Role of Generic Competence in Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement of University Students

Rahat Yasmeen[*]
Zunaira Fatima Syeda[**]
Sehrish Naseer[***]

Abstract

This research aim was to analyze "Role of Generic Competence in Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement of University Students". Quantitative survey research design was used for this research. All students at University of Sargodha, were the population of the study. Convenience sampling technique was used for data collection. 320 students from Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Department of English), Faculty of Social Sciences (Department of Social Work), Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (Sargodha Medical College) and Faculty of Agriculture (Department of Plant Pathology) were selected conveniently. Two adopted instruments were used in study. The online Google form was used for data collection. Mediation analysis techniques were used to assess the Role of Generic Competence in Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement of University Students. The findings of the study produced an insignificant mediating role of Generic Competence in Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement of University Students. It is recommended that universities need to provide guideline to curriculum developers to design such curriculum and evaluation system to fulfill the emerging needs of students and professionals.

Keywords: Generic competence, emotional intelligence, academic achievement, and higher education.

[*]   PhD Scholar, Department of Education, University of Sargodha
      rahatniazi257@gmail.com
[**] PhD Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Sargodha
      zunaira.fatima@uos.edu.pk
[***] PhD (Corresponding Author), HSE University, Russian Federation
      sehrishnwarraich@gmail.com

Introduction

There are various problems i.e., poor teacher-student relationship, poor competencies, unsatisfied learning environment that students meet in their daily life and these problems effects their academic performance (Ononye et al., 2022). In order to provide students with a deeper understanding to tackle these issues educational institutions need to focus on improvement of generic competencies of students. Generic competence is considered less important or is not given special attention in educational institutions. This method left a gap where graduates might attain greater academic success without developing essential generic competence (Madar, 2015). Academic accomplishment alone does not sufficiently imitate other essential abilities which are required for the market. All university students require to be good at marketplace to get job after studies. Generic competence enhances one's academic credentials in finding employment. The concept of generic competence is defined in various ways. But mostly, it is referred to overall, convenient abilities, professional marketplace skills, 21st century abilities or competencies. Main concepts of generic competence are the same but changeable tags used to define it according to the context (Girotto & Oliveira, 2022). Academic success demonstrates a depth of subject knowledge and makes it easier to continue your education, but it does little to further your job prospects. Since 1830 academic achievement of students become a practice in US (De La Fuente-Mella et al., 2022). Educational achievement is the result of a course or the average result across all courses, represented on a scale in numerical form (Madar, 2015). Higher education institutions' main goal is to generate graduates who have the expected employability or general competence that the labor market demands. (Pitan, 2015). The instructional approaches used by higher education institutions greatly influence the acquisition of generic competence. There are many different teaching methods; one that is thought to improve the development of general competence is participatory teaching (Madar, 2015). A person's emotional intelligence is also affected by their generic competence.

The current environment places a strong emphasis on a student's ability to succeed not only on their thinking abilities but also mindfulness, control as well as abilities of them. Emotional intelligence was defined by Mayor and Salovey in 1990. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability of understanding and evaluating feelings of own self and others feelings in order to work effectively in education sector, health sector social sector (Kant, 2019). A variety of intellectual and non-intellectual traits together known as emotional intelligence which affects an individual's capacity to

be good at all academic levels. In order to live in harmony and satisfaction, EI also helps to adapt to the environment. The capacity to experience, comprehend and use a range of emotions, actions, relationships as well as impressions is referred to as emotional intelligence. According to a research, people often prefer to seek out positive emotions while always attempting to ignore the unfavorable (Kant, 2019).

The purpose of the current study is to explore the role of generic competence in emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students. One of the main goals of education is for students to attain academic achievement, which is necessary to compete in the workplace. Performance in educational settings can be impacted by a number of things. The literature provided varying outcomes when it came to the evidence demonstrating the potential of emotional intelligence to enhance generic competence. As far as we are aware, no study that looked at the current phenomenon has been published in the literature. Therefore, current study intended to identify the role of generic competence in emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students.

Objective of the study

The study objective was:
To find out the mediating role of generic competence in emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students

Literature Review

In today's world, universities are making changes day by day. In an effort to meet the needs, universities have made an effort to make clear the type of education they provide to their students and, in doing so, the potential contribution of their graduates to society (Barrie, 2006). Male et al.(2011) examined general graduate skills over the past 20 years that are desirable for employment in various countries at the higher education level. Male et al. (2011) discovered that although there was not a standard language or category for generic competence, the abilities seemed to be universal all over the world. In one Australian institution, Barrie (2006) found that different fields as well as specific experts in the same subject had different ideas of what constitutes broad graduated competence. A coherent theoretical foundation for cognitively understanding generic skills was supplied by the DeSeCo Project, which was commissioned by (OECD, 2016). According to the DeSeCo Project, competences can only be seen in people's real behaviors in specific circumstances. The multifaceted nature

of competences includes factors like circumstances, individual abilities or inclinations, and external expectations. According to the framework, skills are displayed through activities that may best be evaluated through performance observations(Male et al., 2011). DeSeCo frame work focuses too much on the acquisition of generic competencies (Male et al., 2011).

The abilities model developed by Mayer and Salovey is the current theoretical framework for emotional intelligence. Four skills i.e., skill of recognition of emotion, skill of generating, access and facilitate emotions and thinking, skill of understanding thinking, and skill of control intellectual and emotional growth are used in this model.

Procedures are used to evaluate each skill in Mayer and Salovey's paradigm (Sfetcu, 2023).

According to Bar-On (2010), a person's aptitude for constructive social engagement is significantly influenced by their emotional intelligence. Although, the capacity of a person to manage the stress level depends on different aspects including emotional intelligence, responsiveness, self- recognition, and amount of discomfort as well as its duration among others. The ability to handle stress is correlated with emotional intelligence. Children that are emotionally intelligent are generally healthier, happier, and more adaptable and these qualities help them achieve their academic goals. According to Goleman (1995), those with low emotional intelligence skills have higher rates of violent crime and teen suicide, as more episodes of anxiety, despair and anger as well as social issues, school dropouts and a lack of interest in religion. Understanding a person's personal competency, particularly their self-awareness, self-regulation and drive is essential since it affects how they handle their affairs (Fteiha & Awwad, 2020).

According to Goleman and Cherniss (2000), emotional intelligence is the ability to regulate one's bad feelings and replace them with beneficial ones, including compassion, tolerance, and courage, such as wrath, low self-esteem, as well as stress. People are able to tolerate more stress due to positive psychological impacts as well as better personality effectiveness due to being able to regulate one's emotions.

The description of intelligence that refers to it as a general characteristic is the one that is most frequently used. Given that learning is one of the fundamental characteristics of intelligence, the association between intelligence & academic performance can be explained. It is believed that intelligence is the most significant predictor of academic success (Steinmayr et al., 2014).

Academic success of individuals is significantly affected from individual differences. Many efforts have been made to solve this matter

of lower academic achievement and many elements which explain academic achievement. Among the many examined aspects, academic accomplishment has been explained by elements like self-efficacy and self-concept as well as factors like demographic status, IQ, behavioral traits, and attitudes. Along with difficult-to-manage ability gaps, students have specific learning styles that could have an impact on their academic performance (Jilardi Damavandi et al., 2011).

According to some studies, emotional intelligence improves academic and professional achievement and enhances performance above and beyond that provided by general intelligence. Prioritizing thoughts, actions and lifestyle choices help with academic success and is facilitated by emotional intelligence. Students' self-reported EI scores from the beginning of the academic year can be used to predict their final year GPA. It is essential to investigate the association amongst general competence, emotional intelligence as well as educational accomplishment in the specific context of Pakistan due to the varied character of study material (Malik & Shahid, 2016).

Hypothesis of the Study

The basic purpose of the study was to examine generic competence and how it relates with the emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students. In the light of literature following hypothesis were made:

H_{O1}: There is a statistically insignificant mediating role of generic competence in relation with emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students.

Methodology

The nature of the current study was quantitative and cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. All students at university of Sargodha, were the population of the current study. Convenience sampling technique was used in this study. The data of 320 respondents were taken from Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Department of English), Faculty of Social Sciences (Department of Social Work), Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (Sargodha Medical College) and Faculty of Agriculture (Department of Plant Pathology) of university of Sargodha. Two adapted instruments were used in the study "Generic Competence Scale" "GCS" Shah (2009) to measure student 's competencies and "Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale" "WLEIS" Wong and Law (2002) to

measure student's emotional intelligence. "Generic Competence Scale" (Shah, 2009) was a seven-point rating scale and contained 19-items. "Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale" "WLEIS" Wong and Law (2002) was also seven-point rating scale based on 16-items. In this study, Generic competence was mediating variable, and several generic competencies were focused i.e., time management competence, computer and internet use competence, acquiring knowledge competence, coordinating competence, academic writing competence, analytical competence, language competence, communication competence and mastery of own filed competence. Emotional intelligence was independent variable and academic achievement was dependent variable. Academic achievement was measured by the marks and cumulative grade point average of students (CGPA). The Grade Point Average (GPA) and student marks/percentages were utilized in this paper as a yardstick to evaluate academic achievement. The grade point average (GPA) is calculated by dividing the course grade by the total number of credits for the semester. The average GPA for all semesters is added up to create the cumulative GPA. Due to the spread of COVID-19 online data was collected using Google form. Google form link was shared in the respective groups of students with the help of their teachers. Data was collected from all 35 statements (EI = 16, GCS =19) along with demographic information i.e., name, faculty name, department name, semester and marks or CGPA. Mediation analysis technique was used for data analysis. The statistical technique known as mediation analysis is employed to explore the fundamental mechanisms or channels via which an independent variable impacts a dependent variable. This is often done by examining the function of a mediator variable in the relationship (Valente et al., 2020).

Mediation Analysis

Mediation is a simple linear regression extension which is achieved by including one or more variables in the regression equation. Mediating factors define how an intervention generates its effect (Hayes, 2013). In mediation analysis, researchers assume that dependent variable is influenced by the mediator which in turn affects the dependent variable. In other words, it is assumed that there is a causal association between predictor and outcome variables. The independent and dependent variables may be correlated directly or indirectly. A direct effect occurs when a third (or fourth) variable cannot have an effect on the relationship between dependent and independent variable. An indirect effect is when one or more variables particularly those that are mediating other variables

have an impact on association among independent as well as independent variable (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2021).

As an add-on for the SPSS and SAS programs, Andrew Hayes developed the bootstrapping statistical computer application known as Process Macro (Hayes, 2013). The programs are used to look into how one or more mediating or moderating variables affect the association between the independent and dependent variables. The programs computes the direct, indirect and cumulative effects of X on Y, as well as the t and p values, R2, standardized and unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors and all other relevant statistics(Hayes, 2013).

Results

Through process Macro (v4.1) Mediation analysis was carried out (Hayes, 2022).

Table 1
Mediating role of generic competence in emotional intelligence and academic achievement 95% CI

Effects	β	SE	t	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
Direct Effect						
EI→AA	-.0187	.0264	-.7088	.4790	-.0707	.0333
Indirect Effect						
EI→GC	.0155	.0243			-.0334	.0630
Total Effect						
EI→GC→AA	-.0033	.0157	-.2076	.8356	-.0342	.0277

Direct effect observes the association between independent and dependent variable which is not mediated by third variable. In Direct effect examines the association between independent and dependent variable which is mediated by third variable. Total effect is the effect of overall model including direct and indirect effect. It provides sum of direct and indirect effects.

In table 1, results showed that direct effect was insignificant with (β = -.0187, LLCI= -.0707, and ULCI= .0333 with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval); because "zero" fall within the 95% confidence interval. So, emotional intelligence independent variable has insignificant direct effect on dependent variable academic achievement.

Indirect effect was insignificant with (β = -.0155, LLCI= -.0334, and ULCI= .0630 with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval); because "zero" fall within the 95% confidence interval. So, generic competence has an

insignificant mediating role between emotional intelligence and academic performance.

Total effect was also insignificant with (β = -.0033, LLCI= -.0342, and ULCI= .0277 with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval).

Researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is insignificant mediating role of generic competence in relation with emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students.

Discussion

In a highly competitive marketplace, higher education institutions find that competency-based education can offer major benefits. They need to carefully think through which competencies to develop and how to do so. Consider competences as the benefit that higher education offers to start understanding the actions and responses of numerous players (Borraz-Mora et al., 2020). The major purpose of this study was to find the mediating effect of generic competence in relation to emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students.

The outcomes of present research presented insignificant mediating effect of generic competence in relation with emotional intelligence and academic achievement of university students. However, other researchers suggested that in order to effectively grasp and accomplish educational objectives, generic competence is required (Bautista, 2016). Education today places more emphasis on students developing generic competence than on using traditional teaching methods in order to improve students and to help them to achieve academic success (Fortin & Legault, 2010). The value of specific subject competencies in higher education has been examined in previous works but little study has been done on the impact of generic academic competencies on employee satisfaction and loyalty. Institutions of higher learning should work to build generic competence of students in order to make learning processes rewarding in the long run. These competencies give people information that transcends merely theoretical understanding and enable them to develop intrinsic abilities and capacities like teamwork, leadership and empathies(Borraz-Mora et al., 2020). Higher education institutions for instance use cutting-edge approaches that encourage curiosity in young people and leave a positive impression as well as modern technologies. Findings showed that institutions need to put a lot of emphasis on current and former general academic competencies of students to develop good consumers (Borraz-Mora et al., 2020).

According to research, people who possess high levels of generic competences are more likely to produce positive work results, specifically improved job performance. Working results might reproduce how workers feel about their jobs in various terms like pay, benefits, independence and significance of their jobs, coworkers, level of expertise, inner culture, supervisor help (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). A number of academics claimed that instruction promoting generic abilities, strengthens worker happiness, which in turn affects individual performance(Harel & Tzafrir, 1999). The findings showed that generic abilities are most important because they serve as a bridge in profession achievement fulfilment as well as occupational results. Career success can individually have an impact on job performance through the development of competencies, (Trivellas et al., 2015). The growth of perceptions of students, learning experiences and instructional pedagogy all depend on general competency. It can be debated whether generic competence should be evaluated or given credit, although assessment is necessary for a number of reasons. Even if they think general competencies are essential, students as well as lecturers may be non-serious if they are not explicitly tested with a standardized structure like a disciplinary understanding. Frequently, students don't fully appreciate the value of generic competencies until after they graduate (Chan et al., 2017).

Results established that no simple association between academic education and the acquisition of a wide range of generic abilities was found. Teaching and learning activities must be carefully planned if B.S students are to add to the development of generic skills. Assessment criteria must reflect this if educational scores are to quantify also inform on generic abilities ranks. Students must be able to record and summaries their accomplishments in these areas if other chances for skill development are a part of the university experience (Badcock et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Strong evidence supported the idea that generic competence must be developed in higher education. Given that interdisciplinary education is holistic, accessible, and inspiring, as well as the productivity of students, it has become an essential part of academic training today. Selecting generic competence for institutions is a challenging procedure. There are no standards, so it is understandable that different groups like employers, scholars and graduates value each generic competency differently (Sandoval & Ormazábal, 2021).

The present study intended to find out the mediating effect of generic competence in relation to emotional intelligence and academic achievement. This study examined that direct effect of emotional intelligence on academic achievement was statistically insignificant. The indirect effect of generic competence with emotional intelligence and academic achievement was insignificant. Total effect among the generic competence, emotional intelligence and academic achievement was statistically insignificant on university students. Therefore, it was concluded that the mediating role of generic competence was insignificant in relation to emotional intelligence and academic achievement.

Recommendations

It is recommended that in universities the curriculum designers need to design adequately in order to meet the generic competencies of our students. Generic competence is key for academic and professional success.

In future studies, research may be conducted with expanded sample size including other universities for comparison with change over time.

In future research, student's perception about acquisition of generic competence may be examined including mix method study and strive to provide actionable insights that can inform educational practices and policies, ultimately contributing to the success and well-being of university students.

In future studies, the effect of generic competencies on student well-being may be examined.

The emotional intelligence of the students may be improved through necessary counseling and training.

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