

Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy of Graduate Students across the Family Structure: A Comparative Psychological Study

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Abstract:

Being emotionally intelligent and feeling confident are the most important aspects of any individual. Family structure either nuclear or joint highly influences the emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. This study explores the influence of family type on two psychological constructs: *Emotional Intelligence (EI)* and *Self-Efficacy (SE)*. Drawing from a sample of 120 university students (30 each from VBSPU, MGKVP, ASU and DDU), the study holds a comparative design, while keeping the focus on participants from nuclear and joint family structures. Standardized self-report tools were used to administer the level of EI and SE of students. The data were subjected to descriptive statistics, correlation and t-test. The results of this study reveals that EI and SE are moderately and positively correlated ($r = 0.445$), and the students belonging to joint family scored significantly higher on both EI and SE as compare to nuclear families.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Undergraduate Students

Introduction:

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to perceiving, managing, and regulating of the self and others' feelings ^[1] (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In their primary study in 1990, Salovey & Mayer proposed three aspects of emotional intelligence; Appraisal and Expression of emotion, Regulation of Emotion, and Utilization of Emotion. But, in 1997, they represented a revised model with four aspects of emotional intelligence; Perceiving Emotions, Using Emotions to Facilitate Thinking, Understanding Emotions, and Managing Emotions. The new model is popular as *Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Model of EI* ^[2]. Emotional intelligence is a natural part of routine life of everyone, showing up in the little moments we often overlook. It's in how we comfort a friend, stay calm during argument, or recognize when we need a break. For instances, at workplace, EI helps us to listen patiently to a frustrated colleague instead of reacting with anger. At home, it allows us to respond gently to children's tantrum. It also manages disappointment, celebrate others successes and adapt to change. In college life, EI is present when students deal with academic pressure, group assignments, or personal setbacks. It is always helpful during exams and tough times. EI isn't something we study- it's something we live, shaping how we connect, react, and grow every day. This research seeks to examine how different family structures impact the emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of graduate students, employing a comparative method.

The *self-efficacy* (*SE*) describes that it's a belief of ability to carry out actions needed to achieve specific goals ^[3] (Bandura, 1997). Bandura identified four key sources that shape and influence self-efficacy belief: Mastery Experience, Vicarious Experiences, Verbal Persuasion, and Physiological and Emotional States. Self-efficacy represents a person's inner belief in their ability to successfully execute tasks and overcome challenges to reach particular goals. It reflects confidence in managing responsibilities, making decisions and adapting to difficulties. This sense of personal capability plays a vital role in motivation, persistence, and overall performance across various life situations. Both EI and SE have been strongly linked to success in academics, mental health, and social skills ^[4, 5, 6] (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000; Bar-On, 2006; Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

A *family* consists of people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. They'll normally live together, support one another, work together and share resources and duties, share care and love, support, and guidance in order for every member of the family to develop and cope with life. It's the accepted concept of family. But, in this research participants who live with their directly blood relation or marriage-based family were selected only, but not any adopted.

Nuclear families are usually smaller and centred around closed relationships between immediate member such as mother, father and siblings. It is a more tight-knit and self-contained unit. In this environment, people often learn to think and act independently from younger age, since there's more space for personal decision-making. On the flip side, having fewer family members, away from older members of family-can make it harder to handle pressure during tough times. *Joint family* include a married couple living with the same household with the husband's parents, his unmarried siblings; and sometimes even his married brother and brother's family. Member of this kind of family usually share household responsibilities, finances and decision-making. In the routine life, it follows patriarchal norms and create conflicts between generations, where older member of the family often domination ^[7]. It's been found that adolescents from joint family had higher self-efficacy rather than the joint family structure ^[8], even the same results obtained with emotional intelligence i.e. members of joint families have higher emotional intelligence. ^[9, 10]

Individuals with high EI tend to possess a more favourable self-concept and demonstrate greater confidence in their abilities. This connection is particularly evident among adolescents and young adults, where the ability to understand, manage, and express emotions often translates into a healthier self-image and stronger self-worth ^[5, 11, 12, 13] (Bar-On, 2006; Mavroveli et. al., 2007; Cheung and Cheung, 2008; Batool, 2011). Studies have shown that emotionally intelligent individuals are equipped to handle social pressure, resolve conflicts, and maintain emotional balance, all of which contribute to a more stable and positive perception of the self ^[14, 15] (Brackett, Rivers & Salovey, 2011; Zeidnet et. al., 2012). Kumari and Chamola (2017) ^[10] found that adolescents with higher EI, particularly those raised in joint family setting, displayed better emotional self-regulation and greater self-esteem. In a study on workplace performance, Baghery, Razmjooei, and Saei (2018) found a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy ($r = 0.76$) ^[16], suggesting that employees with higher emotional intelligence tend to feel more competent and confident in their professional tasks. This strong relationship highlights how the ability to manage emotions

effectively can enhance one's belief in their capacity to succeed at work. A study conducted in 2019, and the outcome was- university students who better understand their emotions and are able to regulate their mood tend to feel more confident in their ability to handle challenges, highlighting emotional intelligence as a meaningful contributor to perceived self-efficacy^[17] (Morales-Rodriguez & Perez-Marmol, 2019). Kun Wang et.al. (2020) studied on physical activity, emotional intelligence and chosen self-efficacy as mediating variable among college students, and they obtained that college students with higher emotional intelligence were more likely to believe in their ability to succeed ($r = 0.18, p < 0.001$), and this self-efficacy not only correlated with physical activity ($r = 0.26, p < 0.001$) but also partially mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and physical activity ($ES = 0.06$)^[18], suggesting that confidence in one's own abilities helps bridge emotional skills and healthy behaviours. Among school principals, emotional intelligence showed a strong positive relationship with self-efficacy ($r = 0.53$)^[19], indicating that those who perceived themselves as emotionally competent were more confident in their ability to manage leadership responsibilities. Another study conducted on college students had revealed that there was moderate correlation ($r = 0.55$)^[20].

Students with higher EI are better able to regulate their emotions, which enhances their confidence to handle academic challenges, indicating that EI and SE are positively linked and mutually reinforcing constructs in the development of academic resilience^[21] (Sandayanti. Supriyati, & Harnika, 2025). A study conducted on high school students revealed that EI emerges as a significant and dominant significant predictor of SE ($p = 0.000$)^[22] among these students, suggesting that students with higher EI are more confident in their ability to manage academic and personal challenges (Lie, Suherman, & Utomo, 2025). The finding supports the idea that emotional intelligence is a key psychological asset in achieving better self-efficacy outcomes.

The findings of Lekaviciene and Antiniene (2016) clearly illustrate that emotionally warm, cohesive, and connected families foster significantly higher EI across domains such as self-awareness, emotion regulation, and social emotional functioning. These characteristics are inherently nurtured within joint family systems, making it reasonable to assert that joint family members are more likely to develop higher EI^[23]. Gopinath and Chitra (2020) found that family structure significantly influences emotional intelligence, with students from joint families showing higher self-awareness, empathy, and socializing skills than those from nuclear families ($t = 15.438$ to $29.118, p < 0.001$). Additionally, a strong association between family structure and overall emotional intelligence was confirmed through Chi-Square analysis ($\chi^2 = 225.316, p < 0.001$), and regression analysis indicated that 73.9% of the variance in emotional intelligence was explained by family structure ($R^2 = 0.739, p < 0.001$)^[24]. Ahangar & Khan (2017) conducted a comparative study on 600 adolescents (300 from nuclear families and 300 from joint families) and reported that individuals from joint families scored significantly higher on dimensions of EI, including self-awareness, empathy, emotional stability and self-motivation. The composite EI score for joint family adolescents were higher than those from nuclear families, with the difference being statistically significant ($t = 16.29, p < 0.01$)^[25]. Although this study supports EI, but aspects like self-motivation, value orientation, commitment, and self-development -are core components of self-efficacy^[3] (as Bandura

defined), so adolescents from joint families are also higher in self-efficacy rather than nuclear family adolescents. Sandayanti et.al. (2025) observed that “students with emotionally supportive backgrounds- particularly those from joint family systems- demonstrated significantly higher self-efficacy levels, enabling them to cope better with academic demands and stressors ^[21].”

These findings confirms that the joint family environment, with its greater emotional and interpersonal interactions, plays a crucial role in nurturing emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

Material and Method:**Objectives of the study:**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.
2. To compare emotional intelligence across family structure (Nuclear Family vs. Joint Family) among graduate students.
3. To compare self-efficacy across family structure (Nuclear Family vs. Joint Family) among graduate students.

Design of the Study:

The design of this study is comparative-correlational in nature.

Venue of the Study:

The data of the study were collected from four universities; 1. Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, Jaunpur (VBSPU) 2. Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi (MGKVP) 3. Prof. Rajendra Singh University, Prayagraj (ASU).4. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur (DDU). These universities are located at Uttar Pradesh, India.

Sample Size:

A cohort of 120 consecutively enrolled under graduate students was deliberately selected through purposive sampling for the present investigation. Among the sample there were 59 participants from nuclear families and 61 participants from joint families, hence there are 120 participants selected for study.

Participants' Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:**Inclusion Criteria:**

- Currently enrolled in a full-time graduation program.
- Aged between 17-22 years.
- From either nuclear or joint family nature.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Student from blended or single-parent families.
- Incomplete or invalid responses on questionnaire.

Tools:**Sociodemographic Data Sheet:**

A semi-structured proforma was specially designed for the study. It contains information about sociodemographic variable like: Name (Optional), Age, Gender, Studying in which standard, University Name, Nature of Family and Marital Status etc.

Multidimensional Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale- Revised:

Emotional Intelligence was measured using the *Multidimensional Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale-Revised (MSREIS-R)*, constructed and standardized by Prof. Rakesh Pandey and Dr. Tulika Anand ^[26]. This scale includes 51 items across multiple dimensions like utilization, appraisal and expression of emotions, managing the emotions in self and others. Each item is to be rated on a 6-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. MSREIS-R demonstrated high reliability by holding Cronbach’s Alpha= 0.9153 and strong subscale-to-total correlations ranging from 0.734 to 0.858, which indicates excellent internal consistency and concurrent validity. This scale is completely suitable to administer with adolescents and adults in academic and psychological settings. The Hindi version of this scale also available and constructed by same authors. The Hindi version of MSREIS-R administered to participants studying in Hindi language and the English version administered to participants studying with English medium.

General Self-Efficacy Scale:

Self-Efficacy was measured using the *General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)*, constructed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem in 1995 ^[27]. It includes 10 items, and to be rated on 4-point Likert Scale ranging from “Not at all True” to “Exactly True”. GSE holds a strong Cronbach’s Alpha value ranging from 0.76 to 0.90, that indicates good to excellent reliability across different samples and cultural contexts. This scale is also completely suitable to administer with adolescents and adults in academic and psychological settings. English and Hindi both versions administered to participants. Hindi version was constructed by Shonali Sud in 1998^[28]. Cronbach’s alpha was .85-.88 of this translated scale. The Hindi version of General Self Efficacy Scale administered to participants studying in Hindi language and the English version administered to participants studying with English medium.

Procedure:

First of all, informed consent was taken from the participants who were cooperated the study. Accordingly following inclusion and exclusion criteria, the needful sociodemographic information collected via sociodemographic data sheet from the drawn samples. MSREIS-R and GSE were administered to assess the level of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of the participants respectively. After collection of data appropriate statistical analysis were conducted using SPSS-22.

Result:

After the administration on different scales, the statistical calculations were done and data was encoded. Table :1 describe about correlation between EI and SE.

Table-1: Showing Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy

***= Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

The presented table-1 illustrates the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy by applying Pearson's correlation coefficient. The analysis is based on a sample of 120 graduation enrolled. A moderate and positive correlation value of 0.445 ($r = 0.445$) observed between EI and SE, i.e. statistically significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). It clearly indicates that there is positive and meaningful relation suggesting that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tends to exhibit higher level of self-efficacy.

Table-2: Showing group characteristics on different variables

Variables	Family Type	N	Mean \pm SD	<i>t</i> -value	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> value
Emotional Intelligence	Nuclear	59	226.51 \pm 20.71	5.948	118	.000 ^S
	Joint	61	245.43 \pm 13.47			
Self-Efficacy	Nuclear	59	31.08 \pm 3.98	2.854	118	.005 ^S
	Joint	61	33.18 \pm 4.06			

S= Significant

Table-2 shows that there were significant differences in response of participants from both group of family structures on two variables; Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy.

Discussion and Conclusion:

There are 120 participants in the study ($N = 120$), among them 59 participants were belonging to nuclear families and 61 were from joint families. Findings of the present study provide intriguing observations on the association between Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence with family structure among undergraduate students. The significant positive correlation ($r = 0.445$, $p < 0.01$) between EI and SE found. It suggests that individuals who possess higher on emotional intelligence will also possess higher faith in the ability to goal attainment and supports the conceptualization of self-efficacy by Bandura (1997) and emotional intelligence model by Solovey and Mayer (1990). The result of this research maintains consistency with existing research that found emotionally intelligent individuals manage stress well and stay motivated and utilize an efficient coping mechanism-a

Variables		Emotional Intelligence	Self-Efficacy
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.445**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

characteristic of higher self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, Bar-On, 2006). Additionally, the comparative research also implies that the students from joint families scored much higher on EI and SE measures than the students belonging to nuclear families. It related to the emotionally dense and socially dynamic environment common in joint families., in which communication and support between individuals take place more frequently. These external pressures possibly develop emotional proficiency and bolster efficacy standard through social encouragement and vicariously (Mayer et.al., 2000).

Overall, the work puts the family environment in sharp relief as the determinant of key psychological constructs like emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. The research implications run toward theory and application and highlight the needs to develop socio-emotional growth through the medium of family support structures and targeted institutional measures.

Real-Life Research Implications:

The research findings also have practical uses in schools and youth organizations. Colleges can conduct emotional intelligence training for enhancing the self-confidence of the students so that also to be helpful academic performance. Similarly, counselling psychologists in educational institutes can design a family-sensitive interventions especially for the students belonging to the nuclear structured families. So that, as consequence these students can enhance their emotion handling and confidence and can improve life skills for academic and career success.

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