

## Analysis of University Students' Emotional Awareness from Diverse Perspectives

Bashir Hussain\*

Asia Zulfqar<sup>†</sup>Hafiza Noor Us Sabah<sup>‡</sup>

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**Abstract:** Emotional awareness allows learners to see things from others' perspective and helps the students to enhance their self-confidence and behavior. Considering importance of emotional awareness, it is pertinent to examine the level of emotional awareness among the students. This research, therefore, examines the emotional awareness of the university students from the perspective of their gender, program, on-/off-campus residence, and achievement. This study also examines the association between students' emotional awareness and their achievement. This research used descriptive and the correlational research designs. Three public universities were selected to collect data, a sample of 701 students was selected, using cluster and stratified random sampling techniques. Questionnaire was utilized for collection of data from the students. To analyze the data, Pearson correlation and independent sample t-test were calculated to identify the conclusions. The results identify the lower level of emotional awareness among the students in a week but positive association exists between students' emotional awareness and their achievement.

**Key Words:** Emotional Awareness, Achievement, Quantitative, University

### Introduction

Emotional awareness is deemed to be the first building block of emotional intelligence. It is human ability that makes learners more proactive. Emotions imply the humans' sentiments (Colman, 2015) and intelligence, is primarily built on person's intellectual ability to deal with the situations effectively (Feurerstein, Falik, Rand, & Feuerstein, 2002). The concept of the emotional intelligence emerged recently and it refers to persons' abilities to recognize, realize, and feel their own emotions, along with others' emotions (Goleman, 1995). The role of emotional intelligence in transforming individuals' lives is, therefore, highly significant. The theory of emotional intelligence generally comprises two-way mechanism and has a wide collection of both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Fayombo, 2012). Everyone having certain level of emotional intelligence, may be positive or negative. The persons who have emotional intelligence are organized and they give strength to their life in such a way that they will experience fewer negative events in their lives (Joshi, 2012). Emotionally strong personalities have been more successful and happier in their social and personal life.

Emotional maturity and social skills enable the individuals to go in front and easily communicate with others (Kirch, Tucker, & Kirch, 2001). Idea of emotional intelligence, however, became famous after the publication of Goleman (1995)'s work on emotional intelligence (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000). Goleman claimed that 20% of the individuals' success depends upon the cognitive intelligence and 80% depends upon the emotional intelligence (Cherniss, Goleman, Emmerling, Cowan, & Adler,

\* Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

<sup>†</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: [asia.zulfqar@bzu.edu.pk](mailto:asia.zulfqar@bzu.edu.pk)

<sup>‡</sup> MPhil Scholar, Department of Education, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

1998). It shows the superiority of emotional intelligence over the cognitive intelligence. [Goleman \(1995\)](#) believes that every person has some more or less emotional intelligence skill and with the help of proper training, it can be increased. Goleman developed a mix model for the measure of emotional intelligence ([Ghosh, 2014](#)). Goleman's framework of mix model emotional intelligence comprised four domains or the clusters of general emotional intelligence skill. These include self-awareness skills, social management, self-management, and skills of relationship management ([Ee & Ong, 2014](#)).

The dominance of emotional intelligence over cognitive intelligence is evident from the fact that only cognition is not sufficient for success ([Goleman, 1995](#)). Due to this specific reason, the smartest individuals may not always be the happiest or most successful in life. At times, the people with strong academics become unsuccessful in personal relationships or their social interactions, or at their work place. The individuals, therefore, should focus on improving their emotional skills to get better outcomes (Goleman, 1995). In this context, the psychologists and educators suggest an important role of non-cognitive skills in students' academic achievement and in their life success ([Libbrecht, Lievens, Carrette, & Côté, 2014](#)). Emotional awareness is thus, considered as the first step of emotional intelligence. Emotional awareness domain is the most important and is considered as a foundation for the development of general emotional intelligence ([Hasanvand & Khaledian, 2012](#)).

Emotional awareness is deemed to be the basic element of the four main domains or clusters of general emotional intelligence. Emotional awareness refers to the skills that purely deals with the understanding and awareness of one's own emotions ([Libbrecht et al., 2014](#)). It includes such characters who are neither too critical nor unrealistically positive but are authentic with themselves. Emotional awareness also refers to individual faculty to recognize our emotions and their impact on us and others ([Ashkanasy & Dasborough, 2003](#)). Emotional awareness domain is obviously a fundamental sub component of emotional intelligence ([Ee & Ong, 2014](#)). Emotional-awareness skill is very important because it has been considered first step for further advancement in the world of psychology. For example, [Brown and Reilly \(2008\)](#) asserted the importance of emotional awareness as if emotional intelligence was journey, then emotional awareness would be the skill of map reading. Through emotional awareness capacity, we can effectively recognize our moods and feeling ([Songer, Walker, & Beliveau, 2004](#)).

The benefits of the emotional awareness and emotional intelligence for students' achievement and for industry are evident from the research in area. For example, most of the research findings suggest that emotional awareness and academic achievement of the students are positively related ([Ramana & Devi, 2018](#)). Likewise, [Ghosh \(2014\)](#) also conducted study on 200 students and found that emotional intelligence of the students is strongly related with their academic achievement. This study further found that low or high economic status affects students' emotional intelligence too. Furthermore, [Hasanvand and Khaledian \(2012\)](#) also observed a highly positive association between students' achievement and their emotional intelligence. They further found that gender do not have influence on the emotional awareness. [Songer et al. \(2004\)](#) also found a positive impact of emotional intelligence in construction business. Similarly, [Ashkanasy and Dasborough \(2003\)](#) argued the significance of the emotional awareness for organizations and their employees.

The positive role of the emotional awareness for university students is also evident from research and literature. The emotional awareness enables the university students to examine their strength and weakness and its effects on their lives ([Finegan, 1998](#)). [Farooq \(2003\)](#) also observed that the students having higher emotional skills show better results than those with lower emotional skills in the context of Pakistan. The emotional awareness or an ability to understand feelings is helping the university students to remain active, while communicating with others. Similarly, [Ojala \(2013\)](#) focused on the inclusion of emotional awareness in sustainable developmental goals in education, besides its importance for other aspects.

Like other parts of the world, academic achievement occupies a very essential position in the field of education in Pakistani society, where we judge students' capacities and abilities only by their marks or achievements. Sometimes, this type of assessment damage students' heart and mind dangerously. For these few reasons in addition to some others, students should be emotionally strong and balance.

Literature reveals that emotional competencies are essential for human survival. Recently, students are more involved in social media and other unusual activities and sometimes it may damage students emotionally and psychologically. University students usually considered as leaders and they need balance emotional health for survival. In this context, there is a need to examine the emotional awareness of the students in the universities of Pakistan.

Research demonstrates that more emotionally aware students are likely to have less negative thoughts and replace their negative views by feelings of hope and the courage ([Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011](#)). With emotional awareness, the university students cannot only identify their emotions, but they can also take valuable decisions for managing their own emotions, instead of being managed by emotions. It is equally important for university students to become aware of their emotional regulation system instead of hiding or ignoring emotional requirements. At university level, emotional awareness has been a priceless skill as it helps students in managing and coping with challenging academic situations. From other view, emotionally robust students are generally more successful in their university living and, therefore, can learn and perform academically. Considering importance of emotional awareness for students' learning, growth, and development, this is very important to examine the university students' level of emotional awareness, as this is not very much explored area in Pakistan. This research work, therefore, examines the emotional awareness of university the students from the perspective their gender, program, on-/off-campus residence and achievement. Moreover, this study further examines the relationship between university students' achievement and their emotional awareness.

## Objectives and Hypotheses

This research mainly examines the nature of university students' emotional awareness in general and from the perspective their gender, program, their on-/off-campus residence, and achievement. Key objectives of this research were as follows:

- To examine the current state of emotional awareness of university students.
- To study the gender differences of university students in relation to their perceived emotional awareness.
- To explore the differences between the undergraduate and graduate university students as to their degree of emotional awareness.
- To analyze the differences between emotional awareness of university students on the basis of their on-campus or off-campus living.
- To probe the degree of association between university students' emotional awareness and their achievement.

In the view of the objectives of research, four sets of research and null hypotheses were stated to examine the nature of university students' emotional awareness from the perspective of their gender, program, their on-/off-campus living and achievement. The hypotheses of this study were as follows:

1. Research Hypotheses ( $H_i$ ): A statistically significant difference between emotional awareness of female and male university students.

Null Hypotheses ( $H_o$ ): A statistically insignificant difference between emotional awareness of female and male university students.

2. Research Hypotheses ( $H_i$ ): A statistically significant difference between emotional awareness of undergraduate and graduate university students.

Null Hypotheses ( $H_o$ ): A statistically insignificant difference between emotional awareness of undergraduate and graduate university students.

3. Research Hypotheses ( $H_i$ ): A statistically significant difference between emotional awareness of on-campus living and off-campus living university students.

Null Hypotheses ( $H_o$ ): A statistically insignificant difference between emotional awareness of on-campus living and off-campus living university students.

4. Research Hypotheses (H<sub>i</sub>): A statistically significant relationship between emotional awareness of university students and their achievement.

Null Hypotheses (H<sub>o</sub>): There is statistically insignificant relationship between emotional awareness of university students and their achievement.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design, Population and Sample

This research used both descriptive and correlational research designs. These designs are very useful for answering descriptive and relationship questions. The first three research objectives were related to descriptive design and comparison questions. The last objective was related to the correlational design. All students from three public universities of Multan city served as population. The selected public universities from Multan city include one large size Bahauddin Zakariya University and one medium size University of Education (only limited to the Multan Campus), and one medium size Women University. For the purpose of data collection, both cluster sampling and stratified random sampling technique were used.

For sample selection, first, 25 departments were selected from three universities using stratified random sampling techniques. Of these 25 departments, 15 departments were selected from the Bahauddin Zakariya University, and five departments from each of other two universities. Of 25 selected departments, one class was randomly selected from each of the 25 departments. Finally, all students from the selected 25 classes were taken as a sample, using cluster sampling technique. Finally, a total of 701 students were selected as sample from three universities. Of these 701 students, 440 were taken from Bahauddin Zakariya University, 145 students were taken from University of Education and 116 students were taken from Women University. Of these 440 students, 363 were male and 338 were female, 380 were undergraduate and 321 graduate students, and 375 were living off campus and 326 were living on-campus.

### Research Tool

For this research, a questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. Questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section required participants to provide their demographic information i.e., their name (optional), gender, CGPA, program, department, residential status. The second section comprised five-point Likert to measure the level of student's emotional awareness. All the items required all participants to rate their answers against five related scores of never (1); rarely (2); sometimes (3); often (4); and always (5). Second section comprised ten items to seek the responses of the students for judging their level of emotional awareness. The questionnaire was also tested for reliability using SPSS, and the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.82 was found. This part of the tool was adapted from the work of [Mohapel \(2015\)](#) and thus validity of questionnaire was ensured, followed by alignment of the tool with the literature review in the area.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The tool was administered by the researchers to the respondents with brief explanation of the study and the tool. After questionnaire was distributed among the respondents, they were given proper time to fill it out. To ensure high response rate, the filled questionnaires were collected at the same day. Consent was also taken from the participants before administration of the tool. For examining students' demographic information and the level of students' emotional awareness, descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, and SD were calculated. For examining group differences and correlation, the independent t-test and person correlation were calculated with the help of inferential statistics. Use of descriptive and inferential statistics was in line with the guidelines for the analysis of this sort of data and research question, as by scholars ([Creswell, 2011](#)).

## Results

The results comprised five sub-sections for addressing the objectives and the hypotheses. Results firstly showed the emotional awareness of the university students, followed by examining difference in the emotional awareness of the university students on basis of their gender, the program, nature of living, and relationship with achievement.

### Emotional Awareness of University Students as Perceived by Them

Table 1 presents results about university students' level of emotional awareness as perceived by them, by calculating the values of mean and standard deviations.

**Table 1.** Emotional Awareness of University Students

S. No.	Students' emotional awareness as perceived by them	Mean	SD
1	Feeling are clear to me.	3.29	0.97
2	Emotions plays important part.	3.55	1.03
3	My moods have an impact.	3.30	0.87
4	Putting words is easy for me.	3.04	0.89
5	Moods are easily affected.	3.30	1.09
6	Sense easily when going angry.	3.30	1.11
7	Quickly tell others about actual feelings.	3.09	1.01
8	Description of feelings is easy.	3.05	0.86
9	If I feel upset, I know what is happening.	3.22	0.91
10	I can stand by setting aside my thoughts.	3.17	0.95
	<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.23</b>	<b>0.97</b>

Table 1 clearly shows that the mean values all statement about students' emotional awareness are between 3.05 and 3.55. The highest mean value of 3.55 shows that the university students perceive that emotions little often play a critical role in their lives. The lowest mean value of 3.04 shows that the university students perceive that putting words is sometimes easy for them. Overall mean of 3.23, with standard deviation 0.97, shows that most of the students agreed that they have just little more than average level of emotional awareness. University students are, thus, sometimes aware of their emotions and, therefore, they sometimes act according to the standard circumstances of the emotional awareness. Students' score in all the ten aspects of the emotional awareness is low or little more than sometimes, which shows that their level of emotional awareness is very low. It is, therefore, a point of concern for the students, teachers, parents, and for the universities where students are lacking in recognizing their emotions.

### Gender Differences between University Students' Emotional Awareness

Table 2 presents the gender differences in level of university students' emotional awareness, as perceived by them, using an independent sample t-test, from inferential statistics.

**Table 2.** Gender Differences between University students' Emotional Awareness

Gender differences	Gender	N	Mean	t	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Emotional awareness (based on gender)	Male	363	32.09	-704	699	.058
	Female	338	32.51	-704		

Table 2 shows that the mean values of 32.09 for the male students and 32.51 for the female students, are against 10 items of emotional awareness, shows that although, participants from both genders have low

level of emotional awareness, but the value is greater for female students than the male. It means that the male students have more emotional awareness than female. The p-value of .058, however, shows that the difference is statistically insignificant. It can be therefore, concluded that both the female and male university students have the similar level of emotional awareness and the low too. The null hypothesis, for examining students' emotional awareness by their gender, is accepted, so the research is rejected.

### Difference between (Under)Graduate Students' Emotional Awareness

Table 3 presents the differences in level of (under)graduate students' emotional awareness, as perceived by them, using independent sample t-test, from inferential statistics.

**Table 3.** Difference between Emotional Awareness of Undergraduate- and Graduate Students

Nature of Difference	Gender	N	Mean	t	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Emotional awareness (based on program)	Undergraduate	380	32.13	-610	699	.006
	Graduate	321	32.49	-604		

Table 3 shows that mean values of 32.13 for undergraduate students and 32.49 for graduate students, against 10 items of emotional awareness, shows that although participants from both groups have low level of emotional awareness, but value is greater for graduate students than undergraduate students. It means that graduate students have more emotional awareness than undergraduate. The p-value of .006 also shows that the difference is statistically significant. It is, thus, found that graduate university students have significantly more emotional awareness than undergraduate students, although with low level. The research hypothesis, for examining students' emotional awareness by their program, is accepted, and while null one is rejected.

### Difference between Emotional Awareness of University Students Based on their On-Campus and Off Campus Living

Table 4 presents differences in university students' emotional awareness on basis of their on-campus or off-campus living, as perceived by them, using an independent sample t-test, from inferential statistics.

**Table 4.** Difference between Emotional Awareness of Students on Based on their Living

Nature of Difference	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional awareness (based on living)	Off-Campus	375	32.34	.175	699	.845
	On-Campus	326	32.24	.175		

. Table 4 shows that the mean values of 32.34 for students living off-campus and 32.24 for the students living on-campus, against 10 items of the emotional awareness, shows that although, from both groups have low level of emotional awareness, but value is greater for off-campus living students than on-campus living students. It means that off-campus living students have more emotional awareness than on-campus living. The p-value of .845, however, shows that difference is statistically insignificant. It can be, therefore, concluded that both off-campus and on-campus living university students have the same level of emotional awareness and the low too. The null hypothesis, for examining students' emotional awareness by their living, is accepted, and while the research is rejected.

### Relation between Students' Achievement and Emotional Awareness

Table 5 presents association between students' achievement and emotional awareness, using Pearson correlation, from inferential statistics.



**Table 5.** Relationship between students' Emotional Awareness and their Achievement

Variable	Statistics	CGPA	Emotional Awareness
CGPA (Achievement)	Pearson Correlation	1	.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.796
	N	701	701

Table 5 shows that value of Pearson correlation between students' GPA (indicator of academic achievement) emotional awareness is 0.010, which shows that relationship is very low but positive. The p-value of .796, however, shows that relationship is statistically insignificant. It can be, therefore, concluded that the university students' emotional awareness is positively, but with very low degree and statistically insignificantly, associated with students' GPA (indicator of academic achievement). The null hypothesis, for examining the relation between students' achievement and emotional awareness, is accepted, while the research is rejected.

### Discussion

This study found that a vast majority of the students in universities have the low degree of emotional awareness. University students are sometimes aware about their emotions and, therefore, they sometimes act according to the standard circumstances of emotional awareness. The literature, however, emphasizes that emotional awareness domain is the most important and is considered as foundation for the development of emotional intelligence ([Hasanvand & Khaledian, 2012](#)). Likewise, the emotional awareness is considered as the skill of map reading towards emotional intelligence ([Brown & Reilly, 2008](#)). [Dost, Hashemifardnya, and Jalali \(2017\)](#) are of view that emotional awareness helps students to realize and / or feel the emotions of their classmates. Emotional awareness is also counted as an essential leadership skill ([Goleman, 1995](#)). Considering the importance of the emotional awareness for learning, leadership skills and for understanding emotions at your workplace or within class, low emotional awareness of students is a point of concern for the students, teachers, parents, and for the universities.

This study found that students are lacking in recognizing their emotions, which is important component of their learning, and future leadership skills, and social skills. It means that both university students and teachers need to rethink their attitudes, learning and teaching and then respond accordingly. The students need more attention, guidance, and training because low level of emotional awareness skill is not enough at this level. To be aware of the emotions is also very essential because it is considered a starting point towards the emotional intelligence. Further, this study shows that an insignificant difference is there between emotional awareness of female and male university students and their living on-campus and off-campus. Lastly, this study found that a weak but positive correlation is there between emotional awareness and students' achievement at the university level. These results are in line with the results of [Ramana and Devi \(2018\)](#), who also found positive relationship between . both, although their relationship was high in contrast with low relationship in this study.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The following five conclusions were undertaken in response to five objectives of this research, and thus some recommendation have been made accordingly. First, the results of this study found that the university students have low level of emotional awareness skill and, therefore, it is recommended for the universities to create more awareness among their students about the value of self-awareness. Second, this study found that a statistically insignificant difference is there between the emotional awareness of male and female university students and both have a minimal level of emotional awareness. The literature, however, confirms that emotional awareness skills are necessary for university students to improve their capacities and abilities, instead of feeling depressed in difficult emotional condition of life. So, the focus should be on . both genders while focusing the skills.

Third, this study found that the graduate university students have significantly more emotional awareness than the undergraduate students, although with low level. It can be, thus, concluded that the skill of emotional awareness may increase with time and age. It is also recommended that collaboration may be established between the undergraduate and graduate students for cultivating emotional awareness among the students. Fourth, this study found that both off-campus and on-campus living university students have the same level of emotional awareness and, low too. It means that none of the residence have any relationship with the emotional awareness and, thus, both teachers and parents need to reconsider their practices. Finally, this study concluded that students' emotional awareness although positively, but with very low degree and statistically insignificantly, associated with students' CGPA (indicator of achievement). It is proposed that the university students must be provided with special classes to improve their self-confidence. For more understanding of emotional awareness, different courses, conferences, seminars, and forums may be organized in various universities of Pakistan that will provide essential information for improving emotional stability, solidity, and awareness of students.



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