



**TO EXPLORE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE,
SOCIAL ANXIETY, AND LOCUS OF CONTROL AMONG YOUNG ADULTS**

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Abstract

The fear of judgment, embarrassment, or discomfort when interacting with others is commonly experienced by individuals with social anxiety. Emotional intelligence pertains to the capacity to recognize and manage both one's own emotions and those of others. Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can influence outcomes in their lives. The levels of emotional intelligence and locus of control in individuals can significantly impact their level of social anxiety. The study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control in young adults. Purposive random sampling was used to select 200 young adults (100 males and 100 females) aged 18 to 28 from across India. Descriptive

statistics, Pearson correlation, and an independent samples t-test were utilized to identify the study's goals. Results findings revealed that there was a significant correlation among emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control. While, there was no clear gender difference in emotional intelligence, there are noticeable gender differences in locus of control and social anxiety. These findings support the study that emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control differ significantly between genders and highlight the complexities of psychological factors in young adults. By identifying these causal relationships, the study aspires to provide useful insights for fostering healthy mental health and well-being in young adults.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Social Anxiety, Locus of Control, Mental Health, Young Adults.*

INTRODUCTION

Social interactions are a fundamental component of life for humans, even though numerous individuals find social situations stressful. Social anxiety, which is defined as a strong dread of being judged negatively in social circumstances, can considerably interfere with daily life. Understanding the elements that cause social anxiety is critical for designing effective therapies. Individuals with high emotional intelligence (EI) may be better equipped to deal with social circumstances, build rapport, and control their emotional responses to potential threats. On the other hand, a person's locus of control refers to their perception of the major source of control in their life. It is believed that individuals who have an external locus of control attribute events to other forces such as fate or luck, while those who have an internal locus of control feel they have a considerable influence on how things turn out in their life.

Exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control among young adults offers insight into the importance of psychological influence on behavioral contexts. The current study contributes to how young adult's internal factors like locus of control and emotional intelligence play a crucial role in their interpersonal relations and behaviours. Examining the interconnected between these three aspects sheds light on the importance of our psychological functions and their influence on our behavior and interactions in daily life.

Emotional Intelligence

The ability to identify, understand, exhibit, regulate, evaluate, and use emotions to efficiently and positively relate to others is known as emotional intelligence (EI) or emotional quotient (EQ). Mayer and Salovey (1990) defined emotional intelligence “as the capacity to identify, understand, and regulate one's own emotions as well as the capacity to understand those of others”. It is a component of intelligence that involves the ability to interpret emotional data and apply it to thinking and other cognitive processes. Some researchers believe that emotional perception, reasoning, comprehension, and management are the four elements of emotional intelligence and that the emotions that we perceive might have a wide variety of meanings.

Understanding emotions begins with appropriately recognizing them along with understanding the body language and facial expressions that convey emotions is crucial while navigating a variety of nonverbal signs. The following phase of emotional intelligence entails using emotional shifts to improve cognitive and thought processes. Humans instinctively develop emotional connections with objects that draw our attention, and emotions are crucial in guiding our attention and actions. The ability to regulate one's emotions is at the peak of

emotional intelligence as well as being able to control one's own feelings as well as skilfully reacting to those of others.

Salsabila et al. (2022) study indicates that both the locus of control and emotional intelligence have a favourable and significant influence on ethical behavior suggesting that people with strong emotional intelligence and a sense of empowerment over their lives are more likely to act morally. Kahraman (2022) conducted a study on university students to examine the association between emotional intelligence and social anxiety. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence has a favourable influence on minimizing social anxiety among university students. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant link between emotional intelligence and social anxiety among undergraduates.

Social Anxiety

Social anxiety is a fear of social events that may result in embarrassment (e.g., making conversation, meeting strangers, dating) or the chance of being adversely appraised by others (e.g., being perceived as foolish, weak, or anxious). Social anxiety is characterized by concern over one's social position, role, and behavior. When anxiety causes severe suffering or impairment in functioning, a social phobia diagnosis may be indicated (APA). Social anxiety disorder is a prevalent anxiety disorder characterized by severe anxiety or terror in many different kinds of social situations.

Individuals with this condition tend to experience increased stress during interactions with settings in which they believe they will be closely monitored, examined, or criticized by others. These circumstances can include speaking in front of an audience, meeting unfamiliar individuals, embarking on dates, attending interviews for jobs, getting involved with class discussions, or even interacting with a cashier at a store.

Tribhuvan (2022) investigated the locus of control and anxiety among male and female graduate students. The results revealed that female graduate students were much more anxious than male graduate students. A significant positive relationship between external locus of control and chance with anxiety and social phobia was found in the study done by Farahati et al. (2014) where the research aimed to investigate the relationship between locus of control with anxiety and social phobia in adolescent girls.

Locus of Control

Locus of control is a framework for categorizing people's basic motivational tendencies as well as their perceptions of the degree to which they have control over their life situations. Those with an external locus of control often respond to external stimuli and attribute their life outcomes to factors beyond their control. Whereas individuals with an internal locus of control tend to believe that their life outcomes are the result of their own actions and abilities.

Psychologist Philip Zimbardo describes the concept of Locus of control as the perception of whether the results of our actions depend on our own efforts (internal control) or external factors beyond our influence (external control). Rotter's (1954) definition of locus of control “categorizes the motives of individuals' motivation and perceptions of their level of control over their life circumstances”. His 'locus of control' theory, emphasizes internal as opposed to external views of control, altered psychologists' perspectives on motivation and personality. His research brought to light the vital link between locus of control and human agency, which has significant implications for therapeutic and educational practices.

Saxena (2021) investigated self-regulation and locus of control in connection to emotional intelligence in young adults. findings were that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-regulation, as well as a positive relationship between

emotional intelligence and locus of control. Nandi et al. (2022) discovered that there is a relationship between social anxiety and shyness, the findings also indicate that there is a link between shyness and locus of control among teenagers.

Rationale of the Study

Exploring the relationships between emotional intelligence, social anxiety and locus of control is crucial for understanding the unique psychosocial factors that may influence mental health outcomes and behavior. Understanding the interplay between emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control can provide valuable insights into the mental health and overall well-being of young adults. This knowledge can contribute to the development of targeted interventions and support systems. Examining potential gender differences in emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control can shed light on how societal norms and gender socialization influence these psychological constructs. Insights from the research could contribute to the development of academic literature by adding empirical evidence and potentially generating new theoretical insights. Understanding the social anxiety aspect could lead to the creation of peer support networks, helping young adults cope with social challenges. This study shed light on how understanding the relationships between these factors can help young adults cultivate skills that contribute to their success in various aspects of life, such as forming healthy relationships, managing stress, and achieving goals.

Research Gap

The sampling bias and sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. It would be beneficial to include a more diverse sample to ensure broader applicability of the results. The study employed a cross-sectional design, which only provides a snapshot of the

relationships between variables at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control evolve and their causal relationships. The majority of participants were students, which may introduce occupational bias into the findings as different occupational groups may exhibit varying levels of emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control, potentially affecting the generalizability of the results to non-student populations. While the study aimed for gender balance in the sample, it is possible that gender differences in emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control were not adequately explored. Future research could delve deeper into potential gender-related differences in these variables and their interactions.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The aim of the study is to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control among young adults.

Hypotheses

- There will be a significant correlation between emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control among young adults.
- There will be a significant difference between males and females in emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control.

Sample

A total sample of 200 was collected ages ranging between 18 to 28 across India.

Measures

The following scales were utilized to measure emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control among young adults.

- ***The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)***

The SSEIT developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte assesses an individual's level of emotional intelligence and consists of 33 items that test different components of emotional intelligence, including emotional awareness, empathy, emotion management, and social skills. Respondents score each item on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating how strongly they agree or disagree with claims about their emotional experiences and abilities.

- ***Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS)***

The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) was developed by Mattick and Clarke in 1998 as a tool for assessing social anxiety. It is designed to measure the degree of anxiety experienced in social interactions across various situations. The scale consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (not at all characteristic or true of me) to 4 (extremely characteristic or true of me). The items in the SIAS cover a range of social situations, including both formal and informal interactions, such as talking to strangers, participating in meetings, and attending parties.

- ***Locus of Control (LOC)***

Based on Rotter's original concept, Pettijohn developed the Locus of Control Inventory (LCI) in 1986. The purpose of this test is to evaluate a person's locus of control or the degree to which people think they influence the things that happen in their lives. The inventory consists of 20 statements and evaluates whether people believe that external factors, like fate or luck, control events or if they believe that they are within their control (internal locus of control).

Procedure

Participants were selected through random sampling within the university campus and community settings. They were given informed consent papers explaining the study's goal and the processes involved. The test was then proceeded and each participant was thanked for their cooperation in the study.

Analysis of Data

Results

Table 1

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
EI	200	86	145	119.04	10.692
SA	200	6	59	37.82	10.629
LOC	200	25	90	60.20	11.796
Valid N (listwise)	200				

Table 2

<i>Correlation Analysis of Emotional Intelligence, Social Anxiety, and Locus of Control</i>				
		EI	SA	LOC
EI	Pearson Correlation	1	-.308**	.298**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
SA	Pearson Correlation	-.308**	1	-.315**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200
LOC	Pearson Correlation	.298**	-.315**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200

Table 3

T-test

Emotional Intelligence

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Level of Significance
Male	119.12	149.98	0.13	p<0.05
Female	118.95	79.78		

Social Anxiety

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Level of Significance
Male	36.92	120.13	-1.12	p<0.05
Female	38.72	105.33		

Lous of Control

Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Level of Significance
Male	60.65	139.21	12.78	p<0.05
Female	38.72	105.33		

Discussion of Results

The findings in Table 1 show the means and standard deviations suggesting that emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control among young adults vary within the sample. According to Table 2's findings, there appears to be a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.308$) between social anxiety (SA) and emotional intelligence (EI) in young people's Pearson Correlation. These results suggest that social anxiety tends to decrease as emotional intelligence rises, in line with hypothesis one. This suggests that people who possess greater emotional intelligence are probably less likely to experience symptoms of social anxiety. The findings complement the previous research conducted by Kahraman in 2020 where she investigated university students in Turkey to examine the association between emotional intelligence and social anxiety. Among young adults, there is also a positive correlation ($r = 0.298$) between locus of control (LOC) and emotional intelligence (EI). This suggests that higher emotional intelligence is associated with a stronger sense of internal locus of control.

Saxena (2021); Sujanaa et al. (2019) previous study findings also complement the current result findings that imply higher emotional intelligence is associated with greater internal locus of control. Results findings showed a significant negative connection ($r = -0.315$) between locus of control (LOC) and social anxiety (SA). This implies that as social anxiety

increases, the belief in an internal locus of control tends to decrease. In other words, individuals experiencing higher levels of social anxiety may perceive themselves as having less control over their lives and outcomes.

The emotional intelligence t-value of 0.13 in Table 3 indicates that the T-value is relatively small, indicating that there is little variation in emotional intelligence between men and women. Despite the low T-value, the substantial standard deviations for males and females may have added to the relevance. According to a study done by Ali et al (2021), the results revealed that male students had higher emotional intelligence than female students. A substantial difference in social anxiety between males and females was indicated by a social anxiety t-value of -1.12. The negative t-value shows that social anxiety ratings are generally somewhat higher in women than in men. A study done by Wadhawan et al. (2021); Delloso et al. (2015) also supports these results indicating females have higher social anxiety in comparison with males.

In locus of control, the high positive T-value of 12.78 indicates a significant difference between males and females regarding their locus of control. Males have a much higher mean score for locus of control compared to females ($60.65 > 38.72$). This significant difference suggests that males tend to have a stronger sense of control over their lives compared to females within the context of the present study. Akhtar et al. (2014) study has revealed that there are significant gender differences in locus of control, where males were found to be more internal as compared to females. On the other hand, Mohanty (2021) finds no significance between the males and females. In conclusion, while there is no discernible gender difference in emotional intelligence, there are discernible gender variations in locus of control and social anxiety. These

results provide credence to the study that emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control differ significantly between genders.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control among young adults. The study aimed to investigate how the different levels of each variable relate to one another. The sample size contains 200 participants (M=100, F=100) aged ranges between 18 and 28 years. Pearson correlation was utilized to find the relationship between these three variables; EI, SA, and LOC. A T-test was used to identify the level of differences between males and females. The study reveals that young adults generally possess above-average emotional intelligence, but show varied levels of social anxiety and locus of control. Significant correlations exist among emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and locus of control. While gender differences are noted in social anxiety and locus of control, emotional intelligence remains consistent across genders. These findings underscore the complexity of psychological factors in young adults and suggest the need for tailored interventions to promote emotional well-being.

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