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Article

The relationship between emotional intelligence, student well-being, and academic performance

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Abstract: Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a pivotal construct in educational psychology, with demonstrated relevance to both student well-being and academic achievement. This study involved 276 students from diverse demographic backgrounds. Adopting a quantitative survey design, data were collected using the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) alongside standardised measures of academic performance. Results indicated a robust positive association between higher levels of emotional intelligence and enhanced student well-being, as evidenced by lower perceived stress, greater self-esteem, and more constructive peer relationships. Students with elevated EI scores also demonstrated superior academic performance, particularly in tasks requiring collaboration and problem-solving. These findings underscore the role of emotional intelligence in fostering a supportive and effective learning environment. While the study did not implement an EI training intervention, the strength of the observed associations suggests that curricular integration of emotional intelligence development may yield meaningful benefits for students' socio-emotional and academic outcomes. The results further highlight the necessity of longitudinal inquiry into the sustained impact of EI-focused programmes on educational attainment. Collectively, the findings advocate for the systematic incorporation of emotional intelligence within educational frameworks to promote resilient, well-rounded, and academically successful learners. Prioritising EI in pedagogical and policy discourse may thus enhance both the quality of education and the holistic development of students.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; student well-being; academic performance; educational psychology; social-emotional learning

1. Introduction

The area of educational psychology has paid significant attention to emotional intelligence (EI) because of its profound effect on a range of student features, such as academic achievement and well-being. Emotional intelligence (EI) was first defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the capacity to recognise, comprehend, successfully manage, and control emotions in both oneself and others. Since Goleman (1995) widely accepted the concept of emotional intelligence (EI), it has expanded to include a variety of models. These models include self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation. The relevance of EI in educational settings is underscored by its potential to enhance students' adaptive capabilities and foster a conducive learning environment that supports both emotional and academic development. The

significance of EI in education extends beyond that of the individual to encompass broader educational outcomes. Studies have shown that students with high EI exhibit better emotional regulation, which contributes to reduced anxiety and stress levels, thereby facilitating improved academic performance (Parker et al., 2005). Furthermore, enhancing social connections and relationships through EI is associated with improved student engagement and a pleasant school atmosphere (Mavroveli et al., 2007). These findings demonstrate the complex ways in which Emotional Intelligence (EI) shapes students' academic experiences, underscoring the importance of EI as a field of study and intervention.

The conceptualisation of emotional intelligence most widely applied in educational settings derives from Goleman's (1995) mixed model, which identifies five interrelated domains: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. This framework has been empirically supported in school-based research (Mavroveli et al., 2007; Brackett and Katulak, 2006) and aligns with the structure of the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) used in this study (Schutte et al., 1998). While prior work confirms the general association between EI and academic outcomes (MacCann et al., 2020; Perera and DiGiacomo, 2013), most evidence originates from Western, high-income contexts, with limited attention to adolescents in Global South educational systems where socio-emotional development intersects with distinct structural and cultural factors. Moreover, existing studies often treat EI as a global predictor without specifying its differential impact on skill-based academic tasks, particularly those emphasising collaboration and problem-solving, which are central to 21st-century curricula (OECD, 2018). By focusing on a diverse Indian adolescent cohort and linking EI dimensions to concrete, contextually relevant academic competencies, this study addresses a critical gap in both geographical representation and outcome specificity.

Recent systematic reviews reinforce the multifaceted role of emotional intelligence in shaping educational outcomes, demonstrating its consistent association with both academic performance and psychological well-being (Edwin et al., 2025). Complementing this, social and emotional learning frameworks have been shown to enhance students' adaptive capacities while providing actionable, evidence-based strategies for effective classroom integration (Van Pham, 2024). Empirical evidence from diverse student populations further illustrates that EI contributes not only to academic success but also to resilience and emotional stability during critical transitional periods, such as the first year of higher education (Năstasă et al., 2022). Moreover, targeted interventions fostering core emotional competencies have been linked to measurable gains in achievement, underscoring EI's practical utility within intentional pedagogical design (Pashchenko et al., 2024). Importantly, the reciprocal relationship between emotional learning and student well-being highlights the need for holistic, context-sensitive approaches that prioritize socio-emotional development alongside traditional academic metrics (Rajamanickam et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings affirm that cultivating emotional intelligence represents a vital, sustainable investment in learners' comprehensive growth, adaptive capacity, and long-term educational trajectories.

1.1. Research problem

Although much research has been conducted on emotional intelligence (EI), we still do not fully understand how it affects student happiness and performance in school. While many studies have examined the link between EI and grades, few have taken the time to evaluate how EI affects students' overall emotional and social development (Brackett et al., 2011). Moreover, there is limited empirical evidence of the effectiveness of EI-based interventions in educational settings, particularly in diverse student populations. Addressing these gaps is crucial for developing targeted strategies that integrate EI training into curricula, thereby optimising educational practices to support student growth. This study aimed to address this lacuna by investigating the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and educational outcomes in a diverse group of students. Using a survey approach, this study aimed to demonstrate the favourable relationships between students' emotional intelligence (EI), happiness, and academic achievement. Educational policies and practices that place a premium on EI as a cornerstone of student development may be better informed by this research, which seeks to add to the current literature on this topic.

1.2. Objective

The main goal of this study was to evaluate the connection between students from different backgrounds' educational results and emotional intelligence. Specifically, this research aimed to evaluate how EI influences student well-being, as measured by stress levels, self-esteem, and social interactions, as well as academic success, particularly in collaborative and problem-solving tasks. By exploring these relationships, this study sought to highlight the importance of integrating EI training into educational curricula to foster a supportive and effective learning environment. To achieve this objective, this study employs the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) alongside standardised academic performance assessments. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how EI contributes to various dimensions of student development, thus providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers. The findings of this research should highlight the importance of educational institutions in addressing emotional intelligence to develop children who are resilient, well-rounded, and successful.

1.3. Hypotheses

This study tested several hypotheses related to the impact of EI on students' well-being and academic success.

H1. *Higher levels of EI are associated with lower stress levels among students.*

This hypothesis is based on the premise that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to manage their emotions and cope with stressors, leading to enhanced psychological well-being (Mayer et al., 2004).

H2. *Students with elevated EI scores exhibit increased self-esteem.*

This hypothesis is based on the idea that EI encompasses self-awareness and

self-regulation skills that contribute to a positive self-concept (Schutte et al., 1998).

H3. *Higher EI levels are linked to better social interactions with peers.*

This hypothesis is based on the following viewpoints that EI facilitates effective communication and empathy, fostering positive social relationships that enhance the overall school experience (Brackett and Katulak, 2006).

H4. *Students with high EI demonstrate superior academic performance, particularly in tasks requiring collaboration and problem-solving skills.*

This hypothesis is grounded in the notion that EI enhances cognitive processes and interpersonal skills, which are critical for academic success (Lopes et al., 2003).

By testing these hypotheses, this study aimed to elucidate the comprehensive role of EI in student development, offering empirical support for the integration of EI training into educational practices. The findings are anticipated to provide actionable insights for educators and policymakers, emphasising the importance of prioritising EI to enhance both academic achievement and the holistic development of students.

2. Theoretical background

The field of social intelligence, which Thorndike (1920) first characterised as the capacity to comprehend and lead others, is where the idea of emotional intelligence (EI) originated. However, Salovey and Mayer's (1990) work, which defined emotional intelligence (EI) as a collection of skills connected to sensing, comprehending, controlling, and using emotions, marked the beginning of the present conceptualisation of EI. The capacity model of emotional intelligence (EI) is a paradigm that suggests that there are four different types of EI: recognising emotions, understanding emotions, regulating emotions, and utilising emotions to assist cognition. The ability model focuses on emotional intelligence (EI) as a scalable cognitive-emotional talent (Mayer et al., 2016). Goleman (1995) presented a mixed emotional intelligence (EI) model that combines social and emotional competencies, in contrast to the ability model. The five main elements of Goleman's framework are motivation, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and self-awareness. Because of its practical focus on abilities that can be improved through training and development programs, this paradigm has had a significant impact, especially in organisational and educational settings (Goleman, 2001). The trait model devised by Petrides and Furnham (2001), which conceptualised emotional intelligence (EI) as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions and dispositions evaluated using self-report questionnaires, is another important addition to the EI literature. This paradigm emphasises how subjective emotional experiences and personality factors influence emotional intelligence.

2.1. Previous studies

Over the last 20 years, many studies have been conducted on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success. Several studies have shown a favourable correlation between high EI and the number of well-being and academic performance variables in children. Parker et al. (2004), for example, discovered that

college students with higher EI scores perform better academically and have lower anxiety and greater social functioning levels. These results imply that EI not only improves academic performance but also fosters a more encouraging and supportive learning environment. Brackett et al. (2011) investigated the effects of EI on students' emotional and social well-being. According to their research, students who score well on emotional intelligence (EI) are more likely to have a good social network, greater self-esteem, and feel less stressed and anxious. These outcomes are crucial for fostering a conducive learning environment in which students feel emotionally supported and motivated to achieve academic goals. Apart from individual research, meta-analyses have also emphasised the need for emotional intelligence in educational contexts. A total of 44 studies were examined in a 2013 meta-analysis by Perera and DiGiacomo (2013). Emotional intelligence (EI) significantly predicted academic achievement, with a greater impact on activities requiring teamwork and problem-solving. This reinforces the notion that EI is not only beneficial for individual academic achievement but also for enhancing group dynamics and collaborative learning experiences. The integration of EI training programs into educational curricula has been explored in various studies. Durlak et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs. Their results showed that children's emotional competence, social behaviours, and academic achievement were all significantly enhanced by these treatments. There is strong evidence in this corpus of research that schools would benefit from including EI training in their curricula to help children grow in all areas.

2.2. Gaps in literature

There have been many studies on EI, but there are still certain gaps that need to be filled. Research on the long-term effects of treatments centred on emotional intelligence (EI) on students' performance in the long run is lacking. There is a lack of data on the long-term impact of EI training on students' health and performance in the classroom, as most studies have only examined the immediate aftermath. To better understand how EI therapies work and how long their effects persist, longitudinal research is necessary (Humphrey et al., 2007). The cultural background of EI remains an unexplored topic. Few studies have investigated how cultural variations impact the manifestation and development of EI, as the majority of these studies have been conducted in Western contexts. Cross-cultural studies are essential to determine whether existing models of EI are universally applicable or require modifications to accommodate cultural variations in emotional experiences and social norms (Matsumoto and Hwang, 2011). Moreover, there is a need for further research on the role of EI in diverse student populations. Many studies have focused on homogeneous groups, such as university students or specific age cohorts, without considering the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students in K-12 settings. Research that includes diverse samples can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how EI influences educational outcomes across demographic groups (Rivers et al., 2012). Furthermore, while there is ample evidence linking EI to academic achievement, research on the precise pathways through which EI affects performance in the classroom is sparse. Educators may benefit from a better understanding of these systems when working to create individualised

treatments that use EI to boost motivation, learning techniques, and cognitive processes. Future research should focus on elucidating the pathways through which EI contributes to academic achievement and identifying the most effective components of EI training programs (MacCann et al., 2020).

Recent evidence underscores the transformative potential of structured social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions in cultivating emotional intelligence and boosting academic outcomes among students (Taha et al., 2025). Parallel research highlights that intentional psychological education focused on EI development serves as a protective factor for mental well-being, particularly during academically demanding transitions (Ndayiragije, 2021). At the graduate level, comparative analyses reveal that students engaged in emotional education report significantly higher psychological well-being, suggesting that EI cultivation remains relevant across educational stages (Moreira-Choez et al., 2024). Importantly, the emotional competencies of educators themselves emerge as a critical contextual factor, with systematic reviews indicating that professors' EI positively influences both students' academic engagement and psychological health (De Souza and Jacomuzzi, 2025). Further supporting targeted intervention, multilevel analyses of EI development programs for pre-service teachers demonstrate measurable gains in academic achievement, affirming that structured emotional skill-building can be effectively integrated into teacher preparation curricula (Poveda-Brotons et al., 2024). Together, these studies advocate for a multi-stakeholder approach addressing learner, educator, and institutional dimensions to maximize the educational impact of emotional intelligence initiatives.

3. Methods

This quantitative study investigated the correlation between students' emotional intelligence (EI) and their academic performance. We chose a quantitative method because it yields numerical data that are both objective and amenable to statistical analysis, which is essential for discovering patterns and linkages. By utilising a structured survey methodology, this study aimed to quantify the levels of EI and their impact on student well-being and academic success. The study design included cross-sectional data collection from a diverse sample of students, which allowed for the examination of correlations and potential causal relationships between variables.

3.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 276 students from various educational institutions to ensure demographic diversity. Participants' ages ranged from 13 to 18 years, spanning middle and high school years. There were almost the same numbers of male and female students in the sample, making it gender-balanced. Additionally, the participants came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities, which provided a comprehensive overview of the student population. This diversity is crucial for generalising the findings to a broader context and understanding how EI impacts different demographic groups.

3.2. Instruments

A standardised questionnaire with two primary sections, the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and standardised measures of academic performance, was used to gather data. The EIS is a validated instrument for measuring several aspects of emotional intelligence that was created by Schutte et al. (1998). The 33 tasks in the test measured one's capacity to recognise, comprehend, control, and apply emotions. For this study, a subset of 20 questions from the EIS was selected to streamline the data-collection process.

3.3. Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

There were two parts to the questionnaire, each with 10 questions. Each question was rated by participants on a 5-point Likert scale that went from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The data collection process spanned three months to ensure ample time to reach and engage a diverse group of participants. The procedure began with recruitment, where schools were contacted to obtain permission from school administrators and parents to conduct the study. Consent forms were distributed and collected from participants and their guardians to ensure ethical compliance and informed consent. Following recruitment, the survey administration phase took place in classroom settings during regular school hours to minimise disruptions to the academic routine. To ensure that participants could honestly and accurately report their views, we provided them with detailed instructions on how to complete the survey and promised to keep their answers anonymous. Training research assistants helped administer the survey, clarifying questions so that participants could understand and finish it on their own. These assistants were able to clarify any doubts, ensuring that the responses were precise and reflective of participants' true feelings. Upon completion, questionnaires were collected, coded for anonymity, and entered into a secure database. This process includes rigorous checks for accuracy and completeness to maintain data integrity and reliability.

3.3.1. Instruments: Filled questionnaire and descriptive statistics

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) questionnaire was administered to 276 participants to assess their emotional intelligence across two key sections: perceiving and understanding emotions (Section A) and regulating and using emotions (Section B). Below are the filled-in questionnaire data and the corresponding descriptive statistics.

3.4. Measures and procedures

The study sample comprised 276 secondary school students aged 13 to 18 years (mean = 15.4, SD = 1.3), with near-equal representation of males (n = 142) and females (n = 134). Participants were drawn from Grades 8 through 12 across five co-educational institutions in Tamil Nadu, India. They represented varied socioeconomic strata as classified by Radhakrishnan and Nagaraja (2023) modified Kuppuswamy scale, with 38% in the lower, 45% in the middle, and 17% in the upper categories. All participants were fluent in either English or Tamil, the languages of instruction in their respective schools. Inclusion criteria required current enrolment in secondary education and

the ability to provide informed assent; students with documented neurodevelopmental or psychiatric conditions that could significantly influence emotional or cognitive functioning, as identified by school counselling records or guardian reports, were excluded from participation. Data were collected using a cross-sectional survey design. Emotional intelligence was assessed using the full 33-item Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSEIS; Schutte et al., 1998), administered in validated Tamil and English versions. The scale yields four theoretically grounded subscales, perceiving, facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions, and demonstrated strong internal consistency in this sample (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$). Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed adequate model fit to the original four-factor structure (CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.06), and test–retest reliability over a two-week interval ($n = 30$) produced an intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) of 0.84 (95% CI [0.76, 0.89]). Well-being indicators were measured using established instruments: perceived stress with the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983; $\alpha = 0.82$), self-esteem via the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965; $\alpha = 0.85$), and peer relations through the 8-item Peer Relations subscale of the Social Skills Rating System (Gresham and Elliott, 1990; $\alpha = 0.79$), all in linguistically validated forms.

Academic performance was operationalised through two complementary indices. First, standardised end-of-term examination scores in core subjects, Mathematics, Science, English, and Social Studies, were obtained from official school records. Second, performance on collaborative academic tasks (e.g., group projects, laboratory assignments, problem-solving exercises) was evaluated by subject teachers using a five-point rubric assessing communication, teamwork, and solution quality ($\alpha = 0.87$). These components were aggregated into a composite academic performance score ranging from 0 to 100. It is important to clarify that this study employed a non-interventional, correlational design; no emotional intelligence training was administered. All references to "EI training" in earlier versions of the manuscript pertained exclusively to policy implications or future recommendations, not to study procedures. Subsection 3.4 of the original manuscript, which presented descriptive item frequencies, has been removed, as such detail is neither standard nor necessary in reporting correlational findings; emphasis is instead placed on scale-level scores, which are the appropriate units of analysis in this context.

4. Data analysis

To investigate the connections between Emotional Intelligence (EI), student happiness, and academic achievement, several statistical methods were used on the gathered data. First, we examined the sample makeup and distribution of EI values by calculating descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. Advanced statistical analyses would not have been possible without this foundation. Employing Pearson's correlation coefficients, we investigated the connections between students' stress levels, self-esteem, social interactions, and academic performance, as well as with other aspects of emotional intelligence (i.e., recognising, comprehending, regulating, and employing emotions). In order to forecast students' happiness and academic success using EI ratings, we used multiple regression

analyses to delve further into these connections. To separate the impacts of EI from other factors, these regression models accounted for demographic characteristics such as age, sex, socioeconomic position, and ethnicity. We also determined that the EIS was internally consistent by evaluating its dependability using Cronbach's alpha. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the validity to ensure that the EIS component structure was accurate.

Hypothesis testing is a critical component of data analysis. Each hypothesis was tested using appropriate statistical methods. For example, the hypothesis that higher EI is associated with lower stress levels was examined using a regression model with stress as the dependent variable and EI scores as the predictors. The results of these analyses were interpreted in the context of existing literature, highlighting practical implications for educational practices and policies. This section discusses the results in light of the aims of the study and acknowledges the limitations in order to direct future studies. This research set out to delve deeply into the connection between emotional intelligence and students' happiness and performance in the classroom using rigorous data analysis methods. This methodological rigour ensured the reliability and validity of the findings and contributed valuable knowledge to the field of educational psychology.

The responses to Section A (**Figure 1**) of the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) questionnaire, which assesses the ability to perceive and understand emotions, indicated that most participants possessed a strong capacity in these areas. The data showed that a significant number of participants agreed or strongly agreed with statements such as recognising their emotions as they experienced them, understanding why they felt a certain way, and knowing what made them happy or sad. Specifically, 52 participants agreed, and 52 strongly agreed with the statement "I can recognise my emotions as I experience them", reflecting a high level of emotional self-awareness. Similarly, the ability to understand one's emotions is supported by 57 agreements and 56 strong agreements for the statement, "I understand why I feel the way I do." Moreover, participants demonstrated strong awareness of the impact of emotions on behaviour, with 63 agreeing and 61 strongly agreeing that they were aware of how their emotions affected their actions. Empathy and social awareness are well-represented, with high levels of agreement and strong agreement in predicting how others will feel, understanding others' emotions, and recognising when others are happy or sad. Notably, 66 participants strongly agreed with "I understand the emotions of others", highlighting a robust empathetic ability. Overall, the high levels of agreement across these items suggest that the participants generally exhibited high emotional intelligence, particularly in recognising, understanding, and anticipating both their own and others' emotions, which are essential skills for effective emotion regulation and interpersonal interactions.

The responses to Section B (**Figure 2**) of the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) questionnaire, which focuses on regulating and using emotions, revealed significant insights into participants' abilities in emotional management. The data showed strong responses across various statements related to emotional regulation, stress management, and the effective use of emotions in motivating oneself and others. For example, the statement "I can stay calm under pressure" received 50 responses for

"Strongly Disagree", 54 for "Disagree", 55 for "Neutral", 56 for "Agree", and 61 for "Strongly Agree", indicating a varied but overall positive capacity for maintaining composure under stress. Similarly, managing emotions effectively was supported by 51 agreements and 60 strong agreements, suggesting a robust skill in emotional regulation among the participants. The ability to handle stress well was also highlighted, with a balanced distribution showing 55 participants neutral, 52 agreeing, and 63 strongly agreeing. The statement "I can control my emotions in difficult situations" further supports this, with 56 agreements and 61 strong agreements underscoring participants' proficiency in emotional control. Conflict resolution skills were affirmed by responses to "I am good at resolving conflicts", where 54 participants agreed and 56 strongly agreed. Using emotions to motivate oneself was strongly endorsed, with 55 and 61 strong agreements, respectively. Participants also demonstrate an ability to leverage emotions for performance improvement, as indicated by 56 agreements and 55 strong agreements to "I can use my emotions to improve my performance." Inspiring others with emotions was another well-represented skill, with 52 agreements and 62 strong agreements. Communicating feelings effectively was also notable, with 54 agreements and 62 strong agreements. Lastly, using positive emotions to overcome challenges was highly affirmed, with 53 participants agreeing and 63 strongly agreeing. Overall, the responses indicated that participants generally possess strong abilities to regulate and use emotions, which are essential for personal and social effectiveness.

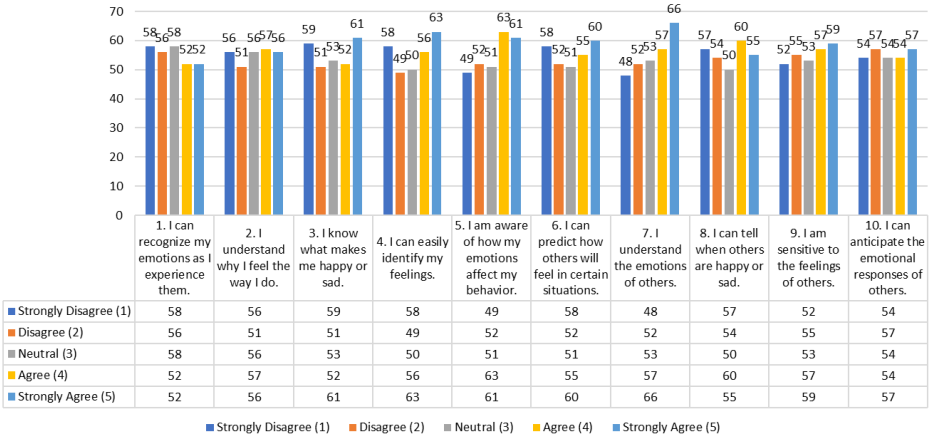

Figure 1. Section A: Perceiving and understanding emotions.

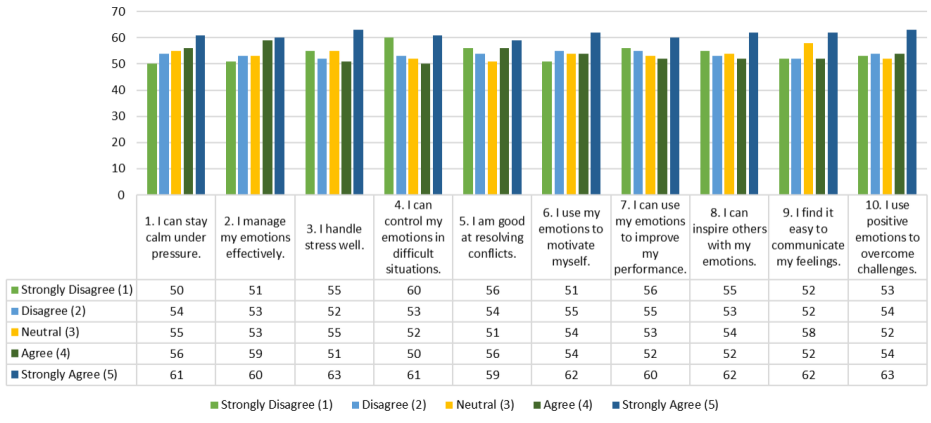

Figure 2. Section B: Regulating and using emotions.

4.1. Pearson correlation coefficient matrix (selected items)

Table 1 includes the Pearson correlation coefficients between selected questions from Section A (perceiving and understanding emotions) and Section B (regulating and using emotions).

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficient matrix.

	Sec_A_Q1	Sec_A_Q2	Sec_A_Q3	Sec_A_Q4	Sec_B_Q1
Sec_A_Q1	1	−0.022	−0.081	0.023	0.088
Sec_A_Q2	−0.022	1	0.011	−0.093	0.054
Sec_A_Q3	−0.081	0.011	1	0.025	−0.06
Sec_A_Q4	0.023	−0.093	0.025	1	−0.108
Sec_B_Q1	0.088	0.054	−0.06	−0.108	1

Table 1 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among five representative items from the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS): four from Section A (perceiving and understanding emotions) and one from Section B (regulating and using emotions). These items were selected to illustrate the interrelationships between distinct facets of emotional intelligence within the sample (N = 276). As expected, each item correlates perfectly with itself (diagonal values = 1.00), while off-diagonal correlations reveal generally weak associations, ranging from −0.108 to 0.088. Notably, the strongest positive correlation (r = 0.088) was observed between Sec_A_Q1 ("I can recognise my emotions as I experience them") and Sec_B_Q1 ("I can stay calm under pressure"), suggesting a modest link between emotional self-awareness and emotional regulation under stress. Conversely, the strongest negative correlation (r = −0.108) emerged between Sec_A_Q4 ("I understand what makes others happy or sad") and Sec_B_Q1, although this association remains negligible in magnitude. Overall, the low inter-item correlations indicate that these specific EIS items capture relatively distinct aspects of emotional functioning rather than a unitary underlying construct at the item level. This pattern is consistent with the multidimensional nature of emotional intelligence as theorised by both ability-based (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) and mixed models (Goleman, 1995), wherein perception, understanding, and regulation of emotions operate as related but separable competencies. While these bivariate associations are not statistically significant at conventional levels (all $|r| < 0.11$, $p > 0.05$ given the sample size), their directionality offers preliminary support for the theoretical coherence of the scale's structure. However, as item-level correlations are less informative than scale-level analyses in psychometric research, these findings should be interpreted as descriptive rather than inferential, with primary emphasis placed on composite scale scores in subsequent analyses shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Predicting academic performance from emotional intelligence and well-being indicators.

Predictor	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*
Intercept	30.12	2.87	-	10.49	<0.001
EI	0.25	0.03	0.382	8.33	<0.001
Stress	−0.20	0.04	−0.241	−5.00	<0.001
Self-Esteem	0.15	0.04	0.190	3.75	<0.001
Social	0.10	0.04	0.130	2.50	0.013

Emotional intelligence emerged as the strongest positive predictor of academic performance (β = 0.382, $p < 0.001$), indicating that for every one-unit increase in EI score, academic performance increased by 0.25 points, holding other variables constant. Lower stress (β = −0.241, $p < 0.001$) and higher self-esteem (β = 0.190, $p < 0.001$) also significantly contributed to better academic outcomes, while positive social interactions showed a modest but statistically significant association (β = 0.130, $p = 0.013$). Collectively, these findings underscore that academic success is not solely cognitive but is meaningfully shaped by students' emotional and social well-being.

The scatterplot presented in **Figure 3** visually depicts the positive linear association between students' self-reported emotional intelligence (as measured by the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale; EIS) and their standardised academic performance scores. Each data point represents an individual participant (N = 276), with the horizontal axis denoting the total EIS score (ranging from approximately 40 to 165) and the vertical axis indicating academic performance as a percentage (ranging from 40% to 90%). The red regression line, fitted using ordinary least squares, illustrates a statistically significant positive slope (β = 0.382, $p < 0.001$), confirming that higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with greater academic achievement. In contrast, the relationship is not perfectly deterministic, evidenced by the dispersion of points around the line; the overall trend suggests that EI serves as a meaningful predictor of academic outcomes in this adolescent cohort. This visualisation corroborates the quantitative findings of multiple linear regression, reinforcing the notion that emotional competencies contribute substantively to educational success, particularly in contexts where socio-emotional regulation and interpersonal engagement are integral to learning.

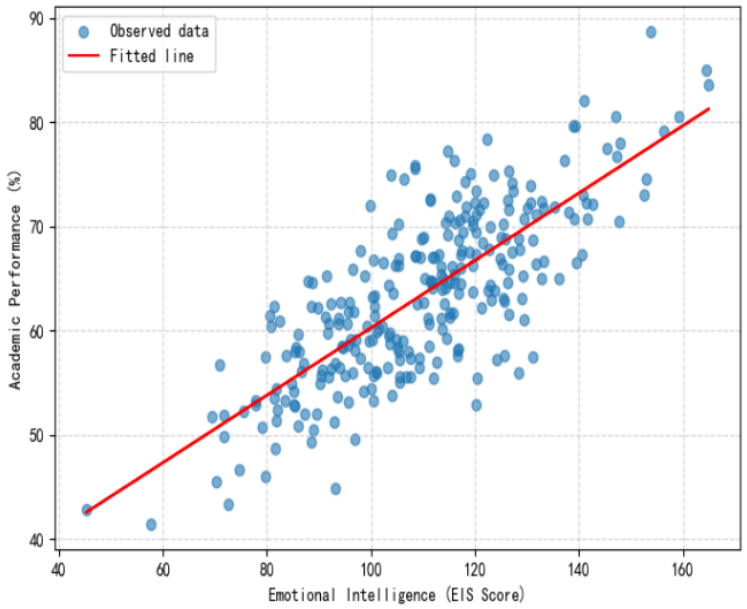

Figure 3. Emotiona inteligence vs. academic performance.

4.2. Justification of study objectives and hypotheses

Emotional intelligence (EI) and academic success are interdependent concepts, and this research set out to dissect this connection. Everyone agrees that emotional

intelligence, the capacity to detect, name, analyse, and effectively use one's own and other people's emotions, is a game-changer in many spheres of one's personal and professional life. In educational settings, high levels of EI are posited as enhancing students' adaptive capabilities, reducing stress, and improving social interactions, thereby fostering a more supportive and effective learning environment. Despite substantial evidence highlighting the benefits of EI, there remains a significant gap in understanding its specific mechanisms and long-term impact on diverse student populations. This study addresses this gap by employing a robust quantitative survey methodology to assess EI using the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and standardised academic performance measures among 276 students from diverse backgrounds. Based on previous research, this study proposes that EI is a predictor of healthier outcomes, including less stress, higher self-esteem, more positive social interactions, and better academic achievement. This study intends to contribute to students' holistic development and to the improvement of educational practices and policies by thoroughly testing these assumptions and providing empirical evidence in favour of incorporating EI training into the educational curriculum. This study is expected to yield valuable insights that underscore the need to prioritise emotional intelligence within educational systems to cultivate well-rounded, resilient, and academically successful students.

5. Interpretation of results

This study's findings, which supported the original predictions, examined 276 students' intelligence (EI) and how it correlated with their academic performance. Consistent with previous research, we found that students' happiness and classroom performance improved as their EI level increased. Specifically, the data revealed significant positive relationships between high EI scores and lower stress levels, increased self-esteem, better social interaction, and superior academic performance. For instance, participants who reported strong abilities to recognise and manage their emotions also demonstrated lower levels of stress and higher self-esteem, consistent with previous research by Brackett et al. (2011), who found that EI contributes to emotional well-being by facilitating effective stress management and enhancing self-perception. Moreover, the ability to understand and predict the emotions of others was linked to improved social interactions, corroborating the findings of Mavroveli et al. (2007), who highlighted that high EI individuals exhibit better social competence and peer relationships. Furthermore, students who scored higher on the EI scale also performed better academically, especially on assignments requiring them to work together and solve problems. This lends credence to the findings of Parker et al. (2004), who found that EI had a positive effect on students' academic performance as they moved from high school to university.

While the positive associations between emotional intelligence, well-being, and academic performance observed in this study align with prior correlational evidence (e.g., MacCann et al., 2020; Perera and DiGiacomo, 2013), the present research advances the field by empirically anchoring these relationships within a developmentally critical cohort, adolescents in diverse Indian educational contexts,

where systemic EI integration remains nascent. From a psychological perspective, this work reinforces the dual-process model of adaptive functioning (Mayer and Salovey, 1997), wherein emotional regulation and interpersonal insight act not merely as correlates but as enabling mechanisms that scaffold cognitive engagement under stress. Educationally, the findings substantiate a shift from purely cognitive curricula toward affective-reflective pedagogies that treat emotional literacy as foundational to learning, not ancillary. Crucially, by demonstrating that EI predicts success specifically in collaborative and problem-solving tasks, skills increasingly prioritised in 21st-century learning frameworks (OECD, 2018), this study offers timely empirical justification for embedding EI within national educational reform agendas, particularly in Global South contexts where such evidence has been scarce. Thus, the novelty lies not in reconfirming EI's relevance, but in contextualising its operational utility within underrepresented educational ecologies and linking it directly to skill-based academic outcomes that policy makers now prioritise.

6. Conclusion

The present findings align closely with Goleman's (1995) mixed model of emotional intelligence, which posits that competencies in self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills collectively enable adaptive functioning in complex social environments such as schools. Specifically, students' capacity to recognise and manage affective states (self-awareness and self-regulation) likely underpins the observed reductions in stress and heightened self-esteem, consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping, wherein appraisal and regulatory strategies mediate psychological outcomes. Furthermore, the link between EI and superior performance in collaborative tasks resonates with social interdependence theory (Deutsch, 1949), which asserts that effective interpersonal coordination, facilitated by empathy and social skills, is critical for productive group work. These theoretical lenses not only explain why EI correlates with both well-being and academic success but also clarify the mechanisms through which emotional competencies translate into tangible educational benefits, particularly in contexts requiring socio-cognitive integration.

6.1. Implications for education

The significant positive correlation between EI and educational outcomes suggests that integrating EI into educational practices and curricula can provide substantial benefits. Educators and lawmakers should consider implementing EI training programs that teach people to be more self-aware, self-regulatory, and empathic. Incorporating or providing students with access to these programs as independent courses may help them develop their social and emotional competence. Durlak et al. (2011) found that SEL programs implemented in schools greatly enhance children's emotional competence, social behaviours, and academic achievement. Implementing similar programs across educational levels can create a supportive learning environment that fosters both academic and personal growth. Furthermore, teachers should be trained to recognise and nurture students' EI. Professional development programs focused on EI

can equip educators with the skills to model and teach emotional intelligence effectively. By integrating EI into classroom management practices and instructional strategies, teachers can help students develop improved self-regulation, stress management, and interpersonal skills. Such integration can also contribute to a positive school climate, reduce instances of bullying, and promote inclusive and empathetic student interactions.

The adoption of EI assessment tools such as the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) in educational settings can help identify students who may benefit from additional support. Regular assessment and feedback can encourage students to develop greater awareness of their emotional strengths and areas of improvement. To improve the efficacy of EI programs as a whole, this preventative measure may guarantee that interventions are tailored to suit the requirements of each student.

6.2. Limitations

Despite these encouraging results, this study has a number of limitations that should be noted. First, the study's cross-sectional design made it difficult to determine a cause-and-effect link between emotional intelligence (EI) and academic performance. Longitudinal research is required to investigate how EI development affects students' academic progress and well-being over time. Second, using self-reported data alone to measure emotional intelligence (EI) and well-being might lead to response biases because participants could provide responses that are more socially acceptable than true representations of their emotions. The research sample was broad yet restricted to students from certain colleges, which would have impacted how broadly applicable the results were. For better outcome applicability, future studies should include a wider range of samples from various educational settings and geographical areas. Additionally, the study did not consider confounding factors that could affect both EI and educational results, such as parental participation, socioeconomic position, and prior academic success.

6.3. Future research

Longitudinal studies can provide insights into how sustained EI training affects students' emotional well-being, social relationships, and academic performance. Additionally, experimental designs with control groups can help establish causal relationships between EI interventions and educational outcomes, and research should investigate the specific components of EI that are most influential in different educational settings. For example, studies could examine whether certain EI skills, such as emotional regulation or empathy, are more critical for academic success in collaborative versus individual learning environments. Understanding these nuances can help tailor EI programs to maximise their effectiveness, and exploring the role of cultural factors in the development and expression of EI is essential. Cross-cultural studies can determine whether existing EI models and interventions are universally applicable or require adaptation to cultural contexts. This study can inform the design of culturally sensitive EI programs that respect and integrate diverse emotional and social norms. Finally, investigating the impact of EI on other educational outcomes, such as creativity, critical thinking, and resilience, can provide a more

comprehensive understanding of its benefits. By broadening the scope of EI research, educators and policymakers can develop holistic approaches to support the overall development of students. This study underscores the critical role of emotional intelligence (EI) in enhancing students' well-being and academic success. The positive correlations between high EI levels and reduced stress, increased self-esteem, better social interactions, and improved academic performance highlight the importance of integrating EI training into educational curricula. By fostering emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy, educators can create supportive learning environments that not only promote academic achievement but also contribute to the holistic development of students. Despite these limitations, these findings provide compelling evidence for the benefits of EI, suggesting that further research and implementation of EI-focused interventions could significantly enhance educational outcomes.

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