

## The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Student Success: A Literature Review

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**Abstract:** Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in student success, influencing academic performance, mental well-being, and social interactions. As education becomes more complex and diverse, understanding how EI affects students is increasingly important. This study aims to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on student success through a comprehensive literature review. Using qualitative methods, relevant articles published from 2015 to 2025 were collected from accessible databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, ResearchGate, and ScienceDirect. The selected studies focus on how EI contributes to academic achievement, mental health, and positive social relationships. The findings indicate that students with high EI tend to achieve better grades, manage stress effectively, and build stronger relationships with peers. Additionally, interventions designed to improve EI skills have been shown to enhance both academic and personal outcomes. This review highlights the need for schools to integrate emotional intelligence training into their curricula to promote holistic student development. By fostering EI, educators can better prepare students to succeed academically and navigate social challenges. Future research should further investigate effective strategies for implementing EI programs in educational settings.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Student Success, Academic Achievement, Education.

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### A. INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of education, academic success is no longer solely determined by intelligence quotient (IQ) or cognitive skills alone. Today, emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in shaping a student's academic performance, well-being, and social development. Emotional intelligence, as popularized by Daniel Goleman (2003), is defined as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (p. 43). Goleman’s framework includes five main components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These emotional competencies serve as the foundation for managing personal emotions and building positive interpersonal relationships – abilities that are essential for navigating academic life effectively.

Over the last decade, researchers and educators have increasingly explored how EI contributes to student success. Several studies have demonstrated that students with higher levels of EI are more likely to achieve better academic performance, maintain psychological well-being, and establish supportive peer connections (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2016; MacCann et al., 2019). Emotional intelligence also plays a crucial role in helping students adapt to stress, solve problems, and resolve conflicts constructively (Shah & Galantino, 2019).

In modern classrooms, especially those that are culturally and socially diverse, the presence of emotional skills has become more important than ever. Educators are starting to

recognize the impact of emotional literacy on learning outcomes and classroom dynamics. Integrating EI into the curriculum not only helps reduce behavioral problems but also improves students' motivation and classroom engagement (Durlak, 2015). In this sense, EI is not just an add-on, but a central component of holistic education.

However, despite its clear benefits, emotional intelligence training is still underrepresented in many formal education systems. The dominant focus remains on measurable academic metrics, while emotional and social aspects are often neglected. Therefore, this literature review aims to examine and synthesize recent research findings on how emotional intelligence influences student success. The review focuses on three main areas: academic achievement, mental health, and social relationships. By doing so, it highlights the importance of implementing EI-based programs and practices in schools and calls for further research on strategies to integrate EI in everyday learning.

## **B. METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive literature review method to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and student success, especially in terms of academic achievement. The purpose of this study is to collect, analyze, and summarize findings from previous research that explores how emotional intelligence affects students' learning outcomes and academic performance. Data were collected through a structured search of journal articles published between 2015 and 2025. The articles were obtained from several open-access and reputable databases, including Google Scholar, DOAJ, ResearchGate, and ScienceDirect. Keywords such as "emotional intelligence," "academic achievement," "student success," and "education" were used in the search process.

The inclusion criteria for selected studies were: (1) published in peer-reviewed journals; (2) written in English; (3) focused on the educational context; and (4) specifically discussed the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance. Studies involving school or university students were prioritized. A total of 17 relevant articles were selected after reviewing their abstracts and full texts. These articles were then analyzed to identify key findings, theoretical frameworks, and conclusions related to how emotional intelligence contributes to students' academic success.

Thematic analysis was used to examine recurring patterns and categorize the results into major themes, such as the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' overall success, the relationship between emotional intelligence and learning performance, and the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. This method helps to provide a clearer understanding of how emotional intelligence can support students' learning processes and academic outcomes. Thematic analysis is commonly used in educational research to explore relationships and meanings in qualitative data (Nowell et al., 2017).

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A review of 17 scholarly articles published between 2015 and 2025 reveals strong and consistent evidence that Emotional Intelligence (EI) significantly influences students' overall success, learning performance, and academic achievement. These three aspects are explained in detail below:

### **1. The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Students' Overall Success**

Emotional intelligence is widely recognized as a crucial factor in shaping students' general success, encompassing not only academic capabilities but also social, emotional, and psychological competencies. According to Goleman (2003), EI involves self-awareness, self-

regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills – dimensions that help individuals navigate life's challenges and succeed in personal, academic, and social domains.

Numerous studies support this notion. For instance El Othman et al. (2020) found that students with higher EI scores exhibited better emotional regulation and decision-making, which contributed to improved interpersonal relationships and psychological well-being – both essential for long-term student success. In a similar vein, a study conducted by Masrurroh et al. (2024), revealed that emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-management, motivation, social awareness, and relationship management, had a significant positive effect on students' learning achievement. Regression analysis confirmed that all components of EI individually contributed to academic success, with social awareness emerging as the most dominant factor. This aligns with the findings of previous research, which suggest that emotional intelligence plays a key role in fostering not only personal growth but also academic performance. Moreover, Namaziandost et al. (2024) showed that students with high EI tend to persevere through academic obstacles, maintain a growth mindset, and take ownership of their learning journey. Likewise, Jones et al. (2017) noting that students who cultivate emotional competencies are more likely to succeed not just in grades but in navigating school environments, forming peer support networks, and building a positive academic identity.

## **2. The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Learning Performance**

Learning performance, often observed in how students engage with daily academic tasks, study routines, and classroom activities, is another area heavily influenced by EI. Students with strong emotional awareness and control are better able to manage distractions, maintain focus, and stay motivated in their studies. Engin (2017) demonstrated that students with higher EI levels reported more effective concentration, reduced procrastination, and higher satisfaction with their learning process.

In a similar vein, Agnoli (2023) and Inglés et al. (2017) found that emotionally intelligent learners tend to use metacognitive strategies more effectively, such as setting personal goals, monitoring their progress, and self-correcting when facing learning difficulties. These students are also more proactive in seeking help, managing time efficiently, and building positive study habits. In the context of secondary and higher education, Zhoc et al. (2018) showed that EI was significantly correlated with improved classroom behavior and sustained learning interest. Emotional competencies also foster intrinsic motivation, as reported by Chang & Tsai (2022) who found that university students with high EI levels displayed greater personal drive and ownership over their academic responsibilities, resulting in consistent learning progress and better outcomes in coursework.

## **3. The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement**

Perhaps the most quantifiable outcome of EI's influence is students' academic achievement, typically measured through GPA, test scores, and performance evaluations. Across numerous studies, a positive and statistically significant relationship was found between EI and academic achievement. A meta-analysis by MacCann et al. (2019) involving over 40,000 participants concluded that EI contributes uniquely to academic success, even after controlling for IQ and personality traits. Hadiwijaya & Hutasoit (2017) found that emotional intelligence (EI) has a significant and positive effect on students' learning achievement. Their regression analysis revealed that the five dimensions of EI – self-awareness, self-management, motivation, social awareness, and relationship management – collectively explained 68.5% of the variance in academic performance. This suggests that higher levels of emotional intelligence, particularly in social awareness and relationship skills, are associated with better academic outcomes among students.

Supporting this, Pashchenko et al. (2024) reviewed multiple empirical studies and reported a consistent positive correlation between EI and academic performance. Their findings indicated that emotional intelligence not only predicts better grades and study habits but also enhances motivation, resilience, and social connectedness—all of which contribute to improved academic success. Similarly, Shafait et al. (2021) found that emotionally intelligent students not only performed better academically but were also more consistent in submitting assignments on time, preparing for exams with structured schedules, and managing academic stress effectively. Goetz & Bieg (2016) explained that emotional regulation, a core component of EI, helped students reduce academic anxiety, which often hinders performance.

Further, Balian Allen (2016) noted that students with strong emotional reasoning skills were better at interpreting feedback from instructors, adapting to teaching styles, and improving their work based on constructive criticism. This finding was echoed in Thomas & Allen (2021) who argued that EI indirectly boosts academic results through enhanced communication with peers and instructors, leading to a more engaged and supportive academic experience. Finally, research by Pérez-González & Qualter (2018) suggested that interventions designed to improve EI resulted in measurable improvements in test scores and academic confidence among both high school and university students. These findings emphasize the value of integrating EI development into educational curricula to support long-term academic success.

The findings from this literature review affirm the substantial role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in shaping educational outcomes across diverse academic settings. The evidence from 17 peer-reviewed studies consistently highlights EI as a multidimensional construct that not only enhances students' emotional and interpersonal functioning but also supports their academic growth and long-term educational success. This section discusses the significance of these findings within the context of each key domain: overall student success, learning performance, and academic achievement.

First, the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' overall success goes beyond traditional academic metrics to encompass emotional resilience, psychological well-being, and social adaptability. As Goleman (2003) outlines, core EI components such as self-awareness, empathy, and self-regulation are central to navigating the complex social environment of schooling. Articles by El Othman et al. (2020), Masruroh et al. (2024), and Namaziandost et al. (2024) indicate that students who possess high EI are more equipped to manage interpersonal relationships, make thoughtful decisions, and exhibit persistence in overcoming academic challenges. These attributes are critical to a student's holistic development, contributing not only to academic survival but also to thriving in a learning ecosystem that demands both cognitive and emotional labor.

Moreover, Jones et al. (2017) note that EI fosters a growth mindset and positive academic identity, allowing students to build meaningful peer support systems and develop a strong sense of belonging within educational institutions. These psychosocial advantages form the basis of "student success" as conceptualized in modern education—where emotional readiness, adaptive behavior, and social engagement are equally valued alongside academic excellence. Therefore, cultivating EI in schools could serve as a powerful preventative strategy against disengagement, burnout, and mental health concerns among youth.

Second, the influence of EI on students' learning performance becomes evident when examining how students emotionally navigate their day-to-day learning processes. As reported by Engin (2017) and Agnoli (2023), emotionally intelligent students are more capable of sustaining attention, overcoming procrastination, and regulating emotional states that hinder concentration—such as anxiety or boredom. These capabilities directly impact

classroom engagement, the use of metacognitive strategies, and the development of positive study habits. In other words, emotional intelligence acts as a facilitator for active learning and autonomy.

Supporting this, Inglés et al. (2017) and Zhoc et al. (2018) provide strong evidence that EI promotes intrinsic motivation and positive classroom behaviors. Students who are emotionally aware tend to seek help when needed, collaborate constructively with peers, and manage academic pressures with greater composure. As Chang & Tsai (2022) emphasize, these learners take ownership of their responsibilities and demonstrate goal-oriented behavior, which improves their capacity to learn effectively across different academic disciplines. Consequently, integrating EI into instructional design—through reflective practices or emotion-focused pedagogy—can significantly improve students' capacity to internalize and apply what they learn.

Third, the findings on EI and academic achievement emphasize that emotional intelligence not only supports the process of learning but also significantly influences tangible academic outcomes, such as GPA and test performance. A meta-analysis by MacCann et al. (2019) strongly establishes this link, showing that EI contributes uniquely to academic success, even when accounting for cognitive abilities and personality traits. The research by Hadiwijaya & Hutasoit (2017) further reinforces this point, revealing that various EI dimensions collectively explain a substantial percentage of the variance in academic performance. Specifically, social awareness and relationship management appear to play a crucial role in students' ability to collaborate, seek academic support, and engage meaningfully with instructors.

Further supporting evidence from Pashchenko et al. (2024) and Shafait et al. (2021) suggests that emotionally intelligent students are more consistent in completing assignments, preparing effectively for exams, and adapting well to feedback and academic challenges. Goetz & Bieg (2016) highlight the role of emotional regulation in reducing performance anxiety—a common barrier to student success—while Balian Allen (2016) and Thomas & Allen (2021) show how EI strengthens students' responsiveness to criticism and fosters more constructive academic relationships. Perhaps most notably, Pérez-González & Qualter (2018) demonstrate that targeted interventions aimed at enhancing EI lead to improvements not only in emotional functioning but also in academic performance. This finding holds significant implications for educational practice, suggesting that EI is not a fixed trait but a teachable competency that can—and should—be embedded into the school curriculum.

In summary, the collective findings of this review reveal that Emotional Intelligence is deeply intertwined with how students learn, perform, and succeed academically. Beyond acting as a buffer against academic stress, EI empowers students to manage their learning processes, build positive relationships, and develop emotional resilience—traits that are increasingly vital in the dynamic and demanding world of modern education. These insights advocate for the integration of EI development in educational policy, pedagogy, and teacher training, promoting a more holistic approach to academic success.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on a comprehensive review of 17 scholarly articles published between 2015 and 2025, this study concludes that Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' educational experiences and outcomes. The evidence strongly indicates that EI is not only a predictor of academic achievement but also a significant contributor to students' learning performance and overall success within the academic environment.

First, the findings show that Emotional Intelligence contributes to students' general success by fostering essential life skills such as emotional regulation, empathy, social awareness, and resilience. These skills enable students to build healthy interpersonal relationships, cope with academic stress, and remain motivated throughout their educational

journey. Second, students with high levels of EI demonstrate better learning performance. They are more capable of managing time, setting goals, staying focused, and employing metacognitive strategies that support sustained engagement and meaningful learning experiences. Emotional Intelligence facilitates not only how students study but also how they perceive and navigate learning challenges. Third, the review affirms a consistent and positive correlation between EI and academic achievement. Students with greater emotional competencies tend to perform better on standardized tests, maintain higher GPAs, and approach academic tasks with confidence and diligence. The evidence also supports the effectiveness of EI-based interventions in improving both emotional well-being and academic performance.

Given these conclusions, the author suggests that future researchers explore the development and implementation of structured EI interventions in educational settings. There is a need for longitudinal studies that investigate the long-term impact of Emotional Intelligence training on academic success across diverse student populations. Additionally, future research could examine the cultural, socioeconomic, and contextual factors that may influence the relationship between EI and academic outcomes, particularly in multicultural and inclusive education environments. Educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers are encouraged to recognize the critical role of Emotional Intelligence in student development. Integrating EI-focused programs and activities into school curricula may offer a more holistic and supportive approach to education, ultimately leading to improved academic performance and well-rounded student success.

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