



THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Emotional Intelligence on academic achievement among students of Secondary School Kottur, Karnataka. The data of this research were obtained through the use of a questionnaire which elicits information on the students' Emotional Intelligence level as well as their academic performance. The results of the study reveal that the respondents have high level of Emotional Intelligence. Two domains (Self-Emotion Appraisal and Understanding of Emotion) of the Emotional Intelligence investigated are found to be significantly and positively associated with the respondents' academic achievement. The findings of the study hold important implications on the value of Emotional Intelligence and their relationships to students' academic performance especially among Secondary School.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; academic achievement, Secondary School

1. Introduction

It has long been a concern of many parties on factors contributing to academic performance among students in learning institutions, starting from as low as pre-school to as high as tertiary level. Results and findings of numerous researches conducted in this area of study over a long period of time reveal a variety of factors; students' IQ, EQ, socio economic status, motivation, peer-relationship, teacher-student relationship, parental involvement and personality. Among all these factors, EQ had been commonly used as a determinant and associated with academic success. However, many recent and emerging studies are revealing that EQ alone is not a reliable predictor of students' academic achievement (Craggs, 2005). This claim prompts many

researchers and academicians to explore and identify other factors that contribute another 80% to a person's success.

2. Statement of the problem

There has been substantial evidence proving that being emotionally intelligent can help individuals excel through life transitions starting from school to college, and later into to the working world. At the secondary school level, emotional intelligence is seen as a valuable skill that helps students to manage and cope with the demanding nature of the academe. A number of studies have already established the positive relationship between students' emotional intelligence and higher academic achievement, citing reasons such as emotionally intelligent students have better interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, are more adaptable, and are better at managing stress. In other words, emotionally intelligent students are more successful in living their college life and thus, are able to learn and perform academically.

Therefore, due to the many claims on the influence of emotional intelligence on academic and occupational success, this study aims to find out the level of emotional intelligence among the students of the Secondary school and to investigate its influence on their academic achievement. The Statement of the problem was "THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY STUDENTS"

3. Research Objectives and Questions :

The study is guided by the following objectives;

- 1) Investigating the relationship between the respondents' emotional intelligence and their academic achievement.
- 2) Identifying the level of emotional intelligence among the respondents.

Research questions for the study are as follows:

- 1) What is the level of emotional intelligence among the respondents?
- 2) What is the relationship between the respondents' emotional intelligence and their academic achievement?

4. Review of Literature

1) Mayer & Salovey define emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (1990, p. 189). They later redefine the term as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and / or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p. 10). They propose a model of EQ that consists of four domains of abilities which are the perception, use, understanding and regulation of emotion. Emotional intelligence is claimed to affect various aspects of human performance, namely in physical and psychological health, social interaction and performance at school and in the work place (Bar-On, 1997). Unlike Intelligent Quotient (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ) is associated with career and personal life success, including success in the academe (Mayer and Salovey,

1997; Goleman, 1995). There has been a lot of research carried out in order to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement.

2) Jaeger's (2003) study (as cited in Romanelli, Cain and Smith, 2006) reveals that levels of emotional intelligence among 150 students of a general management graduate-level course were associated with academic performance. Among these 150 students, greater correlation between emotional intelligence and academic performance was found among students who were offered emotional intelligence curriculum as compared to their counterparts who did not undergo the curriculum. Based on the findings of this research, researchers concluded that emotional intelligence is both teachable and learnable by teachers and students.

3) In another study involving more than 3,500 first-year students of a public university, Jaeger and Eagan (2007) found that interpersonal, stress management and adaptability to be significant predictors of students' academic achievement. They claimed that ability to deal with stressful situations allow learners to "manage the anxiety of tests, deadlines, competing priorities, and personal crises" (p. 527). Other than that, adaptability among college students identify individuals who are "generally flexible, realistic, effective in understanding problematic and emotional situations, and competent at arriving at adequate solutions" (p. 528). Jaeger and Eagan further concluded that in achieving college success, a student needs to have these abilities to be calm, flexible, and realistic when dealing with pressures. Likewise, Jaeger, Bresciani, and Ward (2003) also found that interpersonal skills and students' general mood were significantly correlated to high school GPA. Similarly, Aminuddin, Tajularipin, and Rohaizan's (2009) study examining emotional intelligence level among 223 Form One and Form Four students in rural areas reveal findings that also support the influence of emotional intelligence on academic achievement. They found that the emotional intelligence is closely related to the students' academic achievement, which, they added, corroborates with the findings by Parker et al. and Petrides et al.

4) Dr. Reuvan Bar-On, one of the proponents and leading researchers in the study of emotional intelligence also recognizes the influence of this non-cognitive ability in the success of a student's life. He posits that "ability to manage one's emotions, to be able to validate one's feelings and to solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature are important for being academically successful; additionally, academic performance appears to be facilitated by being able to set personal goals as well as to be sufficiently optimistic and self-motivated to accomplish them" (2005, p. 14-15). Bar-On further postulates that an assessment of emotional intelligence levels among students can be significantly used to predict their scholastic performance. He argues that such information can be used to identify "students who are in need of guided intervention" (p. 15) and to enhance their emotional-social intelligence competencies and skills thus helping them to perform better academically. In a nutshell, knowledge on students' emotional intelligence allows educators and administrators as well as the students themselves to recognize the importance of emotional competencies in learning hence capitalizing on them to achieve the common educational goals.

5) All the research findings discussed indicate the role that emotional intelligence plays in determining academic achievement among students. Given its importance, there has been recognition to develop emotional intelligence skills among students in order to assist them in performing in their studies. Low,

Lomax, Jackson and Nelson (2004) assert that “emotional knowledge, skills, and intelligence hold a major key to improving education and helping students, teachers, faculty, and student development professionals attain higher degrees of achievement, career success, leadership, and personal well-being” (p. 2).

5. Research Methodology:

5.1 Research Design

The quantitative design methodology employed in this study is correlational research. This design was selected because the study aims to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Therefore the independent variable examined in this study is students’ level of emotional intelligence whereas the dependent variable is students’ academic achievement in Teacher made academic achievement Test

Since the study is a quantitative study, the sole instrument utilized for data collection was questionnaire. Questionnaire is an important and popular instrument in gathering data (Singh, Chan and Sidhu, 2006). Other than being cost effective, questionnaire is suitable to be used as a tool to elicit information and responses from a particular group of people.

5.2 Sampling

The population selected to carry out this study were 500 Secondary school students, Kottur District. 265 secondary school students were selected from Kottur Town, Karnataka

5.3 Instrumentation:

Emotional Intelligence scale (EIS) standardized by Reuven Bar-On’s was used for Emotional Intelligence and Academic achievement Test prepared and standardized by Investigators was used.

5.4 Data Collection Procedures :

Respondents were approached and informed that they had been randomly selected to be the respondents for the study and they were given a brief explanation on the purpose of the study and its contribution to the field of education. Respondents were given a brief instruction on how to respond to scale items in order to make sure they understand what is expected of them. Once the questionnaire was administered, the respondents were given ample time to complete it and the questionnaire was collected on the same day to ensure high response rates.

5.5 Data Analysis Procedures:

Once all the questionnaires were collected, all the data gathered were keyed-in and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for statistical analysis. Both descriptive and referential statistics were carried out in answering the research questions of this study. Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the demographic background of the respondents as well as to determine the level of emotional intelligence among the respondents. The results obtained are presented in forms of percentages, means and standard deviations. Referential analysis through the use of correlation coefficient on the other hand was carried out in order to establish the degree of relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

All the results obtained are presented in tables and graphs and are accompanied by descriptions explaining the results. Then, discussion of the results is carried out in order to answer the research questions and

necessary conclusions are drawn based on the findings of the research. Based from the overall findings, the researcher discusses the significant implications of the study and put forth a few suggestions for further and future research.

6. Findings and Analysis of Data:

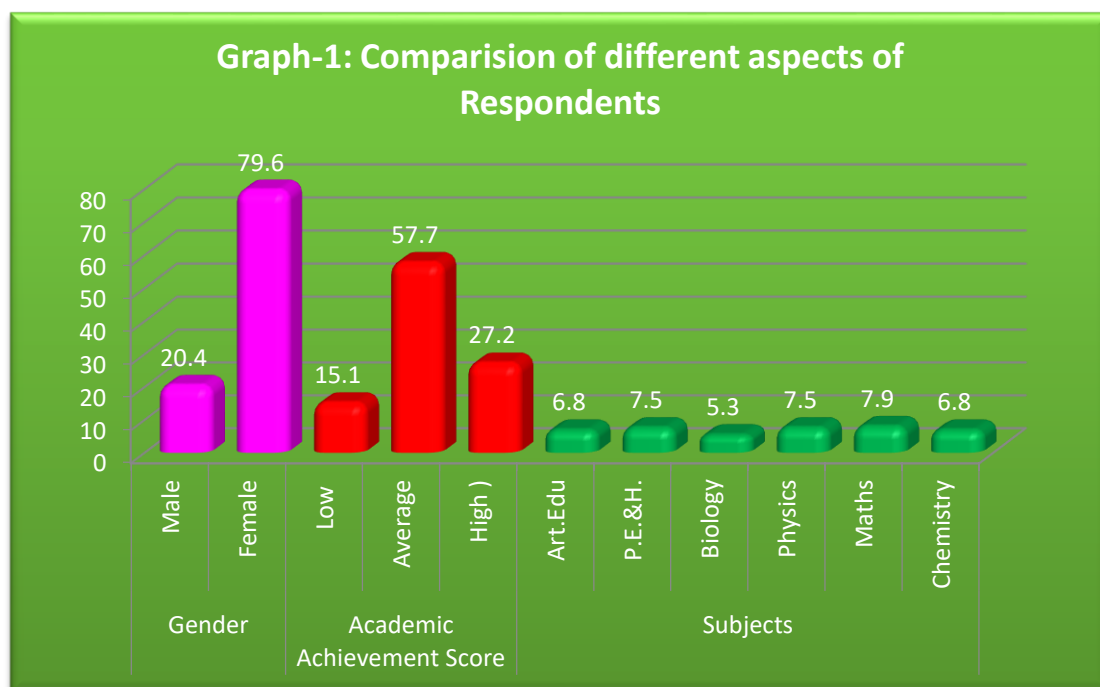
6.1 Demographic Information:

Table -1

**Distribution and Percentage of Respondents according to Gender, Age, AA marks and Subjects
(n=265)**

Respondents Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	54	20.4
Female	211	79.6
Age		
20-22	141	53.6
23-25	109	41.4
25>	13	4.9
Academic Achievement Score		
Low (< 35%)	36	15.1
Average (35%- 60%)	138	57.7
High (60% to 100%)	65	27.2
Subject		
AA Test total score	154	58.1
Art & Design Education	18	6.8
Physical Education &Health	20	7.5
Science Biology	14	5.3
Science Physics	20	7.5
Science Mathematics	21	7.9
Science Chemistry	18	6.8
Total	265	100

The items in the questionnaire require respondents to indicate their response base on 1 to 5 point Emotional Intelligence scale. In this study, respondents' responses with a the highest score secured was 340 and the lowest was 41.



6.2. Level of Emotional Intelligence among the Respondents.

Table -2

Descriptive Analysis of Level of Emotional Intelligence

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	217.43	26.589

Table-2 above presents the overall mean score of emotional intelligence among the respondents while Table -2 on the other hand presents the mean scores of the four domains of emotional intelligence investigated in this study. Firstly, finding in Table -2 reveals that the students of Secondary school, Kottur City, had high level of emotional intelligence ($M= 217.43$, $SD= 26.589$).

The findings from Table -2 indicate that the respondents were highly aware of their own emotions and feelings and they understood that emotions can evolve depending on situations. On top of that, they could anticipate what emotion is likely to transpire under certain circumstances. However, the results show that the respondents had less awareness of others' emotions as compared to the awareness of their own emotions. It was also found that the lowest mean score of the four domains is on the respondents' ability to regulate their emotions. This domain is the most advanced of all the four abilities that make an emotionally intelligent individual (Mayer and Salovey, 1990). According to Mayer and Salovey (1990), having the ability to regulate emotions allows individuals to accept and handle both pleasant and unpleasant feelings. This ability is crucial in living a student's life where one has to cope with occasional failures and disturbing experiences as well as the pressure to perform academically (Pfeiffer, 2001).

6.3. Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement:

Table 6.3.1

Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

	r –value	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence	0.884	0.193

In determining the strength of the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, Pearson correlation analysis was carried out. The overall result is presented in Table -2 and Table -3 shows that there is a positive and weak relationship ($r= 0.884$, $p= 0.193$) between the respondents' overall emotional intelligence and their academic achievement which means that the higher their level of emotional intelligence, the better they perform academically. This relationship however was found to be not statistically significant.

There is a similarity between the results of the present study with Pishghadam's (2009) who also found that EQ was weakly associated with academic performance when it was examined as a whole but when examined according to subscales, the findings yield significant relationship with academic achievement.

7. Conclusions and Discussion:

Based on the findings, a few conclusions can be drawn to answer the research questions of this study. Firstly, the finding shows that the students of the secondary school have high level of emotional intelligence. However, no significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement. Since the respondents are future educators, there is a crucial need for them to possess emotional intelligence skills which will allow them to be caring and empathetic teachers. Relating this to the student teachers, Goad and Justice (as cited in Nelson, Low and Nelson, 2005) emphasize the importance and the value of emotional intelligence in teacher preparation programs by claiming that teachers with emotional intelligence skills are better able at maintaining classroom management performance and remain in the teaching profession especially among novice teachers. Therefore, since the findings suggest that the respondents are future teachers with high level of emotional intelligence, it is expected of them to be able to take on the challenge to educate the young generations and adapt to the demanding and stressful working environment (Nelson, Low and Nelson, 2005) in the teaching profession. This is especially true among novice teachers who just embark into one of the most stressful profession as educators.

8. Implications of the Study :

As has been aforementioned, it is of great importance for teachers to be equipped with emotional intelligence skills to allow them to function effectively as educators. This is because it is noted that having this ability helps teacher candidates to not only perform academically as teacher trainees but also excel in their career when they embark into the teaching profession. This undoubtedly has some implications on the teacher preparation programs in terms of curricular design and the emphasis on instilling and developing these skills among the student teachers through activities and modules. According to Kremenitzer and Miller (2008), improving emotional intelligence among pre-service teachers should be a fundamental element in their education programs and can be further enhanced and reinforced through continuous professional

development activities. Similarly, Elkins and Low (as cited in Nelson, Low and Nelson, 2005) reported that pre-service teachers have a crucial need to acquire communication competence and emotional intelligence. Relating this to a local scenario, it is surprising to note that the need for emotional intelligence has not been addressed formally in the teacher training curriculum in Malaysia (Noriah, Ramlee, Zuria and Siti Rahayah, 2007). Therefore, it is about time for the student teacher education programs in higher learning institutions especially in UiTM to start instilling elements of emotional intelligence in its curriculum as well as incorporating activities and modules that would help the student teachers to develop these vital skills. These can be achieved by encouraging future teachers to practice perceiving, understanding and regulating their emotions in carrying out their task as a teacher.

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