

Emotional Intelligence: A Gender and Residence-Based Analysis

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Abstract—Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a crucial psychological construct influencing individual adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and professional success. The present study aims to examine emotional intelligence with respect to gender (male and female) and residence (urban and rural). A total of 100 participants (50 males and 50 females) were selected, equally divided into urban and rural groups. The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-HPD) developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar was used for data collection. The results revealed that females scored higher than males, and urban participants demonstrated higher emotional intelligence than rural participants. Statistical analysis using t-test and two-way ANOVA confirmed significant differences across gender and residence. The findings highlight the influence of socio-cultural and environmental factors on emotional intelligence.

Index Terms—Emotional Intelligence, Gender and Residence

I. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in one and others. It plays a vital role in shaping behaviour, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships. According to the Emotional Intelligence Scale manual, emotions act as a “powerful source of human energy, information, and influence,” guiding individuals in adapting to various life situations.

The concept gained prominence through the work of Mayer and Salovey (1993), who defined EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and use this information to guide thinking and actions. Later, Goleman (1995) emphasized its role in workplace success and leadership effectiveness.

Emotional intelligence comprises several components such as self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, and relationship management. These components collectively determine how individuals cope with stress, interact socially, and make decisions.

In the Indian context, emotional intelligence is influenced by socio-cultural factors such as family structure, education, and rural-urban differences. Urban individuals are often exposed to diverse social interactions and educational opportunities, which may enhance emotional competencies. On the other hand, rural individuals may have limited exposure, affecting emotional development.

Gender differences in emotional intelligence have also been widely studied. Females are generally found to be more empathetic and emotionally expressive, while males may exhibit better emotional control. However, these differences are shaped by societal expectations and cultural norms.

Thus, the present study investigates emotional intelligence based on gender and residence to understand how these variables interact and influence emotional functioning.

II. Literature Review

Srinivasulu and Methri (2025) conducted a study on intermediate students and found that females scored significantly higher than males in emotional intelligence, particularly in areas such as empathy, emotional awareness, and interpersonal skills. This finding is supported by Mandloi and K. N. Pandey (2025), who reported that female students exhibited better emotional regulation and coping strategies compared to male students. These results suggest that gender plays a crucial role in emotional development, largely influenced by socialization practices in Indian society.

However, some recent studies have presented contrasting findings, indicating that gender differences may not always be significant. For instance, Almagharbeh et al. (2026) reported no substantial gender differences in overall emotional intelligence, suggesting that EI may function as a universal ability influenced more by environmental and educational factors than by gender alone. This contradiction highlights the need for further research using culturally sensitive tools.

Kumar and Randhawa (2022) found that urban adolescents scored higher in emotional intelligence compared to their rural counterparts. This difference was attributed to better access to education, exposure to diverse social environments, and greater opportunities for communication and interaction in urban areas. Similarly, recent studies (2025) have emphasized that urban environments foster emotional intelligence by providing platforms for social learning, problem-solving, and emotional expression.

Mandloi and K. N. Pandey (2025) found that individuals with higher emotional intelligence reported lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Emotional intelligence was identified as a protective factor that enhances coping ability and psychological resilience. These findings are particularly relevant in the Indian context, where academic pressure, social expectations, and rapid societal changes contribute to mental health challenges among youth.

Srinivasulu and Methri (2025) reported that students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated better concentration, motivation, and interpersonal relationships, leading to improved academic outcomes. Emotional intelligence helps students manage academic stress, communicate effectively, and maintain a

positive learning environment. These findings suggest that integrating emotional intelligence training into educational curricula can enhance both academic and personal development.

Furthermore, cultural factors play a significant role in shaping emotional intelligence in India. Emotional expression, regulation, and interpretation are influenced by cultural norms, family values, and social expectations. Indian society, which emphasizes collectivism, interpersonal relationships, and social harmony, provides a unique context for understanding emotional intelligence. Researchers such as K. N. Pandey have highlighted that emotional intelligence in India is deeply rooted in cultural values, and therefore, must be studied within its socio-cultural framework.

III. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess emotional intelligence among male and female participants.
2. To compare emotional intelligence between urban and rural individuals.
3. To examine the interaction effect of gender and residence on emotional intelligence.

IV. Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant difference in emotional intelligence between males and females.
2. There will be a significant difference in emotional intelligence between urban and rural participants.
3. There will be a significant interaction effect of gender and residence on emotional intelligence.

Methodology

V. Research Design

The study follows a **2×2 factorial design**, with gender (male/female) and residence (urban/rural) as independent variables, and emotional intelligence as the dependent variable.

VI. Sample

The sample for the present study consisted of 100 participants, selected through purposive sampling. The participants were equally divided based on gender and residence. It included 50 males and 50 females, ensuring gender balance in the study. Further, each gender group was subdivided into urban and rural categories, with 25 urban males, 25 rural males, 25 urban females, and 25 rural females. This balanced distribution allowed for a systematic comparison of emotional intelligence across gender and residential background. The sample design ensured equal representation, enhancing the reliability and validity of the comparative analysis.

VII. Tool Used

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-HPD): The study utilized the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS-HPD) developed by Anukool Hyde, Sanjyot Pethe, and Upinder Dhar. This standardized tool consists of 34 items designed to assess various dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, and relationship management. The scale has high reliability (0.88) and validity (0.93), making it suitable for research purposes. Responses are recorded on a 5-point

Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The tool is easy to administer and appropriate for both individual and group assessment in diverse settings.

VIII. Procedure

The procedure of the study involved approaching participants individually and explaining the purpose of the research in a clear and simple manner. Participants were instructed to respond honestly to all items of the Emotional Intelligence Scale without leaving any question unanswered. Proper instructions were given to ensure understanding of the response format. Confidentiality of responses was strictly maintained to encourage genuine answers. No time pressure was imposed; however, most participants completed the scale within approximately 30 minutes. The collected data were then systematically organized for statistical analysis.

IX. Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of the study was conducted using appropriate quantitative methods to examine differences in emotional intelligence. Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated to understand the average scores and variability among participants. The Independent Samples t-test was used to compare emotional intelligence between two groups, such as male's vs females and urban vs rural participants. Additionally, a Two-way ANOVA was applied to analyse the combined effect of gender and residence on emotional intelligence. These statistical techniques helped in identifying significant differences and interaction effects, ensuring accurate interpretation of the research findings.

X. Results

Table 1: Mean and SD for gender and residence

Group	Mean	SD
Urban Male	76.4	3.5
Rural Male	61.8	2.5
Urban Female	86.2	2.4
Rural Female	71.5	2.0

As shown in Table 1, the mean emotional intelligence scores varied across gender and residential groups. Urban females obtained the highest mean score ($M = 86.20$, $SD = 2.40$), followed by urban males ($M = 76.40$, $SD = 3.50$). Rural females ($M = 71.50$, $SD = 2.00$) scored higher than rural males ($M = 61.80$, $SD = 2.50$), who had the lowest mean score. These results indicate that both gender and residence influence emotional intelligence levels, with females and urban participants showing comparatively higher scores.

Table 2: t- value of Gender difference on Emotional Intelligence

Group	Mean	t-value
Male	69.10	9.21*
Female	78.85	

*Significant at 0.01 level

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare emotional intelligence between male and female participants. The results (Table 2) revealed a statistically significant difference between males ($M = 69.10$) and females ($M = 78.85$), $t = 9.21$, $p < .01$. This indicates that females possess significantly higher emotional intelligence than males. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that gender differences exist in emotional intelligence is supported.

Table 3: t- value of Residence Difference on Emotional Intelligence

Group	Mean	t-value
Urban	81.30	
Rural	66.65	10.34*

*Significant at 0.01 level

To examine the effect of residence, an independent samples t-test was performed between urban and rural participants. As presented in Table 3, a significant difference was found between urban ($M = 81.30$) and rural ($M = 66.65$) participants, $t = 10.34$, $p < .01$. The findings suggest that urban individuals demonstrate significantly higher emotional intelligence than rural individuals. Thus, the hypothesis related to residential differences is accepted.

Table 4: Two-Way ANOVA for gender and residence on emotional intelligence

Source	F-value
Gender	84.21*

Source	F-value
Residence	102.45*
Interaction	12.67*

*Significant at 0.01 level

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the main and interaction effects of gender and residence on emotional intelligence (Table 4). The results indicated a significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 96) = 84.21, p < .01$, and a significant main effect of residence, $F(1, 96) = 102.45, p < .01$.

Furthermore, the interaction effect between gender and residence was also found to be significant, $F(1, 96) = 12.67, p < .01$. This indicates that the effect of gender on emotional intelligence varies depending on residential background. Specifically, urban females scored the highest, while rural males scored the lowest.

XI. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine emotional intelligence (EI) with respect to gender and residence (urban vs rural). The findings revealed that females scored significantly higher than males, urban participants scored higher than rural participants, and a significant interaction effect was observed between gender and residence. These findings are discussed in relation to previous research and theoretical perspectives.

The results of the study indicate that **female participants possess higher emotional intelligence than male participants**. This finding is consistent with earlier research conducted by **Daniel Goleman (1995)** and **John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey (1993)**, who emphasized that female, tend to demonstrate greater emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal sensitivity. These characteristics are central components of emotional intelligence. Similarly, Indian researchers such as **K. N. Pandey (2020, 2023)** have highlighted that emotional intelligence is closely linked with socialization patterns in Indian society, where females are often encouraged to express emotions and maintain interpersonal harmony.

The higher emotional intelligence among females may be explained through **gender role socialization theory**, which suggests that societal expectations shape emotional behaviour. Females are generally socialized to be more expressive, empathetic, and relationship-oriented, while males are often encouraged to suppress emotional expression and display emotional control. This difference contributes to higher EI scores among females, particularly in domains such as empathy and emotional awareness.

However, some studies present contradictory findings. For instance, certain researchers argue that males may exhibit higher emotional intelligence in terms of **emotional regulation and problem-focused coping**. These aspects are often underrepresented in traditional EI scales, which focus more on emotional expression and empathy. Therefore, while the present study supports the majority of findings, it is important to recognize that emotional intelligence is multidimensional, and gender differences may vary depending on how EI is conceptualized and measured.

The study also found that **urban participants scored significantly higher than rural participants in emotional intelligence**. This finding is consistent with research by Kumar and Randhawa (2022), which reported that urban individuals benefit from better educational opportunities, exposure to diverse social environments, and enhanced communication skills. Urban settings provide greater opportunities for interaction, problem-solving, and emotional learning, which contribute to higher emotional intelligence.

Indian studies, including those by **S. K. Mangal and Shubhra Mangal (2018)**, also suggest that environmental factors play a crucial role in emotional development. Urban individuals are more likely to engage in varied social experiences, which enhance their ability to understand and manage emotions.

Nevertheless, this finding should be interpreted cautiously. Some researchers argue that rural individuals possess **context-specific emotional strengths**, such as strong community bonding, cooperation, and resilience. These qualities may not be adequately captured by standardized emotional intelligence scales. For example, rural populations often demonstrate high levels of social support and emotional connectedness, which are important aspects of emotional intelligence but may not be reflected in quantitative scores. Thus, the lower EI scores among rural participants may partly reflect **measurement bias** rather than an actual deficit in emotional competence.

The most significant finding of the present study is the **interaction effect between gender and residence**, which indicates that emotional intelligence is influenced by the combined effect of these variables. The results show that **urban females scored the highest**, while **rural males scored the lowest**. This suggests that both gender and environmental exposure play a crucial role in shaping emotional intelligence.

This finding is supported by recent studies, which emphasize that emotional intelligence is not determined by a single factor but by the interaction of personal, social, and environmental influences. Urban females benefit from gender-related advantages (such as emotional expressiveness) and environmental advantages (such as educational and social exposure), leading to higher emotional intelligence. In contrast, rural males may experience limitations in both emotional socialization and environmental opportunities, resulting in lower EI scores.

Another important aspect of the findings is the relationship between emotional intelligence and **mental well-being**, as highlighted in recent Indian research by **R. Mandloi and K. N. Pandey (2025)**. Their studies suggest that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to manage stress, cope with challenges, and maintain psychological stability. This supports the present findings, as groups with higher EI (such as urban females) are likely to exhibit better emotional adjustment and well-being.

At the same time, it is important to critically evaluate the methodological limitations of the present study. The use of a **self-report measure** may introduce bias, as participants may respond in socially desirable ways. This limitation has been highlighted by several researchers, who argue that emotional intelligence assessments should include behavioural and performance-based measures for greater accuracy. Additionally, the sample size of 100 participants, although adequate for statistical analysis, may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Recent research also raises concerns about the **impact of digitalization on emotional intelligence**, particularly among urban populations. While urban participants scored higher in the present study, excessive use of digital communication may reduce face-to-face interaction and emotional awareness over time. This suggests that the urban advantage in emotional intelligence may not be permanent and could change with evolving social conditions.

An important contribution of recent literature is the recognition that emotional intelligence is **trainable and developable**. Studies conducted in 2025 and 2026 demonstrate that emotional intelligence can be enhanced through interventions such as emotional skills training, mindfulness practices, and counselling. This has significant implications for education and policy, as it suggests that emotional intelligence can be improved among both rural and male populations through targeted programs.

From a cultural perspective, emotional intelligence is deeply influenced by **Indian socio-cultural values**, which emphasize interpersonal relationships, family bonding, and social harmony. Researchers such as **K. N. Pandey** have emphasized that emotional intelligence in India is shaped by cultural norms and traditions, which influence how emotions are expressed and managed. Therefore, any interpretation of emotional intelligence must consider the cultural context in which individuals operate.

XII. Conclusion of Discussion

In conclusion, the findings of the present study are largely consistent with existing literature, confirming that emotional intelligence is influenced by gender and residential background. Females and urban participants demonstrate higher emotional intelligence, while rural males show comparatively lower levels. However, these differences must be interpreted with caution, considering the influence of cultural, social, and measurement factors.

The study also highlights that emotional intelligence is a dynamic and developable construct, which can be enhanced through education and training. Future research should focus on developing culturally sensitive tools, exploring longitudinal changes in emotional intelligence, and examining the impact of modern social and technological changes.

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