

Students' Emotional Intelligence and its Effect on Academic Achievement at University Level

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine the effect of students' emotional intelligence on their academic achievement at the university level. A positivist paradigm directed the research, which was non-experimental and quantitative. A correlational research design was employed. The target population consisted of students enrolled at the University of Okara. A two-stage random sampling method was used to select a representative sample of 300 students. Data collection involved two research instruments, and the analysis was conducted using inferential statistical techniques, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, independent sample t-test, and linear regression. The findings revealed a strong, positive, statistically significant relationship between students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that emotional intelligence significantly and positively impacted educational attainment at the university level. This study provides empirical evidence supporting the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing academic achievement. The findings highlight the importance of emotional intelligence as a key factor for academic achievement, potentially drawing the attention of educational stakeholders to its significance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Academic Achievement, University Students.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in students' academic achievement, as it influences their ability to manage emotions, build relationships, and navigate challenges in educational settings. Research suggests that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit better academic performance due to their enhanced self-regulation, motivation, and social skills (Mayer et al., 2016). Additionally, emotional intelligence fosters resilience and adaptability, which are essential for coping with academic stress and maintaining focus on learning tasks (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). As educational institutions increasingly recognize the importance of emotional intelligence, integrating emotional intelligence development into curricula may contribute to improved academic success and overall student well-being (Goleman, 1995).

The ability to use one's emotions to accomplish desired goals is known as emotional intelligence (Edward & Warelow, 2005). According to Sarwar et al. (2017), emotional intelligence, which includes a range of abilities and competences, affects students' capacity to manage different academic expectations and stresses. According to Sarrionandia et al. (2018), it functions as a

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personal resource that includes skills that enable the efficient receiving and application of emotional information to direct thoughts and behaviors. In this sense, emotions are mental reactions cognitive, conative, and behavioral caused by a person's evaluation of their environment. They feature a feedback component that transmits data to inspire behavior and actions in a particular situation, and they offer information about oneself and others (Santos et al., 2021).

According to Putwain et al. (2022), emotions can be distinguished by their physiological activation and valence. Students with high emotional intelligence are probably better able to control their emotions, which helps them make wise choices and behave in a way that makes sense given the circumstances. Since emotional intelligence improves a person's capacity for influence, teamwork, and achievement in academic environments, it is essential for academic achievement. Emotions are likely to help Students reach their objectives since they can improve cognitive functions like learning and attention. However, an individual's level of motivational intensity may influence how much emotions impact attention and cognition (Putwain et al., 2022). One of the most important factors influencing academic and personal achievement is emotional intelligence. In order to succeed in these domains, students are thus urged to cultivate their emotional competences (Santos et al., 2021).

Numerous elements, such as cognitive intelligence, diligence, perseverance, learning methodologies, financial situation, cultural background, motivation, stress management, and connections with parents, instructors, and classmates, have historically been linked to academic success. Cognitive intelligence is thought to be the most important of these (Ahmed et al., 2019; Mohzan et al., 2013). Nonetheless, the importance of non-cognitive skills in academic achievement has drawn more attention in recent years (Wang, 2019). At first, it was thought that emotional intelligence was a subset of cognitive intelligence. Nevertheless, recent studies indicate that emotional intelligence is a separate notion that can predict life outcomes, workplace conduct, and academic achievement apart from IQ (Choi et al., 2019; Wolfe & Kim, 2013). Numerous studies have revealed a positive association between academic achievement and emotional intelligence (Ogundokun & Adeyemo, 2010; Sanchez et al., 2013; Zhou et al., 2020).

A person's future social growth is significantly influenced by their academic achievement (Kapur, 2018). Academically successful people have the abilities and information required to make significant contributions to society and the economic development of their country. Educational psychologists have long prioritized student academic achievement and have worked to determine the elements that contribute to students' academic achievement (Helal et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2018; Kaviyarasi & Balasubramanian, 2018). In addition to their academic achievement, exceptional kids need possess emotional intelligence, which is a developing topic of study in psychology (Suryasa et al., 2021). Many academics were dubious about the applicability of emotional intelligence in evaluating human intelligence when it was initially proposed. They held that intellectual intelligence (IQ) should be the only criterion used to evaluate and value intelligence, with an emphasis on cognitive skills rather than affective variables (Allen & Robert, 2000). But Goleman (1995) showed how important emotional intelligence is by highlighting it in his publications. He maintained that emotional intelligence (80%) is frequently more important for success in life than intellectual intelligence (20%). Strong emotional intelligence is exhibited by people who are able to control, comprehend, and use emotions to effectively direct their thoughts and behaviors (Fantuzzo et al., 2007; Gallagher & Vella-Brodrick, 2008; Mayer et al., 2002; Parker et al., 2001).

People that possess high emotional intelligence are more adept at recognizing, managing, and directing their reactions and behaviors. They are more likely to report better levels of life satisfaction, feel more pleasant emotions in their surroundings, and succeed in reaching higher well-being levels (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2014). Younger age groups, including college students, are more affected by this (Wu et al., 2016). Academic achievement is both a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a student's achievements throughout their learning journey. Research on academic achievement has generally relied on two main approaches: a quantitative perspective, which focuses on grades, and a qualitative perspective, which examines personal factors and context. Historically, school grades have served as a key indicator of academic success. Gonzalez (2018) highlights the intrapersonal aspects of teenage students' personalities, while Fierro et al. (2019) emphasize socio-emotional factors, particularly the motivational processes that drive student behavior.

Emotional intelligence significantly influences students' academic achievement, as it encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively. A meta-analysis by MacCann et al. (2020) demonstrated that students with higher emotional intelligence scores achieved better academic achievement, with an effect size of $r = .20$ for ability emotional intelligence and $r = .29$ for mixed emotional intelligence models. Similarly, a study involving 480 Kuwaiti college students found that self-emotion appraisal and use of emotions, key components of emotional intelligence, were strongly associated with higher grade point averages (GPA) (Al-Mahdy et al., 2020). These findings suggest that integrating emotional intelligence development into educational curricula could enhance students' academic achievement and overall well-being.

The issue of poor academic achievement among university students is concerning. In Pakistani universities, the role of emotional intelligence as a non-cognitive factor influencing academic achievement has often been overlooked. Many studies on academic achievement have not addressed the impact of emotional intelligence. This presents a significant gap in the research, making it essential to explore whether emotional intelligence influences students' academic achievement.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the effect of students' emotional intelligence on their academic achievement.
2. Explore the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement at the university level.
3. Identify differences in students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement based on gender.

Research Questions

Following were research questions of the study:

1. What is the impact of students' emotional intelligence on academic achievement?
2. What is the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement at university level?
3. Is there a difference in students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement with regard to gender?

Literature Review

The ability to effectively regulate and control emotions, as well as to detect and comprehend one's own feelings and those of others, is known as emotional intelligence (Kotaman, 2016; Goroshit & Hen, 2012; Hogan et al., 2010). Emotional intelligence has been linked to a number of

beneficial outcomes, such as increased mental health, better cognitive abilities, positive personality traits, adaptability to new circumstances, and improved health and well-being (Berrocal & Checa, 2016; Brackett et al., 2011; Paavola, 2017). Students' studies have highlighted the significance of emotional development because it develops the ability to regulate emotions, which in turn encourages social behavior and supports pleasant learning experiences, all of which contribute to a positive school climate. Children that possess emotional intelligence are more likely to follow directions, pay attention, listen intently, and have patience while solving issues, all of which improve academic success.

The ability to appropriately and efficiently handle emotional information is referred to as emotional intelligence. It is a talent that involves the perception, use, comprehension, and control of emotions and is developed via both education and experience (Mayer et al., 1999). In everyday social interactions, people with high emotional intelligence are able to identify emotions in both themselves and others, cultivating positive attitudes and responding appropriately both emotionally and behaviorally. Better mental health and more social support are two benefits of this skill (Huang & Dai, 1997; Zeidner et al., 2009). According to Bar-On's emotional-social intelligence model, emotional intelligence includes knowing oneself and other people, forming solid bonds with others, and effectively adjusting to and navigating one's surroundings in order to feel good about oneself (Bar-On, 2010; Xu & Zhang, 2002). The importance of emotional intelligence in fostering well-being has been repeatedly demonstrated by research (Gallagher & Vella-Brodrick, 2008; Liang & Wang, 2018; Li, 2020; Wang & Cai, 2015;).

A person's ability to recognize, analyze, and control their own emotions as well as those of others is what is referred to as emotional intelligence. According to Chukwuka (2014), it is a type of social intelligence that entails keeping an eye on one's own emotions as well as those of others, recognizing the differences between them, and using this knowledge to shape decisions and behavior. Salovey and Mayer were the first to propose the idea of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Their study defines emotional intelligence as the capacity of people to observe and distinguish between their own emotions and those of others, which can subsequently influence their attitudes and actions. Furthermore, according to Ciarrochi et al. (2001), emotional intelligence is defined as a confluence of interrelated cognitive and emotional talents. Additionally, it describes the ability to identify, communicate, control, and make use of emotions in adaptive ways (Nordin, 2012; Shafiq & Rana, 2016). For humans to successfully adjust to social behavior, they must be able to recognize both their own and other people's emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Emotion perception includes the emotional content people employ to solve problems as well as how they modify and channel their own feelings toward others. The ability to recognize, evaluate, and control one's own and other people's emotional states in order to accomplish particular objectives is known as emotional intelligence (Choudary, 2010; Fox & Spector, 2000). According to Mayer et al. (2000), emotional intelligence is a concept that includes a variety of character attributes and skills associated with processing emotional data.

Furthermore, according to Goleman et al. (2013), emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to effectively control one's emotions as well as the capability to restrain impulses and emotions, particularly when dealing with feelings of disappointment, depression, or failure. They also underlined how emotional intelligence helps people manage their feelings in interpersonal connections and support or mentor others in social situations. Students need to develop social and emotional skills in addition to information in order to build effective learning settings (Amirian & Behshad, 2016). Numerous studies have emphasized the

significance of emotional intelligence in a number of domains, such as academic accomplishment (Fallahzadeh, 2011; Marquez et al., 2006), student learning (Brackett & Mayer, 2003), and effective teaching (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2009). Academic success, emotional intelligence, and other emotional and cognitive characteristics that promote learning have all been found to positively correlate in empirical study. For example, Shamradloo (2004) found that emotional intelligence was twice as good as cognitive intelligence at predicting academic achievement. Therefore, assessing Students' emotional intelligence can help them perform better academically. According to Chukwuka (2014), emotional intelligence might be a more accurate indicator of academic success than conventional intelligence tests. Students with emotional intelligence are better able to deal with life's obstacles, which can result in stronger problem-solving abilities. Improving students' capacity to control their emotions and moods can also aid them in completing challenging intellectual assignments, which is an essential academic success skill. Finally, kids with higher emotional intelligence may be better able to use their emotions to increase motivation, achievement, and adaptability. This could result in greater problem-solving skills and stronger peer relationships, which could raise academic success.

Prior research has shown that cognitive skills including reasoning, memory, and problem-solving are essential for academic achievement (Nesayan et al., 2019; Peng & Kievit, 2020). Nonetheless, non-cognitive elements like emotional intelligence, self-assurance, and the impact of friends and family are also thought to be important indicators of academic success by researchers (MacCann et al., 2020; Tepper & Yourstone, 2018). These results imply that students' academic achievement cannot be adequately explained by cognitive talents alone.

In this regard, emotional intelligence is a particularly significant non-cognitive element (Altwijri et al., 2021; MacCann et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2017). Emotional intelligence, according to Drigas and Papoutsi (2018), is the capacity to comprehend, control, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. Malaysian university students must overcome both academic and emotional barriers due to a variety of stressors and problems. These include familial troubles, peer relationships, financial strains, exam anxiety, and academic obligations (Reddy et al., 2018). One's essential ability that helps people deal with their everyday problems is emotional intelligence. However, prior research on the connection between academic success and emotional intelligence has produced contradictory results (MacCann et al., 2020; Suleman et al., 2019).

Research Methodology

Research Design

Quantitative research is primarily divided into two categories: intervention research and non-intervention research. Experimental research designs fall under intervention studies, while survey and correlation research designs are part of non-intervention studies. The present study, which focuses on correlational research, belongs to the quantitative research paradigm. The objective of correlational designs is to establish relationships between variables in such a way that outcomes can be predicted for a specific group. The participants in this study were university professors, and the key factors examined were emotional intelligence and academic achievement. The primary aim of the study was to explore the impact of university students' emotional intelligence on academic achievement. This research was quantitative, correlational, and non-experimental in nature.

Population of the Study

In Pakistan, there are various types of universities, including professional degree-granting

institutions that focus on developing specialized skills, as well as general universities. In the province of Punjab, there are 32 general-type universities. Therefore, the general population for this study consists of students from these general universities. The accessible population for the study was the entire student body of the university in Okara, Pakistan.

Sampling Procedure

The population was used to pick the study's sample at random (Siddique et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2023). The sample was selected using a two-stage random sampling technique. The first step was the random selection of four departments from the University of Okara: two from the natural sciences (fourth and seventh semester students) and two from the social sciences (fourth and seventh semester students). All of the students in the chosen departments were part of the sample in the second stage. Fifty percent of the 600 students enrolled in these departments were chosen for the study. Consequently, 300 University of Okara students made up the final sample size.

Research Instruments

To assess students' emotional intelligence, the Bar-On (2002) Emotional Quotient Inventory Short version was used, which has been applied in the Pakistani context (Bibi, 2021; Mustafa et al., 2023; Siddique & Rana, 2021; Siddique, 2020a; Siddique, 2020b; Siddique et al., 2024; Taseer et al., 2023). This inventory includes six subscales: favorable impression (six items), self-motivation (six items), stress management (five items), interpersonal skills (seven items), adaptation (five items), and intrapersonal skills (six items). Students' academic achievement was measured by their CGPA, obtained from the relevant departments. University students were given the two research devices in order to gather data. Prior to gathering data, the researcher gave the participants an introduction, described the goal of the study, and gave them the assurance that their answers would remain anonymous and confidential. The participants' written consent was also acquired. The survey included 300 respondents in total. Self-administered questionnaires with all pertinent study data were filled out by each participant.

Data Analysis

Inferential statistics like the Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson r) were used to examine the connection between academic success and emotional intelligence. The impact of emotional intelligence on academic achievement was investigated using linear regression, while demographic factors, such as gender, were examined using an independent sample t-test.

Results

Table 1: Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Variables	r -value
Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement	.861**

** $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

The relationship between students' academic achievement and emotional intelligence is displayed in table 1. The findings show that academic achievement and emotional intelligence are strongly positively correlated ($r = .861^{**}$, $n = 300$, $p < .001$). This implies that there is a substantial and statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence with academic achievement.

Table 2: Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	<i>t</i> -value	Model <i>R</i> Square
Emotional Intelligence & Academic Achievement	29.16	.740

The findings of the linear regression analysis are shown in table 2, where the R² value of .740 shows that 74.0% of the variation in students' academic achievement can be explained by emotional intelligence. With $p = .001$, the beta value of .861 is significant. With a beta value of .861 at $p = .001$, these results show a strong and substantial relationship between emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement.

Table 3: Gender Wise Comparison in Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Variables	Gender	<i>t</i> -value	<i>df</i>
Emotional Intelligence & Academic Achievement		137.07	262.04
	Female	131.96	
Academic Achievement		71.19	257.46
	Female	67.51	

Table 3 shows the comparison of gender-wise mean scores for emotional intelligence and academic achievement using an independent sample *t*-test. The results indicated that emotional intelligence and academic achievement were found significantly significant differences at $p = .05$.

Discussion

The current study investigated the connections between university-level academic achievement and students' emotional intelligence. All things considered, the results aligned with earlier investigations. Academic achievement and students' emotional intelligence were found to be positively and significantly correlated. It was discovered that emotional intelligence and all of its elements are essential to schooling. Students who are able to identify and control their emotions are better able to communicate their requirements and concentrate on their studies, which helps them reach their objectives and enhances their wellbeing and academic achievement. These results are consistent with those of earlier research by Wolfe and Kim (2013), Sanchez et al. (2013), Taseer et al. (2023), Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2010), Choi et al. (2019), and Zhou et al. (2020).

Academic achievement, which is defined as students' achievement from prior semesters, was also taken into consideration in this study. These findings are in line with earlier research by Taseer et al. (2023). For university students, emotional intelligence a positive outlook is essential. The study also sought to investigate how students' gender affected their emotional intelligence and academic achievement. The data was analyzed using an independent sample *t*-test, and the findings revealed significant differences. In comparison to female students, male students scored higher on average in emotional intelligence and academic accomplishment. According to these results, emotional intelligence significantly and favorably affects university students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

This section of the study shows the results of data gathered from correlational descriptive research—this quantitative research examined the relationship between students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Moreover, the effect of students' emotional intelligence on academic achievement was also determined through regression analysis. The first objective was to examine the link between students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement at university level. Pearson r was applied to find an association between both students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement.

The present study was conducted to investigate correlation between students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement at university level. The results concluded that there was strong and positive significant association between students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement. The second research question examined the difference in students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement regarding the demographic factor of gender. Both female and male students had significant difference in students' emotional intelligence and academic achievement, emotional intelligence and academic achievement. In the last research question, the effect of students' emotional intelligence on academic achievement was found. Regression analysis was done to see the impact of students' emotional intelligence on academic achievement. The findings revealed that students' emotional intelligence had a reasonable predictive power of academic achievement. The current study also examined the effect of students' emotional intelligence on academic achievement. According to the results, there was strong effect of students' emotional intelligence on academic achievement at university level.

Implications

The findings of this study hold both practical and theoretical significance, benefiting students, teachers, parents, government officials, policymakers, and researchers. Theoretically, the study provides valuable insights into existing theories of emotional intelligence and its influence on students' academic achievement. It contributes to the body of empirical knowledge on intelligence, particularly emotional intelligence, and strengthens the theoretical foundations of this field. The results will expand our understanding of how emotional intelligence impacts academic achievement, offering additional support for existing theories.

Additionally, the study's findings may re-emphasize the importance of parental involvement in nurturing emotional intelligence in children. Parents will gain insights into the nature of intelligence and how fostering emotional intelligence can contribute to their children's success in university and beyond.

The study is also of practical value to educators, heads of departments, and policymakers, highlighting the significance of emotional intelligence in improving students' academic achievement at the university level. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on emotional intelligence, providing insights that can help enhance university education. Moreover, this research will broaden the literature on emotional intelligence and academic achievement, particularly within the context of Pakistani universities.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing students' academic achievement in classroom settings. Therefore, teachers should focus on developing students' emotional

intelligence skills to improve their academic achievement at the university level in the Punjab province.

2. Students' emotional skills can be improved through targeted training. Furthermore, emotional intelligence and related skills should be integrated into the curriculum to promote better academic achievement.

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