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Research Article

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Young People: "Making Emotions Work for You, Instead of Against You"

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I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction: The importance of Emotional Quotient (EQ) in personal happiness and relationships for both children and adolescents is rarely recognized. The Association of Adolescent and Child Care in India (AACCI) conducts workshops to create awareness among students, parents and teachers including, multi-centric studies to assess levels of EI using standardized scales.

Aim: To assess the emotional intelligence (EI) scores in college students and study the effects of various demographic variables

Methods: Cross-sectional study, using Schutte's Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) students - all-women's college in North India (n = 354: 17–21 years; M = 18.63 years, SD = 1.06 years). Group I: 17–19 years (late adolescents); Group II: 20–21 years (young adults). Variables used - age, sibling status, academic course, extracurricular activities, self-perceived internet, social media usage and dependence, substance use, and self-perception of control over one's life to see their effects on SEIS scores. The data were analyzed using t-tests and one-way ANOVAs.

Results: Those with social media usage showed higher moderate SEIS scores ($p < 0.022$) scores as compared to participants who did not use social media ($p < 0.022$). The other variables did not show a statistically significant effect on SEIS scores.

Conclusion: In our sample, social media usage showed a significant impact on EI. Further studies are needed to focus on the various aspects of social media influences and their role in EI.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Social Media, Intra-Personal Awareness, Inter-Personal Awareness, Empathy, Female College Students

Introduction

Due to a fierce academic environment, both parents at home and teachers in school are focused on developing the intelligence quotient (IQ) of children and adolescents. The importance of emotional quotient (EQ) in personal happiness and relationships is rarely recognized. The Association of Adolescent and Child Care in India (AACCI) conducts workshops to create awareness among students, parents and teachers about emotional intelligence (EI), its role in our everyday life, and ways to build it because of its importance in our mental well-being. We also conduct multi-centric studies to assess levels of various aspects of resilience like EI using standardized scales.

For years, intelligence has been understood as a descriptive term encompassing a hierarchy of mental abilities used to understand the world around us. EI can be understood as an ability that combines general intelligence and emotions to enhance thought.[1] In the 1920s, Edward Thorndike, spoke about "social intelligence" and David Wechsler, who developed intelligence tests talked about "non-intellective" factors that affected intelligent behavior.[2,3]

EI, as a concept, was popularized by the book titled, "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ". In this book, Daniel Goleman talks about how IQ and EQ are not opposing competencies but separate ones.[4] This model emphasized five competencies that encompass EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Having these competencies at a moderate to high level ensures that we can persist in the face of frustration, reason effectively and empathically when faced with emotionally laden situations, control impulses, delay gratification, resolve conflicts, and maintain positive relationships.[4] One of the oldest theories of EI was the Four Branch Theory, wherein EI was described as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate amongst them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action".[2] EI is considered a type of intelligence in that it uses reasoning, 'emotion-related' vocabulary, and other cognitive processes to enhance our thought processes in the understanding of our world.[2]

A third model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI), was the Bar-On model in which five domains were considered to be important for social-emotional intelligence: intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood.[5,6] This model defines ESI "as a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands."

In this model, the author describes the competencies as follows:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Self-awareness is considered a part of intrapersonal awareness in which we understand our mood while we are experiencing it. Self-aware people are neither engulfed, nor ruminative, nor too accepting of their own moods, using it with judgement to have a positive outlook towards life.
2. **Social Awareness:** Social awareness, also considered interpersonal awareness, is the ability to understand the emotions and motives of others while also being able to empathize (being able to put oneself in another person's place).
3. **Adaptability:** Another component of ESI is our ability to adapt to change and show flexibility and problem-solving skills.
4. **Stress Management:** A fourth component of the ESI is our ability to manage our own emotions in lieu of the situation and the ability to control our impulses.
5. **General Mood:** This component reflects our ability to maintain optimism, contentment, and happiness in our lives despite challenges.

Founded in 2007, AACCI is a civil society/ NGO registered in Mumbai and working on an all- India basis. It works with children and youth via parents, grandparents and teachers in schools and colleges. One of its main aims is Life Skill Education (LSE) for adolescents. Through the life skill approach, AACCI aims to prevent lifestyle disorders and promote mental health. AACCI does multi-centric youth behavior studies to customize intervention programs for holistic wellness.

As part of the 'Building Resilience' program, this study aims to understand the relationship between EI and different variables that affect student life and to find ways to build skills related to EI that can help students navigate their lives better.

Materials and Methods

Aims and Objectives: In 2017, the AACCI initiated the project on "Building Resilience" among school and college students in India. a) The current study aimed to determine the scores of the Schutte's Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) scores in (n = 354) college girls from a women's college in Delhi and draw age-based comparisons (group I: 17–19 years and group II: 20–21 years) for the same b) to see the effect of various demographic variables on the scores.

The following demographic variables were studied: age, sibling status (no sibling, one sibling, and more than one sibling), academic course (BA/ BCom/ BSc), participation in interschool/ college competitions, (athletic and sociocultural competitions). The questionnaire also asked about their self-perceived internet and social media usage and dependence. Lastly, they were asked if they believed that they were in control of their life and whether they

consumed tobacco and alcohol.

Sample Characteristics: Participants included 354 women (n = 354; age range: 17–21 years, M_{age} = 18.63 years, SD = 1.06 years) pursuing BA, BCom, or BSc from an all-women's college in North India.

Sample Selection: Participants were selected via convenience sampling. AACCI conducted an awareness program at this all-women's college in North India and requested students to participate in their survey. Participants filled out the online survey questionnaire under the supervision of their college professor and a team of student volunteers trained by AACCI.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: There were no exclusion criteria, and all the students who volunteered to participate in the survey were included in the study.

Study Design: A cross-sectional study was conducted using convenience sampling.

Study Duration: The study spanned a three-month period from July to September 2018.

Procedure

As part of its multicentric studies on youth behavior in India, AACCI designed and administered a survey questionnaire, which focused on collecting socio-demographic data in addition to the following five psychometric tools to gauge the participants' stratum of resilience, self-efficacy, EI, self-regulation, and self-esteem, respectively: 1) Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28),[7] 2) Social Self-efficacy Scale,[8] 3) SEIS,[9,10] 4) Adolescent Self-Regulation Inventory[11] and 5) Rosenberg's Self-esteem scale[12]. Additionally, AACCI has submitted individual papers for these scales exploring their distinct relationships[13-17] with the demographic variables for the same cohort. The current paper discusses the analysis of results pertaining to SEIS.

Tool Used

The current paper assesses levels of EI in this cohort and relates it to the variables we want to study. SEIS was used to assess EI in this sample.[18] The SEIS is based on the Four Branch Model of EI, wherein the scale was designed to assess: (a) the appraisal and expression of emotions in self and others; (b) the regulation of emotion in self and others; and (3) the utilization of emotion in solving problems. It follows the trait model of EI that explains how EI comes to play in everyday life. The scale contains 33 items rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The total scale scores range from 33 to 165. Low SEIS scores range from 33 to 111; moderate scores range from 112 to 136; and high scores range from 137 to 165). Scores on the scale are related to eight of nine measures predicted to be related to EI. SEIS can be administered to individuals above the age of 16. The scale is psychometrically sound and also showed evidence of predictive and discriminant validity. Internal consistency coefficients were found to be between 0.87 and 0.90. Test-retest reliability was reported as 0.78. Construct validity is established with factor analysis and correlations with constructs such as attention to feelings, clarity of feelings, mood repair, optimism, impulse control, etc. Studies have also demonstrated the content validity of the scale.[19] The SEIS was used in an Indian sample, the model is found to be fit as per the necessary indices falling within the acceptable limits.[19]

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS Software Version 29.0.0. The effects of age and engagement in extracurricular activities were analysed using t tests. Further, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine the effects of sibling status, academic course, and self-perceived control over one's life. The statistical significance of the calculated coefficients was considered at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Approval and Consent of Patients

Ethical clearance for this project was given by AACCI's Institutional Ethics Committee. Permission for conducting the current study was procured from the college's principal. Informed assent/ consent was obtained via the questionnaire. This was not a clinical trial, and the participants were not patients.

Table 1.Age-Wise Distribution of SEIS Scores

SEIS Scores		Age			
		Late Adolescents (n = 275) (Group 1: 17–19 Years)		Young Adults (n = 79) (Group II: 20–24 Years)	
Scores	Range	n (%)	SEIS (Mean ± SD)	n (%)	SEIS (Mean ± SD)
Total EIS scores	33–165	275 (77.68)	125.629 ± 13.942	79 (22.32)	124.177 ± 14.239
Low	33–111	40 (74.07)	101.65 ± 9.034	14 (25.93)	102.21 ± 6.351
Moderate	112–136	52 (22.91)	124.67 ± 6.045	175 (77.09)	125.01 ± 5.892
High	137–165	13 (17.81)	145.85 ± 6.805	60 (82.19)	143.43 ± 5.741

Table 2.Effect of Age on SEIS Scores

Age (Years)	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
17–19	40 (74.07)	52 (22.91)	13 (17.81)	275 (77.68)
20–21	14 (25.93)	175 (77.09)	60 (82.19)	79 (22.32)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	52	225	71	352
p value	0.400	0.361	0.094	0.209

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 3.Effects of Sibling Status on SEIS Scores

Sibling Status	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
No sibling	3 (5.56)	11 (4.85)	5 (6.85)	19 (5.37)
One sibling	25 (46.30)	125 (55.07)	36 (49.32)	186 (52.54)
More than one sibling	26 (48.15)	91 (40.09)	32 (43.84)	149 (42.09)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	251	2, 224	270	2351
p value	0.575	0.279	0.719	0.614

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 4.Effect of Choice of Academic Course on SEIS Scores

Academic Course	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
BA	9 (16.67)	45 (19.82)	16 (21.92)	70 (19.77)
BCom	3 (5.56)	28 (12.33)	12 (16.44)	43 (12.15)
BSc	42 (77.78)	154 (67.84)	45 (61.64)	241 (68.08)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	251	2,224	270	2,351
p value	0.193	0.395	0.515	0.184

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 5.Effects of Participation in Interschool/ College Competitions on SEIS Scores

Participation in Interschool/ College Competitions	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	13 (24.07)	33 (14.54)	9 (12.33)	55 (15.54)
No	41 (75.93)	194 (85.46)	64 (87.67)	299 (84.46)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	52	225	71	352
p value	0.420	0.138	0.115	0.143

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 6.Effects of Participation in Intraschool/ College Competitions on SEIS Scores

Participation in Intraschool/ College Competitions	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	14 (25.93)	71 (31.28)	26 (35.62)	111 (31.36)
No	40 (74.07)	156 (68.72)	47 (64.38)	243 (68.64)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	52	225	71	352
p value	0.454	0.192	0.265	0.278

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 7.Effects of Internet Usage on SEIS Score

Internet Usage	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	27 (50.00)	146 (64.32)	49 (67.12)	352 (99.44)
No	27 (50.00)	81 (35.68)	24 (32.88)	2 (0.56)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	52	225	71	352
p value	0.276	0.314	0.207	0.149

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 8.Effects of Social Media Usage on SEIS Scores

Social Media Usage	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	16 (26.63)	215(94.71)	70(95.89)	332 (93.79)
No	38 (70.37)	12 (5.29)	3(4.11)	22 (6.21)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	52	225	71	352
p value	0.116	0.022*	0.075	0.004***

Significant p value * < 0.05, *** < 0.001

Table 9.Self-Perceived Dependency on Social Media & its Relationship with SEIS Scores

Social Media Dependency	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	16 (26.63)	69 (30.40)	23 (31.51)	218 (61.58)
No	38 (70.37)	158 (69.60)	50 (68.49)	136 (38.42)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	52	225	71	352
p value	0.116	0.287	0.227	0.055*

Significant p value * ≤ 0.05

Table 10.Use of Tobacco and SEIS Scores

Use of Tobacco	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	1 (1.85)	1 (0.44)	1 (1.37)	3 (0.85)
No	53 (98.15)	226 (99.56)	72 (98.63)	351(99.15)

Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	NA	NA	NA	352
p value	NA	NA	NA	0.403

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 11.Consumption of Alcohol and its Relationship with SEIS Scores

Use of Alcohol	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	1 (1.85)	6 (2.64)	3 (4.11)	10 (2.82)
No	53 (98.15)	221 (97.36)	70 (95.89)	344 (97.18)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	NA	225	71	352
p value	NA	0.484	0.333	0.205

Significant p value * < 0.05

Table 12.Perceived Control Over Life and its Relationship with SEIS Scores

Perceived Control Over Life	Low SEIS Scores n (%)	Moderate SEIS Scores n (%)	High SEIS Scores n (%)	Mean SEIS Scores n (%)
Yes	22 (40.74)	111 (48.90)	40 (54.79)	173 (48.87)
No	9 (16.67)	22 (9.69)	9 (12.33)	40 (11.30)
Maybe	23 (42.59)	94 (41.41)	24 (32.88)	141 (39.83)
Total	54 (100.00)	227 (100.00)	73 (100.00)	354 (100.00)
df	2251	2224	270	2251
p value	0.172	0.108	0.369	0.122

Significant p value * < 0.05

Results & Discussion

Table 1 shows the range of SEIS scores in this cohort. The total scale scores range from 33 to 165. Low SEIS scores range from 33 to 111; moderate scores range from 112 to 136; and high scores range from 137 to 165. Scores on the scale are related to eight of nine measures predicted to be related to EI.[19] Out of 354 participants, 275 participants (77.68%) had a mean score of (M = 125.629, SD = 13.942), whereas 79 participants (22.32%) had a mean score of (M = 124.177, SD = 14.239).

AACCI has published a study conducted with females studying in an engineering college in Pune to explore the relationships between individual scale scores and socio-demographic variables, including age, sibling status, academic course (BA, BCom, and BSc), engagement in extracurricular activities, perceived internet and social usage and media dependence, substance use, and perception of control over one's life.[20]

Relationship Between Age and Its Effects on SEIS Scores

We had divided the sample into two age groups: late adolescents (Group I: 17–19 years; n = 275, 77.68%) and young adults (Group II: 20–21 years; n = 79, 22.32%). Table 2 suggests that in our sample there was no statistically significant difference in SEIS scores between Group I (M = 125.629, SD = 13.942) and II (M = 124.177, SD = 14.2390), t(352), p = 0.209.

However, as evident from Table 2, a comparison on the levels of SEIS scores, we found that in Group I more participants had moderate SEIS scores (112–136; n = 52, 22.91%; M = 124.67, SD = 6.045) as compared to participants who had low SEIS scores (< 111; n = 40, 74.07%; M = 101.65, SD = 9.034) and high SEIS scores (> 137; n = 13, 17.81%; M = 145.85, SD = 6.805). On the other hand, in Group II: 20–21 years, more participants had moderate (112–136; n = 175, 77.09%; M = 125.01, SD = 5.892) and high (n = 60, 82.19%; M = 143.43, SD = 5.741) SEIS scores as compared to low (n = 14, 25.93%; M = 102.21, SD = 6.351). In summary, when Group I and II are compared, in Group I i.e. 17–19 years, more participants had low SEIS scores and in Group II i.e. 20–21 years, more participants had moderate SEIS scores.

The difference in the SEIS scores can be attributed to variables related to cognitive maturity and development of the prefrontal cortex in these age groups. The prefrontal cortex is involved in promoting good judgment when presented with difficult life situations and is one of the

last regions of the brain to reach maturation and brain development is not complete until the age of 25 years.[21,22] EI, on the other hand, develops through adolescence and adulthood, peaking much later in life.

Relationship Between Sibling Status and SEIS Scores

We studied the presence of siblings in this sample because various studies have shown that the presence of siblings or being a single child has a significant effect on the personality and soft skill development of a child which can continue into adolescence and young adulthood. Children with siblings are also more likely to share, resolve conflicts, and manage positive and negative emotions well.

Table 3 suggests that our sample results showed that only: (a) a minority of participants had no siblings (n = 19, 5.37%); mean SEIS scores were 124.579 (SD = 16.077); (b) more than half of the participants with one sibling had mean SEIS scores (M = 126.005, SD = 13.087, n = 186, 52.54%); and (c) less than half of the participants who had more than one sibling had mean SEIS scores (M = 124.524, SD = 14.858, n = 149, 42.09). However, the difference was not statistically significant t(2,351), p = 0.614.

A review of the literature shows a significant relationship between sibling status and EI development. Sibling status and the number of siblings do not affect EI positively; rather, the nature of sibling relationships and the personality of parents i.e. parental warmth and expressiveness, their relationships with the child and siblings might be better predictors of EI.[23,24]

Relationship Between Academic Course and SEIS Scores

A review of the literature suggests that soft skills may be affected by the academic course a student pursues. Hence, we studied the effect of this variable on SEIS scores. Table 4 shows that the majority of the participants belonged to the BSc course (n = 241, 68.08%) as compared to BCom (n = 43, 12.15%) and BA (n = 70, 19.77%). The mean SEIS scores were as follows: (a) BSc (M = 124.548, SD = 14.354); (b) BCom (M = 128.744, SD = 12.866); and (c) BA (M = 125.800, SD = 13.261). There was no statistically significant difference [t(2,351), p = 0.184], suggesting that there was no significant relationship between EI and the type of academic course. Some research suggests that students with high EI perform well on academic courses but there is limited research to suggest that the choice of academic course affects EI.[25] In one study conducted in India, it was found that scores of students from the science and arts streams do not significantly differ on the test of EI; however, a strong correlation was found between EI and academic achievement.[26]

Relationship Between Participation in Intercollegiate Competitions and SEIS Scores

Tables 5 and 6 suggest that participation in athletic and non-athletic intercollegiate competitions does not significantly affect SEIS scores. The majority of the participants (n = 299, 84.46%) did not participate in intercollegiate competitions. There was no statistically significant difference between participants who engaged in intercollegiate competitions (M = 125.646, SD = 13.647) vs. those who did not engage in intercollegiate competitions (M = 125.008, SD = 14.180). Statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between SEIS scores and participation in intercollegiate activities [t (352), p = 0.143]. Participation in extracurricular activities can be related to difficulty in obtaining permission from home to deviate from academics and divert attention to these activities, transportation problems, logistical difficulties, home-related responsibilities, financial limitations, lack of interest, and aspects of personality such as social avoidance.[27] These factors were not within the scope of this study. In a study conducted by AACCI in 2020, EI was found to be positively correlated with self-esteem and social self-efficacy, which is useful for secure relationships and both short- and long-term regulation. The study also showed that those girls who participated in sports had higher social self-efficacy and self-regulation, a component of EI than those who did not participate.[20]

Relationship Between Internet Usage and SEIS Scores

Table 7 suggests that in this sample, it was seen that almost all participants (n = 352, 99.44%) used the internet on a regular basis which is understandable as they belong to the present digital world. Internet usage did not have a significant effect on SEIS scores as per [M = 125.364, SD = 13.995, t(352), p = 0.149)]. Since the focus of this paper was not on detailed internet usage, we have not asked for the type of online activity or the amount of time spent on the internet. In other AACCI publications, we have studied internet addiction, its relationship with self and social efficacy, emotional regulation (both short-term and long-term) and type of internet usage.[20]

Relationship Between Social Media Use and SEIS Scores

Table 8 shows the social media use and SEIS scores. In this sample, the majority of participants used social media (n = 332, 93.79%). Social media use was found to have a significant relationship with mean SEIS scores [(M = 125.801, SD = 13.890, t(352), p < 0.004)].

Specifically, students who used social media had significantly higher moderate SEIS [n = 332, 93.79%, (M = 125.12, SD =

5.899, t (225), p < 0.022)] scores as compared to participants who did not use social media [n = 22, 6.21%, (M = 121.58, SD = 5.401), t(225), p < 0.022)]. This relationship was found to be significant only with respect to moderate EI scores but not with low and high SEIS scores. Our focus was on personal use and dependency on social media as perceived by students and its relationship with SEIS scores. We did not ask about the type of social media use, whether active (like Facebook and Instagram) or passive (like Netflix and Hotstar) or students' purpose of using social media. We have analyzed social media use in our other paper which suggests that social media use and sleep patterns affect student life.[28]

While there are many studies that have focused on the negative effects of social media use, there are fewer studies that have suggested that the use of social media has positive influences on the EI aspects of an individual's personality. Our results suggest that participants who use social media and had moderate scores on the SEIS, understand their own emotional states and that of others with moderate ease, are able to manage their relationships, are aware of social cues, and can also empathize with others, that is, social media use promotes EI. Several studies have shown that selective self-presentation by social media users may lead to increased self-confidence and that the "Feedback" feature that allows users to receive public feedback on their profile turned out to be a positive regulator of narcissistic esteem, which is closely tied to positive self-views of intelligence, physical attractiveness, and power.[29,30]

Social media use, which is driven around an individual's expression of personality as seen in interactive mediums, seems to have a positive relationship with aspects of EI because these mediums enable us to present ourselves in a desirable way, helping us hide our flaws, control how we are seen to others and possibly putting the best foot forward. This self-image or self-presentation is also heavily dependent on how society then views us in return.[30] Self-esteem is also closely tied to self-worth, self-efficacy, and self-awareness. In one study, it was found that to be able to present oneself positively on social media itself, one needs to have self-awareness.[31]

When we look at the other aspects of EI like social awareness and empathy, it was found that the positive effect of social media use has to do with connections with either new people or current acquaintances and to enable users surfing the thoughts of other people's experiences which may lead to a higher level of understanding towards other people's perspective.[32,33] Facebook activities, such as chatting, were linked to higher levels of understanding of other people's points of view, particularly among male respondents. This pattern suggests that Facebook, in facilitating great social connection, may encourage some aspects of empathy.[30]It is also possible that social media provides a platform for those who are able to express themselves better when direct social interaction is not involved; another explanation is that interactions at most influence affective empathy (AE) rather than cognitive empathy (CE).[35] Because of the speed of social interactions, affective empathy is more likely to occur easily when staying in these live interactions, while cognitive empathy might occur more as an afterthought to the interaction.

Relationship Between Self-Perceived Dependency on Social Media Usage and SEIS Scores

Table 9 suggests that in this sample, the majority of the participants (n = 246, 69.49%) did not believe they were dependent on social media (M = 125.508, SD = 13.770, t (352), p = 0.341). There was no significant relationship between self-perceived dependency on social media usage and SEIS scores.

Relationship Between Tobacco and Alcohol Use and SEIS Scores

We studied the demographic variable of the use of tobacco and alcohol: (a) to assess the prevalence in college girls as the incidence is increasing in India; and (b) to study the relationship between EI scores and substance use. Tables 10 and 11 suggest that the majority of the participants reported that they do not use tobacco (n = 351, 99.15%) and alcohol (n = 344, 97.18%). This study did not check for hard drug use. The responses may or may not be honestly reported to portray a socially desirable image as in our society, even today, women face greater stigmatization than men for using drugs as they are perceived as "bad women" and violate gender role expectations.[28]

In our sample, there were no statistically significant effects of tobacco and alcohol use on the SEIS scores [(n = 351, 99.15% for tobacco use, M = 125.322, SD = 13.932), t (352), p = 0.403)] and [(n = 344, 97.18% for alcohol use, M = 125.201, SD = 14.009, t (352), p = 0.205)]. Parental regulations can be strict with substance use and as this sample is only female, self-reported alcohol and tobacco use was low.[35]

Relationship of Self-Perceived Control Over One's Life and SEIS Scores

Table 12 suggests that perceived self-control over one's life had no significant relationship with SEIS scores. About half the participants believed they 'had' control over their life [(n = 173, 48.87%, (M = 126.861, SD = 14.032)], some others responded with 'maybe' [(n = 141, 39.83% (M = 123.879, SD = 12.798)], while a fewer number of participants responded 'no' to this question [(n = 40, 11.30%, (M = 123.6, SD = 17.233)]. There was no significant relationship between participants' self-perceived control over their lives and

SEIS scores [t(2,251), p = 0.122)]. With perceived control comes effective management and regulation of emotional reactions. Student participants are still likely to be heavily reliant on their parents financially and emotionally. Decisions related to academic, social and personal lives can hinge heavily on parental approval, thereby, making them feel like they cannot control many decisions in their lives.[36,37]

Limitations

A major limitation was that the sample was selected via convenience sampling collected from only one college, which had female students. Hence, the generalizability of this sample to the wider population needs more studies that include both genders and different age groups.

Another limitation is that this study used self-report measures which are known to have the probability of skewed data due to various individual biases such as wanting to have social desirability and answering with this bias.

A univariate analysis may be oversimplifying the relationships found to be significant in this study. There could be confounders like income, SES, parents' education, occupation etc. which could be why the authors found high SEIS scores among students with high social media use. Hence, a univariate analysis is a limitation in this study.

Recommendations

It is important to make students' parents and teachers aware of understanding and developing EI, which is very important for holistic mental and emotional well-being. It is best encouraged and developed in early childhood so that it creates more emotionally stable adolescents who can become more emotionally stable adults. AACCI conducts multi-centric youth behavior studies in schools and colleges using standardized scales. It also conducts regular workshops for parents, teachers, children, and adolescents in schools and colleges using the WHO life skill education framework for the development of soft skills to improve their resilience, of which, EI is an important aspect.

Conclusion

The importance of developing EI cannot be understated. Fierce academic environments can be a challenge at school/ college as well as at home for students. Developing skills related to EI can help students navigate the stressors of their lives with relative ease. In this study, it was concluded that the only variable affecting SEIS scores was social media usage. Thus, when building life skills, effective use of social media in light of the competencies of EI would be a helpful way to enrich students' lives. Also, more multicentric studies involving both genders in early and mid-adolescent ages will give more insight and validity to the results of demographic variables. Further studies can also explore the other variables in a more specific way like understanding barriers to participation in extracurricular activities and types of social media that influence students' lives. Finally, competencies of EI like self-awareness, social awareness, empathy, adaptability, and emotional regulation must be taught in LSE education.

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