

International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com ISSN: 2250-3552

A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence among Rural and Urban College Students

Dr. Suvarna Gorakshanath Shikare

Associate Professor, Tilak College of Education, Pune

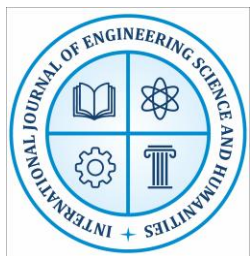
Abstract

Emotional intelligence has emerged as one of the most significant psychological competencies influencing students' academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, mental well-being, and overall personality development. It enables individuals to recognize, understand, regulate, and effectively manage their own emotions while responding appropriately to the emotions of others. During the college years, students encounter various academic, social, emotional, and career-related challenges that require strong emotional competencies. The present study aimed to compare the emotional intelligence of rural and urban college students. A descriptive survey method with a quantitative research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 100 college students, comprising 50 rural and 50 urban students, was selected using the simple random sampling technique. Data were collected through a standardized Emotional Intelligence Scale and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean score, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test. The findings revealed that urban college students demonstrated comparatively higher emotional intelligence than rural college students. Significant differences were observed in self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. The study emphasizes the importance of guidance and counselling services, life skills education, emotional learning programmes, and supportive educational environments in enhancing students' emotional intelligence. The findings provide useful implications for teachers, counsellors, educational institutions, and policymakers in promoting students' emotional well-being and holistic development.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Rural Students, Urban Students, College Students, Comparative Study, Higher Education.

1. Introduction

Education aims not only to impart knowledge but also to develop students' emotional, social, intellectual, and moral competencies. In today's rapidly changing world, students face increasing academic pressure, social expectations, career uncertainty, and emotional challenges. Their ability to understand and regulate emotions, maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, cope with stress, and make responsible decisions has become essential for academic success and



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

personal well-being. Emotional intelligence has therefore emerged as one of the most important competencies for students in higher education.

The concept of emotional intelligence gained prominence through the works of Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990), who defined it as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively. Later, Daniel Goleman (1995) popularized the concept by emphasizing its role in leadership, communication, decision-making, academic achievement, and personal success. Emotional intelligence includes competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, all of which contribute to balanced personality development.

College education represents an important transitional stage where students prepare for higher education, employment, and responsible citizenship. During this period, they encounter diverse social environments, increased academic responsibilities, interpersonal relationships, and career-related decisions. Students possessing higher emotional intelligence are generally better equipped to manage stress, adapt to changing situations, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and maintain positive relationships with peers and teachers.

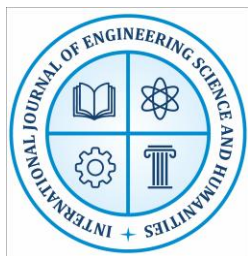
The educational and social environments of rural and urban students differ considerably. Urban students often have greater access to educational resources, technology, counselling services, extracurricular activities, and diverse social interactions. Rural students, while benefiting from close community relationships and family support, may have comparatively fewer opportunities for exposure to varied educational and social experiences. These environmental differences may influence the development of emotional intelligence.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic education, life skills, socio-emotional learning, mental health, and competency-based education. Emotional intelligence directly supports these educational goals by enabling students to become emotionally balanced, socially responsible, and professionally competent individuals. Therefore, assessing emotional intelligence among college students has become increasingly important in educational research.

The present study compares the emotional intelligence of rural and urban college students. The findings are expected to help teachers, counsellors, educational administrators, and policymakers develop programmes that strengthen students' emotional competencies and contribute to their holistic development.

2. Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and appropriately express emotions while effectively responding to the emotions of others. It enables individuals to maintain emotional balance, build healthy interpersonal relationships, solve problems, cope with stress, and make rational decisions in personal, academic, and professional life.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com ISSN: 2250-3552

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide thinking and behaviour. Daniel Goleman (1995) expanded this concept by identifying emotional intelligence as a combination of emotional competencies that contribute significantly to success in education, employment, leadership, and social relationships.

Emotional intelligence is not limited to emotional awareness; it also includes emotional regulation, empathy, self-motivation, social interaction, and effective communication. Individuals with high emotional intelligence can understand their feelings, remain calm under pressure, communicate effectively, and develop positive relationships with others.

3. Need of the Study

Emotional intelligence has become an essential life skill for college students due to the increasing academic, social, and emotional demands of higher education. Students with higher emotional intelligence are better able to manage stress, adapt to changing situations, communicate effectively, and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. These competencies contribute significantly to academic achievement, career readiness, and personal well-being.

The educational environments of rural and urban students differ in terms of educational facilities, technological exposure, extracurricular opportunities, counselling services, and social interaction. Such differences may influence the emotional development of students. Therefore, comparing emotional intelligence among rural and urban college students is important for identifying educational needs and planning suitable intervention programmes.

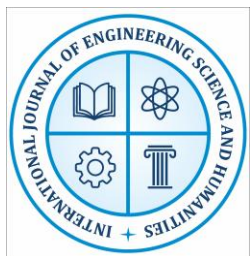
The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic education, socio-emotional learning, life skills, and mental well-being. Understanding students' emotional intelligence will help educational institutions strengthen counselling services, life skills education, and student support programmes. The findings of the study will also assist teachers, parents, counsellors, and policymakers in promoting emotional competence and balanced personality development among college students.

4. Review of Literature

The review of related literature provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding emotional intelligence and its educational significance.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced the concept of emotional intelligence and defined it as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively. Their model established emotional intelligence as an important aspect of cognitive and emotional functioning.

Goleman (1995) emphasized that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in academic achievement, leadership, communication, interpersonal relationships, and professional success. He identified self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills as its major components.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com ISSN: 2250-3552

Bar-On (1997) proposed that emotional intelligence consists of emotional, personal, and social competencies that influence an individual's ability to cope effectively with environmental demands and daily challenges.

Parker et al. (2004) reported that college students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated better academic performance, stronger interpersonal relationships, and lower levels of stress than students with lower emotional intelligence.

Kaur and Sharma (2019) found significant differences in emotional intelligence between rural and urban college students, with urban students obtaining comparatively higher scores due to greater educational exposure, communication opportunities, and access to support services.

Patil and Deshmukh (2022) observed that emotional intelligence positively influences students' self-confidence, decision-making, adaptability, and psychological well-being. Their study recommended integrating emotional learning and life skills education into higher education curricula.

The review of literature indicates that emotional intelligence is closely associated with students' academic achievement, emotional stability, communication skills, leadership, and overall personality development. Although several studies have examined emotional intelligence, limited research has compared rural and urban college students. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the comparative emotional intelligence of rural and urban college students through a descriptive survey approach.

5. Objectives of the Study

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the level of emotional intelligence among rural college students.
2. To study the level of emotional intelligence among urban college students.
3. To compare the emotional intelligence of rural and urban college students.
4. To identify the dimensions of emotional intelligence in which rural and urban college students differ.
5. To suggest educational measures for enhancing emotional intelligence among college students.

6. Hypotheses of the Study

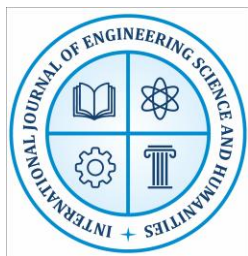
The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

Null Hypothesis (H_0)

H_{01} : There is no significant difference between rural and urban college students with respect to their emotional intelligence.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)

H_{11} : There is a significant difference between rural and urban college students with respect to their emotional intelligence.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

7. Significance of the Study

Emotional intelligence is an essential component of students' personal, social, and academic development. It helps individuals understand and regulate emotions, develop healthy interpersonal relationships, cope with stress, and make responsible decisions. The present study is significant because it provides an understanding of the emotional intelligence of rural and urban college students and highlights the influence of educational and social environments on emotional development.

The findings of the study will help teachers adopt learner-centred teaching practices that promote emotional awareness, empathy, communication, and self-regulation among students. College administrators may use the results to strengthen mentoring systems, counselling services, and life skills programmes that support students' emotional well-being.

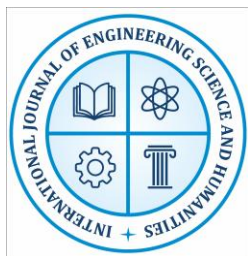
The study will also assist counsellors in identifying students who require emotional guidance and psychological support. Parents will gain awareness of the importance of creating supportive home environments that foster emotional maturity and resilience.

Furthermore, the findings will support curriculum planners and educational policymakers in implementing the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 regarding holistic education, socio-emotional learning, and student well-being. The study also contributes to educational research by providing empirical evidence on emotional intelligence among rural and urban college students and serves as a useful reference for future investigations.

8. Research Methodology

Research methodology provides a systematic framework for conducting scientific investigations and obtaining reliable findings. The present study adopted a quantitative approach to compare the emotional intelligence of rural and urban college students. Data were collected through a standardized Emotional Intelligence Scale and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to determine the differences between the two groups.

Particular	Description
Research Method	The study adopted the Descriptive Survey Method, which is appropriate for collecting information regarding the existing level of emotional intelligence among college students. The method enabled the researcher to compare rural and urban students without manipulating any variables.
Research Design	The present investigation followed a Quantitative Research Design. Quantitative data collected through a standardized Emotional Intelligence Scale were statistically analyzed to obtain objective and reliable findings regarding students' emotional intelligence.
Population	The population of the study consisted of all undergraduate college students studying in recognized colleges located in the selected rural and urban areas.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

Sample	A sample of 100 college students was selected for the study, comprising 50 rural college students and 50 urban college students. Equal representation of both groups ensured meaningful comparison of emotional intelligence.
Sampling Technique	The Simple Random Sampling Technique was employed to select respondents from rural and urban colleges. Every student had an equal opportunity to participate in the study, thereby reducing sampling bias.
Research Tool	Data were collected using a Standardized Emotional Intelligence Scale measuring self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. The instrument provided quantitative scores for comparing emotional intelligence among the respondents.
Statistical Techniques	The collected data were analyzed using Frequency, Percentage, Mean Score, Standard Deviation, and Independent Sample t-test. These statistical techniques were employed to summarize the data, compare the two groups, and test the significance of differences in emotional intelligence.

9. Data Analysis and Interpretation

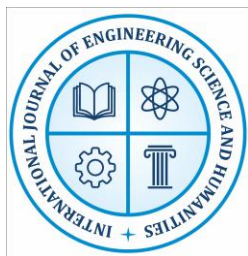
The data collected from 100 college students through the standardized Emotional Intelligence Scale were systematically organized, classified, tabulated, and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean score, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test. The statistical analysis was undertaken to compare the emotional intelligence of rural and urban college students and identify significant differences between the two groups. The findings are presented in the following statistical tables along with appropriate interpretations to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of students' emotional intelligence.

Table 1: Level of Emotional Intelligence among Rural College Students (N = 50)

Level of Emotional Intelligence	Frequency	Percentage
High	13	26%
Moderate	27	54%
Low	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

The table indicates that the majority (54%) of rural college students possess a moderate level of emotional intelligence. About 26% demonstrate a high level, whereas 20% exhibit a low level. This suggests that most rural students have satisfactory emotional competencies but require further guidance to strengthen emotional awareness and regulation.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com ISSN: 2250-3552

Table 2: Level of Emotional Intelligence among Urban College Students (N = 50)

Level of Emotional Intelligence	Frequency	Percentage
High	22	44%
Moderate	22	44%
Low	6	12%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

The table reveals that 44% of urban college students possess a high level of emotional intelligence, while another 44% demonstrate a moderate level. Only 12% fall into the low category. These findings indicate comparatively stronger emotional intelligence among urban college students.

Table 3: Dimension-wise Comparison of Emotional Intelligence

Dimension	Rural Mean	Urban Mean
Self-Awareness	15.12	16.74
Self-Regulation	14.68	16.28
Self-Motivation	15.34	16.82
Empathy	15.42	16.36
Social Skills	14.96	16.48

Interpretation

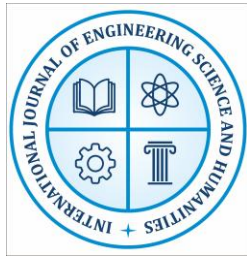
The table shows that urban college students obtained higher mean scores across all dimensions of emotional intelligence. The greatest differences are observed in self-motivation and self-awareness, indicating comparatively stronger emotional competencies among urban students.

Table 4: Factors Influencing Emotional Intelligence

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Family Environment	84	84%
College Environment	87	87%
Peer Relationships	82	82%
Co-curricular Activities	78	78%
Guidance and Counselling	75	75%

Interpretation

The table indicates that the college environment (87%) is perceived as the most influential factor affecting emotional intelligence, followed by family environment (84%) and peer relationships (82%). These findings highlight the importance of supportive educational and family environments.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com ISSN: 2250-3552

Table 5: Comparison of Mean Emotional Intelligence Scores

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Rural College Students	50	74.58	7.62
Urban College Students	50	81.26	6.94

Interpretation

The table shows that urban college students obtained a higher mean emotional intelligence score (81.26) than rural college students (74.58). This indicates comparatively better emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills among urban students.

Table 6: Independent Sample t-Test for Emotional Intelligence

Variable	Rural Mean	Urban Mean	t-value	Level of Significance
Emotional Intelligence	74.58	81.26	4.36	Significant at 0.05 level

Interpretation

The calculated t-value (4.36) is significant at the 0.05 level, indicating a statistically significant difference between rural and urban college students with respect to emotional intelligence.

11. Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis (H_0)

There is no significant difference between rural and urban college students with respect to their emotional intelligence.

Decision

Since the calculated t-value (4.36) is greater than the table value at the **0.05 level of significance**, the **null hypothesis is rejected** and the **alternative hypothesis is accepted**.

Hypothesis Analysis

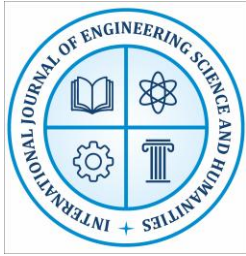
The statistical analysis confirms a significant difference between rural and urban college students regarding emotional intelligence. Urban students obtained significantly higher mean scores than rural students, indicating that educational environment, social interaction, and learning opportunities positively influence the development of emotional intelligence.

Figure 1: Comparison of Mean Emotional Intelligence Scores



12. Results and Discussion

The findings reveal that both rural and urban college students possess satisfactory levels of emotional intelligence. However, urban students demonstrated significantly higher emotional intelligence than rural students across all dimensions. The independent sample t-test confirmed that the observed difference is statistically significant.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

Urban students obtained higher scores in self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. This may be attributed to greater exposure to diverse educational environments, counselling services, extracurricular activities, technology, and broader social interaction. Rural students also demonstrated satisfactory emotional intelligence, particularly in empathy and interpersonal relationships, reflecting the positive influence of family and community support.

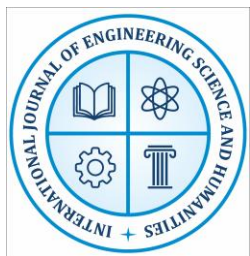
The findings further indicate that college environment, family support, peer relationships, and participation in co-curricular activities play an important role in developing emotional intelligence. These results support the objectives of the National Education Policy (2020), which emphasizes holistic education, socio-emotional learning, life skills, and student well-being.

13. Major Findings

1. The majority of rural college students possess a moderate level of emotional intelligence.
2. Urban college students demonstrate comparatively higher emotional intelligence than rural college students.
3. Urban students obtained higher mean scores across all dimensions of emotional intelligence.
4. College environment, family support, and peer relationships are the major factors influencing emotional intelligence.
5. Urban college students obtained a significantly higher overall mean score than rural college students.
6. A statistically significant difference exists between rural and urban college students regarding emotional intelligence.
7. Educational environment and social exposure positively influence students' emotional intelligence.

14. Educational Implications

1. Colleges should organize emotional intelligence development programmes and life skills workshops.
2. Teachers should adopt learner-centred instructional strategies that promote emotional awareness and empathy.
3. Guidance and counselling services should be strengthened to support students' emotional well-being.
4. Rural colleges should provide more opportunities for leadership, communication, and co-curricular participation.
5. Parents should encourage positive emotional communication and supportive home environments.
6. Educational institutions should integrate socio-emotional learning into regular teaching-learning activities.



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor 8.3 www.ijesh.com **ISSN: 2250-3552**

7. Colleges should implement the holistic education recommendations of the National Education Policy (2020) to enhance students' emotional development.

15. Conclusion

The study concludes that emotional intelligence is an essential competency for college students, contributing significantly to academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, leadership, and psychological well-being. Although both rural and urban college students possess satisfactory levels of emotional intelligence, urban students demonstrate comparatively higher emotional intelligence across all measured dimensions. The statistically significant difference identified in the study highlights the influence of educational environment, family support, peer interaction, and institutional facilities on students' emotional development. Colleges should therefore strengthen life skills education, mentoring, counselling, and socio-emotional learning programmes to foster balanced emotional development among all students and support the objectives of holistic education envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020.

References

1. Bar-On, R. (1997). Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i): Technical Manual. Multi-Health Systems.
2. Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ. Bantam Books.
3. Government of India. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. Ministry of Education.
4. Kaur, P., & Sharma, R. (2019). Emotional intelligence among rural and urban college students: A comparative study. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 7(2), 41–49.
5. Parker, J. D. A., Summerfeldt, L. J., Hogan, M. J., & Majeski, S. A. (2004). Emotional intelligence and academic success. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36(1), 163–172.
6. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211.
7. Patil, S., & Deshmukh, A. (2022). Emotional intelligence and college students' adjustment. *Journal of Educational Psychology and Research*, 14(1), 55–66.