

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance among Nursing Students in Kathmandu

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ABSTRACT

Background: Emotional intelligence (EI) is the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide one's thinking and action. The key components of emotional intelligence include moods, stress management techniques, flexibility, and interpersonal and intrapersonal connections, which have a significant impact on students' academic performance. This study aimed to assess the emotional intelligence and academic performance among nursing students.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 314 students (B.Sc. Nursing and BNS program) of Nursing Campus in Kathmandu. The complete enumerative sampling technique was used to select the sample. The validated tool Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) was used to assess emotional intelligence and Academic Performance Scale, developed by Christopher, was used to assess the academic performance level of nursing students. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Data were entered and analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics version 22. Point estimate and 95% confidence intervals were calculated.

Results: Among the 314 respondents, 245 (78.00%) had an average level of emotional intelligence, 35 (11.15%) had a high level, and 34 (10.85%) had a low level of emotional intelligence. The academic performance level was good in 181 (57.65%) respondents.

Conclusion: The Emotional intelligence level of nursing students was average, more than half of the respondents had a good level of academic performance, only more than one third of the respondents had excellent level of academic performance. So targeted educational strategies are needed to enhance both emotional and academic development in nursing education.

Keywords: Academic performance, emotional intelligence, nursing student, student nurse

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a subset of social intelligence that encompasses the ability to monitor and differentiate one's own emotions as well as those of others, and use this information to guide one's ideas and behavior¹. The concept of emotional intelligence is emerging in healthcare settings to perform successful nursing interventions, meet patients' caring needs, and deal with a variety of clinical challenges and job stressors². Nursing students with high emotional level

exhibit greater empathetic and caring behavior³ and make them capable to notice, analyze, control, manage, and harness emotion in an adaptive manner.⁴

Academic performance is a measure of students achievement in any academic institution.⁵ The predictor of academic achievement is emotional intelligence. Students with higher emotional intelligence may motivate to explore their interests actively and think more broadly about topics of interest, and ultimately improves the nursing students' academic performance.⁶ There is a

positive correlation between Emotional intelligence and Academic performance.⁷

Therefore, this study aims to find out the Emotional Intelligence and Academic performance level of Nursing Students studying in a selected Nursing Campus.

METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at Bir Hospital Nursing Campus from June 2025 to July 2025. Ethical approval was taken from the Institutional Review Board of the National Academy of Medical Sciences, Bir Hospital (Reference no.1296/2081/82). The complete enumerative sampling technique was used to select the sample. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.Sc.), first, second, third, fourth-year and Bachelor in Nursing Science (BNS) first, second, third year students were the selected sample for the study.

Structured self-administered scale was used to collect the data. The instruments consist of three parts. Part I consist the information related to sociodemographic information. Part II consist of information related to Emotional intelligence. Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) was used to collect the data related to the emotional intelligence of students. SSEIT is a Standard tool developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte⁸ and has already been used in Nepal to assess the level of emotional intelligence. It is a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, and consist of 33 items. This instrument has measured the ability of a student to perceive emotions, manage their own and others' emotions and utilize emotions which is categorized as High Emotional Intelligence (>137 of total score), Average Emotional Intelligence (111-137 of total score), and Low Emotional Intelligence (<111 of total score). Part III consist of information related to academic performance. The Academic Performance Scale (APS)⁹ was used to collect the data related to performance of the students. The Academic Performance Scale is a 5-point scale assessment carried out by Carson Birchmeier, Emily Grattan, Sarah Hornbacher, and Christopher McGregory of Saginaw Valley State University. It consists of 8 items. Scoring level of academic performance was categorized as excellent, good, moderate, poor and failing performance based on obtained scores the scoring criteria was 33-40 score: Excellent performance,25-32score: Good performance,17-24 score: Moderate performance, 9-16 score: Poor Performance, and 0-8 score: Failing Performance.

Among the nursing colleges of Kathmandu, Bir Hospital Nursing Campus was selected for the study. A total of 314 students were studying in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Bachelor in Nursing Science program. Written informed consents were obtained voluntarily from all respondents by explaining objectives of the study. Respondents were assured for confidentiality by not disclosing the information given by them. Anonymity was maintained by giving code number to each of them. Self-administered questionnaire was distributed at same time to all participants and data was collected in presence of researchers to prevent data contamination. The average time required to complete the questionnaire was 35 to 40 minutes. Data was collected from 2nd June to 11th July for the duration of 6 weeks.

Data were entered in Epidata 3.1, exported to IBM SPSS Statistics version 22.0 and analyzed. Frequency, percentage, Mean and standard deviation, 95% confidence interval and p-value were calculated. The chi-square test was used to find the association between emotional intelligence, and academic performance with selected socio-demographic variables. The correlation coefficient test was used to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the study respondents had an average age of 23.06 ± 3.86 years. Most respondents (63.7%) received their school education in a boarding school, and a majority (65.6%) had no work experience.

Table 1. Respondents' socio-demographic information
n=314

Variables	Number	Percent
Age in Years		
<20 years	83	26.42
20-24 years	140	44.58
≥25 years	91	29.00
Mean±SD=23.06±3.86		
Sex		
Male	5	1.60
Female	309	98.40
Program		
BNS	173	55.00
B.Sc. Nursing	141	45.00
Year of Education		
First Year	76	24.20
Second Year	147	46.80

Variables	Number	Percent
Third Year	76	24.20
Fourth Year	15	4.80
Ethnicity		
Brahmin	174	55.43
Janajati	109	34.71
Madhesi	19	6.05
Dalit	11	3.50
Muslim	1	0.31
Religion		
Hindu	280	89.20
Buddhist	20	6.36
Kirat	7	2.22
Christian	6	1.91
Islam	1	0.31
Marital Status		
Unmarried	263	83.76
Married	51	16.24
Type of School		
Boarding School	200	63.70
Government School	114	36.30
Work Experience		
No Experience	206	65.60
<5 years	53	16.86
5-10 years	47	15.00
>10 years	8	2.54

Table 2 presents that among the 314 respondents, majority (78.0%) had an average level of emotional intelligence, while approximately equal percentage of respondents had a high level (11.15%) and a low level (10.85%) of emotional intelligence.

Table 2. Respondents' level of emotional intelligence
n =314

Level of Emotional Intelligence	Number	Percent	95% confidence Interval
High	35	11.15	
Average	245	78.00	122.35-124.85
Low	34	10.85	

Table 3 depicts that more than half (57.65%) of the respondents had good level of academic performance, only more than one third (36.95) of the respondents had excellent level of academic performance.

Table 3. Respondents' level of academic performance
n =314

Level of Academic Performance	Number	Percent
Excellent Performance	116	36.95
Good Performance	181	57.65
Moderate Performance	16	5.09
Poor Performance	1	0.31

Table 4 represents the emotional intelligence is associated with the types of schools, the majority of respondents displayed an average level of emotional intelligence both in government schools (72.8%) and boarding schools (81.0%). Furthermore, respondents from government schools exhibited a comparatively higher level of emotional intelligence (20.2%) compared to those from boarding schools (6.0%). There was no significant association between emotional intelligence and other selected variables.

Table 4. Association between level of emotional intelligence and different variables
n=314

Variables	Level of Emotional Intelligence			x ²	p-value
	High N (%)	Average N (%)	Low N (%)		
Program					
BNS	15(8.67)	142(82.08)	16(9.24)		
B.Sc. Nursing	20(14.20)	103(73.00)	18(12.80)	3.818	0.148
Marital Status					
Married	6(11.80)	40(78.40)	5(9.80)		
Unmarried	29(11.00)	205(77.90)	29(11.00)	0.810	0.960
Types of School					
Government School	23(20.20)	83(72.80)	8(7.00)		
Boarding School	12(6.00)	162(81.00)	26(13.00)	16.115	0.000*
Work Experience					
Yes	15(13.88)	77(71.29)	16(14.81)		
No	20(9.70)	16(81.60)	18(8.70)	4.483	0.106
Year of Education					
First & Second Year	28(12.55)	168(75.33)	27(12.10)		
Third & Fourth Year	7(7.69)	77(34.52)	7(7.69)	3.248	0.197
Age in years					
<25	28(11.61)	184(76.34)	29(12.03)		
≥25	7(9.58)	61(83.56)	5(6.84)	1.971	0.373

* p-value significant at < 0.05

Table 5 represents that the academic performance is associated with the types of schools but there was not significant association between academic performance and other selected variables.

Table 5. Association between level of academic performance and different variables n=314

Variables	Level of Academic Performance		x ²	p-value
	High	Low		
	N (%)	N (%)		
Program				
BNS	55(39.00)	86(61.00)		
B.Sc. Nursing	61(35.26)	112(64.73)	0.486	0.557
Marital Status				
Married	21(41.17)	30(58.82)		
Unmarried	95(36.12)	168(63.87)	0.469	0.528
Types of School				
Government School	60(52.63)	54(47.36)	18.911	0.001
Boarding School	56(28.00)	144(72.00)		
Work Experience				
Yes	77(37.37)	129(62.63)	0.049	0.902
No	39(36.11)	69(63.89)		
Year of Education				
Initial	82(36.77)	141(63.22)	0.010	0.922
Final	34(37.36)	57(62.63)		
Age in Years				
<25	90(37.34)	151(62.65)	0.720	0.890
≥25	26(35.61)	47(64.38)		

* p-value significant at < 0.05

There was weak negative correlation between emotional intelligence and academic performance (Table 6).

Table 6. Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

Variables	Academic Performance	
	r _s	p-value
Emotional Intelligence	-0.272	0.001

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to assess the emotional intelligence (EI) and academic performance among nursing students. Most (98.4%) of the respondents were female. The mean age of respondents was 23.06 ± 3.86 years, with the majority (44.58%) of the respondents aged 20–24 years. The majority identified as Brahmin (55.41%) and Hindu (89.17%), and most (83.76%) of respondents

were unmarried. Majority (63.70%) of the respondents had attended boarding schools, and a majority (65.60%) had no prior work experience, indicating that the sample primarily consisted of students in the early stages of their professional development.

In terms of emotional intelligence, majority of the respondents (78.00%) demonstrated an average level of emotional intelligence, while only 11.15% and 10.85% had high and low emotional intelligence respectively. The relatively small proportion of students with high emotional intelligence suggests potential areas for targeted interventions, such as training in empathy, stress management, and interpersonal skills. The findings is consistent with the study conducted in a nursing college of Kathmandu valley which revealed that most (76.5%) of the respondents had an average level of emotional intelligence, followed by 18.5 % with high and 5.0% with low levels of emotional intelligence¹⁰. This finding contradicts with a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among health care providers in the Tertiary Level Hospital of Kathmandu which shows that 40% of the respondents have a low and 32% of respondents have a high level of emotional intelligence, the reason may be due to difference in the study population, practicing healthcare providers with greater clinical exposure and professional responsibilities. Professional experience and prolonged exposure to emotionally demanding clinical situations may significantly influence emotional intelligence levels.¹¹

In this study the type of school attended at the secondary level appeared to have a significant association with emotional intelligence. A higher proportion of respondents from government schools (20.20%) demonstrated high emotional intelligence compared to those from boarding schools (6.00%). This pattern might be explained by the more diverse social exposure and potential challenges encountered in government school environments, which may promote adaptability, empathy, and interpersonal understanding. There is no significant association was found between emotional intelligence and program of study, marital status, work experience, age and level of education. This finding is supported by another study in which there was no statistical significant association between the level of emotional intelligence and any socio-demographic variables at the 95 percent confidence interval.¹⁰

Regarding academic performance, more than half of

the respondents (57.65%) achieved a good level, only more than one third (36.95%) of the respondents had excellent level with notable differences by program type and school background. The highest proportion of students with excellent academic performance were from the BNS program (39.00%) and B.Sc. Nursing program (35.26%). This finding is different with the another study which was done in nursing college of Kathmandu valley in which academic performance found that half (51.30%) of the students had excellent academic performance, 46.2 percent had good performance, and 2.5 percent had moderate academic performance.¹⁰

Moreover, academic performance was significantly associated with the type of school, with government school graduates showing a higher proportion of high academic performance (52.63%) compared to their boarding school counterparts.¹¹ This may reflect differences in motivation, resilience, or learning strategies cultivated in differing educational contexts which also highlight the potential influence of early educational environments on later professional competencies. While academic curricula are essential for knowledge acquisition, the socio-emotional skills nurtured during formative schooling may also shape both emotional intelligence and learning outcomes in higher education. There is no significant association between academic performance and other selected variables. This finding is consistent with the study found a significant correlation between managing own emotions and academic performance ($p = 0.043$). However study was shown Emotional Intelligence and its sub-dimensions, Managing other's emotions, Perception of emotion and Utilization of emotion were not significantly correlated with Academic performance.¹²

In this study, there was weak negative correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Academic performance. Another study is different which indicates a noteworthy positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the academic performance among nursing students. Nevertheless, the analysis did not demonstrate any significant gender disparities in emotional intelligence and Academic performance.¹³

CONCLUSION

The emotional intelligence level of nursing students was average, more than half of the respondents had good level of academic performance, only more than one third of the respondents had excellent level of academic performance.

High level of emotional intelligence can improve communication, teamwork and academic activities, ultimately leading to better academic performance. So targeted educational strategies are needed to enhance both emotional and academic performance in nursing education.

RECOMMENDATION

Since, the majority of the nursing students had an average emotional intelligence level. Academic administrator should implement a comprehensive emotional intelligence development program. A Study in different nursing campuses could be done to generalize the findings.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The study was approved by the IRB of NAMS. Administrative approval for data collection was obtained from Bir Hospital Nursing Campus. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time. Written informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was ensured through coded data. Privacy and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study.

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