Emotional Intelligence and Online English Language Learners' Academic Achievement

Saira Maqbool[*]

Abstract

This paper investigates the correlation between academic achievement of ESL learners and their emotional intelligence. Data from 122 distance education graduate students both male and female, was collected using Bar-one emotional quotient inventory EQ adopted from Mixed Model of EI by Mayers (2007). The sample was selected through convenient sampling technique. The correlation of inventory was correlated with the GPA's of the students to find relationship between emotional intelligence and online English language learners' academic achievement and to know the level of relationship between each emotional intelligence subscale and English language learners' academic achievement. The data obtained was treated in SPSS 22 version. Pearson correlation was applied to draw the results. The result revealed that there exists significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the level of ESL learners' achievement at graduate level. According to the findings of this research some applicable recommendations are suggested.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, English language, online learning, academic achievement.

---

[*] Assistant Professor, Department of English Language & Applied Linguistics, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: sana.sana98@yahoo.com

Introduction

Though the concept of emotional intelligence is not very new, in most of the developing countries including Pakistan, no value is being given to the issues relating emotional intelligence. The educational system in these countries is rather based upon cognitive intelligence only. This study undertakes to explore the relationship between these two factors.

Emotional Intelligence has become the center of attention for educationists in recent era. The idea is growing rapidly. In the present era considerable attention is being paid to the theory of Emotional Intelligence. Goleman (1995 p.317) defines EI as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, and for managing the emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships." According to Salovey and Nater (1990) It is the capacity of an individual to look after him/herself and others feelings and emotions.

Multiple theories and models of learning exist in the field of educational psychology, for example psychometric theories, cognitive theories, cognitive contextual theories and biological theories, the EI theory. Amongst these all, the theory of emotional intelligence is taking deep roots in the fields of teaching and learning. According to Goleman (1998) there exists a gap between effective learning and academic success of students and this gape can be bridged with the help of emotional intelligence. According to Goleman emotions stands for feeling flowing from one's circumstances, mood or relation with others. Intelligence on the other hand is the capability of a person to acquire knowledge and apply it. But these simple definitions weren't satisfactory for the psychologist. The term intelligence has been the center of interest and research for decades. A French psychologist Alferd Binet (1916) was the first to develop such inventory to measure intelligence. Other psychologists have conducted different experiments to understand how learning takes place in human beings like Avon Pavlov and Thorndike classical conditioning.

All these theories acknowledge the importance of factors such as interest, attention, memorization, schema and motivation for academic success. Emotional intelligence plays a much more important role than all these. It helps not only in academic success but in life long long learning. McCluskey (1997), in the research paper Emotional Intelligence in schools describes an experiment conducted by Cover and Murphy in January 2000 about the relationship between self-identity, academic persistence and achievement.

Romaneli and his fellow researchers (2006) says that many researches have proven that the emotional intelligence has greater effect on the achievement of students and the professional success as well as compared to other general intelligence. The emotionally intelligent students are more friendly and peace-loving (Brackett et al., 2011). Such behaviour makes the student emotionally strong and he/she performs best to the ability (Berndt, 1999; Ford & Smith, 2007; Schutte et al., 2001). Emotional intelligence also helps in arranging ideas, lifestyle and behaviour in a more efficient way by which students improve their grades as they become more settled and clear about their self (Schutte, et al., 2001). Emotional intelligence plays the mediating role between school achievement and mental ability but by self-report and ability measure as trait of emotional intelligence students' academic achievement cannot be predicted (Petrides, et al., 2004; O"Connor & Little 2003). According to Basitian et al (2005) emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement are not strongly correlated at all. Literature on the current topic gives mixed results have much contradiction, which generates the need to investigate relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance in the particular context of Pakistan. Unfortunately, it is considered that academic achievement is the only way to positive outcomes in life (Regier J, 2011). As academic education this research will provide insight into the importance of emotional intelligence on ESL learners' academic achievement at graduate level.

Objectives

The major objective of the study is to find the correlate between emotional intelligence and online English language learners' academic success of the students at graduate level

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and English language learners' academic achievement at graduate level in distance learning education system?
2. What is the level of relationship between each emotional intelligence's subscale and English language learners' academic achievement at graduate level?

Literature Review

Online education system has taken central role in distance education because of its advantages to the pedagogical process (Appana, 2008; Katz, 1999; Shopova, 2014; De Freitas, Morgan & Gibson 2015; Avella, Kebritchi, Nunn & Kanai, 2016). That is the reason many countries are now shifting from the usual face to face pedagogy to online system. English language teaching is one of the field where this shift is taking place (Vovides, SanchezAlonso, Mitropoulou, & Nickmans, 2007; Settha Kuama &Usa Inthara, 2016). One of its reason is the perception of educationists that online education is student centered and it teaches them according to their pace, their preference and it is under their control and it has flexibility for them (Clarke & Hermens 2001). Through online education students can share opinion, join in discussion and exchange knowledge without being effected from class size and distance (Harasim, Calvert & Groeneboer, 1997; Ongoz, 2018).

Philosophers for decades have believed in individual differences and in the recent era science has also proved that every human mind works in a different way from others. The eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant believed that humans differ from each other not only in intelligence but in their thinking, understanding, abilities, skills, comprehension and other aspects of personalities as well. These variations are the base of difference in intelligence (Cianciolo &Sternberg. 2004)

The cognitive and non-cognitive that is the intellectual and the emotional aspects of intelligence quotient were under discussion in the middle of the nineteenth century by David Wechsler and his colligues but it was the intellectual element which was the focus of attention. It was in 1999 when Higgs and Dulewicz introduced the seven dimensions of emotional intelligence i.e. self-awareness, the preservation of emotion, motivation, interpersonal sensitivity, persuasion, firmness and prudence with integrity. According to Hammond, et al. (2012) people can gain success if they learn to develop a relation between managing feelings and emotional intelligence.

Emotions and Learning

One of the factors that effects thought processes and thus in turn effects learning is emotions. If a student is emotionally satisfied i.e. he is happy, feeling safe, and motivated will learn more than a student who is upset, anxious, and angry. According to Hammond, et al (2012)

emotions interferes with our ability of processing information. It assists in understanding everything is comes across.

According to Ellison (2001) emotions are all the time functional in human beings till their death. These emotions are connected with the intellect. This connection between emotions and intellect are responsible for making humans act differently in different situations.

Models of Emotional Intelligence

Multiple models of emotional intelligence have been devised by psychologists and scholars. One of these models is titled as ability model. According to this model emotion is a source of obtaining knowledge through understanding and responding to external environment. It furthermore explains that every human is different from others in his ability of processing emotions. Second prominent model of emotional intelligence is named as MSCEIT introduced by Drs. Mayer, Salovey and Carusos in 1997 introduced MSCEIT. This model contains emotion-based problem solving items to assess EI. There are 141 test items in this model that helps in self-assessment. The third well known model is Mayers (2007) Mixed Model. This model not only assesses emotional intelligence but other personality traits as well. This model consists of two sub models.

Mixed model of EI includes two main models of emotional intelligence. First is named as Bar-On model. It measures a person's ability of handling environmental stress. It is "a theory of Psychological well-being and adaptation" (Bar-On, 2004). The second model is presented by Goldman in 1998. Goldman discussed the concept of emotional competence. It's a natural ability in human that helps them perform better. This model also informs how to improve emotional competence through self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship development.

Adaptation to Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success

Emotional intelligence became a topic discussed on continues basis in various works of John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990, 1993 and 1995 but Mayer and Salovey in 1993 were the first to write an academic on the effect or outcomes of the emotional intelligence. Almost all the initial works on emotional intelligence's relationship with academic performance showed strong connection between the two (e.g., Elias, Bruene-Butler, Blum, & Schuyler, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Pasi, 1997).

However, researches having such opinion and statements where based on very limited data (see Matthews, Roberts, & Zeidner, 2003; Zeidner, Roberts, & Matthews, 2002). In one of the experiment conducted by Wong et al. (1995) in US on 227 students on topic of the academic achievement and EI relation resulted in EI not being so strong reason for the academic success although at that time educationist were of the opinion to have EI interventions courses (e.g., Elias et al., 1997) even though having little understanding of such courses.

In the new century some experimental researchers argue that EI in relationship with academic achievement can bring much benefit to the society if adequate consideration is given to the technique of evaluation of EI and academic achievement (Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski, 2004). It was proven that EI has significant effect on the relationship of acadmic achievement and mental health, in an experiment conducted on 650 students in UK (Petrides et al. 2004). They established that the students with good grads also have scored high on the subscales of EI (interpersonal ability, stress management and adaptability). It was also found in the same research that EI has negative correlation with deviant school behavior. Which was verified by Trinidad and Johnson (2002) research in America. Rode et al. (2007) gave two reasons for EI to be related to academic success i.e. academic success has much ambiguities and secondly learning is self-directed which means it needs high capacity of self-management emotionally and logically both that is why students with strong EI will achieve more academic success. One of the psychologist Svetlana (2007) is of the opinion that that students should be given EI training so that they should be able to manage themselves and their academic performance tool

There are many more researches in the same area but they show contrasting results. In some research undertaken in Australia, Canada and the USA on relation between EI and academic success the result declares that there exists a very weak association between them. (Newsome et al. 2000, O'Connor & Little 2003, Bastian et al. 2005). Even that one study has proven that there exists no correlation between that intellectual capability and academic performance (e.g., Newsome, Day, & Catano, 2000; van der Zee, Schakel, & Thijs, 2002)

Indeed, all the available empirical evidence clearly suggests that trait EI is virtually orthogonal to cognitive ability (Derksen, Kramer, & Katzko, 2002; Newsome et al., 2000; Saklofske et al., 2003). Opposite to that in 2004 a cross-sectional study took place in Canada with 372 sample which evidenced the GPA of first year graduate students was highly predicted by their emotional intelligence (Parker et al. 2004).

Hypothesis

This study tested Two main hypotheses:

1. Null Hypothesis
   There is no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and Online English language students' academic achievement.

2. Null Hypothesis
There is no significant correlation between each emotional intelligence subscale and Online English language academic achievement.

Research design
The nature of current research is exploratory. It is a co relational study to find the relationship between emotional intelligence and language competence of Online English language learners in Pakistan.
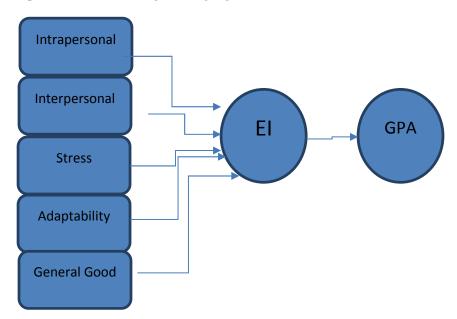

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of relationship of Emotional intelligence and Academic success

Figure 1 explains the effect of Emotional intelligence on the achievement (GPA) of students and the subsection (interpersonal, intrapersonal, stress, adaptability and general good) that constitutes the EI.

Participants

The participants of the current study consisted of 122 students. These participants were selected through convenient sampling from the first distance education University of Pakistan i.e. Alama Iqbal Open University. Two graduate level compulsory online English courses offered by Department of English Language and Linguistics form commerce and computer science graduate level students filled the EQ questionnaire of Bar-On.

Instrumentation

All the 122 students of two different universities took the standardized scale of Bar-On EQ-I questionnaire. The short form of the questionnaire was composed of interpersonal, intrapersonal, stress, adaptability, and general mood. The researcher herself visited each class and administered the questionnaire after the teacher' lecture had finished with the help of the class teacher. For acquiring maximum reliability from the questionnaire it was translated into the national language of Pakistan i.e. Urdu. Due to the translated version of the test the students with lower level of English proficiency were also able to understand it completely and easily. The Bar-On EQ-i is a self-assessment measure of EI skills which consisted of Five Composite Scales of Emotions and each Composite Scale has related 15 subscales with 133 statements some of which are overlapping other subscales. The scale employs a 5-point likert scale with a response format ranging from "very seldom or not true of me" (1) to "very often true of me or true of me" (5). From which the respondents have to select one option for each statement. The time required for the questionnaire is from 40 to 45 mints.

Demographical Variables Form (DVF) and Academic Record

Before the Bar-On test a demographical variable form was also given to obtain some basic data about the participants for the purpose of convenience of the research and later on the academic record was obtained in the form of Grade Point Average (GPA) of previous year from the administration of the concern department for correlating it with the Emotional Intelligence.

Validity of Instrument

Bar-on inventory of emotional intelligence had been selected to

collect data for this study. Multiple types of validities tests have been performed upon this instrument and it has shown high validity (Akram, 2003). The alpha coefficients of sub-scales of Urdu version of the questionnaire has rangeg from 0.58-0.88 and for total EQ scale it has showed good reliability of 0.95

Data Analysis

Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Overall Academic Success and Subscales of Intrapersonal Composite Scales of Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i) of MA. English students.

Table 1

Five Subscales of Composite Scale of Bar-One EQ-i

Intrapersonal		Emotional Self-Awareness	Assertiveness	Self-Regard	Self-Actualization	Independence
Academic Success	*Pearson Correlation*	*.683***	*.355***	*.684***	*.681***	*.381***
	Significance level	*.000*	*.000*	*.000*	*.000*	*.000*
Interpersonal		*Empathy*	*Interpersonal Relationship*	*Social Responsibility*		
Academic Success	*Pearson Correlation*	*.623***	*.455***	*.484***		
	Significance level	*.000*	*.014*	*.003*		
Adaptability		*Empathy*	*Interpersonal Relationship*	*Social Responsibility*		
Academic Success	*Pearson Correlation*	*.645***	*.232***	*.401***		
	Significance level	*.000*	*.000*	*.000*		
Stress Management		*Stress Tolerance*	*Impulse Control*			
Academic Success	*Pearson Correlation*	*.137***	*.343***			
	Significance level	*.000*	*.000*			
General Good		*Happiness*	*Optimism*			
Academic Success	*Pearson Correlation*	*.213***	*.443***			
	Significance level	*.002*	*.010*			

The first part of table 1 reflects Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Academic Success and subscales of intrapersonal Composite Scale of EQ-i. The data illustrated points out that there is a positive strong relationship between Academic Success and subscales of intrapersonal composite scale of EQ-I emotional self-awareness r. = .683, self-regard r. = .684 and self-actualization r. = .681, and weak positive with assertiveness r. = .355 and independence r. = .683. The relationship between academic success and all sub factors of EQ- i was significance at .000 < .001. The second part of the table displays the relationship between Academic Success and subscales of Interpersonal composite scales of emotional intelligence (EQ-i). The results show that there is a significantly positive strong relationship between Academic Success and empathy r. = .623as P < .001 and moderate positive and none significance with interpersonal relationship r. = .455 and social responsibility r. = .484 as P > .00. The next is relationship between Academic Success and subscales of Adaptability (a composite scale of emotional intelligence). The table shows that there is a positive strong significance relationship between Academic Success and problem solving r. = .645, moderate positive significance with social responsibility r. = .645 and weak positive significance relationship with reality testing as P < .001.The forth data presents the relationship between Academic success and subscales of stress management, which is a composite scale of emotional intelligence (EQ-i). The table shows that there is a positive weak and none significance relationship of academic success with stress r. = .137 and impulse control r. = .343 as P > .001. The data at the end illustrates the relationship between academic success and subscales of general good a composite scale of emotional intelligence (EQ-i). The table shows that there is a positive weak relationship academic success with happiness r. = .213 and optimum r. = .443. The relationship was none significant as P > 0.001.

Findings and Discussion

The current study strived to understand the nature of relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success of the online students studying in English at graduate. For this purpose, a sample of 122 graduate level students were selected from two Two graduate level compulsory online English courses offered by Department of English Language and Linguistics form commerce and computer science graduate level .Through a self-administered inventory Bar-On EQ-I the

emotional level of students was find out and succeeding correlated with the previous result GPA of the students.

Table 1 highlights that as a whole there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success of English language students at Masters level denoting the students with higher score on EI scale will have high GPAs, whereas the students who showed low EQ-I had low academics achievements. The Pearson correlation indicates that academic success was related to emotional intelligence apart from the general good composite scale which shows weak relationship with academic success, and the trend shows that it may become significant if the population size is increased.

Table 1 also illustrate that four out of five composite scale of Bar-One's EQ-I, i.e. Intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability and stress management have positive relationship with academic success whereas the fifth scale of general good has a positive weak relation with it. The correlation coefficient in all the five composite scales of emotional intelligence indicates relationship with academic achievement.

Implications

i. All the five sets of EI that is interpersonal, intrapersonal, adaptability, stress management and general good help students to live successfully in the environment and have higher academic achievement. If the students achieve higher EI it will get them far in life .

ii. The current study has made windows for future studies as it shows a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. New research may be conducted in addition to the above mentioned relation with other psycho and socio variables such as family status, family system, teaching methods, health conditions, parent- child relationship, teacher-student relationship, motivation, memorization, schema, interest, attention and aptitude.

iii. It is highly important for teachers to know that the emotional stability of the students has significant effect on their academic performance. It is only then that they will try to make the students emotionally strong and not discourage them. As Kavanaugh, Zimmerberg and Fein pointed out in 1996 that information process is highly effected by emotional state of a learner. This study implies that the education system should work on the EI of students.

iv. The results of this study implies that though learning a second language after puberty stage is considered a very difficult task and it

involves lots of mental and emotional pressure and by controlling emotional factors achievement can be maximized in second language acquisition.

v. Stress, uncontrollable impulse, inflexibly low self-regard and dependence are some negative factors effecting the second language acquisition of students in a class. Through the current study teachers can be able to understand these factors and that they can be easily treated and their energies can be manipulated in positive manner.

Conclusion

The focus of the current study was to investigate the relationship of emotional intelligence and academic achievements of learners of English as second language (ESL). Bar-One emotional quotient inventory was selected for data collected from 122 distance education graduate students both male and female. The Pearson correlation of student's GPA's with their emotional intelligence reveled that there is positive and strong correlation. Table 1 of the research points out towards the conclusive positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success of M.A English student, Students with high emotional intelligence show high academic achievement whereas the students who showed low EQ-I had low academics achievements. The Pearson correlation directs towards the fact that academic success and emotional intelligence have strong correlation, apart from the general good composite scale which shows weak relationship with academic success, and some trends indicates that by using a larger size of sample for data collection the result can become significant. As a consequence it is implied that if the education system including students and teacher , are made aware of the importance of EI they chances of their success are high.

References

Akram, R. S. (2003). *Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement among University Students.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.

Bar-on, R. (2004). *Emotional Quotient Inventory: A measure of Emotional Intelligence.* Canada: Multi-Health Systems Inc.

Barrett, L. F., Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (2002) Wisdom in Feeling: Psychological Processes in Emotional Intelligence, New York: Cuilford Publications.

Ciancolo, A, T., & Sternberg, R, J. (2004). Intelligence A Brief History, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Detterman, D. K. (2008). Intelligence, Microsoft Encarta 2009[DVD]. United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Ellison, L. (2001). *The Personal Intelligences: Promoting Social and Emotional Learning:* USA: Thoussand Oaks, California, Corwin Press, Inc.

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement among University Students, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.

Fabio, S., & Vanessa, U.D. (2005). Linking Emotional Intelligence and Performance at Work: Current Research Evidence with Individual and Groups. Mount Gerald Publisher: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Greenberg, L. S. (1996). "Allowing and Accepting of Emotional Experience' in Kavanaugh, R.D., Zimmerberg, B. and Fein, S. (eds) Emotion, Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p.323

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ,* New York: Bantam Books.

Goleman, D., Boyatzi, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence,* USA: Harvard Business School Press.

Hammond, L, D,.Orcutt, Strolbe, K., Kirsch, E., I., Martin, D., & Comer, j. (2012). Feelings Count: Emotions and Learning. Retrieved March 12, 2012 , from http://www.learner.org/courses/learningclassrooom/ support/05_emotions_learning .pdf

Heilman, K. M. (2005). *Creativity and the Brain.* USA: Psychology Press.

Hergenhahn, B. R.(2005). *An introduction to the history of Psychology,* USA: Wadsworth,   Cengage Learning.

Intelligence, Human. (2011). *Encyclopedia Britannia. encyclopedia Britannia student and home edition.* Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannia.

Lee J. Cronbach (1957). The two disciplines of scientific psychology. First published in American. *Psychologist, 12,* 671-684.York University, Toronto, Ontario

Mayer, j. D. (2007). How Does This Model Compare to Other Approaches to Emotional   Intelligence: On Mixed Models of Emotional Intelligence?   Retrieved Januay 18, 2012 from. http://unh.edu/emotional_intelligence/EIAssets/EmotionalIntelli genceProper/EI1997MSWhatIsEI.pdf

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2002). Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), Canada: Multi-Health System Inc.

McCluskey, S. (1997, February). Lifelong Learning: Emotional Intelligence in Schools.   Retrieved January 17, 2012, from http://www.cscanada.net/   Oxford   dictionary http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/emotional-intelligence

O'Donnell, A. M., Reeve, J., & Smith, J. k. (2007) Educational Psychology: reflection for   Action, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Regier, J. (2011) Why is Acadmic Success Important? Applied science and technology scholarship. Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

Stenberg, R. J., Lautery, J. &Lubart, T. I. (2003). Models of Intelligence: Cambridge University Press.

Stenberg, R, J., & Berg, C. A. (1992) Intellectual development, USA: Cambridge University Press.