

Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitudes of Undergraduate Learners: An Empirical Investigation in Ghaziabad District

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Received 15 September 2026

Accepted 20 September 2026

Published 25 September 2026

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Email: deepalidabur.edu@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64880/pcjaict.v1i5.21>

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sector.

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Abstract:

The present study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and sexual attitudes among undergraduate students, with special reference to gender differences. The study used a quantitative descriptive survey method. A total of 100 undergraduate students, including 50 male and 50 female students, were selected from aided colleges of Ghaziabad, India, using simple random and cluster sampling methods. Data were collected using the Sushma Talesara Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and Amit Abraham Sexual Attitude Scale (SAS). The data were analysed using an independent-samples t-test and Pearson's correlation. The results showed significant gender differences in emotional intelligence ($t = 3.19, p < 0.01$) and sexual attitude ($t = 3.11, p < 0.01$). Male students obtained higher mean scores than female students on both measures. However, no significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and sexual attitude among female students ($r = 0.124, p > 0.05$) or male students ($r = 0.0071, p > 0.05$). The findings indicate that gender differences exist in emotional intelligence and sexual attitudes, but emotional intelligence is not significantly related to sexual attitudes. The study highlights the importance of appropriate educational guidance, parental support, inclusive education, and awareness programmes in higher education.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Sexual Attitude, Gender, Undergraduate Students, Homosexuality, Lesbianism, Higher Education

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Human beings are social beings. Their survival, development and social organization are based on complex interactions in social settings. Education is a basic instrument of human development, by means of which the potentialities of the individual are converted into constructive contributions to social progress. Education is not only a cognitive acquisition process but also a formation of attitudes, values, emotional stability and behavioral dispositions necessary for interpersonal interactions. Attitudes are a person's favorable or unfavorable disposition toward objects, persons, institutions, or social phenomena; they are a product of an ongoing interaction of biological, psychological, and environmental influences, including parents, peer groups, media, and teachers. Among these are attitudes toward human sexuality, which represent a crucial but often stigmatized aspect of individual identity and social functioning. Sexuality includes physical characteristics, gender identity, sexual orientation, emotional intimacy, eroticism, and social values across the life span.

Higher education settings are daily arenas of interaction for diverse student groups. A healthy academic climate requires mutual respect for different sexual and gender identities. But intolerance, or prejudice, against sexual orientation often leads to ostracism, verbal taunts, harassment and bullying. These negative conditions affect students' psychological health, emotional balance and academic performance.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, assess, control and express emotions in positive ways. It plays a vital role in minimizing interpersonal conflict, promoting empathy and managing stress. In classical models of emotional intelligence, EI includes essential dimensions (self-awareness, self-management/regulation, motivation, empathy and social/relationship management skills). Although it is generally believed that high emotional intelligence increases social tolerance and progressive perception toward various human behaviors, the exact relationship between emotional intelligence and sexual attitudes has rarely been empirically confirmed in the Indian higher education sector.

Sex and gender are different things and are often confused in everyday discourse :

- **Sex:** The biological definition of male, female and intersex organisms based on reproductive capabilities and anatomical traits, including physiological and chromosomal characteristics (i.e. XX, XY, or intersex variations)
- **Gender:** The socially constructed roles, behavioral norms, identity expressions, and cultural attributes that are assigned to people based on their perceived sex in a given society.
- **Sexuality:** The biological, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual expression of a person's identity as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or asexual.
- **Sexual Attitude:** The evaluative beliefs, convictions, and behavioral orientations of a person toward sexuality, including acceptance or rejection of non-normative sexualities (homosexuality and lesbianism). These attitudes are learned from formal and informal sex

education, personal experience, and sociocultural norms. Such attitudes are shaped by formal and informal sex education, personal experience, and socio-cultural norms.

- **Emotional Intelligence:** Denotes the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide thinking, decision-making, and adaptive behaviors.

College students are adolescents and young adults who are experiencing important developmental transitions related to identity development, peer relationships, and career preparation. The present study investigates the levels of emotional intelligence and sexual attitude separately for male and female groups, compares the two domains across the sexes to explore any possible differences, and studies the association between sexual attitude and emotional intelligence separately among male and female undergraduates.

Research Hypotheses

- **H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between the Emotional Intelligence of undergraduate male and female students.
- **H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between the Sexual Attitude of undergraduate male and female students.
- **H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among undergraduate female students.
- **H₀₄:** There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among undergraduate male students.

2. Review of Related Literature

The review of literature brings together foundational psychological theories and real-world findings to explore how sexual attitudes, emotional intelligence (EI), and gender shape the lives of undergraduate students. At its core, early research shows that the way we think and feel directly drives how we act (Ajzen, 1989), making it vital to use culturally relevant tools when studying sensitive subjects like sex knowledge and attitudes in India (Avasthi et al., 1992). As young adults enter college, their perspectives on relationships and intimacy are heavily influenced by peer circles, family communication, and self-esteem, yet many students still face noticeable gaps in basic sexual health awareness (Aggarwal et al., 2000; Jang & Lee, 2011; Dutt & Manjula, 2017; Subbarao & Akhilesh, 2017; Rodríguez-Muñoz et al., 2021). At the same time, emotional intelligence—our ability to understand, manage, and express emotions effectively (Goleman, 1995; Bradberry & Greaves, 2009)—plays a massive role in how students handle stress, make decisions, and build healthy personal connections (Lyons & Schneider, 2005; Nelis et al., 2009; Hafen et al., 2011; van der Linden et al., 2015). When we connect these two areas, it becomes clear that students with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to communicate openly, make responsible choices, avoid risky behaviors, and build more fulfilling personal relationships (Sharma et al., 2015; Morales Rodríguez et al., 2020; Okeke et al., 2022; Özbay & Balaban, 2024; Amin et al., 2025; Ngozi & Omolere, 2026). On top of this, gender acts as a major lens through which all of this happens. Because young men and women are often raised with different social expectations, they tend to develop distinct ways of

managing emotions and viewing relationships, intimacy, and gender rights (Shin & Park, 2014; Kar et al., 2018; Chawla et al., 2020). Looking at all these studies together highlights a clear need to better understand how a student's emotional intelligence and gender work together to shape their sexual attitudes during these transformative college years.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a Quantitative, descriptive survey design. All undergraduate male and female degree students enrolled in colleges across Ghaziabad city, Uttar Pradesh, India. A combination of simple random sampling (for college selection) and cluster sampling (for student administration) employed.

- **Sample Size (N):** N = 100 undergraduate students comprising equal sub-samples:
 - Male Students ($n_1 = 50$) drawn from Mahanand Mission Harijan (M.M.H.) College, Ghaziabad.
 - Female Students ($n_2 = 50$) drawn from Vidyavati Mukand Lal Girls (V.M.L.G.) College, Ghaziabad.

Data on the core variables assessed by means of two standardized psychometric instruments. Emotional intelligence was assessed using the Sushma Talesara Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS). The scale measures five dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Sexual attitude was assessed using the Amit Abraham Sexual Attitude Scale (SAS), measuring attitudes toward non-normative sexualities via two sub-scales: Lesbianism and homosexuality.

3.2 Statistical Techniques

The data was systematically analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including the arithmetic mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (σ), were calculated to measure the central tendency and variance of Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude scores. To examine gender differences, independent samples t-tests were conducted with 98 degrees of freedom ($df = n_1 + n_2 - 2$) and compared against critical values ($t_{0.05} = 1.98$; $t_{0.01} = 2.63$). Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were computed separately for male and female students to assess the strength, direction, and significance of the linear relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitudes.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Comparative Analysis of Emotional Intelligence by Gender (H_{01})

To evaluate H_{01} ("There is no significant difference between the Emotional Intelligence of undergraduate male and female students"), an independent sample t-test was conducted.

Gender	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard Deviation (σ)	Calculated t-value	Critical Value ($p=0.05$)	Critical Value ($p=0.01$)	Result

Male	50	113.68	13.32	3.19	1.98	2.63	Significant
Female	50	104.40	15.63				

*Significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance ($df = 98$).

Table 4.1: Comparison of Emotional Intelligence between Male and Female Students

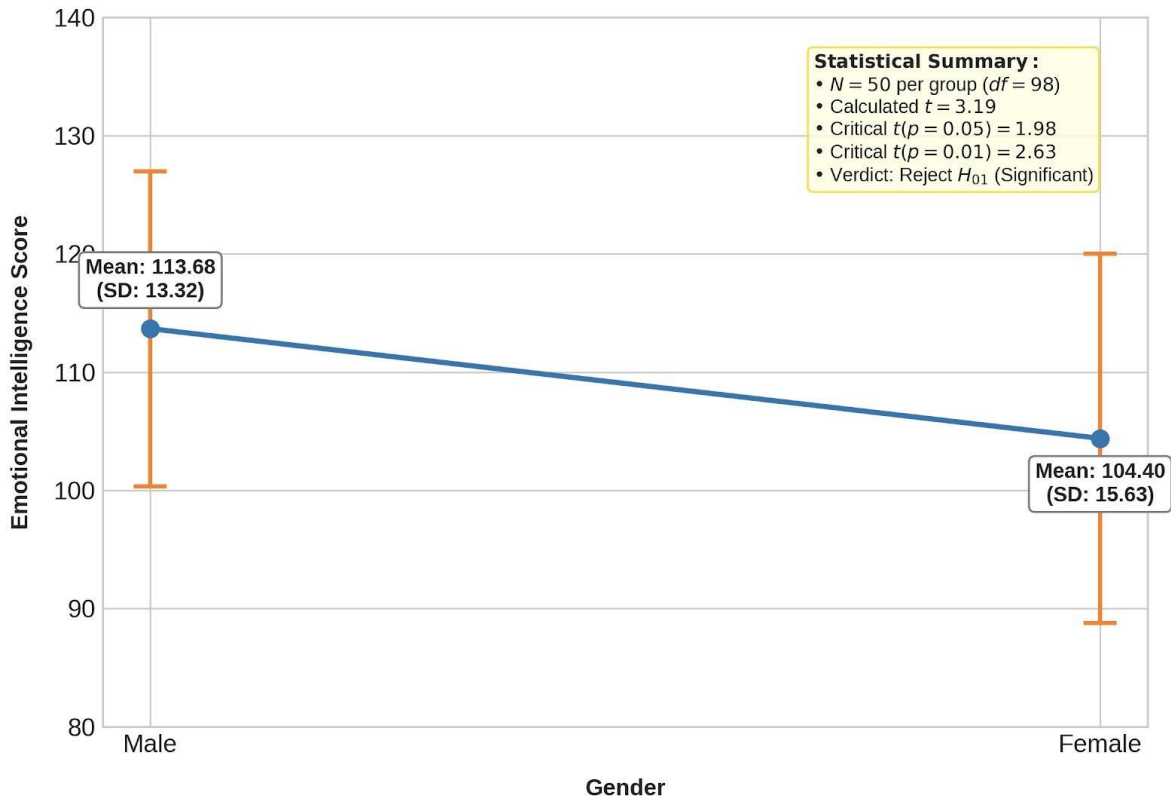


Figure 4.1: Comparative Analysis of Emotional Intelligence Scores by Gender with Standard Deviations

- **Statistical Interpretation:** As displayed in Table 4.1, the mean Emotional Intelligence score for undergraduate male students $\bar{X} = 113.68$, ($\sigma = 13.32$) fell within the "**Average**" range. The mean score for female students $\bar{X} = 104.40$, ($\sigma = 15.63$) also fell within the "**Average**" range. The calculated t -value of 3.19 exceeds both the critical value at the 0.05 level 1.98 and the 0.01 level (2.63) for $df = 98$.
- **Conclusion:** The null hypothesis H_{01} is rejected. There is a statistically significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between male and female undergraduate students, with male students demonstrating higher raw EI scores on this measure.

4.2 Comparative Analysis of Sexual Attitude by Gender (H_{20})

To evaluate H_{02} ("There is no significant difference between the Sexual Attitude of undergraduate male and female students"), an independent sample t -test was conducted.

Gender	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard Deviation (σ)	Calculated t-value	Critical Value ($p=0.05$)	Critical Value ($p=0.01$)	Result
Male	50	59.66	11.15	3.11	1.98	2.63	Significant
Female	50	53.28	9.23				

*Significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance ($df = 98$).

Table 4.2: Comparison of Sexual Attitude between Male and Female Students

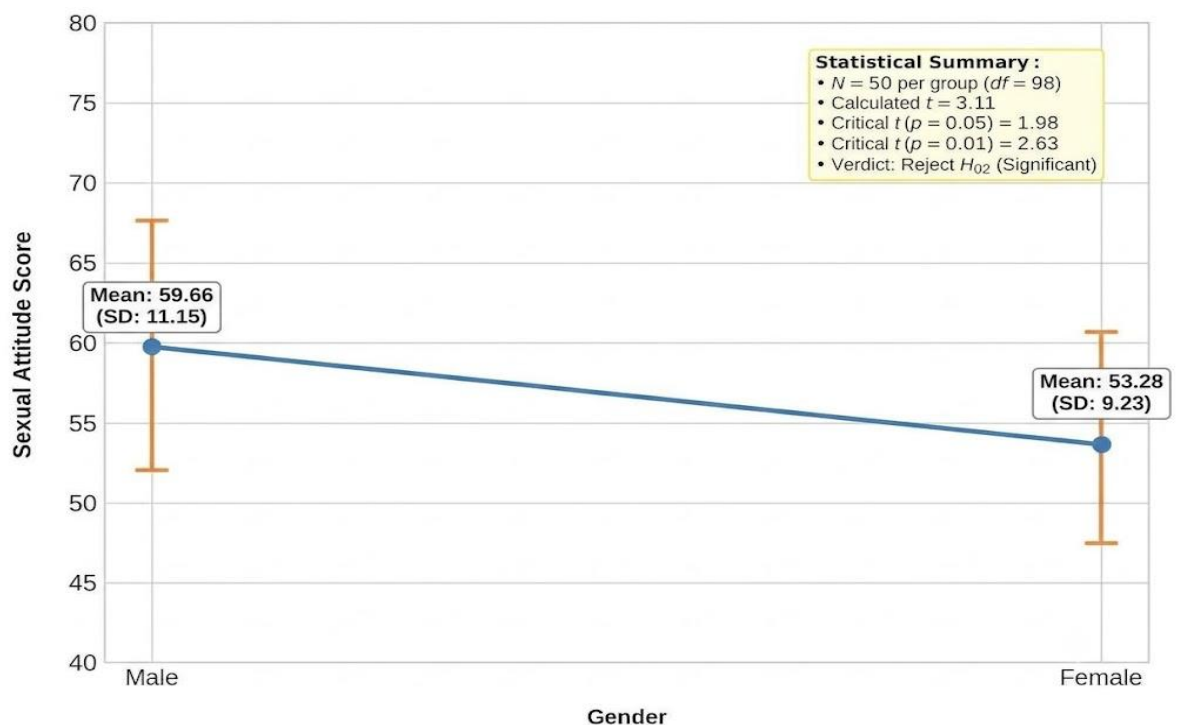


Figure 4.2: Comparative Analysis of Sexual Attitude Scores by Gender with Standard Deviations

Statistical Interpretation: Table 4.2 shows that male undergraduate students achieved a mean Sexual Attitude score of $\bar{X} = 59.66$ ($\sigma = 11.15$). Female students recorded a mean score $\bar{X} = 53.28$ ($\sigma = 9.23$). The calculated t -value of 3.11 exceeds the critical values at both $p = 0.05$ (1.98) and $p = 0.01$ (2.63) for $df = 98$.

Conclusion: The null hypothesis H_{02} is rejected. Undergraduate male and female students differ significantly in their sexual attitudes, with male students exhibiting higher scores on the instrument.

4.3 Relationship between EI and Sexual Attitude among Females (H_{03})

To test H_{03} ("There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude of female undergraduate students"), Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was computed.

Variab le	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Stand ard Deviat ion (σ)	Calcul ated r- value	Critic al Value ($p=0.05$)	Critic al Value ($p=0.01$)	Result
Emoti onal Intelli gence	50	104.40	15.63	0.124	0.279	0.361	Not Signifi cant
Sexual Attitu de	50	53.28	9.23				

$$df = 48 (N - 2)$$

Table 4.3: Correlation between EI and Sexual Attitude in Female Students

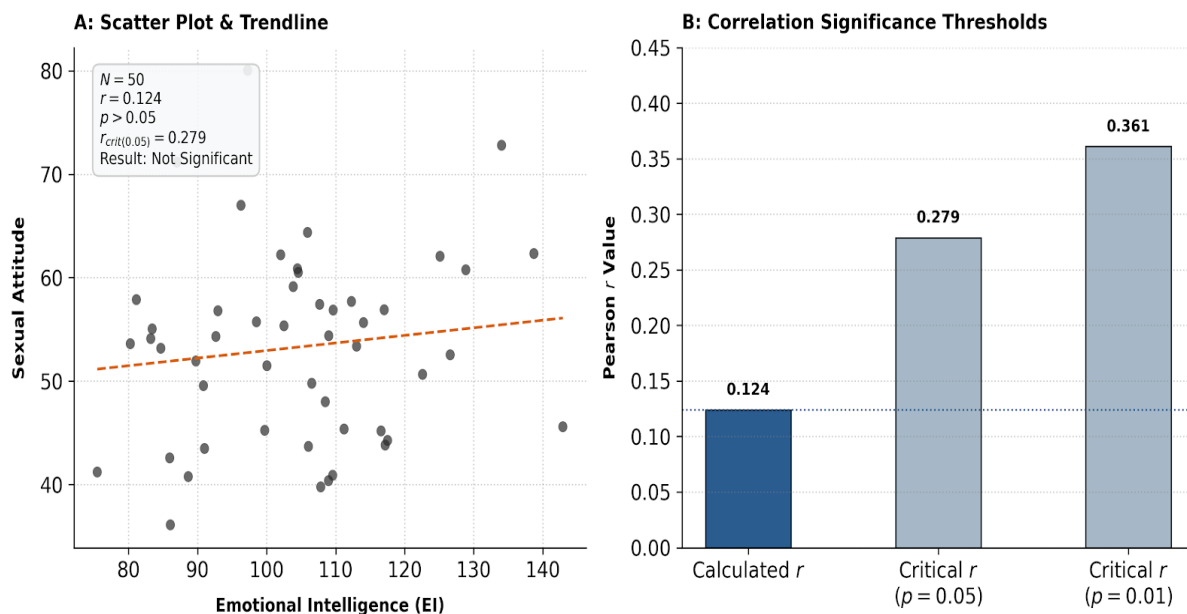


Table 4.3: Pearson Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among Females Undergraduate student

Statistical Interpretation: The calculated correlation coefficient between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among female students is $r = 0.124$. This value is lower than the critical value required for statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($r = 0.279$, $df = 48$).

Conclusion: The null hypothesis H_{03} is accepted. There is no statistically significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among female undergraduate students.

4.4 Relationship between EI and Sexual Attitude among Males (H_{04})

To test H_{04} ("There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude of male undergraduate students"), Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was calculated.

Variable	N	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard Deviation (σ)	Calculated r-value	Critical Value ($p=0.05$)	Critical Value ($p=0.01$)	Result
Emotional Intelligence	50	113.68	13.32	0.0071	0.279	0.361	Not Significant
Sexual Attitude	50	59.66	11.15				

$df = 48 (N - 2)$

Table 4.4: Correlation between EI and Sexual Attitude in Male Students

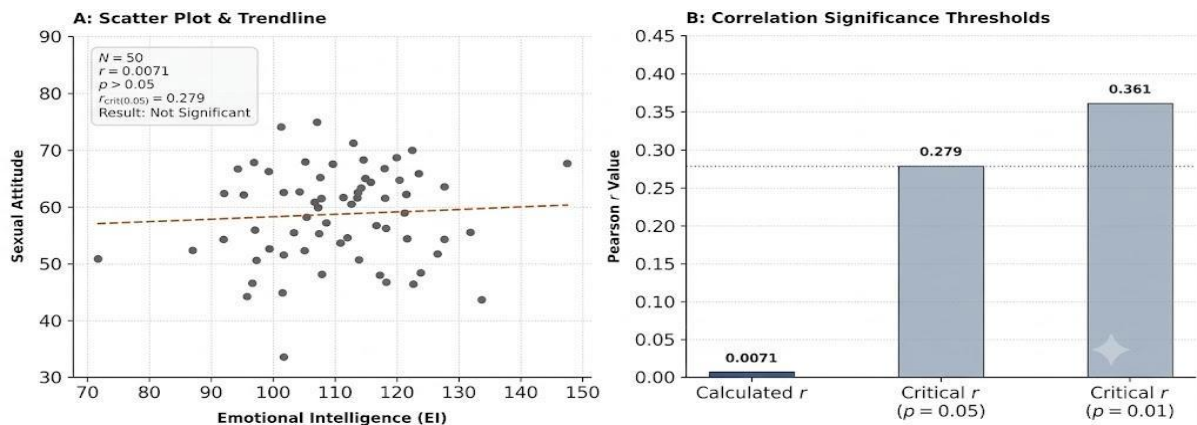


Table 4.4: Pearson Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among Males Undergraduate student

Statistical Interpretation: The calculated correlation coefficient between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among male undergraduate students is $r = 0.0071$. This value indicates an absence of linear association and falls far below the critical value (0.279) at $p = 0.05$ as well as (0.361) at the $p = 0.01$ level of significance for $df = 48$.

Conclusion: The null hypothesis H_{04} is accepted. There is no statistically significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sexual Attitude among male undergraduate students.

5. Findings, Discussion, and Conclusions

5.1 Summary of Findings

- Gender Difference in Emotional Intelligence:** A statistically significant difference exists between male and female undergraduate students regarding emotional intelligence ($t = 3.19$, $p < 0.01$). The mean raw scores on the Talesara EIS were higher for male students ($\bar{X} = 113.68$) than for female students ($\bar{X} = 104.40$).
- Gender Difference in Sexual Attitude:** A statistically significant difference exists between male and female undergraduates regarding sexual attitudes ($t = 3.11$, $p < 0.01$). Male students demonstrated higher mean raw scores ($\bar{X} = 59.66$) than female students ($\bar{X} = 53.28$).

3. **Independence of EI and Sexual Attitude (Females):** No statistically significant correlation was found between emotional intelligence and sexual attitude among female undergraduate students ($r = 0.124, p > 0.05$).
4. **Independence of EI and Sexual Attitude (Males):** No statistically significant correlation was found between emotional intelligence and sexual attitude among male undergraduates ($r = 0.0071, p > 0.05$).

5.2 Discussion of Results

The rejection of Hypotheses 1 and 2 confirms that gender still plays an important moderating role in higher education settings. Emotional processing strategies, self-expression and social attitudes toward non-normative sexualities are influenced by different socialization patterns, gender conditioning and socio-cultural expectations. The higher mean scores on the SAS for males suggest that they are relatively more open or exposed to discussions of non-traditional sexual orientations compared to females whose sexual attitudes are often constrained by tighter cultural surveillance and traditional gender expectations.

The acceptance of Hypotheses 3 and 4 provides a critical theoretical insight: emotional intelligence and sexual attitudes operate as independent psychological domains. High emotional competence (the ability to manage stress, show empathy and manage social interactions) does not necessarily determine an individual's ideological, moral or social stance on sexuality. External social factors such as media exposure, peer influence, religious beliefs, cultural values, and formal education, have a more significant role to play in shaping attitudes toward non-normative sexualities than internal emotional quotients.

6. Implications and recommendations for education

According to the findings of this Research, educational institutions must promote educational self-acceptance and mental health in university students to enable them to withstand harassment based on identity and to develop emotional self-awareness. This will contribute to reducing reactive aggression in diverse environments. Parents play a crucial role in this ecosystem by replacing shame-based messaging with open, non-judgmental dialogue around body image, relationships, and sexuality, thereby empowering young adults to make informed and responsible life decisions. To support this holistic growth, college administrations need to integrate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) into campus life, institute robust anti-harassment policies, and offer accessible counseling services that protect vulnerable student populations. Inclusive public policy and community-driven initiatives that dismantle structural barriers to mental and sexual health care cultivate a nurturing environment that propels social progress and affirms the collective priority of youth development.

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