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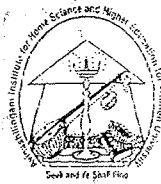
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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FINAL YEAR UNDER GRADUATES

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Introduction

Academic performance/ achievement of students, no doubt, remain the most outstanding development priority area in the world today. The core purpose of education, unquestionably, is human development. Other things being equal, an educated person who is well or relevantly positioned in the socio- economic, cultural and political milieu is expected to be a valuable asset to the society than any other individual who is illiterate and perhaps ignorant. This simple fact explains why researchers and scholars, all over the world, continue to do research into ways of improving human knowledge and development. The socio - political, economic and technological developments, which bring about a high frequency of innovations and reforms, have all combined to make discussions or debates on education and human development trendy, exciting and unending.

Good academic performance is undoubtedly a research after the heart of educational psychologists. Researchers who have sought to discover factors associated with high academic performance have examined an array of variables such as social

behaviour, academic self- concept, learning strategies, motivation, parenting styles, emotional intelligence and socio-economic status.

Although the research examining social behaviour focuses heavily on the environmental factors related to achievement, some investigators have chosen the emotional intelligence of the child as a target for study. Elias and Maurine (2006) had submitted that the way and manner the child perceived himself could affect his academic performance. They also argue that underachievers, when compared to their more academically successfully peers, are plagued by an assortment of personal deficits. They are highly anxious, self- derogatory, likely to act defensively in the face of authority; tend to feel rejected, and set unrealistic goals for themselves.

Academic articles exploring the concept of emotional intelligence began to appear in the early 1990s. Little was known about the concept in the general public on academia until it was popularized in 1995 by Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence; why it can matter more the IQ*. The book captured the attention of the general public,

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media, and researchers by claiming that emotional intelligence can be 'as powerful, and at times more powerful, than IQ' in predicting how successful one is in life.

In the beginning, psychologists focused on cognitive constructs like memory and problem solving in their first attempt to write on intelligence. This did not last when researchers began to challenge this orientation and recognized that there are other non-cognitive aspects of intelligence. For instance, Thorndike wrote about social intelligence in 1937. And as early as 1943, Wechsler proposed that the non intelligence abilities are essential for predicting ability to succeed in life. Imbrosciano and Berlach (2003) have remarked that 'success' may be viewed in three main domains. A good student is often referred to as being 'intelligent', or 'well behaved', or 'academically successful'. Arising from this are the questions: Are there any connection between these domains? Is there a strong connection, between intelligence and academic achievement? Do students with high intelligence behave better? These and many more questions underscore the important place intelligence has been found to play in academic success. This is where the emergence of emotional intelligence gained its weightage.

Emotional intelligence is a confluence of developed abilities to know and value self build and maintain a variety of strong, productive and healthy relationships get along and work well with others in achieving positive results; and effectively deal with the

pressures and demands of daily life and work. The development of emotional intelligence is an intentional, active and engaging process. Affective learning requires a person- centered process for teacher and student growth and development. When emotional intelligence skills are the focus of learning, teachers and students are building human development behaviours that are intricately related to the positive outcomes of achievement, goal achievement and personal well-being.

Emotional intelligence is not in itself sufficient to create optimal outcomes for youth. However, the way of emotional intelligence is used, both by youth and those who support them has a powerful effect on the children's lives. Emotional intelligence appears to be a core ingredient that, when developed and well employed, has wide-ranging benefits for learning, relationships, and wellness.

In recent times therefore, social scientists and educational psychologists are beginning to uncover the relationship of emotional intelligence to other phenomenon. These are: leadership, group performance, academic performance and policing. These findings attest to the significance of emotional intelligence to all constructs (school achievement inclusive). As a matter of fact, emotional intelligence (EI) has recently attracted a lot of interest in the academic literature.

Various investigators have engaged in research designed to examine and apply emotional intelligence constructs within

academic settings. Lam et al (2001) investigated the notion that advanced emotional intelligence was correlated with greater individual performance, often above and beyond that associated with one's level of general intelligence. Jaeger (2003) studied the effects of emotional intelligence instruction on academic performance and found out that a greater correlation exists between the emotional intelligence and academic performance. Likewise, Abisamra (2000) reported that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. He therefore canvassed for inclusion of emotional intelligence in the schools' curricula.

But by contrast a few of them have sought to provide evidence of limited relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their scores in their studies. Some research has found emotional intelligence is not being correlated with academic performance. The results has been mixed. Nevertheless, and in spite of the studies reviewed, there is still a need to further investigate the relationship of emotional intelligence to academic achievement. Research indicating a close connection between emotional intelligence and academic performance is plethora.

The present research aims to fill up the lacunae of the researches held on the influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Academic Performance and follows the words of Salovey and Mayer (2004) that define EI as the ability to perceive and express emotions, assimilate them in

thinking, understanding and reasoning, and regulate them in the self and others. Hence the domains of Emotional Intelligence as stated by Salovey and Mayer namely Intrapersonal Awareness, Interpersonal Awareness, Intrapersonal Management and Interpersonal Management are considered and empirically examined for its relation with academic performance.

Subsequently, the term performance has got different connotations in the academic pursuit itself. Merriam Webster defines performance as 'the act of performing' (the action/work to be performed so as to accomplish or bring to completion), execution, accomplishment, fulfillment' etc. However, the term performance in the present research is related to the academics and is coined to a single term as academic performance of the adolescent girls. With this background, the present study was conducted with the following objectives.

The objectives for the present study were to

- measure the total Emotional Intelligence level possessed by the selected sample
- analyse the association of the independent variable – area of origin and course of graduation on the total emotional intelligence level of the selected sample and
- assess the relative effect of the measured total Emotional Intelligence with the Academic Performance of the selected sample

Methodology

Three hundred college going adolescent girls of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu were selected for the present research. A general and personal profile was being collected from the selected sample through a self constructed questionnaire. A Standard Questionnaire by Mangal and Mangal for the assessment of Emotional Intelligence level of an individual (totally as well as separately on four domains Intrapersonal Awareness, Interpersonal Awareness, Intrapersonal Management and Interpersonal Management respectively) was being administered to the 300 respondents from the major course streams of Home Science, Humanities, Management and Science respectively. The mark sheets of the selected sample till the 4th semesters' of their academic year were being computed and those marks were aggregated, and a mean of all those aggregated marks were collected. Then the mean of all the semesters' marks had been graded, separating the high from the middle and the low achievers. Then an assessment of those grades with the total Emotional Intelligence scores of each student was being done, to see whether there is a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance. ANOVA technique in the research is used to intend and find the correlation between the total emotional intelligence score and the two moderating variables namely area of origin of the selected sample and course of graduation. Also ANOVA technique is used

to produce the result and find out the correlation between the marks obtained which was graded and total emotional intelligence score. The findings were resolved and presented below.

Results and discussion

A. Life milieu of the selected sample

a. General profile

Significant rifts would appear when attempts are made to match cures to the causes of good/ poor academic performance of college going adolescent girls. Hence efforts were made to collect the general milieu of the selected sample with special relevance to age, religion, area of origin and mother tongue and presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. General profile of the selected sample

Details	N	Per cent
Age		
19 years	71	23.7
20 years	174	58.0
>20 years	55	18.3
Religion		
Hindu	249	83.0
Muslim	25	8.3
Christian/ others	26	8.7
Origin		
Urban	105	35.0
Sub- urban	86	28.7
Rural	109	36.3
Mother tougue		
Tamil	218	72.7
Malayalam	36	12.0
Telugu	27	9.0
Kannada	9	3.0
Hindi	10	3.3

A considerable number of the selected sample (174) is found under the bubbling age of 20 years accounting to 58 per cent. It is noted that 23.7 per cent were still in their teen years. Glancing at the religious aspect, a vast majority of 83 per cent of the selected sample were Hindus, followed by Christians (8.7%) and Muslims (8.3%). Tracing the area of origin of the selected sample more or less equal representation was found for city born (35%) and village born (36.3%) of adolescent girls and the remaining hailed from sub-urban area. From the above table it is very much indicative that majority of 72.7 per cent of the selected samples speak Tamil, followed by Malayalam (12%), Telugu (9%), and Kannada (3%).

b. Personal profile

Personal profile is that which provides a ground to know about the personal information of the selected sample. Table 2 presents the personal profile of the selected sample with regard to the course of graduation, skills possessed, choice of career and service done.

Table 2. Personal profile of the selected sample

Details	N	Per cent
Course		
Home Science	119	39.7
Management	32	10.7
Humanities	68	22.7
Science	81	27.0
Skills possessed		
Arts/Crafts	71	24.0
Management skills	19	6.4
Innovative thinking	98	33.1
Creative ability	92	31.5
Others	188	53.5
Career choice		
Myself	210	70
Family	90	30

Looking into the aspect of the course that is being opted by the selected sample considerably 39.7 per cent of the selected sample belong to the course stream of Home Science. Twenty seven per cent hail from Science background followed by Humanities stream (22.7%) and the Management faculty (10.7%). The type of random sampling stand as the reason for the uneven proportion of graduation of the selected sample. Information was collected on the skills possessed by the selected sample, owing to the suspect that an emotionally intelligent person could enhance or possess special talents against their counter parts. The breakup from the table reveals that 33.1 and 31.5 per cent of subjects were confident enough to declare that they are innovative and creative respectively. Also an interesting fact is that the entire selected samples are involved in community services namely National Social Service and National Cadet Corps carried out on and off the campus.

B. Grading the selected sample based on the total emotional intelligence scores obtained

Mangal Emotional Intelligence Inventory (MEII) is used to measure the emotional intelligence level of college going students summed across four domains namely Intrapersonal Awareness (knowing about one's emotions), Interpersonal Awareness (knowing about others' emotions), Intrapersonal Management (managing one's emotions), and Interpersonal Management (managing others' emotions). Table 3 gives a clear picture of the categorization and per cent distribution of the selected sample based on

the total score obtained by them on the above said four domains of emotional intelligence.

Table 3. Grading the selected sample based on the total emotional intelligence score

Area	Category	N	Per cent
Total emotional intelligence	Very good (≥ 88)	5	1.6
	Good (77-89)	64	21.3
	Average (63-76)	139	46.3
	Poor (49-62)	79	26.3
	Very poor (≤ 48)	13	4.3

It is obvious from the table that, about 1.6 per cent of the selected subjects seem to be very good and emotionally intellectual enough and more than half of the subjects (160/300) were in the average category of emotional intelligence. However, a satisfactory per cent of 17.5 per cent were categorized as emotionally intelligent. But 23.1 per cent and 5.9 per cent were found to be not emotionally intelligent, which enlighten the need to provide sustainable and strengthened enhancement programme on emotional intelligence in higher education system.

C. The effect of area of origin and course of graduation of the selected sample on total emotional intelligence score

Expecting that certain variables like area of origin and the course of graduation of the selected respondents could influence their emotional intelligence, data were analyzed using two separate one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the total emotional intelligence scores as dependent variable and the area of origin and course of

graduation as independent variables. Table 4 reflects the outcome of the effect of the area of origin and course of graduation on the total emotional intelligence score of the selected sample.

Table 4. Relationship of area of origin and course of graduation on total emotional intelligence score level

Details	No.	Mean	SD	f
Origin				
Urban	105	68.22	10.16	3.314*
Sub-urban	86	65.44	11.32	
Rural	109	64.57	10.81	
Course				
Home Science	119	69.82	9.55	8.395**
Management	32	63.97	13.91	
Humanities	68	63.39	9.47	
Science	81	63.48	10.90	

* Significant at 5% level ** - Significant at 1% level

An increase in the computed 'f' value implies that there is a significant difference at 5 per cent level between the independent variable - area of origin and the dependent variable - total emotional intelligence score of the selected sample. The above table also depicts the upshot mean score for the sample hailing from urban area, followed by the sub-urban category and rural origin. This finding ensures that the area of origin strongly influence the emotional intelligence level of the selected sample.

The mean scores depicted in the table with relevance to the course of graduation had explicitly revealed that the Home Science majoring students over powered their counterparts with a better score on their total emotional intelligence. The 'f' value highlights that the course of graduation has

a powerful influence on the emotional intelligence of the selected lot.

D. Relative effect of total emotional intelligence on the academic performance of the selected sample

To fill up the research gap that could explicate the two opposing views on the

'influence of emotional intelligence on the academic performance', the present research was carried out. The per cent distribution of the selected respondents based on the total emotional intelligence score is associated with the mean marks scored by them in their previous semesters and presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Relationship between the academic performance and the total emotional intelligence score

Total emotional intelligence score Grade			Semester marks obtained		f- value
	N	Per cent	Mean	SD	
Very good	5	1.6	81.10	6.93	11.235**
Good	64	21.3	73.29	7.97	
Average	139	46.3	69.16	9.09	
Poor	79	26.3	65.67	8.65	
Very poor	13	4.3	61.35	12.43	

** Significant at 1% level

The Table 5 reveals the relationship of emotional intelligence on the whole with the academic performance level based on the mean marks obtained in the previous semesters. The computed 'f' value of 11.235 significant at 1 per cent level has evidently showed that emotional intelligence could significantly predict academic achievement of college students. This finding is consistent with Jaegar (2003) on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success. Similarly, Abisamra (2000) had reported that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance. Certainly and in consonant with the present finding, it can be ascertained that emotional intelligence determines to a great extent the academic performance of college going students.

This finding is easily explainable bearing in mind that emotional intelligence competencies, such as ability to regulate one's feelings, problem solving, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are highly germane to academic success. For instance, a student who is adept in emotional management could use such skills to ward off stress and anxiety associated with test taking and examination. Furthermore ability to display interpersonal skills may assist students to seek academic help from teachers, peers and resource persons.

Implications of the study

The study has implication for the curriculum developers to integrate emotional intelligence into the curriculum of school to college students. It also emerges out with the

recommendation that the teachers, counselors and educational psychologists should encourage the development of a strong achievement motivation in the students through the provision of appropriate counselling intervention programmes and enabling environment. By doing so, the academic performance of the students could be improved barring all other teaching - learning obstacles.

The sub - factors of emotional intelligence, consistently predict academic performance, as per the present finding which itself has interesting implications. It is an accepted finding that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of job performance. Yet, schools and admission tests continue to put a significant emphasis on cognitive ability, when it explains very little of achievement in the workplace or in life. In graduate programmes and cognitively demanding careers, such as engineering, the selection process focuses primarily on intellectual abilities and not on emotional intelligence. Therefore, graduate programmes and competitive companies could consider incorporating such an emotional intelligence competencies in the selection process.

It is strongly recommended that business schools consider adding practical courses that would help students function at a higher level of emotional intelligence and which would ultimately improve employee performance and interactions in the workplace. A specific emotional intelligence course could include instruction and actual practice in some of the following areas

related to emotional intelligence, assertiveness, adaptability, emotion expression, emotion regulation, emotion management (others), emotion perception (self and others), impulsiveness, relationships, self-esteem, self-motivation, social awareness, stress management, trait optimism, happiness and empathy, inspiring/ influencing others, managing time and priorities, negotiating, managing conflict, and recognizing personality traits in others.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that this study has some limitations. First, although the sample size for this study was relatively adequate the fact still remains that it did not represent the totality of students. Also the other gender was not examined. Thus a note of caution needs to be sounded when generalizing the study's findings. On the whole, opinion about the Emotional Intelligence Level assessment in terms of reliability, validity, enhancement, expected content, and providing guidance in the present research is very positive and encouraging. Security and endorsement are not only the factors that aid in the transformation to adolescence. Intelligence pooled with appropriate emotions and quality academics make them shine in their academics as well as in their career development.

Despite these limitations, the findings of the study have provided a further need on how to improve upon the academics of students. In particular, the study has shown that emotional well - being could be emphasized on academic success.

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