

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG NURSING STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: Emotional intelligence has a great effect on the quality of learning and application of the learned knowledge in practice. The aim of the current study is to compare the nursing students, emotional intelligence skills between Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) and Tanta (Egypt), A comparative study design was used for the current study ,Data was collected from two settings Namely King Saud University (Riyadh) and Tanta University (Egypt) ,The subject of this study was composed of 400 students who chosen by a convenience sample from previous mentioned settings to ensure representativeness ,One tool was used to collect data for the current study, It consisted of two parts : part one A Socio-demographic and Academic Data Questionnaire: Part two ,Emotional intelligence scale to assess the students' emotional inelegance which is a 33-item scale. The results of this study revealed that there was a high statistical significant difference between Tanta and Riyadh students regarding their emotional intelligent mean score in several items. In addition to statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and scores mother's education and family incomes ($p = 0.004$ and $p = 0.034$ respectively) for Tanta students. The study concluded: the Riyadh student got high total emotional intelligence scores compared to Tanta students. Recommendation: Based on the results of this study we recommend that emotional intelligence concept should be incorporated into the nursing curriculum in order to promote growth of the student' emotional intelligence abilities needed to work with patients in different clinical settings.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Riyadh, Tanta, Nursing Students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a profession strongly associated with individuals' health, and defined by some sorts of clinical nursing care including interpersonal and inter-group communications as well as other various activities, as a result of growing complexity of the healthcare environment , and increasing expectations of clients in today's competitive healthcare marketplace^{1,2} nursing graduates must not only be competent in technical and critical thinking skills, but also be equipped to manage "soft" people skills "Soft" people skills have been identified as emotional intelligence (EI) skills⁽³⁾.

Emotional intelligence skills include the ability to demonstrate empathy and self-awareness, along with motivating others, and demonstrating excellent interpersonal skills^{4,5&6} . Emotional intelligence is tactical and helps to predict success because it reflects how a person applies knowledge to the immediate situation revealed that the emotional intelligence and self-esteem are positively correlated⁽⁷⁾.

Traditional admissions markers may predict successful academic performance but may not capture many intangible characteristics, behavioral variations, and traits that may be more critical to successful nursing practice and life in general.⁽⁸⁾ These intangible characteristics, such as empathy, social maturity, and self-awareness may be essential components required for connecting with and caring for patients. Many organizations have examined and to some extent

used emotional intelligence as a measure of these intangible characteristics, which some speculate are better predictors of educational and occupational performance.^(9&10)

Nurses' performance improved by preparing nursing students to not only critically think but also to integrate emotional intelligence into clinical practice. Some scholars have proposed that the educational preparation of nurses improved by incorporating emotional intelligence lessons into the nursing curricula. In addition to a continuing education course on EI. "Those good clinical skills often progress well through the early stages of their careers."^(9&10)

Some researches suggests that the nurses with higher EI display strong self-awareness and high levels of interpersonal skills; they are empathetic and adaptable; and they're more likely to connect easily with patients and meet their psychological needs. Thus, staff with these abilities can contribute to a higher-job performance⁽¹¹⁾

Emotional intelligence can assist nurses in managing their own and their patients' emotions, showing genuine emotional responses, being empathetic and communicate emotions without introducing conflict and managing instinctive emotions, such as disgust, annoyance and frustration, in nurse-patient interactions. Viewing the situation from patients' perspectives and empathizing with their emotions, nurses can manage many clinical situations⁽¹²⁾. When patients are cared for by a nurse who demonstrates EI skills, they feel that the nurse is actually concerned about their welfare and health, which is the essence of nursing and caring^(13&14).

Nursing students are required to manage numerous clinical situations, adapt to the different teaching styles and expectations of instructors, work independently toward objectives, and manage conflicts. In addition, some aspects of academic work may be considered highly stressful, such as taking exams and practicing nursing procedures in health care settings. These situations require high levels of emotional management^(15,16&17)

Nursing students are expected to appreciate the patients' emotions, and use cognitive information to assess patients' needs, and then demonstrate emotional interventions that convey caring, and empathy toward patients and their families⁽¹⁸⁾, so the current study aimed to compare the emotional intelligence skills between Riyadh and Tanta nursing students.

The current study follow theoretical framework which based on the work of **Mayer and Salovey** regarding the four branch ability based model of emotional intelligence which are related but distinct abilities: (a) perceiving emotions, (b) using emotions, (c) understanding emotions, and (d) managing emotions. The four branch ability based model of emotional intelligence is in accordance with the scientific writings in the area of intelligence⁽¹⁹⁾ The model defines emotional intelligence theory, which posit that individuals who have sufficient interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies can properly handle their emotions (self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation) and regulate other employee emotions (empathy and social skills) to cope with environmental challenges, decrease environmental strains and increase leadership effectiveness in organizations. Model of emotional-social intelligence posits that the level of emotional intelligence will increase individuals' competencies and this may help them to decrease external demands and pressures, as well as increase human well-being & positive individual attitudes and behaviors⁽²⁰⁾.

The Aim of the Study:

The aim of the current study is to compare the nursing students, emotional intelligence skills between Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) and Tanta (Egypt)

Research Question

Are there a difference of the emotional intelligence between Riyadh and Tanta nursing students

2. SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Research Design:

A comparative study design was used for the current study

Setting:

Data was collected from two settings Namely King Saud University (Riyadh) and Tanta University (Egypt)

Subjects:

The subject of this study was composed of 400 students who chosen by a convenience sample from previous mentioned settings to ensure representativeness.

Exnclusion Criteria:

The researcher exclude grad one from Tanta subjects Because in Riyadh the College begins at level (3) which equal (grad 2 in Tanta)

Tool of the Study:

One tool was used to collect data for the current study. It Consisted Of Two Parts-

a- part one

A Socio-demographic and Academic Data Questionnaire: This tool was developed by the Researchers to elicit information about the socio-demographic and academic characteristics of the studied subjects such as student's age, gender, family income, parent's education and birth order.

b- Part two

Emotional intelligence scale to assess the students' emotional inelegance which is a 33-item scale. Some of the items on the scale include 'I know when to speak about my personal problems to others . According to Ciarrochi, Forgas, and Mayer (2006), 'The internal and test–retest reliabilities of the SSRI total score are high, $\alpha = .93$ and $.73$, respectively ⁽²¹⁾. The responses on the scale were rated on 5-point scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The total scores on the scale range from 33 to 165, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of emotional intelligence.

Methods

1. An official permission was obtained from the dean of the Faculty of Nursing in the previous two settings to get the permission for data collection after explaining the purpose of the study.
2. An informed written consent was obtained from the students before data collection and confidentiality will be considered.
3. The tool content validity was tested by 5 juries who are experts in the related field.
4. Internal consistency was measured. Demonstrated excellent internal consistency, i.e., Cronbach's alpha coefficients of $.81$ ranging from a low peer and low parental attachment group to a high peer and high parental attachment group.
5. Pilot study: Before embarking on the actual study, a pilot study was carried out on 10% of the sample (20 students) to assess the clarity and applicability of tool. According to the results of the pilot study, necessary modifications were carried out which were in paraphrasing of some sentences in part two (level was changed to academic year [In Egypt no levels at the college but academic year]) and these students who complete pilot study were excluded from the study subjects.
6. The researchers interviewed students in break time between lectures and the purpose of the study was shown to them and their written consent was taken to participate in the study.
7. The sheet was distributed to the students with simple clarification from the researchers. The sheet took about 20 – 25 minutes to be filled by each student.
8. Academic performance was calculated using GPA in King Saud University and final evaluation in Tanta University. Because the credit hour system was not followed in Faculty of Nursing, Tanta University, GPAs at King Saud University students was transformed to final grade.

Ethical Considerations:

Informed oral consent was obtained from the nursing students after explanation of the purpose and importance of the study, and reassuring them that these responses would not affect their grades. Confidentiality of any obtained information was ensured. - Anonymity of the study subjects was assured.

3. DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS PLAN

Data were collected over a period of one month starting from -1/11/2015 to 1/12/2015 one of the researcher collect data from the Riyadh and other researcher from Tanta at the same period

Data Analysis:

The collected data were organized, tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS software statistical computer package version 22. Data was presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. Interval and ratio variables were presented in the form of means and standard deviations. The total score for the emotional inelegance scales in section 2 was calculated. For interval and ratio data Independent *T.test* was used to compare between Riyadh and Tanta Students. Persons correlation was used to correlate between total emotional intelegnce score and Interval and ratio variables. The significance level was chosen as ($p < 0.05$).

4. RESULTS

A total of 400 nursing students were included in the study. A self-administered questioner was used to collect the data for the study. The study aimed to compare between Riyadh and Tanta nursing students' emotional inelegance

Table 1: Comparison between nursing Students from Tanta and Students from Riyadh Regarding their Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Tanta		Riyadh	
	Number 200	Percent %	Number 200	Percent %
Age				
17>20	40	20.0	16	8.0
20 >23	149	74.5	174	87.0
23>26	11	5.5	10	5.0
Grade level				
2 nd grad	78	39.0	56	28.0
3 rd grad	50	25.0	102	51.0
4 th grad	72	36.0	42	21.0
Birth order				
First	59	29.5	33	16.5
Second	33	16.5	43	21.5
Third	37	18.5	45	22.5
Fourth	36	18.0	31	15.5
Fifth and up	35	17.5	48	24.0
Father and Mother live together				
Living with both parents	184	92.0	187	93.5
Living with one parent	16	8.0	13	6.5
Types of family				
Small	37	18.5	52	26.0
Big	139	69.5	134	67.0
Very big	24	12.0	14	7.0

Table 1 shows comparison between students from Tanta and students from Riyadh regarding their demographic characteristics, About two thirds (74.5%) from **Tanta** students had their ages ranged from 16 to 18 years old and (87%) of the students from Riyadh had their ages ranged from 16 to 18 years and up. More than half 51% of Riyadh nursing students from 3rd grade while one quarter from **Tanta** nursing student from 3rd grade.

Table 2: Comparison between nursing Students from Tanta and Students from Riyadh Regarding their Parents Education and Occupation

Variables	Tanta		Riyadh		P
	Number 200	Percent %	Number 200	Percent %	
Mother's Education					0.000
Read and write	123	61.5%	61	30.5%	
Middle school	31	15.5%	26	13.0%	
High school	21	10.5%	47	23.5%	
University or higher	25	12.5%	66	33.0%	
Does your mother work					0.075
Yes	39	19.5%	52	26.0%	
No	161	80.5%	148	74.0%	
Father's Education					0.000
Read and write	77	38.5%	36	18.0%	
Middle school	41	20.5%	24	12.0%	
High school	40	20.0%	42	21.0%	
University or higher	42	21.0%	98	49.0%	
Does your mother work					0.232
Yes	126	63.0%	134	67.0%	
No	74	37.0%	66	33.0%	

Table 2 shows comparison between students from Tanta and students from Riyadh regarding their parent's education and occupation. There was statistical significant difference between Tanta and Riyadh students mother' education (p= 0.000). About one third (30.5%) of the mothers of Riydh students were able to read and write compared to about (61%) of the mother of Tanta students. The percentages of mothers who completed their graduate education were higher in Riyadh than Tanta (33% and 12.5% respectively). There was no statistical significant difference between Tanta and Riyadh student's mother regarding their working condition. The majority of the mothers in both places were not working (80% and 74% respectively)

Reading student's father education, There was statistical significant difference between Tanta and Riyadh students father' education (p= 0.008). More than one third (38.5%) of the fathers of Tanta students can read and write compared to 18% of the fathers in Riyadh. The percentages of fathers who completed their graduate education from Riyadh was more than double of those from Tanta (49% and 21% respectively). About two thirds of the fathers in both places were working (63% and 67% respectively)

Table 3: Comparison between Students from Tanta and Students from Riyadh Regarding their Academic Achievement and Health Problems

Variables	Tanta		Riyadh		P
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
grade point average					0.000
Very low	4	2.0%	0	0.0%	
Average	55	27.5%	11	5.5%	
Good	79	39.5%	59	29.5%	
Excellent	62	31.0%	130	65.0%	
Did you repeat any school year					0.000
Yes	31	15.5%	8	0.5%	
No	169	84.5%	192	99.5%	
Do you have any health problem					0.004
Yes	53	26.5%	16	8.0%	
No	147	73.5%	184	92.0%	

If yes Specify					0.01
Heart problems	5	2.5%	2	1%	
Kidney problems	3	1.5%	1	0.5%	
Cardiovascular problems	4	2%	1	0.5%	
Others	41	20.5%	21	10.5%	

Table 3 shows comparison between students from Tanta and students from Riyadh regarding their academic achievement and health problems. There was statistical significant difference between Tanta and Riyadh students regarding their repeating school years, and number of repeated school years ($p = 0.000$, $p = 0.000$, and $p = 0.004$ respectively). More than double students from Riyadh got excellent grade compared to those of Tanta (65% and 31% respectively). Only 0.5% of Riyadh students repeated school year compared to 15.5% of Tanta students.

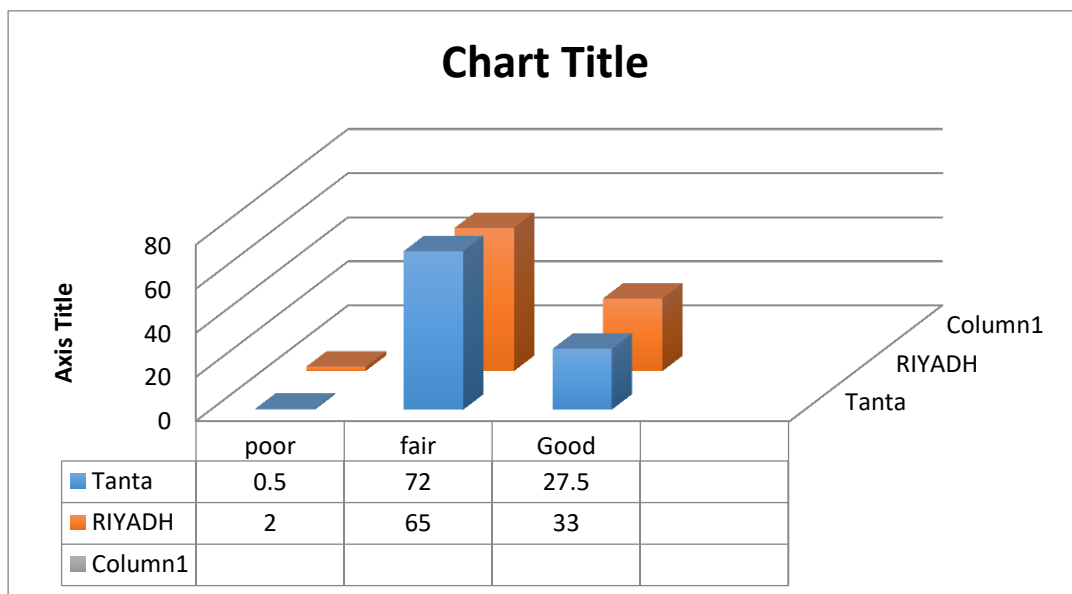
There was statistical significant difference between Tanta and Riyadh students regarding health problems ($p=0.004$). More students (26%) from Tanta reported health problems compared to Riyadh students (8%)

Table 4: Comparison between nursing Students from Tanta and Students from Riyadh Regarding their Emotional Intelligence Scores

Item	Tanta		Riyadh		P
	Men	Sd	Mean	Sd	
1) I know when to speak about my personal problems to others	3.42	1.086	3.52	1.173	0.354
2) When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them	3.79	1.035	3.75	1.124	0.711
3) I expect that I will do well on most things I try	4.18	0.750	3.67	1.070	0.000
4) Other people find it easy to confide in me	3.91	0.970	3.47	1.147	0.000
5) I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people*	2.52	1.070	2.79	1.234	0.022
6) Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important	3.55	1.222	3.86	1.173	0.010
7) When my mood changes, I see new possibilities	3.75	0.926	3.68	1.127	0.498
8) Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living	4.04	1.187	3.84	1.188	0.085
9) I am aware of my emotions as I experience them	3.77	0.910	3.62	1.192	0.158
10) I expect good things to happen	3.76	0.914	3.51	1.211	0.023
11) I like to share my emotions with others	3.26	1.229	2.93	1.320	0.009
12) When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last	3.08	1.119	3.15	1.199	0.547
13) I arrange events others enjoy	3.17	1.244	3.49	1.186	0.009
14) I seek out activities that make me happy	3.27	1.536	3.93	1.140	0.000
15) I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others	3.48	1.007	3.60	1.252	0.292
16) I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others	3.97	.904	3.60	1.240	0.001
17) When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for m	4.21	0.907	3.90	1.219	0.004
18) By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing	3.80	0.940	3.58	1.161	0.043
19) I know why my emotions change	3.77	1.113	3.29	1.218	0.000
20) When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	4.09	0.988	3.84	1.084	0.019
21) I have control over my emotions	2.88	1.217	3.28	1.212	0.001

22)	I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them	3.67	0.992	3.41	1.139	0.015
23)	I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on	3.74	1.143	3.93	1.192	0.114
24)	I compliment others when they have done something well	3.80	1.205	3.49	1.219	0.263
25)	I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send	3.56	1.077	3.43	1.234	0.011
26)	When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced	3.96	1.019	3.30	1.300	0.000
27)	this event myself					
28)	When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas	3.49	1.027	3.34	1.213	0.169
29)	When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail*	2.48	1.235	2.48	1.267	0.968
30)	I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them	3.61	1.026	3.40	1.130	0.058
31)	I help other people feel better when they are down	3.70	1.089	3.77	1.225	0.518
32)	I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	3.90	0.905	3.75	1.217	0.163
33)	I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	3.89	0.906	3.49	1.268	0.000
34)	It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do*	2.71	0.975	2.68	1.263	0.790

Table 4 Shows comparison between students from **Tanta** and students from Riyadh regarding their emotional intelligence scores. There was a high statistical significant difference between **Tanta** and Riyadh students regarding their emotional intelligent mean score in several items. The items includes I expect that I will do well on most things I try, Other people find it easy to confide in me, I seek out activities that make me happy, When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself, and I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice (p = 0.000 for all of the previous items)



P = 0.172

Figure 1: Comparison between Students from Tanta and Students from Riyadh Regarding their Total Emotional Intelligence Scores

Figure one shows comparison between students from Tanta and students from Riyadh regarding their total emotional intelligence scores. There was statistical significant difference between Tanta and Riyadh students regarding their total emotional intelligence scores $P = 0.127$). Thirty three percent of the students of Riyadh got high total emotional intelligence scores compared to 27.5% of Tanta students.

Table 5: Correlation between Total Emotional Intelligence Scores and some sociodemographic characteristics of nursing Students of Tanta and Riyadh

Variables	Total Emotional Intelligence Scores			
	Tanta		Riyadh	
	r	p	r	p
Age	-.043	0.549	-.004	0.958
Grade level	-0.049	0.488	.197**	0.005
Birth order	0.008	0.913	-.045	0.526
Mother's education	0.207**	0.003	.026	0.711
Father's education	0.119	0.094	.139*	0.049
Income	0.150*	0.034	.029	0.684

Table 4 Shows correlation between total emotional intelligence scores and age, grade level, birth order, mother's education, father's education and income of students of Tanta and Riyadh. There were statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and scores mother's education and family incomes ($p = 0.004$ and $p = 0.034$ respectively) for Tanta students. Regarding Riyadh students there was a statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and father's education ($p = 0.049$). For the rest of the variables there were not statistically significant associated with between total emotional intelligence.

5. DISCUSSION

Emotion is fundamental to nursing practice and Emotional Intelligence is considered as an important characteristic of nurses that can affect the quality of their work including clinical decision-making, critical thinking, evidence and knowledge use in practice

The finding of the current study revealed that the student's age ranged between 13 and 21 years old. The majority (80.75%) of the student in the sample had their ages ranged between 16 and 18 years old. All were female and they are all Arabic English speakers. These results were similar to the results of Han, H., & Johnson, S. D. (2012)⁽²²⁾ who studied the relationship between students' emotional intelligence, social bond, and interactions in online learning. Their study showed that the participant ages ranged from 24 to 63 ($M=40.5$ $SD=10$). The majority of the participants were female (74%), native English speakers (92%), and Caucasian (87%). The participants represent the population in the program because the population was also primarily female (67.5%), Caucasian (74.8%), and their ages ranged from 22 to 63 ($M=38.33$ $SD=9.12$).

This study shows that there was statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and age of the sample. This result was congruent with the results of Harrod and Scheer (2005)⁽²³⁾. They explore the adolescent emotional Intelligence in relation to demographic characteristics. It was found not any that there is relationship between age and level of emotional intelligence. Contradicting these findings, a study by Goleman (2004)⁽²⁴⁾ confirmed that level of emotional intelligence increases with the age, as claimed

Several researches (Halçınarlı and Bender, 2006⁽²⁵⁾. Austin et al., 2005⁽²⁶⁾.; Harrod and Scheer, 2005⁽²³⁾.) revealed that levels of emotional intelligence vary depending on the sex and female students have a higher level of emotional intelligence in comparison to the male students. Sanchez-R et al. (2010)⁽²⁷⁾ highlighted that sex does not create a significant difference and women have a higher level of emotional intelligence only in social sciences. Although the previous researches indicate that women have a higher level of emotional intelligence, this study reached a result that does not verify that conclusion.

The results of the current study revealed that there was statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and academic performance ($P = 0.019$). Regarding the 2 cities included in the study there was statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and academic performance in both Tanta and Riyadh separately ($p = 0.008$, $p = 0.007$ respectively). This shows that as the academic performance increases the emotional intelligence score increase. This results is in alignment with the results of **Chamundesari 2013**⁽²⁸⁾ who studied Emotional intelligence and academic achievement among students at the higher secondary level emotional intelligence and academic achievement are all positively correlated with each other and significant at 0.01 level.

This study shows that more than two thirds (80%) of the sample got total score of emotional intelligence. This results was similar to the results by **Nazan Y (2013)**⁽²⁹⁾. He studied the emotional intelligence characteristics of the students studying at various faculties and colleges of the universities. It is seen that men have higher average in wellbeing, self-control and sociability factors and this difference is statistically significant ($p < .01$) in wellbeing and sociability factors. Women have higher averages than men in terms of emotionality factors and there is a significant ($p < .05$) difference

The current study revealed that mothers and fathers education are associated to their children emotional intelligence. There were statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and, mother's education and family incomes ($p = 0.008$, $p = 0.004$ and $p = 0.034$ respectively) for **Tanta** students. For Riyadh students there were statistically significant positive relationship between total emotional intelligence and father's education this may be because of Riyadh is most modern than Tanta and cultural differences .

In conclusion The importance of emotional intelligence is gradually being acknowledged and the number of studies made in this field is increasing gradually. This research study the emotional intelligence level, emotional intelligence differences of undergraduate nursing students depending on their demographic qualities and the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievements, age, sex can have an influence on emotional intelligence levels. Besides, several factors such as income status of the person, the place of growing up, family background and the social, cultural environment can have an impact on it. Thus, it is seen that the studies conducted come up with different results and it is becoming difficult to make generalizations. When we consider the number of factors having impact on the levels of emotional intelligence and their form of impact, the researchers recommended that conducting several studies on this field, at different places by using different variables is necessary.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the current study, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence and scores mother's education and family incomes ($p = 0.004$ and $p = 0.034$ respectively) for Tanta students

7. RECOMMENDATION

The researchers recommend that the training of emotional intelligence in nursing students, is necessary because of growing complexity of the healthcare environment and increasing expectations of clients in today's competitive healthcare marketplace. Also emotional intelligence concept should be incorporated into the nursing curriculum in order to promote growth of the student's emotional intelligence abilities needed to work with patients in different clinical settings.

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