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# Unpacking Demographic Influences on Emotional Intelligence Among Educators of Higher Educational Institutions

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## ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognised as a key determinant of leadership, teaching effectiveness, job satisfaction, and stress management in higher education. While prior research largely views EI as a personal trait, research on socio-demographic influences has received limited attention, particularly in the Indian context. This study examines differences in EI across age, gender, marital status, experience, employment status, income, educational qualification, and administrative roles among 106 faculty members from HEI in Telangana. A descriptive, cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Findings reveal significant variations in EI by age, experience, employment status, and income, with older, more experienced, regular employees, and those with higher incomes reporting greater EI. No significant differences emerged for gender, marital status, education, or administrative responsibility. The study highlights EI as a dynamic skill shaped by socio-demographic factors, emphasising its importance for implementing emotional interventions within institutional policies to foster emotional well-being and performance in HEIs.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Socio-Demographic Factors, Higher Education, Faculty, Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test

## INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) was defined by Mayer and Salovey (1990) as one's ability to identify, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others. In the last two decades, the importance of EI in organisations has rapidly emerged at both personal and professional levels across various settings, supporting effective performance, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, stress reduction, and coping mechanisms.

EI is often regarded as a key factor for the success of individuals and organisations. It is positively associated with various organisational outcomes. Numerous studies have shown that EI contributes to improved performance. It has a direct effect on job performance and also a negative effect on job stress (Cheraghi et al., 2025). EI also significantly enhances job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, and workplace adaptability (Del et al., 2018; Deb et al., 2023). Emotionally intelligent leaders exhibit effective leadership behaviours, such as empathy, strong relationships, and a positive environment (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). In people-centric organisations, such as higher education institutions (HEIs), EI becomes crucial, as interpersonal communication, decision-making, stress coping, and leadership are integral to day-to-day operations.

Faculty members face significant emotional and psychological strain in this fast-paced academic environment, amid changing demands from higher education organisations. They manage administrative duties, academic responsibilities, and interactions with peers and students, all while regulating and managing their emotions. Increased workload, role ambiguity, and emotional demands can lead to stress. In this context, EI becomes

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important. EI promotes effective interpersonal relationships, social skills, empathy, and informed decision-making for academic leaders.

Additionally, mental health concerns among faculty can also be reduced through EI. Individuals with EI are less likely to experience stress (Mérida-López et al., 2022), which helps them cope with stress. The use of EI enhances adaptive stress-coping behaviours in demanding situations (Jooste et al., 2023; Sáez-Delgado et al., 2023)

Leaders in HEIs manage diverse teams and sensitive student issues, and they experience considerable pressure. Leaders with high EI demonstrate transformational leadership styles to motivate, foster collaboration, promote inclusiveness, and support emotional well-being in the workplace (Singh et al., 2021). They excel at inspiring and influencing colleagues while demonstrating resilience and empathy in the face of challenges. Many studies have examined EI in organisations, including HEIs. EI improves teachers' well-being and job satisfaction (Pandey & Sharma, 2024).

Additionally, it boosts self-efficacy, helping individuals believe in their ability to perform tasks. Those with high EI tend to feel more competent and confident in their work, maintaining emotional control, focus, and motivation even in difficult situations. (Pool & Qualter, 2012).

Moreover, academic professionals are highly susceptible to psychological stress resulting from workloads, deadlines, administrative tasks, and shifts in student expectations. The ability to face challenges depends on technical and cognitive skills, as well as emotional abilities. EI components, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping mechanisms, enable individuals to manage stressors effectively. EI not only helps to reduce burnout but also helps overall mental health (Kaur, 2024; Suram et al., 2025)

Despite extensive literature on the benefits of emotional intelligence in organisational life, few studies examine how socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, income, and experience relate to EI. Understanding the relationships among these demographic factors is essential, as they influence how each person develops, regulates, and uses EI competencies in their professional lives. The present research examines differences in EI scores across socio-demographic factors among faculty members in higher education. By examining this, the study aims to determine whether demographic factors, such as age, gender, and employment status, influence the difference in EI scores.

The significance of this study lies in helping higher education institutions identify targeted development and training interventions that account for demographic factors. By understanding the relationship between EI and demographic factors, institutions can create more support and development initiatives, improving organisational effectiveness and individual well-being.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence (EI) was first defined by Mayer and Salovey (1990) as a type of social intelligence characterised by the ability to perceive one’s own and others' emotions, understand them, and utilise these emotions to make informed decisions. Later, the concept of EI was popularised by Daniel Goleman. He has expanded it to five important components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In people-centric professions like teaching, recognising and managing emotions is essential for interpersonal effectiveness and the organisation's overall well-being.

Three primary models of emotional intelligence have emerged over the past few decades. They are the ability model, as given by Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso (2004), and the trait model, as proposed by Petrides & Furnham (2010). The ability model treats EI as a cognitive ability involving four domains: perception of emotions, understanding of emotions, utilisation of emotions, and management of emotions. This model utilises emotional intelligence as a measure of IQ and is used for performance-based assessments. It involves knowing and utilising emotional knowledge to enhance cognitive processes and decision-making. This model is grounded in the belief that EI is a measurable form of intelligence and can be improved through training and cognitive engagement.

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The Goleman (1998) mixed model combines cognitive abilities with social and emotional competencies. The model consists of five competencies that contribute to workplace success. Goleman states that these traits are critical for effective leadership and achievement in emotionally demanding work environments. The model is popular in organisational settings, particularly for developing emotional competency and leadership.

The trait model, conceptualised by Petrides & Furnham (2001), is used in this context. He states that EI is an individual's personality rather than abilities. This model examines how one perceives one's emotions and how they affect behaviour and responses. Trait emotional intelligence includes assertiveness, adaptability and self-efficacy. The model highlights the subjective experiences and role of one's personality in the functioning of emotions.

Although the three models have different theoretical bases, they agree that emotions significantly impact how individuals think, behave, and maintain interpersonal relationships. Each model contributes to EI research, providing valuable insights for application across various settings, including the workplace and higher education institutions.

**Emotional Intelligence in Higher Educational Institutions:**

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a central focus in HEIs as they have realised that success requires cognitive skills and the capacity to understand, manage, and use emotions effectively. Faculty members in HEIs are expected to manage teaching, academic research, mentoring, and administration within ever-changing institutional structures. These responsibilities often require a high level of empathy, effective communication, and emotional regulation. Emotionally intelligent teachers are often better at building trust, creating a learning environment, engaging and setting interpersonal behaviours. According to various studies, EI improves leadership abilities, job satisfaction, stress management and teaching effectiveness in academic settings.

Emotionally intelligent teachers create and support a learning environment that motivates and engages students. EI abilities are utilised in their teaching practices, including empathy for students' feelings, fostering engagement by actively involving students, maintaining emotional connections, and self-regulation (Mamat & Ismail, 2021). Additionally, Mortiboys (2013) states that, rather than focusing on cognitive development, successful teaching requires the ability to identify and respond to learners' emotional states. However, the Traditional focus of education policy and practice is criticised by Humphrey for ignoring the important role emotions play in learning. According to the study, EI training should be integrated into teacher development programs to fulfil students' holistic needs (Humphrey et al., 2007).

Emotional intelligence also significantly affects leadership and organisational efficiency, extending beyond the classroom. Emotionally intelligent leaders foster a positive environment where teachers and students thrive and enhance their interpersonal relationships. Enabling EI in higher education fosters collaboration, enhances conflict resolution, and facilitates students' adaptation to institutional changes. In this context, integrative EI does support both the individual and the organisation (Vandervoort, 2006). EI leaders build trust, facilitate knowledge sharing, and foster synergy within teams, thereby promoting organisational learning and creativity. EI enables collective capability, enabling institutions to match personal beliefs with the organisation's vision (Lazovic, 2012). EI fosters a collaborative atmosphere, increases job satisfaction, and contributes to organisational growth. Leaders who practice EI are more likely to influence, motivate and maintain a healthy culture (Patra, 2004)

Some studies also suggest that HEIs rely on intellectual skills and emotional competencies to achieve better productivity and foster a positive collaborative environment. EI should be viewed as an individual outcome and a dynamic process integrated in the organisation, facilitating adaptability, learning and strategic responsiveness (Huy, 1999). EI benefits staff, faculty, and students in HEIs. High EI levels are associated with strong self-directed learning, which enhances performance, personal growth and satisfaction in university. In particular, students who effectively understand and regulate their emotions are more active, persistent, and reflective in learning; this helps them achieve their goals and also assists in developing life skills, such as time management, effective communication, and problem-solving (Zhoc et al., 2018). EI competencies, such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, serve as protective factors that help students maintain focus, engage, and

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adapt to change during a crisis like COVID-19, when they must manage virtual learning and stress. EI training is important to integrate into their curriculum to increase resiliency and adaptability to deal with change and uncertainty (Warrier et al., 2021)

Emotional intelligence also supports educators' well-being. EI has a positive relationship with job performance, and the dimensions of EI, including self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, and social skills, help teachers manage stress more effectively, increase their job satisfaction, and enhance their job performance (Mohamad & Jais, 2016). EI acts as a buffer against burnout. EI helps educators maintain mental stability and psychological well-being. Teachers with self-regulation are less likely to experience exhaustion and depersonalisation, suggesting that EI protects against these experiences in high-pressure situations (Bocheliuk et al., 2021)**.** EI acts as a protective factor against psychological stress in demanding educational settings. Although EI generally fosters well-being, regulating negative emotions can have physiological consequences if self-care is unbalanced. This highlights the importance of EI for growth and suggests that organisations should support faculty in developing and maintaining EI competencies to enhance educators' physical and mental well-being (Cheng & McCarthy, 2018).

Emotional intelligence has become more widely recognised at institutional levels, helping improve organisational creativity and resilience. EI components, such as empathy, emotion management, and effective communication, are highly beneficial to knowledge-based organisations, such as HEIs. In this context, EI acts not only as an individual trait or outcome but also as an evolving process that promotes organisational development and adaptability (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2010). Some also argue that EI is essential for maintaining performance in times of crisis, as it empowers employees to handle change with greater confidence and adaptability (Chrusciel, 2006)

The use of EI components, including self-awareness, self-management, and relationship management, not only strengthens employees with opportunities to grow, but also increases organisational growth, and increases engagement, improving decision making (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011)

Finally, the research demonstrates that EI is a fundamental ability that benefits not only individuals but also students, teachers, and institutions. Teachers with EI are more effective at managing classroom dynamics, engaging students, and adapting to their needs. Leaders with good EI foster trust and collaboration that support innovation and the institution's growth. This makes EI an important factor in supporting students and leadership development. As higher education transforms in response to technological disruptions and societal shifts, Ei provides a way to create more flexible, inclusive and successful institutions.

**Demographics and Emotional Intelligence**

In education, among teachers and early-career academics, Emotional Intelligence is crucial for promoting both personal and student success. It has been found that the social and economic competencies, perceptions, understandings, and emotional regulation of infant and primary school teachers are influenced by socio-demographic and work-related factors, including age, gender, number of children, teaching level, and administrative roles (Arteage et al., 2022).

EI has a positive relationship with leadership effectiveness in both males and females, indicating that EI contributes to leadership behaviours regardless of gender (Singh, 2007). A study showed that older individuals tend to score high in EI due to life experiences and emotional maturity, and the study even revealed that contextual factors moderate this relationship (Gautam & Khurana, 2019). Women often showed high empathy and emotional regulation, while age and work experience positively correlated with emotional maturity and self-management. This shows that EI develops with experience and differs in gender (Tetteh Tetteh et al., 2021)

However, the findings are not always the same. It was found that there is no significant difference in EI between age and gender among early-career academics, highlighting that contextual factors, such as culture and professional norms, moderate the relationship (Marembo & Chinyamurindi, 2018). Significant studies also found that EI positively affects psychological well-being, leadership effectiveness, performance, academic achievement, and adaptability in higher educational institutions. However, the impact of demographic factors on

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faculty and staff EI has been relatively underexplored. Studies have frequently shown EI as an individual trait or a teachable skill, without examining how demographic variables, such as age, gender, marital status, education, employment status, income, and administrative position, are connected with EI. Although the studies explored demographics and EI across corporate, school, and clinical settings, the findings are not extended to higher education institutions, particularly in non-Western contexts.

**Objectives of the study**:

1 To measure the Emotional Intelligence of faculty members of Higher Educational Institutions

2 To study the difference in Emotional Intelligence across various socio-demographic factors of faculty working in Higher Educational Institutions.

By addressing these objectives, this study aims to fill a literature gap by demonstrating the significance of socio-demographic factors in faculty members' EI in higher education institutions. Additionally, the study aims to provide new insights that help institutions design targeted professional development initiatives to enhance the overall well-being of faculty and the organisation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships between EI and socio-demographic variables among faculty members in an HEI. Data were collected from 106 faculty members working in public higher education institutions in the state of Telangana. It includes state universities and affiliated government colleges. A structured questionnaire with two sections is used to collect data. Section I included questions on demographic variables to measure socio-demographic information, such as age, gender, marital status, experience, education, income, and administrative role. In section II of the questionnaire, Schutte's self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) measures emotional intelligence (Schutte et al., 1998). The SSEIT is chosen for its proven validity and reliability in assessing EI across contexts, and it is assumed that participants will answer the self-report honestly. We have simplified the scale with simple words without changing the essence. The sample for data collection is drawn using convenience sampling, as it provides initial insights into the demographics and EI in higher education.

The collected data is analysed using the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics summarise the sample demographics and EI scores, including mean, standard deviations, and frequencies. The mean differences between socio-demographic variables and EI scores are examined using one-way ANOVA and independent-samples t-tests. To identify differences between groups, Post hoc tests were conducted, with $p < 0.05$ considered significant.

## FINDINGS

This section presents the study's findings, including demographic frequencies, the scale's reliability, and ANOVA and t-test results, highlighting mean differences in emotional intelligence scores and socio-demographic variables.

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic frequency distribution of the faculty working in higher education.**

| S No | Particulars | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Age | < 30years | 9 | 8.5% |
| | | 30 to 45 years | 67 | 63.2% |
| | | 45 to 60 years | 30 | 28.3% |
| 2. | Gender | Male | 43 | 40.6% |
| | | Female | 63 | 59.4% |
| 3. | Marital Status | Married | 94 | 88.7% |
| | | Single | 12 | 11.3% |
| 4. | Education | Post graduate | 58 | 54.7% |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Ph.D. | 48 | 45.3% |
| 5. | Employment Status | Regular | 57 | 53.8% |
| | | Part-Time | 49 | 46.2% |
| 6. | Experience | Less than 2 | 6 | 5.7% |
| | | 2 to 10 years | 37 | 34.9% |
| | | More than 10 | 63 | 59.4% |
| 7. | Income | Less than 5 | 42 | 39.6% |
| | | 5 to 10 | 28 | 26.4% |
| | | More than 10 lakhs | 36 | 34% |
| 8. | Administrative responsibilities | No | 53 | 50% |
| | | Yes | 53 | 50% |

Table 1 above shows the study's frequency distribution of demographic factors. The sample comprises 106 faculty members working in higher education institutions. The age of the participants shows that the majority, 63% (n = 67), are between 30 and 45 years old, 28.3% (n = 30) are between 45 and 50 years old, and 8.5% (n = 9) are under 30 years old. Regarding gender, 59.4% (n = 63) are females, and 40.6% (n = 43) are males. It also shows that 88.7% (n = 94) of the members are married, while 11.3% (n = 12) are single. Additionally, for educational qualifications, 54.7% (n = 58) hold a postgraduate degree, and 45.3% (n = 48) have a PhD. In the study, 53.8% (n=57) of the participants are full-time or regular faculty, whereas 46.2%(n=49) are contract or part-time faculty. Regarding job experience, most participants have over 10 years of experience, with 59.4% (n = 63), 34.9% (n = 37) having between 2 and 10 years, and only 5.7% (n = 6) having less than 2 years of experience.

The participants' income levels showed that 39.6% (n=42) earned less than five lakhs, 26.4% (n=28) earned between five and ten lakhs, and 34% (n=36) earned more than ten lakhs. Finally, faculty reported that 50% (53) hold administrative responsibilities, showing that many of the sample are in leadership roles. Overall, the demographics revealed that the sample primarily consists of regular employees, with equal representation by gender, educational qualification, and experience. These factors provide context for interpreting differences in EI across the factors.

After collecting the data, a reliability test is conducted on the 33 Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSEIS) items. The test result shows that Cronbach's alpha is 0.93, which exceeds 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency in measuring EI scores. This indicates that SSEIS is effective in measuring EI.

**Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha test**

| Cronbach's Alpha | No of items |
|---|---|
| 0.930 | 33 |

The overall EI scores of 106 faculty members working in higher education institutions are measured by SSEIS, ranging from 65 to 160, with a mean score of 127.9 (SD = 19.26). This shows that participants have shown high EI scores, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Descriptives of Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale**

| **Emotional Intelligence** | **N** | **Mini** | **Max** | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Valid N** | 106 | 65.0 | 160.0 | 127.896 | 19.2616 |

Table 4 presents the item-level descriptive statistics of the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale. The SSEIS items indicate that most individuals have reported high EI scores on a five-point Likert scale. The mean of the 33 items ranged from 2.94 to 4.31, showing that participants promote EI behaviours. The highest means are for the items "use of positive emotions to generate new ideas" (M = 4.31, SD = 0.90) and "in positive solving problems are easy" (M = 4.27, SD = 1.02). In contrast, items related to difficulty in understanding others' emotions, why people feel the way they do, showed lower means (M=2.94, SD=1.17)

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**Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the item-level Schutte emotional intelligence scale**

| S No | Item | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I am aware when to share my own difficulties with others. | 106 | 3.972 | .9202 |
| 2. | When I face problems, I recall similar past experiences and how I overcame them. | 106 | 3.991 | .9309 |
| 3. | I feel that I will succeed in most of my attempts, I try. | 106 | 4.047 | .9399 |
| 4. | People feel easy to tell in me. | 106 | 3.708 | 1.0776 |
| 5. | I find it challenging to interpret other people's nonverbal cues. | 106 | 3.500 | 1.1972 |
| 6. | Major life events helped me to re-examine what is truly significant and what is not. | 106 | 4.094 | 1.0284 |
| 7. | I see novel potentials when my mood changes. | 106 | 4.085 | .9574 |
| 8. | Emotions make my life worth living. | 106 | 4.009 | .9411 |
| 9. | As I experience emotions, I am aware of my emotions. | 106 | 4.057 | 1.0675 |
| 10. | I expect positive things to happen. | 106 | 4.132 | .9569 |
| 11. | I like sharing my emotions with others. | 106 | 3.009 | 1.1505 |
| 12. | I know how to last a confident emotion as I understand it. | 106 | 3.943 | .9742 |
| 13. | I organise events that others enjoy. | 106 | 3.509 | 1.0533 |
| 14. | I pursue actions that make me glad. | 106 | 4.009 | .8890 |
| 15. | As I send messages to others, I am conscious of the non-verbal messages I convey. | 106 | 3.906 | 1.1425 |
| 16. | I present myself in a way that leaves decent imprint on others. | 106 | 3.575 | 1.1460 |
| 17. | When I am in confident mood, problem-solving is easy. | 106 | 4.274 | 1.0192 |
| 18. | I recognise the emotions of others by looking at their face. | 106 | 4.047 | 1.1074 |
| 19. | I understand why my emotions change. | 106 | 4.170 | .9408 |
| 20. | Being in confident mood helps me generate new ideas. | 106 | 4.311 | .8983 |
| 21. | I regulate my emotions effectively. | 106 | 3.547 | 1.1052 |
| 22. | I can easily recognise my emotions as they arise. | 106 | 4.066 | .8758 |
| 23. | By visualising positive outcomes for my tasks, I motivate myself. | 106 | 3.953 | 1.0271 |
| 24. | I give compliments when others do something well. | 106 | 4.217 | .9857 |
| 25. | I am conscious of non-verbal messages sent by others. | 106 | 3.651 | 1.1956 |
| 26. | When someone shares about an important life event, I almost feel as if it has happened to me. | 106 | 3.792 | 1.1103 |
| 27. | I tend to arise with new ideas when there is change in my emotion. | 106 | 3.934 | 1.1487 |
| 28. | When I face challenge, I tend to give up as because I expect I fail. | 106 | 3.755 | 1.2785 |
| 29. | By observing others, I understand what people feel. | 106 | 3.396 | 1.1521 |
| 30. | When others are feeling down, I help them to feel better. | 106 | 4.189 | .9672 |
| 31. | I use positive dispositions to help myself keep trying in times of facing difficulties. | 106 | 3.858 | .9405 |
| 32. | By listening to their voice, I can tell how people are feeling. | 106 | 3.745 | 1.0425 |
| 33. | I find it hard to know why people sense the way they do. | 106 | 2.943 | 1.1697 |

To examine the differences between Emotional Intelligence scores and demographic variables, ANOVA and t-tests were conducted. Table 5 below presents the results of the ANOVA conducted on the demographic variables Age, Experience, and Income level, along with EI scores.

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**Table 5: ANOVA test of socio-demographic variables and emotional intelligence scores**

| S No | Particulars | N | Mean (SD) | source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | f | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | **Age** <30 years | 9 | 115.00 (34.7) | Between Groups | 2416.71 | 2 | 1208.36 | 3.406 | .037* |
| | 30to 45 years | 67 | 127.19 (17.55) | Within Groups | 36539.14 | 103 | 354.75 | | |
| | 45 to 60 years | 30 | 133.33 (15.04) | | | | | | |
| 2. | **Experience** <2 years | 6 | 121.67 (28.33) | Between Groups | 2360.91 | 2 | 1180.46 | 3.323 | .040* |
| | 2 to 10 years | 37 | 122.27 (21.41) | Within Groups | 36594.95 | 103 | 355.29 | | |
| | >10 years | 63 | 131.79 (16.11) | | | | | | |
| 3. | **Income** <5 lakhs | 42 | 122.29 (23.97) | Between Groups | 2397.32 | 2 | 1198.66 | 3.377 | .038* |
| | 5 to 10 lakhs | 28 | 129.54 (16.27) | Within Groups | 36558.54 | 103 | 354.94 | | |
| | >10 lakhs | 36 | 133.17 (12.93) | | | | | | |

**Age**

The one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference between EI scores and age groups, F(2,103) = 3.406, p = 0.037. The results of the Tukey post Hoc comparison showed that individuals in the age group below 30 years had lower mean EI scores (M = 115.00, SD = 34.7), while individuals in the age group between 45 and 60 years had higher EI scores (M = 133.33, SD = 15.0). This shows that EI increases with age.

**Income**

The AVOVA test revealed a significant difference in the mean between income and EI scores, F(2, 1.3) = 3.377, p = 0.38. Participants with an income of less than five lakhs showed a lower mean EI score (M = 122.29, SD = 24.0) than those with an income of more than 10 lakhs (M = 133.17, SD = 12.9). This indicates that low income is associated with low EI. However, earnings partially overlap with both low- and high-income levels.

**Experience**

Experience also showed a significant difference in EI scores, F(2, 103) = 3.323, p = 0.040. Participants with less than 2 years of experience had a lower mean EI score (M = 121.67, SD = 28.3), whereas those with more than 10 years of experience had a higher mean EI score (M = 131.79, SD = 16.1). This shows that EI grows with experience.

Finally, the ANOVA test findings revealed significant differences in EI scores and socio-demographic variables, including age, experience, and income level. The 40-60 age group, individuals with more than 10 years of experience, and those with an income of more than ₹ 10 lakhs showed higher EI scores.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine mean differences in EI scores across gender, marital status, educational qualification, employment status, and administrative position.

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**Table 6: t-test of socio-demographic variables and Emotional intelligence**

| S No | particulars | N | Mean (SD) | T(df) | P | Mean difference (95% CI) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Gender | Male (n=43) | 125.12(21.89) | -1.176 (75.61) | 0.243 | -4.68 (-12.22, 3.25) |
| | | Female (n=63) | 129.79(17.16) | | | |
| 2. | Marital status | Married (n=94) | 128.96 (17.16) | 1.024 (11.87) | 0.326 | +9.37 (-10.60, 29.35) |
| | | Single (n=12) | 119.58(31.12) | | | |
| 3. | Education | Post graduate (n=58) | 125.71 (20.09) | –1.290 (104) | 0.200 | –4.83 (–12.26, 2.59) |
| | | Ph.D. (n=48) | 130.54 (18.07) | | | |
| 4. | Employment status | Regular (n=57) | 131.46 (13.69) | 2.007 (74.33) | 0.048 | +7.70 (0.06, 15.35) |
| | | Part-time/contract (n=49) | 123.76 (23.67) | | | |
| 5. | Administration responsibilities | No (n=53) | 125.08(22.53) | -1.517 (90.60) | 0.133 | -5.64 (-13.016,1.75) |
| | | Yes (n=53) | 130.72(15.02) | | | |

**Gender**

For gender, female respondents showed higher EI scores than males (M = 129.79, SD = 17.16); however, the difference between males' and females' EI scores was not statistically significant, t(75) = -1.176, p = 0.243.

**Marital status**

For marital status, married respondents had higher EI scores than single (M=128.9, SD=17.16), but the mean difference is not statistically significant t (11.87) =1.024, p=0.325)

For educational qualification, participants with a PhD degree showed higher EI scores than participants having postgraduate (M=125.71, SD=20.09), but the difference is found to be not statistically significant, t (104) =-1.290, p=0.200

**Employment status**

The results for employment status showed a difference in EI scores between regular and part-time/contract employees. The mean difference of 7.70 is statistically significant, with an interval ranging from 0.06 to 15.35, indicating that individuals with regular employment tend to have higher EI levels than those with part-time employment.

**Administrative responsibilities**

Finally, participants holding administrative responsibilities have a slightly higher EI score than those without any responsibility (M=130.72, SD=15.02), but the difference is also not significant, t (90.60) = -1.517, p=0.133

The t-test findings revealed no significant difference in EI scores across socio-demographic factors, gender, marital status, educational qualification and administrative positions. Meanwhile, the test revealed a statistically

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significant difference in EI scores between regular and part-time employees, with regular employees scoring higher than part-time or contract faculty members.

# DISCUSSION

This study examines differences in EI scores across socio-demographic factors among faculty members at higher education institutions. The results revealed significant differences in age, income, employment status, experience, and EI scores. Notably, participants aged 40 to 60 years had higher EI scores than those aged 30 or younger. Some studies have shown that life experiences and professional growth, which help individuals recognise, understand, regulate, and use emotions, contribute to EI (Fariselli et al., 2008). The relationship between higher income levels and higher EI scores is due to greater professional development opportunities and higher job satisfaction among senior faculty (Rode et al., 2017)**.** The relation between greater work experience and higher EI scores suggests that longer experience leads to the development of emotional competencies (Shipley et al., 2010)**.** Additionally, Regular employees have shown higher EI than part-time faculty. Studies show that this is because their employment status influences EI scores due to job security, consistent organisational support, and regular income, which help increase emotional abilities (Ealias & George, 2012).

Over the last two decades, many higher education institutions have relied on contractual and part-time faculty rather than permanent positions. This may be due to market flexibility or a cost-reduction strategy. As part-time and contractual faculty perceive themselves as peripheral within the institution, they engage in maintaining deeper connections or relations within the organisation. They are also given a heavy workload, lower income, and limited in decision-making, which also leads to psychological strain and stress among employees.

However, the study found no statistically significant differences in emotional scores or socio-demographic factors, including gender, marital status, education, and administrative roles. The findings contrast with those of other studies, which show that males tend to have higher EI than females (Ahmad et al., 2006; Suram et al., 2025). Married individuals showed higher EI scores than unmarried, divorced or remarried individuals (Madahi et al., 2013). Faculty with a PhD scored higher in EI, likely due to greater job satisfaction (Ahmed, 2015). Additionally, Individuals with administrative or leadership positions tend to have higher EI levels, as it is a key factor in building trust and enhancing performance (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022).

One possible reason for the absence of differences in gender, marital status, education, and administrative responsibilities may be differences in the cultural context of HEIs, as noted by Mayya, S. et al. (2021). The findings suggest that having a formal degree or having responsibilities does not enhance EI. Finally, the results suggest that EI is not just a trait or ability that can be taught in isolation. However, it is a dynamic collection of abilities influenced by socio-demographic factors. The relation found underscores the significance of socio-demographic factors in the development of emotional abilities.

The findings also have practical and policy implications. Higher educational institutions seeking to improve the effectiveness, well-being and organisational environment can implement targeted development programs. Particularly for young and less experienced staff, training interventions can be implemented to develop adaptability, regulation, empathy, and emotional awareness. Additionally, the competencies of individuals in administrative roles should be developed to support and foster a collaborative environment.

### Limitations

The study is not an exception to limitations. Due to its cross-sectional nature, only causal links between EI and socio-demographic factors are drawn. Participants may overestimate their emotional intelligence, and the use of self-report questionnaires may lead to bias. Lastly, the sample is restricted to public HEIs in Telangana state and limited to contextual factors, though it includes diverse participants.

### Future directions

Few studies have examined the underlying mechanism by which EI works. Longitudinal and experimental research is required to understand the evolution of EI competencies and their interactions with demographic and

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cultural factors. There is a need to consider examining how EI evolves over the academic career, and a qualitative approach should be explored to gain richer insights into the lived experiences that contribute to EI. Comparative studies among public and private institutions, as well as across different cultural contexts, should be conducted to understand how demographic and organisational factors impact and shape EI, and how they should be incorporated into policies that need to be addressed.

## CONCLUSION

According to the study, the emotional intelligence of faculty in higher education is significantly predicted by age, experience, employment status and income level. However, no relation is found between EI and demographic variables, such as gender, marital status, education, and administrative role. These findings show that EI is developed through personal and professional experiences and is not uniformly distributed across groups. This study highlights the role of demographic factors in enhancing EI and treats it as a dynamic ability rather than a fixed trait. The findings suggest target training programs to enhance EI, particularly in young and newly joined faculty. This helps individuals improve their interpersonal relations, strengthen their well-being, and foster successful educational institutions. It also helps develop a positive organisational culture that enables teachers and students to understand how demographic and contextual factors influence EI.

**Declaration:**

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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