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Research Article

Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Classroom Interaction and Academic Engagement among Undergraduate Students: Evidence from Norbuling Rigter College

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence, classroom interaction, and academic engagement among undergraduate students at Norbuling Rigter College. In higher education, student learning is increasingly shaped not only by cognitive ability and subject knowledge, but also by emotional and interpersonal competencies that influence participation, collaboration, and engagement in the classroom. Against this background, the study investigates whether emotional intelligence is associated with classroom participation, peer collaboration, student-teacher interaction, public speaking confidence, and overall academic engagement.

A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted. Data were collected from 268 undergraduate students selected through stratified random sampling across different academic programmes and years of study. Emotional intelligence was measured using an adapted version of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale together with items covering classroom interaction and engagement variables. The data were analysed using IBM SPSS through descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis.

The findings show that students reported a moderate to high level of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence demonstrated positive and statistically significant correlations with participation, public speaking confidence, peer collaboration, student-teacher interaction, and academic engagement. Regression results further revealed that emotional intelligence significantly predicted academic engagement and remained the strongest predictor even after controlling for demographic variables. The study concludes that emotional intelligence plays a meaningful role in strengthening classroom interaction and enhancing student engagement in higher education. The findings suggest that institutions should integrate emotional intelligence development into teaching and learning practices to create more supportive, interactive, and academically engaging classrooms.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence; classroom interaction; academic engagement; peer collaboration; higher education.*

Introduction

Background of the study

In the modern educational system, success in life's academic domain is not limited by cognitive abilities anymore. Increasing attention has been paid to the role of emotional and social competencies

in predicting student learning experiences and interactions in the classroom. One of the most important concepts in this regard is emotional intelligence, that is, the ability of the individual to perceive, understand, regulate, and think properly, the emotion in self and in others(Caruso et al., 2002).

The concept of emotional intelligence has been popularized by Daniel Goleman and has focused on how emotional competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation an important operational role which is key for both success in personal and professional realms. In educational settings, emotional intelligence can have a major impact on how students interact with their classmates, interact with their instructors and contribute to classroom discussions(*Daniel Goleman_ Goleman - Emotional Intelligence (Bantam Books) - Libgen.Li*, n.d.).

Classroom interaction is an essential part of effective learning environments. Active participation in discussion, group work, and constructive communication with the instructors greatly improve the academic involvement and learning of the course content. Surprisingly, students with higher emotional intelligence might be able to handle the dynamics of the classroom, confidently present their ideas and work effectively with their peers(Veiga et al., 2026).

In addition, recent studies indicate that emotionally intelligent students exhibit greater interpersonal relationship skills, conflict management skills, and academic engagement.(Fredricks et al., 2004) These characteristics are of significance especially in the modern higher education environment where collaborative learning and interactive teaching methods are widely encouraged.

Despite the recent interest in emotional intelligence in education, there is very little empirical evidence about the effects of emotional intelligence on the interaction in the classroom among college students. Even though people have started talking about Emotional Intelligence (EI) and its use in Education (like teaching and encouraging other successful behaviours), there is not much empirical evidence of how EI affects Classroom Interaction among College Students. Understanding how EI works may give Educators a better understanding of how to create better Engagements and Support for Students' Learning.

To this end, the current study will investigate the relationships of EI with Classroom Interaction among College Students with respect to Participating, Collaborating with Peers and Interacting with Instructors and Engaging in Learning.

Problem Statement

Academic achievement has been typically associated with cognitive abilities and subject knowledge. However, there is a current interest in the contribution of emotional competencies in determining the learning behaviors of students. Emotional intelligence is believed to affect the way the students communicate, collaborate and respond to challenges in the classroom.

Despite this, there are still some challenges that can now be found in many college classrooms, including limited participation, ineffective group collaboration, and weak interaction between students and teachers. Some students may be reluctant to share their ideas, lack the skill to work effectively in teams, or feel uncomfortable approaching their instructors for academic support.

These problems may, in part, be due to differences in emotional intelligence between the students. Those with higher emotional intelligence are often better able to manage their emotions and to communicate effectively and to maintain positive relationships with their peers and their instructors.

Though the theoretical importance of emotional intelligence within the educational realm has been understood, there has been little empirical work that addresses the role of emotional intelligence as it impacts classroom interaction among college students. Understanding this relationship might provide valuable insights for educators and institutions seeking to promote student engagement and collaborative learning.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on the participation in the class, collaboration with peers, interactions in student-teacher context, and general engagement in the studies of college students.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among college students.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and classroom participation.
3. To analyze the influence of emotional intelligence on peer collaboration and student–teacher interaction.
4. To determine whether emotional intelligence predicts academic engagement among students.
5. To provide recommendations for integrating emotional intelligence development into educational practices.

Research Questions

The study will address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of emotional intelligence among college students?
2. How does emotional intelligence influence students' participation in classroom discussions?
3. Does emotional intelligence affect peer collaboration and teamwork among students?
4. How does emotional intelligence influence student–teacher interaction?
5. Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and academic engagement among students?

Research Hypotheses

H_{o1}: Emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with classroom participation.

H_{o2}: Emotional intelligence does not significantly influence peer collaboration.

H_{o3}: Emotional intelligence does not significantly influence student–teacher interaction.

H_{o4}: Emotional intelligence does not significantly predict academic engagement.

Significance of the Study

This study is very significant on a number of inspiring grounds.

First, it adds to a growing corpus of studies of emotional intelligence in educational contexts, viewing its deep connection to the classroom interactions between college students.

Second, the findings empower educators to realize the role of emotional competencies at influencing the positive student's participation, collaboration, and engagement in their learning journeys.

Third, the findings open the door for educational institutions to design transformational programmes that foster emotional intelligence development among students which will ultimately improve the quality of interactions in the classroom and increase student learning.

Finally, this research helps to highlight avenues for future researchers who are interested in exploring the fascinating worlds of emotional intelligence and student engagement in higher education.

Scope of the Study

This study aims to improve the knowledge of the relationship between emotional intelligence and interactions between students in classrooms at Norbuling Rigter college. The study will be looking at relationships of emotional intelligence and factors associated with classroom participation, working with peers to complete assignments, and working with their instructor to complete assignments as well as academic engagement in order to find correlations that can help inform the development of instructional strategies and enhance the educational experiences of students.

The sample for this study will consist of undergraduate students, and the researchers will use a structured survey that will provide relevant data to help answer the research questions.

Literature review

Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence plays an important role in helping the individual to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively - both his or her own and others. This is an important concept that was first brought to light by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer who defined emotional intelligence as the capacity to monitor one's emotions and the emotions of others in order to inform thinking and behaviour(*MayerSalovey.InSaloveySluyter.WhatIsEI.1997*, n.d.).

Building on this foundation, Daniel Goleman stressed the transformational role of emotional intelligence in one's personal development as well as one's relationships with others. He determined some of the important competencies within the emotional intelligence including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies can dramatically improve the ability of the individual to navigate through different situations and interact with other people(*Daniel Goleman_ Goleman - Emotional Intelligence (Bantam Books) - Libgen.Li*, n.d.).

In educational settings, emotional intelligence training to foster its development serves to equip students with the tools they need to better identify and deal with the stress they experience in their academic careers while communicating positively with peers and school instructors and engaging effectively in their educational experiences. By developing these skills, students are able to foster a more supportive and productive academic environment.

Emotional Intelligence in Education

Students can enhance their learning through emotional intelligence. Better emotional intelligence in students establishes better emotional regulation and greater interpersonal relationships as well as more resilience to overcoming academic challenges(Estrada et al., 2021).

According to research, students who have more emotional intelligence tend to display higher engagement levels in classroom discussions, collaborative work during group activities, and positive communication with instructors. Consequently, these behaviour traits contribute not only to the student's personal development but also to creating an engaging and supportive learning atmosphere for all parties involved(Trigueros et al., 2020).

Classroom Interaction and Student Engagement

Enhancing the learning process through classroom interactions is an essential part of an effective learning experience through a meaningful connection of students with their teacher as well as to other students through collaborative activities such as class discussions, group projects, oral presentations and solving problems together. Providing opportunities for students to work together in interactive ways will lead to students having more involvement with their peers as well as creating an environment conducive to deeper comprehension of the content at hand. Creating opportunities for collaborative work helps develop student's critical thinking skills and gives students a stronger understanding of what they have learned. Encouraging interactive opportunities can create a much more exciting and productive place to learn for all individuals involved(Jiang et al., 2025)

Emotional Intelligence and Classroom Interaction

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has been broadly recognized as a significant outcome of classroom interaction, social relationships, and academic performance. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the skill of the students to acknowledge, comprehend and manage their feelings and those of other people in the proper manner. Learners who have a greater level of emotional intelligence can cope with stress, stay motivated, and have positive engagements with their colleagues and educators. Such skills can assist students in actively engaging in the classroom setting, work efficiently in a group, and hold positive relationships within the learning environment. It has been shown that, emotionally intelligent students are more likely to demonstrate improved learning performance and have enhanced interpersonal communication which helps to foster a more supportive and interactive classroom environment(Saleem et al., 2024; Shrestha, 2025).

Moreover, emotional intelligence aids in the social adaptation and behavioral control of the classroom among the students. Research indicates that students who possess a high emotional intelligence are more likely to have strong peer relations, motivation to learn and interest during classroom activities. Awareness of emotions, as well as emotional regulation, enables the students to resolve conflicts, collaborate with peers in the classroom and adjust to various learning conditions and enhances classroom dynamics and academic performance. Consequently, emotional intelligence is gradually viewed as a crucial part of social-emotional growth and successful classroom communication of the students(Qazi et al., 2024; Kaur, 2025).

Research Gap

Although previous literature has discussed this relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance, there is a good opportunity to examine the dimension of emotional intelligence in the classroom further, as emotional intelligence clearly influences how classroom interaction takes place in higher education. Additionally, there is a need for more comprehensive studies focused on the influence of emotional intelligence on important aspects of the classroom dynamic, including participation, collaboration, student-teacher communication and academic engagement. This study aims at contributing to this important area of study by investigating the association between the emotional intelligence of the student and how it can positively influence different aspects of classroom interactions among college students, which in turn lead to creating a more enriching classroom environment.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Emotional Intelligence Theory.

The concept of emotional intelligence was first introduced by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer and they defined emotional intelligence as the capability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively in oneself and others. Later, Daniel Goleman went further and explained the importance in social relationships, communication and the person's effectiveness.

According to Emotional Intelligence Theory, people who have a higher emotional intelligence have better ability to:

- ✓ know and understand their own emotions,
- ✓ perceive emotions in others,
- ✓ control emotional responses, and
- ✓ utilise emotional information to direct thinking and behaviour.

In education environments, such emotional competencies impact the interaction between students with each other, students with discussions and instructors with students. Students with an elevated emotional intelligence are more inclined to be able to handle stress in the classroom, participate in collective learning, and hold positive relationships with classmates and teachers.

Therefore, Emotional Intelligence Theory is an appropriate theory to study the role of emotional intelligence in classroom interplay and academic interaction in college students.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, emotional intelligence is considered the independent variable, while classroom interaction components and academic engagement are treated as dependent variables.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework shows the positive role that emotional intelligence plays in determining how students interact with each other in the classroom. Students with greater emotional intelligence tend to be more confident to engage in discussions, teamwork with other students, and to communicate with the instructor. By the process of fostering such patterns of interaction, an environment which benefits academic engagement and enriches the overall learning experience can be created.

Emotional Intelligence

↓

Classroom Interaction

- Participation
- Peer Collaboration
- Student–Teacher Interaction

- Public Speaking Confidence

↓

Academic Engagement

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and classroom interaction in the college students. Quantitative methods allow for the statistical analysis of correlation between variables and for the objectivity of measuring both emotional intelligence and the behaviours of classroom engagement.

The research uses a cross-sectional survey design whereby data will be gathered from the respondents at one point in time through the use of a structured questionnaire.

Target Population

The target population of this study is students who are enrolled in Norbuling Rigter college. These students engage actively in the classroom activities such as discussions, presentations, and group projects that make them good candidates for investigating the impact of emotional intelligence in classroom interactions.

Sampling Technique

The study used stratified random sampling methodology to represent the population of the college, with five separate programmes and three academic years (1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year). This approach is necessary as the population comprising the people is made up of different groups and student experiences, academic demands and behaviour can greatly differ between for example a 1st year political science student and a 3rd year business student.

By using stratified random sampling with 15 strata (5 programs × 3 years), it can be made sure every unique subgroup is well represented. This is a method that can help prevent over or underrepresentation that can occur with a simple random sampling method.

Sample Size

A sample size of 268studentsare used to ensure sufficient data for statistical analysis.

This sample size is adequate for conducting:

- ✓ Exploratory Factor Analysis
- ✓ Pearson correlation coefficient
- ✓ multiple linear regression

A larger sample improves the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

Data Collection Method

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to students.

The questionnaire consisted of several sections:

1. Demographic information
2. Emotional intelligence scale
3. Classroom participation
4. Peer collaboration
5. Student–teacher interaction
6. Academic engagement

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Research Instrument

The measurement of emotional intelligence were adapted from theWong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale.(Wong & Law, 2002)

This scale measured four main dimensions of emotional intelligence:

- ✓ Self-emotion appraisal
- ✓ Others' emotion appraisal
- ✓ Regulation of emotion
- ✓ Use of emotion

Additional items measured classroom interaction behaviours such as participation, collaboration, and engagement.

Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The procedures included:

- ✓ Descriptive statistics
- ✓ Reliability analysis
- ✓ Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
- ✓ Pearson correlation analysis
- ✓ Regression analysis

The sample consisted of 268 students selected using stratified random sampling from five academic programmes and three academic years.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the overall levels of emotional intelligence and classroom interaction variables among students.

Table 1

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Intelligence	3.82	0.56	2.10	4.90
Classroom Participation	3.64	0.63	1.80	4.80
Public Speaking Confidence	3.58	0.69	1.60	4.90
Peer Collaboration	3.91	0.57	2.20	5.00
Student–Teacher Interaction	3.47	0.66	1.70	4.80
Academic Engagement	3.76	0.59	2.10	4.90

Students have a moderate to high level of emotional intelligence, as measured in this study by their mean score of 3.82 on a 5-point scale with a standard deviation of 0.56.

In terms of classroom interactions, students report highest levels of enjoyment when collaborating on peer projects (mean = 3.91) and lowest levels of interaction with their instructors (mean = 3.47). This suggests that greater efforts should be made to improve comfort levels and promote engagement for students within the instructional setting.

The results indicate that the overall level of student academic engagement is relatively high (mean = 3.76). These results suggest that students are generally exhibiting moderate to high emotional intelligence and positive attitudes towards their behaviour in the classroom.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the **internal consistency reliability** of the measurement scales.

Table 2 : Reliability Statistics

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Emotional Intelligence	8	.88
Classroom Participation	3	.81
Public Speaking Confidence	2	.79
Peer Collaboration	4	.84
Student–Teacher Interaction	3	.82
Academic Engagement	5	.86

The reliability analysis indicates that all the constructs have Cronbach alpha values that are above 0.70 which depicts an acceptable high degree of internal consistency. Emotional intelligence demonstrates a significant reliability level (a =.88), and academic engagement also demonstrates a high level of reliability (a =.86). The data above demonstrates that the measurement scales used in the questionnaire are valid and can be used in the further statistical analysis.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA was conducted to examine the construct validity of the measurement instrument.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 3 : KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) Measure	.87
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity χ^2	2546.31
df	300
Sig.	< .001

The value of KMO=0.87 indicates that there is a high level of sampling adequacy that is encouraging to the analysis. Besides, the Test of Sphericity provided by Bartlett provided a statistically significant output ($p < .001$), which means that variables do have some significant correlations that justify the application of the factor analysis. As a result, the data thus seem to be very appropriate in undertaking Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Total Variance Explained

Six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted.

Table 4 : Total Variance Explained

Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)
Emotional Intelligence	6.12	24.48
Participation	3.11	12.45
Public Speaking Confidence	2.40	9.60
Peer Collaboration	2.15	8.60
Student–Teacher Interaction	1.89	7.56
Academic Engagement	1.74	6.96
Total Variance Explained		**69.65%**

The six factorized factors explained 69.65 percent of the total variance, which is normally considered to be satisfactory in the social science research context. This finding indicates that the items in the questionnaire are good representatives of the underlying constructs of emotional intelligence and classroom interaction.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence and classroom interaction variables.

Table 5 : Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1(EI)	2 (P)	3 (PSC)	4 (PC)	5 (STI)	6 (AE)
1. Emotional Intelligence (EI)	—					
2. Participation (P)	.43	—				
3. Public Speaking Confidence (PSC)	.39	.58	—			
4. Peer Collaboration (PC)	.47	.51	.46	—		
5. Student–Teacher Interaction (STI)	.36	.48	.41	.44	—	
6. Academic Engagement (AE)	.55	.60	.53	.59	.50	—

Note: $p < .01$

A moderate and positive correlation has been established between emotional intelligence and several different variables associated with classroom interactions. The following results support this finding:

- ✓ Emotional intelligence is related to academic engagement ($r = .55$)
- ✓ Emotional intelligence is connected with peer collaboration ($r = .47$)
- ✓ Emotional intelligence is equally associated with classroom participation ($r = .43$)

Based on the above correlations, students with higher emotional intelligence tend to have:

- ✓ Greater levels of participation in class discussions
- ✓ Will be able to work better with peers
- ✓ Will be more engaged in learning activities

In light of this data, the development of emotional intelligence will improve student experiences in education.

Regression Analysis

Simple Regression (Baseline Model)

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether emotional intelligence predicts academic engagement among students using the model

Academic Engagement = $\beta_0 + \beta_1(EI) + \varepsilon$

Table 6 : Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Engagement

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.42	0.23	—	6.17	< .001
Emotional Intelligence	0.61	0.06	.55	9.81	< .001

Model Summary

Table 7

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p
.55	.30	.30	96.24	< .001

The regression model showed that it was statistically significant as the F value was 96.24 and the p-value was less than 0.001. The results indicate that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of academic engagement with the beta of 0.55 and p-value of 0.001. Also, this model accounts 30% of the variation in academic engagement ($R^2 = 0.30$). These findings suggest that emotional intelligence can be a moderately large factor in the explanation of academic engagement of students.

Multiple Regression with Control Variables

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether emotional intelligence still predicts engagement after controlling for demographic variables using the model

Academic Engagement = $\beta_0 + \beta_1(EI) + \beta_2(Gender) + \beta_3(Year) + \beta_4(Academic\ Performance) + \varepsilon$

Table 8 : Multiple Regression Predicting Academic Engagement (N = 268)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.28	0.29	—	4.41	< .001
Emotional Intelligence	0.52	0.07	.49	7.43	< .001
Gender	0.09	0.06	.08	1.47	.143
Year of Study	0.11	0.05	.12	2.15	.033
Academic Performance	0.18	0.06	.17	2.98	.003

Model Summary

Table 9

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p
.61	.37	.36	38.64	< .001

Even when controlling for different demographic factors, the quality of emotional intelligence is the most important predictor of academic engagement ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$). This observation adds value to the conclusive nature of the relationship found, and is unlikely to be impacted by difference in demographic between students.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 10 : Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Predictor	Tolerance	VIF
Emotional Intelligence	.71	1.41
Gender	.92	1.09
Year of Study	.85	1.18
Academic Performance	.78	1.28

All VIF values are below 5, indicating no multicollinearity problem. Therefore, the regression estimates are stable and reliable.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 11 : Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result	Decision
H_{01}: EI has no significant relationship with classroom participation	$r = .43$, $p < .001$	Rejected
H_{02}: EI does not significantly influence peer collaboration	$r = .47$, $p < .001$	Rejected
H_{03}: EI does not significantly influence student–teacher interaction	$r = .36$, $p < .001$	Rejected
H_{04}: EI does not significantly predict academic engagement	$\beta = .55$, $p < .001$	Rejected

Based on the data collected about emotional intelligence and its influence on the degree to which students communicate with one another in and outside the classroom, as well as how engaged students are academically, it appears that there is a significant impact of emotional intelligence on student-to-student interactions and academic engagement.

As compared to peers who are less emotionally intelligent, students who possess a higher level of emotional intelligence are likely to display:

- ✓ Improved participation in discussions in the classroom
- ✓ Better collaboration with peers
- ✓ Improved interactions with instructors
- ✓ Increased involvement in academics.

Summary of Findings

The study does present some notable findings:

- ✓ Students had moderately high levels of emotional intelligence.
- ✓ Positive correlation has been found between emotional intelligence and several factors related to classroom interaction.
- ✓ Emotional intelligence was found to be correlated with peer collaboration and also academic engagement.
- ✓ Regression analysis also showed that emotional intelligence is a substantial predictor of academic engagement.

These findings imply the valuable role emotional intelligence plays in improving effective classroom interactions and active learning between college students.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the research process.

The following measures were taken:

- Participation was**voluntary**.
- Respondents were**informed about the purpose of the study**.
- Participants will remain **anonymous**.
- Data collected will be used **only for academic purposes**.
- Respondents were having the right to **withdraw from the study at any time**.

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