

Exploring Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance of Filipino University Academic Achievers

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Abstract

The responsibility of academic institutions to produce holistically developed individuals puts compounded pressure on the school administrators to raise students' achievement. While most learning institutions put a premium on readying its learners in attaining scholastic success, it is quite apparent how most Philippine schools neglected to put an ample attention to one's emotional and social growth. This current study utilized a descriptive-correlational design—with a randomized sample of 203 university academic achievers between ages of 16 to 21—to generate relationships among factors derived from Emotional Quotient-i: Youth Version (EQ-i:YV) and academic performance as measured by General Pointed Average (GPA). Pearson's correlations suggested that the overall emotional intelligence has significant positive associations with intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and general mood scales while overall emotional intelligence and its composite scales are related to academic performance. Thus the findings affirmed the claim that the more the academic achievers become emotional-social intelligent, the higher their tendency to exude academic prowess. This study further highlights the potential implications of emotional intelligence in educational progress and academic success; hence emotional intelligence-based activities should be integrated in higher education curriculum.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, Bar-On model of ESI, academic performance

1. Introduction

The responsibility of academic institutions to produce holistically developed graduates puts intensified pressure on the school administrators to raise students' achievement levels and attain academic success. In several learning organizations, it is the students' academic excellence that is given a rightful recognition. They are named academic scholars while others distinguish them as top-performing students. In this study, the researchers referred to them as university academic achievers as they usually exceed the school's standards of academic distinction through grade performances. University achievers are students whose academic performance has achieved the standard making them a Dean's Lister—with no less than a general point average of 1.75 or proportional to 88 percent.

As academic expertise being the primary focus of learning institutions in the Philippines, there are some aspects of individuality that the schools have seemed to overlook—the need to paved the way to fulfilling one's emotional-social growth. Emotional-social intelligence is comprised of various emotional and social abilities, skills and facilitators that act together to decide viable human behavior (Bar-On, 2006). Emotional-social intelligence has been accounted for its usefulness to anticipate various aspects of human behavior (Bar-On, 2006), performances (Bar-On, 2006; Bangun & Iswari, 2015) and success (Bangun & Iswari, 2015) in school (Bar-On, 2006; Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, and Majeski, 2004; Parker et al., 2004; Jordan, McRorie, & Rowie, 2010; Khajehpour, 2011; Fallahzade, 2011; Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013), the workplace and in the clinical

setting (Bar-On, 2006). Since this study currently focuses on academic achievers, past research has uncovered different premiums to propel its investigation towards its impact to students.

Amidst the increasing number of studies explaining emotional intelligence as it relates to some aspects of human behavior, performances, and success—particularly in understanding one’s emotional and social aspects of individuality—there is a dearth of such research in the Philippines most especially involving academic achievers. Thus, the present discourse calls for the exploration of Bar-On model of emotional and social intelligence and academic performance of Filipino university academic achievers. It is believed that university academic achievers who are emotional-social intelligent are liable to have better academic performances.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Development of Emotional Intelligence

Thorndike and Gardner were some of the early theorists who brought the concept of emotional intelligence (Stys & Brown, 2004). Their earliest thoughts paved the way to the existence of the three main models of emotional intelligence made by (1) Peter Salovey and John Mayer; (2) Reuven Bar-On; and (3) Daniel Goleman (Stys & Brown, 2004). These scholars have conceptualized their own models of emotional intelligence—either focusing on pure intelligence as a standard type of mental capacity (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2000) or on the merging of mental ability and personality traits (Bar-On, 2000; Goleman, 2001) respectively. Peter Salovey and John Mayer’s model sees emotional intelligence as a type of pure intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000). Their model proposes that emotional intelligence is composed of two areas: experiential and strategic which further branch out to more psychological complex processes of emotions and cognitions including emotional perception, emotional assimilation, emotional understanding, and emotional management (Mayer et al., 2000). Bar-On’s model proposes emotional intelligence as a blend of cognitive and personality aspects (Bar-On, 2006). His model composes of five facets of skills, abilities and facilitators namely intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood (Bar-On, 2006). Goleman presents practically comparable thoughts to Bar-On. However with reference to the success in the working environment, Goleman’s model composes of four main emotional intelligence constructs including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management (Goleman, 2001). The historical timeline of emotional intelligence puts forth that emotional intelligence is not a new concept, but instead experts have expanded a general understanding that emotional intelligence is a key component to success—whether it be in school (Bar-On, 2006; Parker et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2004; Jordan et al., 2010; Khajehpour, 2011; Fallahzade, 2011; Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013), the working environment (Bar-On, 2006), or in clinical setting (Bar-On, 2006). With the deciding objective of remediation, this paper will intensively set sight on the relation and complexity of emotional intelligence, emotional quotient, and emotional-social intelligence.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

Application of emotional intelligence to higher education has been interestingly growing (Tolegenova, Aimaganbetova, Naurzalina, Kunanbayeva, and Algozhayeva, 2016). One of the areas that seems to be recognized in previous studies is the students’ academic success (Bar-On, 2002; Parker et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2004; Jordan et al., 2010; Khajehpour, 2011; Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013). Academic success usually involves students meeting a certain minimum standard of academic performance (Bar-On, 2002). Subsequently, a lot of past studies on this matter has traditionally centered on the students’ institutionalized measures of academic or cognitive capacities (Bar-On, 2002). In spite of the fact that these capacities anticipate a portion of the variability in academic success, researchers are turning out to become aware of the significance of emotional and social competencies to students’ academic success in all levels of education (Bar-On, 2002; Parker et al., 2004; Parker et al., 2004; Jordan et al., 2010; Khajehpour, 2011; Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013). Emotional intelligence as defined by Bar-On (2000, 2001) is a multi-factorial accumulation of emotional and social capabilities that decide how viably people relate with themselves as well as other people and deal with daily demands and pressures. Bar-On model of emotional and social intelligence is made out of five noteworthy parts including intrapersonal (self-awareness and self-expression); interpersonal (social awareness and interpersonal connections); stress management (emotional management and regulation); adaptability (change management) and general mood (self-motivation) and is a critical element in deciding one’s capacity to succeed in life and specifically impacts overall well-being (Bar-On 2000, 2001). For instance, Parker et al. (2004) matched the students’ academic records with emotional intelligence data and found that those who belonged to the group of academically successful students scored significantly higher than those who belonged to the group of unsuccessful students in terms of intrapersonal, stress management and adaptability in addition to the total emotional intelligence. Almost similar results were also found by Jordan et al. (2010) that intrapersonal ability had little association with

academic achievement, while adaptability had the strongest relationship with achievement in all subjects. In another landmark study of Khajehpour (2011), it was also found that emotional intelligence could significantly predict academic achievement. Furthermore, Skipper and Brandenburg (2013) affirmed that emotional intelligence increases along with increases in general pointed average. Tolegenova et al. (2016) also positively relates the role of emotional intelligence in educational progress. They have found that the educational progress measured by GPA shows the ability of the participants to pay attention to their emotions, clear up and repair their emotional states as well as manage their emotions during the completion of an educational task. Similarly, Iswari, Bangun and Tjakraatmadja (2011) confirmed that graduate success in business schools could be accounted to the students' emotional intelligence. They have found that emotional intelligence is a significant measure to predict academic achievement index and usually influenced by competencies on emotional, social and even personal. Moreover, from the teachers' perspectives and keen observation, emotional intelligence can be used to facilitate effective learning outcomes. Turner and Curran (2006) required the sense of awareness of the interpersonal and intrapersonal factors to help manage emotions. Attention that facilitated by positive emotional engagement can advance students engagement (Turner & Curran, 2006). These previous studies of Bar-On (2002), Parker et al. (2004), Parker et al. (2004); Jordan et al. (2010); Khajehpour (2011); Skipper and Brandenburg (2013); Turner and Curran (2006), Iswari et al. (2011) and Tolegenova et al. (2016) only confirmed the utilitarian value of emotional success to academic success and educational progress.

2.3 The Problem and Hypotheses

Due to its reported implications towards understanding various aspects of human behavior, performances and success in school (Bar-On, 2006) specifically university students (Parker et al., 2004; Fallahzade, 2011; Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013; Jordan et al., 2010), the present study calls to explore the emotional intelligence using the 5 composite scales of emotional-social intelligence proposed by Bar-On (2002) and academic performance as measured by grade point average (see Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013; Jordan et al., 2010) to generate relationships between and among the said factors using Filipino university academic achievers as samples.

It is firmly believed by this current research that:

- University academic achievers who are able to accurately perceive, understand and express feelings to guide their behavior tend to perform better academically.
- University academic achievers who are able to establish and maintain good relationships with others tend to perform better academically.
- University academic achievers who are able to effectively control and constructively manage their emotions tend to perform better academically.
- University academic achievers who are able to use realistic and flexible coping strategies tend to perform better academically.
- University academic achievers who are able to become positive and content in oneself, others, and life in general tend to perform better academically.

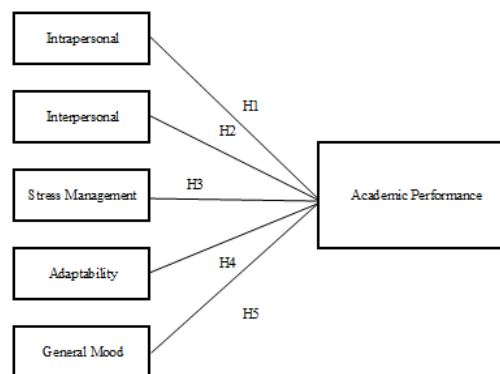


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

3. Method

3.1 Sample and Procedures

The present study included a sample of 203 university academic achievers from 10 different fields of study (i.e., Accountancy, Arts and Letters, Architecture, Commerce, Education, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, Science and Rehabilitation Sciences) representing all year levels in a Catholic university in the Philippines. Using a basic random-sampling, the student sample was comprised of 133 females (57.08%) and 70 males (30.04%) with age ranged from 16 to 21 years. All of them have a grade point average for the entire year of 1.75% or 88% above.

Agreement among the researchers, the university and students was made prior to conducting the survey. Researchers secured students' consent and comprehensively explained the procedures, benefits and risks they are subject to. Students participation was on a voluntary manner. Surveys were made in the academic year 2010-2011 with the assistance of the university guidance counselors. Students filled out the questionnaires on the testing schedules arranged by the university.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1 Respondent's Robotfoto

In gathering baseline information about the respondents, this discourse made use of the respondent's robotfoto, which in Dutch means a cartographic sketch of a suspect in a criminal investigation (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). This instrument was employed to determine the demographic information (e.g., gender, age, GPA, etc.) about the respondents and their involvement in school-based activities.

3.2.2 Emotional Social Intelligence

To measure the emotional-social intelligence, this study utilized the Emotional Quotient-i: Youth Version (EQ-i: YV) which was developed by Bar-On and Parker (2000). It has a 60-item self-report measure comprising of a 6-item intrapersonal, 12-item interpersonal, 12-item stress management and 10-item adaptability, alongside its 14-item general mood and 6-item positive impression validity. Responses are rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very seldom or not true of me) to 4 (very often or true to me) with adequate internal reliabilities and validities of 0.84 to 0.89 across main emotional composite scales. A high score on any individual ability implies a high level of social and emotional competency.

3.3 Analytic Approach

To explore the factors and relations of emotional intelligence derived from the self-report responses of university academic achievers, this study applied the descriptive-correlational design. This design, a non-experimental method, depicts the relationship between two (Jackson, 2006c) or more measured variables. Mean scores and standard deviations were relevant in the assessment of the variables. A zero-order correlation analysis using Pearson's correlation performed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences 17.0 was utilized to uncover the relationship of emotional intelligence to academic performance when applied using Filipino university academic achievers as samples.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 University Academic Achievers Profile

Two hundred three university academic achievers (133 females and 70 males) from ten different fields of study—Accountancy, Arts and Letters, Architecture, Commerce, Education, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, Science and Rehabilitation Sciences—participated (representing all year levels). The students' age ranged from 16 to 21 years. All of them have a grade point average of 1.75 or 88% and above for the entire year. In terms of their participation in organizations (school activities), 10.83% are very actively involved; 34.48% are actively involved; 42.85% are fairly involved while 11.33% do not have any participation. As to the reason for their non-participation in activities, 50.74% are afraid that their academic performance will be affected; 24.14% are not interested; 7.39% are under strict parental control; while the rest gave other reasons like: far distance of residence, schedule constraints, and personal limitations. As to the possibility of future active involvement to develop their social/emotional/leadership skills for those who have indicated fair or no active involvement, 41.87% said YES, 11.33% said No and 46.80% are undecided.

4.2 Emotional Intelligence and Its Composite Scales

Table 1. Correlation matrix

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Intrapersonal	15.77	2.18	-					
Interpersonal	39.40	4.55	0.27*	-				
Stress Management	27.40	3.95	0.12	-0.18*	-			
Adaptability	30.67	4.48	0.19*	0.17*	-0.00	-		
General Mood	28.15	3.96	0.19*	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-	
Overall Emotional Intelligence	56.80	4.55	0.66*	0.51*	0.32*	0.63*	0.41*	-

Note. ** $p > 0.01$ level; * $p > 0.05$ level.

Mean scores and standard deviations along with correlation coefficients are presented in the table above. Table 1 shows that interpersonal dimension has a negative relationship with stress management dimension while it also illustrates a positive significant relationship with intrapersonal dimension. This implies that the higher the exposure of an achiever in interpersonal relationships and social responsibilities, the lesser is his or her tolerance and control for impulses and stress factors. These results are in congruent with what Bar-On (1997) and Dawda and Hart's (2000) findings that the aforementioned variables are related to each other. It also appears that intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions are linked with each other—in the sense that self-regard is related to social awareness. These results are not entirely surprising considering that around 50.74% of the university academic achievers are not involved in extra-and co-curricular activities out of the fear that their academic performance will be sacrificed. However, it must be noted that when they were asked if they will be willing to develop the ability to relate with others and learn valuable social/emotional/leadership skills, only 11.33% showed disinterest and negatively responded.

The current study has high hope that academic achievers could still be encouraged or motivated to develop their social/emotional/leadership behaviors. In addition, the adaptation dimension reported positive but weak significant relationships with the other subscales of emotional intelligence including intrapersonal and interpersonal. This means that academic achievers who are aware of themselves and are able to articulate their feelings to others tend to be flexible, realistic and effective in dealing with everyday problems; they are also able to establish cooperative, constructive, and satisfying interpersonal relationships. This pattern of results is consistent with the findings of Bar-On (1997) and Dawda and Hart (2000), showing that as adaptability skills increase, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills also increase to a certain degree. The established association among the five composite scales of emotional and social competencies is not surprising, given the overlapping issues of emotional and social intelligence constructs, supporting the factor analyses conducted by Dawda and Hart (2000) which suggests that many of its segment parts do not clearly rise as separable dimensions.

4.3 Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

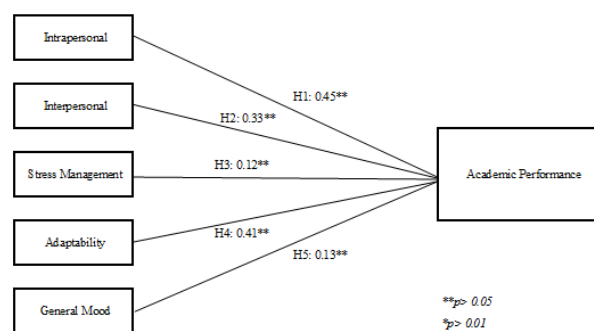


Figure 2. Relationships of emotional intelligent and academic performance

Intrapersonal dimension anticipated in Hypothesis 1 to be positively associated to academic performance such that the university academic achievers with higher intrapersonal skills tend to have higher academic performances. Intrapersonal dimension includes identifying feelings to understand and direct one's behaviour (Bar-On, 1997, 2000, 2002; Parker et al., 2004). True to expectation, intrapersonal was related to academic performance—reflecting a moderate positive correlation. Given the very nature of these students, they utilize what they know about themselves to exude academic prowess and perform what is expected of them inside the school. This finding lends support to Hypothesis 1. The results matched previous studies conducted by Jordan et al. (2010), Parker et al. (2004) and Petrides et al. (2004) that intrapersonal and GPA as measured of academic performance are connected to each other—suggesting further that the university academic achievers who are able to accurately perceive, understand and express feelings to guide their behavior are likely to perform better academically.

Hypothesis 2 posited that interpersonal dimension is positively related to academic performance such that the university academic achievers with higher interpersonal skills tend to have higher academic performances. Consistent with the expectation, interpersonal was related to academic performance which reflected a positive correlation. Knowing that academic achievers are exposed to an environment that cultivates healthy relationships would make them more tolerating of reactions and inputs of each other—prompting to have an open correspondence that could possibly promote better scholastic performance. This finding lends support for Hypothesis 2. The data supported previous studies of Parker et al. (2004) and Bar-On (1997), affirming that the university academic achievers who are able to effectively control and constructively manage their emotions are likely to perform better academically.

The association between stress management dimension and academic performance was further explored in this study. Stress management dimension involves managing stressful events calmly and proactively (Bar-On, 1997, 2000, 2002; Parker et al., 2004). This research suggests that the university academic achievers with higher stress management skills tend to have higher academic performances, affirming previous studies conducted by Bar-On (1997), Parker et al. (2004) and Fallahzade (2011) that stress management dimension is related to academic performance. Academic achievers tend to anticipate the probable outcomes brought by stressors. As a result, they are able to work under pressure and eliminate incautious response equipping them to become prepared for stressful situations. Hence, a well-prepared student can produce remarkable academic outputs and results. Moreover, this result implies that stressors can be well dealt given that the students had conditioned themselves on the probable repercussions of a difficult situation.

Adaptability dimension in addition was found to be correlated with academic performance. This study suggests that the university academic achievers with higher adaptability skills tend to have higher academic performances. These results in support of previous studies conducted by Fallahzade (2011), Jordan et al. (2010) and Parker et al. (2004) that adaptability skills are related to academic performance. The ability to adjust relates to the academic achievers' own strategies in managing present changes. These strategies include how well they handle changes by being able to distinguish their own problems and respond in a practical manner. Thus, they seek to convert negative and destructives thoughts into a positive, healthy and realistic coping strategy—leading to increase their performances in class.

Furthermore, general mood dimension was found to be correlated with academic performance. This means that the university academic achievers who were able to become positive and content to oneself, others, and life in general, have better chances of being academically excellent. Despite the fact that academic achievers have their own limitations, these students still prefer to see the benefits they can draw out from the situation. Having this perspective, the students are able to identify the opportunities to further improve their academic outputs rather than the adversity they may encounter. Therefore, their positive outlook affects the choices they make concerning academic success.

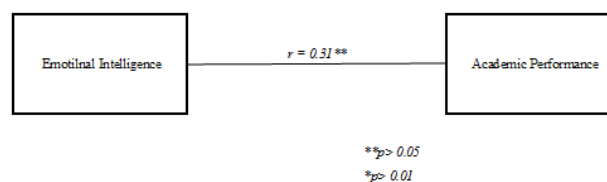


Figure 3. Relationships of overall emotional intelligent and academic performance (GPA)

Finally, the study depicts the significant relationship between the overall emotional intelligence and academic performance of Filipino university academic achievers. This means that the more the students become emotional-social intelligent, the higher their tendency to display academic prowess. This is in support with the findings of Petrides et al. (2004), Parker et al. (2004), Jordan et al. (2010), Khajepour (2011) and Skipper and Brandenburg (2013) that overall emotional intelligence is related to the academic performance.

5. Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations and Limitations

The current study examines the relationship between the emotional intelligence and academic performance of Filipino university academic achievers. First, the study calls to explore the emotional intelligence using the five composite scales of emotional social intelligence proposed by Bar-On (2002) and academic performance as measured by the respondents' GPA (see Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013; Jordan et al., 2010). Empirical results show that the students who have the ability to accurately perceive, understand and express feelings to guide their behavior; to establish and maintain good relationships with others; to effectively control and constructively manage emotions; use realistic and flexible coping strategies; and to become positive and content in oneself, others, and life in general tend to perform better academically. These outcomes in addition to serving as supplementing empirical evidences of previous studies, also point out the established significant associations between and among the emotional intelligence dimensions including a negative relationship between interpersonal and stress management dimensions; a positive relationship between interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions; and a positive but weak significant relationship between adaptability dimension to the other dimensions of emotional intelligence specifically intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. Thus, these evidences substantially add up to the reported implications of emotional intelligence to predict various aspects of performance in school (Bar-On, 2006) specifically university students (Parker et al., 2004; Fallahzade, 2011; Skipper & Brandenburg, 2013; Jordan et al., 2010) and extend the scant literature on this phenomenon in the Philippines.

This study also supported the empirical evidences found by Petrides et al. (2004), Parker et al. (2004), Jordan et al. (2010), Khajepour (2011) and Skipper and Brandenburg (2013) that the overall emotional intelligence is related to the GPA as measured of academic performance. This means that the more the students become emotional-social intelligent, the higher their tendency to exude academic prowess. The current study used the university academic achievers' GPA across all educational courses which only contained their performances across the entire academic year. Hence, it should be noted that students' academic performances vary each academic year lending a relative academic performance. This leaves future research to consider other educational indicators such as courses difficulty, type of enrolled courses (minor/major courses), and the number of enrolled courses (Parker et al., 2004) to really account for one's academic performance.

The development of emotional and social competencies among university academic achievers has a great promise. While a good percentage of academic achievers have fears that their academic performance will be affected when they spend time with other people, results have shown that emotionally intelligent academic achievers can perform well on expected tasks and at the same time enjoy the company of others. With student's academic success coupled with emotional-social intelligence competencies, it is very likely that schools can produce successful people in all fields of endeavors. The researchers propose that an emotional social intelligence program be developed to address the academic achievers' challenges in their academic potential. Likewise, it will also include improving aspects of their behavior towards social situations (sociability and personal relations) that is needed to boost their good attitude towards interaction. Finally, it is important that future research focus on the implementation and evaluation of school programs that are geared toward enhancing the potentials of academic achievers addressing the concerns of the present study. This study further offers support for the inclusion of emotional social intelligence in the higher education curriculum with emphasis on the successful transition of academic achievers from college to employment to really account for students' educational progress and academic success; hence EI-based activities should be integrated as proposed here and in the studies conducted by Jordan et al. (2010) and Skipper and Brandenburg (2013), affirming the growing interest in the application of emotional intelligence in higher institution (Tolegenova et al., 2016).

In spite of the interesting findings of this study, it has its limitations that deserve an ample attention. Emotional intelligence is still a subject that needs to be further investigated especially within the Philippine context to determine its applicability to local setting. It is suggested that future research may use a larger number of respondents since this study had dealt only on academic achievers as its prime respondents. Future research may also apply emotional intelligence in other demographic profiles such as gender and age as well as comparing academic achievers to non-academic achievers. Widening the scope of courses under study and making it inter-rated among not only Catholic schools but also state universities is recommended. Furthermore, a measure

on emotional intelligence suited for Filipinos may also be developed to determine accurately the emotional intelligence of Filipino students. The result of this research lays out a reference point for research on Filipino university students, and direction for universities administration.

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