

## Exploring the Association of Cohesive College Environment with Emotional Intelligence in District Mardan Pakistan

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### Abstract

*The present study explores the association of cohesive college environment with emotional intelligence, followed by parental focuses on the future success of their children in the competitive environment around. The objective of the study was to investigate the level of association of emotional intelligence with college environment. The study was carried out in district Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, for data collection three public colleges were selected through lottery method. A sample size of 234 students from a population of 601 was randomly selected through Sekaran (2003) devised formula. Chi square  $\chi^2$  statistics was used for association between cohesive college environment and emotional intelligence. The results revealed a significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) association of college environment (mutual cooperation, regular interaction, sharing, respecting each other's opinion, teacher-student and student-student relationship, and support in co-curricular activities by teacher) with emotional intelligence. The study recommended that college environment exerting its influence on the emotional intelligence of the adolescents, therefore; all the stakeholders including, parents, peers, media Personal and teachers should be sensitized regarding their role and interaction with adolescents in order to get better results in terms of balanced emotional intelligence.*

**Key words:** College Environment, Emotional Intelligence, Association, Chi Square, Statistical Analysis

### Introduction

Education is essential for the development of society. The more educated the people more civilized and well-disciplined will be the society (Saud, 2016). Mainly, family has responsibility to socialize children for making them productive members of society (Zhang,

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2011). However, this may be subject to educational institution environment which is the focus of the present study.

Educational research in the United States and other developed countries has emphasized that the interaction between teachers and students is important for educational stratification (Collins, 2018). Studies have found that supportive relationships between teachers and students have positive impact on students' academic achievement and school persistence (De la Paz, 2014).

In understanding the disparities in educational outcomes, many studies have pointed to the importance of the interpersonal aspects of schooling that could be termed as school environment (Chen, 2019). These studies recognize that the quality of students' relationships with teachers is an important predictor of students' academic outcomes. Supportive relationships with teachers can provide students with academic guidance, counselling on educational decisions, and encouragement and emotional support through daily interactions at colleges (Saud, 2016). Other studies have showed that poor student-teacher relationships are a major cause of student's alienation from studies, which in turn may lead to dropping out of students (De la Paz, 2014).

The present study is designed to look if College Environment (CE) is significantly associated with emotional intelligence or otherwise. Further, the study also unearths if this relationship is positive or negative.

### **Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

As reported by Asnawi, Yunus, and Razak (2014) emotional intelligence (EI) at workplaces is the focus in recent years. Hence EI has been explained by leaps and bounds from various perspectives (Peterson, 1997; Salovey, 1990; Bhatia, 2012; Cooper, 1997). Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined an emotional competence based on EI which is expressive in the form of self and social awareness, management, and social skills at workplace. In other words, EI is conceptualized as understanding and motivating oneself along with others, and on job creative performance (Gottman, 1997; Henig, 1996).

According to Asnawi, Yunus, and Razak (2014) while operationalizing emotions explain self-emotions appraisal, others' emotions assessment, and use of emotion and regulation of emotion. An individual with high abilities and skills in the mentioned areas of emotion can maintain positive emotions and perform better consistently (Bennets, 1996;

Segal, 1997). They believe that people with such skills would be able to handle psychological distress efficiently (Salerno, 1996).

EI, primarily was explained by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 and thereafter gained popular attention of the scholars (Saud, 2016). The subject of EI emerged in best known and a number of other trendy books (Cooper, 1997; Gottman, 1997; Salerno, 1996; Segal, 1997), periodicals and daily papers' articles (Bennets, 1996; Henig, 1996; Peterson, 1997). It also attracted electronic media and discussed enormously in talk shows (Hudson, 1998).

Researchers have focused emotional intelligence in order to find out reasons of the variation in people (Zeidner, 2003; Asnawi, 2014). The ability to cope with stressful conditions and managing them in best possible way is an aspect of EI. Emotional intelligence enables a person to know when and how to express emotions and control them in order to be successful in jobs (Chen, 2019). The emotional intelligence articulates and equip an individual to argue with his own emotions and read the emotions of others. It could be said on the ground of researches that emotional intelligence is the subject matter of sociology and psychology along with management courses like leadership, organizational behaviour etc.(Saud, 2016). Scholars recognize the role of EI as an important one in predicting successful life both in private sphere and public domain (Bhatia, 2012).

### **College Environment**

The institutional environment plays a significant role in shaping the personality of members (Lotkowski, 2004). Academic institution through its kind of interpersonal relationship shows the environment. It reflects the relationship of teachers with students, among students, and administration (Nora,1993; Braxton & McClendon, 2002). As reported by Redmond, Quin, Devitt and Archbold (2011), contribution of the environment of academic institution in educational performance, integration, attachment, and retention is vital. Contrary would result into maladjustment and poor results.

The development of academic integration is reported to be linked with supportive academic environment which results into better adjustment and future results (Nora, 1993). Social integration in a college may be developed through interaction with faculty, peers, staff at both formal and informal level (Chen, 2019).Involvement in student organization can also provide such chance (Saud, Bangash, & Ali, 2016). Supportive teacher student relationship provides ample chances of emotional intelligence and adjustment outcomes for students (Braxton, 2002).

It is reported that academic self-confidence, academic goal, institutional commitment social support and social involvement are critical for not only relation but also for adjustment, emotional satisfaction and quality result (Lotkowski, Robbins, 2004; Wayman, 2002).

Researches strongly press the idea that teacher polite and equal treatment of his/her students contributes in a highly quality environment of the institution. Such encouraging and interactive platform raises the potentials and qualities of students (Redmond, 2011).

Entry in to a college requires adjustment and adoptability with the normative values and behaviour of the college group (Chen, 2019). Lack of the adjustment leads to problem in relation and dropout. This adoptability could be supported by the college environment vitally. Development of affiliation with college is possible through conducive and familiar environment (Braxton, 2002; Goleman, 1998). It is also reported that social and sports activities enhance the viable environment of academic institution which ultimately contributes towards good academic and emotional results (Pascarella, 2005).

Study found that caring and respectful environment at college among students add to the wellbeing of peers. Lack of social gathering and sports activities negatively contributes to the academic performance and personality development of students. Harsh and non-supportive environment at college triggers feelings of isolation and loneliness among student (Redmond, 2011; Segal, 1997). Such an environment negatively affects the emotional wellbeing and failure in life to come (Powers, Bowen & Rose, 2008). This environment can be improved through involving councillors, parents and teachers (Carter & Perluss, 2008).

Relationship of teacher and student help in developing emotional intelligence (Pearce, 2009; Arum, 2011). Studies indicate that teachers limited approach in dealing with student is now been changed and teachers are required to change their belief to change the classroom culture (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

## **Methodology**

The present study is carried out in district Mardan where three public colleges are selected through lottery method for data collection. Total number of colleges in the study area is 14 where 9:5 ratios exist in male and female colleges (Bureau of Statistics Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2014). However, as per record of Abdul Wali Khan University, total numbers of Public Sector Colleges (included two post graduate colleges) at District Mardan are 16 with the ratios of 10:6 of male and female respectively. For this study the researchers used the number

available with Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Two male colleges and one female college are selected.

Respondents are students of class twelve of the selected colleges. They are from both genders divided proportionally to the ratio of 23% female and 77% male. They cover both rural and urban population. They are selected randomly from the total number of students given in table below. Using the magic table given by Sekaran (2003), out of the total population i.e. 601 students (college enrolment list, 2015), a sample size of 234 is randomly selected. Further, respondents are proportionally allocated and thereby selected from the three colleges through the formula used by (Chaudhry and Kamal, 1996), given as under:

$$n_i = \frac{n \times N_i}{N}$$

n = Total sample size

n<sub>i</sub> = Required sample size

N<sub>i</sub> = No of the respondent in each sub tribe (strata)

N = Total population size

**Table 1: Distribution of population and sample size**

S.no	Public Colleges	Population size	Sample size
1	Govt Girls Degree College Sheikh Maltun (F)	136	53
2	Govt Boy Degree College Toru (M)	225	87
3	Govt Degree College Mardan (M)	240	94
<b>Total</b>		601	234

Source: Colleges Enrolment Lists (2015)

Data is collected through a comprehensive questionnaire covering all the variables of the study. The questionnaire is in the format of Likert scale. Data collection through Liker Scale produces reliable results (Kumar, 2008; Kothari, 2003).For measuring EI, Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire developed by Anukool Hyde, SanjyotPethe and UpinderDhar is used. For College Environment, questionnaires in the form of Likert scale, is developed

through the help of literature and personal observation. Dependent variable i.e., emotional intelligence which has ten aspects with thirty-four items spreading with in all the aspects, is indexed for reaching to logical inferences. Analysis of the collected data is carried out through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 20). The data is shifted to the program after coding it for bi-variate analysis. Further, Chi statistics are used for measuring association between the dependent and independent variable.

### **Results and Discussion**

The statistically bivariate analyses of independent variables (college environment) and dependent variable (i.e., emotional intelligence) is presented below. Relationship between (emotional intelligence) and College environment is measured through cross tabulation. The results with cogent reasons and supported with literature are presented and discussed.

Table 02 shows the findings regarding relationship and direction of association between college environment and emotional intelligence. College environment is restricted to eight statements which cover liking college, encouragement and motivation by teachers, polite and equal treatment by them, state of students' interaction among themselves. Each statement is cross tabbed with emotional intelligence to find out its association and direction of relationship.

A positive and significant relationship ( $P < .015$ ;  $\gamma = .362$ ) is found between liking college and emotional intelligence. It is an observed general human nature that a place or company which satisfies the psycho-social needs of individuals could be liked and owned. The findings suggest that such level of warmth with college is significantly linked with emotional intelligence of members. In other words, if the environment of a college is conditioned with discouraging traits that could negatively affect the emotional intelligence of fellows. The findings are in line with Lotkowski, Robbins, and Neoth (2004) who conclude that supportive relationships between teachers and students have positive impact on students' overall performance.

A positive and significant association ( $P < .002$ ;  $\gamma = .453$ ) is observed between teacher encourage questions and emotional intelligence. The findings suggest that suppressive environment at college could lead to negative impact on emotional intelligence of students. It could be deduced that allowing students to put questions rather encouraging them to ask would result in better emotional intelligence. Similar results are put forward by Zeidner et al., 2003.

A positive and significant result ( $P < .003$ ;  $\gamma = .448$ ), ( $P < .000$ ;  $\gamma = .632$ ) is extracted between polite treatment by teachers even if irrelevant question is asked, expressing views contradictory to teachers and emotional intelligence. The foregoing results illustrate an extremely caring and balanced environment at college on the part of teachers. It could be inferred from the findings that such a liberal, open and wide approach of teachers regarding their students' queries could develop an exemplary academic environment that could have positive linked with emotional intelligence. In other words, it could pave way to a creative academic milieu at college level that could ensure academic revolution in college. Contrary to which could result in negative impact on the emotional intelligence of students and overall educational system. The study findings are in agreement with Redmond, Quin, Devitt and Archbold (2011) who report that poor relationship at school could lead to negative impact for students.

Similarly, a positive and significant relationship ( $P < .015$ ;  $\gamma = .362$ ) is found between equal treatment of students by teachers and emotional intelligence. The result suggests that the feeling of deprivation develops among students when they experience unequal treatment in the hands of teachers. It is evident from the findings that equal treatment could develop an emotional intelligence among students. The reasons for unequal treatment could be ethnic, political, ideological, regional, gender or other biased approach. However, it should be kept in mind that such unequal treatment could be destructive for the students' emotional wellbeing and thereby could put the society out look at stack. The findings are in line with Redmond, Quin, (2011); Braxton, 2002).

Similarly, a positive and significant association ( $P < .000$ ;  $\gamma = .632$ ), ( $P < .000$ ;  $\gamma = .522$ ) is observed in mutual cooperation, support in academics by students and emotional intelligence. The findings suggest that students' support and cooperation in academic work with each other demonstrate a homogeneous and conducive environment at college which is related with emotional intelligence as evident from the forgoing results. Similar results are derived by Braxton & McClendon (2002) who emphasize on the importance of interpersonal relationship in academic institution for better results.

A positive and significant association ( $P < .011$ ;  $\gamma = .386$ ) is found between motivation to participate in co-curricular by teachers and emotional intelligence. It could be deduced from the findings that the nature of teachers' students' relationship determines the environment of an academic institute. If these relations are supportive, cooperative, and encouraging, the social environment would contribute positively to the emotional intelligence

of the students as revealed from the results. The findings are comparable to that of Pascarella & Terenzini (2005).

**Table No.2 Relationship between College Environment and Emotional Intelligence**

College Environment	Attitude	Emotional Intelligence			Total	Statistics
		High	Moderate	Not sure		
Regular college attendance	Always	164 (70)	47(20)	23(10)	234(100)	$\chi^2 = 12.364 (.015)$ $\gamma = .362$
Teachers encourage questions in the class	Always	97(42)	31(13)	12(5)	140(60)	$\chi^2 = 17.386$ (.002) $\gamma = .453$
	Sometime	64(27)	20(9)	10(4)	94(40)	
Our teachers treat us politely even if ask irrelevant question	Always	83(35)	27(12)	17(3)	117(50)	$\chi^2 = 15.01 (.003)$ $\gamma = .448$
	Sometime	55(23)	24(10)	15(7)	94(40)	
	Never	11(5)	7(3)	5(2)	23(10)	
Our teachers treat us politely	Always	79(34)	31(13)	7(3)	117(50)	$\chi^2 = 32.891 (.000)$ $\gamma = .632$
	Sometime	74(32)	26(11)	27(7)	117(50)	
Class teachers treat all students equally	Always	145(62)	48(20)	18(8)	211(90)	$\chi^2 = 12.388 (.015)$ $\gamma = .362$
	Sometime	18(8)	3(1)	2(1)	23(10)	
Students take care of each other in class	Always	141(60)	33(14)	13(6)	187(80)	$\chi^2 = 32.891 (.000)$ $\gamma = .632$
	Sometime	19(8)	22(9)	6(3)	47(20)	
Students support each other in the class	Always	93(46)	30(15)	18(9)	141(60)	$\chi^2 = 22.143 (.000)$ $\gamma = .522$
	Sometime	40(17)	24(10)	6(3)	70(30)	
	Never	13(6)	5(2)	5(2)	23(10)	
Teachers motivate students to participate in activities	Always	72(31)	35(15)	10(4)	117(50)	$\chi^2 = 13.164 (.011)$ $\gamma = .386$
	Sometime	90(38)	18(8)	9(4)	117(50)	

Survey, 2015

Note\*Frequency with percentage in parenthesis

### Conclusions

The prime objective of this research work was to investigate the association of emotional intelligence with college environment. Emotional intelligence was a dependent

variable which was measured through a Likert scale devised by Anuka Hyde, SanjyyotPethe and UpinderDhar (2002). College environment was the independent variable where college environment was measured through a Likert scale prepared by the researchers himself with the help of literature.

The study illustrates that teacher-student and student-student relationship at college level has influence upon the emotional intelligence of students which could be reflected and expressed in the attitude and behavior of students. Encouragement by teachers, their nice and equal treatment was found to be positively associated with emotional intelligence. Similarly, support in co-curricular activities by teacher was linked with emotional intelligence. Students' relations with each other at college were also associated with emotional intelligence as concluded from the present study.

In a nut shell, it could be concluded that emotional intelligence is the social product of the investment of social capital in the complementary groups of life and society, i.e., College Environment. Simply, emotional intelligence is positively and significantly associated with healthy environment at college. On the basis of the present study it is recommended that college environment exerting its influence on the emotional intelligence of the adolescents therefore parents should be sensitized regarding their role and interaction with adolescents in order to get better results in terms of balanced emotional intelligence. The study also suggested that a forum for a dialogue is to be provided by the government to all the stakeholders like parents, students, community leaders, teachers and media personals to discuss regularly the environment of the College, and suggest improvement in it. Further it is recommended that the government also needs to increase salaries of teaching staff and provide alternative sources of income like research projects etc. This policy will encourage teachers not only to perform their roles with full commitment but also divert their attention from engaging in other economic activities at the cost of students' future. In addition, government should also launch a policy of zero-tolerance against those teachers who are polluting the academic environment of college by discouraging and ill-treating students, wasting their time, engaging themselves in businesses that are in conflict with the interest of the institution.

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