

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance among Adolescents and Early Adults

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence is about understanding our emotions and knowing how to manage them in different situations. For students, this can be important because they often deal with academic pressure, stress, challenges, and relationships while trying to do well in their studies. The present study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among students and also explored whether male and female students differed in these areas. A total of 80 students between the ages of 18 and 23 participated in the study. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance was examined using Pearson's correlation. An independent samples t-test was used to examine gender differences. The findings showed that students with higher emotional intelligence tended to have slightly better academic performance; however, the relationship was weak and not statistically significant. The study also found no significant difference between male and female students in either emotional intelligence or academic performance. This suggests that gender may not play an important role in determining students' emotional intelligence or academic success. Academic performance may be influenced by several other factors, including motivation, study habits, cognitive abilities, and the learning environment. Overall, the study shows that emotional intelligence may support students in managing their emotions and academic challenges, but it is only one part of a much bigger picture when it comes to academic achievement and personal development.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Academic Performance Among Students

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in a student's everyday life, especially during adolescence. It is about understanding our own feelings, knowing why we feel a certain way, managing our emotions, and being able to understand and respond to other people's feelings with empathy. For students, these skills are important because they affect their relationships, well-being, academic performance, and ability to deal with stress. Adolescence is a time of many physical, mental, and emotional changes. Students also have to deal with academic pressure, family expectations, friendships, and other challenges. Having good emotional intelligence can make these situations easier to handle. Students with higher EI are usually better at staying calm, controlling their reactions, managing stress, and staying focused. Even when they face poor marks, exams, or other setbacks, they are more likely to keep trying instead of giving up. Emotional intelligence develops through both personal abilities and the environment around a student. Skills such as self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills help students understand themselves and interact better with others. At the same time, family support, friendships, parenting, and the school environment also influence how these skills develop. A supportive environment can make students feel comfortable expressing their emotions and learning how to deal with them in healthy ways. Students with good EI often build stronger relationships because they know how to communicate, listen, understand others, and handle disagreements. They may also cope better with stress and emotional difficulties, helping them stay more balanced and resilient. EI can also support academic performance by helping students manage their time, stay focused, handle exam pressure, and remain motivated when studies become difficult. As students grow older, emotional intelligence becomes even more important because they start making decisions about higher education, careers, and their future. It helps them deal with uncertainty, make better decisions, adapt to new situations, and take on responsibilities with confidence. Overall, emotional intelligence is an important part of a student's growth. Developing it during adolescence can help students become more confident, emotionally balanced, and prepared to face the challenges of the future.

Review of Literature

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an important part of college life because it can affect students' academic performance, well-being, and overall growth. It means being able to understand and manage our own emotions while also recognizing and responding to the

emotions of others (Bai et al., 2022). College students often face academic pressure, social changes, and emotional challenges, so having good emotional skills can help them cope better and stay engaged in their studies (Han et al., 2022; Akkaraju et al., 2019).

Many studies have found a positive connection between emotional intelligence and academic performance. Parker et al. (2004) found that students with higher EI adjusted better to college and performed better academically because they were better able to manage stress, stay motivated, and deal with challenges. Similarly, Nasir and Masrur (2010) found that students who understood and managed their emotions well tended to achieve better academically. Jaeger and Eagan (2007) also found that EI was related to better classroom participation, communication, relationships, and academic success.

However, emotional intelligence is not the only factor that determines academic success. Barchard (2003) found that EI had only a modest effect on academic performance when compared with cognitive intelligence and other factors. This shows that students' academic achievement depends on a combination of emotional, cognitive, and environmental factors.

EI is also important beyond academic marks. Soria and Stubblefield (2014) found that it can support student engagement and persistence. Other studies have shown that emotionally intelligent students may be better able to handle academic pressure, adjust to college life, remain involved in their studies, and continue their education (Han et al., 2022; Bai et al., 2022; Edgar et al., 2019).

Emotional intelligence includes skills such as motivation, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills (Goleman et al., 2013). These skills can help students understand themselves, build healthy relationships, manage their behaviour, communicate effectively, work with others, and maintain their well-being (Collie, 2022; Jiang et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2020; Hilton et al., 2022).

Overall, the literature shows that emotional intelligence can play an important role in students' academic and personal lives. Even though cognitive ability may sometimes have a stronger influence on academic achievement, EI helps students manage emotions, relationships, stress, and challenges. Therefore, developing emotional intelligence can contribute to a better and more successful college experience.

Objective

- To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among early adults.
- To examine the gender difference in emotional intelligence and academic performance among early adults.

Hypothesis

In quantitative research, design to identify the emotional intelligence and academic performance among early adults. The present study aims to examine whether there is a difference in emotional intelligence and academic performance exist between male and female early adults. Based on this objective, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: There will be significant difference between emotional intelligence and academic performance among male and female early adults.

H2: There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence and academic performance among male and female early adults.

H3: There will be significant relationship difference between emotional intelligence and academic performance among male and female early adults.

Methodology

Research Design:

The present study used a quantitative correlational research design to understand whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among students. A quantitative approach was used because the information collected from the participants was converted into numerical data and analyzed using statistical methods. A correlational design was considered appropriate for this study because the main aim was to examine whether students with higher levels of emotional intelligence also showed better academic performance. The study did not involve changing or controlling any variables. Instead, emotional intelligence and academic performance were measured as they naturally existed among the participants. Emotional intelligence was considered the independent variable, while academic performance was considered the dependent variable. The study also examined whether male and female students differed in their levels of emotional intelligence and academic performance. To analyze the data, an independent samples t-test was used to compare male and female students, while Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance.

Participants

The participants in the present study were 80 students between the ages of 18 and 23 years. This age group was selected because early adulthood is a period when individuals experience several important changes in their personal, social, emotional, and academic lives. Students at this stage often face academic pressure, make important decisions about their future, manage relationships, and develop greater independence. The participants came from different academic backgrounds, which allowed the study to include students with varied educational experiences. They were selected using convenience sampling, as the participants were easily accessible and willing to take part in the study. Before participating, the students were informed about the purpose of the study and what their participation would involve. Participation was completely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. The privacy and confidentiality of the participants were maintained throughout the study. They were also informed that they could choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Tools

The present study used the Emotional Intelligence Scale and a measure of Academic Performance to assess the two main variables of the study. These tools helped in understanding the participants' emotional abilities and their academic achievement. The Emotional Intelligence Scale was used to assess how well participants understand, recognize, manage, and respond to their emotions. It focuses on important aspects of emotional functioning, such as emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and the ability to understand and respond to emotions in interpersonal situations. Academic performance was assessed using the academic performance scores reported by the participants. These scores provided an indication of their academic achievement and helped the researchers examine whether academic performance was related to emotional intelligence. The use of these tools provided a structured and systematic way of collecting information about the study variables. They helped ensure consistency in the assessment process and provided a suitable foundation for examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among students.

Sample

The present study included early adults between the ages of 18 and 23 years. The sample consisted of 80 students, including both male and female participants from different academic

backgrounds. The participants were pursuing various academic courses and were selected from different educational settings. The sample included students from different streams, such as Engineering, Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Arts (BA), and students preparing for competitive examinations such as NEET. Including students from different academic backgrounds helped the study obtain a wider understanding of emotional intelligence and academic performance among students. The participants were selected using convenience sampling, based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. Participation was completely voluntary. Before taking part in the study, the participants were informed about its purpose and what their participation would involve. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. The privacy and confidentiality of the participants were maintained throughout the research process. No personally identifying information was collected, and the information provided by the participants was used only for academic and research purposes. Including participants from different academic backgrounds helped provide a broader perspective on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance.

Statistical Analysis

The data collected for the present study were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among students. Statistical analysis helped the researchers organize the collected information, identify patterns in the data, and interpret the findings in a systematic manner. The following statistical techniques were used in the study: Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis, Independent Sample t-Test

Data and Source of Data

The present study used, primary data which were collected directly from the participants through a structured questionnaire. The data were collected specifically to understand emotional intelligence and academic performance among students. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms, making it easier for participants to access and complete it. The participants were students between the ages of 18 and 23 years and came from different academic backgrounds. They included students pursuing courses such as Engineering, Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Arts (BA), as well as students preparing for competitive examinations such as NEET. Before the data collection began, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and what their participation would involve.

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. They were also informed that the information they provided would be kept confidential and used only for academic and research purposes. No personally identifying information was collected. The structured questionnaire was used to collect information related to the main variables of the study. The Emotional Intelligence Scale was used to assess the emotional intelligence of the participants, while academic performance was assessed using the academic performance information provided by them. Using the same structured format for all participants helped maintain consistency throughout the data collection process. After the responses were collected, the data were organized and prepared for analysis. The information was then analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance and to identify possible gender differences in the study variables. This process helped the researchers collect relevant information in a systematic manner and address the objectives of the study.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Comparison of Emotional Intelligence Scores Based on Gender

Variables	Gender	N	MEAN	SD	df	t Value	SIG
Emotional Intelligence	Male	31	37.80	5.97		-0.342	0.734
	Female	49	37.34	5.68	78	-0.346	0.730

Table 1 compares the emotional intelligence of 80 undergraduate students, including 31 males and 49 females. Males had a slightly higher mean score (37.80) than females (37.34), but the difference was very small. The t-test showed that this difference was not statistically significant, $t(78) = -0.346$, $p = .730$. Since $p > .05$, the null hypothesis was retained, meaning that male and female students had similar levels of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves understanding and managing our own emotions and recognising the emotions of others. It can be influenced by education, family, social relationships, and life experiences, rather than gender alone. This finding is consistent with Chamizo-Nieto et al. (2021), Okwuduba et al. (2021), and Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2020), who also found that gender was not a consistent factor in emotional intelligence. The similar results may be because the students had comparable educational and social experiences. Other factors, such as personality,

family environment, emotional maturity, social support, and personal experiences, may have a greater influence. Overall, the study found no significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female students, so the proposed hypothesis was not supported.

Table2: Emotional intelligence among gender based difference in academic performance

Variables	Gender	N	MEAN	SD	df	t Value	Sig
Academic Performance	Male	31	26.10	3.94		0.167	0.868
	Female	49	26.24	3.71	78	0.179	0.866

Table 2 looks at the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance among undergraduate students. The results showed a weak positive relationship ($r = .124$), but it was not statistically significant ($p = .209$). Since $p > .05$, the null hypothesis was retained, meaning that emotional intelligence and academic performance were not significantly related in this study. Students with higher emotional intelligence tended to have slightly better academic performance, but the relationship was too small to be meaningful. This could be because academic performance is influenced by many factors, such as study habits, motivation, time management, concentration, intelligence, self-discipline, family support, and the learning environment. Emotional intelligence may help students manage stress, stay motivated, and maintain good relationships, but it may not directly improve academic performance. The findings are partly consistent with Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2020) and Quílez-Robres et al. (2023), who found that emotional intelligence can support academic performance. However, they differ from Mohd Mohzan et al. (2013), Fernandez et al. (2012), Iqbal et al. (2021), and Okwuduba et al. (2021), who found significant positive relationships. These differences could be due to differences in participants, educational settings, cultural backgrounds, and measurement tools. Overall, the study found a weak but non-significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance, so the hypothesis was not supported.

Table 3: Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Academic Performance
Pearson Correlation		0.124
Sig(2-Tailed)		0.209
N	80	80

Table 3 compares the academic performance of 80 undergraduate students, including 31 males and 49 females. Male students had a mean score of 26.10 (SD = 3.94), while female students had a slightly higher mean of 26.24 (SD = 3.71). However, this difference was not statistically significant, $t(78) = 0.167$, $p = .868$. Since $p > .05$, the null hypothesis was retained, showing that male and female students performed similarly academically. Academic performance can be influenced by many factors, including motivation, study habits, time management, learning strategies, emotional well-being, and the learning environment. The findings are consistent with Chew et al. (2013), Chamizo-Nieto et al. (2021), Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2020), and Quílez-Robres et al. (2023), who highlighted the importance of psychological, motivational, and environmental factors rather than gender alone. The students may also have had similar educational experiences, curriculum, assessment methods, and learning resources. Overall, there was no significant gender difference in academic performance, so the proposed hypothesis was not supported.

Limitations

While the present study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance, several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations are important for placing the findings in proper context and for guiding future research.

- **Modest Sample Size:** The study included only 80 participants, which may not have been enough to identify small or less obvious relationships between emotional intelligence and academic performance.
- **Homogeneity of the Sample:** Since the participants were mostly young adults from a similar educational background, the findings may not apply to students from different age groups, courses, or backgrounds.
- **Dependence on Self-Report Instruments:** Since the data were collected through self-report questionnaires, participants' responses may have been influenced by personal perceptions, lack of self-awareness, or the desire to give socially acceptable answers.
- **Cross-Sectional Nature of the Study:** Since the data were collected at only one point in time, the study cannot determine whether emotional intelligence directly affects academic performance or vice versa.

Conclusion

The study found a weak positive but non-significant link between emotional intelligence and academic performance. This means emotional intelligence may help students academically, but it is not the main factor affecting their performance. There were also no significant differences between male and female students in either variable. Academic performance is influenced by many factors, such as motivation, study habits, intelligence, and the learning environment. Overall, emotional intelligence can help students manage stress and challenges, but other factors also play an important role.

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