

Levels of Emotional Intelligence and Self-esteem Among Nursing Students in Selected Nursing Colleges

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Abstract

Background: Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a critical role in personal and professional development, especially in healthcare professions like nursing. It facilitates emotional regulation, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships.

Aim: Aim of the present was to assess the emotional intelligence and self-esteem among the nursing students.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study with a non-experimental quantitative approach was conducted among 192 nursing students selected using purposive sampling. A structured interview schedule comprising demographic data and a 20-item Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment Tool was used to gather data. EI was assessed across four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Rosenberg's Self-esteem scale for assessing self-esteem.

Results: The study revealed that a majority of participants had low emotional intelligence: 61.98% exhibited low overall EI. Domain-specific low EI levels were noted in self-awareness (55.21%), self-management (57.29%), social awareness (54.69%), and relationship management (57.29%). The mean overall EI score was 66.89 ± 14.34 . The overall mean and Standard deviation of self-esteem was 23.38 ± 5.30 . The correlation coefficient between self-esteem and emotional intelligence is 0.280, indicating a positive but low correlation.

Discussion: The findings indicate underdeveloped emotional intelligence among nursing students, necessitating structured EI development programs.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, nursing students, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, Self-esteem.

INTRODUCTION

Emotion is a fundamental aspect of human personality and functioning. In both personal and professional realms, emotional intelligence (EI) significantly influences decision-making, behavior regulation, and interpersonal dynamics. Salovey and Mayer were the first to define emotional intelligence, and Mayer (2004) later elaborated it as the capacity to reason about emotions and use emotional information to enhance thought processes. According to Mayer, EI involves the ability to perceive, access, generate, understand, and regulate emotions for both emotional and intellectual development.

Prior research underscores the significance of emotional intelligence in academic success, stress management, and professional resilience. For nursing students, high EI is particularly crucial as it contributes to empathy, clinical decision-making, communication, and holistic patient care.

Self-esteem is the subjective sense of personal worth or value, encompassing positive or negative evaluations of oneself. It reflects an individual's overall attitude toward themselves, irrespective of external circumstances. Originally discussed by David Hume in the 18th century, self-esteem gained prominence through the works of William James, who distinguished between the "I-self" and "Me-self".

Understanding the predictive value of self-esteem is essential for enhancing the well-being of college students. Self-esteem, viewed through various psychological models, plays a pivotal role in an individual's identity formation, societal interactions, and overall mental health. High self-esteem is linked to positive emotions, life satisfaction, and effective coping mechanisms, while low self-esteem contributes to increased sensitivity to external judgments and heightened stress levels.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the levels of emotional intelligence among nursing students.
- To assess the self-esteem among nursing students.
- To find the correlation between the emotional intelligence and self-esteem among nursing students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A descriptive cross-sectional study among 432 college youth (18–23 years) in Udupi, Karnataka, examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and assertiveness using standardized tools. The mean scores were 124.99 (EI), 18.48 (self-esteem), and 60.71 (assertiveness). Pearson's correlation showed weak but significant positive relationships of emotional intelligence with self-esteem ($r = 0.282$) and assertiveness ($r = 0.288$), and a stronger correlation between self-esteem and assertiveness ($r = 0.367$). The findings highlight the importance of promoting self-esteem and assertiveness to enhance emotional intelligence in youth.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 300 undergraduate students in Pune, Maharashtra, to assess the association between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and academic performance. Data were collected using the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). Emotional intelligence also showed a weak positive correlation with academic performance ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that enhancing self-esteem may positively influence emotional intelligence and overall academic success among students.

METHODOLOGY:

Research Approach: Quantitative research approach and research design was descriptive correlational design. **Sample and sampling technique:** The study sample comprised 192 nursing students selected through purposive sampling. **Tools:** Data were collected using a structured interview schedule which included: Part A: Demographic variables (age, gender, course, residence, family type, leisure activities) and Part B: A 20-item Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment Tool encompassing four domains: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness and Relationship management. Each domain included five items scored on a five-point Likert scale. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Rosenberg's Self esteem Scale(10 point Scale). **Data Analysis:** Descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS. The results of the study were divided into

Section A: Description of demographic data.

Section B: Description of emotional intelligence and self Esteem.

Section C: Correlation between the emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

SECTION A: Description of Demographic Variables.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	19–20 years	100	52.08
	21–22 years	92	47.92
Gender	Male	28	14.58
	Female	164	85.42
Course	GNM	64	33.33
	B.Sc. (N)	128	66.67
Residency	Urban	150	78.13
	Rural	42	21.88
Type of Family	Nuclear	143	74.48
	Joint	43	22.40
	Single Parent	04	2.08
	Extended	02	1.04
Leisure Activities	Playing Games	96	50.00
	Reading	48	25.00

	Online Apps	42	21.88
	Crafting/Painting/Travel	06	3.13

Section B: Description of emotional intelligence and Self esteem among Nursing students.

Table 2: Distribution of samples according to Emotional Intelligence Levels

Domain	EI Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self-Awareness	Low	106	55.21
	High	86	44.79
Self-Management	Low	110	57.29
	High	82	42.71
Social Awareness	Low	105	54.69
	High	87	45.31
Relationship Management	Low	110	57.29
	High	82	42.71
Overall Emotional Intelligence	Low	119	61.98
	High	73	38.02

The table no. 02 displays the distribution of emotional intelligence (EI) levels—categorized as low and high—across four domains and the overall EI score among the participants. A majority of participants demonstrated low EI in all domains, with the highest proportion observed in Overall Emotional Intelligence (61.98%), followed by Self-Management (57.29%) and Relationship Management (57.29%). Self-Awareness and Social Awareness also showed more participants in the low EI category (55.21% and 54.69%, respectively). In contrast, fewer participants exhibited high EI levels across domains, ranging from 42.71% to 45.31%.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Emotional intelligence scores.

Domain	Score Range	Mean	SD
Self-Awareness	5–25	16.80	3.94
Self-Management	7–25	16.68	3.73
Social Awareness	6–25	16.94	3.83
Relationship Management	5–25	16.46	4.02
Total EI Score	24–100	66.89	14.34

The table presents the mean and standard deviation (SD) of emotional intelligence (EI) across its four key domains among the study participants. The highest mean score was observed in the domain of Social Awareness (M = 16.94, SD = 3.83), followed by Self-Awareness (M = 16.80, SD = 3.94), Self-Management (M = 16.68, SD = 3.73), and Relationship Management (M = 16.46, SD = 4.02). The overall mean EI score was 66.89 with a standard deviation of 14.34, indicating moderate emotional intelligence among the participants with some variability in responses.

Table No. 4. Description of Self esteem among nursing students.

Self Esteem	Frequency	Percentage
Low Self Esteem	59	30.73
Moderate Self esteem	95	49.48
High Self Esteem	38	19.79
Total	192	100

The table presents the distribution of participants according to their levels of self-esteem. Out of a total of 192 participants, the majority, 95 individuals (49.48%), exhibited moderate self-esteem. This was followed by 59 participants (30.73%) who had low self-esteem, and 38 participants (19.79%) who

demonstrated high self-esteem. These findings indicate that nearly half of the participants fall within the moderate range, while a smaller proportion of individuals report high levels of self-esteem.

Table No. Mean and SD of Self Esteem among nursing students.

No	Items	Mean	SD
1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	2.03	0.96
2	At times I think I am no good at all	2.40	0.89
3	I feel that I have a number of good qualities	2.04	0.83
4	I am able to do things as well as most other people	2.15	0.83
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of	2.45	0.84
6	I certainly feel useless at times	2.43	0.93
7	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	2.23	0.91
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself	2.20	0.97
9	All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure	3.04	1.23
10	I take a positive attitude toward myself	2.31	1.34
Overall score of self-esteem		23.28	5.30

The overall mean and Standard deviation of self esteem was 23.38 ± 5.30 .

Table No. 06. Correlation between the emotional intelligence and self esteem among nursing students.

Correlation	Emotional Intelligence
Self Esteem	0.280

The correlation coefficient between self-esteem and emotional intelligence is 0.280, indicating a positive but low correlation. This suggests that as emotional intelligence increases, self-esteem tends to increase as well, although the relationship is not very strong. The positive direction of the correlation implies that individuals with higher emotional intelligence may generally have better self-esteem.

DISCUSSION

The study findings reveal that the majority of participants demonstrated low levels of Emotional Intelligence (EI) across all its domains. The highest proportion of participants with low EI was observed in the Overall Emotional Intelligence score (61.98%), closely followed by Self-Management (57.29%) and Relationship Management (57.29%). Self-Awareness (55.21%) and Social Awareness (54.69%) also reflected low levels in a majority of participants. These results suggest significant deficits in the emotional competencies required to recognize, manage, and respond to one's own and others' emotions effectively. The mean scores across EI domains indicate moderate capabilities, with Social Awareness recording the highest mean ($M = 16.94$, $SD = 3.83$), followed by Self-Awareness ($M = 16.80$, $SD = 3.94$), Self-Management ($M = 16.68$, $SD = 3.73$), and Relationship Management ($M = 16.46$, $SD = 4.02$). The overall mean EI score of 66.89 ± 14.34 suggests that while the average emotional intelligence among participants falls within the moderate range, there is a wide variation in individual responses.

In terms of self-esteem, most participants (49.48%) had moderate self-esteem, while 30.73% exhibited low self-esteem, and only 19.79% reported high self-esteem. The mean self-esteem score of 23.38 ± 5.30 reflects a moderate level of self-worth among the participants. However, the substantial proportion of individuals with low self-esteem raises concern, particularly given its potential impact on mental well-being and academic or professional performance.

The correlation coefficient of 0.280 between emotional intelligence and self-esteem indicates a positive but weak relationship. This suggests that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are somewhat more likely to possess higher self-esteem, though the association is not strong. Nevertheless, the positive direction of the relationship supports existing psychological theories that emotional awareness and regulation contribute to self-evaluation and self-confidence.

Recommendations

1. Implement Emotional Intelligence Development Programs.

Introduce structured training sessions focused on developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and relationship-building skills. Activities like role-play, reflective journaling, and emotional skills workshops may be effective.

2. Enhance Self-Esteem Through Supportive Interventions.

Provide individual and group counseling services aimed at improving self-worth, reducing negative self-talk, and reinforcing personal strengths, particularly for those with low self-esteem.

3. Curriculum Integration.

Integrate emotional intelligence and self-esteem modules into academic or professional development curricula, with continuous assessments and feedback mechanisms.

4. Promote Mentorship and Peer Support.

Establish peer mentoring programs where emotionally competent individuals support others, fostering an emotionally healthy and encouraging environment.

5. Regular Assessment and Feedback.

Conduct periodic assessments of EI and self-esteem to monitor progress and identify individuals needing targeted intervention.

6. Train Educators and Leaders.

Equip educators, clinical instructors, and supervisors with skills to model emotionally intelligent behavior and create psychologically safe learning environments.

7. Encourage Reflective Practices.

Introduce mindfulness, meditation, and reflective exercises in the daily routine to enhance emotional self-regulation and self-perception.

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