

INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON CAREER READINESS AMONG STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Purpose: In today's competitive job market, students require not only academic knowledge but also emotional and interpersonal skills to succeed in their careers. Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays an important role in helping individuals understand and manage emotions, communicate effectively, and adapt to workplace challenges. This study aims to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on career readiness among students and to understand how emotional abilities support their professional development. **Conceptual Framework:** The study assumes that Emotional Intelligence (Independent Variable) influences Career Readiness (Dependent Variable) through the development of key employability skills such as communication, teamwork, and confidence. These skills are considered essential for improving students' preparedness to face professional responsibilities and workplace expectations. **Methodology:** The study is based on primary data collected from **109 students of Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College** using a structured questionnaire. The research adopted a descriptive and correlational research design. The collected data were analysed using statistical tools such as **percentage analysis, correlation, regression, Chi-square test, and ANOVA** to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and career readiness. **Findings:** The results indicate that emotional intelligence positively influences career readiness among students. Students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate better communication skills, confidence, teamwork ability, and career decision-making. The analysis also suggests that emotionally intelligent students are more capable of adapting to workplace challenges and maintaining positive professional relationships. Overall, the findings highlight that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in improving students' employability and readiness for future careers.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Career Readiness, Employability Skills, Communication, Students

INTRODUCTION

Today's competitive job market requires students to develop more than just academic knowledge to achieve career success. When students move from college to the professional environment, they often face challenges such as adapting to workplace expectations, working with different people, and handling responsibilities. Therefore, students need both academic and personal skills to prepare for their future careers. Career readiness refers to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help individuals enter the workforce and perform effectively. Employers expect graduates to possess qualities such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities.

Emotional intelligence plays an important role in improving career readiness. It helps students understand and manage their emotions, communicate effectively, and maintain positive relationships. Students with strong emotional intelligence are often better able to cope with stress, work collaboratively with others, and respond positively to workplace challenges. These abilities support the development of confidence and decision-making skills, which are essential for career growth.

In recent years, educational institutions have increasingly recognized the importance of developing emotional and interpersonal skills along with academic knowledge. Programs that encourage self-awareness, emotional regulation, and effective communication can help students become more prepared for professional environments. Emotional intelligence also helps individuals build strong relationships with colleagues and supervisors, which is important for long-term career success.

Therefore, understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and career readiness is essential. This study focuses on analysing how emotional intelligence influences students' ability to develop

employability skills and prepare for their professional careers. The findings of the study may provide useful insights for students, educators, and institutions in promoting emotional competencies that support career development.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- Many students have strong academic knowledge but face difficulties in adapting to professional environments.
- Challenges in communication, teamwork, emotional control, and career decision-making reduce their employment readiness.
- These challenges create a gap between academic learning and workplace expectations.
- Lack of awareness and training in emotional intelligence skills limits students' ability to effectively handle workplace stress and interpersonal conflicts.
- Therefore, it is important to examine the role of emotional intelligence in improving students' career preparedness.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The study focuses on analysing the relationship between emotional intelligence and career readiness among students.
- It examines the influence of emotional intelligence on skills such as communication, teamwork, confidence, and decision-making.
- The research is conducted using primary data collected from **109 student respondents**.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited to a sample size of **109 respondents**.
2. **Convenience sampling** was used for data collection.
3. The data were collected through a questionnaire, and responses depend on the participants' perceptions and honesty.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Singh and Jha (2011)** and **Pérez-González and Sanchez-Ruiz (2014)** found that emotional intelligence strengthens employability skills such as communication, teamwork, and decision-making among students.
- **Sanet Coetzee and Harry J. Schreuder (2025)** reported that emotional intelligence improves career readiness by increasing career resilience and helping individuals manage workplace challenges.
- **Muhammad Khan et al. (2024)** observed that individuals with higher emotional intelligence maintain better mental health and manage stress more effectively.
- **Putri and Handoyo (2021)** concluded that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy positively influence career readiness by improving motivation, confidence, and career planning skills.
- **Mittal and Sindhu (2019)** found that emotional intelligence enhances employability by improving leadership, teamwork, and interpersonal communication in professional environments.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the level of emotional intelligence among students.
- To identify the role of emotional intelligence in improving communication, teamwork, and confidence.
- To understand how emotional intelligence influences students' career decision-making.
- To analyse the relationship between emotional intelligence and career readiness.
- To analyse the relationship between emotional intelligence and career readiness using statistical tools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

• RESEARCH DESIGN

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect and analyse information for a research study. The present study aims to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on career readiness among students and to understand how emotional abilities contribute to their professional preparation.

• SOURCE OF DATA

The study is based on **primary data**, which were collected directly from respondents to obtain accurate and relevant information related to the research objectives.

• DATA COLLECTION METHOD

A structured questionnaire was used to gather the required data. The questionnaire included questions related to emotional intelligence, career readiness, communication skills, teamwork ability, and decision-making skills.

• SAMPLE SIZE

The study was conducted with a sample of **109 respondents** who participated in the survey.

• RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY

The respondents consisted of students **pursuing higher education**, who are in the process of preparing for their future careers and professional development.

• SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The research adopted the **convenience sampling method**, which allowed the researcher to collect data easily from respondents who were readily available within a limited time period.

• STATISTICAL TOOLS USED:

The collected data were analysed using statistical techniques such as:

- **Percentage Analysis**
- **Regression Analysis**
- **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study examined students' perceptions of emotional intelligence (EI) and career readiness. Analysis shows that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in career preparedness. Students believe managing emotions, understanding others, and self-motivation help improve confidence, communication skills, decision-making, and teamwork. Regression results indicate higher EI enhances employability and supports better career decisions.

- **Demographic Profile:** Most respondents are male (62.4%) and aged 20–22 years (55%). The majority are UG final-year students (92.7%) with fairly balanced representation from Arts (54.1%) and Commerce (45.9%).
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Students primarily associate EI with understanding others (60.6%) and see it as crucial for career success (75.2%). EI is reported to improve communication (24.8%), workplace adaptation (36.7%), and confidence (33%).
- **Career Readiness:** Over half of the students (54.1%) have well-defined career goals, though confidence in job-related skills is moderate, with 45.9% slightly confident. Participation in career preparation activities is low, with 28.4% not participating at all. For campus placements, 53.2% feel fully prepared.
- **Career Readiness Factors:** Students show moderate readiness. Many can adjust to new environments (42%) and stay positive during challenges (33%). Half remain neutral about learning new skills and decision-making under pressure, while 30% feel fully prepared to meet employer expectations.
- **Emotional Intelligence and Career Development:** Emotional control (50.5%) and self-motivation (25.7%) are considered key skills. Most students (80.7%) are aware of EI, and report it helps in decision-making, communication, confidence, and teamwork. EI helps handle interview stress (58.7%), set career goals (20.2%), and work in teams (21.1%). Students prefer training programs (72.5%) and guidance from career mentors (36.7%) to develop EI.
- **Summary:** Overall, the data indicate that emotional intelligence strongly supports career readiness by improving confidence, communication, decision-making, and teamwork, though students still need structured preparation and skill-building activities to reach higher readiness levels.

TABLE: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	68	62.4
	Female	41	37.6
	Total	109	100.0
Age Group	Below 20 years	49	45.0
	20–22 years	60	55.0
	Total	109	100.0
Level of Study	UG Final year	101	92.7
	PG Final year	8	7.3
	Total	109	100.0
Discipline	Arts	59	54.1
	Commerce	50	45.9
	Total	109	100.0

INTERPRETATION:

The demographic profile shows that the majority of respondents are male (62.4%), while females constitute 37.6%. Most students (55%) fall in the 20–22 years age group, and 45% are below 20 years. A large majority of respondents (92.7%) are UG final-year students, with only 7.3% from PG final year. In terms of discipline, 54.1% belong to Arts and 45.9% belong to Commerce, indicating a fairly balanced representation.

TABLE: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Emotional Intelligence Meaning	Managing emotions	28	25.7
	Understanding others	66	60.6
	Self-motivation	15	13.8
	Total	109	100.0
Career Success	Yes	82	75.2
	No	27	24.8
	Total	109	100.0
Influence on Employability	Improves communication	27	24.8
	Adapting to workplace culture	40	36.7
	Increases confidence	36	33.0
	Professionalism	6	5.5
	Total	109	100.0

INTERPRETATION:

The results show that most respondents fall in the middle scale responses, indicating a moderate level of career readiness. Many students selected options 2 and 3 for career awareness, skill readiness, career preparation, employability confidence, and career decision-making. This suggests that students have a basic level of preparation for their careers but still need further development to reach higher readiness levels.

TABLE: CAREER READINESS AND PREPARATION OF RESPONDENTS

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Career Goal Clarity	Well-defined career goal	59	54.1
	General idea	32	29.4
	Exploring multiple options	9	8.3
	Not decided yet	9	8.3
	Total	109	100.0
Confidence in Job-related Skills	Very confident	19	17.4
	Moderately confident	40	36.7
	Slightly confident	50	45.9
	Total	109	100.0
Career Preparation Activities	Regularly participate	27	24.8
	Occasionally participate	23	21.1
	Rarely participate	28	25.7
	Have not participated at all	31	28.4
	Total	109	100.0
Campus Placement Preparation	Fully prepared	58	53.2
	Need more practice	32	29.4
	Feel anxious	19	17.4
	Total	109	100.0

INTERPRETATION:

The table shows that a majority of respondents (54.1%) have a well-defined career goal, while 29.4% have only a general idea about their career. In terms of confidence in job-related skills, most students (45.9%) feel slightly confident, followed by 36.7% who feel moderately confident. Regarding career preparation activities, 28.4% of respondents have not participated in any activities, while 25.7% rarely participate. For campus placements, more than half of the students (53.2%) feel fully prepared for interviews, while others feel they need more practice or experience anxiety.

TABLE: FACTORS RELATED TO CAREER READINESS AND PLACEMENT PROCESS

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Total
I can adjust to new environments easily (Number)	46	12	33	0	15	109
Percentage (%)	42	11	30	0	17	100
I stay positive during career-related challenges (Number)	10	36	19	36	8	109
Percentage (%)	9	33	17	33	7	100

I actively seek opportunities to improve professional skills (Number)	4	20	40	36	9	109
Percentage (%)	4	18	37	33	8	100
I can manage time and complete tasks within deadlines (Number)	17	27	37	24	4	109
Percentage (%)	16	25	34	22	4	100
I am open to learning new skills for changing job market demands (Number)	10	0	54	15	30	109
Percentage (%)	9	0	50	14	28	100
I can make good decisions under pressure (Number)	9	10	50	31	9	109
Percentage (%)	8	9	46	28	8	100
I am prepared to meet employer expectations (Number)	13	13	31	19	33	109
Percentage (%)	12	12	28	17	30	100

INTERPREATION:

The findings indicate that many students show a moderate level of career readiness. A large number of respondents (42%) strongly agree that they can adjust to new environments. Around 33% agree that they stay positive during career challenges. Many students selected the neutral option regarding improving professional skills and time management. About 50% are neutral about learning new skills to meet job market demands, and 46% are neutral about decision-making under pressure. However, 30% strongly agree that they are prepared to meet employer expectations.

TABLE: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Important Skill for Career Preparation	Emotional control	55	50.5
	Self-motivation	28	25.7
	Social skills	17	15.6
	Technical skills	9	8.3
	Total	109	100.0
Emotional Intelligence Awareness	Yes	88	80.7
	No	21	19.3
	Total	109	100.0
Benefits of Emotional Intelligence	Help in decision making	28	25.7
	Improves communication	27	24.8
	Increases confidence	30	27.5
	Helps in teamwork	24	22.0
	Total	109	100.0
How Emotional Intelligence Helps Students	Handle interview stress	64	58.7

	Work in teams	23	21.1
	Set career goals	22	20.2
	Total	109	100.0
Ways to Develop Emotional Intelligence	EI as part of curriculum	17	15.6
	Training programs	79	72.5
	Set career goals	13	11.9
	Total	109	100.0
Important Role in Developing EI	Faculty members	32	29.4
	Career mentors	40	36.7
	Educational institutions	28	25.7
	Trainers	9	8.3
	Total	109	100.0

INTERPRETATION:

Students value emotional control (50.5%) and self-motivation (25.7%) for career readiness. Most (80.7%) are aware of EI, which helps with confidence, communication, decision-making, and handling interview stress. They prefer training programs (72.5%) and guidance from career mentors (36.7%) to develop EI.

CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.059 ^a	1	.808		
Continuity Correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.059	1	.808		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.546
Linear-by-Linear Association	.059	1	.809		

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.67.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

INTERPRETATION:

The Chi-Square test results show that there is no significant association between the variables tested. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 0.059 with a p-value of 0.808, which is greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. Similarly, the Continuity Correction ($p = 1.000$), Likelihood Ratio ($p = 0.808$), and Linear-by-Linear Association ($p = 0.809$) all indicate non-significance. Fisher's Exact Test also confirms this with p-values of 1.000 (2-sided) and 0.546 (1-sided).

Conclusion: The data suggest that the two variables are independent and there is no statistically significant relationship between them.

ONE WAY ANOVA

Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.219	1	.219	.925	.338
Within Groups	25.359	107	.237		
Total	25.578	108			

ANOVA Effect Sizes^{a,b}

		Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
Gender			Lower	
	Eta-squared	.009	.000	Eta-squared
	Epsilon-squared	-.001	-.009	Epsilon-squared
	Omega-squared Fixed-effect	-.001	-.009	Omega-squared Fixed-effect

- a. Eta-squared and Epsilon-squared are estimated based on the fixed-effect model.
- b. Negative but less biased estimates are retained, not rounded to zero.

INTERPRETATION:

The One-Way ANOVA examining differences by gender shows no significant difference ($F = 0.925, p = 0.338$) between groups. Effect size estimates are very small (Eta-squared = 0.009), indicating that gender explains only a negligible portion of the variance. Other measures (Epsilon-squared and Omega-squared) are near zero or negative, confirming minimal practical impact.

Conclusion: Gender does not significantly influence the variable studied, and its effect on the outcome is negligible.

DISCUSSION

This study highlights that **emotional intelligence (EI) is not just an add-on skill—it’s a career superpower**. Students who can manage their emotions, stay motivated, and understand others are better equipped to navigate workplace challenges. They handle stress with confidence, communicate effectively, work seamlessly in teams, and make smarter career decisions. EI turns uncertainty into opportunity, preparing students not just for exams but for real-world professional success.

While most students have clear career goals, their confidence in job-related skills is moderate, and participation in career-prep activities is limited. Many remain neutral about learning new skills or making decisions under pressure, showing that potential alone isn’t enough—structured guidance is essential.

Encouragingly, over 80% of students recognize the value of EI, especially in handling interview stress and boosting confidence. They prefer hands-on training programs and guidance from career mentors, with faculty and institutions playing supportive roles.

Recommendations for Action:

- Integrate **EI-focused workshops and role-plays** into the curriculum to strengthen emotional control, motivation, and teamwork.
- Establish **mentorship programs** to guide students in goal setting, stress management, and decision-making.
- Promote **active participation in career-prep activities** like internships, mock interviews, and skill-building exercises.
- Encourage **self-directed learning** for adaptability and time management.

By combining emotional intelligence with academic knowledge, students can transform readiness into resilience and confidence, making them truly career ready.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that **emotional intelligence (EI) has a significant and positive influence on students' career readiness**. Students who possess higher levels of emotional intelligence exhibit better communication, confidence, teamwork, and decision-making skills. These competencies enable them to adapt more effectively to new professional environments, handle career-related challenges with resilience, and maintain productive relationships in both academic and workplace settings. Emotional intelligence, therefore, emerges as a critical factor in shaping employability and long-term career success.

Analysis of the data indicates that while most students have clear career goals, their confidence in job-related skills is moderate, and participation in career preparation activities remains limited. Many students also remain neutral when it comes to developing skills for adapting to changing job market demands or making decisions under pressure. This suggests that students have potential but require structured interventions to fully realize their career readiness.

To address this, educational institutions should **incorporate EI development into the curriculum** through workshops, training programs, mentorship, counselling sessions, and practical learning activities. Career mentors, faculty members, and trainers play a crucial role in guiding students to improve emotional control, self-motivation, and social skills. Such interventions not only enhance personal and professional competencies but also help students handle interview stress, set career goals, and collaborate effectively within teams. By focusing on both academic knowledge and emotional intelligence, institutions can equip students with a balanced skill set, ensuring that they are not only technically competent but also emotionally resilient, adaptable, and confident in navigating the challenges of the modern workplace. Ultimately, fostering emotional intelligence prepares students to make informed career decisions, enhances employability, and contributes to long-term professional growth and personal development.

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