

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING OF STUDENTS

Megha Sharma

Assistant Professor, JES College Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, India

sharmamegha@atomicmail.io

Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the empirical association between emotional intelligence (EI) and self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies of university students. This study employed a cross-sectional correlational research design with a stratified random sample of 380 undergraduate students in different fields of study who filled out two normative instruments, the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). Descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyze the quantitative data. The results showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-regulated learning ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$). The dimensions of emotional intelligence showed that the highest correlation with the employment of cognitive and metacognitive strategies were the regulation of emotion and the use of emotion. There were no significant gender differences for the total correlation, but the females had higher scores in the appraisal of emotions. The results suggest that emotionally competent students are more likely to be able to regulate, control, and maintain their learning activities, handle academic stress, and use appropriate cognitive strategies. The findings in this study highlight the need to include SE interventions as part of the curriculum for higher education institutions in order to build up strong SRL structures and enhance academic retention.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, self-regulated learning, academic performance, undergraduate students, educational psychology.

INTRODUCTION

In today's educational setting, academic success is seen as complex process that involves more than just intelligence. It also depends on a student's ability to regulate their own learning and manage their emotions. The move towards a learner-centered approach brings new challenges for undergraduates, such as managing their time on their own, thinking through complex ideas, and coping with emotional stress. To deal with these challenges, students need to develop effective learning strategies that help them take control of their own learning. These strategies are generally referred to as self-regulated learning (SRL).

At the same time, there has been growing interest in how emotional intelligence (EI) can predict academic success and ongoing engagement in learning.

While traditional intelligence tests (IQ) are still good at showing cognitive abilities, emotional and self-regulatory skills can greatly affect how well students perform in class and how successful they are overall. Self-regulated learning is an active process where students set their own learning goals, and they monitor and control their thoughts, motivation, and actions based on these goals and the environment around them.

According to Pintrich's model, SRL has three main parts: cognitive strategies like rehearsal, elaboration, and organization; metacognitive strategies like planning, monitoring, and regulating; and resource management strategies such as managing time, the study environment, and working with peers. Students who are high in SRL are proactive, can adapt well, and stay

focused even when they face distractions. However, these thinking strategies aren't just about intellect—they also involve how students handle emotions like boredom, frustration, and anxiety. This emotional aspect has led to increased interest in emotional intelligence within education. Salovey and Mayer defined EI as the ability to accurately perceive, understand, and express emotions, and to use emotions to support thinking. It also includes the ability to manage emotions to promote both emotional and intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence is considered a valuable psychological resource in education. Students who can manage their emotions effectively are better equipped to handle issues like test anxiety, procrastination, and burnout, which in turn allows them to focus more on complex thinking strategies.

Although there is a clear link between EI and SRL in theory, research at different levels has shown mixed results. The exact way emotional states influence self-regulatory actions is not fully clear. Some studies focus on how emotions affect attention, while others look at how emotions support motivation and goal pursuit. Most existing models are based on high school settings, leaving a gap in understanding how these dynamics work in the more independent and less structured environment of university education. To address this gap, this study explores the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-regulated learning strategies among undergraduate students.

The main hypothesis is that using advanced SRL strategies is positively and significantly connected to emotional intelligence. Additionally, the study aims to find which aspects of emotional intelligence are strongest in predicting SRL behaviors, providing a basis for targeted educational support.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design and Sample

The design of cross-sectional correlational survey was selected as the design to determine the relationship between variables, which was not experimented. The school was a well-known public university, and enrolled undergraduates served as the target population for this school. The initial selection of students was done using a stratified random sampling technique, with stratification based on academic discipline (Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences) and year of study (6); 200 students were randomly sampled from each stratum, for a total of 400 students. A complete data set was produced after data cleaning and excluding incomplete responses, resulting in a final data set of 380 students (52.6% female, 47.4% male) with a mean age of 20.4 years ($SD = 1.6$).

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) before giving the instruments. Each participant received an informed consent letter with the study's goals, the voluntary nature of the study, and the complete confidentiality measures. All individual participants in this study were informed and their written informed consent was obtained electronically before any data was collected, which is in accordance with human subject research guidelines.

Instruments and Measures

Emotional Intelligence was assessed by the widely-used 33 item Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (9) which is an adaptation of Salovey & Mayer's original EI model. A 5-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to get a response from participants. The instrument consists of four main subscales: Appraisal of Emotion, Regulation of Emotion, Expression of Emotion and Utilization of Emotion. Overall reliability of the SSEIT in the current study was highly consistent with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86.

Self-Regulated Learning was measured using a Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (4) with 31 items related to the Strategies in the Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies subscale and Resource Management subscale. The answers were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all true of me, 7 = very true of me). These key aspects of self-regulation—elaboration, organization, critical thinking, metacognitive self-regulation, and time/study environment management—are all reflected in the composite scale. The internal consistency estimate (Cronbach's alpha) of SRL scale in the present sample was 0.89.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 26.0. To describe the baseline variables descriptive statistics (Mean, SD) were obtained. The level of correlation between EI and the SRL dimensions was measured using Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis. Finally, a standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to see how much variance was explained

by each subscale of EI and to check for multi-collinearity within the model using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) constraints.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The baseline descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among emotional intelligence subscales and self-regulated learning are systematically presented in Table 1. The data reveal that students generally reported moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.44$) and moderate utilization of self-regulated learning frameworks ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.81$).

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Appraisal of Emotion	3.62	0.51	1.00			
2. Regulation of Emotion	3.71	0.48	0.42**	1.00		
3. Expression of Emotion	3.59	0.55	0.38**	0.35**	1.00	
4. Utilization of Emotion	3.80	0.42	0.49**	0.51**	0.41**	1.00
5. Total SRL Strategies	4.72	0.81	0.36**	0.52**	0.29**	0.48**

Note: Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix. ** $p < 0.01$; $N = 380$.

Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a robust, statistically significant positive relationship between global emotional intelligence and the overall use of self-regulated learning strategies ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$). This core finding strongly validates our primary hypothesis. To determine the independent contributions of each EI domain, standard multiple regression analysis was conducted. The combination of the four emotional intelligence subscales accounted for 38.4% of the total variance in self-regulated learning scores ($R^2 = 0.384$, $F(4, 375) = 58.32$, $p < 0.01$). The statistical values confirm that emotion regulation ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$) and emotion utilization ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) were the strongest significant predictors of student self-regulation behavior.

Emotion regulation is a very well predicted factor, which is the most prominent one, and it fits the theoretical prediction. With practice and awareness, students who are able to cope with their negative emotional reactions like exam stress, lack of performance, or boring tasks of challenging work will be able to actively prevent emotional hijacking (10). This means they can maintain their active working memory, which enables them to effectively implement deep cognitive strategies, such as elaboration and metacognitive self-monitoring. On the other hand, poorly developed emotional regulation is often associated with feelings of academic stress, that can lead to behavior avoidance, widespread procrastination, and disjointed study habits. Likewise, the high levels of emotion utilization underscore the role of emotion manipulation in strategic behavioral intention. Students with high emotional usage are masters of converting positive feelings into high levels of intrinsic motivation, interest, and self-regulated goal setting (11). For complex conceptual issues, they are emotionally intelligent in their approach to their problem, viewing it as a challenge, not a threat, and using various resource management techniques, such as peer working together or organised time structures, to activate. This finding is in direct support of earlier research that shows that positive affect orientation broadens the cognitive flexible repertoire, which directly supports creative problem-solving and self-regulation.

CONCLUSION

This study is designed to create an empirical correlation between emotional intelligence and SRL strategies of university under-graduates. According to the results this is a psychological stability and motivation that can create learning behaviors related to high emotional intelligence, which are organized and purposeful. More specifically, the ability to regulate and utilize emotions is important in understanding substantial differences among students in their planning, monitoring and persistence in cognitive activity. Socio-emotional skill development should thus be taken into account within the general provision of higher education institutions, with an emphasis on learning outcomes other than academic performance. The

development of emotional competence abilities along with academic directions may help the universities educate the autonomous, resilient and self-regulated lifelong learner.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

This research contributes significantly to the existing educational psychology literature by demonstrating the structural link between socio-emotional competencies and autonomous learning behaviors in high-stress academic environments. Practically, the findings provide actionable insights for university administrators and curriculum designers to integrate emotional intelligence training frameworks into standard student orientation and support systems, thereby boosting academic self-efficacy and overall retention rates.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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