

Examining the Inverse Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Examination Anxiety in Adolescents

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Abstract:

This study explores how emotional intelligence relates to examination anxiety among adolescents. Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions, which plays an important role in handling academic pressure. A correlational research design was used, involving 600 Class IX students from secondary schools of Aurangabad district now known as Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar. Emotional intelligence was assessed using a standardized scale, while examination anxiety was measured through a researcher-developed tool. The collected data were analysed using Pearson's correlation technique. The results showed a clear negative relationship between emotional intelligence and examination anxiety, suggesting that students with stronger emotional skills tend to experience less anxiety during exams. In particular, aspects such as self-regulation and motivation were found to be important in reducing anxiety levels. The findings emphasize the role of emotional intelligence in helping students cope with academic stress and enhancing their overall well-being.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Examination Anxiety, Adolescents, Secondary School Students, Emotional Regulation, Correlational Study.

INTRODUCTION:

Education serves as a fundamental means of shaping individuals and contributing to societal development. However, the growing demands of academic achievement have led to increased examination-related stress among students. Examination anxiety is commonly reflected through cognitive, emotional, and physiological reactions such as excessive worry, fear of failure, and physical tension, all of which can hinder students' performance and overall well-being.

In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) has gained importance as a key factor in managing academic pressure. It refers to the capacity to recognize, interpret, and regulate one's own emotions as well as those of others. The frameworks proposed by Mayer and Salovey, and later expanded by Goleman, highlight essential components of EI, including self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social competence. These abilities enable learners to respond effectively to stressful situations and maintain emotional stability.

Education extends beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge; it also involves the development of cognitive, emotional, and social capabilities. Understanding how learning occurs has been a central focus of psychological theories. Pavlov's classical conditioning explains learning through associations, while Skinner's operant conditioning emphasizes the role of reinforcement in shaping behaviour. Piaget's cognitive development theory views learning as an active process of constructing knowledge through stages, whereas Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective highlights the influence of social interaction and cultural context. Bandura's social learning theory further demonstrates that individuals learn by observing and imitating others. Together, these perspectives illustrate that learning is a complex and dynamic process shaped by mental processes, environmental influences, social interactions, and emotional experiences.

Intelligence has traditionally been viewed as the cognitive ability to reason, solve problems, and adapt to new situations. Early psychologists like Alfred Binet(1905) and Charles Spearman (1904) focused on general intelligence (g factor) measurable through IQ tests. Over time, researchers recognized that cognitive intelligence alone does not fully explain human behaviour and success. This gave rise to the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI), which gained prominence through the work of Daniel Goleman. Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's capacity to identify, interpret, regulate, and effectively use emotions in oneself as well as in social interactions. It includes key components such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, all of which play an important role in maintaining psychological well-being, building healthy relationships, and enhancing academic success.

In the context of modern schooling, students are increasingly subjected to academic stress, competitive environments, and societal expectations that can significantly impact their mental health. One of the most prevalent forms of academic stress among adolescents is exam anxiety, which often manifests as intense fear, worry, and physiological tension during assessment periods. This anxiety, when left unmanaged, can severely impair a student's academic performance, concentration, self-confidence, and overall psychological well-being. Simultaneously, Emotional Intelligence (EI) a construct that refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions constructively has emerged as a critical factor influencing personal and academic success. In 1990's Daniel Goleman Introduced, emotional intelligence includes components such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These abilities help individuals manage stress, resolve conflicts, make responsible decisions, and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.

A significant difficulty encountered by students in the modern competitive education system is examination-related anxiety. Examination anxiety is a form of situational anxiety arising from the fear of underperforming or failing in exams. It manifests through cognitive symptoms such as negative thoughts and worry, physiological symptoms like rapid heartbeat and sweating, and behavioural symptoms such as avoidance and restlessness. High levels of examination anxiety can hinder concentration, impair memory retrieval, and negatively impact academic performance and overall well-being.

A review of literature shows that emotional intelligence has been widely studied in relation to academic stress, performance, and psychological well-being among adolescents. Several studies, such as Ahmad and Aziz (2019) and Kulkarni (2023), reported a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and examination anxiety, indicating that higher EI helps reduce stress. Similarly, Dogra (2023) and Trigueros et al. (2020) found that emotional intelligence enhances resilience and lowers academic anxiety. However, some studies like Nayak and Bhatt (2021) reported no significant relationship, suggesting the influence of other factors. Most of these studies have focused on higher secondary or university students, with limited research on secondary school learners. Moreover, there is a lack of region-specific studies in Maharashtra, particularly in Aurangabad district. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the correlation between emotional intelligence and examination anxiety among Class IX students, addressing this research gap.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:

1. To study the Emotional Intelligence of IX standard students Of Aurangabad district.
2. To study the Examination Anxiety of IX standard students Of Aurangabad district.
3. To study the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Examination Anxiety of IX standard students of Aurangabad district.

METHODOLOGY:

The study utilized a descriptive correlational survey approach to explore the association between emotional intelligence and examination anxiety among Class IX students in Aurangabad district. This method allowed for the evaluation of current levels of both variables and the examination of their relationship in a natural setting without any experimental intervention. Data were collected from 600 School students 350 males and 250 female students across multiple talukas using standardized questionnaires. Two instruments were used for data collection. Emotional intelligence was measured using the standardized Emotional Intelligence Scale

developed by Dr. Ekta Sharma, which includes 60 items covering self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management. Examination anxiety was assessed using a self-constructed scale developed by the researcher in accordance with the objectives of the study. Examination anxiety tool was self-made tool which is having 54 items covering four major domains such as Behavioural, Emotional, Psychological, and Physiological aspects of anxiety. The reliability of the scale is 0.81 that comes under Good and the validity of the scale is 0.83.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

Objective 1: To study the level of Emotional Intelligence among IX standard students of Aurangabad district.

Emotional Intelligence of Students.	N	Mean	SD	Range	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence	600	192.62	44.94	141-220	Average

Table no 1.1 showing Mean of Emotional Intelligence of Students.

The table 1.1 reveals that students EI score is 192.62, the obtained mean value comes in the average range i.e. 126-198, Hence it can be concluded that the EI scores of IX class Students of Aurangabad District is in average range.

2.To study the level of Examination Anxiety among IX standard students Of Aurangabad district.

Examination Anxiety of Students.	N	Mean	SD	Range	Interpretation
Examination anxiety	600	158.93	45.65	126-198	Average

Table 1.2 showing Examination Anxiety Among Students.

The descriptive analysis presented in Table 1.2 shows the overall examination anxiety mean score for all students is 158.93, which likewise falls within the average range. Hence it can be concluded that the Examination anxiety scores of IX class Students of Aurangabad District is in average range.

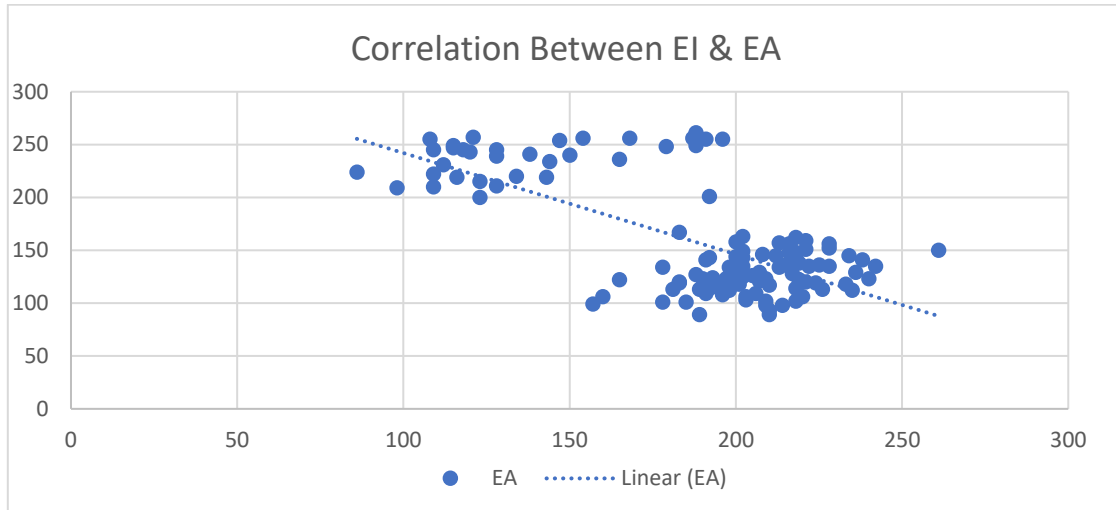
3.To study the Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Examination Anxiety of IX standard students of Aurangabad District.

Variables	Pearson's Correlation (r)	Range	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence and Examination Anxiety	-0.4523	-0.40-0.69	Moderate Negative Correlation

Table 1.3 Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Examination Anxiety

Interpretation:

To analyse the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Examination Anxiety among IX standard students, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was computed. The obtained correlation coefficient was $r = -0.45$, indicating a moderate, negative, and statistically significant relationship between the two variables. This negative association suggests that as students' Emotional Intelligence increases, their level of examination anxiety tends to decrease.



Graph no 4.11 showing Negative correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Examination Anxiety of Students.

Those students who possess stronger emotional skills such as self-awareness, emotion regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management are more capable of managing exam-related stress and pressures. Conversely, students with lower Emotional Intelligence appear more vulnerable to experiencing heightened nervousness, fear of failure, and cognitive difficulty during examinations.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that both emotional intelligence and examination anxiety among Class IX students fall within a moderate range, reflecting an average level of emotional capability alongside a manageable degree of academic stress. A significant outcome of the analysis is the identification of a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.45$) between the two variables. This suggests that students who possess higher emotional intelligence are likely to experience lower levels of anxiety during examinations.

This relationship underscores the importance of emotional competencies such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and interpersonal skills in coping with academic challenges. Students with well-developed emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage their thoughts, stay composed under pressure, and approach examinations with greater confidence. In contrast, those with lower emotional intelligence tend to experience increased anxiety, fear, and difficulty concentrating, which may hinder their academic performance.

These findings are in line with earlier research that highlights the role of emotional intelligence as a protective factor in reducing anxiety and enhancing psychological well-being among adolescents. Moreover, the results emphasize that emotional intelligence is not merely a theoretical concept but a practical ability that can be nurtured and strengthened through educational practices and interventions.

CONCLUSION

The study establishes that emotional intelligence and examination anxiety are inversely related among Class IX students of Aurangabad district. Although both variables were observed at a moderate level, the negative association suggests that strengthening emotional intelligence can play a crucial role in lowering students' examination anxiety.

These findings underline the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence into the school curriculum through well-planned programs, guidance, and teacher-led support. Developing students' emotional competencies can enable them to handle academic pressure more effectively, enhance their learning outcomes, and support their overall well-being. Therefore, emotional intelligence emerges as an essential element in creating a supportive and balanced educational environment.

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