



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor (RJIF): 8.4
IJAR 2024; 10(6): 31-35
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 03-02-2024
Accepted: 04-03-2024

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Understanding emotional intelligence among undergraduates in Palakkad District

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Abstract

The study titled understanding emotional intelligence among undergraduates in Palakkad District explores the level of awareness of Undergraduates towards Emotional Intelligence and examines the perception of Undergraduates towards EI from different streams. The 3 facets of Emotional Intelligence namely self-awareness, empathy and self-regulation have been analysed in the viewpoint of Undergraduates. The study has used descriptive research design and the researcher has collected data through convenient sampling method from 70 undergraduates of different streams from Palakkad District in Kerala. The analysis was done using Mean Score Analysis and One-Way ANOVA. The level of awareness towards EI was measured through Mean Score Analysis and the perception of Undergraduates of different streams was analysed by using One-Way ANOVA. The results of the analysis revealed that the Undergraduates' awareness level to Emotional Intelligence is low. The study also identified that the Undergraduates from Arts and Professional Course have a different perception towards Self-Awareness aspect of Emotional Intelligence. The findings of the research suggest to bring a pro-active approach in the educational institutions in Kerala for building emotionally intelligent group of students.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, undergraduates

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence can be referred as the skill to recognize and regulate emotions well. Emotional Intelligence has become a necessity for the people of various streams. This term is of high importance to professionals, employees, corporates, students and so on. In their 1990 paper titled "Emotional Intelligence", published in the journal "Imagination, Cognition and Personality", Peter Salovey and John Mayer created the concept. Daniel Goleman popularized it later in 1995 with his book "Emotional Intelligence". "The capability to know the feelings of oneself and of others, to access and produce emotions to help mind process emotions and emotional information, and to control emotions to foster both intellectual and emotional development is known as emotional intelligence". Daniel Goleman's study on emotional intelligence has outlined its 5 main areas such as Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social skills. Emotional Intelligence is applicable in every walks of life, whether it be a student or a professional. This study is particularly focusing on the undergraduates in Palakkad district. It aims at understanding the emotional intelligence among the undergraduates. These days, there are rising national trends in the number of students experiencing anxiety, stress, despair, and poor academic performance. Since educational institutions generally do not address emotional awareness and emotional control abilities, students face difficulties and issues with their academic performance.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence can be the capability to diagnose, realize, and control the feelings of oneself and of others (EI). It includes traits like empathy, self-control, self-awareness, and social skills. People having high emotional intelligence are good at handling social situations, overcoming stress and hardship with courage, and fostering enduring connections. Emotional intelligence (EI) is becoming more widely acknowledged as a vital component of success in both personal and professional spheres, impacting areas including decision-making, leadership, teamwork, and communication.

Gaining knowledge of other people's viewpoints, detecting and controlling emotions, and promoting positive interpersonal interactions are all components of growing emotional intelligence.

Major Components of Emotional Intelligence

1. Self-awareness

To be self-aware means to be able to diagnose and realize one's own views, feelings, and behaviours. It requires to be aware of a person's feelings and realizing how they affect the choices and behaviours. Self-aware people are able to evaluate themselves objectively, identify their values and motives, and grasp their goals and desires. They possess the ability to better manage their feelings since they are aware of them as they emerge.

2. Self-regulation

Self-regulation is the capacity to regulate and manage one's instincts, emotions, and behaviours in different contexts. It includes the skill to govern one's emotions, think things through before acting, and adjust one's behaviour in response to changing conditions. People who are self-regulated are not controlled by their emotions; rather, they are able to keep themselves cool and stay calm under pressure, show resilience in the face of difficulties, and recover positively from setbacks.

3. Motivation

The force that drives a person's activities and behaviours is called motivation. It involves having a strong drive to accomplish aims, enduring despite obstacles, and retaining enthusiasm and hope in the face of disappointments. Motivated people create difficult but attainable objectives for themselves and are determined to pursue them with passion and devotion. Instead of being driven only by praise or recognition from others, they are driven by an innate feeling of purpose or devotion to what they accomplish.

4. Empathy

Empathy is the capability to think, sense and experience from the viewpoint of someone else. It describes placing oneself in another person's position and see things from their perspective. Empaths are adept at interpreting nonverbal cues including body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions. They are also sensitive to the emotions of others. They communicate with others with compassion and understanding, and they exhibit a sincere care for their well-being. Since empathy enables people to relate to others on an emotional level and offer support and affirmation, it promotes deeper connections and stronger relationships.

5. Social Skills

A variety of talents are included in social skills, which facilitate relationship-building, cooperation, and successful communication with others. This covers abilities including negotiating, teamwork, assertiveness, active listening, and conflict resolution. People with strong social skills are good at establishing connection and giving others a sense of worth and understanding. They can easily navigate social encounters and express their thoughts and feelings in a confident and unambiguous manner. Effective teamwork and the development and maintenance of healthy relationships are dependent on having strong social skills, both personally and professionally.

Review of Literature

In Sánchez-Ruiz, Jose, Carlos, Prez-Gonzalez, and Petride's (2010) ^[9] had conducted a study titled "Trait emotional intelligence profiles of students from different university faculties.". For that, the researcher had collected the details of 512 pupils from the following five academic fields namely, technical studies, natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities. The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire was used by researchers to hypothesize that: (a) the arts and social sciences would perform better in the emotional domain than technical studies; (b) the arts and social sciences would perform better in the emotional domain than technical studies; (c) the arts and self-control would perform worse than technical studies; and (d) there would be an interaction between faculty and gender, with female students performing better than male students in the social sciences alone. There were also some additional exploratory comparisons made. The findings, while continuing in the predicted direction, bolstered hypotheses (a), (b), and (d), but not (c).

Zhun Gong *et al.*, (2019) ^[2] had examined the impact of emotional intelligence on the burnout and performance in job. The research was done with reference to the role played by psychological capital as a mediator. The research aimed at identifying the way in which the emotional intelligence of a person impacts the performance and burnout in job; does it has got a direct effect or indirect effect and what is the role of psychological capital in the relation of emotional intelligence with the job performance and job burnout. The respondents of the study were the employees of several organizations who were surveyed through a questionnaire. The number of respondents surveyed counted to about 450. Findings of the study disclosed that the emotional intelligence of the employees had got an optimistic predictive influence over the job performance and psychological capital. Further, emotional intelligence was negatively related with the burnout in job. It was also explored that the psychological capital had a pessimistic predictive impact over job burnout and an optimistic predictive impact over the job performance. The authors had also identified that the psychological capital played the role of a mediator on the relation of emotional intelligence with the job performance and job burnout.

Sabie *et al.* (2020, p.52) ^[10] have studied about the relationship amongst emotional intelligence and employee performance in the private sector companies in Romania. Employee performance and emotional intelligence are strongly correlated. According to the findings, it has been found out that EI and performance are closely related with a Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .547$), and with an error probability of less than 0.001 studied the impact of emotional intelligence on the turnover intentions. The author had performed this study by identifying the relationship of the factors through the role played by POS as a moderator and the role of job burnout and work-family conflict as the mediator. Details were gathered over a survey from 722 employees from banks of Vietnam. Analysis of the collected data was done PLS-SEM with the help of Smart-PLS 3.0 which showed that the emotional intelligence and turnover intention of the employees had negative association with each other. It was also explored that this relationship was partially mediated by the job burnout and work-family conflict. Also, the authors had also proved that POS had the ability to reduce the job burnout, intentions of turnover of

the employees as well as the conflict amidst work and family. The perceived organizational support also moderated the relation of emotional intelligence with work-family conflict. The negative association of the variables was found to be strong for the employees who do work in an environment filled with support.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the level of awareness about Emotional Intelligence among Undergraduates in Palakkad District.
2. To study the perception of Undergraduates from different streams towards Emotional Intelligence.

Research Methodology

The study focuses on understanding the Emotional Intelligence among Undergraduates. The research has a descriptive research design. The researcher has used three variables namely Self-Awareness, Empathy and Self-Regulation for measuring the Emotional Intelligence. The respondents of the particular study are the Undergraduates in Palakkad district. The population includes undergraduates from different streams such as Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Medical Science and Engineering. The researcher has selected 70 samples from the population by using the convenient sampling method. The study depends upon primary data which the researcher has collected using a structured questionnaire and secondary data which was gathered through journals, websites etc.

Analysis and Interpretation

1. Level of awareness of students towards emotional intelligence mean score analysis.

Table 1: Mean score analysis of emotional intelligence

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Awareness	70	1	5	2.0014	.56196
Empathy	70	1	5	2.0414	.58767
Self-Regulation	70	1	5	2.1543	.62732
Overall Awareness				2.0647	

Source: SPSS Output

Table 1 depicts the results of mean score analysis of awareness regarding Self-Awareness, Empathy and Self-Regulation of Undergraduates on five-point scale. The highest mean score was obtained for Self-Regulation (2.15), followed by Empathy (2.04) and Self-Awareness (2.001). The value of the scores is close to "2", which indicate that the level of awareness of the Undergraduates regarding each variable is low. The overall awareness score of 2.06 also revealed that the awareness of Undergraduates on Emotional Intelligence is poor.

2. Perception of students towards Emotional Intelligence with respect to their stream - One Way ANOVA
 H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of Undergraduates towards Self-Awareness based on their stream.
 H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of Undergraduates towards Empathy based on their stream.
 H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the perception of Undergraduates towards Self-Regulation based on their stream.

Table 2: One Way ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Self-Awareness	Between Groups	2.519	3	.840	2.876	.043
	Within Groups	19.271	66	.292		
	Total	21.790	69			
Empathy	Between Groups	1.818	3	.606	1.817	.153
	Within Groups	22.012	66	.334		
	Total	23.830	69			
Self-Regulation	Between Groups	2.492	3	.831	2.223	.094
	Within Groups	24.662	66	.374		
	Total	27.154	69			

Source: SPSS Output

The above table depicts the outcome of One-Way ANOVA for showing the perception of Undergraduates towards the variables of Emotional Intelligence with respect to their stream of education. In case of Self-Awareness, the result is shown to be significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, H₀₁ has been rejected, which says that Self-Awareness of the Undergraduates differs significantly with respect to their stream of education.

However, in case of Empathy and Self-Regulation, the result is shown to be insignificant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, H₀₂ and H₀₃ have been failed to reject. Hence, the Empathy and Self-Regulation of the Undergraduates do not significantly differ with respect to their stream of education.

3. Post-Hoc Analysis

Since H₀₁ has been rejected, it is important to do Post-Hoc Analysis for the significant result of Self-Awareness.

Table 3 shows the results of Post-Hoc Analysis of the One Way ANOVA result of Self-Awareness. From the table, it has been evident that there exists significant difference in the perception towards self-awareness between undergraduates in arts stream and undergraduates in professional course. From the Table 4, it can be inferred that the perception towards self-awareness is significantly higher for professional undergraduates when compared to other streams. Similarly, the perception towards self-awareness is significantly lower for arts undergraduates when compared to other streams.

Table 3: Post-Hoc Results of Self-Awareness

(I) Stream of Study	(J) Stream of Study	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Arts	Science	-.32500	.27018	.627
	Commerce	-.35326	.17515	.192
	Professional Course	-.77500*	.27018	.028
Science	Arts	.32500	.27018	.627
	Commerce	-.02826	.23454	.999
	Professional Course	-.45000	.31197	.478
Commerce	Arts	.35326	.17515	.192
	Science	.02826	.23454	.999
	Professional Course	-.42174	.23454	.283
Professional Course	Arts	.77500*	.27018	.028
	Science	.45000	.31197	.478
	Commerce	.42174	.23454	.283

Source: SPSS Output

Table 4: Descriptive

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Arts	12	1.6750	.51368	.14829
Science	6	2.0000	.43359	.17701
Commerce	46	2.0283	.56869	.08385
Professional Course	6	2.4500	.41833	.17078
Total	70	2.0014	.56196	.06717

Source: SPSS Output

Conclusion

The research aimed at analysing the Emotional Intelligence of Undergraduates in Palakkad District. The intention of the research was to assess the level of awareness of Undergraduates towards different dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and also to determine their perception towards these dimensions based on their stream of education. The results of the study identified that there is low level of awareness among the Undergraduates regarding self-awareness, empathy and self-regulation. The overall awareness towards Emotional Intelligence was also found to be low. The perception towards self-awareness significantly vary between undergraduates in arts stream and undergraduates in professional course. Hence, it can be concluded that the awareness exhibited by the Undergraduates in Palakkad district towards Emotional Intelligence in terms of self-awareness, empathy and self-regulation is critically low. The variation in the perception underscores that the stream of education has a vital role in influencing the emotional capabilities of the undergraduates. This gives a clear overview that there should be targeted interventions for moulding the Emotional Intelligence of the Undergraduates. Furthermore, such intervention should be tailored according to the stream in which they belong to.

Suggestions

Based on the above findings, the researcher has put forward the following suggestions.

- The institutions have to impart Emotional Intelligence into their curriculum so that the students can understand and learn the EI skills. The students have to be trained with interactive and experimental learning skills.
- Different EI programs have to be developed for separate streams. Only tailor made programmes can address the stream-specific problems.
- Training should also be given to the educators as well. Teachers with good emotional skills can better understand the students and create a supportive learning environment.

- Peer mentoring programmes can support the students in developing EI where the students with high EI can help other students in developing the EI skills.
- Regular assessments on students' EI growth will help to understand where they were and where they are now. It will also help to find out the areas for improvement and take necessary actions.

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