

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Academic Achievement

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Emotional Intelligence on academic achievement among students of Education Faculty, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad. 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 a 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 pre service teachers.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence; academic achievement.*

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, socio economic status, motivation, peer relationship, teacher student relationship, parental involvement and personality. Among all these factors, IQ had been commonly used as a determinant and associated with academic success. However, many recent and emerging studies are revealing that IQ alone is not a reliable predictor of students' academic achievement (Craggs, 2005). One of the most popular and most cited sources is Daniel Goleman's infamous book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. In his book Goleman (1995) claims that only 20% of a person's success can be attributed to IQ. This claim prompts many researchers and academicians to explore and identify other factors that contribute another 80% to a person's success.

In his book Goleman (1995) claims that only 20% of a person's success can be attributed to IQ. This claim prompts many researchers and academicians to explore and identify other factors that contribute another 80% to a person's success. The publishing of Goleman's first book has led to

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a new area of study not only in the field of education but also in business, human relationships, career development, leadership, industrial and organizational psychology and many more. Many parties are intrigued to know how emotional intelligence or EQ of a student can help him or her to learn better and perform academically. Low and Nelson (2006) claim that EQ is crucial to a student's personal health and college success. They claimed that students with emotional intelligence skills are better able to cope with demanding and complex college experience. When individuals are able to lead their life successfully in the academe, they can focus on their learning and perform academically.

Apart from its contribution to academic success, a person with high emotional intelligence is also said to function better as a worker citing reasons such as being able to be a team player, work under pressure, and contribute to organization's productivity. It is becoming more evident that employers nowadays are no longer looking for employees with good grades alone but they are more interested in applicants who can meet the demands of a working world and adapt to the forever changing climate and needs of their organization. This is especially true in profession that requires the employees to be highly emotionally intelligent. An increasing amount of research is being carried out to examine stress in workplace including in learning institutions involving educators such as teachers and lecturers. This is because teaching profession is recognized to be one of the most stressful professions (Antonioniou, 2000; Kyriacou, 1987; Manthei & Solman, 1988 as cited in Noriah, Ramlee, Zuria, SitiRahayah, 2007).

Perhaps not many teachers realize that they themselves hold the key to managing their emotions and subsequently prevent themselves from being badly affected by stress. Sutton and Wheatley (as cited in Kremenitzer and Miller, 2008) argue that "emotions are an integral part of a teacher's job and have an impact on teacher effectiveness, behavior, cognition, and motivation" (p. 107). Nelson, Low and Nelson (2005) also posit that teacher can "effectively deal with the pressures and demands of daily life and work" (p. 2) by developing and capitalizing on their emotional intelligence skills. Therefore, due to the nature and demands involved in teaching, teachers should build on and strive to acquire high level of emotional intelligence to stay relevant and effective in the line of education.

Based on this discussion, it is apparent that having high emotional intelligence gives an added advantage to individuals, may it be in educational pursue or career development. This is because it has been soundly established that emotional intelligence is one of the important determinants of academic achievement among students and it is also what makes them versatile employees once they embark into the working world. This is especially true and more prevalent in professions that require the employees to be highly emotionally intelligent such as in the teaching profession. The next part of this paper will therefore describe an area of investigation that is central to the purpose of the present study in relation to what have been thoroughly discussed earlier.

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 college 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

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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.

In addition to that, being emotionally intelligent does not only help students to learn better but it also determines their career success, especially for those who want to embark into a profession that requires high level of emotion- related competence, such as teaching. Teaching is high in emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983, as cited in Kremenitzer and Miller, 2008). Emotional labour refers to “the extent to which a worker must express appropriate emotions to excel in his or her job” (Kremenitzer and Miller, 2008, p. 107), which is essentially integral to being emotionally intelligent. Hence, there is a need for those who aspire to become educators to possess the skills of emotional intelligence.

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 Education Faculty, Dr. BAMU, Aurangabad and to investigate its influence on their academic achievement. Since the respondents are future educators who will join the teaching profession in the near future, it would be insightful to find out how emotionally intelligent they are and to establish whether emotional intelligence does help them to perform academically in their pursuit to attain their Bachelor Degree in Education.

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?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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

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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.

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.

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.

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.

All the research findings discussed indicate the role that emotional intelligence plays in determining academic achievement among students. Given its importance, there has been

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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).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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 (Self- Emotion Appraisal, Others' Emotion Appraisal, Use of Emotion, and Regulation of Emotion) whereas the dependent variable is students’ academic achievement in a form of Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

Fraenkel and Wallen (2007) state that correlational research is also referred to as descriptive research when the research attempts to describe relationships between variables. However, description from a correlational research is different than other types of studies. Description in correlational research describes “the degree to which two or more quantitative variables are related, and it does so by using a correlation coefficient” (p. 335). Therefore, in this study, correlation coefficient was carried out to determine the degree of relationship between the independent variable with students’ academic achievement.

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.

Population and Sampling

The population selected to carry out this study were 1214 bachelor degree students of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Babsaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad. The students are enrolled in a variety of programmes namely Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Art & Design Education, Physical Education & Health Programme and Bachelor of Education in Science in Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 278 participants would be sufficient to be the representative of the 1214 student population identified for this study. This study employed simple random sampling procedure in which every sample has an equal chance to be selected as a participant. Based on the amount of sample proposed by Krejcie and Morgan, 23% students from every programme were selected to become the participants. This means that out of the 278 students sample, a total of 171 students were selected from TESL Programme, 13 students were from Art & Design Education, 22 students were from Physical Education & Health, 13 students were from Science Biology, 20 students were from Science Physics, 23 students were from Science Mathematics and lastly 17 students were from Science Chemistry Programme.

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Instrumentation

Since the study is a purely quantitative study, questionnaire is the sole instrument used for the purpose of data collection in the present study. The rationale for using questionnaire is because it is not costly, could be easily distributed and the most convenient way to collect data (Holmes et al., 2005). The questionnaire used in this study consists of 2 Sections. Section A (Demographic Background) requires participants to provide background information such as gender, age, CGPA and program. Section B (Emotional Intelligence) attempts to measure students' level of Emotional Intelligence. This section was taken from the version adapted by Wong & Law (2002) which consists of four (4) dimensions which are *Self-Emotion Appraisal*, *Other's Emotion Appraisal*, *Use of Emotion* and *Regulation of Emotion*. Respondents were required to respond to the items which employed a 7-point Likert scale in which they have to rate their responses ranging from 1 which indicated *Strongly Disagree* to 7 which indicated *Strongly Agree*. There are 16 items in Section B and it employs a self-report measure. The responses gathered from Section B provide the level of the students' emotional intelligence.

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 the 7-point Likert 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.

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.

Level of Emotional Intelligence among the Respondents

The items in the questionnaire require respondents to indicate their response base on 1-to-7-point Likert scale. In this study, respondents' responses with a mean score of 0.00 to 2.99 are considered as *Low*, 3.00 to 4.99 are considered as *Moderate* while responses with a mean score of 5.00 to 7.00 are considered as *High*.

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Table 5.2.1 Descriptive Analysis of Level of Emotional Intelligence

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	5.268	0.726

Table 5.2.1 above presents the overall mean score of emotional intelligence among the respondents while Table 5.2.2 on the other hand presents the mean scores of the four domains of emotional intelligence investigated in this study. Firstly, finding in Table 5.2.1 reveals that the students of the Faculty of Education, Dr. BAMU, Aurangabad had high level of emotional intelligence ($M= 5.268, SD= 0.726$). Secondly, the respondents also were reported to have high level of emotional intelligence for all the four domains investigated in this study with ($M= 5.542, SD= 0.874$) for *Self-Emotion Appraisal*, ($M= 5.107, SD= 0.956$) for *Others' Emotion Appraisal*, ($M= 5.419, SD= 1.027$) for *Understanding of Emotion* and ($M= 5.003, SD= 1.136$) for *Regulation of Emotion*.

The findings from Table 5.2.2 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).

Table 5.2.2 Descriptive Analysis of Domains of Emotional Intelligence

Domains of Emotional Intelligence	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Emotion Appraisal	5.542	0.874
Others' Emotion Appraisal	5.107	0.956
Understanding of Emotion	5.419	1.027
Regulation of Emotion	5.003	1.136

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Table 5.3.1 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

	<i>r</i> -value	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence	0.084	0.193

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Table 5.3.2 Correlation between Domains of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Domains of Emotional Intelligence	r –value	Sig.
Self-Emotion Appraisal	0.138	0.017
Others' Emotion Appraisal	-0.029	0.326
Understanding of Emotion	0.154	0.008
Regulation of Emotion	-0.006	0.462

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 5.3.1 whereas Table 5.3.2 shows the relationship according to the domains of emotional intelligence. Table 5.3.1 shows that there is a positive and weak relationship ($r= 0.084$, $p= 0.193$) 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.

Nevertheless, investigation of the relationship between the four domains of emotional intelligence and academic achievement as presented in Table 5.3.2 reveals that out of the four, two domains which are the *Self-Emotion Appraisal* and *Understanding of Emotion* are significantly associated with academic achievement. The results show that the relationship between *Self-Emotion Appraisal*; *Understanding of Emotion* and academic achievement is positive though weak with their respective r and p values ($r= 0.138$ $p= 0.017$, $r= 0.154$ $p= 0.008$), significant at the level of 0.05. This finding indicates that students who are well aware of their feelings and emotions and have the ability to understand those emotions as well as to anticipate what emotions would transpire under certain circumstances are better able to cope effectively with the pressures for academic excellence in higher learning institutions. Low et al., (2004) assert that emotional knowledge, skills, and intelligence do play a significant role in attaining higher academic achievements and improving quality of education. Salovey, et al., (as cited in Mayer and Salovey, 1993) also agree to the notion that individuals who could identify their feelings and emotions clearly and know how to manage them are more capable to recover effectively from emotional distress following failures and unpleasant experiences. 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. The other two domains on the other hand were found to be negatively and weakly associated with academic achievement. They are the *Others' Emotion Appraisal* ($r= -0.029$, $p= 0.326$) and *Regulation of Emotion* ($r= -0.006$, $p= 0.462$). These negative relationships suggest that the higher the respondents' ability to recognize other people's emotion and to regulate their emotions, the lower their academic achievement. This finding is in contrast with other research findings that have established a positive relationship between emotional intelligence skills and academic achievement. According to Parker et al., (as cited in Jaeger and Eagan, 2007), inconsistent findings among studies investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement "may be the result of methodological problems of narrowly defining emotional capabilities and/or assessing academic success over very short time periods" (p.518).

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Jaeger and Eagan (2007) further illustrated that the uncertain relationship between the two might depend on “the operationalization of the academic performance variable” (pp. 518-519).

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 Faculty of Education, Dr. BAMU, Aurangabad 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.

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 Maharashtra (Noriah, Ramlee, Zuria and Siti Rahayah, 2007). Therefore, it is about time for the student teacher education programs in higher learning institutions especially in Dr. BAMU, Aurangabad 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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Conflict of Interest

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