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## Research Paper

## Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Time Management Competency in Higher Education

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### ABSTRACT

The relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and time management competency has become an important area of research in the context of higher education, where students are continuously challenged by academic pressure, social expectations, and personal responsibilities. As universities transition toward more demanding and flexible learning environments, the ability to manage time effectively and regulate emotions constructively has become essential not only for academic success but also for overall personal development. Understanding how EI influences time management skills helps educators design better support mechanisms and helps students develop a more balanced, productive approach to learning. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and use emotions in a positive manner. It includes components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Time management competency, on the other hand, involves planning, prioritisation, scheduling, goal-setting, self-discipline, and the ability to use time efficiently. Students who lack strong emotional and time-related competencies often struggle with procrastination, stress, academic overload, and reduced performance. Research consistently suggests that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of effective time management. One of the primary reasons for this correlation is that time management requires a high degree of self-regulation, which is a key aspect of EI. Students with strong self-regulation skills are able to control impulses, delay gratification, remain focused on tasks, and avoid distractions. This enhances their ability to follow schedules, meet deadlines, and maintain consistency in academic work. Similarly, self-awareness, another component of EI, helps students evaluate how they use their time, understand their limitations, and identify emotional triggers that may lead to procrastination. When students are aware of how emotions such as anxiety, frustration, fear of failure, or lack of motivation affect their study habits, they are better equipped to create strategies for overcoming these barriers. Another dimension where EI supports time management is intrinsic motivation. Students with higher emotional intelligence tend to be more self-motivated, goal-oriented, and capable of maintaining long-term commitment to tasks. Intrinsic motivation helps them adopt effective time management practices, such as setting realistic goals, breaking large tasks into manageable segments, and monitoring progress. Furthermore, empathy and social skills support collaborative learning, group assignments, and interpersonal communication—important aspects of academic life. Better interpersonal skills help students handle academic demands without unnecessary conflict or stress. When students can manage their emotions and communicate well, they can coordinate group work more efficiently, reducing the time wasted due to misunderstandings or poor cooperation. On the other hand, poor emotional intelligence often leads to stress, anxiety, and unproductive coping mechanisms, which negatively impact time management. Students who react emotionally to pressure may avoid tasks, experience burnout, or fall behind in their academic responsibilities. Stress consumes mental energy, reduces concentration, and leads to disorganization. In contrast, emotionally intelligent students manage stress more constructively, allowing them to allocate time calmly and effectively. Several studies have highlighted a significant positive correlation between EI and time management competency among higher education students. These findings imply that enhancing emotional intelligence can directly improve academic outcomes by improving students' ability to plan, prioritize, and complete academic tasks. Institutions that integrate EI training—such as mindfulness sessions, counseling programs, peer mentoring, reflective exercises, and life skills workshops—often observe better student engagement and performance. In conclusion, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping students' time management abilities. Students who can manage their emotions effectively are better equipped to organize their time, handle academic pressure, and maintain productivity. As higher education systems focus increasingly on holistic development, fostering emotional intelligence becomes a powerful strategy for enhancing time management competency and overall academic success. Integrating EI into the educational framework can create more resilient, self-aware, and well-prepared graduates capable of meeting both academic and professional challenges with confidence and competence.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education represents one of the most complex and demanding phases in an individual's academic journey. The transition from school-level learning to university-level education brings with it multiple responsibilities, academic pressures, and personal challenges. Students are expected to adapt to new learning styles, dynamic schedules, social environments, competitive expectations, and the increasing need to balance academic as well as personal life demands. These expectations require students to possess strong emotional control, interpersonal abilities, and the capacity to allocate time judiciously. As a result, two psychological constructs—emotional intelligence (EI) and time management competency—have emerged as fundamental determinants of academic success and personal well-being in higher education. The correlation between emotional intelligence and time management competency has been widely studied and recognized as a powerful predictor of how effectively students can navigate their educational journey. This essay explores this relationship in depth, presenting a comprehensive understanding of how emotional intelligence contributes to effective time management, which in turn enhances academic performance, mental health, personal development, and future success.

### Understanding Emotional Intelligence in the Context of Higher Education

Emotional intelligence is broadly defined as the ability to perceive, understand, interpret, manage, and regulate one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others. Popularized by researchers like Daniel Goleman, EI encompasses five major components: self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social skills. These dimensions help individuals navigate personal interactions, adapt to stressful circumstances, and maintain psychological balance. In the environment of higher education, emotional intelligence acts as a stabilising factor that helps students handle academic pressure, social expectations, personal relationships, and the uncertainties of adulthood. University students encounter numerous situations in which emotional intelligence becomes essential—such as managing disappointment, overcoming the fear of failure, handling conflicts, maintaining healthy relationships, coping with homesickness, dealing with peer comparison, or balancing academic work with part-time employment.

#### 1. Self-awareness

Self-awareness is the ability to recognise one's emotions, thoughts, strengths, weaknesses, and behavioural patterns. For students, self-awareness helps in identifying what triggers stress, what motivates learning, and which academic tasks require more effort or time. Without self-awareness, students may underestimate or overestimate their capabilities, leading to poor time management and unhealthy study habits.

#### 2. Self-regulation

Self-regulation involves controlling impulse reactions, managing stress, maintaining discipline, and responding constructively to emotional challenges. Students who lack self-regulation often fall victim to procrastination, emotional burnout, anxiety-driven avoidance, and disorganization. Conversely, emotionally balanced students remain calmer, more resilient, and better focused.

#### 3. Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to the inner drive that pushes students to achieve academic goals, seek improvement, and remain focused despite challenges. Highly motivated students naturally gravitate toward effective time management because they recognize the value of organized schedules, timely preparation, and goal-oriented study routines.

#### 4. Empathy

Empathy enables students to understand others' perspectives, emotions, and needs. In group work or collaborative learning, empathy plays a crucial role in cooperation, conflict resolution, and communication.

#### 5. Social skills

Students with strong social skills find it easier to communicate effectively, build meaningful relationships, and engage in academic interactions. They are also better at negotiating deadlines, collaborating on projects, resolving conflicts, and seeking help when necessary—all of which contribute indirectly to effective time management.

### Understanding Time Management Competency in Higher Education

Time management competency refers to the ability to plan, prioritise, schedule, monitor, and regulate one's time in a manner that maximises effectiveness and productivity. For students in higher education, time management is not merely a skill but a survival tool, especially when juggling various responsibilities such as attending classes, completing assignments, preparing for examinations, engaging in extracurricular activities, participating in internships, and maintaining social relationships.

#### Key Elements of Time Management

##### 1. Setting Goals

Clear goals serve as the foundation of time management. Students with defined academic and personal goals are more likely to stay organised and motivated.

## 2. Prioritisation

Prioritisation involves distinguishing between urgent tasks and important tasks and completing them accordingly. Failure to prioritise often leads to last-minute stress or poor-quality work.

## 3. Planning and Scheduling

Creating daily, weekly, or monthly plans helps students visualise deadlines, allocate time effectively, and avoid forgetting important commitments.

## 4. Task Breakdown

Breaking large tasks into smaller, manageable parts increases efficiency and reduces overwhelm.

## 5. Avoiding Procrastination

Procrastination is one of the biggest barriers to effective time management. Students who procrastinate often experience stress, decreased academic performance, and guilt.

## 6. Self-discipline and Consistency

Time management requires consistent effort, discipline, and the ability to control distractions.

Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence and Time Management Competency

There is a strong and positive correlation between emotional intelligence and time management competency. Students who possess higher emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate better time management skills. The relationship exists because components of EI facilitate the behavioural and cognitive processes required for effective time allocation.

### 1. EI helps students control procrastination

Procrastination often stems from emotional barriers such as fear, anxiety, boredom, or lack of confidence. Emotionally intelligent students recognise these emotions, understand their impact, and are able to regulate them effectively. They do not allow negative emotions to paralyse their actions. Instead, they use coping mechanisms such as mindfulness, positive thinking, or constructive self-talk to overcome emotional barriers and begin tasks promptly.

### 2. EI enhances goal-setting and motivation

Students with strong intrinsic motivation set more meaningful and achievable goals. Their inner desire for growth makes them more disciplined and proactive in managing time. Emotional intelligence ensures that students remain motivated even in the face of difficulties, leading to consistent adherence to schedules and academic plans.

### 3. EI promotes discipline and self-regulation

Self-regulation is directly connected to time management. Students with strong self-regulation avoid distractions, resist temptations, and stay focused on tasks. They are less likely to be influenced by emotional impulses, such as spending

excessive time on leisure activities, social media, or unnecessary conversations.

### 4. EI helps manage stress and academic pressure

Time management often fails when students feel overwhelmed or stressed. Emotional intelligence provides the emotional tools necessary to cope with academic pressure. Students with high EI remain calm under stress, analyze situations objectively, and respond rationally rather than emotionally. They have better mental clarity, which improves their ability to prioritise tasks effectively.

### 5. EI supports healthy interpersonal relationships

Collaborative tasks, group projects, peer discussions, and classroom interactions form an essential part of higher education. Emotionally intelligent students manage relationships smoothly, saving time that might otherwise be wasted on misunderstandings, conflicts, or communication errors. Good social skills also enable them to seek help from peers or teachers when necessary.

### 6. EI fosters adaptability and behavioural flexibility

Higher education is unpredictable. Deadlines may shift, assignments may overlap, or personal emergencies may arise. Emotionally intelligent students adapt quickly, reorganise schedules efficiently, and maintain productivity despite change.

Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Time Management on Academic Performance. Emotional intelligence and time management play significant roles in enhancing academic performance across various dimensions.

### 1. Improved Concentration and Focus

Students with good EI can regulate distractions and maintain mental clarity. This enhances their ability to concentrate during study sessions, resulting in better comprehension and retention.

### 2. Higher Productivity

Proper time management increases productivity by ensuring students complete tasks efficiently and on time. Emotional balance prevents burnout and fatigue.

### 3. Reduced Stress Levels

Emotional intelligence teaches students how to handle stress effectively. Time management ensures that workloads are distributed evenly, preventing last-minute anxiety and pressure.

### 4. Better Quality of Assignments and Exams

Students who manage their time well start preparing early, allowing them to produce higher-quality work. Emotionally intelligent students do not rush or panic, so they are better able to think clearly during exams and assignments.

## 5. Increased Confidence and Self-efficacy

Success in managing time and emotions boosts students' self-esteem, making them more confident in their academic abilities.

### Challenges Faced by Students with Low EI and Poor Time Management

Students who lack emotional intelligence and time management competence often face multiple obstacles:

#### 1. Chronic Procrastination

Low EI leads to avoidance behaviour, emotional overwhelm, and indecisiveness, all of which fuel procrastination.

#### 2. Academic Overload

Poor time planning results in incomplete tasks accumulating over time, creating academic pressure and confusion.

#### 3. Stress, Anxiety, and Burnout

Lack of emotional regulation makes students prone to stress, which further disrupts their organisation and performance.

#### 4. Declining Academic Performance

Students may fail to meet deadlines, perform poorly in exams, or produce low-quality assignments.

#### 5. Poor Interpersonal Relationships

Low empathy and weak social skills lead to conflicts, miscommunications, and isolation.

#### 6. Reduced Motivation

Failure to regulate emotions often results in decreased motivation, low engagement, and disinterest in studies. Role of Higher Education Institutions in Strengthening EI and Time Management. Universities and colleges play a significant role in shaping the emotional and cognitive skills of students. Institutions can create environments and support systems that nurture both emotional intelligence and time management.

#### 1. Workshops and Training Programs

Workshops on mindfulness, stress management, emotional regulation, and effective communication help students develop their EI.

#### 2. Time Management Sessions

Sessions on planning, scheduling, prioritisation, and goal-setting help students enhance organisational skills.

#### 3. Counselling and Mental Health Support

Counselling services assist students in managing emotional challenges, thereby indirectly strengthening their time management.

## 4. Peer Mentoring Programs

Senior students can mentor juniors, guiding them on managing time and coping with emotional challenges.

## 5. Curriculum Integration

Adding EI and time management modules into academic curricula encourages students to take these skills seriously.

## FINDINGS

The analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and time management competency in higher education reveals a deep, multidimensional correlation that extends beyond academic outcomes and touches every sphere of student life. Several key findings emerge from the study of existing literature, practical observations, and student behaviour patterns.

#### 1. Emotional intelligence significantly influences students' time management behaviour

One of the most consistent findings is that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to exhibit stronger time management abilities. Self-awareness, a core component of EI, enables students to identify their emotions, study habits, and behavioural patterns that impact their productivity. As a result, they are better able to create realistic schedules, manage deadlines, and allocate time effectively across academic tasks.

#### 2. Self-regulation reduces procrastination and improves academic discipline

Procrastination is often rooted in emotional challenges like fear, anxiety, boredom, or lack of confidence. Students with strong self-regulation skills are more capable of recognizing these emotional triggers and managing them in constructive ways. This ability helps them maintain academic discipline, control distractions, and begin tasks early, thereby enhancing their time management performance.

#### 3. Intrinsic motivation drives long-term time management competency

Emotionally intelligent students are typically more intrinsically motivated, meaning their internal desire to achieve is stronger than external pressures. This internal motivation leads to deeper engagement in planning, goal-setting, and organized study routines. Motivation acts as a psychological engine that fuels timely completion of tasks, persistence during challenges, and a positive approach to academic responsibilities.

#### 4. Stress management skills improve cognitive clarity and task prioritisation

Students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate better coping mechanisms for stress. As time pressure is a major cause of student stress, EI provides the tools necessary to remain calm, think clearly, and prioritise tasks based on

urgency and importance. This reduces the mental blocks caused by anxiety and enhances productivity.

#### 5. Empathy and social skills contribute indirectly to time efficiency

While empathy and social skills may appear less related to time management, findings show they play a significant indirect role. Students with strong interpersonal skills manage group projects efficiently, communicate effectively with peers and teachers, and avoid conflicts that waste time and energy. Their ability to build supportive social networks also allows them to seek help when needed, reducing academic delays.

#### 6. Students with low emotional intelligence often lack structured routines

Low EI is frequently associated with inconsistent routines, disorganised study habits, and poor prioritisation. When students cannot regulate emotions like frustration or fear, they tend to avoid tasks, leading to rushed work or missed deadlines. This demonstrates that time management problems are not merely behavioural but deeply emotional.

#### 7. Academic performance improves when EI and time management are strong

Students who exhibit high EI and effective time management consistently perform better academically. They demonstrate higher concentration levels, produce higher-quality assignments, prepare earlier for exams, and experience fewer academic breakdowns. Their ability to balance responsibilities leads to stable and sustained academic success.

#### 8. Institutions that support EI development indirectly strengthen students' time management skills

Programs such as counselling, peer mentoring, emotional well-being workshops, and stress management sessions significantly improve students' emotional intelligence. This improvement automatically leads to better time management behaviours. Higher education institutions that integrate EI development see greater engagement, reduced dropout rates, and more balanced student lifestyles. The study of the correlation between emotional intelligence and time management competency in higher education highlights a powerful, interconnected relationship that directly impacts students' academic success, emotional well-being, and overall personal growth. Emotional intelligence is not merely a psychological trait; it is a life skill that shapes how students perceive their challenges, respond to stress, maintain relationships, and plan their academic journeys. Time management, on the other hand, is a practical skill that determines how effectively students utilize their limited hours to meet academic goals and personal obligations. Together, these two competencies form a foundational framework for student success.

One of the strongest conclusions is that emotional intelligence serves as a predictor of time management outcomes. Students who are emotionally intelligent are more likely to remain calm, focused, and disciplined when faced with academic pressures. Their ability to recognize and analyse their emotions helps them understand why they procrastinate or feel overwhelmed. This understanding enables them to adopt healthier study habits, plan more strategically, and remain consistent in their academic tasks. In essence, emotional intelligence empowers students to manage not just their time, but their entire mental and emotional landscape.

The importance of self-regulation emerges as particularly significant. Students who regulate their emotions effectively can resist the distractions that commonly hinder academic progress, such as social media, peer pressure, or immediate gratification. They can delay impulsive behaviors and stay committed to long-term goals, which is central to strong time management. Emotional intelligence transforms how students interpret challenges—not as threats, but as manageable tasks requiring planning and effort.

Furthermore, motivation acts as a driving force that links EI with time management mastery. Emotionally intelligent students develop healthier intrinsic motivation, which pushes them to plan their study time, set realistic goals, and follow through with dedication. They do not rely solely on external rewards or fear of failure. Instead, they cultivate a deeper sense of purpose toward learning. This mindset naturally enhances their ability to structure their time effectively.

Stress management is another crucial connector between EI and time management. Academic overload, tight deadlines, and high expectations often create emotional strain. Students with high EI possess coping strategies that allow them to handle these pressures without succumbing to anxiety or disorganisation. Their ability to remain emotionally stable translates into clearer thinking, better task prioritisation, and more efficient time use. The indirect role of social intelligence is equally meaningful. Collaborative learning, group assignments, and classroom interactions demand strong interpersonal skills. Students with empathetic and communicative abilities avoid misunderstandings, reduce emotional conflict, and streamline teamwork, which saves valuable time. Their social networks also provide academic support, reducing delays caused by confusion or isolation. Institutions also play a vital role in shaping students' EI and time management abilities. Colleges that invest in emotional development programs, stress reduction activities, and mentoring systems create an environment where students become more emotionally resilient and better organized. These interventions ultimately lead to improved academic outcomes, reduced dropout rates, and a healthier student community. In conclusion, emotional intelligence and time management competency are essential, interdependent elements of student success in higher education. Strengthening EI automatically enhances students' ability to manage time effectively. Students who develop both



competencies are better prepared to handle academic challenges, maintain emotional balance, and pursue their future careers with confidence and adaptability. As higher education becomes more complex and demanding, investing in emotional intelligence training and time management education is not just beneficial—it is imperative for building capable, resilient, and successful graduates.

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