

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FIRST YEAR COLLEGE WORKING STUDENTS

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This study determined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and academic performance of first year college students according to age, sex, Intelligence Quotient (IQ), type whether working or non-working student, and the number of working hours and nature of work of working students. A total of 266 first year students were selected as participants, 115 of which were working students. Their EI was measured using the Bar-On EQi test. Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices was also utilized to measure their IQ. Data were analyzed using Pearson r, t test, and ANOVA. The study reveals that there is a significant relationship between EI and academic performance of the students. It concludes that all aspects of factors of EI show significant relationship with academic performance in varying degrees.

Introduction

To most Filipinos, education is considered as one of the greatest assets one could possess that can never be stolen. However, with poverty being one of the most prevalent global problems, a huge number of young people are unable to go to school or finish college.

Multiple studies and publication show the increasing number of working students in the world and in our country today. According to Johnson (1997), financial problem was one of the top factors influencing the non-progression of college students. With this reality, some become working students to put themselves to school, especially in the pursuit of tertiary education.

Studies conducted by the World Program of Action for Youth Implementation in the Philippines and Rizal Science High

School in Bicol reveal that working children were more likely to have difficulty working and attending school at the same time. Other challenges of working while studying were difficulty in catching-up with the lessons, high cost of school supplies/books/transportation, and school being too far from residence (National Statistics Office, 2010).

It was observed that emotional intelligence (EI) may affect the academic performance of a student in one way or another. Thus, this study aimed to better understand the nature of EI and its importance and relationship to academic performance of working students.

Theoretical / Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on Emotional Intelligence Theory by Dr. Reuven Bar-On which is defined as an “array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures” (Kendra, n.d.). It is further supported by Goleman (1995) whose EI theory advocates that children who can understand and handle their emotions get along better with others and have a better chance of succeeding in school.

Figure 1 shows the relationship between variables of this study. Emotional intelligence is assessed in terms of intrapersonal scale, interpersonal scale, stress management, adaptability, general mood scale and total Emotional Quotient (EQ). Academic Performance is measured in terms of the respondents' general weighted average (GWA) during the second semester of the School Year 2010-2011. The moderator variables namely age, sex, intelligence quotient (IQ) and type (working and non-working students) neutralize the possible biases of the effect of EI on academic performance. The number of hours spent at work and nature of work for the working students are also considered to get a deeper understanding of the significant relationship between EI and academic performance of first year college students.

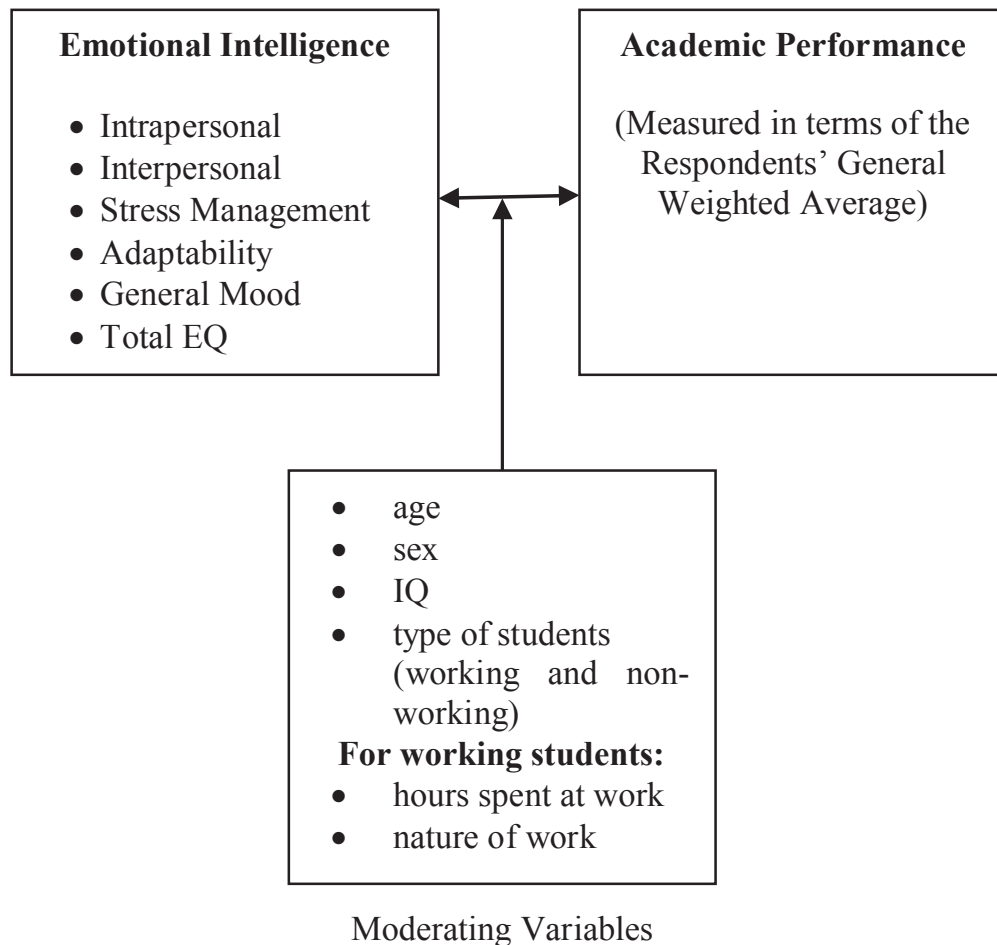


Figure 1. A Schematic Diagram Showing the Relationship of the Variables

Methods

This study made use of the descriptive correlational method and was conducted in a College of Technology, a private, non-sectarian institution. There were 266 respondents out of the total population consisting of 795 first year college students enrolled during the second semester of School Year 2010-2011.

To measure emotional intelligence of the respondents, Dr. Reuven Bar-On's standardized Bar-On EQi was used. This inventory measures 6 areas namely, intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, general mood, and total EQ. The questionnaire is self-report type consisting of 51 items. Additionally, the Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices was used to access the IQ of the respondents. The GWA on General Education subjects/ enrolled was utilized to assess the academic performance of the respondents.

To analyze the data, various statistical tools was used: mean, to determine the level of EI and academic achievement, *t* test to determine significant difference when grouped according to age, sex, IQ, type of student (working or non-working), hours spent for their work (working students) and nature of their work (working students); Pearson *r* to determine the relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and academic achievement of the working students; one-way and two-way ANOVA to determine the significant relationship between intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, general mood, and total EQ of the respondents and their age, sex, IQ, hours spent for their work, nature of their work, and what type of students.

Results and Discussion

The profile of the participants show that the majority who are working students are female at 63 percent while among the non-working students, majority of the participants are male at 58 percent. When participants are grouped according to age, majority of the working students are 18 to 19 years old (69%), while majority of the non-working respondents are 16 to 17 years old or 71 percent of the total population.

When the participants are grouped according to their IQ, the result shows that among the working students, 77 or 67 percent possess an average IQ while 30 or 26 percent have high average IQ. Meanwhile, among the non-working students, 63 or 42 percent possess average IQ while 50 or 33 percent have high average IQ. This means that majority of the participants have an average IQ.

Majority of the students are non-working students that comprises 151 or 57 percent of the total population of the respondents, with most of them spending an average of 6 working hours per day. Additionally, when participants are grouped according to the nature of work, the result shows that majority of the working students are working as service crews (47%), followed by student assistants (29%), house helps, (19%), and security guards (5%).

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents when grouped according to the level of their intrapersonal skill or the ability of

the respondents to communicate and/ or understand their own feelings. The result shows that majority of the working and non-working students had effective functioning level.

Table 1

Level of Emotional Intelligence According to Intrapersonal Scale

Intrapersonal Scale	Working Students		Non-Working Students	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Area for enrichment	46	40	47	31
Effective functioning	69	60	104	69
Enhanced skills	-	-	-	-
Total	115	100	151	100

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents when grouped according to their level of interpersonal skill or the ability of the respondents to communicate their feelings to others and understand what others are also feeling in return. The table shows that majority of the working and non-working students had effective functioning level. However, 45 or 39 percent of the working students and 60 or 40 percent of the non-working students needed enrichment, that is, they need to develop better understanding of how others are feeling and how they communicate their emotions to others, as well.

Table 2

Level of Emotional Intelligence According to Interpersonal Scale

Interpersonal Scale	Working Students		Non-Working Students	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Area for enrichment	45	39	60	40
Effective functioning	70	61	91	60
Enhanced skills	-	-	-	-
Total	115	100	151	100

Table 3 shows the profile of the respondents when grouped according to the level of stress management or the ability of the respondents to still perform and manage their emotions constructively even under pressure. The result shows that among the working students, 47 or 41 percent had enhanced skill, 32 or 28 percent had effective functioning level and 36 or 31 percent needed

enrichment. Meanwhile, majority of the non-working students had effective functioning level at 111 or 74 percent, none had enhanced skill level and 40 or 26 percent needed enrichment. Meaning, even though majority of the respondents possessed effective stress tolerance which enabled them to effectively manage their stress constructively, data revealed that working students possessed better stress management skill compared to non-working students.

Table 3

Level of Emotional Intelligence According to Stress Management Scale

Stress Management Scale	Working Students		Non-Working Students	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Area for enrichment	36	31	40	26
Effective functioning	32	28	111	74
Enhanced skills	47	41	-	-
Total	115	100	151	100

Table 4 shows the profile of the respondents when grouped according to the level of adaptability. Five (4%) working and five (3%) non-working students possessed enhanced skill level. Meaning, despite difference in circumstances, personalities, organizational structures, and other cultural or regional differences, they did not find it hard adapting to their changing environment. Additionally, 71 or 62 percent of the working students and 100 or 66 percent of non-working students had effective functioning level that also depicted the average ability of the respondents to adapt with their environment without getting emotionally strained. However, 39 or 34 percent of the working students and 46 or 31 percent of non-working students needed enrichment in this area meaning they needed to develop their adaptability skill to conform to their changing environment.

Table 4

Level of Emotional Intelligence According to Adaptability Scale

Intrapersonal Scale	Working Students		Non-Working Students	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Area for enrichment	39	34	46	31
Effective functioning	71	62	100	66
Enhanced skills	5	4	5	3
Total	115	100	151	100

Table 5 shows the profile of the respondents when grouped according to the level of the general mood of the respondents. The result shows that 72 or 63 percent of the working students and 83 or 55 percent of non-working students had effective functioning level. However, 43 or 37 percent of the working students and 67 or 44 percent of the non-working students needed enrichment in this area.

Table 5

Level of Emotional Intelligence According to General Mood Scale

General Mood Scale	Working Students		Non-Working Students	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Area for enrichment	43	37	67	44
Effective functioning	72	63	83	55
Enhanced skills	-	-	1	1
Total	115	100	151	100

Table 6 shows the general profile of the respondents according to the level of their EQ. Majority of the working students possessed effective functioning level which comprised 63 or 55 percent of the respondents. The same goes with the non-working students which have 86 or 57 percent having effective functioning level. However, 52 or 45 percent of the working students and 65 or 43 percent of the non-working students needed enrichment in their emotional capacity in perceiving, controlling, evaluating, and communicating their emotions to themselves and also to others.

Table 6

Profile of the Respondents According to their Total Emotional Quotient

	Working Students		Non-Working Students	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Total EQ				
Area for enrichment	52	45	65	43
Effective functioning	63	55	86	57
Enhanced skills	-	-	-	-
Total	115	100	151	100

When the respondents are grouped according to their GWA, majority or 58 students (50%) of the working students have

a GWA ranging from 84.50 to 88.49. Forty-one students or 36 percent had GWA ranging from 80.50 to 84.49. Thirteen or eleven percent of the respondents had GWA ranging from 88.50 to 92.49 and three or three percent of the working students had 77.00 to 80.49. The non-working students, on the other hand, have 64 or 42 percent of the respondents having a GWA ranging from 88.50 to 92.49. Moreover, there are 55 or 36 percent of the respondents having 84.50 to 88.49 GWA. Fifteen or 10 percent of the respondents have a 92.50 to 96.49 GWA, and one or one percent of the respondent have a 96.50 to 100.00 GWA. Only three or two percent of the respondents have a GWA ranging from 77.00 to 80.49.

Generally, the profiles of both working and non-working students show no significant difference. Whether the student is working or not, it does not also guarantee emotional stability.

With the use of *t* test, results show that there is no significant difference in the level of EQ of the respondents when grouped according to age and sex. However, some of the factors of EI show significant difference in age and sex of the respondents. Data reveal that male respondents have higher interpersonal abilities. Meaning they are more able to communicate and understand their emotions and feelings for others than how women do. Male participants also appear to be more adaptable to changing environments than female. This implicates the perception of people on women that has been rooted from cultural stereotypes. Women are perceived as being more emotional and they behave that way because it is believed as what women do, while men express emotions only when situation warrants it.

Although there is no significant difference in the EI of the respondents when grouped according to age, data also reveal that stress management is one of the factors of EI that shows significant difference. It shows that people aged 20 years old and above have higher stress management skill. These results support the reports released by American Psychological Association (APA) (2008), where older adults report having less stress and managing stress better than younger adults.

Another finding reveals that there is a significant difference of EI when respondents were grouped according to IQ. The result shows that high average respondents have higher ability to

perceive, control, evaluate and communicate their emotions effectively both with self and with others than those respondents with poor, below average, low average, average and even against above average IQs. Therefore, EI does not depend on individual IQ. High IQ does not warrant high EQ as well.

On the other hand, results show that there is no significant difference in the level of EQ of the respondents when grouped according to their type (working and non-working). However, there is a significant difference in the stress management and general mood between the working and the non-working respondents. Results show that working students have higher stress management abilities than non-working students. Working students also appear to be more optimistic than non-working students. Therefore, the status of a student in school does not correlate with EI. If an individual understands fully his/her emotions and self in general, it would be possible for that individual to remain emotionally stable regardless of his/her environment or scholastic and academic status.

In spite of this, when working students are grouped according to their nature of work and the length of time they spent in work, the result reveals that there is a significant difference in the level of EI when working respondents are grouped according to the length of time they spent at work and the nature of work that they are engaged with. Results reveal that those who work as student assistants have higher ability to perceive, control, evaluate, and communicate their emotions effectively both with self and with others than those respondents who work as service crews, house helps, and security guards. Furthermore, EI factors such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and stress management show that student assistants do better in these areas. However, service crews show a higher adaptability and general mood skills than other working respondents. This might be brought about by the training that these working students are engaged in with their respective work places in handling customers and customers' complaints even, without getting emotionally strained. Their awareness of their responsibilities in their environment made them able to adjust and cope easily. This is where the theory of Fritz Perls who practiced Gestalt Therapy comes in. Perls gives emphasis not on analysis but on awareness and contact with the environment. The

basic assumption is that individuals have the capacity to “*self regulate*.” One’s skill to adjust and adapt to changing environments is the major focus in making one aware of how past environments interfere with one’s effective functioning and living in the present (as cited in Corey, 2006).

In addition, the length of time spent at work also shows a significant difference in the level of EI. The result shows that working students who spent less than eight hours of work a day have a higher ability to perceive, control, evaluate, and communicate their emotions effectively both with self and with others than those who work more than eight hours. In addition, the academic performance of those who work less than eight hours is higher than those who work more than eight hours and those who work as student assistants perform better than those who work as service crews, house helps and security guards. This result supports the study that academic performance of college students has a significant relationship with the coping styles of working and non-working students wherein those who have worked fewer than 10 hours per week have slightly higher Grade Point Average than those who worked beyond 10 hours per week. These data prove that the EI of working students is affected by the nature of their work and the amount of time they spent working. It means that the lighter the weight of the work and lesser the environmental demands, the higher the EQ of working students.

In the intrapersonal scale, the result shows moderate significant relationship. This indicates the respondents’ need to develop self-awareness. The higher the self-awareness, the higher the understanding of a person and becomes more self-reliant being free of emotional dependency on others, which would drive them to set and achieve goals such as performing even better in school. Seminars, workshop or trainings on self-awareness can be done to help these students develop their ability or competency in knowing themselves and recognizing their emotions.

Interpersonal scale, adaptability scale, and general mood scale show low significant relationship to academic performance. Meaning, these factors of EI contribute to the increase of academic performance of students at a slighter degree. When a person listens and understands others, the more he/she can communicate and express his/her self.

On the other hand, stress management shows a very low significant relationship to academic performance. This shows that working respondents manage stress better than those who are not working. With this, stress management shows very low effect on academic performance of the respondents since majority of the respondents have enhanced and effective skill levels that depicts the respondents' ability to manage stress better. This proves only that being a working student does not make one less able to manage stress. This might even help the person develop a strong stress management skill. The key is not to avoid stress altogether, but to manage stress in such a way that the negative consequences of stress are avoided.

In general, the results show that there is a low significant relationship between EI and academic performance among first year college students. Which means that majority of the respondents, both working and non-working, are able to possess sound emotions that enabled them to perform better in school despite different emotional constraints they have been dealing with. The results indicate the importance of taking into account EI of individuals in assessing academic performance. It has also given light to recognize the possibility of still performing well academically even if the student is working. That is, if the working student possesses healthy, sound, efficient, and effective EI. The person's clear understanding of one's environment and self would give them a stronger focus and motivation to achieve goals in life.

Taking into account the results of this study, it is indeed clear that academic performance of students does not only rely on their intellectual capabilities to acknowledge, comprehend, understand, and communicate using their intellect but on their emotional capabilities as well. Possessing the non-cognitive array of competencies, being able to understand, comprehend, control and communicate emotions with the self and with others brings the individual towards better and sound decision making, setting their drive to perform better in school and achieving life goals.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the study concludes that EI affects academic performance among first year college

students. All aspects or factors of EI show significant relationship with academic performance in varying degrees. It also shows that EI does not really matter on individuals' academic status, age, sex or IQ. Being a working student does not mean having poor EI. Nonetheless, being a full time non-working student means being emotionally well.

Success in life is not just about the intellectual competence of an individual, but on their emotional capabilities as well the readiness to face life's challenges with positivism. It is recommended that since most of the students in the selected college are working, the administration must create programs that will cater to the needs of the working students especially those who work more than eight hours each day. The college may organize a group process, one-on-one or group counseling, trainings and workshops on time management, accountability and commitment to strengthen self-awareness. The academe can also organize a seminar workshop among first year students about self-awareness. The classroom instructor who also serves as a counselor is recommended to take time to talk to their students to identify possible emotional factors that affect the academic performance of their students. Counseling in this situation is the best move. Since values formation and self-worth starts at home, parents should start building the morale of their children, letting their children feel and realize their worth, giving them room for self-expression. Parents must be more understanding, since working shows positive effect on academic performance. To all non-working students, emotional strains affect academic performance. These students should recognize and identify these environmental stressors such as peers and relationships. They must also be aware that positive disposition can help alleviate emotional strains, being happy amidst difficult and stressful situations is a choice. Finally, working students who work more than eight hours a day are encouraged to maintain a healthy working lifestyle. Sparing a portion of their time for studying or reviewing and some leisure will help them enhance their effectiveness and efficiency in balancing the demands of their work and their studies. In addition, taking pride in what they are doing (as working students) will also help them boost their morale and develop self-expression that

would enhance their drive to perform better in their work and studies.

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