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A study of emotional intelligence and mood among traffic police personnel

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and mood states among traffic police personnel in Patna. The objectives were to assess emotional intelligence levels and various mood states, and to analyse their interrelationships. The sample consisted of 200 female traffic police personnel selected using predefined inclusion criteria. The Emotional Intelligence Scale (Hyde et al., 2002) and the Brunel Mood Scale were used. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed significant negative relationships of emotional intelligence with anger (r = -0.85), tension (r = -0.65), and depression (r = -0.78), and positive relationships with happiness (r = 0.74) and calmness (r = 0.57). No significant associations were observed with vigour or fatigue. These results suggest that higher emotional intelligence is associated with more positive mood states and better emotional regulation. This study underlines the need for training programs to enhance emotional competencies among public safety workers.

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INTRODUCTION

Traffic police personnel represent one of the most visible and essential units of urban governance. They are responsible for maintaining the flow of traffic, ensuring safety regulations are followed, responding to emergencies, and managing public interactions—all under challenging and unpredictable circumstances. Daily exposure to noise, pollution, erratic weather conditions, heavy workloads, and frequent conflict with aggressive or non-compliant drivers creates a high-stress occupational environment that impacts both physical and psychological well-being. In such roles, where quick decision-making and emotional composure are essential, psychological skills such as *emotional intelligence* and *mood regulation* become particularly important.

Emotional intelligence (EI), as defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990), involves the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively in interpersonal and intrapersonal contexts. This includes skills such as emotional awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Goleman (1995) further popularized the concept, emphasizing that EI can be more critical than cognitive intelligence in determining success, particularly in emotionally demanding roles. In the context of law enforcement, high emotional intelligence has been associated with improved interpersonal relations, greater adaptability, better coping with stress, and overall psychological balance (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). These qualities are especially vital for traffic police personnel who often work under pressure and must engage with the public in situations that demand emotional control and social tact.

In contrast to the more trait-based and enduring characteristics of emotional intelligence, *mood* refers to temporary but relatively stable emotional states that colour a person's perception and behaviour. Moods influence how individuals evaluate their environment and interact with others. Positive moods—such as happiness and calmness—are linked with better focus, optimism, and improved problem-solving abilities. Negative moods—such as anger, tension, and depression—may result in impaired judgment, reduced patience, and emotional exhaustion. Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory highlights that positive emotions, even if momentary, help build lasting personal resources such as resilience and social support. Meanwhile, negative emotions, especially when ruminated upon, can persist as prolonged negative moods, leading to stress accumulation and burnout. This dynamic is especially relevant for professionals in high-risk, high-pressure fields like traffic policing.

Research by Diener et al. (1999) introduced the concept of a "positivity offset," where individuals maintain a baseline level of positive mood to foster resilience. In demanding jobs like traffic policing, this baseline may be easily disrupted unless individuals possess effective emotional regulation strategies. Emotional intelligence plays a critical role here: individuals with higher EI are better able to maintain emotional balance by mitigating negative moods and reinforcing positive ones. This ability enhances occupational functioning and interpersonal communication while also supporting mental health.

Moreover, mood does not only reflect internal states—it also shapes perceptions, memory, and social interaction. As noted by Smith and Lazarus (1990), emotions and mood states influence appraisal processes, meaning they affect how individuals evaluate the situations they encounter. For example, a traffic officer in a negative mood may interpret a motorist's behaviour more harshly than warranted, possibly escalating an otherwise manageable interaction. On the other hand, an emotionally intelligent officer is more likely to assess situations accurately, maintain calm, and respond constructively—even under pressure.

Empirical studies have also shown that emotional and mood states significantly influence behaviour in traffic-related settings. Mesken et al. (2007) found that emotions like anxiety, anger, and happiness are common among drivers and directly affect their risk-taking and compliance with traffic rules. These findings can be extended to traffic police, who constantly navigate emotional reactions both within themselves and in others. Öztürk and Varankaya (2024) further emphasized that affective states, especially stress and anger, mediate behaviour in high-demand traffic environments.

Despite the well-documented importance of emotional intelligence and mood regulation, there remains a lack of focused research on their interrelationship specifically among traffic police personnel, especially in the Indian context. Most existing literature addresses emotional functioning in drivers, general police officers, or healthcare professionals, leaving a gap in understanding the unique experiences and needs of traffic police. Considering their frequent exposure to emotionally intense situations, assessing their emotional intelligence and mood profiles is vital.

The present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and mood states among female traffic police personnel in Patna. It focuses on how emotional intelligence correlates with mood dimensions, such as anger, tension, depression, happiness, and calmness, using validated psychometric tools. Understanding these correlations can provide insights into how strengthening emotional competencies may help in better mood regulation, enhanced professional performance, and improved well-being of traffic police personnel.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research studies have consistently shown the significant influence of emotions and moods on human behaviour, particularly in high-stress environments like traffic management.

Öztürk and Varankaya (2024) found that both positive and negative affect influenced driver behaviour, with perceived stress and driving anger acting as mediators. Drivers experiencing negative emotions exhibited more violations, while positive emotions reduced stress and encouraged safer driving behaviour**.**

Mesken and Hagenzieker (2007) examined emotional states during driving and reported that anxiety was the most frequent emotion, followed by anger and happiness. They emphasized that emotional reactions were closely tied to traffic events, with anger linked to being obstructed and anxiety to perceived safety threats. Emotions significantly impact driving behaviour, such as speeding and risk perception.

Fredrickson (2001) emphasized that negative emotions are more likely to transform into enduring negative moods compared to positive emotions. She suggested that individuals tend to ruminate longer on negative experiences, which can subsequently influence long-term mood states and overall well-being.

Smith and Lazarus (1990) explored how mood states extend beyond internal experiences, impacting social perceptions and workplace dynamics. Negative moods can lead to biased interpretations of others' behaviours, influencing interpersonal interactions in organizational contexts.

Diener et al. (1999) introduced the concept of a 'positivity offset,' which indicates that individuals generally maintain a mildly positive mood in neutral situations. This baseline positivity fosters resilience, even in challenging environments like traffic policing, and supports emotional stability.

These studies highlight the profound influence of emotional and mood states on cognitive processes, decision-making, and performance, emphasizing the need to investigate these variables among traffic police personnel.

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Aim of the Study

To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and various mood states among traffic police personnel in Patna.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among traffic police personnel.
2. To evaluate the prevalence of different mood states (tension, depression, vigour, fatigue, happiness, calmness).
3. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and mood subscales using the BRUMS scale.

Hypothesis

Emotional intelligence will significantly correlate with thedifferent mood states (anger, tension, depression, vigour, fatigue, happiness, calmness) of BRUMS.

METHODS

Sample

The study was carried out on 200 participants, traffic police personnel from Patna. Following inclusion and exclusion criteria and the rank of the police personnel were followed.

Inclusion Criteria

Following criteria would be used to include participants in the present study:

- Participants should have ability to read, write, and comprehend and Hindi and English language.
- Age range will be 27 to 45 years.
- The Length and work experience in his professional service would be at least 5 years.
- The nature of job responsibility would be the same and data will be included only if they are working in Bihar traffic Police personnel.
- Traffic Police personnel with the same rank and position will be included.

Exclusion Criteria

Following criteria will be used to exclude participants from the study.

- Participants are having psycho-medical conditions like diabetes, neurotic and/or psychotic disorder or other disease or illness that may influence circadian rhythm and other study variables.

- Participants will not be able to understand instructions.
- Participant has prior history of head injury, chronic disease, and psychiatric or neurological disorder.

Tools

The following section presents a brief description of the behavioural measures used in the present research along with their psychometric properties. 2 tests/scales were used in the present research in addition to the personal data sheet that collected demographic information such as age, gender, marital status, working experience, etc. of the participants.

Personal Datasheet

Self-developed personal data sheets have been used to get personal information of police personnel.

Emotional Intelligence Scale(EIS, Hyde, Pethe, & Dhar, 2002): The scale measures emotional intelligence, which consists of 34 items. It measures the 10 Dimensions of emotional intelligence. The scale has appropriate reliability (0.88) and validity (0.93).

The Brunel Mood Scale was created by Dr. John T. Bond in 1998 psychological tool used to measure the mood states of individuals. It was developed to assess various emotional and psychological states across different populations, which consists of 32 items that measure 8 sub-scales, Like Anger, Tension, Depression, Vigour, Fatigue, Confusion, Happy, and Calmness. The scale has appropriate reliability and validity.

Procedure

Participants were informed about the study and gave written consent. Data collection involved both individual and group administration of tools. Scoring followed the prescribed manuals.

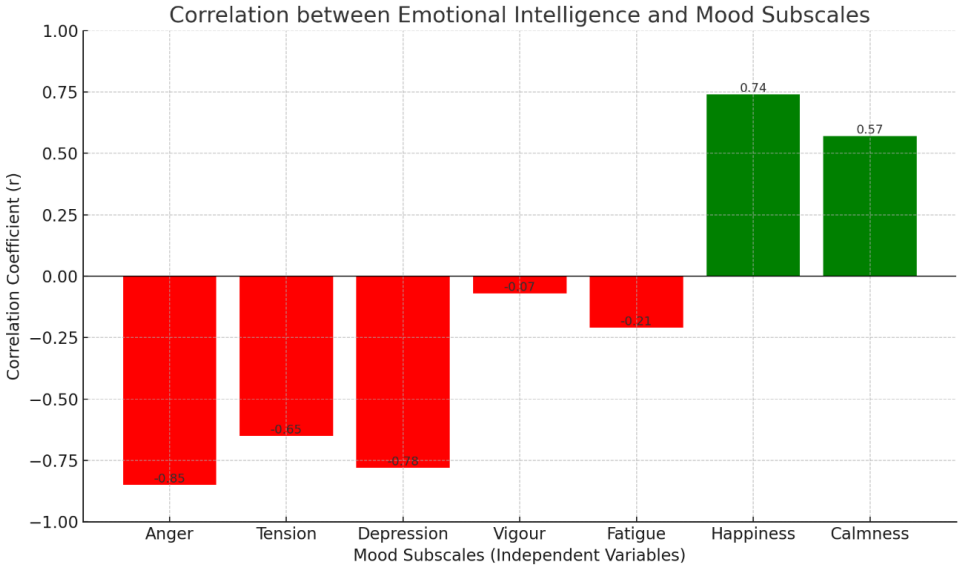
RESULT

After obtaining the data, SPSS has used to analyses the scores on the different variables. Based on the objective of the study, Pearson's product-moment correlation was computed which has been displayed in Table –1.

Table 1 : Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Mood Subscales

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Emotional Intelligence	1							
Anger	-.85**	1						
Tension	-.65**	.xx	1					
Depression	-.78**	.xx	.xx	1				
Vigour	-.07	.xx	.xx	.xx	1			
Fatigue	-.21	.xx	.xx	.xx	.xx	1		
Happiness	.74**	.xx	.xx	.xx	.xx	.xx	1	
Calmness	.57**	.xx	.xx	.xx	.xx	.xx	.xx	1

*N = 200; **p < .01, *p < .05, NS = Not Significant ,.xx = Value not shown.*



Graph-1: Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Mood Subscales

It shows the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and each Mood Subscale :

- Red bars = negative correlation
- Green bars = positive correlation

Graph shows the correlation coefficients between emotional intelligence and various mood subscales among traffic police personnel. The results indicate strong negative correlations of emotional intelligence with anger, tension, and depression, and positive correlations with happiness and calmness. No significant relationships were observed between emotional intelligence and vigour or fatigue. This graphical representation further supports the findings shown in Table 1.

Interpretation

- Emotional intelligence showed a very strong negative correlation with anger ($r = -0.85$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that as emotional intelligence increases, the tendency to experience anger decreases significantly. This highlights the ability of emotionally intelligent individuals to better regulate and manage anger-provoking situations.
- Emotional intelligence also demonstrated a strong negative correlation with tension ($r = -0.65$, $p < 0.01$). Individuals possessing higher emotional intelligence appear to experience lower levels of tension, reflecting better coping mechanisms in stressful environments such as traffic management.
- Similarly, a strong negative relationship was observed between emotional intelligence and depression ($r = -0.78$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that traffic police personnel with greater emotional intelligence are less prone to depressive feelings, possibly due to enhanced emotional regulation and resilience.

  ○ In contrast, emotional intelligence showed no significant correlation with vigour ($r = -0.07$, $p > 0.05$), implying that levels of energy and enthusiasm might not be directly linked to emotional intelligence in the present sample.

- No significant relationship was also found between emotional intelligence and fatigue ($r = -0.21$, $p > 0.05$), suggesting that emotional intelligence may not necessarily prevent feelings of tiredness among traffic police personnel.
- A strong positive correlation was found between emotional intelligence and happiness ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are likely to experience higher levels of happiness, further supporting the importance of emotional regulation abilities.
- A moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and calmness ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$) suggests that greater emotional intelligence helps in maintaining a calm and composed disposition even under pressure.
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DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and various mood states among female traffic police personnel in

Patna, aiming to understand how emotional competencies influence psychological well-being in high-stress public service roles. The findings confirmed strong and significant correlations between emotional intelligence and multiple mood dimensions. Specifically, emotional intelligence was negatively correlated with anger, tension, and depression, and positively correlated with happiness and calmness. These results provide meaningful insight into the emotional dynamics of traffic police work and affirm the critical role of emotional intelligence in occupational health and emotional regulation.

The strong negative correlation between emotional intelligence and anger (r = -0.85) is particularly noteworthy. This aligns with Goleman's (1995) assertion that emotionally intelligent individuals are more capable of regulating impulsive responses and managing emotionally charged situations. For traffic police, who frequently encounter aggressive or non-compliant drivers, the ability to remain composed is not only a professional necessity but a psychological safeguard. The findings also support Fredrickson's (2001) theory that unchecked negative emotions can evolve into persistent negative mood states, such as irritability and hostility, if not managed through emotional coping strategies.

Similarly, the observed negative relationship between emotional intelligence and both tension (r = -0.65) and depression (r = -0.78) reinforces the theory that higher emotional awareness and self-regulation are protective factors against psychological distress. These results are consistent with Diener et al.'s (1999) concept of the "positivity offset," which proposes that individuals generally maintain a positive emotional baseline when equipped with internal psychological resources like emotional intelligence. In the case of traffic police, who are constantly navigating stressful work environments, the presence of such internal resources becomes crucial for maintaining mental equilibrium.

Interestingly, no significant correlation was found between emotional intelligence and the mood subscales of vigour (r = -0.07) or fatigue (r = -0.21). This may suggest that while emotional intelligence plays a critical role in regulating affective states, it may have limited influence on physical energy levels or physiological exhaustion. Vigour and fatigue could be more closely associated with external factors such as workload, shift duration, sleep quality, and physical health—variables not directly examined in this study. This divergence highlights the complex nature of workplace well-being, where both emotional and physical dimensions must be addressed in tandem.

The positive correlations of emotional intelligence with happiness (r = 0.74) and calmness (r = 0.57) underscore the constructive emotional landscape associated with higher EI. As noted by Smith and Lazarus (1990), individuals in positive mood states tend to appraise social interactions more favorably and respond with greater empathy and patience. In traffic management, where public interaction is constant and often confrontational, these traits are essential for de-escalation and effective service delivery. These findings also echo the work of Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002), who emphasized that emotionally intelligent professionals tend to foster more harmonious environments and are more resilient under pressure.

From a practical standpoint, these results strongly support the integration of emotional intelligence training into traffic police development programs. Providing officers with tools to enhance emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy could help reduce workplace stress, improve public interaction, and potentially prevent burnout. The findings also advocate for the broader inclusion of psychological well-being frameworks within traffic departments, aligning with Fredrickson's (2001) recommendation that fostering positive emotions should be a deliberate institutional goal.

However, this study is not without limitations. The sample was restricted to female traffic police personnel in Patna, which may limit generalizability across genders or geographic contexts. Additionally, the study relied on self-report tools, which may be subject to social desirability biases. While the tools used (EIS and BRUMS) have established reliability and validity, future research should consider incorporating observational or behavioral assessments for a more comprehensive evaluation. Longitudinal studies could also help establish causal relationships between emotional intelligence and mood over time.

Future research may expand this work by comparing emotional intelligence and mood profiles across different branches of law enforcement, examining the influence of

organizational culture, or assessing the impact of targeted EI interventions. Investigating moderating factors such as years of experience, rank, or exposure to traumatic incidents could provide deeper insights into the emotional demands of traffic policing.

In summary, the current study reinforces the critical connection between emotional intelligence and mood regulation among traffic police. As traffic policing continues to evolve in complexity and demand, equipping personnel with emotional competencies will be key to enhancing both individual well-being and public service quality.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that higher emotional intelligence among traffic police personnel is associated with significantly lower levels of anger, tension, and depression, alongside higher levels of happiness and calmness. These results underscore the critical role emotional intelligence plays in regulating mood and enhancing psychological resilience in demanding occupational settings. Consequently, incorporating emotional intelligence development into training programs for traffic police can be an effective strategy to improve their emotional well-being and occupational performance. Future initiatives aimed at fostering emotional competencies may not only reduce workplace stress but also promote healthier interpersonal interactions and better public service outcomes. Continued research and tailored interventions are essential to further understand and support the emotional needs of traffic police personnel.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to standard ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. All participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the research. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. They were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Furthermore, participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic purposes. No identifying personal information was collected or reported.

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Statements and Declarations

The author declares that there are no financial or non-financial competing interests related to this work. No funding was received from any organization for the conduct of this research. The study was conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines, and formal ethical approval was not required. However, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. The author independently carried out the design, data collection, analysis, and writing of the manuscript.

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