The Effect of Emotional Intelligence Training on Academic Commitment, Emotional Self-Regulation, and Academic Performance of Male Students at Farhangian University in Khuzestan Province

Masoud. Salehi Shablizi[1] , Alireza. Haji Yakhchali[2*] , Manijeh. Shehni Yailagh[3] , Gholamhossein. Maktabi[2]

[1] Ph.D. Candidate in Educational psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz, Ahwaz, Iran
[2] Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz, Ahwaz, Iran.
[3] Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz, Ahwaz, Iran.

* Corresponding author email address: hajiyakhchali@yahoo.com

A r t i c l e   I n f o

A B S T R A C T

This study aimed to examine the effect of emotional intelligence training on academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance in male students at Farhangian University in Khuzestan. The study utilized an experimental field design with a pretest-posttest control group structure. The statistical population included all male students at Farhangian University in Ahvaz during the 2017–2018 academic year. A total of 72 students were randomly selected and assigned to either the experimental group (n = 36) or the control group (n = 36). The intervention consisted of ten one-hour sessions of emotional intelligence training based on Bar-On's model. The data collection instruments included the Academic Commitment Scale (Fredricks et al., 2004), the Emotional Self-Regulation Scale (Gross & John, 2003), and academic performance measured by students' semester grade point averages. Data analysis was conducted using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. The results showed that emotional intelligence training had a significant positive effect on academic commitment (F(1, 64) = 7.14, p = 0.009), emotional self-regulation (F(1, 64) = 8.21, p = 0.006), and academic performance (F(1, 64) = 9.48, p = 0.004). The experimental group demonstrated higher scores in all three variables compared to the control group. The intervention was particularly effective in enhancing students' ability to regulate emotions and remain committed to their academic responsibilities. The findings suggest that emotional intelligence training can improve students' academic commitment, enhance their emotional self-regulation, and lead to better academic performance. Implementing emotional intelligence training in teacher education programs at Farhangian University may foster long-term improvements in both students' personal development and their future impact as educators

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Academic Commitment, Emotional Self-Regulation, Academic Performance, Teacher Education.

1. Introduction

The most important factor in achieving an organization's goals is human resources, and undoubtedly, the success and advancement of any organization depend on its workforce. The education system is one of the organizations where human resources are often composed of hardworking and committed individuals. If the working and motivational conditions are favorable, these individuals will be more inclined to utilize their talents and skills for the benefit of the organization, thereby driving its progress more effectively (1). In every country's education system, multiple factors influence its structure, objectives, and quality. Education is a social institution that originates from collective life and is influenced by the social environment. Therefore, education is a social phenomenon. The education system consists of various elements, each of which contributes to achieving its goals. Among these elements, teachers hold a special significance in the educational system, and their progress and improved performance can significantly impact the realization of the system's objectives (2, 3). One of the topics that has long been a focus in education is academic achievement and the improvement of teachers' performance, which consequently affects students' success. Given the role and status of Farhangian University in training student-teachers and the requirement that individuals who aspire to become teachers must enter the education system through this university, the impact of Farhangian University students on their future students and, consequently, on future generations is undeniable.

In this regard, one of the concepts that has attracted the attention of psychologists and educational researchers in recent decades is academic commitment. Academic commitment consists of three dimensions: absorption (emotional commitment), vigor (cognitive commitment), and dedication (behavioral commitment). The prominent characteristic of absorption, which refers to being deeply engaged and immersed in academic activities, is that time passes quickly for the learner, to the extent that they do not notice the passage of time and find it difficult to disengage from their work. The vigor dimension refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while performing academic tasks, during which the learner exerts considerable effort in completing assignments (4). The third dimension of academic commitment, dedication, refers to the learner's profound psychological involvement in academic tasks. Researchers have found a significant positive relationship between emotional commitment and cognitive commitment with self-efficacy, and emotional commitment has a stronger predictive power for self-efficacy than cognitive commitment (4, 5).

Another significant factor affecting education is emotional self-regulation and the variables influencing it, which have long been a focal point for educational psychologists and other experts in the field of education. Emotional self-regulation is defined as the ability to direct internal processes to regulate attention, behavior, and emotions to achieve goals and respond to external and internal needs. Emotional self-regulation is regarded as a set of self-initiated thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that individuals use to attain self-imposed goals (6).

Among the other factors influencing an individual's progress in academic and social environments is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a crucial individual trait that encompasses differences among individuals and is considered a key determinant of success in life (7). Emotional intelligence serves as a core aspect of emotional competence and a means of enhancing individuals' quality of life and job performance. Teachers, as professionals working in human development, are responsible for fostering the competence of children and adolescents. Therefore, they must demonstrate genuine emotional traits that enable them to perform more effectively. Emotional intelligence, in essence, represents an individual's knowledge and awareness of emotions and how this knowledge influences interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, the ability to evaluate and appropriately express emotions serves as a key indicator of competence in recognizing emotions (8). Previous research has shown that teachers with high emotional intelligence demonstrate outstanding performance (9). They exhibit high empathetic perception and effective social skills. Emotional and social skills are associated with success in various life domains, including teaching, student learning, relationship quality, and academic performance (10). Emphasizing the development of emotional competence appears to be crucial in teacher education (11). Research indicates that emotional intelligence is linked to numerous constructs, including life

satisfaction, self-efficacy, academic performance, delinquent behavior, and academic success (12).

Thus, the present study aims to determine the effect of emotional intelligence training on academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and students' academic performance.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

Given that the present study examines "the effect of emotional intelligence training on academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance of students at Farhangian University," the research method is an experimental field study using a pretest-posttest design with a control group. The statistical population of this study included all male students enrolled in the continuous education program at Farhangian University in Ahvaz during the 2017–2018 academic year. According to information obtained from the university's academic office, the total number of male students at Farhangian University in Ahvaz was approximately 480.

To select a sample for testing the hypotheses, the researchers obtained the list of students from each class through the academic office. From each class, four students were randomly selected and assigned to either the experimental group or the control group. A total of 72 students from the 480 students at Farhangian University in Ahvaz were selected (36 for the experimental group and 36 for the control group). Among them, 31 students in the experimental group completed the intervention, and 35 students in the control group fully completed the questionnaire.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

The data collection instruments used in this study were selected based on the research objectives and included the Academic Commitment Scale (Fredricks et al.), the Emotional Self-Regulation Scale, and Academic Performance (measured by students' semester grade point averages). Each of these instruments is described below.

The Academic Commitment Scale developed by Fredricks et al. (2004) measures behavioral, cognitive, and emotional commitment to academic activities. This

questionnaire consists of 15 items distributed across three subscales: behavioral commitment (4 items), cognitive commitment (5 items), and emotional commitment (6 items). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always" (1 to 5). The validity of this scale was established through expert judgment by specialists in education and psychology. In Hosseini's (2016) study, construct validity was examined, yielding validity coefficients of 0.72 for behavioral commitment, 0.80 for cognitive commitment, and 0.85 for emotional commitment. The reliability of the Academic Commitment Scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, the Spearman-Brown split-half method, and Guttman's method. The reliability coefficients for behavioral commitment were Cronbach's alpha = 0.52, Spearman-Brown = 0.46, and Guttman = 0.46. For emotional commitment, the reliability coefficients were Cronbach's alpha = 0.72, Spearman-Brown = 0.74, and Guttman = 0.74. For cognitive commitment, the reliability coefficients were Cronbach's alpha = 0.73, Spearman-Brown = 0.79, and Guttman = 0.79. All reliability coefficients were within an acceptable range (4).

The Emotional Self-Regulation Scale was designed by Gross and John (2003). This questionnaire consists of 10 items and includes two subscales: (a) emotional suppression and (b) emotional reappraisal. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The total score on this scale ranges from 10 to 70. Internal consistency for the emotional suppression subscale, measured by Cronbach's alpha across four different administrations, was 0.73, 0.68, 0.75, and 0.76, respectively. The three-month test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.69 (6). The internal consistency of the questionnaire in the present study was 0.79.

Academic Performance was measured using students' grade point averages from the previous and current semesters, as recorded in their academic transcripts.

2.3. Intervention

In this study, the experimental intervention involved training the experimental group in the components of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence training was based on Bar-On's model and was conducted over ten one-hour sessions. The training materials included books, articles, worksheets, and slides. Each training session

consisted of four stages. In the first stage, participants were prepared for the session. In the second stage, the main training content was delivered. In the third stage, participants reflected on the material they had learned. In the fourth stage, the activities were reviewed and completed by both the participants and the instructor.

Session 1: Pretest, Introduction, and Rules

The first session began with administering pretests to all participants to assess their baseline levels of academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance. After the assessments, participants introduced themselves to establish rapport and create a comfortable group environment. The instructor then explained the structure of the training program, including the objectives, session topics, and expected outcomes. Finally, the session concluded with a discussion of group rules and guidelines for participation, ensuring a structured and respectful learning environment.

Sessions 2 and 3: Recognizing and Labeling Emotions

During these sessions, participants were introduced to different emotional vocabulary words, including basic emotions such as happiness, sadness, surprise, anger, and fear. The focus was on developing an understanding of the causes of emotions, recognizing their physiological and situational triggers, and learning to identify emotions in oneself and others. Participants practiced facial expression recognition through guided activities, using visual aids and role-playing exercises to enhance their ability to interpret emotional cues accurately.

Session 4: Expressing Emotions

This session focused on helping participants articulate their emotions effectively. Participants learned how to structure sentences that accurately express their feelings and were guided through exercises to practice verbalizing their emotions in various social contexts. The session emphasized the importance of clear and respectful communication when expressing emotions to others. Role-playing activities were conducted to provide hands-on experience in effectively conveying emotions in different interpersonal situations.

Sessions 5 and 6: Developing Empathy

These sessions aimed to enhance participants' empathy skills by teaching active listening techniques and emotional reflection strategies. Participants practiced techniques such as mirroring emotions, paraphrasing statements, and providing genuine acknowledgment of others' feelings. Exercises included group discussions, partner-based activities, and real-life scenario simulations where participants engaged in meaningful conversations and practiced empathetic responses. The role of nonverbal communication in conveying empathy was also emphasized.

Session 7: Problem-Solving Skills

Participants were introduced to systematic problem-solving strategies for managing emotional challenges. The session covered techniques for analyzing emotional problems before reacting impulsively, exploring possible solutions, and implementing effective problem-resolution strategies. Additional topics included self-correction techniques instead of attempting to change others' behaviors, self-control strategies, positive self-talk, and self-reinforcement. Participants practiced structured problem-solving through case studies and scenario-based exercises.

Session 8: Identifying Trouble-Causing Situations and Responsibility

This session focused on recognizing emotionally distressing situations and understanding personal responsibility in emotional regulation. Participants shared their experiences with challenging emotional situations and discussed their reactions. Techniques such as self-talk, role-playing, and guided self-reflection were used to help participants recognize their own responsibility in managing their emotions, speech, and behaviors. The session also emphasized the importance of accountability in emotional interactions and its impact on personal and academic relationships.

Session 9: Anger Management

Participants explored the various causes of anger, such as provocation, humiliation, frustration, and unmet expectations. They were introduced to appropriate methods for expressing anger constructively rather than destructively. The session included guided discussions and exercises on recognizing early signs of anger, delaying reactions, and choosing alternative ways to communicate frustrations effectively. Strategies such as cognitive restructuring and relaxation techniques were introduced as tools for anger regulation.

Session 10: Stress Management

This session provided participants with tools for identifying psychological stress in themselves and others.

They learned to differentiate between maladaptive coping strategies, such as aggression, withdrawal, and rumination, and healthier alternatives for stress reduction. Practical techniques such as relaxation training, expressive writing, and verbal emotional disclosure were introduced to help participants manage stress more effectively. Participants engaged in guided relaxation exercises and practiced journaling as a method of emotional release.

Session 11: Review and Consolidation

In this session, participants reviewed key concepts covered in the previous sessions. The instructor summarized the training content, reinforcing important strategies and techniques. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any uncertainties regarding the material. Interactive discussions were conducted to help integrate the training into participants' daily academic and social lives.

Session 12: Posttest and Conclusion

The final session involved administering posttests to assess changes in academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance. The results were compared to pretest scores to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. The session concluded with an acknowledgment of participants' efforts, feedback collection regarding their experiences, and an expression of gratitude for their participation in the program.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effectiveness of the intervention through SPSS-26.

3. Findings and Results

The descriptive statistics for the study variables, including academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance, are presented in Table 1. The results indicate that the mean academic commitment score for the experimental group was 4.25 (SD = 0.45), while the control group had a lower mean of 3.65 (SD = 0.50). Emotional self-regulation scores were also higher in the experimental group (M = 5.80, SD = 0.60) compared to the control group (M = 4.90, SD = 0.75). Additionally, academic performance, measured through students' grade point averages, showed an improvement in the experimental group (M = 86.40, SD = 5.20) relative to the control group (M = 78.30, SD = 6.10). These differences suggest a positive impact of emotional intelligence training on the targeted outcomes.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Group	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	Academic Commitment	4.25	0.45
Control	Academic Commitment	3.65	0.50
Experimental	Emotional Self-Regulation	5.80	0.60
Control	Emotional Self-Regulation	4.90	0.75
Experimental	Academic Performance	86.40	5.20
Control	Academic Performance	78.30	6.10

The ANCOVA results further confirm these findings, as presented in Table 2. The analysis revealed a statistically significant effect of group membership on academic commitment, $F_{(1, 64)} = 7.14$, $p = 0.009$, with the experimental group demonstrating higher scores. Similarly, the effect on emotional self-regulation was significant, $F_{(1, 64)} = 8.21$, $p = 0.006$, indicating that participants who received emotional intelligence training exhibited better emotional self-regulation. Lastly, academic performance also showed a significant difference between groups, $F_{(1, 64)} = 9.48$, $p = 0.004$, supporting the hypothesis that training positively influenced students' grades. The error terms for each variable indicate that individual differences and external factors accounted for some variation in the outcomes, but the intervention played a meaningful role in improving students' academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance.

Table 2

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Results for Study Variables

Source	Academic Commitment	Emotional Self-Regulation	Academic Performance	df	F	p
Group	10.82	15.23	18.35	1	7.14	0.009
Error	65.42	80.75	102.64	64	8.21	0.006
Total	76.24	95.98	120.99	65	9.48	0.004

These results provide strong empirical support for the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training in enhancing students' academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of emotional intelligence training on male students at Farhangian University in Khuzestan. The findings indicate that the application of the independent variable (emotional intelligence training) had a significant positive effect on the dependent variables (academic commitment, emotional self-regulation, and academic performance) of the students. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence training had a significant impact on enhancing students' academic commitment and dedication to their studies. Since no previous research was found specifically examining the effect of emotional intelligence training on academic commitment among university students, the results of this study were compared to similar studies. The findings are consistent with prior research, including those prior studies (4, 6, 13).

Another key finding of this study was the significant effect of emotional intelligence training on the emotional self-regulation of students at Farhangian University. The results demonstrated that emotional intelligence training effectively improved students' ability to regulate their emotions. These findings align with previous research (8, 10, 14-21).

Furthermore, the results of this study showed a significant effect of emotional intelligence training on students' academic performance. The findings are consistent with previous studies (6, 14, 18, 22-26).

High levels of academic commitment suggest that students perceive education as an integral part of themselves, adhere to academic rules and standards, and strive to achieve better academic outcomes. To explain the positive effect of emotional intelligence training on academic commitment, it can be stated that emotions play a significant role in how individuals perform their tasks. To maintain dedication and adherence to academic tasks, individuals must regulate and reduce stress and emotions. Emotional intelligence training, which includes components such as stress management and anger management, positively affects academic commitment. When individuals learn to manage stress and anger, they develop greater emotional stability and psychological well-being. This mental calmness enables them to remain more committed to their academic responsibilities and increases their perseverance in completing academic tasks (27).

Emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to guide, direct, and control one's emotions. Individuals experience different emotional states when encountering various situations, some of which are negative and can lead to anxiety and psychological disorders, ultimately affecting their well-being (28). The positive effect of emotional intelligence training on emotional self-regulation can be explained by the necessity of motivation, energy, and learned techniques for emotional control. Emotional intelligence training, through components such as recognizing and labeling emotions, expressing emotions, anger management, stress management, and problem-solving training, helps individuals identify the factors that generate negative emotions and enables them to take preventive measures. By managing emotions effectively, individuals can recognize and control sources of worry and mental distress, ultimately achieving emotional balance and self-regulation (22).

Academic performance refers to an individual's outcomes in completing academic tasks, which are reflected in their grades at the end of a semester after attending various classes. The positive impact of emotional intelligence training on academic performance can be explained by the

direct and strong relationship between emotions and academic achievement. When negative emotions decrease and positive emotions increase, individuals experience greater energy and motivation, leading to a more dynamic and engaged learning process. Emotional intelligence training, which includes components such as emotion recognition, emotional expression, anger management, stress management, and problem-solving training, equips students with essential skills. Consequently, students who learn to manage and regulate their emotions become more adaptable when facing challenging academic tasks. Moreover, recognizing and labeling emotions help individuals develop a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to plan their academic efforts more effectively and achieve higher performance (29).

Given that one of the primary concerns of educators and researchers in recent decades has been improving students' academic performance and ensuring that they apply their learned skills effectively, the results of this study can provide valuable insights for education policymakers. Implementing emotional intelligence training at Farhangian University can contribute to the academic and personal development of student-teachers, ultimately benefiting their future students. Furthermore, as cultural changes often begin within the education system, addressing social issues such as aggression, communication difficulties, and other societal challenges through positive educational reforms is essential. Training future teachers in emotional intelligence can serve as a foundation for these cultural changes. Therefore, it is recommended that the administration and board of trustees of Farhangian University incorporate emotional intelligence training into the curriculum or emphasize its importance in teacher education programs. By equipping future educators with emotional intelligence skills, they will be better prepared to support their students' emotional and academic development.

Authors' Contributions

M. S. S. conceptualized the study, designed the intervention program, and supervised data collection. A. H. Y. contributed to the research methodology, statistical analysis, and interpretation of findings. M. S. Y. was responsible for literature review, participant recruitment,

and implementation of emotional intelligence training. G. M. assisted in data analysis, manuscript drafting, and final revisions. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

The study placed a high emphasis on ethical considerations. Informed consent obtained from all participants, ensuring they are fully aware of the nature of the study and their role in it. Confidentiality strictly maintained, with data anonymized to protect individual privacy. The study adhered to the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects as outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and avoiding any harm to participants.

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