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## Empowered minds, confident hearts: Emotional intelligence as a catalyst for self-esteem in university students

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### Abstract

In the subject of education, research on emotional intelligence is becoming increasingly significant. This concept has an impact on pupils' performance. It is well acknowledged that some people with lower IQs have greater success in life than others with higher IQs. This is where the idea of emotional intelligence comes into play. Developing people with emotional intelligence (EQ) and the ability to apply it effectively is just as important as producing knowledgeable folks. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are self-aware, aware of their needs, strengths, and shortcomings, able to maintain self-control, and able to build healthy relationships. In stressful situations, self-esteem is also crucial since it is linked to confident judgment and decision-making. Emotional intelligence (EI) and academic achievement are positively correlated, emphasizing that a student's educational path is particularly improved when they have the capacity to comprehend and control their emotions. This article aims to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence on self-esteem among students. Emotional intelligence enhances motivation, confidence, performance, and contentment. People with high self-esteem never give up on their belief that they deserve to succeed and put in all their effort to achieve their objectives. It is a mindset that creates the illusion of contentment, validates confidence, and draws success.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, University Students

### Introduction

The university stage seems to be a time of major transition, when academic demands, new social and personal obligations, and the passage from adolescent to maturity occur. Additionally, fear of failing and new evaluation methods might elicit unpleasant emotions that could change academic performance. Students may therefore experience unintended consequences from their attempts to adjust to this new environment (Guil *et al.*, 2019) <sup>[1]</sup>. EI has a big impact on daily living. It is important to note that emotional intelligence significantly enhances people's professional, personal, and developmental learning (Ali *et al.*, 2021) <sup>[2]</sup>. Fida *et al.* (2018) <sup>[3]</sup> believe that emotional intelligence fosters emotional firmness and that students at universities and other higher education institutions should be more resolute and talented. Young students who attend universities are given the opportunity to effectively enter the workforce.

EI has become a major focus over the last decade, recognized as one of the key challenges. Because emotional intelligence plays a significant role in problem-solving and minimizing conflicts between the intellectual and emotional domains, it offers many benefits, including effective interpersonal communication, self-control, compliance, motivation, improved social skills, flexibility, handling stress, and managing one's mood. Additionally, Individuals who have emotional intelligence can achieve greater in their academic and professional endeavors (Damasio, 1995; M Noori, 2009) <sup>[4,5]</sup>. Performance, motivation, and emotion are closely related, and this link can result in either pleasure or discontent. Although students experience a range of emotional conflicts when discussing academic demands, they must be positively oriented and react well to the needs in order for them to look satisfied. It is essential to consider each student's unique talents and abilities while promoting desire for learning. It is possible for strong motives that conflict with intellectual capacity to have unexpected effects.

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A sense of failure and a loss of self-confidence result from goal failure and a lack of support from positive emotional motivation (Vărășteanu and Iftime, 2013) <sup>[6]</sup>.

### Emotional Intelligence (EI)

It is believed that the discipline of EI seeks to understand, and explain people's feelings, joys, and abilities (Hassan, 2007) <sup>[7]</sup>. Emotional intelligence may also be defined as the ability to comprehend emotions in order to evaluate concepts and actions and to apply them in a way that promotes emotion and intelligent growth and maturity. (Goleman, 2005) <sup>[8]</sup>. EI considers how others apply their understanding to succeed. One portion of social intelligence, emotional intelligence, is predictive in some domains, including academic and professional achievement. Stated differently, it possesses the capacity to guarantee emotions and joy for both individuals and others (Bar-On, 1997) <sup>[9]</sup>.

Intelligence refers to the mental ability to process information that can be utilized in social situations to solve problems. Being emotionally intelligent involves having a good understanding of emotions and sentiments. Emotions are significant in our daily lives (Banks, 2012) <sup>[10]</sup>. It contributes to daily life interactions and success. An individual can regulate their own emotions, distinguish between them, and use the information to inform their ideas and behavior (Drigas and Papoutsis, 2018) <sup>[11]</sup>. Emotional intelligence is the ability to use emotions to enhance cognition and to reason with them in a meaningful way. More than 90 percent of people worldwide lack EI. The term "Emotional Intelligence" is a misnomer, because the idea of emotion is wildly misinterpreted (Tajeddini, 2014) <sup>[12]</sup>.

Emotional intelligence is on several "inner-side" human traits, such as comprehension, drive, motivation, goal-setting skills, self-assurance, inventiveness, adaptability, and drive for success. These characteristics are essential for personal growth. Additionally, emotional intelligence places emphasis on other "outer side" human traits, such as motivating others, exercising effective leadership, forming alliances, networking, cooperating, exerting influence, and nurturing others (Goleman, 1998) <sup>[13]</sup>. Emotional irregularities can lead to problems with mental health, elevated fear, and worsening interpersonal relationships. Consequently, the individual's level of life satisfaction suffers (Gross, 1998) <sup>[14]</sup>. Emotional intelligence is a model of behavior and personality that presumes people are aware of who they are and the social environment they live in (Vărășteanu and Iftime, 2013) <sup>[6]</sup>. Individuals with high emotional intelligence manage their feelings to maximize their chances of surviving by adjusting to the circumstances flexibly and in a way that is consistent with their objectives (Peña-Sarrionandia, 2015) <sup>[15]</sup>.

### Self-Esteem

The definition of it is "a person's general feeling of worth," according to Moris Rosenberg, one of the writers who has made the greatest contributions to his research despite the fact that there are many historical allusions (Rosenberg, 1965) <sup>[16]</sup>. Adolescence is when self-esteem first emerges, and it continues to grow until middle age, peaking at about age 60 before gradually declining from there (Orth *et al.*, 2012) <sup>[17]</sup>. Self-esteem is closely linked to the following attitudes: believing in one's own success, mobilizing based on the goal to be accomplished, experiencing failure more or

less profoundly, and improving one's own performance based on prior exposure (Vărășteanu and Iftime, 2013) <sup>[6]</sup>.

Academic success is influenced by several reasons, one of which is self-esteem. Self-worth and self-satisfaction are components of self-esteem (Bar-On, 2006) <sup>[18]</sup>. The most significant psychosocial difficulties from infancy to death are thought to be the development of self-esteem. According to our assessments and beliefs, we are, we are capable of, and what is our future (Macdonald, 1994) <sup>[19]</sup>. Social life and its ideals are the source of self-esteem, which is present in every aspect of a man's everyday actions. It is therefore among the most significant facets of human personality and behavioral traits. More self-esteem will lead to beneficial improvements, including improved academic performance, more effort to succeed, strong self-confidence, ambition, and a tendency toward better health (Lawrence *et al.*, 2006; Mann *et al.*, 2004) <sup>[20,21]</sup>.

Self-esteem refers to how individuals perceive themselves, and it can be influenced by various factors, including perceptions of their own abilities, intelligence, and attractiveness. Self-esteem has been connected to psychological well-being in a number of studies, whereas poor self-esteem has been associated to relationship problems, eating disorders, depression, suicide, and other types of psychopathologies (Mann, 2004) <sup>[21]</sup>. Research has shown that self-esteem has a crucial impact on academic achievement; whereas low self-esteem can negatively impact academic performance and health, high self-esteem is linked to improved problem-solving skills and stress management (Huang, 2011) <sup>[22]</sup>.

### Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem

In the connections of success, social competence, and self-esteem, emotional intelligence is essential as all of the associated elements are significant and dynamic. First, self-esteem reflects one's agency, dignity, and unchangeable human character and serves as a sign of adaptability (Cheung *et al.*, 2014) <sup>[23]</sup>. Therefore, it is essential for people of all ages and genders to define their identity and existence (Emmanuelle, 2009) <sup>[24]</sup>. The potential contribution to citizenship makes it a significant policy problem as well (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003) <sup>[25]</sup>.

Enhancing emotional intelligence (EI) can boost youth self-esteem (Cheung, Cheung, & Hue, 2015) <sup>[26]</sup>. To support the wellbeing of talented kids, it is crucial to examine their psychosocial characteristics in order to better understand the elements that affect them (Zeidner, Shani-Zinovich, 2015) <sup>[27]</sup>. Self-esteem is influenced by emotional intelligence (EI); hence it could be crucial to create social situations that support it (Cheung, Cheung, & Hue, 2015) <sup>[26]</sup>. Emotional intelligence generally predicts teenagers' self-esteem (Guasp *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[28]</sup>. The analysis conducted by these scientists indicates that clarity and repair also appear to be predictive when the dimensions are examined independently. While repair had an impact on interpersonal relationship satisfaction, clarity was the only factor that predicted self-esteem in another study (Ruvalcaba-Romero, 2017) <sup>[29]</sup>. Both factors were shown to have an impact on pleasant feelings. Teenagers who score well on these two categories appear to have a tendency to be happier and evaluate themselves more favorably, which leads to a greater level of contentment in life, that is, the average self-esteem in this process (Rey, Extremera, & Pena, 2011) <sup>[30]</sup>.

Success in work, education, and personal life is recognized to be predicted by emotional intelligence (VanRooy and Viswesvaran, 2004) [31]. People with high EI are better at analyzing the (emotional) causes of both their own and other people's behavior and applying this knowledge to shape their decisions and thoughts (Mayer & Salovey, 1993) [32]. Earlier research demonstrated a strong and positive correlation between SE and EI, indicating that people with high EI also typically have high SE (Mesmer-Magnus *et al.*, 2006) [33]. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been connected to effective academic, social, and psychological outcomes during adolescent as well as positive self-esteem. (Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014; Perera and DiGiacomo, 2015) [34,35].

People who have greater EI use the capacity to understand and regulate their emotions to protect themselves from difficult circumstances (Schutte *et al.*, 2002) [36]. These people ought to be more equipped, in theory, to keep a cheerful disposition when it's suitable and to successfully lift a depressed one when confronted with unpleasant situations. They may be able to maintain higher levels of self-worth and value because of their emotional intelligence. Both greater state self-esteem and an increase in positive mood states were associated with higher EI. After experiencing a negative state, those with higher EI also showed less of a drop in positive emotions and self-worth (Schutte *et al.*, 2002) [36]. Numerous research have confirmed similar findings in samples pertaining to teenagers, showing a significant correlation between self-worth assessments and high perceived emotional intelligence scores (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Bajgar, 2001) [37]. Self-esteem was specifically correlated with improved mood clarity and emotional recovery (Fernández-Berrocal *et al.*, 2006) [38]. Those who lack self-esteem increase the likelihood of experience emotional turmoil and commit crimes (Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998) [39]. Adolescents with high self-esteem have positive feelings and positive self-perception, as demonstrated (Bibi *et al.*, 2016) [40].

### Conclusion

Adolescents who have high hopes for their capacity to comprehend and control their emotions feel and appreciate more happy feelings and are generally happier with their lives (Salovey *et al.*, 2009) [41]. Adolescents who are adept at recognizing and controlling their emotions should also regard themselves more favorably overall (Schutte *et al.*, 2002) [36]. Finally, Teens with high emotional healing and mood clarity are more likely to feel good about the mselves throughout the self-evaluation process and to feel appreciated, both of which increase their sense of overall life satisfaction. Similarly, these results offer more proof that one's perception of life happiness is positively impacted by perceived emotional intelligence, which is aided by self-esteem.

Positive quality of life is associated with higher emotional intelligence, while psychopathology is more likely to develop in people with lower emotional intelligence (Petrides and Furnham, 2000) [42]. According to Hwang (2011) [43], having a healthy sense of self-worth serves as a foundation for long-lasting enjoyment and helps one maintain a happy emotional state in day-to-day interactions (Myers and Diner, 1995) [44]. People with high self-esteem think well of themselves, seeing themselves as equal to others and valuable and productive (Rosenberg, 1965) [16]. Self-consistency theory states that people adopt attitudes

and act in ways that are consistent with and uphold their degree of self-worth (Korman, 1967) [45]. Good attitudes (positive affect and job satisfaction) and high-quality work (task performance) are characteristics of people with high self-esteem because they support and reinforce their high self-esteem (Korman, 1966, 1967) [46,45].

Adolescence requires healthy self-esteem, which is regarded as a protective factor in life and is linked to a variety of desirable outcomes, including prosocial behavior, positive emotion, social confidence, and general psychological adjustment (Pyszczynski *et al.*, 2004) [47]. Adolescent academic, social, and psychological results as well as high self-esteem have been linked to emotional intelligence (EI) (Di Fabio and Saklofske, 2014; Perera and DiGiacomo, 2015) [48, 49]. People with high EQ are successful, productive, and have good communication skills has been growing daily (Onen and Ulusoy, 2015) [50]. Educational understanding, which seeks to educate pupils holistically to improve academic aspects and academic achievement, has been impacted by the idea of EQ in education (Rietti, 2008) [51]. A person with a high EQ might believe that he can "do something" and live a highly qualified life by controlling his emotions and so reducing feelings of fear and trepidation. The school where one's actions are developed must incorporate this notion as EQ plays a big part in conduct (Dutoğlu & Tuncel, 2008) [52].

Emotional intelligence is more significant than human talents such as technical proficiency. Conversely, reduced levels of depression, improved brain function, and good self-esteem are linked to strong emotional intelligence (Yost and Tucker, 2000) [53]. When faced with challenges, those who have a high sense of self-worth are more resilient. They are more successful because they are more diligent (Barkhordary *et al.*, 2009) [54]. People with strong emotional intelligence could be more inclined to react in a way that is socially acceptable during high-stakes personality tests. People with high EI and self-esteem are also less prone to exaggerating their relevant work-related knowledge or skills (VanRooy & Viswesvaran, 2004) [31]. Individuals who score higher on emotional intelligence appear to use less inefficient coping mechanisms and more effective ones. In contrast, emotional intelligence by its very nature makes a person stronger by allowing them to acknowledge their feelings (Goldenberg *et al.*, 2006) [55].

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