

Examining the Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Undergraduate Engineering Students' Academic Achievement

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Abstract

Most previous studies have well-established the link between emotional intelligence (EI) and student academic outcomes. However, little is known about the role of emotional intelligence in engineering students' academic achievement (AA) in higher education. This study aimed to examine how and to what extent emotional intelligence contributes to undergraduate engineering students' academic achievement in the Ethiopian context. A quantitative method with a cross-sectional survey design was employed. Samples (N= 321) were drawn from regular final-year undergraduate students at Bahir Dar Technology Institute, Bahir Dar University via stratified random sampling. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Wong and Low Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS). Academic achievement was assessed by cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS 23.0 was conducted to test the hypothesized relationship. The results revealed that emotional intelligence had a significant positive direct effect on undergraduate engineering students' academic achievement ($\beta=.45$, $p<.001$) and accounted for 20% (SMC=0.20) of the variance in academic achievement. The finding highlights that increased emotional intelligence could lead to better academic achievements. This study will provide valuable insight into the value of emotional intelligence in engineering education; specifically in the non-Western context since most studies on emotional intelligence have been conducted in the Western context. The findings will also have practical implications for academic institutions in developing evidence-based interventions to enhance students' emotional intelligence, thereby improving their learning and academic performance. Limitations and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: cross-sectional; cumulative grade point average; higher education; structural equation modeling; non-Western context

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