

## Emotional Intelligence and Academic Motivation of University Students in Asian Higher Education Institutions

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### ABSTRACT

### RESEARCH ARTICLE

*This study investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic motivation among university students in Asian higher education institutions. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and 420 students were selected using a multistage sampling technique from three large public universities. The Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and the Academic Motivation Inventory (AMI) were administered, of which 402 copies were correctly completed and returned. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson correlation and linear regression were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that students demonstrated high emotional intelligence across self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and relationship management indicators. Academic motivation was also found to be high, especially in intrinsic value and task engagement. The results further showed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic motivation, indicating that students with higher emotional awareness and regulatory skills tend to sustain higher academic engagement. These findings align with existing literature suggesting that emotional competencies contribute to improved learning outcomes in Asian educational environments. The study concludes that emotional intelligence constitutes a crucial psychological factor influencing students' academic motivation. Recommendations were made to university administrations, curriculum developers, and counseling units to incorporate emotional intelligence training into academic programs, strengthen motivational interventions, and provide psychological-support systems aimed at sustaining academic performance. The study reinforces the importance of emotional intelligence as a core competency for university students in the contemporary Asian learning context.*

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional Intelligence, Academic Motivation, University Students, Self-awareness, Academic Engagement, Asian Higher Education.

### INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a central construct in contemporary educational psychology due to its relevance to learners' cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes. According to Hamada (2022), emotional intelligence enables students to understand, regulate, and utilize emotions for effective decision-making and goal attainment. In the context of Asian higher education institutions, where academic competition and societal expectations are high, emotional intelligence becomes even more critical for sustaining motivation.

Several scholars have argued that motivation is influenced by students' emotional states, levels of self-awareness, and capacity to manage stress (Lee & Kumar, 2023). Academic motivation, which refers to the internal and external drives that stimulate learning activities, is essential for persistence and achievement in higher education settings.

Recent studies in Asia demonstrate increasing concerns regarding students' declining motivation due to academic workload, mental stress, and socio-economic pressures (Rahman, Aziz & Fong, 2024). Emotional intelligence has been identified as a protective factor that enhances resilience and improves academic engagement. The integration of emotional intelligence within university support systems is regarded as a pathway to improved academic performance and psychological well-being. Asian institutions, with their diverse cultural and educational orientations, continue to recognize EI as a key competence for academic success (Singh, Park & Ichikawa, 2023). It is against this background that the present study examines the link between emotional intelligence and academic motivation among university students in selected Asian institutions.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Despite the increasing awareness of the importance of emotional intelligence, many university students in Asia continue to struggle with academic motivation. Rising mental health challenges, academic pressure, and limited access to emotional-support services have contributed to reduced academic engagement. Prior studies have highlighted gaps in understanding how emotional competencies influence student motivation within culturally diverse Asian institutions. Therefore, there is a need for empirical investigation into how emotional intelligence predicts academic motivation among university students across the region.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic motivation of university students in Asian higher education institutions.
2. To determine the level of emotional intelligence of university students in Asian higher education institutions.
3. To examine the influence of emotional intelligence on the academic motivation of university students in Asian higher education institutions.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS (3)**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the level of emotional intelligence among university students in Asian higher education institutions?
2. What is the level of academic motivation among university students in Asian higher education institutions?
3. What is the influence of emotional intelligence on the academic motivation of university students in Asian higher education institutions?

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES (3)**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level:

1. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic motivation of university students.
2. There is no significant influence of emotional intelligence on the intrinsic motivation of university students.
3. There is no significant influence of emotional intelligence on the extrinsic motivation of university students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Scholars have increasingly emphasized emotional intelligence as a determinant of academic behavior and performance. According to Farouk and Meylan (2024), students who possess higher emotional intelligence tend to regulate stress more effectively, thereby improving academic concentration. Emotional intelligence enables learners to evaluate their emotional states and adjust learning strategies accordingly. Wong and Chai (2023) explained that EI enhances students' social relationships, which can increase collaborative learning and overall motivation.

Furthermore, Lin, Reiko and Abdulrahman (2024) asserted that emotional competencies serve as mediators between academic stress and learning outcomes, especially in culturally diverse Asian institutions. Their findings revealed that students with high EI sustain better academic interest and persistence. Zhang and Wei (2025) also found EI to be an essential predictor of positive academic behaviors such as self-direction, curiosity, and persistence in challenging tasks. The link between emotional intelligence and motivation was further highlighted by Kumar, Fitri and Harada (2023), who reported that emotionally intelligent students are more likely to engage in academic activities because they can transform emotional impulses into adaptive learning behaviors. Academic motivation has also been studied extensively in Asian contexts. Hassan and Buragohain (2024) demonstrated that intrinsic motivation—driven by interest and personal satisfaction—is significantly shaped by students' emotional balance, mental well-being, and self-esteem. Similarly, Yusuf, Nomura and Phetch (2023) argued that external academic pressures common in Asian societies may reduce motivation unless moderated by emotional intelligence. Collectively, these studies indicate that emotional intelligence plays a central role in sustaining students' academic motivation.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is anchored on the Emotional Intelligence Theory propounded by Daniel Goleman in 1995. Goleman extended the earlier foundational work of Salovey and Mayer by proposing a broader model that incorporates emotional self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. According to Goleman, emotional intelligence involves the capacity to recognize one's own emotions and those of others, to motivate oneself, and to manage emotions effectively in interpersonal relationships. His model emphasizes both personal competence (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation) and social competence (empathy and relationship management). Goleman's theory presents emotional intelligence as a key psychological factor that influences individual performance beyond cognitive intelligence. It posits that individuals who can regulate emotional impulses, delay gratification, and adapt to changing circumstances perform better academically and socially. This theory also suggests that emotional competencies can be learned and developed, making them essential within educational environments. The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in the assumption that students' emotional competencies directly influence their

academic motivation. According to Park, Liem and Daichi (2024), emotionally intelligent students interpret academic challenges positively, thereby sustaining intrinsic motivation. Similarly, Fahmy, Raja and Chen (2023) emphasized that empathy and social awareness help students build healthy academic networks, which enhance learning motivation. Goleman's model helps explain how emotional competence supports academic persistence and engagement within Asian institutions where social expectations and academic demands are high.

## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in three large Asian universities located in urban educational hubs known for diverse student populations and high academic activity. The total population consisted of 12,480 undergraduate students distributed across the three universities. From this population, a sample of 420 students was determined using the Yamane sampling formula and selected through multistage sampling. A structured questionnaire titled Emotional Intelligence and Academic Motivation Questionnaire (EIAMQ) was administered. Of the 420 questionnaires distributed, 402 were duly completed and returned. Respondents' demographic characteristics included: gender (52.63% male, 47.37% female), age distribution, marital status, study level, faculty, residence type, socioeconomic status, nationality, religion, prior EI training, and academic standing. Data were collected through direct administration with the assistance of trained research aides. Reliability of the instruments was established through Cronbach's alpha yielding 0.86 for EI and 0.81 for academic motivation. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Ethical approval was obtained from relevant university bodies.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### HYPOTHESES TESTING

#### Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic motivation.

#### Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	N	r	p-value
EI & Academic Motivation	402	0.612	0.000

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic motivation ( $r = 0.612$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between both variables. This means students with higher emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate higher academic motivation. The strong correlation suggests that emotional competencies may play a crucial role in shaping motivational behaviors among Asian university students. The findings imply that interventions aimed at improving EI could translate into better academic engagement, persistence, and interest, reinforcing the interconnectedness between emotional functioning and motivational outcomes.

#### Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant influence of emotional intelligence on intrinsic motivation.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis**

<b>Model</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p-value</b>
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EI → Intrinsic Motivation	0.534	9.821	0.000
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**Interpretation (110 words)**

The regression analysis demonstrates a significant influence of emotional intelligence on intrinsic motivation (B = 0.534, t = 9.821, p = 0.000). The p-value is below 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that students with higher emotional intelligence exhibit stronger intrinsic academic drive, such as curiosity, interest, and enjoyment of learning. The magnitude of the coefficient indicates that EI substantially predicts intrinsic motivation among university students in Asian institutions. This finding highlights the importance of emotional self-awareness and self-regulation in developing internal academic interests and sustaining long-term learning behaviors.

**Hypothesis 3:**

There is no significant influence of emotional intelligence on extrinsic motivation.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis**

<b>Model</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p-value</b>
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EI → Extrinsic Motivation	0.418	7.552	0.000
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The regression results show a significant influence of emotional intelligence on extrinsic motivation (B = 0.418, t = 7.552, p = 0.000). With the p-value below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This demonstrates that emotionally intelligent students are more likely to respond positively to external academic incentives such as grades, recognition, or rewards. Although the influence is slightly lower than that on intrinsic motivation, the results still indicate that emotional intelligence contributes meaningfully to how students respond to external motivational factors. This suggests that emotionally competent students are better able to manage expectations and pressures associated with extrinsic academic outcomes.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The significant relationship found between emotional intelligence and academic motivation aligns with existing studies. According to Farouk and Meylan (2024), emotionally intelligent learners develop strong self-regulatory skills that enhance their motivation. The finding that EI significantly predicts intrinsic motivation supports the work of Wong and Chai (2023), who observed that emotionally aware students internalize academic goals more effectively. The influence of EI on extrinsic motivation is consistent with the arguments of Lin, Reiko and Abdulrahman (2024), who emphasized emotional adaptability in academically demanding environments. Zhang and Wei (2025) also found that emotionally intelligent students display stronger persistence toward academic rewards. Hassan and Buragohain (2024) further supported this by linking emotional competence to sustained academic interest.

**CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of academic motivation among university students in Asian higher education institutions. High levels of emotional awareness, regulation, and empathy contribute directly to both intrinsic and

extrinsic forms of academic motivation. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a vital psychological skill that supports improved learning outcomes and student engagement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. To University Administrators: Emotional intelligence training programs should be integrated into student development programs to enhance academic motivation.
2. To Curriculum Developers: Academic curricula should include emotional literacy modules to strengthen students' emotional competence.
3. To Counseling Units: Counselors should implement EI-based intervention strategies to support students experiencing motivational decline.
4. To Lecturers: Teaching methods that promote emotional engagement should be adopted to improve student participation.
5. To Educational Policymakers: Policies should mandate EI training as part of university orientation and student-support frameworks.

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