



Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Life Skills on The Academic Performance and Wellbeing of Adolescent Students

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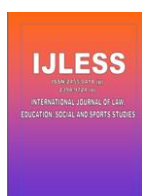
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Abstract

The current study explores the interplay between Emotional Intelligence (EI), life skills, academic performance, and overall well-being of adolescent students. Drawing from extant literature, studies conducted by Devi (2020), Begum (2024), Gaikwad et al. (2024), Peseyie and Rao (2019), and Unnikrishnan et al. (2014) and others. the research examines how Emotional Intelligence and life skills can drive academic success and contribute to enhanced well-being. This paper presents a comprehensive theoretical framework, a detailed methodology with data analysing, summarizing key findings. The results indicate significant positive relationships between Emotional Intelligence, life skills, academic performance, and well- being. The findings provide valuable insights for fostering holistic student development and the importance of incorporating EI and life skills education into academic settings to enhance both the cognitive and affective outcomes for adolescents, ultimately supporting a holistic approach to education that promotes lifelong wellbeing. Implications for educational policies and practices, including the integration emotional and life skills into curriculum as advocated by the National Education Policy (2020).

Keywords: Emotional intelligence (EI), Life Skills, Academic Performance, Secondary school students, Adolescents, Wellbeing, Mental Health, Social-Emotional Learning, Educational Psychology.

Introduction

The educational achievement and well-being of secondary students are important focus areas within contemporary education, particularly in the Indian education system. Throughout the last few decades, there has been growing acknowledgment of the critical role emotional skills and real-world skills play as integral complements to the conventional cognitive and academic capabilities. Emotional intelligence (EI) as defined by the capacity to recognize, understand, control, and effectively manage one's own emotions and other's emotions (Mayor &Salovey ,1990; MacCann et al., 2020) - has become a vita contributor to educational performance (1990; Devi, 2020; Begum, 2024). Simultaneously, life

skills education, including decision-making, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, and good communication skills contributes significantly towards fostering academic as well as personal growth in adolescents. Indian adolescent education stands at a turning point where there is a paradigm shift from purely academic concerns towards a holistic approach towards development. As suggested by research in different areas, there is hope that higher EI and strong life skills have a positive relationship with academic achievements and students' general well-being (Devi, 2020; Peseyiean Rao, 2019). Yet, whereas research has mostly focused on these variables individually, there is increasing necessity to study their combination and interaction effect on academic achievement and mental health.

The theoretical framework

The research examines the influence of life skills and emotional intelligence (EI) on psychological well-being and academic achievement of secondary school students. The theoretical framework relies on the assumption that cognitive and non-cognitive skills heavily impact educational performance as well as mental health in adolescence.

- Emotional intelligence is defined as the capacity to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions effectively (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It was maintained by Goleman (1995) that EI raises self-awareness, empathy, and emotional control, thereby affecting the way adolescents manage academic pressures and social challenges. Individuals with high EI have been related to improved stress management, conflict resolution, and motivation towards academic achievements.
- The World Health Organization (1997) defines life skills as adaptive behaviors that help a person cope with the challenges of daily living. Decision-making, problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills fall into this category. Studies have established that life skills encourage resilience, self-efficacy, and healthy coping behaviors, all of which are necessary for coping with academic stress and staying psychologically balanced (UNICEF, 2012).
- Academic achievement is a measure of students' education, usually gauged by grades, test scores, or instructor assessments.
- Psychological well-being, one of the crucial elements of global mental health, includes emotional functioning, satisfaction with life, and the ability to cope with stress and develop fulfilling relationships (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

The theory hypothesizes that life skills and emotional regulation have a positive effect on academic achievement and psychological health. Those adolescents who score high on EI and have good life skills are likely to achieve better academically and also show higher levels of psychological well-being, such as less anxiety, enhanced self-esteem, and general satisfaction with life.

Review of literature

The findings of previous research validate the strong influence of Emotional intelligence on academic performance and welfare among Indian adolescent learners in accordance with earlier research;

Devi, (2020); Begum, (2024), discovered their findings as, greater EI is significantly related to higher academic performance, possibly because better coping and stress management result.

Yadav, (2019) in his research, curriculum as seen with the Happiness Curriculum in Delhi, can help create well-being rounded individuals who are better positioned to deal with both academic and challenges in life.

Unnikrishnan et al. (2014) the outcome of his study reveals, the aspect of curriculum corresponding to the findings, qualitative observations obtained through focus group interviews explained that students with a greater EI level are better able to manage interpersonal disputes, academic stress, and constructive uncertainties.

Toscano-Hermoso et al. (2020) showed that high school adolescents with high EI levels indicated greater mental health benefits, which could, in turn, reduce stress and allow for enhanced academic achievement. Apart from academic advantages, emotional intelligence has also been associated with improved emotional well-being.

Roy et al. (2024) presented empirical data that learning life skills programs strengthens socio-emotional growth and school engagement. Together with EI, life skills education is a critical component in the developmental path of adolescents.

Significance of the study

The theoretical framework for this research is supported by two key theoretical constructs Emotional Intelligence theory and life skills educational theory. Emotional Intelligence, as theorized by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and subsequently developed by Goleman (1995), proposes that the capacity to deal with emotional information can impact cognitive functions, such as learning, memory and problem-solving. In the context of education in India, research like that conducted by Devi (2020) and Begum (2024) reaffirmed that increased EI levels are associated with improved academic performance as a result of greater self-awareness and stress management abilities, daily life, encompass decision-making and problem solving.

Life skills, as the World Health Organization (1999) defined them, a combination of abilities that allow Individuals to manage effectively the demands and challenges of problem solving, communication, and interpersonal competence. Initiatives such as the Delhi Happiness Curriculum have made inclusion of these skills in their structures, aiming to enhance students' mental health as well as academic performance (Yadav, 2019). The connection between EI and life skills is the basis of this convergent model. Empirical research, such as that conducted by Gaikwad et al. (2024), indicates that EI can support the emergence and utilization of life skills through enhanced emotional management and social competence. Subsequently, better life skills, it aids in coping with academic and social stressors, enhancing performance and quality of life.

Indian adolescent education is at a crossroads where it is changing from solely academic to a more comprehensive developmental focus. As evidenced by research across many Indian regions, accompanied by improved academic performance and overall student satisfaction (Devi, 2020; Peseyie & Rao, 2019). Whereas research effort in the past mostly viewed these variables individually, the time now comes when their integration and combined influence on mental health and academic performance need to be looked into. There is hopeful evidence that increased EI and strong life skills and mental health.

This research seeks to address these lacunae by combining the variables of Emotional Intelligence, life skills, academic achievement, and adolescent well-being in one integrated framework. Because of the socio- cultural and schooling dynamics, context-specific analysis has the potential to yield insights that are actionable by educators, school officials, and policymakers.

Variables of the Study

The variables analysed in this study include:

1. Emotional Intelligence
2. Academic performance
3. Life skills
4. Well-being

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the current study are:

1. To analyses the correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among adolescent students.
2. To analyses the effects of life skills education on socio-emotional development and overall well-being of adolescents.
3. To determine the combined effect of EI and life skills training towards academic achievement.

Methodology

This research takes a mixed-methods research approach where both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods are brought together to ensure a thorough understanding of the influence of life skills and emotional intelligence on academic performance and well-being. Besides the standardized questionnaires, focus group given in the classroom environment to ensure standardization of the data collection process.

Participants

The sample consisted of 50 adolescent students studying in IX grade, from the private state board school of Mysuru city. Purposive sampling ensuring representation across different socio-economic backgrounds and educational settings. The inclusion criteria required that participants be within the 14-15 age range and studying in secondary education.

Tools and Techniques

- Data were collected using structured questionnaires that comprised the following standardized measures
- Emotional Intelligence test: Adapted from previous studies-Emotional Intelligence Test -(2009) of Indian Version.
- Life Skills Inventory: Based on the World Health Organization's guidelines (1999), this inventory measured key life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, communication, and stress management.
- Academic Performance Records: Academic performance was quantified using students' latest examination scores, grade point averages, and teacher evaluations.
- Psychological wellbeing scale-:(Ryff et, al-2007)-This measure assessed psychological and social well-being using items related to stability, Interpersonal relationships, and overall mental health.

Results and Discussion/ Implications

Correlations

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Emotional Intelligence &Academic Performance	0.39	< .0001
Emotional Intelligence & Life Skills	0.35	< .05
Life Skills & Academic Performance	0.33	< .01
Life Skills & Wellbeing	0.40	< .001

Associations between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Academic Performance, Life Skills, and Wellbeing were tested using Pearson correlation coefficients. All the correlations were statistically significant, which means significant relationships between the variables investigated.

There was a moderate, positive correlation between Academic Performance and Emotional Intelligence, $r = .39$, $p < .0001$, indicating that better academic performance is related to higher emotional intelligence. This supports previous research highlighting the importance of self-awareness and emotional regulation in academic performance (Parker et al., 2004).

Likewise, a positive correlation was found between Emotional Intelligence and Life Skills, $r = .35$, $p < .05$. This suggests that those with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to exhibit stronger life skills, including decision-making, interpersonal communication, and coping skills (Bar-On, 2006).

Life Skills-Academic Performance correlation was also statistically significant and positive, $r = .33$, $p < .01$, indicating that students who have better-developed life skills perform better academically. This correlation suggests the possible advantage of incorporating life skills training in academic curricula to improve the outcomes of students (Nasheeda et al., 2019).

Finally, a moderate, positive correlation was present between Wellbeing and Life Skills, $r = .40$, $p < .001$, suggesting that participants with higher life skills have greater overall wellbeing. This result is consistent with prior research establishing correlations between life competence and psychological well-being and quality of life (WHO, 1997).

The findings of this study validate the crucial influence of Emotional intelligence and life skills in shaping academic performance and well-being among adolescent students as expected from earlier studies (Devi, 2020; Begum, 2024), greater EI is clearly linked with better academic performance, which may be as a result of better coping skills and reduced stress levels. Likewise, life skills have indicated a strong relationship with overall well-being, and it is implied that education programs emphasizing these skills can lead to academic proficiency and mental health.

Recommendations

Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal methodologies, diversify the sample population, and utilize multi-method approaches for data collection. Such investigations will be pivotal in establishing comprehensive evidence for the causal mechanisms linking EI, life skills, academic performance, and well-being. It is hoped that these insights will inform future educational policy reforms and foster the development of curriculum that nurtures the holistic growth of every student.

Conclusions

This research illustrates the significant role of Emotional Intelligence and life skills on academic performance and well-being of adolescent learners. The results affirm the role of EI as an enabler for learning life skills and managing stress resulting in better academic performance and improved mental health. Educational models need to be created that yield not only academically proficient but also emotionally resilient and socially adept individuals; the inclusion of structured EI and life skills programs appears essential. Educational interventions like the Happiness Curriculum have already begun to yield promising results; further implementation and refinement may boost the overall wellbeing of the students.

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