

A Study of Emotional Intelligence in Academic Success in Higher Secondary Students

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Abstract

Academic success or achievement, long regarded as a product of cognitive intelligence, is increasingly recognized as being significantly influenced by Emotional Intelligence (EI). The present study examines the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students, with a focus on gender differences and variations in emotional intelligence levels. Using a sample of 220 students (110 boys and 110 girls), Emotional Intelligence and academic performance data were collected and statistically analyzed. Results revealed a moderate positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement, indicating that students with higher Emotional Intelligence tend to perform better academically. ANOVA results confirmed a significant difference in academic achievement among students with high, medium, and low Emotional Intelligence levels, emphasizing the influence of emotional competencies on academic outcomes. Furthermore, significant gender differences were observed in Emotional Intelligence, with girls scoring higher than boys; however, no statistically significant gender difference was found in academic achievement. The findings underscore the importance of integrating Emotional Intelligence development into educational practices to support students' academic and emotional growth. The study concludes by recommending educational interventions and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing Emotional Intelligence for holistic student development.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Academic Success, Higher Secondary Students, Emotional Regulation, Academic Achievement.

1. Introduction

The pursuit of academic success has traditionally been associated with cognitive intelligence, often measured by standardized assessments of intellectual capacity. However, recent advances in educational psychology and behavioral sciences have broadened this understanding, emphasizing the crucial role of non-cognitive factors, particularly Emotional Intelligence (EI), in determining students' academic trajectories. Emotional Intelligence, a construct conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer in the early 1990s, refers to an individual's ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and manage emotions, both internally and in interpersonal interactions (G'ulomova, 2024). This emotional competency enables students not only to acknowledge the academic curriculum but also to cope with psychological stress, maintain motivation, and establish positive social relationships—all of which contribute to enhanced academic performance. In contemporary educational contexts, students face a multitude of challenges, including academic pressure, competitive learning environments, and psychosocial stressors. These factors, if not effectively managed, often result in diminished academic engagement and poor academic performance. Emotional

Intelligence has emerged as a critical determinant in addressing these challenges, providing students with the necessary emotional resilience and adaptability to succeed in both scholastic and co-scholastic domains (Labby, Lunenburg, & Slate, 2012). Empirical studies across diverse cultural and educational settings have repeatedly demonstrated that emotionally intelligent students exhibit higher levels of classroom engagement, academic motivation, and interpersonal effectiveness, thereby contributing positively to their academic success (Halimi, AlShammari, & Navarro, 2021; Altwijri et al., 2021).

Early investigations into the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement, such as that by AbisAmrA (2000), revealed a significant positive correlation between these constructs among secondary school students. Subsequent longitudinal and cross-sectional studies (Parker et al., 2004; Qualter et al., 2012) reinforced these findings, demonstrating that Emotional Intelligence not only facilitates academic adjustment during transitional educational phases but also contributes to sustained academic success. Meta-analytical studies such as MacCann et al. (2020) have further consolidated the evidence base, illustrating that EI consistently predicts academic performance across multiple educational levels, irrespective of variations in cognitive ability.

Despite the growing corpus of international research, there remains a relative paucity of empirical studies examining the role of Emotional Intelligence in the academic success of higher secondary students within the Indian educational context. Most existing studies have focused on university or medical students (Altwijri et al., 2021; Kumar, Sagar, & Rachamanti, 2025), leaving a gap in understanding how EI influences academic outcomes during the critical adolescent years in secondary education. This period is particularly important, as students encounter increased academic rigor alongside significant emotional and social development.

The present study seeks to address this gap by exploring the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students in India. Through a quantitative approach involving a sample of 220 students, this research aims to investigate not only the overall association between EI and academic success but also the specific emotional competencies—such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills—that most strongly predict academic outcomes. In doing so, the study builds upon the theoretical frameworks of emotional intelligence (G'ulomova, 2024) and contributes empirical insights that extend the findings of earlier scholars (AbisAmrA, 2000; MacCann et al., 2020; Altwijri et al., 2021).

This study holds considerable significance for educational practice and policy. By elucidating the emotional factors that influence academic achievement, it advocates for the inclusion of Emotional Intelligence development within school curricula. Such integration can equip students with essential life skills, develop holistic development, and enhance academic engagement and resilience. The findings of this study are expected to inform educators, counsellors, and curriculum developers about the necessity of emotional learning programs that complement cognitive instruction, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and effective educational environment.

In light of the above, the present study endeavours to empirically examine the extent to which Emotional Intelligence contributes to academic success among higher secondary students, thereby offering valuable insights into the psychological dimensions of academic achievement and proposing practical implications for secondary education.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To assess the Emotional Intelligence (EI) levels (high, medium, and low) among higher secondary students.

- To examine the relationship between overall Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement.
- To compare the academic achievement of students across different levels of Emotional Intelligence (high, medium, and low).
- To identify gender-wise differences in specific Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

- **H₀1:** There is no significant correlation between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students.
- **H₀2:** There is no significant difference in academic achievement among students with high, medium, and low levels of Emotional Intelligence.
- **H₀3:** There is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students.

2. Research Methodology

The present study used a **Descriptive Survey Method** to investigate the level of Emotional Intelligence and the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students. The **random sampling method** was used to select a sample of 220 students from various schools in Unnao district. The sample included boys and girls from different academic streams and socio-economic backgrounds.

2.1 Population and Sample

TABLE 1-

S. No.	Gender	Number of Students
1	Boys	110
2	Girls	110
Total		220

2.2 Research Tools

To measure Emotional Intelligence, a **self-structured questionnaire** was developed by the researcher, based on established theoretical frameworks. Academic success was assessed through the **cumulative academic scores** of the students, providing an objective measure of academic performance.

2.3 Statistical Techniques

Mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, and correlation were applied to analyze the data.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

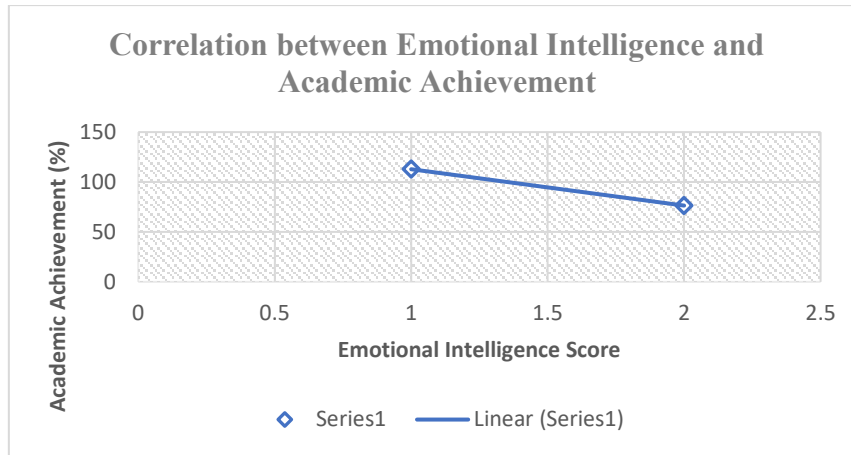
This section presents the statistical findings related to the hypothesis of the study, based on the analysis of Emotional Intelligence scores and academic performance among 220 higher secondary students. Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS software. The key statistical tests included descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis.

Results And Discussion

H₀1: There is no significant correlation between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students.

Table 2: Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value
Emotional Intelligence Score	220	112.8	15.2	0.42	< 0.01
Academic Achievement (%)	220	76.4	8.6		



Interpretation:

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.42$) indicates a **moderate positive relationship** between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and academic achievement among higher secondary students. The **p-value (< 0.01)** confirms that this correlation is **statistically significant**, meaning the observed relationship is not due to chance.

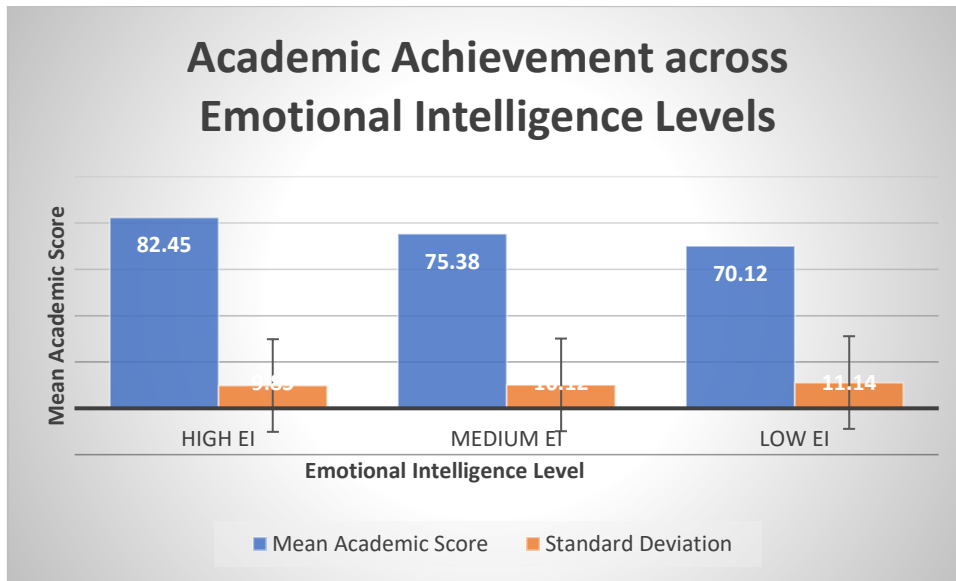
This implies that **as students’ Emotional Intelligence increases, their academic performance also tends to improve**. Emotional skills such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy may support better focus, motivation, stress management, and classroom interaction, all of which contribute to enhanced learning outcomes.

Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is **rejected**, and it is concluded that **Emotional Intelligence is an important factor influencing academic success** among higher secondary students.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in academic achievement among students with high, medium, and low levels of Emotional Intelligence.

Table 3: Emotional Intelligence Level and Academic Achievement

Emotional Intelligence Level	Sample Size (n)	Mean Academic Score	Standard Deviation (SD)	F-value	Interpretation
High EI	70	82.45	9.85		
Medium EI	70	75.38	10.12	25.00	Significant difference
Low EI	70	70.12	11.14		



Interpretation:

The obtained **F-value (25.00)** is substantially higher than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a **statistically significant difference in academic achievement** among students possessing **high, medium, and low levels of Emotional Intelligence**.

As a result, the **null hypothesis (H₀₂)**, which stated that “*there is no significant difference in academic achievement among students with high, medium, and low levels of Emotional Intelligence,*” is **rejected**.

This finding implies that **Emotional Intelligence plays a significant role in influencing academic performance**. Students with **high Emotional Intelligence** (Mean = 82.45, SD = 9.85) demonstrate higher academic achievement compared to those with **medium** (Mean = 75.38, SD = 10.12) and **low Emotional Intelligence** (Mean = 70.12, SD = 11.14).

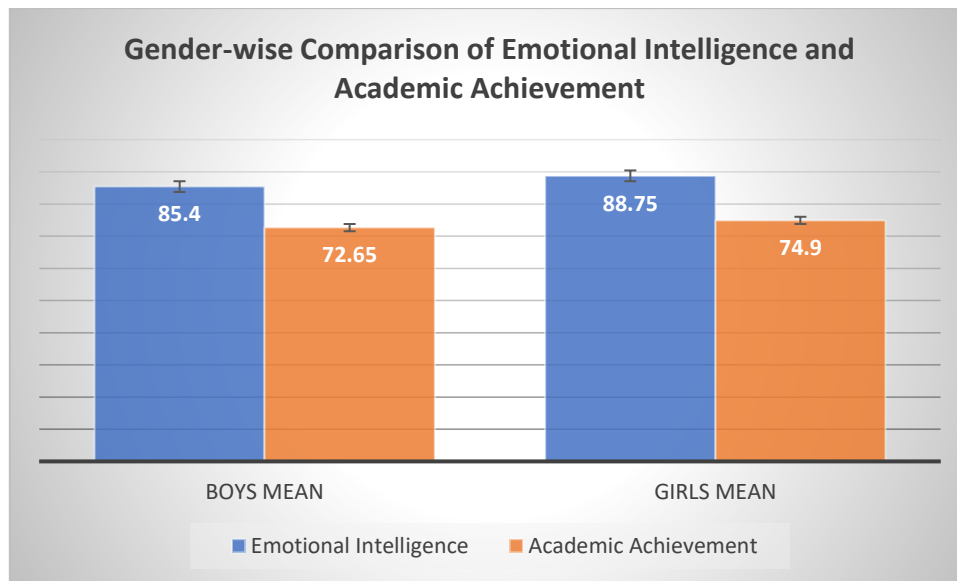
This result suggests that Emotional Intelligence may function as a **differentiating factor** in academic outcomes, potentially due to enhanced self-regulation, emotional stability, motivation, and interpersonal competencies that contribute to effective learning behaviors and classroom engagement.

We can conclude from the analysis that **academic achievement significantly varies with levels of Emotional Intelligence**, reinforcing the importance of integrating emotional skill development in educational settings to support holistic student growth and academic success.

H₀₃: There is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement among higher secondary students.

Table 4: Gender-wise Comparison of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Significance
Emotional Intelligence	Boys	110	85.40	9.12	2.14	0.034	Significant
	Girls	110	88.75	8.46			
Academic Achievement	Boys	110	72.65	10.30	1.96	0.052	Not Significant (NS)
	Girls	110	74.90	9.85			



Interpretation:

The null hypothesis (H_{03}), which states that there is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement among higher secondary students, is partially rejected on the basis of the statistical findings. The analysis reveals that the mean score of Emotional Intelligence among girls ($M = 88.75$, $SD = 8.46$) is significantly higher than that of boys ($M = 85.40$, $SD = 9.12$). The obtained t -value of 2.14 and p -value of 0.034, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, indicate a statistically significant difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected with respect to Emotional Intelligence, implying that gender plays a significant role in determining students' emotional intelligence, with girls exhibiting higher levels.

In contrast, the difference in Academic Achievement between boys and girls was found to be statistically insignificant. Although girls ($M = 74.90$, $SD = 9.85$) achieved slightly higher scores than boys ($M = 72.65$, $SD = 10.30$), the t -value of 1.96 and p -value of 0.052 exceed the accepted threshold for significance. As a result, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected in the case of academic achievement. This suggests that, while emotional intelligence differs significantly by gender, academic performance does not show a statistically meaningful gender difference among higher secondary students in the present study.

Discussion of Results:

The findings of the present study provide valuable insights into the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students. A moderate and statistically significant positive correlation was observed between Emotional Intelligence and academic performance, suggesting that students with higher levels of Emotional Intelligence tend to achieve better academic results. This aligns with previous research indicating that emotionally intelligent students are more likely to manage stress, maintain motivation, and engage effectively in learning tasks. Further, the analysis of variance revealed significant differences in academic achievement across students with high, medium, and low levels of Emotional Intelligence, confirming that EI is a meaningful predictor of academic outcomes. Moreover, gender-wise comparisons highlighted a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence, with girls outperforming boys. However, no statistically significant gender difference was found in academic achievement, indicating that both male and female students perform similarly in academic domains, regardless of their emotional intelligence levels. These results underscore the critical role of Emotional

Intelligence in shaping academic success and suggest the need for integrating emotional skill development into the secondary school curriculum to foster holistic student growth.

Conclusion:

The present study concludes that Emotional Intelligence plays a significant role in shaping the academic achievement of higher secondary students. A moderate positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and academic performance was observed, indicating that students who possess greater emotional awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills are more likely to succeed academically. The significant variation in academic achievement among students with high, medium, and low levels of Emotional Intelligence further reinforces this relationship. While gender differences in Emotional Intelligence were found to be statistically significant, academic performance did not differ notably between boys and girls. These findings highlight the importance of nurturing Emotional Intelligence among adolescents to support their academic and personal development. Educational institutions should, therefore, consider integrating Emotional Intelligence training into the curriculum and co-curricular activities to foster emotional well-being and enhance learning outcomes. Future research may explore intervention-based models to strengthen Emotional Intelligence and assess their long-term impact on academic and life success.

Future Implications and Recommendations

1. Educational programs should integrate Emotional Intelligence training to develop students' emotional regulation, self-awareness, empathy, and social skills.
2. Emotional Intelligence development can be facilitated through workshops, classroom activities, and counselling sessions.
3. Future longitudinal studies are needed to examine how Emotional Intelligence develops over time and its lasting effects on academic performance and life outcomes.
4. Comparative research should explore differences in Emotional Intelligence and academic success across socio-economic, cultural, and educational groups.
5. Teacher education programs should include Emotional Intelligence modules to help educators model and develop emotional competencies in classrooms.
6. Emotionally intelligent teachers can create nurturing and supportive learning environments that enhance students' academic achievement.
7. Developing Emotional Intelligence is essential for promoting academic excellence, personal growth, and equipping students to meet the social and emotional challenges of modern life.

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