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A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) AMONG STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical competency in personal, academic, and professional success. It encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and in others. This research explores the multifaceted factors that influence the development of EI across the human lifespan. The study identifies and examines the interplay of genetic, environmental, psychological, and social elements that contribute to the growth and enhancement of emotional intelligence. Genetic and neurobiological underpinnings, such as brain structure and temperament, play a foundational role in determining an individual's emotional responsiveness and regulatory capacities. However, environmental factors—especially early childhood experiences—serve as crucial determinants in shaping emotional skills. Secure attachment with caregivers, exposure to emotional conversations, and nurturing environments foster emotional awareness and empathy from a young age. Social and cultural contexts further influence emotional development, as cultural norms dictate how emotions are expressed and interpreted. Educational systems that incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) have also been shown to significantly impact the development of EI, promoting emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. Additionally, life experiences, including challenges, failures, and interpersonal relationships, contribute to the evolution of one's emotional competence over time.

Key Words - Emotional Intelligence, emotional regulation, empathy, interpersonal skills, emotional competence

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and manage emotions in one and others. For students aged 15 to 23—an age group that spans adolescence to early adulthood—EI development is particularly important, as it influences their academic success,

interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and mental well-being. The formation of EI during this life stage is shaped by a combination of personal, social, cultural, and environmental factors.

One of the most significant influences on EI is personal and psychological factors, such as personality traits, self-awareness, and coping styles. Traits like openness, conscientiousness, and empathy are positively associated with higher EI. Self-reflection and the ability to understand one's emotional state enhance emotional awareness and regulation. Students who are more resilient and capable of using constructive coping mechanisms typically develop stronger emotional control and interpersonal sensitivity.

The family environment and parenting style also play a crucial role. Authoritative parenting characterized by warmth, support, and structure has been shown to foster higher EI levels. Families that encourage emotional expression, active listening, and conflict resolution help children build strong emotional foundations. In contrast, environments marked by neglect, authoritarian control, or high conflict can hinder emotional growth.

Social and educational settings further shape emotional intelligence. Peer relationships are essential for developing empathy, social skills, and conflict resolution abilities. Classroom climate, teacher support, and student-teacher relationships impact students' confidence, emotional regulation, and motivation. Participation in co-curricular activities such as sports, arts, debates, or volunteering also enhances teamwork, communication, and emotional resilience.

Cultural and societal influences deeply affect emotional expression and regulation. Cultural norms determine how emotions are perceived, shared, and managed. In collectivist cultures, for example, harmony and group welfare are emphasized, promoting empathy and interpersonal awareness. In contrast, individualistic cultures may encourage assertiveness and emotional independence. Understanding these differences is essential for students navigating diverse social settings.

The rise of digital and social media exposure also plays a dual role in shaping emotional intelligence. While positive content can promote emotional learning and social connectivity, excessive or unregulated use may result in social comparison, cyberbullying, and reduced face-



to-face interaction. These experiences influence emotional self-awareness and empathy, particularly during the formative years of identity development.

Importantly, structured Emotional Intelligence training and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have proven effective in improving EI competencies. These interventions help students recognize emotions, manage stress, communicate effectively, and develop empathy and resilience. Schools and colleges that integrate SEL into their curriculum often report better academic performance, lower behavioral problems, and improved student well-being.

In conclusion, the development of Emotional Intelligence among students aged 15 to 23 is dynamic and multi-dimensional. Influenced by individual traits, family dynamics, peer interactions, cultural background, media exposure, and formal education, EI can be nurtured through intentional strategies. Educators, parents, and policymakers must recognize these contributing factors and work collaboratively to create emotionally supportive environments. By doing so, they equip students with the emotional tools necessary for academic achievement, personal fulfillment, and lifelong success.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The development of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been widely studied across psychological, educational, and organizational disciplines. A substantial body of literature highlights that EI is a dynamic attribute shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

1. Mayer and Salovey (1990) first introduced the concept of EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions to guide thinking and behavior. Goleman (1995) expanded this model by identifying five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These elements have since served as the basis for research into EI development.
2. Bar-On (2006) emphasized the role of neurobiological structures, particularly the limbic system and prefrontal cortex, in emotional processing and regulation. Studies by Schulte et al. (2004) also suggest a genetic predisposition in emotional reactivity, although environment plays a larger role in shaping emotional competencies.



3. According to Denham et al. (2003), emotional competence begins to develop in early childhood, heavily influenced by caregiver interactions. Secure attachments and emotionally responsive parenting foster empathy and emotional regulation (Thompson, 1994).
4. Culture plays a critical role in determining how emotions are expressed and interpreted. Matsumoto et al. (2008) found that cultural norms affect both the development and the display of EI. Furthermore, peer interactions during adolescence also contribute to social-emotional growth (Saarni, 1999).
5. Research by Durlak et al. (2011) demonstrated that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs in schools significantly enhance EI components such as self-awareness and interpersonal skills. These programs provide structured environments for emotional skill development.
6. Petrides and Furnham (2001) linked traits like openness, empathy, and resilience with higher EI. Life experiences—particularly adversity—also contribute to the development of emotional maturity (Salovey et al., 2002).
7. In professional settings, emotionally intelligent leadership has been shown to increase team performance and workplace satisfaction (Boyatzis & Goleman, 2001). Continuous learning and feedback mechanisms help develop EI in adulthood.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the influence of family environment on the development of Emotional Intelligence among students.
2. To analyze the role of teachers and school environment in enhancing students' Emotional Intelligence.
3. To study the impact of peer relationships on the emotional and social development of students.
4. To assess the level of self-awareness and emotional self-management among students.
5. To evaluate the contribution of extracurricular activities, training programs, and media exposure to the development of Emotional Intelligence among students.

RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Type of Research

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. It aims to systematically describe the factors influencing the development of Emotional Intelligence among students and to analyze the degree of influence of family, school, peers, self-management, and training activities using quantitative methods.

2. Nature of the Study

The study is quantitative in nature, as numerical data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, percentage analysis, and reliability testing.

3. Research Approach

A survey method was employed to collect primary data from student respondents. The survey approach was chosen because it allows for the collection of standardized information from a large sample within a limited time.

4. Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises students studying at the undergraduate level in selected educational institutions.

5. Sample Design

- Sample Size: 200 students
- Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling
- Sampling Unit: Individual student respondent

The sample was selected based on accessibility and willingness of students to participate in the study.

6. Sources of Data

- Primary Data: Collected through a structured 20-item Emotional Intelligence questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale.
- Secondary Data: Collected from journals, books, research articles, reports, and online academic sources related to Emotional Intelligence.

7. Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire consisting of 20 statements was used. The questionnaire was divided into five dimensions:

1. Family Environment (4 items)
2. Teacher and School Influence (4 items)
3. Peer Relationships (4 items)
4. Self-Awareness and Emotional Management (4 items)
5. Training, Activities, and Media Influence (4 items)

Each statement was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

8. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on a small group of students to test the clarity and reliability of the questionnaire. Based on feedback, minor modifications were made to ensure validity and ease of understanding.

9. Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.91, indicating excellent reliability and consistency of the tool.

10. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was personally administered to students with prior permission from the concerned authorities. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Clear instructions were given to avoid response bias.



11. Tools and Techniques of Analysis

The collected data were processed and analyzed using the following statistical tools:

- Percentage analysis
- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Factor-wise mean comparison
- Reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha)

12. Period of the Study

The data collection was carried out over a period of two months.

13. Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to a sample of 200 students only.
- Convenience sampling restricts generalization of results.
- The responses are based on self-report, which may involve personal bias.
- The study is limited to selected educational institution

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected from 200 student respondents to examine the factors influencing the development of Emotional Intelligence (EI). The data were analyzed using percentage analysis and mean score interpretation.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	92	46%
Female	108	54%
Total	200	100%

Interpretation 1: Female students formed the majority of respondents.

**Table 2: Age Group**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	38	19%
18–20	96	48%
Above 20	66	33%
Total	200	100%

Interpretation 2: Most respondents belonged to the 18–20 years age group.

Descriptive Statistics of EI Factors (20 Items)

Q.No	Statement Area	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Parental emotional encouragement	4.12	0.71	High
2	Family emotional support	4.20	0.68	High
3	Family builds confidence	4.05	0.75	High
4	Learning emotions from family	3.98	0.77	High
5	Teachers guide emotions	4.15	0.69	High
6	School emotional safety	4.10	0.72	High
7	Teacher peer motivation	4.18	0.70	High
8	Classroom emotional skill	4.02	0.74	High
9	Friends shape emotions	3.95	0.78	High
10	Comfort sharing with peers	3.90	0.80	High



Q.No	Statement Area	Mean	SD	Interpretation
11	Group learning EI	4.05	0.73	High
12	Peer stress support	3.92	0.77	High
13	Self-awareness	4.14	0.69	High
14	Emotion control	4.06	0.71	High
15	Stress management	4.00	0.76	High
16	Self-reflection	4.10	0.70	High
17	Extracurricular impact	4.22	0.66	High
18	Social media effect	3.80	0.82	Moderate
19	EI training exposure	3.75	0.85	Moderate
20	Counseling & workshops	4.08	0.71	High

Overall Mean EI Score = 4.04 (High Level)

Factor-Wise Mean Comparison

Factor	Questions	Mean Score	Level
Family Influence	Q1–Q4	4.09	High
Teacher & School	Q5–Q8	4.11	High
Peer Influence	Q9–Q12	3.95	High
Self-Management	Q13–Q16	4.08	High
Activities & Training	Q17–Q20	3.96	High

**Interpretation:**

All five factors show high influence on Emotional Intelligence development, with teacher & school influence ranking highest.

Reliability Test

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
20-Item EI Factors	0.91

Interpretation:

The questionnaire shows excellent reliability.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The majority of the respondents were female students (54%), while 46% were male, indicating a balanced gender representation.
2. Most of the students belonged to the 18–20 years age group (48%), showing that the sample largely represents young undergraduate learners.
3. The overall Emotional Intelligence level of students is high (Mean = 4.04), indicating that students possess strong emotional awareness, control, and social skills.
4. Family environment has a strong positive influence on Emotional Intelligence, with all family-related statements recording high mean values (above 4.00). Emotional encouragement and support from parents play a vital role in shaping students' emotions.
5. Teacher and school environment emerged as the strongest influencing factor on Emotional Intelligence (Factor Mean = 4.11). Teachers significantly help students in emotional understanding, communication, and relationship building.
6. Peer relationships have a positive impact on Emotional Intelligence (Factor Mean = 3.95). Friends help students in emotional sharing, cooperation, and stress management.



7. Students demonstrate a high level of self-awareness and emotional self-control (Factor Mean = 4.08), indicating their ability to manage emotions in difficult academic and personal situations.
8. Extracurricular activities significantly contribute to the development of Emotional Intelligence (Mean = 4.22), showing that active participation improves emotional skills.
9. The influence of social media and formal EI training programs was found to be moderate (Means = 3.80 and 3.75 respectively), indicating a need for more structured emotional intelligence programs.
10. The reliability of the questionnaire is excellent (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91), confirming the consistency and trustworthiness of the collected data.
11. Overall, all five factors—family, teachers, peers, self-awareness, and activities/training—were found to have a significant and positive influence on the development of Emotional Intelligence among students.
12. The study confirms that Emotional Intelligence is not shaped by a single factor but by a combination of personal, social, and institutional influences.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to examine the factors influencing the development of Emotional Intelligence (EI) among students. Based on the data collected from 200 respondents and the statistical analysis performed, it is evident that Emotional Intelligence among students is shaped by a combination of personal, social, and institutional factors.

The overall EI score of 4.04 (High Level) indicates that students possess strong emotional awareness, the ability to regulate emotions, empathy, and constructive social behavior. Among the influencing factors, teachers and school environment emerged as the most significant contributors, highlighting the vital role of educators in shaping students' emotional skills and interpersonal competencies. Family support also plays a crucial role by providing emotional stability, confidence, and early emotional learning.

Peer interactions further enhance students' cooperation, communication, and stress-handling abilities. Students also demonstrated strong self-awareness and self-management skills,



suggesting that they are capable of recognizing and regulating their emotions in challenging situations. Participation in extracurricular activities showed a notably positive impact, emphasizing the importance of sports, cultural programs, and group events in strengthening emotional intelligence.

However, the influence of social media and exposure to formal EI training programs was found to be moderate, indicating the need for more structured and meaningful EI-oriented workshops, counseling sessions, and life-skills training in educational institutions.

Overall, the study concludes that Emotional Intelligence is a multi-dimensional construct and its development depends on continuous support from family, teachers, peers, and structured institutional programs. Strengthening EI among students will enable them to cope with academic stress, build healthier relationships, make responsible decisions, and succeed both personally and professionally

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