Relationship of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Burnout with Mediating Effect of Self-efficacy among University Students

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Abstract

The present study investigated the association between emotional intelligence (EI) and academic burnout with a self-efficacy's (SE) mediating effect among university students. A cross sectional research design was used in this study which was carried out in Karachi from September 2018 to January 2019. The sample involved 400 full time regular university students from different academic institutions in Karachi, Pakistan. The participants ranged in age from 16 to 25 years (M=21.28, SD=2.12). Participants were given the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale, the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Academic Burnout Scale to investigate the association between a student's emotional intelligence, academic self-efficacy, and academic burnout. The descriptive statistics and linear regression analysis were used to compute the results. The findings show that emotional perception, emotional use, emotional self-management, and managing emotions with others were identified as the significant predictors of academic self-efficacy. It was determined that emotional intelligence and academic self-efficacy played a significant influence in preventing academic burnout among undergraduate students. Students with high levels of emotional stability perform better academically, which is influenced by emotional intelligence. Through developed curricula, trainings, exercises, and awareness sessions, educational institutions may create a variety of strategies to sustain not just students' academic performance but also their ability to operate normally in daily life. Academic administrators can readily manage students' academic burnout if they focus on these factors.

Keywords: Academic Burnout, Academic Self-efficacy, Emotional Intelligence

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Introduction

An individual's *emotional intelligence* is defined as the ability to monitor one's own emotions and those of others, recognize and discern between them, and use them in directing their thinking for a predictive behavioral response (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Furthermore, high-achieving individuals tend to have a high level of emotional intelligence. The result is a significant decline in academic grades for students with low emotional intelligence (Costa & Faria, 2015). Studies have determined that there is a significant correlation between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and academic burnout among students. Academic burnout has become a common problem for undergraduate students. It has a negative impact on pupils'

performance and academic attainment (Cumberledge, 2018; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Academic burnout is typically seen in instances where students, in particular, find it difficult to manage their academic workload, lose interest in their studies, and even feel emotionally upset. Many academics, educators, and researchers in education concur that students' academic performance is impacted by the rising occurrence of academic burnout. Academic burnout is typically observed when students find it difficult to manage their academic tasks, when their interest in their studies declines, and occasionally when they feel emotionally distressed (Carlotto et al., 2006).

Academic burnout is a very individualized characteristic, although it can have a negative impact on those who are more susceptible. At times, it appears to be in a cycle. For instance, psychological distress brought on by stress will result in subpar academic achievement, which will further intensify burnout. Additionally, this causes students to avoid academic assignments more often. Academic burnout has symptoms including psychological distress, physical ailments, emotional tiredness, cynicism, and declines in performance if it is not treated (Carlotto et al., 2006).

The academic performance of undergraduates is seen as a crucial component of the competition to enhance higher education. As the first step in pursuing higher education, undergraduate study is a significant transitional stage during which the majority of students experience intellectual exposure and stress. This stage also heightens interest in accomplishments and crucial professional roles in society. At this stage of their schooling, students can experience anxiety due to fear of failure, uncertainty surrounding their profession choice, and dread of losing a competition, or what would happen if they miss the target. To counter this, the students sometimes work even harder to maximize their chances of success and happiness with their accomplishments (Tosevski et al., 2010). On the other side, if anxieties occur frequently, it reduces students' interest in their studies and raises psychological strain, which leads to students believing that their academic duties are difficult and that they are incapable of doing them. In a similar vein, Ansari and Stock (2010) investigated how motivated students believe themselves to be more successful than their peers and to experience less academic fatigue (Law, 2007).

In a recent study conducted by Suleman et al. (2019), emotional intelligence and academic success in terms of cumulative grade point average were found to have a substantial positive association. All of the sub dimensions of emotional intelligence and academic success were found to have a statistically significant positive association. It is obvious from their data that academic success increases with emotional intelligence.

Additionally, it strengthens the kids' emotive bond with the school, which in turn inspires higher levels of performance and interest in their studies. Additionally, Neuman (1990) lists three causes of academic burnout among undergraduates. Examples include the following: 1. Students who are satisfied with their studies will experience less academic stress and perform better on academic tasks; 2. A healthy institutional environment and academic facilities reduce the likelihood that students will experience academic burnout; and 3. Students' motivation, enthusiasm, and interest in their studies also reduce academic stressors.

The vast body of evidence has led to the conclusion that academic burnout is the most common mental health issue affecting students in higher education institutions, negatively affecting their academic performance and delaying their development of both psychological and physical affiance. Students experience emotional tiredness, cynicism, diminished self-achievement, hostile attitudes, and aggressive behavior, all of which contribute

to feelings of low self-fulfillment and the clinical symptoms of burnout syndrome. Similar research was done by Gurbuz and Murat (2008), who discovered that academic self-efficacy and emotional intelligence are predictive of academic burnout in undergraduate students. Identification of this issue in young, developing minds is necessary for proper recognition and management. To understand the underlying causes and their treatment, there is an enormous demand for accurate and valid culturally based research. In this sense, the literature is quite supportive of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and the likelihood of their use in academic contexts.

Objectives of the present study are given below:

- To find the predictive association between emotional intelligence, academic self-efficacy and academic burnout among undergraduates.
- To assess whether academic self-efficacy act as a mediating variable between emotional intelligence and academic burnout.
- To find the difference in study variables on the basis of age and gender.

Method
Sample

This cross-sectional study looks at the relationships between academic self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and academic burnout in undergraduate students. The study involved 400 undergraduate students in total, and the sample was selected from several academic institutions in Karachi, Pakistan. 48.5% of the participants were males (N=194) while 51.5% were females (N=206). Students with various academic grades, including grade "A" were represented by 211 respondents, grade "B" by 158, and grade "C" by 31 respondents, made up the complete sample. 150 students from the bachelor's program, which lasts two years, and 250 students from the BS program, which lasts four years, were among the participants. Participants from the nuclear family system made up (N=215), while those from the joint family system (N=185). The participants ranged in age from 16 to 25 (M=21.28, SD=2.12).

The current study only included regular students from various academic institutions. Private students and those enrolled in distant learning programs were not included in the study. Any student who had a mental or physical disability was also not allowed to participate in the study. A purposive technique was used to perform the sampling.

Instruments

The study employs a demographic questionnaire, the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 1998), and the Academic Burnout Scale (ABS) (Bresó et al., 2007) for psychological evaluation. The demographic form was used to gather information regarding personal details. Personal information, academic information, and parental information made up the bulk of the form's contents.

Procedure

The Board of Advance Studies and Research's approval allowed the study at the University of Karachi to begin. Later, the researcher acquired approval to collect data by getting in touch with institutional authorities. The participants were handed consent papers, which they were prompted to read. They were supposed to sign them if they were willing to participate in the study. A rapport was built with the individuals before the questionnaires were given. The respondents were handed the demographic form, which they were instructed to complete in full. The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale, Academic Burnout Scale, and Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale were presented to participants within five minutes of completing the demographic form. The administrative researcher praised

the participants' active involvement, attention, and support in the study after the examinations were finished. The following phase involved scoring the data in accordance with manuals and transferring it to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, v22) for statistical analysis. Statistical tools used for this purpose were descriptive analysis, Pearson's correlation, *t*-test, and regression analysis.

Results
Table 1

Regression Analysis for Mediation of Self-efficacy between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Burnout (N=400)

Variables	B	95%CI [Lower, Upper]	SE B	β	R²	ΔR²
Step 1					.20	.20***
Constant	69.10***	[63.46, 74.72]	2.86			
Emotional Intelligence	-.24***	[-.29, -.19]	.02	-.45***		
Step 2					.22	.01**
Constant	71.88***	[65.91, 77.85]	3.04			
Emotional Intelligence	-.19***	[-.26, -.13]	.03	-.35***		
Academic Self-efficacy	-.30***	[-.53, -.07]	.11	-.15***		

*Note. CI=Confidence Interval, ***p<.001, **p<.01*

Table 1 of the study's findings indicated the impact of emotional intelligence and academic self-efficacy on academic burnout in undergraduates. R^2 value of .20 in step 1 revealed that emotional intelligence explained 20% variance in the academic burnout with F (1, 398) =100.89, $p<.001$. In step 2, R^2 value of .22 revealed that emotional intelligence and academic self-efficacy are responsible for 22% variance in the academic burnout with F (2, 397) = 54.58, $p<.001$. ΔR^2 value of .01 revealed 1% change in the variance of model 1 and 2. Hence, the results illustrated that emotional intelligence (β = -.45, p<.001) and academic self-efficacy (β = -.15, p<.001) negatively predicted academic burnout.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics for Subscales of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy among Undergraduates (N= 400)

Scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
MEO	-							27.45	5.17
MES	.62**	-						31.66	5.19
EU	.67**	.65**	-					22.45	4.32
EP	.64**	.60**	.65**	-				34.65	5.81
EI	.86**	.84**	.85**	.86**	-			116.3	17.53

ASE	.41**	.53**	.53**	.45**	.56**	-	29.23	5.22
ABS	.33**	.27**	.29**	.29**	.34**	.36**	47.63	10.53

Note. MEO= Manage Emotion with Other; MES= Manage Emotion with Self; EU= Emotion Utilization; EP= Emotion Perception; EI= Emotional Intelligence; SE= Self-Efficacy; ASE=Academic Self-efficacy; ABS=Academic Burnout Scale

Table 2 findings indicate a significant relationship among emotion perception, emotion utilization, self-management, managing emotions with others, and self-efficacy among undergraduate students.

Table 3
t-test Statistics for subscales of Emotional Intelligence, Academic Burnout and Self-Efficacy between Males (n=194) and Females (n=206) Undergraduates (N=400)

Scale	Gender	M	SD	t	p	95% CI [Lower, Upper]
EP	Male	33.85	5.76	-2.70	.007	[-2.68, -.42]
	Female	35.40	5.74			
EU	Male	21.75	4.28	-3.13	.002	[-2.18, -.49]
	Female	23.09	4.26			
MES	Male	30.73	5.08	-3.53	.000	[-2.81, -.80]
	Female	32.53	5.15			
MEO	Male	26.68	5.47	-2.93	.004	[-2.51, -.49]
	Female	28.18	4.76			
EI	Male	113.02	17.56	-3.59	.000	[-9.60, -2.81]
	Female	119.23	16.99			
ASE	Male	28.57	5.13	-2.45	.014	[-2.29, -.25]
	Female	29.84	5.22			
ABS	Male	48.46	10.32	1.52	.128	[-.46, 3.67]
	Female	46.85	10.69			

Table 3 show that there were significant gender differences on subscales of emotional intelligence, including emotion utilization, emotion perception, overall emotional intelligence, managing emotions, and managing emotions with self. Additionally, substantial gender differences were found in academic burnout and negligible gender differences were found in academic self-efficacy.

Figure 1
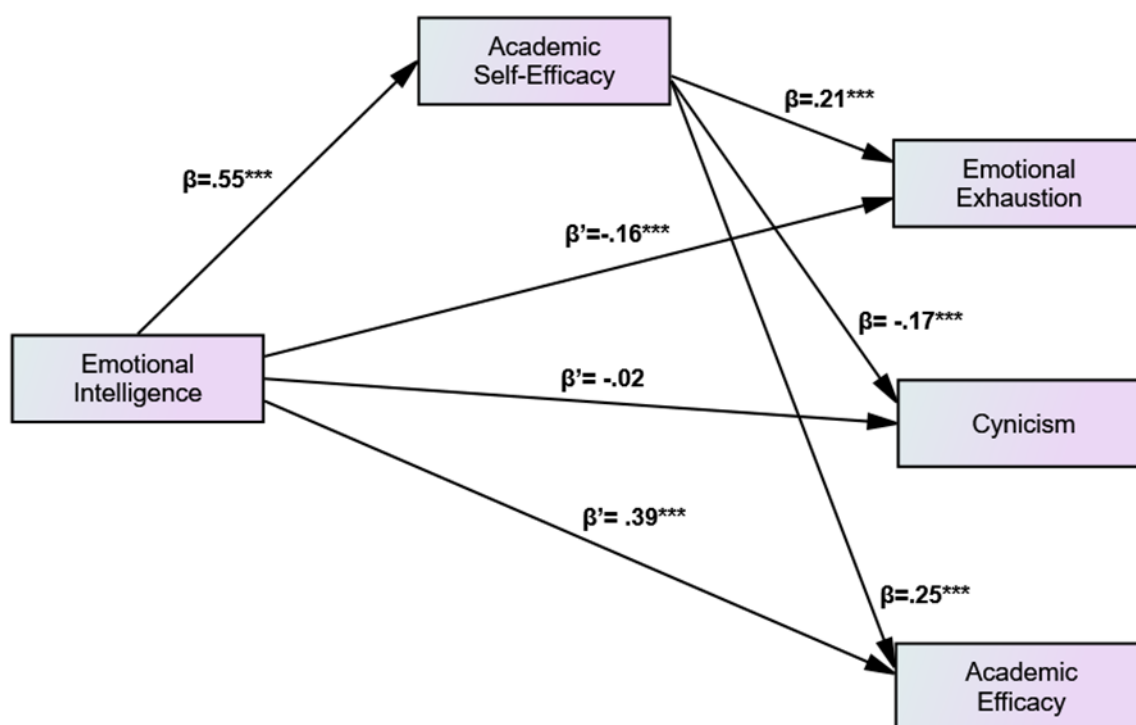*Statistical Model of Mediation Analysis*

Figure 1 presents the statistical model of mediation analysis between emotional intelligence and academic efficacy, cynicism, and emotional exhaustion through academic self-efficacy among undergraduate students.

Discussion
According to the study's findings, academic self-efficacy beliefs and emotional intelligence are closely related and both contribute significantly to preventing academic burnout in undergraduate students. Results indicated that emotional intelligence among undergraduate students is a predictor of academic burnout. These results are in line with those of an earlier study (Mee, 2015).

As found in this study, a significant positive predictor of self-efficacy is the student's perception, utilization, and management of emotions. Previous research has identified similar findings (Duran et al., 2006; Hen & Goroshit, 2014). Emotional intelligence is crucial in predicting academic success and aids students in selecting the best options and methods for adjusting to their studies and performing better. The bonding of emotional intelligence and academic efficacy can be explained more effectively when we explain, mainly, the role of emotional intelligence construction in predicting self-efficacy among undergraduate students.

A person's capacity to distinguish between their feelings and intellect from those of others and themselves, as well as to be clear about their feelings and attitudes, attitudes, and mood regulation tactics, is referred to as emotional intelligence. Therefore, it is assumed that appropriate use and availability of academic resources help increase the potential of emotional intelligence and academic self-efficacy amongst students, and they feel happy concerning the situations. However, in terms of the unfavorable environment, students often feel frightened and concerned, which impacts their academic

performance and can occasionally cause emotional distress. Henceforth, the role of emotional intelligence and academic self-efficacy in enhancing educational performance and efficiency at academic places is essential to balance and resolve the problems. That supports the students in various directions, such as positive perception, understanding, and management of emotions.

Students with a high degree of emotional intelligence deal effectively with their emotions, usually acquiring a high degree of coping skills. Students with potential emotional intelligence display their emotions purposefully, rationally, and adequately; ultimately, they perceive stressors realistically (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Consequently, it can be said that students who are emotionally intelligent and have strong positive beliefs; can perceive and understand the environmental stressors easily and fulfill academic demands properly. They use their emotions accordingly and adequately by establishing good relationships with teachers and peers (socialization). They seem more practical, motivated, and goal-oriented towards the tasks because of their ability to manage their own emotions and others'.

Concerning the current study about undergraduates, academic burnout may be produced because of extraneous variables such as working environment, relationships, and new exposure. Emotional intelligence usually helps students manage stress in all situations. Students start to believe in struggling hard, better academic performance, and high academic achievements (Carlotto et al., 2006; Tarnowski & Carlotto, 2007). Another reason for academic burnout among undergraduates is limited educational resources or facilities. With the limited resources, students face various academic difficulties. These scenarios can, however, differ from one institution to another. Both the public and private sectors offer educational opportunities to students in Pakistan. Although financial difficulties do not directly contribute to academic burnout, they might add to stress when parental expectations are high. It has been investigated that students with emotionally rich abilities can control the worst situations, and they perceive a lower degree of academic burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Moreover, academic burnout increases students' dropout rates and decreases students' motivation and interest in studies. In such scenarios, a teacher's role can be essential to motivating students, educating them, and providing a way out of how he/she can manage the situation. This teacher's role makes the student consistent on tasks with encouragement and search for alternative methods to resolve situations where they have difficulty. The fact that Pakistani students who pursue higher education have few resources and basic facilities is one element that is crucial to note for academic self-efficacy. However, they are logically driven to complete tasks by making the most of their abilities, and ultimately, they develop a high level of self-efficacy.

It is further recommended that teachers provide suitable conditions for growth and academic progress, especially for learners from rural areas, and provide them with opportunities to learn more. If students have no interest in the curriculum and have a low level of motivation, they usually perceive a high degree of academic stress because of their poor management skills. On the other hand, if they show interest in studies or class activities or have a high level of motivation, they listen to the lectures, do homework seriously, and show excellent academic performance. This means that motivation, interest, and involvement in academic activities enhance a student's level of academic efficacy (Saif, 2004). The people who show better performance can be trained until they become well equipped to succeed. In this way, the academic performance of students can be improved and academic burnout can be reduced among undergraduate students.

Conclusion

According to this study, students' academic self-efficacy is strongly correlated with emotional intelligence. It means emotional intelligence increases the high emotional stability among students, which is reflected in the form of academic efficacy. Moreover, there were significant gender differences in emotional intelligence and self-efficacy variables. In addition to maintaining a student's educational performance, educational institutions may offer activities, training, and awareness sessions to maintain a student's cognitive development and daily life functioning. Academic authorities can readily manage students' academic burnout if they focus on these areas. Additionally, coaching students about their programs and stressful issues on a regular basis minimizes the risk of academic burnout.

Implications

Academic burnout is the most common mental health issue among students in higher education institutions, which negatively affects students' academic performance and slows down their psychological and physical affiance, according to the conclusion drawn after reviewing a substantial body of literature. Students experience emotional tiredness, diminished personal accomplishment, angry attitudes, and aggressive behavior, all of which lead to feelings of low personal fulfillment and are therefore, considered to be clinical signs of burnout syndrome. There is a need for adequate identification and management of this issue among young, developing minds. To comprehend the root causes and its treatment, there is an overwhelming requirement for trustworthy and legitimate culture-based study.

Limitations

The present study has some serious limitations regarding the sample collected only from one city of Pakistan, which have minimized the generalizability extent of the findings. Moreover, for deeper understanding of this phenomenon, in-depth and longitudinal studies would also be designed so that a thorough and broader understanding can be achieved.

Contribution of Authors

Wizra Saeed: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft
Neelam Zafar: Conceptualization, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Writing- Reviewing & Editing
Rabia Hanif: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by authors.

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