

## *Knowledge, Attitude, Perception among Undergraduate Students on Integrating Emotional Competence Training in Dental Curriculum*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The dental profession demands not only technical expertise but also strong interpersonal and emotional skills. Emotional competence (EC) is crucial for managing patient relationships, reducing professional burnout, and fostering effective communication. Despite its significance, emotional competence training is often overlooked in traditional dental curricula.

This article explores the need for integrating EC training into dental education, focusing on its benefits, challenges, and strategies for implementation. By preparing students to navigate the psychological and emotional complexities of clinical practice, EC training can enhance patient care and overall professional development.

**Aim:** To evaluate the knowledge, attitude, and perception of dental students towards the emotional competence training.

#### **Objectives**

1. To assess the level of knowledge of dental students regarding emotional competence training.
2. To explore the perceptions of dental students regarding the emotional competence training.

**Method:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 300 dental students, comprising 97 males (32.5%) and 202 females (67.5%), including 71 first-year BDS students, 62 second-year BDS students, 51 third-year BDS students, 56 fourth-year BDS students and 60 interns. The survey included 13 questions exploring awareness, perception on emotional competence training. Responses were analyzed based on gender and year of study using chi-square tests to identify statistically significant difference.

**Keywords:** Botox, Botulinum Toxin, Dentistry, Cosmetic Procedures, Esthetics, Dental Students, Knowledge.

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#### **Introduction**

The dental profession demands not only technical expertise but also strong interpersonal and emotional skills. Emotional competence (EC) is crucial for managing patient relationships, reducing professional burnout, and fostering effective communication. Despite its significance, emotional competence training is often overlooked in traditional dental curriculum.

This article explores the need for integrating EC training into dental education, focusing on its benefits, challenges, and strategies for implementation. By preparing students to navigate the psychological and emotional complexities of clinical practice, EC training can enhance patient care and overall professional development.

Understanding dental students' knowledge, attitude, and perceptions regarding emotional competence training is crucial for effective curriculum development. Knowledge refers to students' familiarity with emotional competence training and their applications in clinicals. Attitude encompasses students' feelings and beliefs about the relevance and utility of emotional competence training in their education and future careers.

In today's fast-paced world, emotional intelligence (EQ) is often just as important as intellectual intelligence (IQ). While traditional education focuses on cognitive abilities, emotional competence training emphasizes the development of emotional skills that influence both personal and professional life. Emotional competence (EC) is a critical skill for dental professionals to navigate patient interactions, manage stress, and foster effective communication. This study underscores the importance of integrating EC training into dental curricula to enhance patient-centered care and student well-being.

Emotional competence is essential in dentistry, where practitioners must balance technical expertise with interpersonal interactions. Dental students often face high stress levels and emotional challenges, which can impact their academic performance and patient care abilities. Research has highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in healthcare, linking it to better communication, reduced burnout, and improved patient satisfaction. Despite its importance, emotional competence training is rarely integrated into dental education. This study aims to evaluate the impact of an emotional competence training program on dental students' EI and related skills.

Contemporary views of higher education mostly agree that acquisition of scholarly theoretical or practical/technical knowledge are no longer sufficient in order to function well as a health professional.

Being successful and effective in any given profession requires a wider skill set or competencies that encompass values and attitudes towards both oneself and others; in the field of dentistry this notion would appear to align with the patient-centred approach. EI has been identified as one such potential set of skills, sometimes defined as the ability to perceive and manage emotions, as well as the ability to understand emotions and use emotions to promote or enhance thinking.

### **Understanding Emotional Competence**

Emotional competence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence emotions in oneself and others. Unlike emotional intelligence, which is often described as a general aptitude or ability to handle emotions, emotional competence is more action-oriented. It focuses on practical skills, such as regulating emotions, expressing empathy, and resolving conflicts constructively.

### **The Importance of Emotional Competence in Dentistry**

Emotional competence includes the following key components

1. **Enhancing Patient Care**  
Emotional competence enables practitioners to empathize with patients, understand their concerns, and provide personalized care. Empathetic communication can reduce patient anxiety, improve adherence to treatment plans, and enhance clinical outcomes.
2. **Reducing Stress and Burnout**  
Dentistry is a high-stress profession with a significant risk of burnout. EC training helps students develop coping mechanisms, manage stress, and maintain emotional resilience, promoting long-term well-being.
3. **Strengthening Interpersonal Relationships**  
Effective teamwork is critical in modern dentistry. Emotional competence fosters collaboration and

conflict resolution, creating a positive work environment.

4. Promoting Ethical and Professional Behavior  
Emotional regulation and empathy are essential for maintaining professionalism and navigating.

## Methodology

- A) Study design and area:** A cross sectional study was carried out at tertiary care teaching hospital khammam.
- B) Study population:** The health care students including those of IV years and Interns who responded to the offline paper print questionnaire survey.
- C) Study Instrument:** A self-administered questionnaire was designed based on knowledge attitude and awareness on the advanced technology had total 13 questions. Each participant has to fill their demographic data like Name, age, and year of study. Participant has to select one option from the answers provided against questions the questions were based on knowledge attitude and awareness among dental students.
- D) Pilot study:** A pilot study was conducted on a group of students to assess the validity and reliability of study.
- E) Sampling method:** The sampling method used is a convenience method.

**F) Inclusion criteria:** The students who were interested in study and who are willing to participate.

**G) Exclusion criteria:** students who are not willing to participate are excluded.

**H) Organizing the study:** The study was designed in a paper-based version of the self-administered questionnaire of 14 questions focusing on knowledge, awareness.

## Includes the sections of demographic data:

Name, Age, Sex and Year of study demographic information and asked to answer all questions by selecting one option from the provided answers.

**Statistical analysis:** Data from the filled questionnaire was conducted in a tabular form in an Excel worksheet and evaluated for analysis. the analysis was performed by SSPS version 29.

## Result

A total of 300 students took part in this with female (67.5%) and male of (32.5%). Age of the participants ranging from 18-27 years. In this study females were more likely to demonstrate awareness of emotional competence training than males. Significantly Interns showed greater familiarity with emotional competence training than fourth year students.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	300	19	23	20.87	1.1507

	Gender	Frequency	Percent
Valid	MALE	97	32.5
	FEMALE	203	67.5
	Total	300	100.0

Year of the Study		Frequency	Percent
Valid	IBDS	71	23.6
	IIBDS	62	20.6
	III BDS	51	17
	IV BDS	56	18.6
	INTERN	60	20
	Total		100.0

Year of the Study		Frequency	Percent
Valid	IBDS	71	23.6
	IIBDS	62	20.6
	III BDS	51	17
	IV BDS	56	18.6
	INTERN	60	20
	Total		100.0

#### Distribution and comparison of responses based on gender

Item	Response	Males		Females		Chi-Square value	P-value
		n	%	N	%		
Q1	2	131	60.8	95	70.3	7.326	0.05*
	3	29	39.1	40	29.6		
Q2					25	5.999	0.112
	2	24	48.9	25	51.0		
	3	10	43.4	13	56.5		
	4	88	40.9	127	59.0		
Q3	1	19	52.7	17	47.2	5.210	0.1537
	2	21	56.7	16	43.2		
	3	12	44.4	15	55.5		
	4	79	39.5	121	60.5		
Q4	1	3	33.3	6	66.6	1.455	0.8249
	2	93	43.2	121	56.74		
	3	35	46.6	40	53.3		
	4	0	0	1	100		
Q5	1	67	44.1	85	55.9	0.429	0.9366

	2	25	40.9	36	59.0		
	3	36	45.5	43	54.4		
	4	3	37.5	5	62.5		
Q6	1	80	43.7	103	56.2	5.0847	0.171
	2	33	44.5	41	55.4		
	3	12	60	8	40		
	4	6	26	17	73.9		
Q7	1	41	41	59	59	0.6195	0.8937
	2	21	46.6	24	53.3		
	3	11	47.8	12	52.1		
	4	58	43.9	74	56		
Q8	1	36	45.0	44	55	4.174	0.373
					59.2		
	3	12	63.1	7	36.8		
	4	52	41.9	72	58		
Q9	1	130	43.4	1	100	0.0164	0.436
	2	169	56.5	0	0		
Q10	1	131	43.8	168	56.1	0.775	0.563
	2	0	0	1	100		
Q11	1	131	43.8	168	56.1	0.775	0.563
	2	0	0	1	100		
Q12	1	129	43.		Q12	1	129
	2	2	50	2	50		
Q13	1	129	43.5	167	56.4	0.065	0.587
	2	2	50	2	50		

**P<0.05 is statistically significant**

#### **Distribution and comparison of responses based on year of the study**

Item	Response	I BDS		II BDS		III BDS		IV BDS		INTERN		Chi-Value	P-Value
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Q1	2	0	0	0	0	4	28.5	0	0	10	71.4	27.933	0.0003

	3	14	4.9	29	10.1	14.1	49.3	5.6	19.5	26	16		
Q2	1	0	0	0	0	11	91.6	1	8.3	0	0	90.84	0.000
	2	2	4.4	0	0	22	44.9	24	48.9.6	1	2		
	3	1	4.3	11	47.8	6	26	1	4.3	4	17.3		
	4	11	5.1	18	8.3	105	48.8	30	13.9	51	23.7		
Q3	1	0	0	0	0	22	61.1	14	38.8	0	0	70.95	0.000
	2	0	0	0	0	22	59.4	13	35.1	2	5.4		
	3	0	0	0	0	17	62.9	9	33.3	1	3.7		
	4	14	7	29	14.5	84	42	20	10	53	26.5		
Q4	1	0	0	0	0	9	100	0	0	0	0	63.54	0.000
	2	10	4.6	21	9.7	76	35.3	52	24.1	56	26		
	3	4	5.3	8	10.6	59	78.6	4	5.3	0	0		
	4	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0		
Q5	1											33.9	0.0007
	2	1	1.6	6	9.8	22	36	16	26.2	16	26.2		
	3	2	2.5	0	0	40	50.6	19	24	18	22.7		
	4	1	12.5	0	0	7	87.5	0	0	0	0		
Q6	1	7	3.8	15	8.2	77	42	41	22.4	43	23.5	58.4	0.000
	2	3	4	3	4	41	55.4	14	18.9	13	17.5		
	3	2	10	1	5	17	85	0	0	0	0		
	4	2	8.7	10	43.4	10	43.4	1	4.3	0	0		
Q7	1	4	4	8	8	53	53	20	20	15	15	13.011	0.368
	2	2	4.4	5	11.1	26	57.7	6	13.3	6	13.3		
	3	1	4.4	0	0	9	39.1	8	34.7	5	21.7		
	4	7	5.3	16	12.1	57	43.1	22	16.6	30	22.7		

Q8	1	2	2.5	7	8.7	38	47.5	80	22.5	15	18.7	34.45	0.0004
	2	5	6.5	10	13.1	31	40.7	8	10.5	22	28.9		
	3	3	15.7	0	0	50	78.9	0	0	1	5.2		
	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Q9	1	14	4.6	29	9.7	145	48.4	56	18.7	55	18.3	4.371	0.516
	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Q10	1	14	4.6	29	9.7	14	48.	5	18.7	5	18.	1.07	0.89
0						4	1	6		6	7	2	8
	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Q11	1	14	4.6	29	9.7	144	48.1	56	18.7	56	18.7	4.371	0.358
	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Q12	1	14	4.6	29	9.7	144	48.1	56	18.7	56	18.7	8.686	0.165
	2	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	3	75		
Q13	1	14	4.6	29	9.7	144	48.1	56	18.7	56	18.7	8.686	0.165
	2	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	3	75		

**P<0.05 is statistically significant**

### Discussion

The integration of emotional competence training into dental education presents both opportunities and challenges. The findings from the research indicate that while many dental students recognize the importance of emotional competence training, there is a varying degree of familiarity. Some students express enthusiasm about the integration of emotional competence training in the dental curriculum to enhance patient care and to reduce emotional burnout, while others may feel apprehensive about

adopting the new method due to lack of training or exposure.

One key aspect that emerged from the study is the need for comprehensive training programs that involve emotional competence training experience. This training exposure is crucial for improving dental students' emotional intelligence, particularly in empathy and stress management.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of emotional competence training into the dental curriculum is essential for preparing students for stress management and communication skills,

highlighting its value in dental education. Incorporating such training into curricula can foster more empathetic and resilient professionals, ultimately improving patient care.

Moving forward, it is imperative for dental students to prioritize the incorporation of emotional competence training into dental curriculum. This will ensure that graduates are not only able to manage stress and emotional burnouts but also adaptable to future practice with patient centred approach in practice. Ultimately, a well-rounded education that embraces emotional competence will lead to improved patient care and outcomes, benefiting both dental professionals and the communities they serve.

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