DOI: 10.71317/jgst.2.11.2026.1037
Journal of Global Social Transformation
Journal homepage: https://rjsaonline.org/index.php/JGST

The Asymmetry of Campus Adaptation Regarding Receptive Peer Support and Active Social Initiation: Examining Emotional Intelligence and Social Adjustment Among University Students

Nafisa Asghar[1], Aneeqa[2], Razia Yasmeen[3], Ghulam Muhammad Malik[4]
[1] Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.
Email: nafisajanjua71@gmail.com
[2] Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.
Email: aheshanulla0452@gmail.com
[3] Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.
Email: razia.yasmeen@uos.edu.pk
[4] Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.
Email: ghulam.muhammad@uos.edu.pk

ARTICLE INFO

Submission:
October 09, 2026
Revised:
October 30, 2026
Accepted:
November 04, 2026
Available Online:
November 13, 2026

Keywords:
Emotional Intelligence, Social Adjustment, University Students.

Corresponding author:
Ghulam Muhammad Malik
Email:
ghulam.muhammad@uos.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to analyze the Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Social Adjustment (SA) levels of university students. For this purpose, a quantitative, cross-sectional descriptive research design was used to collect data from 240 male and female undergraduate students at the University of Sargodha, Pakistan. Data collection utilized a structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire measuring emotional intelligence (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$) and social adjustment (Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$). The descriptive statistics analysis was performed using SPSS, and these tests included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The descriptive findings revealed that university students exhibited moderate-to-high levels of emotional intelligence and moderate levels of social adjustment. From individual analysis of items, it was found that students performed best in self-motivational encouragement and empathic understanding of their friends' feelings; however, they were highly vulnerable in terms of stress regulation and personal confidence affirmation. Within social adjustment, a distinct divergence emerged between receptive peer support and active interpersonal initiation, with students reporting the lowest confidence in initiating classmate interactions and forming new friendships. The findings of the study suggest that emotional intelligence is an important aspect that can help overcome feelings of loneliness on the university campus, create constructive peer groups, and cope with developmental challenges during studies at university. It is recommended to integrate socio-emotional skills training programs into the university orientation program and set up mentoring and counseling workshops on managing stress.

Introduction

In the current system of higher education, students are supposed to attain holistic competence through the combination of intense academic requirements and successful social adaptation. Transitioning from high school education to university experience is regarded as an essential stage of development towards adulthood and is distinguished by such factors as disruption of environment,

increased autonomy, diversity of peer contact, and challenges of socio-academic nature (Zhao et al., 2024). Although many students are capable of demonstrating strong intellectual performance at the time of entering the institution, a considerable number of individuals face serious problems when trying to adapt to new environments, develop supportive peer relations, and cope with interpersonal challenges (Baker & Siryk, 1984; Lawrie & Kim, 2024). Detachment from usual living conditions and support systems results in exposing students to various sources of transition friction, including loneliness on campus, social anxiety, interpersonal isolation, and psychological stress (Dong et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2024).

Against this backdrop of development, Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays an important role as an essential psychological resource needed to cope with the challenges of the university environment (Mosleh et al., 2024; Tang & He, 2023). Defined as the ability to identify, comprehend, control, and empathize with one's emotions and the emotions of others, EI serves as the bridge between cognitive evaluation and adaptive interpersonal behavior (Iqbal et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2024). The essential skills that include self-awareness, emotional control, self-motivation, and empathy enable young adults to interpret behavioral signs from their peers, control emotions under stress, and maintain productive social interactions (Iqbal et al., 2021; Sepiadou, 2024).

At the same time, Social Adjustment (SA), understood as the extent to which students become integrated into the social life of the university, establish proper peer relationships, and align their own needs with institutional demands, is an important cornerstone of college adaptation as such (Baker & Siryk, 1984; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020). However, emotional intelligence and social adjustment, prosocial behavior, social skills, and perceived social support are important elements in preventing social isolation and social maladjustment in students (Trigueros et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2024). Nevertheless, being aware of one’s emotions internally is not necessarily equivalent to easy socialization externally. Understanding the significance of emotional intelligence and social adjustment becomes vital to develop appropriate socio-emotional orientation programs and peer mentoring initiatives.

The multidimensional nature of university adaptation has long been recognized as a primary determinant of student retention, psychological health, and professional preparedness (Baker & Siryk, 1984; Dong et al., 2021). When evaluating college adaptation across academic, personal-emotional, institutional, and social domains, social adjustment specifically reflects how effectively students participate in campus activities, build friendships, and utilize interpersonal support systems to resolve social problems (Baker & Siryk, 1984; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020). Longitudinal and cross-sectional evidence indicates that while students may stabilize or improve in certain emotional and academic domains during their university years, many experience significant vulnerabilities in social adjustment and belonging (Lawrie & Kim, 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). Specifically, university cohorts often exhibit a marked behavioral divergence between receptive peer support and proactive social initiation: while students readily value emotional support and respect from existing friends, many experience social shyness and low confidence when initiating interactions with classmates, expressing ideas in group settings, and forming new friendships.

A substantial body of international literature establishes emotional intelligence as a critical component for adaptive student outcomes, learning motivation, and interpersonal adjustment (Mosleh et al., 2024; Tang & He, 2023). Students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate greater capability in regulating negative affect, maintaining optimistic self-motivation, and engaging in prosocial behaviors that strengthen peer support networks (Tang & He, 2023; Wang et al., 2021). Conversely, students who struggle with emotional regulation and rational stress management are more susceptible to interpersonal friction, loneliness, and social withdrawal on campus (Mosleh et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

Within the Pakistani higher education context, researchers have increasingly examined the role of emotional intelligence in shaping student learning, academic achievement, and virtual or face-to-face classroom engagement (Dong et al., 2022; Fatima & Ali, 2023; Iqbal et al., 2021). Recent empirical evidence from public-sector university settings in Pakistan reveals a distinct profile among tertiary learners: students frequently exhibit their strongest competencies in motivation and empathy, followed by self-awareness and self-confidence, while scoring lowest in emotional self-control and social competence (Fatima & Ali, 2023). Despite growing recognition of these patterns, empirical research in indigenous Pakistani public universities has predominantly focused on academic achievement and grade point averages rather than examining how specific dimensions of emotional intelligence relate to students' day-to-day social adjustment across university graduates (Dong et al., 2022; Fatima & Ali, 2023; Iqbal et al., 2021).

Public-sector universities in Pakistan—such as the University of Sargodha—encompass diverse student populations drawn from varied socio-cultural backgrounds who must continuously negotiate socialization demands across their degree programs. In the absence of localized empirical data examining the nexus between internal emotional competencies (emotional awareness, regulation, empathy, and understanding) and external social adaptation (interpersonal relations, classroom participation, peer acceptance, and campus loneliness), institutional support mechanisms remain largely reactive. Grounded in this contextual gap, the present study analyzes the levels of emotional intelligence and social adjustment among students at the University of Sargodha,

identifying specific areas of psychological vulnerability—such as stress-induced temper regulation, self-affirmation of competence, and active social initiation—to inform evidence-based institutional counseling and orientation practices.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has evolved as a foundational construct in contemporary psychology and education, explaining how individuals perceive, appraise, regulate, and utilize emotional information to navigate complex interpersonal environments (Chapman & Hayslip, 2005; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006). In the scholarly literature, emotional intelligence is primarily conceptualized through three complementary paradigms: the ability model, which frames emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive-emotional capacities for processing affective information; the self-report ability model, which evaluates perceived competencies in attending to, clarifying, and repairing emotions; and trait or mixed models, which integrate intrapersonal and interpersonal dispositions with socio-emotional adaptability (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Pong & Leung, 2023; Suriá-Martínez et al., 2019). Across higher education research, self-report multidimensional frameworks—particularly those grounded in the four core domains of self-emotion appraisal (emotional awareness), others' emotion appraisal (empathy and interpersonal observation), regulation of emotion (temper and affect control), and use of emotion (self-motivation and competence affirmation)—have demonstrated robust psychometric validity among university cohorts (Pong & Leung, 2023; Vilca-Pareja et al., 2022).

Within university environments, these four interconnected dimensions operate as essential psychological resources. Emotional self-awareness enables students to identify the internal causes of their feelings and monitor shifts in their mood states (Suriá-Martínez et al., 2019; Vilca-Pareja et al., 2022). Empathy and interpersonal emotional appraisal allow young adults to decode non-verbal behavioral cues and accurately interpret the emotional experiences of peers (Lawrie & Kim, 2024; Lee et al., 2024). Emotional regulation governs an individual's capacity to modulate stress-induced reactivity, control impulsivity or temper, and recover from psychological distress (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Megías-Robles et al., 2023). Finally, self-motivation and emotional utilization channel affective energy toward constructive goal pursuit, positive self-talk, and resilience in the face of academic or social obstacles (Pong & Leung, 2023; Tang & He, 2023; Vilca-Pareja et al., 2022). Rather than functioning as isolated traits, these internal competencies form the psychological architecture upon which external interpersonal relationships and campus adaptation are constructed.

Entry into university life from secondary education represents a key developmental transition among young adults, which calls for simultaneous adaptation to academic, personal, and social change (Dong et al., 2021; Khorasani et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024). Enrollment in a university takes young adults away from the known supportive environment at home and school and exposes them to new social groups and different institutions (Dong et al., 2021; Lawrie & Kim, 2024). University adaptation is a multidimensional process involving academic, personal-emotional, institutional, and social adaptation (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020).

Social adjustment refers to the degree to which students adjust to the social environment of the institution and become active participants in classroom and out-of-class group activities, form supportive friendships, and cope with social challenges (Kayani et al., 2022; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2024). Research findings suggest that, even though most students have cognitive skills necessary for successful performance at the university level, several students face persistent challenges in demonstrating equal social proficiency (Davidson & Morales, 2022; Kayani et al., 2022). Maladjustment occurs when the stress associated with the transition is greater than the student’s coping mechanisms, resulting in social interaction anxiety, feelings of loneliness on campus, alienation, and depression (Kayani et al., 2022; Khorasani et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024).

An important consideration in the literature on socialization at universities is the difference between receiving peer support and initiating social behavior proactively. Studies have shown that perceived social support, meaning acceptance, respect, and emotional support from current friendships, functions as a key protective factor, increasing subjective well-being and decreasing psychological distress (Wang et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). Nevertheless, initiating social behavior, such as being comfortable interacting with unfamiliar peers, voicing one’s opinions in group discussions, and making new friend groups, entails greater social self-efficacy and emotional competence (Kayani et al., 2022; Lawrie & Kim, 2024). Students who suffer from social discomfort and fear of peer disapproval find it hard to initiate interactions during transitional semesters and thus are prone to loneliness on campus despite valuing peer relationships (Kayani et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2024).

Several empirical studies have documented that emotional intelligence is a major factor of college adaptation, interpersonal success, and psychological well-being for university students (Chapman & Hayslip, 2005; Davidson & Morales, 2022; Extremera & Fernández-Berro-cal, 2006; Krajniak et al., 2017). Since social interactions are intrinsically affective in nature, those students who can accurately recognize and comprehend emotions would be able to synchronize their emotions with those of other people on campus, which helps to develop a feeling of belongingness and positive interpersonal relationships (Lawrie & Kim, 2024; Mella et

al., 2021). Besides, higher levels of emotional intelligence facilitate prosocial behavior and effective social skills among students, which allow them to develop wider and more diverse social networks and get adequate emotional support from peers in difficult times (Trigueros et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

Beyond facilitating empathy, specific dimensions of emotional intelligence directly govern how students cope with interpersonal friction and transitional stress (Khorasani et al., 2023; Mosleh et al., 2024). Empirical findings confirm that emotional clarity and mood repair are associated with positive self-concept, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among university undergraduates (Suriá-Martínez et al., 2019; Vilca-Pareja et al., 2022). Similarly, Tang and He (2023) demonstrated that emotional intelligence improves students' adaptive functioning through the serial mediating mechanisms of self-efficacy and perceived social support. When students maintain positive self-affirmation and motivational encouragement, they exhibit greater confidence in engaging with collaborative learning and peer activities (Iqbal, Ashraf, et al., 2021; Tang & He, 2023).

On the other hand, deficits in certain sub-competencies of emotionality, especially in regulating emotions and maintaining a rational temper, entail considerable danger for social adaptation (Krajniak et al., 2017; Megías-Robles et al., 2023). Those who have lower regulatory abilities become more likely to develop impulsiveness, interpersonal conflicts, peer victimization, and emotional exhaustion (Martínez-Martínez et al., 2020; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020; Megías-Robles et al., 2023). Furthermore, there is evidence provided by recent studies that, despite having developed proper emotional awareness and empathy, a poor ability to regulate one's stress and affirm self-confidence might prevent students from using their emotions socially (Fatima & Ali, 2023; Zhao et al., 2024).

Problem Statement

There is abundant international literature available regarding emotional intelligence and university adjustment, yet it is important to understand that cultural and institutional contexts become crucial in defining socio-emotional interactions in the context of non-Western higher education institutions (Dong et al., 2022; Kayani et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2024). In Pakistan, public sector universities comprise heterogeneous groups of students having socio-economic, linguistic, and geographically diverse backgrounds (Iqbal, Qureshi et al., 2021; Kayani et al., 2022).

Various empirical studies in the context of Pakistani higher education have investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on student learning and psychological well-being. As an example, Iqbal, Qureshi, et al. (2021) and Iqbal, Ashraf, et al. (2021) concluded that self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills positively influence relational engagement, collaboration, and cognitive achievement of Pakistani university students. Likewise, the role of emotional intelligence as a moderator of psychological well-being and academic achievement of tertiary students in Pakistan was explored by Wang et al. (2022) and Dong et al. (2022). Investigating the specific dimensions of emotional intelligence of Pakistani university students from the public sector, Fatima and Ali (2023) did not find any significant difference between male and female participants' overall levels of emotional intelligence. However, the authors noted considerable variations in sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence: the students showed maximum skills in motivation and empathy followed by self-awareness and self-confidence, whereas emotional self-control and social skills were the least developed dimensions.

Another study by Kayani et al. (2022) examined the predictors of social adjustment among university students in Pakistan, highlighting that whereas peer support and teacher support help in facilitating campus adjustment, social interaction anxieties and lack of social self-efficacy are the major barriers to social interaction and social adjustment. Though the above contributions are significant, previous studies in the Pakistani context have mostly focused on the influence of emotional intelligence on academic performance (GPA and examination performance) or online learning participation rather than on exploring the levels of emotional intelligence and social adjustment along with its contextual factors (Dong et al., 2022; Fatima & Ali, 2023; Iqbal, Qureshi, et al., 2021). As a result, very little information is available on the university students' perceptions regarding various dimensions of emotional intelligence (awareness, empathy, temperament regulation, and self-motivation) and certain social adjustment dimensions (peer receptive support vs friendship initiation and campus loneliness) at Pakistani universities, including the University of Sargodha.

The rationale of the study is grounded in the challenges students face when transitioning into higher education. In modern university settings, students are expected to achieve social competence alongside academic performance. Despite being academically capable, many students struggle with adjusting to novel social environments, forming peer relationships, and managing interpersonal situations. Emotional intelligence (EI) provides essential psychological skills for recognizing, understanding, and managing emotions, which directly influence interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution. Learning how EI helps one adapt socially will enable the student to deal with any emotional and social pressures at school. Although the link between emotional

intelligence and interpersonal performance is well known, there has not been enough research on how emotional intelligence and social adaptability in university students is developing in the local setting. Findings offer practical implications for higher education institutions to design emotional intelligence training modules, campus counseling interventions, and peer-mentoring programs to enhance student well-being and adaptation.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study hold theoretical and practical significance for multiple stakeholders within the higher education ecosystem:

- This study bridges a critical contextual gap in Pakistani higher education research, which provides localized empirical evidence explaining how internal emotional competencies and external social adjustment highlight the behavioral contrast between receptive peer support and active friendship initiation.
- The findings help undergraduate students identify their own socio-emotional strengths—such as self-motivation and empathy—alongside specific vulnerabilities in stress-induced temper control and self-affirmation of competence. This awareness encourages students to practice emotional regulation techniques and actively participate in study circles, student societies, and group activities to overcome social timidity and campus loneliness.
- In the absence of localized data, institutional support mechanisms in public-sector universities often remain reactive. This research equips university leadership at the University of Sargodha and similar institutions with empirical justification to integrate emotional intelligence modules into freshman orientation sessions, establish formal senior-to-junior peer-mentoring frameworks, and schedule socialization workshops during transitional semesters.
- By isolating the exact sub-dimensions where students struggle most—specifically handling difficulties rationally, maintaining positive self-talk, initiating classmate interactions, and managing campus isolation- the study guides university counselors in designing targeted workshops on anger management, cognitive-emotional stress regulation, and assertive interpersonal communication.
- The study informs university teachers that high internal empathy and academic motivation do not automatically translate into comfortable classroom communication or group participation. Educators can use these insights to foster psychologically safe, collaborative classroom environments that reduce fear of negative evaluation and build students' social confidence.
- By establishing reliable psychometric benchmarks for the Emotional Intelligence ($\alpha = 0.89$) and Social Adjustment ($\alpha = 0.81$) scales within a Pakistani public university cohort, this study lays an empirical foundation for future scholars to conduct multi-institutional, longitudinal, and mediation or moderation studies incorporating variables such as resilience, self-esteem, and coping styles.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

The delimitations indicate the pre-defined limitations that were imposed by the researchers:

- Only students studying at the University of Sargodha in Sargodha, Pakistan, were considered for this study.
- The study was confined to a sample size of 240 students, using a stratified sampling method.
- The study purposefully focused on two psychological variables: emotional intelligence and social adjustment, excluding other relevant individual differences like academic achievement, resilience, personality, or coping skills.
- The study was confined to a quantitative survey research design using self-reported data based on a Likert scale.
- Limitations due to the structure, methodology, and situation that were out of complete control by the researchers
- Since data were collected from a public sector university only, results cannot be generalized to other universities in Pakistan, and external validity is affected.
- The cross-sectional nature of the data did not allow longitudinal examination of development or changes from one semester to another and did not allow establishing any cause-and-effect relationship between EI and SA either.

- Data collected in this study are prone to self-reporting errors such as social desirability bias and common method bias due to the absence of qualitative triangulation (e.g., focus groups, interviews).

Ethical Considerations of the Study

The ethical considerations considered during the research are:

- The proper administrative clearance was sought from the relevant authorities of the University before starting the data collection process.
- Informed consent was acquired from each of the respondents before giving the questionnaire to them.
- Participation in the survey was completely voluntary.
- The core academic objectives and purpose of the study were clearly communicated to all respondents before they completed the instrument.
- The privacy of participants was fully guaranteed; the respondents were informed that all their answers would be kept confidential and that their information would never be shared with anyone.
- All the gathered information was intended solely for research purposes.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of the present study were:

1. To analyze the item-wise levels of emotional intelligence among undergraduate students at the University of Sargodha.
2. To evaluate the item-wise levels of social adjustment among undergraduate students.
3. To identify specific areas of psychological strength and vulnerability within students' emotional intelligence, particularly regarding self-motivational encouragement, empathy, stress-induced temper regulation, and personal competence affirmation.
4. To examine the behavioral divergence between receptive peer support and proactive interpersonal initiation in students' campus socialization.

Research Methodology

This research presents the methodological framework adopted in this study to be able to explore university students' perceptions regarding emotional intelligence and social adjustment. It clarifies the systematic procedures used in the conduct of the research, such as research design, target population, sampling method, research instrument, validity, reliability, data collection process, and data analysis techniques.

Research Design

The study is cross-sectional and quantitative, along with a descriptive research design.

Population and Sampling of the Study

The population of this research comprised male and female undergraduate students at the University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan. These students were chosen because university life is characterized as a continuous process of socialization and emotional intelligence is a crucial determinant in students' adaptation to the university.

The sample of the study consisted of 240 students from the University of Sargodha who were chosen by the stratified sampling technique.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire with a rating scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was adapted by the researchers. There were three sections to the questionnaire; the first section was on information about the demographic variables; the second section was on emotional intelligence and measured emotional intelligence based on emotional awareness, regulation, empathy and

emotional understanding. The third section assessed social adjustment using socialization items that referred to interpersonal relations, adaptability in social situations, and interaction with peers.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

For content validity, the questionnaire was examined by educational and psychological experts. This feedback was then used to enhance the accuracy, clarity and appropriateness of the statements regarding the measurement of emotional intelligence and social adjustment. Changes were made according to expert advice.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. A value of 0.70 or more is acceptable. To establish the psychometric soundness and internal consistency of the structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire, a reliability analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). After the content validity test of the instrument through an expert review by both educational and psychological experts, the internal consistency of the two parts of the instrument, Emotional Intelligence and Social Adjustment, was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient among a sample of 240 university students. According to the criteria for reliability in the study, Cronbach's alpha should be at least 0.70 for acceptable reliability.

Table 1: Consolidated Reliability Analysis of the Research Variables (N = 240)

Research Variable	Item Codes	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α\alphaα)	Acceptable Benchmark	Reliability Status
Emotional Intelligence	EI1 – EI12	12	0.89	≥ 0.70	High Internal Consistency (Reliable)
Social Adjustment	SA1 – SA9R	9	0.81	≥ 0.70	High Internal Consistency (Reliable)

The findings in Table 1 assess the internal consistency and reliability of the measures against the minimum acceptable standard of α≥0.70. The alpha coefficient values obtained for both variables greatly exceeded this standard, indicating that the questions of the relevant scales are homogeneous and provide a reliable assessment of the constructs for the university students being studied.

Thus, the Emotional Intelligence scale, which consists of 12 items assessing emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and emotional understanding, produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89. High internal consistency of the emotional competencies questions is indicated by this figure. In a similar way, the Social Adjustment scale with 9 questions assessing interpersonal skills, social adaptability, and peer interaction had the following value for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient: 0.81. Both figures (0.89 and 0.81) indicate internal consistency and show that the instrument produces consistent results; hence, both scales can be considered reliable and can be used for further analysis.

Data Collection Procedures

No data were collected without prior permission from the relevant university authorities. The selected individuals were given questionnaires, and the purpose of the research was fully explained to them. Participants could be certain that the results of their responses would be confidential and used exclusively for academic purposes. The questionnaire used in this research was completed voluntarily, and the participants were urged to be honest in their responses. The research followed the principles of ethics. The participants joined voluntarily, and consent was sought from each one of them before the data collection exercise. The confidentiality of the participants was guaranteed since their responses would not be shared with any other party.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS software and presented in the form of descriptive statistics, which included mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage.

Demographic Profile of the Study Respondents

The demographic composition of the 240 respondents provides an exhaustive analysis of the sample composition at different levels. As far as the gender representation is concerned, there were more females than males among the respondents. In all, 152 out of

240 respondents (63.3%) were females, whereas 88 out of 240 respondents (36.7%) were males. This distribution represents the trends of gender enrolment at the selected departments of the university. The results of the study reflect the perspectives and psychological dynamics of undergraduate students only.

Descriptive Statistics and Frequency Distribution for Emotional Intelligence (EI) Items

Table 1. Frequency Distribution, Percentages, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Emotional Intelligence Items (N = 240)

Item Code & Statement	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	M	S.D.
EI1: I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time	36 (15.0%)	16 (6.7%)	58 (24.2%)	96 (40.0%)	34 (14.2%)	3.32	1.243
EI2: I have a good understanding of my own emotions	28 (11.7%)	36 (15.0%)	38 (15.8%)	84 (35.0%)	54 (22.5%)	3.42	1.307
EI3: I always know whether I am happy	26 (10.8%)	14 (5.8%)	62 (25.8%)	82 (34.2%)	56 (23.3%)	3.53	1.223
EI4: I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior	14 (5.8%)	26 (10.8%)	44 (18.3%)	86 (35.8%)	70 (29.2%)	3.72	1.168
EI5: I am a good observer of others' emotions	12 (5.0%)	24 (10.0%)	64 (26.7%)	64 (26.7%)	76 (31.7%)	3.70	1.164
EI6: I have a good understanding of the emotions of people around me	22 (9.2%)	26 (10.8%)	58 (24.2%)	84 (35.0%)	50 (20.8%)	3.47	1.202
EI7: I can control my temper and handle difficulties rationally	16 (6.7%)	46 (19.2%)	64 (26.7%)	80 (33.3%)	34 (14.2%)	3.29	1.133
EI8: I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions	10 (4.2%)	36 (15.0%)	66 (27.5%)	84 (35.0%)	44 (18.3%)	3.48	1.085
EI9: I have good control of my emotions	14 (5.8%)	28 (11.7%)	64 (26.7%)	64 (26.7%)	70 (29.2%)	3.62	1.189
EI10: I always tell myself I am a competent person	28 (11.7%)	38 (15.8%)	60 (25.0%)	66 (27.5%)	48 (20.0%)	3.28	1.278
EI11: I am a self-motivated person	16 (6.7%)	26 (10.8%)	62 (25.8%)	96 (40.0%)	40 (16.7%)	3.49	1.100
EI12: I always encourage myself to try my best	14 (5.8%)	22 (9.2%)	46 (19.2%)	90 (37.5%)	68 (28.3%)	3.73	1.143

Note. SDA=Strongly Disagree; DA=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree; M=Mean; S.D.=Standard Deviation

Across the twelve Emotional Intelligence items ($N = 240$), respondent endorsement was evaluated by grouping responses into combined agreement (*Agree* and *Strongly Agree*), combined disagreement (*Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree*), and *Neutral* categories. A strong majority ($\geq 60\%$) endorsed self-encouragement and interpersonal perception: EI12 ("I always encourage myself to try my best") recorded the highest combined agreement at 65.8% (37.5% Agree, 28.3% Strongly Agree) against only 15.0% disagreement, followed closely by EI4 ("I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior") at 65.0% agreement (35.8% Agree, 29.2% Strongly Agree) with 16.6% disagreement. A clear majority (50.0%–59.9%) expressed positive agreement across eight additional competencies, including observing others' emotions in EI5 (58.4% agreement vs. 15.0% disagreement), understanding one's own emotions in EI2 (57.5% agreement, though 26.7% disagreement), recognizing personal happiness in EI3 (57.5% agreement vs. 16.6% disagreement), self-motivation in EI11 (56.7% agreement vs. 17.5% disagreement), emotional control in EI9 (55.9% agreement vs. 17.5% disagreement), understanding others' emotions in EI6 (55.8% agreement vs. 20.0% disagreement), recognizing the causes of feelings in EI1 (54.2% agreement vs. 21.7% disagreement), and capability in controlling emotions in EI8 (53.3% agreement, 19.2% disagreement, and 27.5% neutral). Conversely, fewer than half ($< 50\%$) agreed on two items: EI7 ("I can control my temper and handle difficulties rationally") achieved 47.5% agreement alongside 25.9% disagreement and 26.7% neutrality. At the same time, EI10 ("I always tell myself I am a competent person") also recorded 47.5% agreement with a notable 27.5% disagreement and 25.0% neutrality, signaling difficulties in stress-induced temper regulation and positive self-talk among more than a quarter of the sample.

Using a 5-point scale where M>3.00 indicates a positive level of competence, all twelve questions scored above the midpoint, indicating a high level of Emotional Intelligence. Ranking the items by central tendency shows that motivational self-encouragement (EI12, $M = 3.73$) and empathic observation (EI4, $M = 3.72$; EI5, $M = 3.70$) represent the strongest emotional competencies in the sample, followed by general emotional control (EI9, $M = 3.62$) and mood awareness (EI3, $M = 3.53$). Mid-tier positive scores were observed for self-motivation (EI11, $M = 3.49$), emotional control capability (EI8, $M = 3.48$), social emotional understanding (EI6, $M = 3.47$), self-emotional understanding (EI2, $M = 3.42$), and emotional cause awareness (EI1, $M = 3.32$). Lowest mean scores were found in rational management of temper (EI7, M=3.29) and self-affirmation of competence (EI10, M=3.28). This indicated that emotional regulation when faced with difficulties and confidence were the most important aspects for further development.

The variation in responses for all Emotional Intelligence variables ranged from a rather narrow interval of SD=1.085 to SD=1.307. The highest consistency (lowest dispersion) was observed for EI8 ($SD = 1.085$), EI11 ($SD = 1.100$), EI7 ($SD = 1.133$), and EI12 ($SD = 1.143$), followed closely by EI5 ($SD = 1.164$), EI4 ($SD = 1.168$), EI9 ($SD = 1.189$), EI6 ($SD = 1.202$), EI3 ($SD = 1.223$), and EI1 ($SD = 1.243$). Moderate dispersion was observed in EI10 (SD=1.278) and EI2 (SD=1.307), given that the differences were relatively bigger between the respondents who strongly agreed and disagreed with the items measuring personal competence and self-emotional awareness.

Descriptive Statistics and Frequency Distribution for Social Adjustment (SA) Items

Table 2. Frequency Distribution, Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Social Adjustment Items (N = 240)

Item Code & Statement	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	M	S.D.
SA1: I feel at ease when interacting with my classmates	30 (12.5%)	30 (12.5%)	64 (26.7%)	78 (32.5%)	38 (15.8%)	3.27	1.235
SA2: I can develop friendships easily within the university	30 (12.5%)	42 (17.5%)	54 (22.5%)	62 (25.8%)	52 (21.7%)	3.27	1.320
SA3: I can communicate my ideas effectively in social settings	14 (5.8%)	26 (10.8%)	92 (38.3%)	78 (32.5%)	30 (12.5%)	3.35	1.026
SA4: I have successfully adapted to the university environment	18 (7.5%)	32 (13.3%)	74 (30.8%)	68 (28.3%)	48 (20.0%)	3.40	1.170

Item Code & Statement	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	M	S.D.
SA5: I actively take part in group activities	22 (9.2%)	34 (14.2%)	58 (24.2%)	84 (35.0%)	42 (17.5%)	3.38	1.196
SA6: I actively take part in classroom activities	22 (9.2%)	30 (12.5%)	68 (28.3%)	64 (26.7%)	56 (23.3%)	3.43	1.234
SA7: I feel accepted and respected by my peers	18 (7.5%)	26 (10.8%)	50 (20.8%)	86 (35.8%)	60 (25.0%)	3.60	1.191
SA8: I receive emotional and social support from my friends	18 (7.5%)	24 (10.0%)	42 (17.5%)	94 (39.2%)	62 (25.8%)	3.66	1.185
SA9R: I feel lonely at university *(Reverse scored)*	30 (12.5%)	36 (15.0%)	56 (23.3%)	54 (22.5%)	64 (26.7%)	3.36	1.352

Note. SDA=Strongly Disagree; DA=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree; M=Mean; S.D.=Standard Deviation

The use of these percentage levels on the nine Social Adjustment questions (N=240) shows that there is a distinct line between passive peer support and active social initiative. A significant majority (≥60%) responded positively to peer support and acceptance questions: SA8, "I receive emotional and social support from my friends" showed 65.0% overall agreement (39.2% agree, 25.8% strongly agree) with 17.5% disagreement, and SA7, "I feel accepted and respected by my peers" obtained 60.8% overall agreement (35.8% agree, 25.0% strongly agree) with just 18.3% disagreement. A moderate majority (50.0%–59.9%) reported active engagement in group activities under SA5 (52.5% agreement vs. 23.4% disagreement) and classroom activities under SA6 (50.0% agreement, 21.7% disagreement, and 28.3% neutral), while on the reverse-scored loneliness item SA9R ("I feel lonely at university"), 50.1% selected scale points 4 and 5 (22.5% and 27.6%), 23.3% remained neutral (point 3), and 27.5% selected points 1 and 2 (12.5% and 15.0%). However, fewer than half (< 50%) expressed confidence across four core adaptation indicators: SA1 ("I feel at ease when interacting with my classmates") and SA4 ("I have successfully adapted to the university environment") both recorded 48.3% agreement, with SA1 showing 25.0% disagreement and SA4 showing 20.8% disagreement, alongside a large neutral group of 30.8%. Likewise, 47.5% supported SA2 ("I find it easy to make friends in the university setting") while 30.0% opposed it, and SA3 ("I am capable of expressing my thoughts effectively in social situations") yielded the lowest percentage of agreement with 45.0%, accompanied by 16.6% disagreement and the highest neutral rate of 38.3%, reflecting social timidity and problems starting friendships.

Judged considering the M>3.00 criterion, all nine items exceeded the scale midpoint, suggesting that the participants exhibited a relatively moderate degree of Social Adjustment. The order of items inside the scale indicates that the students performed better in receptive relations, including receiving emotional and social support from friends (SA8, M=3.66), as well as being accepted and respected by their peers (SA7, M=3.60). Moderate mid-range mean scores were recorded for participating in classroom activities (SA6, $M = 3.43$), adapting to the university environment (SA4, $M = 3.40$), participating in classmate activities (SA5, $M = 3.38$), the reverse-scored university loneliness item (SA9R, $M = 3.36$), and communicating ideas effectively in social settings (SA3, $M = 3.35$). The minimum mean score was equal in two cases: feeling comfortable while interacting with other students (SA1, M=3.27) and making friends in university easily (SA2, M=3.27); hence, social adjustment difficulties lie in interpersonal relations and building social connections.

Standard deviation for Social Adjustment items ranged from SD=1.026 to SD=1.352, which means that there is high consistency in answers provided by the participants. The lowest degree of variation in answers is observed in item SA3 concerning social communication (SD=1.026), where the majority of the respondents chose the agree and neutral options; the next most consistent items are university adaptation (SA4, SD=1.170), friend support (SA8, SD=1.185), peer acceptance (SA7, SD=1.191), and group participation (SA5, SD=1.196). Higher dispersion of answers is noticeable in classroom participation (SA6, SD=1.234), classmate interaction comfort (SA1, SD=1.235), making friends (SA2, SD=1.320), and university loneliness (SA9R, SD=1.352).

Discussion

This study measured EI and SA among students at the University of Sargodha, Pakistan (N=240) to investigate university students' perceptions regarding internal emotional competencies and external socialization tendencies. Descriptive statistics indicated that the university students showed a moderate to high level of emotional intelligence, with all twelve variables surpassing the positive competence standard of 3.00. At the same time, the respondents showed a moderate level of social adjustment, with all nine socialization variables also surpassing the scale midpoint. Moreover, the high perception levels of emotional intelligence and social adjustment indicate that emotional competencies play a key role in the psychological aspect of social adjustment of students within the university setting (Chapman & Hayslip, 2005; Davidson & Morales, 2022; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Krajniak et al., 2017).

A granular examination of the emotional intelligence items reveals an asymmetrical profile of emotional competencies among the surveyed students. Respondents performed best in self-motivational encouragement and empathic interpersonal observation, including recognizing friends' emotions from their behavior and observing others' emotions. Students also reported solid mid-tier capabilities in general emotional control, mood awareness, general self-motivation, emotional control capability, understanding others' emotions, understanding one's own emotions, and identifying the causes of feelings. This evidence aligns closely with recent indigenous evidence from public-sector Pakistani higher education. Fatima and Ali (2023) observed that Pakistani university students scored highest in motivation and empathy, followed by self-awareness and self-confidence, while scoring lowest on emotional self-control. In this study, the high endorsement of motivational encouragement (EI12) and empathy (EI4, EI5) indicates that Pakistani undergraduates are highly collectivist and sensitive towards the affective signals of their peers, along with having an inherent motivation for academic success (Iqbal, Ashraf, et al., 2021; Lawrie & Kim, 2024; Tang & He, 2023).

However, item-based analysis revealed some psychologically vulnerable aspects in two dimensions, where overall agreement was below 50%, including rational temper control in case of difficulty and self-affirmation of personal competence. In addition, EI10 and EI2 showed the highest variability among student answers, meaning that there were significant differences in individual perceptions about personal confidence and emotional awareness. Indeed, such findings correlate with international studies showing that although emerging adults can easily identify basic emotions, it is more complicated to regulate impulsive behavior and stress-induced emotions and maintain positive self-assessment. It requires advanced strategies for cognitive-emotional regulation (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Megías-Robles et al., 2023; Sepiadou, 2024). If emerging adults face problems with mood repair or affirming personal competence (EI10), then their self-esteem and psychological resilience deteriorate during university transition.

Under social adjustment, the study revealed a significant behavioral contrast between accepting peer support and initiating interpersonal interactions. Most students agreed with receptive relational items, which stated that they obtain both emotional and social support from their peers and feel respected by their friends. Students also indicated some level of participation in classroom activities and classmate group activities. The above findings are consistent with existing literature on the role of peer acceptance and social support when friendship ties are already formed, and these become critical protective factors for university students' well-being (Wang et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

Conversely, fewer than half of the respondents expressed confidence across four core indicators requiring active social initiative and broader environmental adaptation: feeling at ease when interacting with classmates, developing friendships easily within the university, communicating ideas effectively in social settings, and adapting successfully to the overall university environment. Furthermore, on the reverse-scored campus loneliness indicator, while 50.1% of the sample rejected feelings of loneliness, 27.5% actively experienced loneliness, and 23.3% remained ambivalent, yielding the highest dispersion on the social adjustment scale. The contrast between being receptive to peers' help and proactive social initiations provides substantial proof for the theories postulated by Baker & Siryk (1984) and the recent research carried out in Pakistan by Kayani et al. (2022). According to Kayani et al. (2022), while Pakistani university students receive immense help from peers around them, social interaction anxiety and low social self-efficacy may often prevent them from initiating contact with unfamiliar classmates or sharing their opinions in public. This happens because students coming from different regions of Pakistan and varying educational systems are hesitant to take an active part in social interactions in large public sector universities due to the fear of negative evaluation (Dong et al., 2021; Lawrie & Kim, 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

In terms of another key finding that can be drawn from the comparative examination of the two constructs, university students revealed relatively higher levels of internal emotional competence in comparison with external social adjustment. Although students have an awareness of their own emotions and are empathic towards their friends (EI4, EI5), they cannot use their internal emotional capabilities to socially interact effortlessly (SA1, SA2, SA3). Such inconsistency can be linked to the particular vulnerability factors that are present in the emotional intelligence scale: since more than half of the students were not able to control their temper

rationally under stress (EI7) or to affirm their competence (EI10), they were unable to initiate social contacts in unknown stressful situations on campus. According to Tang and He (2023) and Vilca-Pareja et al. (2022), self-efficacy and self-esteem play a vital role as intermediate mechanisms for transforming emotional intelligence into adaptive actions. Thus, without confidence in one's competence (EI10) and being capable of maintaining composure under stress (EI7), empathy itself is not enough to eliminate social reticence and campus loneliness (Fatima & Ali, 2023; Khorasani et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024). Still, the results show that a high degree of responses in social adjustment and emotional intelligence proves its significance in facilitating adjustment on campus. Students who can identify, comprehend, and manage their emotions are much more likely to engage in collaborative tasks (SA5, SA6), form respectful relations with peers (SA7, SA8), and reduce feelings of isolation (SA9R) (Iqbal, Qureshi, et al., 2021; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020; Trigueros et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021).

Lastly, demographic analyses add valuable context to the institutional practice and can be considered congruent with the findings of Fatima and Ali (2023) regarding a Pakistani public university student population because it can be concluded that modern-day male and female undergraduates face socio-emotional challenges and possess developmental potential. Meanwhile, social adjustment indicates that campus socialization is a process rather than a feature (Dong et al., 2021; Lawrie & Kim, 2024). However, social adaptation of students is influenced by changes in academic workload, peer group composition, and overall familiarity with an institution (Khorasani et al., 2023; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2024). Furthermore, all the above-listed observations underline the necessity for structured socio-emotional orientation courses, departmental peer mentoring programs, and counseling workshops on rational stress coping, positive self-talk, and proactive interpersonal communication.

Conclusions

Considering the results obtained from the study, it can be deduced that the university students at the University of Sargodha have a moderate to high level of emotional intelligence. The average scores obtained for all the dimensions of emotional intelligence were above the positive score of 3.00. It was found that the university students displayed their highest levels of emotional intelligence in self-motivation and empathy, where they were highly capable of encouraging themselves to do their best and had the ability to understand the feelings of their friends or fellow students through their actions. However, although most of the students displayed a high level of general mood awareness and emotional regulation skills, there was a significant number of students who struggled with rational temper regulation and maintaining positive self-talk about themselves.

On the issue of social adaptability, the research indicates that university students have average levels of social adaptability, since the means of all items exceed the mid-point of the scale and generate an average composite score. A more detailed analysis of the socialization variables shows a clear disparity between receptiveness to peer support and proactive social initiation. Students showed high levels of satisfaction in having positive relationships with friends in terms of gaining emotional and social support from them and being respected by their peers, as well as average involvement in class and group activities. However, students had serious difficulties in initiating interpersonal interaction since they scored low on confidence in their ability to communicate with other students, make friends at university, express ideas in social situations, and deal with campus loneliness.

Moreover, both constructs result in the following conclusion about the fact that university students are more capable of developing their internal emotional intelligence competencies as compared to the development of their external social adjustment skills. While the fact is that the students are usually aware of their own emotions and can also be empathic toward others, they do not necessarily manage to transform their internal emotional competencies into easy socializing and establishing friendships outside the university setting. Moreover, the levels of emotional intelligence and social adjustment of male and female students have been observed.

Therefore, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence and social adjustment are integral parts of the university learning environment, as the considerable levels of emotional intelligence and social adjustment clearly demonstrate that university students successfully recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions and are more likely to handle all kinds of problems and challenges both academically and interpersonally. Therefore, developing emotional intelligence, which includes such aspects as stress regulation, self-confidence, and social communication, is important for building healthy relationships among university students.

Recommendations of the Study

Considering the outcomes and conclusions that were reached during the investigation, the following recommendations for students, educators, and university administrators can be drawn to improve students' emotional intelligence and facilitate their better socialization:

- The fact that several students have found it hard to control their temper and act rationally when facing various difficulties proves that students need to learn self-awareness and emotional regulation techniques like journaling, meditation, and deep breathing exercises to regulate their emotions in various social and academic contexts.
- To overcome initial reluctance in interacting with peers and making friends, students should engage themselves in various activities such as joining different student organizations, sports clubs, study circles, and volunteer work.
- Students need to practice empathy and active listening during peer interactions daily, since these key aspects of emotional intelligence contribute to successful conflict resolution and increase mutual respect.
- Instead of retreating from campus loneliness and difficulty with adapting to university life, students need to take advantage of university counseling centers or seek advice from peer mentors or trusted university professors.
- University administrations need to include emotional intelligence and social adjustment modules in newcomer orientation sessions or general educational classes.
- The departments must establish formal programs of peer mentoring where senior students having excellent social and emotional competencies act as mentors to assist new and junior students in acclimatizing themselves to the campus environment and developing friendships.
- The student affairs department must arrange workshops on social and communication skills in those transitional periods where students face problems adjusting themselves.
- The university counseling centers must conduct group training in anger management and stress coping through rational thinking and self-affirming self-talk since these are those areas where students have minimum self-efficacy.

Suggestions for Future Research

To counteract the limitations of the current methodology and contribute to further investigation on the emotional intelligence and social adjustment among college students, the following research directions are recommended for future scholars:

- For the current study, only 240 students from one public university were selected. Future research must select a larger and more diverse sample from both public and private universities located in other cities of Pakistan.
- Future researchers should examine the role of emotional intelligence and social adjustment alongside other psychological constructs—such as resilience, self-e….steem, academic stress, and coping styles—using correlation and regression models together with mediation or moderation models to uncover the complex mechanisms linking emotional skills to social adaptation.
- Other studies will need to employ both quantitative self-reporting questionnaires along with qualitative techniques such as conducting in-depth interviews or focus group discussions as well as performance-based assessment of emotional intelligence.

References

1. Baker, R. W., & Siryk, B. (1984). Measuring adjustment to college. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 31*, 179–189. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.31.2.179
2. Chapman, B. P., & Hayslip, B., Jr. (2005). Incremental validity of a measure of emotional intelligence. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 85*, 154–169. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa8502_08
3. Davidson, D., & Morales, D. (2022). Associations between autism symptomatology, alexithymia, trait emotional intelligence, and adjustment to college. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.813450
4. Dong, X., Kalugina, O. A., Vasbieva, D. G., & Rafi, A. (2022). Emotional intelligence and personality traits based on academic performance. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.894570
5. Dong, Y., Dang, L., Li, S., & Yang, X. (2021). Effects of facets of mindfulness on college adjustment among first-year Chinese college students: The mediating role of resilience. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management, 14*, 1101–1109. https://doi.org/10.2147/prbm.s319145

6. Extremera, N., & Fernández-Berrocal, P. (2006). Emotional intelligence as predictor of mental, social, and physical health in university students. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology, 9*, 45–51. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1138741600005965

7. Fatima, A., & Ali, S. K. (2023). Relationship of emotional intelligence with academic scores and gender in students of Masters in Health Professions Education (MHPE) at a public sector university. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences, 39*. https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.39.6.7399

8. Iqbal, J., Ashraf, M. A., Perveen, S., et al. (2021). How emotional intelligence influences cognitive outcomes among university students: The mediating role of relational engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.711439

9. Iqbal, J., Qureshi, N., Ashraf, M. A., Rasool, S. F., & Asghar, M. Z. (2021). The effect of emotional intelligence and academic social networking sites on academic performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management, 14*, 905–920. https://doi.org/10.2147/prbm.s316664

10. Kayani, S., Aajiz, N. M., Raza, K. K., Kayani, S., & Biasutti, M. (2022). Cognitive and interpersonal factors affecting social adjustment of university students in Pakistan. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20*, 655. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010655

11. Khorasani, E. C., Ardameh, M., Sany, S. B. T., et al. (2023). The influence of emotional intelligence on academic stress among medical students in Neyshabur, Iran. *BMC Psychiatry, 23*. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-05344-0

12. Krajniak, M. I., Pievsky, M., Eisen, A. R., & McGrath, R. E. (2017). The relationship between personality disorder traits, emotional intelligence, and college adjustment. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 74*, 1160–1173. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22572

13. Lawrie, S. I., & Kim, H. S. (2024). The role of emotional similarity and emotional accuracy in belonging and stress among first-generation and continuing-generation students. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1355526

14. Lee, D., Burrows, T., James, D., Wilkinson, R., & Surjan, Y. (2024). Emotional intelligence evaluation tools used in allied health students: A scoping review. *Journal of Medical Radiation Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.1002/jmrs.851

15. Martínez-Martínez, A. M., López-Liria, R., Aguilar-Parra, J. M., et al. (2020). Relationship between emotional intelligence, cybervictimization, and academic performance in secondary school students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*, 7717. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17217717

16. Martínez-Monteagudo, M. C., Delgado, B., García-Fernández, J. M., & Ruíz-Esteban, C. (2020). Cyberbullying in the university setting. Relationship with emotional problems and adaptation to the university. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.03074

17. Megías-Robles, A., Sánchez-López, M. T., Gómez-Leal, R., et al. (2023). Impulsivity and sensitivity to reward as mediating factors of the negative relationship between emotional intelligence and health-related risk-taking: Evidence from a sample of university students. *BMC Psychology, 11*. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01417-7

18. Mella, N., Pansu, P., Batruch, A., et al. (2021). Socio-emotional competencies and school performance in adolescence: What role for school adjustment? *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.640661

19. Mosleh, S. M., Alsaadi, F. A., Alnaqbi, F. K., et al. (2024). Examining the association between emotional intelligence and chatbot utilization in education: A cross-sectional examination of undergraduate students in the UAE. *Heliyon, 10*, e31952. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e31952

20. Pong, H.-K., & Leung, C.-H. (2023). Cross-sectional study of the relationship between trait emotional intelligence and career adaptability of Chinese youths. *BMC Public Health, 23*. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15372-w

21. Sepiadou, I. (2024). Emotion regulation strategies and perceived emotional intelligence: The effect of age. *Adultspan Journal, 23*. https://doi.org/10.33470/2161-0029.1159

22. Suriá-Martínez, R., Ortigosa Quiles, J. M., & Riquelme Marin, A. (2019). Emotional intelligence profiles of university students with motor disabilities: Differential analysis of self-concept dimensions. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*, 4073. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16214073

23. Tang, Y., & He, W. (2023). Relationship between emotional intelligence and learning motivation among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic: A serial mediation model. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1109569

24. Trigueros, R., Sanchez-Sanchez, E., Mercader, I., et al. (2020). Relationship between emotional intelligence, social skills and peer harassment. A study with high school students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*, 4208. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124208

25. Vilca-Pareja, V., Luque Ruiz de Somocurcio, A., Delgado-Morales, R., & Medina Zeballos, L. (2022). Emotional intelligence, resilience, and self-esteem as predictors of satisfaction with life in university students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*, 16548. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416548

26. Wang, F., Huang, X., Zeb, S., Liu, D., & Wang, Y. (2022). Impact of music education on mental health of higher education students: Moderating role of emotional intelligence. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.938090

27. Wang, H., Wu, S., Wang, W., & Wei, C. (2021). Emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior in college students: A moderated mediation analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713227

28. Yu, L., Wu, X., Zhang, Q., & Sun, B. (2024). Social support and social adjustment among Chinese secondary school students: The mediating roles of subjective well-being and psychological resilience. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management, 17*, 3455–3471. https://doi.org/10.2147/prbm.s477608

29. Zhao, M., Abdul Kadir, N. B., & Abd Razak, M. A. (2024). The relationship between family functioning, emotional intelligence, loneliness, social support, and depressive symptoms among undergraduate students. *Behavioral Sciences, 14*, 819. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14090819



2026 by the authors; Journal of Global Social Transformation (JGST). This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).