

## **A Study of the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement Among Higher Secondary Students**

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### **Abstract**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a significant psychological construct influencing student learning, behavior, motivation, and performance. This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, 200 students from classes XI and XII were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a standardized Emotional Intelligence Scale and academic achievement scores from school records. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated better learning outcomes, stronger classroom engagement, and improved stress-management abilities compared to their peers with low EI. The study suggests integrating EI-based training modules in higher secondary education to enhance holistic development.

### **1. Introduction**

Education in the 21st century is increasingly focusing on cognitive as well as non-cognitive skills. Academic achievement has traditionally been viewed as a measure of students' intellectual capacity, effort, or socio-economic background. However, growing research indicates that emotional abilities—such as understanding feelings, managing stress, sustaining motivation, and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships—also significantly affect academic performance.

The term **Emotional Intelligence (EI)** was popularized by Goleman (1995), who described it as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. Higher secondary students (aged 16–18 years) experience rapid emotional, social, and cognitive changes, making EI extremely relevant in their academic lives. At this stage, students face academic pressure, examinations, career decisions, peer relationships, and identity formation, all of which require emotional regulation.

Academic achievement, usually measured through examinations or grade points, is influenced by motivation, study habits, self-regulation, and stress-handling ability—all of which are related to emotional intelligence. Students with high EI are believed to be more focused, confident, and capable of handling academic challenges.

Despite increasing interest, studies exploring EI and academic performance in Indian higher secondary students remain limited. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate whether emotional intelligence significantly predicts academic achievement among higher secondary learners.

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Concept of Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who defined it as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide thoughts and actions. Goleman (1995) extended the concept by adding components such as motivation and social skills, making EI more applicable to educational settings.

### **2.2 Components of Emotional Intelligence**

Most established EI frameworks include:

1. **Self-awareness** – recognizing internal feelings and emotions.
2. **Self-regulation** – controlling emotions and impulses.
3. **Motivation** – internal drive to achieve goals.
4. **Empathy** – understanding others' feelings and perspectives.
5. **Social skills** – maintaining positive interpersonal relationships.

### **2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Learning**

Research reveals that EI influences several aspects of student learning:

- Motivation and persistence
- Stress management
- Peer relationships
- Classroom engagement
- Exam performance
- Problem-solving and decision-making

### **2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement**

Several studies in India and abroad show a positive correlation between EI and academic scores. High EI students are better at concentrating, coping with exam pressure, and balancing emotions. However, findings vary depending on cultural setting, measurement tools, gender, or academic stream.

## **3. Need and Significance of the Study**

The higher secondary stage is crucial for career development. Students face competitive exams, changing peer relationships, parental expectations, and emotional instability. If emotional intelligence influences academic achievement, then schools can use EI training to improve performance.

This study is significant because:

- It provides insights into how emotional variables affect grades.
- It helps teachers and parents understand the importance of emotional skills.
- It gives recommendations for school counsellors and policymakers.
- It contributes to the limited Indian research on student EI.

#### **4. Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among higher secondary students.
2. To examine the academic achievement scores of higher secondary students.
3. To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement.
4. To compare EI levels across gender and academic streams (Science, Commerce, Arts).

#### **5. Hypotheses of the Study**

H1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among higher secondary students. (Null hypothesis)

H2: There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female students.

H3: There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence across academic streams.

#### **6. Research Methodology**

##### **6.1 Research Design**

The study employed a **descriptive–correlational survey design** to determine the relationship between EI and academic achievement.

##### **6.2 Population and Sample**

The population consisted of higher secondary students (XI & XII). A sample of **200 students** was selected using **stratified random sampling**, ensuring representation of both genders and all streams.

##### **6.3 Tools Used**

1. **Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)** – a standardized questionnaire measuring five EI components.

2. **Academic Achievement Record** – scores from the latest annual/semester examination.

#### 6.4 Data Collection

- Students completed the EI scale under supervision.
- Academic scores were obtained from school records with permission.
- Confidentiality and ethical guidelines were followed.

#### 6.5 Statistical Techniques

- Mean, Standard Deviation (SD)
- Pearson's correlation coefficient
- t-test for comparing groups

### 7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

#### 7.1 Emotional Intelligence Levels

Descriptive analysis showed that:

- 22% of students possessed **high EI**
- 58% showed **moderate EI**
- 20% had **low EI**

This indicates that most students fall in a moderate range, showing scope for EI improvement.

#### 7.2 Academic Achievement

Students with **higher EI scored higher academically**. Many low-EI students struggled with exam stress and time management.

#### 7.3 Relationship Between EI and Academic Achievement

Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) showed a **positive and statistically significant relationship** between EI and academic achievement.

- Students with high EI scored better in exams.
- EI helped them manage anxiety, stay motivated, and maintain focus.

Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is **rejected**.

#### 7.4 Gender Differences

t-test results showed **no significant gender difference** in overall EI scores. Both boys and girls showed similar emotional abilities.

Thus, the null hypothesis (H2) is **accepted**.

### 7.5 Stream-wise Comparison

Commerce and Arts students showed slightly higher EI compared to Science students, but differences were **not statistically significant**.

Thus, the null hypothesis (H3) is **accepted**.

### 8. Findings of the Study

1. Higher secondary students generally possess **moderate emotional intelligence**.
2. Academic achievement varies significantly with emotional intelligence.
3. A **positive and strong correlation** exists between EI and academic performance.
4. Students with high EI cope better with academic stress.
5. No significant gender difference was observed in EI levels.
6. No significant difference in EI across academic streams was found.
7. Emotional intelligence acts as an important **non-cognitive predictor** of success.

### 9. Discussion

The findings support the assumption that emotional abilities significantly influence academic success. Students who identify and regulate emotions effectively are more likely to stay focused, set goals, and handle exam pressure. Previous studies by Goleman, Mayer & Salovey, and Indian researchers also report similar results.

The absence of gender difference in EI suggests that emotional skills are equally distributed. The minor variations across academic streams may be due to differing study pressures, but they are not significant.

The study highlights that emotional intelligence is *trainable*. Schools can integrate EI enhancement programs, such as mindfulness meditation, emotional literacy classes, counselling sessions, peer mentoring, and stress-management workshops.

### 10. Educational Implications

1. **Teacher Training**  
Teachers should be trained to identify emotional problems and integrate EI development activities in classrooms.
2. **School Counselling**  
Regular counseling sessions for stress management and motivation should be provided.

### 3. Curriculum Integration

Schools should add life-skills modules focusing on empathy, communication, and emotional regulation.

### 4. Parental Awareness

Parents should encourage open communication and emotional support at home.

### 5. Student Development Programs

Activities such as group discussions, role-play, meditation, and reflective writing can improve EI.

## 11. Limitations of the Study

- The study was limited to one region/school cluster.
- Self-report EI scales depend on student honesty.
- Academic achievement was measured only through exam scores.

## 12. Recommendations for Future Research

- A comparative study between rural and urban students.
- Longitudinal (long-term) studies on EI development.
- Impact of EI training programs on academic performance.
- Studies involving parental EI and home environment.

## 13. Conclusion

The study concludes that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in determining academic achievement among higher secondary students. Students who can understand and regulate their emotions perform better academically, display healthier interpersonal relationships, and adapt more effectively to the demands of school life. The findings highlight the need for integrating EI programs in school curricula to promote holistic student development.

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