

Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy on Self-Esteem Among Nursing Students

¹Sarayu Priya Muthukrishnan, ²Golden Catherine T, ³Rajila S, ⁴Annlin Smila S

¹Principal Department of Child Health Nursing, Dr. Jeyasekharan College of Nursing, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari Dist., Tamil Nadu, India, ²HOD cum Professor, Department of Mental Health Nursing, Dr. Jeyasekharan College of Nursing, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari Dist., Tamil Nadu, India, ³Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecological Nursing Dr. Jeyasekharan College of Nursing, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari Dist., Tamil Nadu, India ⁴Associate Professor, Department of Medical Surgical Nursing Dr. Jeyasekharan College of Nursing, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari Dist., Tamil Nadu, India

How to cite this article: Sarayu Priya Muthukrishnan, Golden Catherine T, Rajila S, , Annlin Smila S. Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy on Self-Esteem Among Nursing Students. International Journal of Nursing Education / Vol 18 No. 2, April - June 2026

Abstract

Introduction: Nursing is a profession that demands not only clinical competence but also strong emotional and psychological adaptability. Objectives of the study were to correlate the level of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on self-esteem and to associate the level of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem with their selected sociodemographic variables.

Methods: Descriptive cross-sectional research design was used for the research. 289 samples were taken using the complete enumerative sampling technique. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) were the tools of the study. The data gathered at the selected nursing college was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistical methods, and interpretations were made based on the objectives of the study.

Results: The study results show that a moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem was observed with $r = 0.64$; on the other hand, a strong positive correlation of $r = 0.97$ was observed for self-efficacy & self-esteem. Association of the demographic variables revealed that age, course, year of the study, and religion were associated with emotional intelligence at chi-square 0.0270, 0.0038, and 0.0417, respectively, at $p < 0.5$ level at 95% CI.

Conclusion: The study emphasizes that emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy are interrelated constructs influencing one another and that certain demographic factors play a significant role in shaping emotional intelligence among the participants. Promoting emotional intelligence and self-efficacy through targeted educational and psychological interventions may therefore enhance students' overall self-esteem and personal growth.

Key words: *Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, self-esteem, nursing students*

Corresponding Author: Sarayu Priya Muthukrishnan, MSc (N), PhD Principal Department of Child Health Nursing, Dr. Jeyasekharan College of Nursing, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari Dist., Tamil Nadu, India.

E-mail: sarayukalai@gmail.com

Submission: Sep 9, 2025

Revision: February 2, 2026

Published date: April 27, 2026

Introduction

Nursing is a profession that demands not only clinical competence but also strong emotional and psychological adaptability. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. Likewise, self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities to accomplish tasks and overcome challenges, contributes significantly to confidence and motivation levels among students. Self-esteem, or the overall self-worth a person feels, is essential for mental well-being and academic success.

As nursing students navigate demanding academic requirements and emotionally charged clinical situations, their emotional intelligence and self-efficacy influence their level of self-esteem. This interrelationship is particularly important because poor self-esteem can lead to increased anxiety, decreased academic performance, and even dropout from nursing programs. Therefore, examining how emotional intelligence and self-efficacy affect self-esteem can help educators develop targeted interventions to strengthen students' emotional health and academic resilience.

Need and Significance in Nursing

The modern healthcare environment demands emotionally resilient, competent, and confident nurses. The rigorous nature of nursing education exposes students to multiple stressors such as high academic workloads, patient care responsibilities, and frequent exposure to suffering and death. These stressors can negatively affect their self-esteem and mental well-being if not managed appropriately.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as protective psychological factors¹ that can buffer against low self-esteem and burnout. Understanding how these traits influence self-esteem will help in designing mental health and personality development programs, enhancing student retention and academic performance, and helping in promoting

better coping strategies and communication in clinical practice.

This study is significant because it will provide insights for nurse educators and curriculum planners to foster emotional intelligence and self-efficacy skills in nursing education, ultimately contributing to the development of emotionally strong, self-assured future nurses.

A study conducted by **Merin B.(2023)**² on the effectiveness of psychodrama therapy in improving self-esteem among 2nd-year B.Sc. Nursing students in a selected college in Kanyakumari. Using convenient sampling, 40 students were divided into experimental (n=20) and control (n=20) groups. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was administered after collecting demographic data. Post-intervention revealed 65% of them to have very high self-esteem and 35% with moderate self-esteem, with no cases of very low self-esteem.

Banappagoudar S, Ajetha DS, Parveen A, Gomathi S, Subashini SP, Malhotra P. (2022)³ conducted a descriptive study at Rama Nursing College, Kanpur, involving 210 nursing students selected through non-purposive sampling. Data were collected using a two-part questionnaire: socio-demographics and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Findings showed 73.3% had normal self-esteem, 23.8% low, and 2.9% high. Chi-square analysis revealed a significant association between self-esteem and stress levels. However, these studies did not explore the combined effect of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on self-esteem, particularly in the context of nursing education.

Bsharat, F.,(2024)⁴ a cross-sectional study conducted at the Arab American University. The study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem in 225 fourth-year nursing students, using convenience sampling. Tools included the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Results showed high emotional intelligence (mean 151.3±1.9) and high self-esteem (mean 24.3±3.5), with a moderate positive correlation between the two variables

Statement of the Problem

A descriptive study to assess the relationship of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy with self-esteem among undergraduate nursing students in Dr Jeyasekharan College of Nursing, Tamil Nadu

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to assess the emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem among nursing students; to correlate the level of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy with self-esteem; and to associate the level of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem with their selected sociodemographic variables.

Methodology

A quantitative research approach with a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The study was conducted at a selected college. The complete enumerative sampling technique was adopted. Sample size was 289. The study was conducted at Dr. Jeyasekharan College of Nursing among the B.Sc. Nursing and DGNM students for one week.

Method of Data Collection

The formal administrative permission was obtained from the correspondent and principal. Ethical approval obtained from internal ethical committee (Ref No.JMT-CON/PERMISSION/11938/2024) in the month of July. Informed consent was obtained. Formal permissions were obtained to use the standardized tools in the study. All nursing students

were included as samples. The procedure was explained to each participant with confidentiality and anonymity. Self-structured socio-demographic data sheet administered to elicit demographic variables. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to assess self-esteem with 10 items scored on a 4-point scale (0-30). The General Self-Efficacy Scale is a self-report measure of self-efficacy with 10 items with scores ranging from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating more self-efficacy and the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) is a 5-point Likert scale, with scores from 33 to 165 were administered. The data sheets were coded, and the files were kept under lock and key.

Demographic variables were analyzed with frequency and percentage distribution. Mean percentages and standard deviations were used to compute the level of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Pearson's correlation coefficient examined relationships, and the chi-square test assessed associations with demographic variables with significance level.

Data Interpretation

The majority of participants (n=150) were aged 19-20 years, while only one participant was older than 22 years. 237 were female and 52 male. 235 of them were undergraduate students, and 54 were diploma holders. 78 were in their first year and 59 in their fourth year. 287 had completed their higher secondary and 2 other qualifications. 182 were from rural areas and 107 from urban areas. 108 were Hindu, and 6 were Muslim. 11 had a family income \geq ₹159,586.51, and 119 of them were in the ₹39,830-₹79,755 category.

Assessment of Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy

| Score | Emotional Intelligence | | Self-Esteem | | Self-Efficacy | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | frequency | percentage (%) | frequency | Percentage (%) | frequency | percentage (%) |
| High | 18 | 6.23% | 281 | 97.23% | 262 | 90.66% |
| Moderate | 243 | 84.08% | 8 | 2.77% | 21 | 7.27% |
| Low | 28 | 9.69% | 0 | 0.00% | 6 | 2.08% |

Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy on Self-Esteem

According to Cohen's guidelines, an r value of 0.64 ($p < 0.05$) indicates a moderate-to-strong correlation and a very strong positive correlation with an r value of 0.97 ($p < 0.05$) for self-efficacy &

self-esteem. Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy were correlated with $r = 0.66$. Nursing students with higher emotional intelligence tend to have higher self-esteem.

Association of emotional intelligence, self-esteem and self-efficacy with selected sociodemographic variables.

| Demographic variables | Emotional Intelligence | | Self-Esteem | | Self-Efficacy | |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|---------------|----------|
| | Chi square | P value | Chi square | P value | Chi square | P value |
| Age | 7.22 | 0.0270 * | 1.14 | 0.5659 | 5.19 | 0.0748 |
| Gender | 4.49 | 0.6103 | 2.79 | 0.8351 | 5.68 | 0.4598 |
| Course | 19.22 | 0.0038 * | 3.13 | 0.7930 | 8.53 | 0.2016 |
| Year of study | 13.08 | 0.0417 * | 8.57 | 0.1995 | 8.23 | 0.2221 |
| Previous qualification | 1.29 | 0.5258 | 5.27 | 0.0716 | 2.89 | 0.2354 |
| Residence | 6.77 | 0.1486 | 0.96 | 0.9152 | 5.51 | 0.2386 |
| Religion | 14.73 | 0.0053* | 8.09 | 0.0883 | 16.10 | 0.0029 * |
| Family income | 0.47 | 0.7910 | 1.72 | 0.4241 | 0.06 | 0.9689 |

Discussion

The majority of the nursing students had moderate emotional intelligence, high self-esteem, and high self-efficacy. A moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem was observed with $r = 0.64$; on the other hand, a strong positive correlation of $r = 0.97$ was observed for self-efficacy & self-esteem. There was a moderate correlation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, with an r value of 0.66. A cross-sectional survey conducted on B.Sc. nursing students revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem. 60 samples were screened using the self-report questionnaires for emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and empathy. The mean self-esteem score of nursing students was 17.27; a positive correlation of 0.548 was found at $p < 0.05$.

Association of the demographic variables revealed that age was significantly associated with a p -value of 0.0270 at $p < 0.05$, course of study was significantly associated with a p -value of 0.0270, year

of the study with a p -value of 0.0038, and religion with a p -value of 0.0417, respectively. A similar study was conducted by **Rodríguez ES, Martínez ME, Presa CL(2023)**⁵ to correlate emotional intelligence and age. 111 first year and 101 final year undergraduates participated in the study. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire was adopted. The study findings concluded stating the drastic change in the emotional intelligence level of students in first year to third year with mean 154.40 at 95% confidence interval compared to the third year mean value 162.01.

This is consistent with earlier research. For instance, **Bsharat, F., (2024)**⁴ identified a moderate positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among final-year nursing students.

Karaca et al. (2019)⁶ reported that nursing students with higher emotional intelligence had better coping mechanisms and self-worth. A study by **Rao & Kemparaj (2021)**⁷ found a strong relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and academic performance among nursing

students. Similar findings were observed by **Alavi, N.M., (2016)⁸**, where self-efficacy positively predicted self-esteem in nursing students.

As future nurse leaders, students must be equipped not only with clinical skills but also with self-assurance, emotional maturity, and adaptability – traits built through targeted emotional intelligence and self-efficacy training. When such psychological strengths are cultivated during the “learning” phase, students are better positioned to “lead” in tomorrow’s complex healthcare environments.

The findings showed a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-esteem, as well as between self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Recommendation

- Incorporate emotional intelligence training and personality development modules into the nursing curriculum.
- Conduct workshops and seminars to strengthen self-efficacy and communication skills.
- Offer regular counseling services to help students manage academic and clinical stress.
- Create mentorship programs where senior students help juniors build confidence.
- Future research should explore the long-term impact of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy training on professional performance.

Conclusion

The journey of a nursing student is not only academic but deeply personal and emotional.. It starts with curiosity and ends with confidence. Nursing students undergo a structured series of changes as they cross each year of their study. Self-esteem is highly reliant on emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the innate belief about one’s own potentials and it is indeed seen high in most of the nursing students as they master the skills of the profession. On the other hand emotional intelligence is the mastery of emotions which is still in the area of concern. A longitudinal study is planned to be conducted by adopting various settings.

The study revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem among nursing students. These psychological factors play a vital role in student well-being and professional development. Enhancing these qualities through structured interventions can promote emotional resilience, academic excellence, and better patient care outcomes in the future. This study confirms that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy play a crucial role in shaping self-esteem, which in turn influences students’ growth into confident and competent future professionals.

Ethical Clearence: The approval of the study was from internal ethical committee within college and the Ref No.JMT-CON/PERMISSION/11938/2024

Funding: Self-funded

Conflict of Interest: None

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