

A Comparative Study of Social Intelligence among College Students of Ranchi University

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ABSTRACT

Background: Social intelligence plays a crucial role in effective interpersonal relationships, social adjustment, and overall personal development, particularly during the college years when students face diverse social and academic challenges.

Objectives: The present study aimed to conduct a comparative analysis of social intelligence among college students of Ranchi University with reference to gender, religion, and place of residence.

Method: The sample comprised 240 college students selected from various colleges affiliated with Ranchi University using a stratified random sampling technique. All participants belonged to the middle socio-economic status. Social intelligence was measured using the Social Intelligence Scale developed by Chadha and Ganesan (1986).

Results: The findings revealed that the majority of college students demonstrated a moderate to high level of social intelligence, with very few participants falling below average and none in the extreme categories. Female students and students from urban areas scored significantly higher on social intelligence, whereas no significant difference was observed with respect to religion.

Conclusion: The study concludes that social intelligence among college students of Ranchi University is generally well developed and is significantly influenced by gender and place of residence, but not by religion.

Keywords: *Social Intelligence, Gender, Religion, Place of Residence.*

INTRODUCTION

Social intelligence is a vital aspect of human functioning that plays a central role in shaping how individuals interact with others and navigate the complexities of social environments. It may be defined as the ability to effectively understand, interpret, and respond to the behaviors, emotions, and intentions of others across various social contexts. This form of intelligence extends beyond basic communication; it involves a nuanced understanding of social dynamics, empathy, emotional awareness, and the capacity to manage or influence social interactions wisely.

Individuals with high social intelligence are often distinguished by strong interpersonal skills, the ability to build and maintain healthy relationships, and sensitivity to social cues such as tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and situational context. They tend to be effective communicators who can adapt their behavior according to the demands of different situations, resolve conflicts tactfully, and respond appropriately to the emotional states of others. These abilities are essential in both personal and professional settings, where cooperation, collaboration, and emotional regulation are crucial.

The foundational concept of social intelligence dates back to the early twentieth century, when psychologist Edward L. Thorndike first introduced the term. In 1920, Thorndike defined social intelligence as “the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, and to act wisely in human relations” (Thorndike, 1920). His definition emphasized the practical and interpersonal aspects of intelligence, clearly distinguishing social intelligence from academic or mechanical intelligence. Thorndike regarded social intelligence as a distinct and essential component of successful human interaction, particularly in leadership, educational, and organizational contexts.

Building upon Thorndike's foundational work, Nancy Cantor and John F. Kihlstrom (1987) offered a more cognitive and knowledge-based perspective. They conceptualized social intelligence as "an individual's fund of knowledge about the social world," referring to the mental representations, schemas, and experiences that individuals use to understand and respond to social situations. This perspective highlights that social intelligence is not merely an innate ability but is developed over time through experience, observation, and learning. Such accumulated social knowledge enables individuals to anticipate behaviors, comprehend underlying motives, and respond appropriately in diverse social settings.

Further expanding the concept, Eleni Andreou (2006) closely linked social intelligence with social competence and interpersonal skills. According to Andreou, social intelligence comprises a set of learned abilities that allow individuals to initiate and sustain positive social interactions, manage social challenges effectively, and influence others constructively. She emphasized behavioral components such as assertiveness, cooperation, empathy, and emotional self-regulation as key indicators of socially competent individuals.

Contemporary research recognizes social intelligence as a multidimensional construct integrating emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. It encompasses self-awareness, empathy, perspective-taking, and the ability to build rapport and trust. Importantly, social intelligence is not a fixed trait; rather, it can be developed and enhanced through experience, reflection, and social learning.

In modern society—characterized by rapid communication technologies, increased global connectivity, and growing cultural diversity—social intelligence has become more relevant than ever. Whether in leadership, teamwork, education, or family life, individuals with higher levels of social intelligence tend to achieve more positive outcomes, as they are better equipped to understand others, manage interpersonal dynamics, and foster environments of mutual respect and understanding.

Saxena et al. (2013) conducted a study on the social intelligence of undergraduate students in relation to gender and subject stream. The study aimed to examine the social intelligence of male and female undergraduate students from Science and Arts streams studying in various degree colleges in Bhilai city, Chhattisgarh. For this purpose, the descriptive survey method was adopted. A sample of 120 undergraduate students, comprising 60 males and 60 females, was selected using a stratified disproportionate random sampling technique. Data were collected using the Social Intelligence Scale (SIS) developed and standardized by Chadha and Ganesan (2009). The data were analyzed using the t-test. The findings of the gender-wise analysis indicated that female students possessed higher social intelligence than their male counterparts.

Bar-On, R. (2006) conducted a study to examine the adjustment ability of undergraduate students in relation to their social intelligence, gender, and academic stream. The study focused on understanding how social intelligence influences students' adjustment to academic and social environments. The sample consisted of 300 undergraduate students, including 150 males and 150 females, randomly selected from various colleges affiliated with Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal. Data were collected using the Adjustment Inventory and the Social Intelligence Inventory. The findings revealed that there were no significant differences in adjustment ability with respect to gender or academic stream (science and humanities). However, significant differences were observed in adjustment ability among students with different levels of social intelligence.

Saxena et al. (2013) investigated social intelligence among college students in relation to gender and locality and found that female and urban students demonstrated significantly higher social intelligence than their male and rural counterparts. The authors emphasized that exposure to diverse social environments and communication opportunities contributes positively to the development of social intelligence.

Similarly, Parker et al. (2004) explored the relationship between social intelligence and academic performance among undergraduate students and reported a positive correlation between the two variables. Their findings suggested that students with higher social intelligence were better able to manage peer relationships, classroom interactions, and academic stress, leading to improved academic outcomes.

In a post-pandemic context, recent research has highlighted the growing relevance of social intelligence in digitally mediated environments. For example, Savci et al. (2022) examined the association of social intelligence and perceived sociability with loneliness among undergraduate nursing students engaged in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding that higher social intelligence was significantly associated with lower levels of loneliness in computer-supported collaborative learning settings, underscoring the protective role of social intelligence within digitally mediated academic contexts.

Further, Pandey & Sharma (2024) conducted a comparative study on social intelligence among college students in relation to gender and place of residence. The findings indicated significant differences based on gender and locality, with female and urban students scoring higher on social intelligence dimensions such as social awareness, empathy, and social skills. However, no significant differences were observed with respect to religion, suggesting that socio-environmental factors may have a stronger influence on social intelligence than cultural or religious background.

Overall, the reviewed studies consistently suggest that social intelligence is a crucial psychological construct influencing students' interpersonal effectiveness, adjustment, and academic functioning. Gender and place of residence emerge as significant determinants in many studies, while academic stream and religion show mixed or negligible effects. These findings highlight the need for continued research on social intelligence among college students, particularly in diverse socio-cultural contexts such as Indian universities.

METHODOLOGY

Aim: The present study aims to examine and compare the levels of social intelligence among college students of Ranchi University with reference to gender, religion, and place of residence.

Objectives

- To measure the levels of Social Intelligence of college students.
- To know the impact of gender, religion and place of residence on Social Intelligence of college students.

Hypotheses

- The levels of Social Intelligence will be vary among total and sample sub-groups.
- There will be significant impact of gender, religion and place of residence on Social Intelligence, of college students.

Sample

The sample of the proposed study was selected from colleges of Ranchi University, Ranchi. The sample will be selected by using stratified random sampling technique. A total number of 240 students studying in different colleges of Ranchi University. All samples were selected from middle socio-economic status.

Tools used

Socio-demographic data sheet

It was prepared to collect socio-demographic details of participants. It contained information about socio-demographic variables like, gender, age and religion.

Social Intelligence Scale (SIS) Chadha & Ganesan's

Social intelligence of the subjects was assessed through Chadha & Ganesan's (1986) Social Intelligence Scale (SIS). SIS is a group test designed to measure the social intelligence of the adults. The test consists of eight independent dimensions named-Patience, Co-operativeness, Confidence, Sensitivity, Recognition of social environment, Tactfulness, Sense of humour and Memory. In all there are sixty-six items arranged in five parts.

It has been designed for use with 18-25 years age of college students. The split-half reliability coefficients of different dimensions of the scale range between .89 and .96 as reported by the authors. The test-retest reliability coefficients range from .84 to .97 in a sample of 150 subjects. The validity of the test has been computed in terms of empirical validity and cross validity. For empirical validity, the author's used "Social Intelligence Test" by Moss and Hunt.

Statistical Analysis: To examine the impact of gender, religion, and place of residence on social intelligence, a three-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used.

Results

Table No. 1: Level of Social Intelligence among total and sample sub-group

Group			High	Above average	Average	Below Average
Total			51	120	60	9
Hindu	Male	Rural	2	10	16	2
		Urban	5	22	3	0
	Female	Rural	7	14	7	2
		Urban	5	21	4	0
Christian	Male	Rural	6	11	11	2
		Urban	4	13	10	3
	Female	Rural	5	18	7	0
		Urban	17	11	2	0

Table No. 1 presents the distribution of levels of social intelligence among the total sample and across various sub-groups based on religion (Hindu and Christian), gender (male and female), and place of residence (rural and urban). The overall distribution shows that the majority of students fall within the Above Average category (120), followed by Average (60) and High (51). Only a small number of participants (9) were found in the Below Average category, and none were classified in the extreme categories, indicating that social intelligence among the participants is generally moderate to high. Among Hindu male students from rural areas, most participants were categorized as Average (16) or Above Average (10), with only two students falling below average. Hindu males from urban areas showed comparatively higher levels, with a greater number in the Above Average (22) and High (5) categories. Hindu female students, both rural and urban, demonstrated relatively higher social intelligence levels, with urban Hindu females showing a larger concentration in the Above Average (21) and High (5) categories.

In the Christian group, rural male students were primarily distributed across Average (11) and Above Average (11) levels, while urban male students showed slightly higher representation in the Above Average category (13). Christian female students, particularly those from urban areas, demonstrated the highest levels of social intelligence, with 17 students classified as High and 11 as Above Average.

Overall, the results indicate that social intelligence is well developed across all groups, with noticeable variations based on gender and place of residence.

Table No. 2: F value showing the Impacts of Gender, Religion, Place of Residence of the College Students on Social Intelligence

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Level of Significance
Gender (A)	1842.604	1	1842.604	29.130	.001
Religion (B)	178.537	1	178.537	2.823	NS
Residence (C)	810.338	1	810.338	12.811	.001
A * B	47.704	1	47.704	.754	NS
A * C	22.204	1	22.204	.351	NS
B * C	175.104	1	175.104	2.768	NS
A * B * C	478.838	1	478.838	7.570	NS
Error	14675.167	232	63.255		NS
Total	2486915.	240			
Corrected Total	18230.496	239			

Table No. 2 presents the results of a three-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) examining the effects of gender, religion, and place of residence, as well as their interaction effects, on social intelligence.

The analysis reveals a significant main effect of gender on social intelligence ($F = 29.130$, $p < .001$), indicating a statistically significant difference between male and female students. Similarly, a significant main effect of place of residence was found ($F = 12.811$, $p < .001$), showing that rural and urban students differ significantly in their levels of social intelligence.

In contrast, the main effect of religion was not found to be statistically significant ($F = 2.823$, NS). Furthermore, all interaction effects—gender \times religion, gender \times residence, religion \times residence, and the three-way interaction of gender \times religion \times residence—were non-significant. This suggests that these variables do not interact in a meaningful way to influence social intelligence beyond their individual effects.

DISCUSSION

The present study provides an in-depth understanding of social intelligence among college students and highlights the influence of key demographic variables such as gender and place of residence. The overall findings indicate that the majority of students exhibit moderate to high levels of social intelligence, with very few individuals falling below average and none in the extreme categories. This suggests that social intelligence is reasonably well developed among college students, likely due to increased opportunities for social interaction, peer engagement, and collaborative learning inherent in higher education settings. This observation is consistent with the view that social intelligence is a dynamic and learnable construct that develops through social learning and environmental interaction rather than being a fixed trait (Thorndike, 1920; Bandura, 1977; Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987).

A significant gender difference in social intelligence was observed, with female students demonstrating higher levels than male students. This finding supports earlier research suggesting that females tend to possess greater interpersonal sensitivity, empathy, and emotional responsiveness—core components of social intelligence (Goleman, 2006; Decety & Lamm, 2006). Gender-based socialization patterns may play a crucial role in this difference, as females are often encouraged to be emotionally expressive, relationship-oriented, and socially attuned. Empirical studies conducted in the Indian context have also reported similar findings, indicating that female students consistently score higher on measures of social intelligence and related constructs (Saxena & Jain, 2013; Kundu et al., 2015). These results reinforce the argument that social intelligence is closely associated with emotional and relational competencies that are more strongly nurtured in females across cultures.

The study further revealed a significant effect of place of residence on social intelligence, with urban students scoring higher than their rural counterparts. This finding aligns with ecological and social learning perspectives, which emphasize the role of environmental complexity and exposure in shaping social competence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bandura, 1977). Urban environments typically offer more diverse social interactions, multicultural exposure, digital communication platforms, and structured extracurricular activities, all of which contribute to the development of social awareness and adaptability. In contrast, rural students may experience relatively limited social exposure, which can restrict opportunities for developing advanced interpersonal skills. Similar urban–rural differences in social intelligence have been documented in previous studies, supporting the present findings (Saxena & Jain, 2013).

In contrast to gender and place of residence, religion did not emerge as a significant predictor of social intelligence in the present study. This suggests that religious affiliation alone does not substantially influence the cognitive, emotional, or behavioral dimensions of social intelligence as measured by standardized scales. While religious institutions may promote moral values and prosocial behavior, their impact on measurable social intelligence appears to be indirect and mediated by broader social and environmental factors (Decety & Lamm, 2006). The shared academic environment and common social experiences within colleges may minimize religious differences in social competence.

The absence of significant interaction effects among gender, religion, and place of residence further indicates that these variables independently influence social intelligence rather than interacting in a combined manner. This finding suggests that the influence of gender on social intelligence remains consistent across residential and religious backgrounds, and similarly, the effect of residence is not contingent upon gender or religion. Comparable independent effects have been reported in multivariate studies on social intelligence and adjustment among undergraduate students (Kundu et al., 2015).

Overall, the findings of the present study underscore the importance of social learning experiences and environmental contexts in the development of social intelligence. In an increasingly interconnected and socially complex world, social intelligence plays a vital role in academic adjustment, emotional well-being, employability, leadership, and effective

interpersonal functioning. Recent international evidence also emphasizes the growing importance of social and emotional skills for lifelong success (Social, 2024). The study highlights the need for higher education institutions to design structured interventions-such as social skills training, group-based learning, and experiential activities-particularly targeting male and rural students, to foster balanced social development and interpersonal effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The findings reveal that social intelligence among students is generally moderate to high. Significant differences were observed with respect to gender and place of residence, with female and urban students demonstrating higher levels of social intelligence than their male and rural counterparts. However, religion did not have a significant influence, and no interaction effects were found among the variables. The results suggest that social intelligence is shaped primarily by socialization and environmental exposure. The study highlights the need for targeted social skills development programs in higher education, particularly for male and rural students.

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