of 18 years, 10 (33.30%) of students were at the age of 19 years and 3 (10.00%) of students were at the age of 20 years.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on gender revealed that 25 (83.30%) of students were female and 5 (16.70%) of students were male.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on area of residence showed that 17 (56.70%) of students belonged to semi-urban area, 8 (26.70%) belonged to urban area and 5 (16.70%) belonged to rural area.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on type of family revealed that 26 (86.70%) of students belonged to nuclear family and 4 (13.30%) belonged to joint family.

- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on reason for choosing nursing showed that majority 17 (56.66 %) of students selected nursing due to job security, 10 (33.30%) due to self-interest and 3 (10.00%) due to family influence.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on extracurricular participation revealed that 18 (60.00%) of students participates in extracurricular activities whereas 12 (40.00%) did not participate.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on relationship with family showed that all 30 (100.00%) students reported having a good relationship with their family.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on relationship with peers revealed that 25 (83.30%) of students had good relationship and 5 (16.70%) had average relationship with peers.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on academic stress showed that majority 16 (53.30%) of students experienced moderate stress, 13 (43.30%) experienced severe stress and 1 (3.30%) experienced mild stress.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on 12th marks revealed that majority 22 (73.30%) of students scored above 90%, 7 (23.30%) scored above 80% and 1 (3.30%) scored above 70%.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on adjustment to college showed that 24 (80.00%) of students had moderate adjustment, 5 (16.70%) had easy adjustment and 1 (3.30%) had difficulty in adjustment.
- Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on communication with teachers revealed that 16 (53.30%) of students were somewhat comfortable, 8 (26.70%) were comfortable and 6 (20.00%) were not comfortable in communicating with teachers.

Section B: Assessment of level of emotional intelligence among nursing students

Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on level of emotional intelligence revealed that majority 25 (83.33%) of students had moderate emotional intelligence, while 5 (16.67%) had high emotional intelligence and none of the students had low emotional intelligence.

Table 1:

Reason for choosing Nursing	High emotional intelligence		Moderate emotional intelligence		χ^2	df	Table value
	f	(%)	f	(%)			
Self-interest	2	(7)	8	(27)			
Family influence	2	(7)	1	(3)	6.903529	2	5.99
Job security	1	(3)	16	(53)			

Association of level of emotional intelligence and reason for choosing nursing.

N=30

p<0.05

The table 1 describes about the association of level of emotional intelligence among nursing students with reason for choosing nursing. The computed Chi-square value was 6.903529 which is more than the table value 5.99 which depicts that there is a significant association between level of emotional intelligence and reason for choosing nursing

Association between level of emotional intelligence and selected socio-demographic variables

The results showed that factors like age, gender, family type, place of residence, extracurricular activities, relationships with family and peers, academic stress, grades achieved in the 12th grade, adjustment to college, and comfort with teachers had no significant association with the level of emotional intelligence. However, a significant association has been found between the level of emotional intelligence and the reason for choosing nursing, suggesting that student's reasons for choosing nursing had some influence on their level of emotional intelligence.

Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate better communication skills, teamwork, and leadership abilities, which are critical components of nursing practice. Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in shaping competent, compassionate,

and resilient nurses who can effectively respond to the emotional and clinical demands of the healthcare settings. Moreover, emotional intelligence enhances empathy and caring behavior, enabling students to deliver holistic and patient-centered care.¹⁸

The study aimed at assessing the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students and find out the association between level of emotional intelligence and selected socio-demographic variables.

Nursing Implications

The findings of the study have certain important indications for the nursing profession in the field of nursing practice, nursing education, nursing administration and nursing research.

Nursing Practice

- Nursing students can practice self-awareness by regularly reflecting on their emotions and behaviour during patient care.
- Nursing students can seek feedback from mentors and peers to improve interpersonal and communication skills in practice.
- Nurses can strengthen teamwork and conflict-management skills by applying emotional intelligence during interprofessional collaboration.
- Nurses can identify and recognize students and colleagues with low emotional intelligence and provide guidance, mentoring, and supportive interventions to improve emotional skills.
- Nurses can model emotionally intelligent behaviours such as empathy, active listening, and respectful communication in patient care settings.

Nursing Education

- Nurse educators can incorporate regular emotional intelligence assessment and feedback during clinical postings to monitor students' emotional growth.
- Nursing students can practice self-awareness by regularly reflecting on their emotions and behaviour during patient care.
- Nursing students can participate in workshops and training programmes focused on emotional intelligence development.
- Nursing students can participate in workshops and training programmes focused on emotional intelligence development.

Nursing Administration

- Nurse administrators can establish mentorship and counselling services to support students in managing emotional challenges.
- Nurse administrators can incorporate regular emotional intelligence assessment and feedback during clinical postings to monitor students' emotional growth.
- Nurse administrators can create a supportive and positive learning environment to enhance students' psychological well-being.
- Nurse administrators can organize training programs focused on developing emotional intelligence.

Nursing Research

- This study helps to guide future research topics.
- Nurse researchers can conduct interventional studies to evaluate the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training programs.
- Nurse researchers can examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance, stress, and clinical competence.
- Nurse researchers can explore factors influencing emotional intelligence, such as educational environment and personal characteristics.

Limitations

- Generalization of the study is limited due to convenience sampling technique and small sample size.
- Study included only 1st semester of B.Sc. nursing students.
- Study is limited to selected college of Pathanamthitta district.
- Descriptive design was used for the present study

Recommendations

- A similar study can be conducted with a larger population.
- Similar study can be conducted among different setting.
- Similar study can be carried out by different research methods like mixed methods.
- Similar study can be conducted among various nursing groups.
- Similar study can be conducted among nurse educators.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to assess the level of emotional intelligence among B.Sc. Nursing students of a selected College of Nursing in Pathanamthitta District and to determine its association with selected socio-demographic variables. The findings revealed that the majority of nursing students possessed a moderate level of emotional intelligence, while a smaller proportion demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence. A significant association was observed between emotional intelligence and the reason for choosing nursing as a profession, whereas no significant association was found with other selected socio-demographic variables. The study highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in nursing education and practice, as it contributes to effective communication, empathy, stress management, interpersonal relationships, and professional competence. Therefore, efforts should be made to strengthen emotional intelligence among nursing students through appropriate educational strategies and supportive learning experiences, thereby preparing them to provide holistic, compassionate, and quality patient care.

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