

# Does Cultural Intelligence & Emotional Intelligence Differ by Region in India? A Comparative Study

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Students from various parts of India periodically migrate to universities for academic and professional reasons. They reflect various cultural diversities and have to overcome obstacles like intergroup prejudice and acculturative stress. Although these factors can differ by region, the response tendency may be influenced by their respective cultural intelligence/quotient (CQ) and emotional intelligence/quotient (EQ). The comparisons of CQ and EQ across students from significant regions of India, however, have never been recorded in a prior study. This study attempted to examine the level of CQ and EQ among students who were enrolled in educational institutions in Kalaburagi City, who belong to three major regions of India (North, South-East, and South-West). A total of 385 students between the ages of 18 and 31 (mean age: 20.56; standard deviation: 2.633) were recruited for the study. Surprisingly, there were significant geographical disparities in the use of emotions and metacognitive CQ. Compared to students from the other two regions, students from the south-eastern area performed better while using emotional EQ and scored less while using meta-cognitive CQ. The study deduced the plausible factors and potential explanations for CQ – EQ disparities and inter-regional acceptability among students from three major regions, which may be used to develop a CQ & EQ training program for usage across India's educational system.

**Keywords:** cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, students, region.

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# Различаются ли культурная и эмоциональная компетентности в регионах Индии? Сравнительное исследование

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Студенты из разных уголков Индии периодически меняют институты по академическим и профессиональным причинам. Они обладают разными культурными отличиями и должны преодолевать такие препятствия, как межгрупповые предубеждения и аккультурационный стресс. Несмотря на то, что эти факторы могут различаться в зависимости от региона, на тенденцию реагирования могут влиять соответствующие показатели культурной (КК) и эмоциональной компетентности (ЭК). Однако сравнения КК и ЭК у студентов из значимых регионов Индии никогда ранее не фиксировались в работах. В данном исследовании была предпринята попытка изучить уровень КК и ЭК у студентов, обучавшихся в учебных заведениях города Калабураги из трех основных индийских регионов (северного, юго-восточного и юго-западного). Для участия в исследовании было набрано в общей сложности 385 студентов в возрасте от 18 до 31 года (средний возраст — 20,57; стандартное отклонение — 2,633). Удивительно то, что существовали значительные географические различия в использовании эмоций и метакогнитивной КК. По сравнению со студентами из двух других регионов, студенты из юго-восточного региона показали лучшие результаты при применении ЭК и меньше набрали баллов при использовании метакогнитивной КК. В ходе исследования были выявлены вероятные факторы и причины различий в КК — ЭК и межрегиональной приемлемости среди студентов из трех основных регионов, которые могут быть использованы для разработки программы обучения КК и ЭК во всей образовательной системе Индии.

**Ключевые слова:** культурная компетентность, эмоциональная компетентность, студенты, регион.

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## Introduction

India is one of the most culturally and socially diverse country in the world. It is a home to diverse com-

munities and social groups differing in cultural markers including language, region, religion, race, and caste. Due to globalization and urbanization, masses from various social and cultural groups converge at certain hubs to

procure education. Institutions of higher education have become a multicultural hub, consisting of varied groups of students from different regions of India. Despite this, these multicultural hubs have both benefits as well as challenges. For instance, cultural diversity and cultural capital improve academic performance [7; 63], but they might cause acculturation stress and inter-group perception-bias (stereotype, prejudice & discrimination). This can increase the risk of discrimination [9; 41; 47] and harm the psychological well-being of students [4; 36] while inclining the rate of student dropout [52]. Especially, cultural discrimination triggers severe psychological disturbances, like suicidal tendencies & depression among students [32; 38]. Therefore, there is an urgency to explore, accept and adapt to cultural diversity through the empathetic understanding of others, considering them as individuals rather than a representative of a social group.

This can be possible through inoculating cultural intelligence (CQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) within academic context. Previous studies demonstrated the effective role of EQ in reducing prejudice [14; 39] and discrimination, thereby reducing acculturative stress [64]. In addition, CQ directly moderates acculturative stress [21; 45], which helps to improve social skills [31], and innovative behavior among students [30]. Nevertheless, it is essential to assess the participant's level of CQ & EQ before assigning the intervention program. In line with this, the preliminary aim is to assess the level of CQ and EQ among the students.

### **Cultural diversity across India**

Culture and language are inextricably linked [17; 24]. Although there are languages like Punjabi, Gujrathi, Marathi, which were once part of the Indo-European language family, people from the North Indian states primarily speak Hindi [67]. However, each state in the South India has its own pronoun language, which is descended from the Dravidian linguistic group [33]. Scholarly research has shown that there were significant differences between the North Indian and the South Indian individuals in terms of skin tone, height, life values, and degrees of happiness [8; 50]. The southeast and southwest areas were historically governed by several colonial powers, which had a significant impact on their respective cultural and traditional values [26]. Overall, the diverse behaviors that people displayed at a multicultural hub like a university represented the different cultural perspectives.

With the best of the researcher's knowledge along with a thorough literature review, it was found that there is no prior study that has been conducted to assess the differences in CQ and EQ among students from different regions in India. This might be possible due to the system of integrative cultural values enforced by the Indian education system [59], although the ground reality can differ. Moreover, most of the previous studies were conducted in the international context [37; 44; 56; 60] but neglected the impact of regional variations on CQ and EQ within the nation. The present study proposed to reveal the inter-regional acceptance and

cultural adaptation of the students belonging to different regions. Therefore, the study aimed to compare CQ and EQ among students from the north, southeast, and southwest regions of India.

### **Cultural intelligence (CQ)**

Understanding the underlying meaning behind how individuals from other cultures portray themselves and being able to successfully adjust oneself in various cultural circumstances are two characteristics of someone with cultural intelligence [15]. It catalyzes negotiations in intercultural meetings/situations [3]. In the educational context, cultural intelligence plays a crucial role in cross-cultural adjustment and psychological adaptation [25; 28; 51]. It serves as a conduit for conceptualizing metacognitive, cognitive, behavioral, and motivational elements that are reflected in a cultural context. [15]. Moreover, it aids an individual in adapting to a multicultural environment [43]. People with high CQ tend to have high cultural competency that eventually can lower their acculturative stress.

### **Emotional intelligence (EQ)**

Emotional intelligence or emotional quotient (EQ) is the capability to perceive, understand, manage and act on one's own or other people's emotions [53]. It has been associated with physical and mental health, intercultural competence, aggression, cultural adjustment & work productivity [18; 20; 23; 39; 40; 55; 65]. The optimal level of EQ bolsters interpersonal relationships [48]. Specifically, in the academic context, it improves scholastic performance along with enhancing social cohesion among students [1; 46]. Furthermore, EQ lowers acculturative stress by prompting appropriate coping responses in an educational environment [26; 64].

### **Cultural intelligence & Emotional intelligence**

However, previous studies indicated the similarities between CQ and EQ, despite they are distinct from each other [2; 11; 35; 49; 57]. EQ is culturally specific since it allows a person to roughly understand and react to the emotions of a corresponding culture [16; 62]. In contrast, CQ is culture-free, as it effectively functions among diverse social and cultural groups [42]. Nonetheless, EQ is the sub-set of CQ. For instance, studies demonstrated that interpersonal skills and social skills belonging to EQ are associated with CQ [31]. Although a few studies supported the overlapping of CQ with EQ [11; 12]. In line with this apparent contradiction, the third aim of the study is to assess the correlation between CQ and EQ among students.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

This study included 385 students who were studying in various educational institutes in Kalaburagi City, and who hail from different regions of India. In accordance with their native state, they were categorized into 1) The northern region (n=122, female=66, male=56), 2) the

south-eastern region (n=131, female=61, male=70 and 3) the south-western region (n=132, female=93, male=39). Overall, a total of 155 male and 230 female students with a mean age of 20.56 years (SD=2.633) have been recruited for this study. Out of them, two hundred fifty-one were undergraduates, one hundred thirty-three were postgraduates, and four were research scholars. The researchers excluded international students and regional language students who cannot write and comprehend the English language.

*Tools*

*Cultural Intelligence/Cultural Quotient Scale (CQS):* This scale was developed by S. Ang, L. Van Dyan and C. Koh to assess the cultural intelligence of individuals [2]. It is a rating scale that included four sub-domains; Motivational Cultural Quotient (5 items); Cognitive Cultural Quotient (6 items); Metacognitive Cultural Quotient (4 items); and Behavioral Cultural Quotient (5 items). The reliability through Cronbach Alpha of CQ is .86, while the reliability of each subscale is as follows: Motivational CQ is 0.80, Cognitive CQ is 0.81, Metacognitive CQ is 0.76, and Behavioral CQ is 0.77 respectively.

*Emotional Intelligence Scale (EQS):* this scale was developed by C. S. Wong and K. Law K. [66]. It is a rating scale used to assess the emotional intelligence of an individual. It has four subscales with four items in each; Self-Emotional Appraisal; Other's Emotional Appraisal, Use of Emotion, and Regulation of Emotion. The reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha; the 'self-emotional appraisal' is 0.61, 'other's emotional appraisal' is 0.79, 'use of emotion' is 0.82, and 'regulation of emotion' is 0.81.

*Procedure*

A list of educational institutes in Kalaburagi City was prepared by the prime investigator. With the help of Research Randomizer, 10 educational institutes were selected and approached to gain permission for data collection. After cognitive briefing, the students from the permitting institutes who volunteered to participate were taken to a comfortable space, where their consent and basic socio-demographic details were obtained. The emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence scales were administered along with assuring the confidentiality of the study. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 25.

*Data analysis*

Descriptive analysis was performed to compute the mean, standard deviation, and percentages of variables. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to understand the significant differences in EQ and CQ depending on the region. In addition, a post hoc Tukey Test was used to compare the lowest as well as the highest significant differences in CQ and EQ across the regions. Furthermore, correlational analysis (*r*) was carried out to find the relationship between CQ and EQ among the students belonging to 3 regions, where the value of *r* determines the strength & direction of correlation.

**Results**

*Descriptive Analysis*

The study consists of 40% of male and 60% of female students, among which 65% were undergraduates, 34% were postgraduates & 1% were PhD scholars. In addition, 32% of the students belong to the northern region, while students from the south-eastern region & south-western region constitute 34% each. The mean age of the students was 20.56 & SD is 2.63. The mean & SD of the sub-variables of cultural differences were as follows: motivational cultural quotient (Mean=26.14, SD=5.98), cognitive cultural quotient (Mean=23.7, SD=7.68), metacognitive cultural quotient (Mean=20.3, SD=5.0) and behavioral cultural quotient (Mean=23.3, SD=6.0). The mean & SD of sub-variables of emotional intelligence are as follows: self-emotional appraisal (Mean=21.3, SD=6.6), other's emotional appraisal (Mean=21.1, SD=4.7), use of emotion (Mean=21.04, SD=5.2) & regulation of emotion (Mean=19, SD=5.6). Table 1 shows the details of the descriptive analysis.

Table 1

**Descriptive statistics**

Variables	n	Percentage
Gender-Male	155	40%
Female	230	60%
Education-Undergraduate	251	65.2%
Postgraduate	130	33.8%
PhD	4	1%
Northern Region	122	32%
South-Eastern Region	131	34%
South-Western Region	132	34%
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Metacognitive CQ	20.0	5.03
Cognitive CQ	23.7	7.68
Motivational CQ	26.1	5.98
Behavioral CQ	23.3	6.05
Self-emotional appraisal	21.3	6.64
Other's emotional appraisal	21.1	4.70
Use of emotions	21.0	5.2
Regulation of emotions	19.4	5.63

*One-way ANOVA*

The results (Table 2) demonstrate the comparison of sub-components of CQ & EQ with the students' regions. Except for meta-cognitive CQ [F (2,382) = .622, *p*=.002] & the use of emotions [F (2,382) =4.45, *p*= .012], there was no significant difference in sub-components of CQ & EQ among students from the northern, south-eastern & south-western regions. This can be seen in cognitive CQ [F (2,382) =.476, *p*=.621], motivational CQ [F (2,382) =1.82, *p*=.16], behavioral CQ [F (2,382) =1.63, *p*=.196], self-emotional appraisal [F (2,382) =1.96, *p*=.14], other's emotional appraisal [F (2,382) = .156, *p*=.85], and regulation of appraisal [F (2,382) = .158, *p*=.85]. The Tukey post hoc analysis was conducted while finding a significant difference in metacognitive CQ (*p*=.002) and use of emotions (*p*=.012) among the

students from the 3 regions. The lowest difference in meta-cognitive CQ was found among the students from the south-eastern region ( $18.79 \pm 1.98, p = .005$ ) compared to the students from the south-western and northern region. In contrast, the use of emotions shows the highest difference among students from the south-eastern region ( $22.14 \pm 1.67, p = .027$ ) when compared to the students from the south-western and northern regions. However, a significant difference in the use of emotions was not found between the south-western and northern students.

*Correlational Analysis*

Pearson correlation analysis was used to find the relationship between CQ and EQ. Metacognitive CQ has a significant positive correlation with self-emotional appraisal ( $r = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ), other's emotional appraisal ( $r = 0.29, p < 0.01$ ), use of emotions ( $r = 0.27, p < 0.01$ ) & regulation of emotion ( $r = 0.19, p < 0.01$ ). Cognitive CQ has a significant positive relationship with self-emotional appraisal ( $r = 0.23, p < 0.01$ ), other's emotional appraisal ( $r = 0.31, p < 0.01$ ), use of emotions ( $r = 0.33, p < 0.01$ ) & regulation of emotion ( $r = 0.26, p < 0.01$ ). Motivational CQ has a significant positive relationship with self-emotional appraisal ( $r = .28, p < 0.01$ ), other's emotional appraisal ( $r = .37, p < 0.01$ ), use of emotions ( $r = .30, p < 0.01$ ) & regulation of the emotion ( $r = .29, p < 0.01$ ). Behavioral CQ has a significant positive relationship with self-emotional

appraisal ( $r = .26, p < 0.01$ ), other's emotional appraisal ( $r = .31, p < 0.01$ ), use of emotions ( $r = .28, p < 0.01$ ) and regulation of emotion ( $r = .24, p < 0.01$ ).

**Discussion**

This study aimed to 1) investigate the level of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among the students of three regions 2) compare CQ & EQ among students from the northern, south-eastern, and south-western regions of India 3) explore whether there exists any relationship between CQ and EQ among the students. First, the results demonstrated a significant differences in CQ and EQ, especially in meta-cognitive CQ that is about how an individual seeks knowledge about culture and monitors one's thoughts related to a particular culture [19], which includes pre-planning and shifting the pre-existing mental models toward cultural norms [3]. This infers that due to grown up in specific region a student's meta-cognitive CQ can be different from another student who belongs to a different region. Similarly, a significant difference was found in the 'use of emotions' among the students from the three regions. The use of emotions is a sub-component of EQ, which deals with using one's emotions in a proper way that subsequently results in constructive activities that improves

Table 2

**One-way ANOVA results**

Variable	Mean (SD)			df	F	P	Post hoc Turkey
	(1) Northern Region (n=122)	(2) South-Eastern region (n=131)	(3) South-Western region (n=132)				Sig Difference
Metacognitive CQ	20.7 (4.9)	18.8 (5.7)	20.6 (4.2)	2, 382	6.22	.002**	1>2, 3>2
Motivational CQ	23.9 (8.6)	24.1 (7.3)	23.2 (7.2)	2, 382	1.82	.16	
Cognitive CQ	26.7 (5.7)	25.4 (6.4)	26.3 (5.7)	2, 382	.47	.62	
Behavioral CQ	24.0 (6.4)	22.6 (6.1)	23.3 (5.7)	2, 382	1.6	.19	
Self-emotional appraisal	20.4 (5.9)	22.2 (8.5)	21.4 (4.7)	2, 382	1.96	.14	
Other's emotional appraisal	21.02 (5.3)	21.02 (4.9)	21.3 (3.9)	2, 382	.16	.85	
Use of emotions	20.5 (5.6)	22.1 (4.8)	20.5 (5.0)	2, 382	4.45	.012*	2>1, 2>3
Regulation of emotions	19.7 (5.6)	19.3 (5.4)	19.3 (5.9)	2, 382	.16	.85	

\*\* $p < 0.01$  \* $p < .05$

Table 3

**Bivariate of correlation**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Metacognitive cultural quotient		0.27**	0.47**	0.36**	0.24**	0.30**	0.27**	0.20**
2. Cognitive cultural quotient			0.28**	0.33**	0.23**	0.32**	0.34**	0.26**
3. Motivational cultural quotient				0.44**	0.28**	0.37**	0.30**	0.29**
4. Behavioral cultural quotient					0.26**	0.31**	0.28**	0.24**
5. Self-emotional appraisal						0.40**	0.39**	0.38**
6. Other's emotional appraisal							0.50**	0.38**
7. Use of emotions								0.46**
8. Regulation of emotions								

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

one's performance [13; 34]. This infers that the students from different regions might identify specific emotions and utilize them in accordance with appropriate context.

The post hoc Tukey analysis showed that the difference in meta-cognitive CQ is the lowest and the use of emotions is the highest among students from the south-eastern region when compared to the northern and south-western region. This may be due to their advanced level in science and the higher standard of facilities available in the south-east [26]. This may have subsequently contributed to cultural acceptance [10], lowering the differences in meta-cognitive CQ among students of that region.

Second, considering the modern history of India, missionaries first appeared in the south-eastern region, aiming to 'enlighten' the peasants and gave them a new perspective on life by employing the educative systems, libraries, and religious activities they established [26]. As a result, in the south-eastern area, compared to other locations, disparities in the usage of emotions among the students emerged as a result of the collision of existing communities and missionaries. To clarify whether this clash of civilizations actually impacts different EQ sub-dimensions, more research is required.

Unexpectedly, there was no significant difference among other dimensions of CQ and EQ, except for meta-cognitive CQ and the use of emotions. This may be due to the ability of students from all three regions to adapt to the new situations, which was not assessed in the current study [27; 29; 60]. Nevertheless, the first-year students were found to have more adjustment issues than the second-year or the final-year students [6]. However, individual differences can play a critical role in determining both CQ and EQ and should be studied in the future.

A positive correlation between EQ and CQ was obtained corroborating with previous literature [61]. In the present study, meta-cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioural CQ have a relatively strong correlation with the other's emotional appraisal, which indicates that prior knowledge of the other's culture is important to perceive, interpret and comprehend one another's emotions. Further, it may involve questioning one's pre-existing perceptions of the other's culture [16]. However, this can motivate appropriate behavior in a multi-cultural setting through the apprehension of the other's emotions. Similar to emotional usage, cognitive CQ has a substantial association, suggesting that knowledge gained from diverse cultural experiences [15] can control emotions during performance in a multicultural setting. Nevertheless, cultural experiences include norms and customs that enable an individual to accurately comprehend their emotions [54]. However, the strength of the correlation is no more than .3, which may be attributed to the low sample size.

#### *Implications & Limitations*

The study can aid in ascertaining the overlap of CQ and EQ. Both CQ and EQ in coordination can enrich the management of both emotions and cultural acceptance among students, which can nurture a conflict-free educational environment. This research showed the overlap between EQ and CQ, highlighting the necessity to investigate this relationship together with moderating factors including self-efficacy and self-adjustment. The study also advises utilising a qualitative research approach to evaluate CQ and EQ because it can provide a more thorough explanation of students' perceptions in a multicultural setting.

There were certain limitations of the study. The study focused primarily on differences in CQ and EQ based on the students' region in general but did not consider individual differences such as multicultural attitudes, personality traits, or self-efficacy. These factors can be considered in future research. Second, socio-demographic variables such as socio-economic status, religion, and family type may also have a role in both CQ and EQ [5; 58]. Third, the study excluded international students, the inclusion of which might have helped in comparing the differences in CQ and EQ between Indian students and foreign students. Finally, the study's findings cannot be generalized to other populations like employed people, grade-school students, labor workers, or migrants, but these may become the focus of the future studies.

#### **Conclusion**

This study aimed to find the level and difference in CQ and EQ based on which region students studying in educational institutions (a multicultural context) in Kalaburagi City came from. The study indicated that EQ and CQ largely overlap and highlighted significant differences in meta-cognitive CQ and the use of emotions among students from the three regions. The findings of the study contribute to the literature on cultural intelligence & emotional intelligence as this area remains less prioritized by researchers. Understanding the relationship between cultural and emotional intelligence might aid education system administrators in better comprehending the needs and challenges faced by students. This may lead to the creation of suitable support networks for students, particularly first-years. After all, education is intended to transform the next generation into a responsible, culturally and socially flexible individual. However, the implications and limitations of this study should be taken into account and may be used for future, related studies.

#### *Conflict of Interests*

The authors declare no conflict of interests in the authorship and publication of this work.

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