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**Dr. Chinna Chadayan**  
Professor, Enam Nursing  
College, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Melba Sahaya Sweety**  
Associate Professor, Enam  
Nursing College, Dhaka,  
Bangladesh

## Level of emotional intelligence among nursing students in Dhaka

**Chinna Chadayan and Melba Sahaya Sweety**

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### Abstract

**Background:** Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a key attribute for nursing students, as it influences their ability to manage stress, interact effectively with patients, and succeed in clinical settings. However, limited research has focused on assessing the EI of nursing students, particularly in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Objective:** The study aimed to assess the level of emotional intelligence among B.Sc. Nursing students in Dhaka and determine its association with demographic variables such as gender, religion, and year of study.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted with 236 B.Sc. Nursing students from a selected nursing college in Dhaka. A convenience sampling method was used to select participants. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which included a socio-demographic information section and the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). The data were analyzed to evaluate the distribution of EI scores and assess associations with demographic variables.

**Results:** The majority of participants were female (82.63%) and Muslim (86.86%). Emotional intelligence scores varied, with the majority of students falling into the "Average Emotional Intelligence" category (57.63%). Smaller proportions of students were classified as having high (19.92%) or very high (5.08%) EI, while 12.71% had below-average EI and 4.66% had low EI. The study found a significant variation in EI levels among the students based on demographic factors, such as year of study and gender.

**Conclusions:** Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in nursing education and practice. While most nursing students exhibited moderate emotional intelligence, there is a need for targeted interventions to improve EI skills, particularly for students with lower EI levels. Incorporating EI training into nursing curricula could enhance students' emotional preparedness and improve their clinical performance and well-being.

**Keywords:** Dhaka, EI assessment, emotional intelligence, nursing students, demographics, nursing education

### Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence emotions in both oneself and others. It encompasses several key abilities, including emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and the use of emotions to guide thinking and behavior. Individuals with high EI can navigate complex social situations, handle stress more effectively, and build strong interpersonal relationships, all of which are essential for both personal and professional success (Prasanth *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[3]</sup>. In today's fast-paced world, EI is recognized as an essential skill in various domains, especially in professions requiring direct human interaction, such as healthcare.

In the nursing profession, emotional intelligence is of particular importance due to the demanding nature of patient care. Nurses are often faced with emotionally charged situations, where they must not only apply their technical expertise but also offer emotional support and understanding to patients. Given the vulnerability and stress that many patients experience, nurses must possess strong interpersonal skills and emotional awareness to provide compassionate care (Thomas, 2017) <sup>[5]</sup>. Thus, emotional intelligence is not only critical for managing patient care but also for fostering a supportive healthcare environment that enhances the overall quality of care.

While much of the research on emotional intelligence has focused on practicing nurses, fewer studies have specifically examined EI in nursing students.

**Corresponding Author:**  
**Dr. Chinna Chadayan**  
Professor, Enam Nursing  
College, Dhaka, Bangladesh

However, nursing students also face significant stress and emotional challenges, especially during clinical placements. These challenges can directly affect their emotional well-being and performance, making it crucial to evaluate and improve their emotional preparedness. Research has shown that nursing students with higher levels of EI experience lower levels of anxiety and tend to perform better during clinical training (Thamizhselvan & Vembu, 2019) [4]. Therefore, assessing the EI of nursing students is vital in understanding how their emotional competence influences their ability to cope with stress, interact with patients, and succeed in their clinical education.

Emotional intelligence is emerging as an essential factor in nursing education and practice. It is closely aligned with the core competencies of nursing, such as empathy, self-awareness, and interpersonal communication. Nurses with high EI are better equipped to handle the emotional demands of the profession, ensuring that they not only provide excellent care but also maintain their own mental well-being. Recent studies have indicated a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem, suggesting that individuals with higher EI are better able to manage emotional stress and maintain positive self-perception (Meti *et al.*, 2022) [2].

### Justification of the study

As the healthcare environment becomes increasingly demanding, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is crucial for nursing students to manage stress, maintain well-being, and build effective relationships with patients and colleagues. Despite its importance, there has been limited research on EI among nursing students, and it is not explicitly addressed in most nursing curricula. While nursing students are trained in clinical skills, they often struggle to apply these skills in real-world settings without complementary emotional and social competencies. Given the high levels of stress and burnout nursing students face, EI is essential for them to cope both personally and professionally. This study, aimed at assessing the emotional intelligence levels of nursing students at a selected nursing college in Dhaka, seeks to emphasize the importance of integrating EI into nursing education. The findings will help inform curriculum development, ensuring that future nurses are better prepared to provide compassionate, effective care in an emotionally demanding healthcare environment.

### Statement of the study

“A study to assess the level of emotional intelligence among B.Sc. Nursing students in a selected nursing college in Dhaka”.

### Objectives of the study

- To assess the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students in Dhaka.
- To determine the association between emotional intelligence levels and selected demographic variables of the nursing students.

### Hypothesis

- **Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant association between the level of emotional intelligence and selected demographic variables among nursing students in Dhaka.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** There is a significant

association between the level of emotional intelligence and selected demographic variables among nursing students in Dhaka.

## Materials and Methods

### Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional analytical design, which allowed the researchers to evaluate the emotional intelligence levels of nursing students at a specific point in time and explore potential associations with their demographic characteristics.

### Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling method was employed to select participants for the study. This non-probability sampling approach involved including students who were readily available and met the inclusion criteria during the time of data collection.

### Sample Size

The total number of participants in the study was 400 B.Sc. Nursing students. This sample was considered adequate to ensure a comprehensive understanding of emotional intelligence levels within the targeted population.

### Study Setting

The research was conducted in a selected nursing college located in Savar, which provided a relevant academic environment for assessing emotional intelligence among nursing students.

### Sample Selection Criteria

#### Inclusion Criteria

- Nursing students who were 18 years of age or older.
- Nursing students who were currently studying in the selected institution in Savar.

#### Exclusion Criteria

- Students who declined to give consent or were not interested in participating in the study.
- Students who were absent during the period of data collection.

### Data Collection Instruments

The data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which was divided into two key sections:

#### Section A: Socio-Demographic Information

This section gathered basic background information about the participants, including variables such as age, gender, religion, academic year, among others. These variables were later analyzed to assess their relationship with emotional intelligence levels.

#### Section B: Emotional Intelligence Assessment Tool

The emotional intelligence of the participants was measured using the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). This standardized questionnaire is designed to assess various components of emotional intelligence, including the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively. The SSEIT consists of 33 items, each rated on a Likert scale, which provides a quantitative measure of an individual's emotional intelligence.

**Results**

**Section A: Description of Sociodemographic Variables of B.Sc. Nursing Students, N=236**

**Table 1:** Frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic variables of the subjects

Sl. No	Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Boys	41	17.37%
		Girls	195	82.63%
2	Religion	Muslim	205	86.86%
		Hindu	21	8.90%
		Buddhist	4	1.69%
		Christian	6	2.54%
3	Year of Study	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	69	29.24%
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	68	28.81%
		3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	50	21.19%
		4 <sup>th</sup> Year	49	20.76%

**Section A: Description of the association between the level of emotional intelligence in the subjects with their selected demographic variables**

The present study was conducted among 236 B.Sc. Nursing students in a selected nursing college to assess their emotional intelligence and demographic variables. The table provides a detailed description of the sociodemographic profile of these 236 students, covering gender, religion, and year of study. In terms of gender, the majority of students are girls, comprising 82.63% (195 students), while boys account for 17.37% (41 students). Regarding religion, a significant proportion of students are Muslim, representing 86.86% (205 students), followed by Hindu students at 8.90% (21 students). Smaller groups identify as Buddhist (1.69%, 4 students) and Christian (2.54%, 6 students). As for the year of study, the distribution is fairly balanced across the four years. 1<sup>st</sup> Year students form the largest group with 29.24% (69 students), closely followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students at 28.81% (68 students). 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students make up 21.19% (50 students), and 4<sup>th</sup> Year students represent 20.76% (49 students). Overall, the data highlights a predominantly female student population with a strong Muslim majority, and a fairly even distribution across all year groups.

**Section B: Description on the level of emotional intelligence among nursing students**

**Table 2:** Distribution of emotional intelligence scores among nursing students (N=400)

Score Range	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
145-165	Very High Emotional Intelligence	12	5.08%
125-144	High Emotional Intelligence	47	19.92%
105-124	Average Emotional Intelligence	136	57.63%
85-104	Below-Average Emotional Intelligence	30	12.71%
Below 85	Low Emotional Intelligence	11	4.66%
Total		236	100%

**Discussion**

This study assessed the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of 236 B.Sc. Nursing students in Dhaka and explored its distribution across various categories. The majority of the students were girls (82.63%), with boys making up only 17.37%. A significant proportion of students identified as

Muslim (86.86%), reflecting the religious composition of the region. The distribution of students across academic years was balanced, with the largest group being 1st Year students (29.24%).

Regarding emotional intelligence, most students scored in the "Average Emotional Intelligence" category (57.63%), suggesting moderate emotional competencies. A notable number of students had high EI (19.92%) and very high EI (5.08%), while some students had below-average EI (12.71%) and low EI (4.66%). These findings emphasize the need for targeted emotional intelligence development, particularly for those in the lower EI categories, as emotional competencies are essential for effective patient care and personal well-being in the nursing profession.

The study suggests that while many students possess adequate emotional intelligence, incorporating EI training into nursing curricula could further enhance their ability to cope with stress and improve their interpersonal skills, which are crucial in clinical practice.

**Conclusion**

This study highlights the importance of emotional intelligence among nursing students, who must manage both the technical and emotional demands of their training and future careers. The findings suggest that while most students possess average or high levels of emotional intelligence, there is a notable need to further enhance EI skills across the board. Given the challenges nursing students face, especially during clinical placements, integrating emotional intelligence training into the nursing curriculum could improve students' emotional preparedness, leading to better patient care and more resilient nurses.

**Future Implications**

Incorporating emotional intelligence assessments and training into nursing education programs could be beneficial in fostering emotionally competent healthcare professionals. Further studies are needed to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on clinical performance, stress management, and overall well-being in nursing students, as well as to investigate potential demographic differences in EI levels.

**Conflict of Interest**

Not available

**Financial Support**

Not available

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**How to Cite This Article**

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