



Self-Awareness: An EI Element and Its Impact on Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance

*Binit¹, Dr. Dipti Sethi²

1 (Binit, Research Scholar at Indus University, India)

2 (Professor, MBA Department, Indus University, India)

ABSTRACT

In today's competitive environment, students are expected to handle multiple roles with efficiency and effectiveness. Academic performance has become a key indicator of success in higher education and is often regarded as a strong predictor of future academic and professional achievements. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate the right attitude and goal orientation in students to prepare them for the unseen complexities of life and to ensure quality education. This research examines the impact of self-awareness—a crucial aspect of emotional intelligence—on students' examination performance. The study was performed on a sample of undergraduate students from the educational institutes in Ahmedabad. Adopting a quantitative approach, data were collected using a survey instrument. Findings indicate that self-awareness plays a significant role in shaping students' academic performance. The study highlights the implications of these findings for academics and provides recommendations for future research.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Self-awareness, Academic Performance*

I. INTRODUCTION

The academic performance of students holds significant importance as a measure of success within higher education, often serving as a critical indicator of their potential achievements in future informative and professional endeavours. Many factors, including motivation, study practices, and personality behaviours, influence the academic performance of students. Among these personality traits, goal orientation stands out as a relevant element. Goal orientation refers to individuals' approaches to their objectives and the tactics they employ to achieve them, as described by Dweck and Leggett in 1988. The consequences of academic performance extend to advantageous outcomes such as improved employment prospects and sharp chances of admission to graduate schools, as strengthened by studies like those conducted by Barr and McNeilly in 2002, they found that a substantial 81% of job recruiters evaluating marketing majors view grade point average (GPA) as a vital screening criterion for prospective applicants.

Some organizations even automatically eliminate applicants who fail to meet a minimum GPA requirement, as recruiters believe that GPA serves as an indicator of the applicant's capacity, intelligence, and aptitude for absorbing job-related information (Barr and McNeilly 2002). EI skills and competencies are vital to success in educational settings, and they also reveal a significant positive relationship between EI and academic achievement among higher education students. In an exploration led by Rozell, Pettijohn, and Parker (2002), a significant relationship was found between EI and the aggregate grade point average (CGPA) of college students.

Emotional Intelligence, as a dimension of social intelligence, encompasses the ability to recognize and interpret one's own emotions as well as those of others, distinguish between them, and utilize this understanding to guide thoughts and behaviours. At its core, Emotional Intelligence involves the identification, assessment, and regulation of emotions in oneself, in others, and even within groups. Developing emotional intelligence, alongside stress management skills, plays a vital role in building students' confidence in their academic achievements. It not



only enhances their competence but also helps them critically reflect on the causes of setbacks. While traditional notions of intelligence have largely focused on cognitive and academic abilities, the concept of emotional intelligence extends this understanding, emphasizing that intelligence is multidimensional and extends beyond purely intellectual skills. Within this broader framework, self-awareness—an essential element of emotional intelligence—warrants deeper examination for its influence on students' academic performance.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has gained significant attention in educational psychology as a predictor of student success beyond cognitive ability (Mayer et al., 2004; Goleman, 1995). Defined as the capacity to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively, EI includes several interconnected components: self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and relationship management. Among these, self-awareness is often described as the foundation (Goleman, 1998), forming the basis upon which other EI skills are built. Self-awareness is the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as understand how they influence behaviour and performance. In academic settings, this awareness is essential for choosing appropriate learning strategies, coping with stress, and maintaining resilience in challenging situations. The relationship between self-awareness and academic performance is mediated by other EI domains: for example, recognizing exam anxiety (self-awareness) allows the use of relaxation techniques (self-management), which enhances concentration and test results.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several scholarly works have individually examined factors such as emotional intelligence, self-awareness, action orientation, learning efficiency, academic achievement, and performance. However, there remains a significant gap in research that fully integrates these domains. The academic success of undergraduate students is influenced not only by intellectual ability and subject knowledge but also by a range of non-cognitive skills. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor that shapes how students perceive, regulate, and utilize emotions in the learning process (Mayer et al., 2000; Goleman, 1995). Among the dimensions of EI, self-awareness is considered the cornerstone competency, enabling students to recognize and understand their emotional states, strengths, weaknesses, and motivational drivers (Goleman, 1998). A brief overview of the existing literature is presented below:

Emotional Intelligence

Intelligence is often described as a general capacity, largely inherited, that enables individuals to transform information into new ideas and skills. Within this framework, analytical intelligence and emotional intelligence are considered distinct yet complementary forms of intelligence (Jones & Day, 1997; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Despite their differences, both academic and emotional intelligence rely on the adaptive application of declarative and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge pertains to comprehending the nature of particular situations, while procedural knowledge relates to understanding how to act in specific circumstances. Adaptable application of declarative and procedural knowledge implies grasping the dynamics of unfamiliar situations and knowing how to respond effectively in such contexts. A key distinction between emotional intelligence and analytical intelligence lies in how knowledge is employed and put into practice. Analytical intelligence typically addresses problems with a single best solution



available (Sternberg, Wagner, Williams, and Horvath, 1995). Conversely, emotionally intelligent behaviour tackles issues that can be interpreted in multiple ways, lacks objective solutions, and offers various responses that may lead to the desired outcome. Furthermore, emotional intelligence lacks absolute standards for evaluation, as what constitutes intelligent behaviour is contingent upon the context in which the behaviour is displayed (Jones and Day, 1997).

A considerable body of research consistently demonstrates that emotional intelligence (EI) plays a pivotal role in shaping success, even within intellectually demanding professions. Findings suggest that EI can be up to four times more influential than IQ in determining professional achievement and status. Although extensive research has examined the link between EI and performance across educational as well as organizational contexts, comparatively fewer studies have investigated the influence of emotional maturity on academic outcomes. Nevertheless, existing evidence does highlight the predictive value of emotional intelligence to academic achievement.

The introduction of the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has bridged the seemingly disparate worlds of emotions and intelligence. The debate surrounding the integration of these two psychological concepts into a new theoretical framework continues. Traditional intelligence research has traditionally emphasized cognitive abilities, such as logical reasoning, mathematical skills, verbal aptitude, and analogical understanding. While IQ has predictive power in academic and professional success, it does not fully account for overall life performance and achievements.

The concept of emotional intelligence provides a framework for understanding the role of emotions in influencing behaviour, decision-making, and overall functioning. Research indicates that individuals with average classical IQ can still achieve significant success across diverse life domains through the effective use of emotional intelligence, particularly in managing emotions, fostering social relationships, and making informed decisions. EI contributes to critical factors such as leadership, collaboration, adaptability, and psychological well-being, thereby complementing traditional measures of intelligence by emphasizing the profound impact of emotional awareness and interpersonal skills on overall performance. Emotional intelligence has five components: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Empathy, Social skills, and Decision making. Emotional intelligence extends beyond student life and the realm of education; it is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in corporate recruitment and social interactions, going beyond the scope of academic achievement.

Self-Awareness

Salovey and Mayer (1990) describe emotional intelligence (EI) as a subset of social intelligence that entails the ability to perceive and monitor one's own emotions as well as those of others, distinguish between them, and employ this understanding to guide thought and behavior. Building on this, Goleman (1998) broadens the concept to include a range of competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and interpersonal skills, applied appropriately and consistently for effectiveness. Earlier, Goleman (1995) identified five core domains of EI: recognizing one's emotions, managing emotions, self-motivation, perceiving emotions in others, and managing relationships. Collectively, these domains underscore the



multifaceted nature of EI, highlighting not only the recognition of emotions but also their active regulation to achieve desired outcomes.

Although substantial research highlights the significance of emotional intelligence in academic achievement, some studies have reported little relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance. The findings in this area remain mixed, with certain studies demonstrating a positive correlation, while others fail to establish such a link. Given these inconsistencies, further investigation is warranted to clarify the relationship between self-awareness, an element of emotional intelligence, and academic achievement.

In Goleman's (1995, 1998) framework, self-awareness is the first and most critical domain of emotional intelligence, forming the basis for self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Without the capacity for self-awareness, individuals cannot effectively manage their emotions or understand their impact on others—skills essential for academic and professional success. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso model (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) situates self-awareness within the broader domain of perceiving emotions, which refers to the ability to accurately identify and interpret emotional signals in oneself and others. This awareness enables learners to recognize when emotions may be interfering with or enhancing their cognitive processing.

Self-awareness is central to the academic journey because it facilitates accurate self-assessment, promotes adaptive learning strategies, and fosters emotional regulation during challenging situations. Self-awareness serves as the entry point to EI. Without the ability to recognize and name one's emotions, it is difficult to regulate them, maintain motivation, or empathize with others (Goleman, 1998). This awareness extends beyond emotions to include accurate self-assessment of strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences, which directly influences academic strategy selection.

Academic Performance

Academic achievement is often assessed through examinations or continuous evaluation, yet there is no universal consensus on the most effective method of assessment or on which dimension carries greater weight—procedural knowledge, such as skills, or declarative knowledge, such as facts. Student academic performance serves as a critical indicator of success in higher education and is often regarded as a strong predictor of future academic and professional accomplishments. Several factors influence academic outcomes, including motivation, study habits, and personality traits. Among these traits, goal orientation has been consistently associated with academic performance. Goal orientation reflects how individuals approach their objectives and the strategies they employ to attain them (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). The literature identifies two primary types of goal orientation: action orientation and state orientation. Action-oriented individuals emphasize the steps required to achieve their goals, displaying proactivity, persistence, and a strong work ethic. In contrast, state-oriented individuals concentrate on goal outcomes, often exhibiting reactive behavior, a reliance on external validation, and a tendency toward immediate gratification (Kuhl, J., 1992). To bring the students a certainty of effective academic performance, it is highly imperative to develop their personality with emotional intelligence.



Interaction between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

Emotional intelligence serves as a crucial resource for managing setbacks, sustaining resilience in the face of challenges, and seeking support when necessary. It complements students' academic abilities by enabling them to identify distractions, set priorities effectively, and maintain a healthy balance between academic responsibilities and personal well-being.

Moreover, emotional intelligence plays a key role in managing stress by fostering adaptive coping strategies and reducing the likelihood of negative emotional spirals. By understanding and regulating their emotions and by reaching out for support when needed, students are better equipped to handle academic pressures while safeguarding their emotional health. High levels of emotional intelligence also strengthen interpersonal relationships, facilitating effective collaboration in group projects, constructive conflict resolution, and productive engagement with peers and teachers.

In addition, emotional intelligence helps students regulate their emotional responses during difficult situations, encouraging optimism and a forward-looking perspective on success. When cultivated alongside goal-oriented behavior, emotional intelligence can significantly enhance both academic performance and overall well-being.

Interaction between Self-Awareness and Academic Performance

Self-awareness, a fundamental component of emotional intelligence, refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and reflect on one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and motivations. This skill plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic experiences and outcomes. Self-awareness enables students to engage in metacognitive practices, such as monitoring their learning strategies, recognizing when an approach is ineffective, and adapting accordingly. Self-aware students are more likely to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, leading to enhanced academic performance (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000).

Self-awareness supports intrinsic motivation by allowing students to connect personal goals with academic objectives. Being aware of one's values and aspirations helps in setting realistic, achievable goals and sustaining motivation, which is directly linked to academic success (Zimmerman, 2002). By recognizing emotional triggers and stress patterns, self-aware students are better equipped to manage academic pressures.

Self-awareness fosters reflective thinking, which improves decision-making in academic contexts—such as choosing study methods, managing time, or seeking help when needed. This proactive behaviour positively influences academic outcomes. Academic success often requires group work and collaborative learning. Self-awareness enhances empathy and communication, allowing students to interact more effectively with peers and instructors, thereby improving group performance and learning experiences. When students are aware of their abilities, they develop self-confidence, which enhances classroom participation and academic engagement. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of self-awareness, an element of emotional intelligence, on students' academic performance in exams.



III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND DESIGN

Research Objectives

- To study the impact of self-awareness, an element of emotional intelligence (EI), on students' academic performance

Research Design, Sample, and Data

The present study adopts a descriptive research design, specifically employing survey research methodology, to investigate the influence of self-awareness, one of the elements of emotional intelligence on the academic performance of undergraduate students. The study involves a sample of fifty-nine college-going students from institutions of higher education. To assess the emotional intelligence levels and its parameters, of the respondents, a survey questionnaire was administered. This questionnaire measures emotional intelligence (in three domains), and comprehensively evaluates academic performance (Grade) and Emotional intelligence (EI). This analysis aims to determine if there is a statistically significant correlation between self-awareness, an element of emotional intelligence, and academic performance.

The statistical technique employed for this analysis was Cronbach's reliability test, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, the Pearson correlation test, Linear Regression Analysis, and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance). The study's findings are summarized and presented under various headings, outlining the results and implications of the research. These findings will shed light on the connection between self-awareness and students' academic performance

Measures

Academic performance, as assessed through the Grade Point Average (GPA), served as an indicator of the academic achievements of business students, as supported by previous studies (Borde 1998). Participants were requested to provide their GPA and the percentage of marks they had earned in the previous semester. To measure emotional intelligence and its three elements, the instrument employed in this study was the Schutte Self-Report Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al, 1998).

Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire. The collected data underwent reliability testing and statistical analyses, including linear regression and One-way ANOVA tests, using SPSS Ver 27 software to derive the study's findings. In this research, academic performance was considered the dependent variable, while the EI inventory was treated as an independent variable. These variables consisted of individual constructs and were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale.

Research Hypotheses

H0: There is no significant impact of self-awareness on the academic performance of students

H1: There is a significant effect of self-awareness on the academic performance of students

IV. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Reliability Test

First, the reliability test was carried out for EI-AVG. The result of the Cronbach alpha reliability test (Table 1) for EI-AVG was 0.797; thus, it can be said that the data set reliability is good.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Test

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.797	59

Cronbach's Reliability Test Values: Between Grade and EI-AVG: $\alpha = .797$

Normality Test

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was also performed between EI-AVG versus Grade

H_0 : The variable is normally distributed

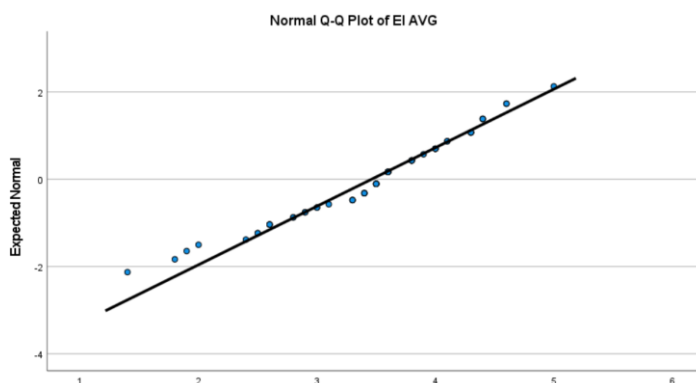
H_1 : The variable is not normally distributed

Table 2: Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test		
Statistics	dF	P-value
0.969	59	0.135

We find that for EI-AVG, the p-value of the Shapiro-Wilk test is .135 (Table 2) is more than 0.05, visible in Image 1 also and this implies that we cannot reject H_0 , i.e., accept H_0 , so the data is normally distributed

Image 1: Normality Test



Pearson Correlation Test

The third Pearson correlation test was conducted to see the correlations between EI-AVG vs Grade, and found that EI-AVG (Table 3) is positively correlated with Grade.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Test

Correlations			
		Grade	EI-AVG
Grade	Pearson Correlation	1	0.229
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.081
	N	59	59

Hypothesis Testing

Linear Regression Analysis and ANOVA

In addition, linear regression was conducted for hypothesis testing using GRADE as the dependent variable and EI-SA-AVG as the independent variable. One-way ANOVA was performed to find a statistical difference.

Students' Performance (Grade) vs Self-awareness (EI-SA-AVG)

H₀: There is no impact of emotional intelligence on the academic performance of students

H₁: There is a significant impact of emotional intelligence on students' academic performance

The value of R-squared is 0.057 from linear regression analysis, and the p-value was .013 (<.05, Table 4). As we find the p-value is 0.038, we can accept H₁ and conclude that emotional intelligence has a significant impact on the performance of students. Similarly, the one-way ANOVA result exhibited a p-value of .013 (<.05, Table 5), so it again exhibited that students' academic performance is impacted by emotional intelligence, and both linear regression analysis and ANOVA test exhibited that there was an impact of emotional intelligence on student academic performance.

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis (Grade vs EI-SA-AVG)

Dependent Variable		Grade			
N		59			
Multiple R		0.32			
Squared Multiple R		0.102			
Adjusted Squared Multiple R		0.087			
Standard Error of Estimate		0.4438			
Effect	Coefficient	Standard Error	Std. Coefficient	t	p-Value
Constant	1.139	0.226	0	5.045	0
EI-SA-AVG	0.151	0.059	0.32	2.55	0.013



Table 5: ANOVA (Grade vs EI-SA-AVG)

Analysis of Variance					
Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	F-Ratio	p-Value
Regression	1.281	1	1.281	6.504	0.013
Residual	11.227	57	0.197		

V. CONCLUSION

Emotions play a vital role in an individual's life, and when disrupted, they may trigger feelings of fear, worry, anxiety, frustration, anger, resentment, or irritability, all of which can hinder the achievement of desired goals. Academic performance, in particular, often declines under the influence of such negative emotions. Therefore, fostering positive emotional regulation becomes essential for enhancing academic success.

The present study hypothesized that self-awareness, as a fundamental dimension of emotional intelligence, is also a strong predictor of academic achievement. Students who possess a clearer understanding of their emotional states and learning needs are better equipped to manage stress, sustain motivation, and adopt effective study strategies. It was further proposed that individuals with higher levels of self-awareness would demonstrate superior academic performance over a semester. The findings support this hypothesis, indicating that self-awareness significantly predicts students' academic outcomes. Moreover, improved academic performance not only benefits students in their immediate examinations but also enhances learning efficiency, productivity, and achievement in future academic tasks.

The educational implications suggest the integration of self-awareness development into curricula through approaches such as reflective practice, mindfulness training, and cultivating present-moment awareness to enhance emotional regulation. Embedding these practices within academic settings can contribute not only to improved academic performance but also to the cultivation of lifelong emotional competencies. The broader objective extends beyond academic instruction to include nurturing students' emotional well-being. Ultimately, the aim is to provide a holistic education that supports both academic achievement and emotional growth

Limitations and future scope of study

Our research findings underscore the urgent need for more comprehensive investigations into emotional intelligence (EI), particularly through longitudinal designs and methodological approaches such as the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), which can provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding. This line of research holds significant potential for advancing knowledge on the relationship between self-awareness and academic achievement. Failure to recognize and cultivate human potential—due to unutilized talents, missed opportunities, or biases related to race, gender, and other factors—often results in the unnecessary loss of human capabilities. Addressing these challenges through well-designed educational and motivational interventions is therefore essential. Continued exploration is needed to better understand how abilities, capacities, and emotions collectively shape individual development and academic outcomes.



Future research on self-awareness, as a core dimension of emotional intelligence, should also examine the extent to which students' goals are internalized and self-determined versus externally imposed. Furthermore, our findings highlight the need to identify which specific domains of EI warrant focused investigation to academic performance, with the ultimate aim of supporting students in achieving higher levels of success.

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