The predictive ability of Emotional Intelligence in Academic Engagement among Al Al-Bayt University Students

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Abstract

The current study sought to investigate the level of emotional intelligence and academic engagement in Al al-Bayt University students in light of gender and university majors' variables, and to reveal the predictive ability of emotional intelligence in academic engagement. The study sample consisted of (235) students from Al al-Bayt University. The study adopted two measures, the emotional intelligence scale (Al-Adamat & Atoum, Accepted-2022) and the academic engagement measure (Atoum & Al-Adamat, accepted-2022). The findings revealed a high level of emotional intelligence among the students and statistically significant gender differences in the level of emotional intelligence, where females outperformed males. Also, there were statistically significant differences in the level of emotional intelligence due to the academic majors favoring humanity majors. Furthermore, academic engagement was also high among university students and the dimensions of emotional knowledge and emotional control explained (18.8%) of the variance in academic engagement.

القدرة التنبؤية للذكاء الانفعالي بالانغماس الجامعي لدى طلبة جامعة آل البيت

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الملخص

هدفت الدّراسة الحالية إلى التعرف على مستوى الذكاء الانفعالي والانغماس الجامعي لدى طلبة جامعة آل البيت في ضوء متغيري الجنس والتخصص الأكاديمي، والكشف عن القدرة التنبؤية للذكاء الانفعالي بالانغماس الجامعي. تكوّنت عينة الدراسة من (235) طالبًا وطالبةً من طلبة جامعة آل البيت. تم استخدام مقياس الذكاء الانفعالي (Al–Adamat & Atoum, Accepted) ومقياس الانغماس الجامعي. (Atoum & Al–Adamat, Acepted) أشارت نتائج الدّراسة أن مستوى الذكاء الانفعالي لدى طلبة الجامعة كان مرتفعًا، وأن هناك فروق دالة احصائيًا في مستوى الذكاء الانفعالي تُعزى لمتغير الجنس ولصالح الإناث، ووجود فروق دالة احصائيًا في مستوى الذكاء الانفعالي تُعزى لمتغير التخصص الأكاديمي ولصالح التخصصات الانسانية، وأظهرت النتائج أن مستوى الانغماس الجامعي لدى طلبة الجامعة كان مرتفعًا. وأخيرًا أشارت نتائج الدّراسة إلى أن بُعدي المعرفة الانفعالية وتنظيم الانفعالات قد فسرا ما نسبته (18.8%) من التباين الحاصل في الانغماس الجامعي.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and handle emotions. Although it first appeared in 1964, it gained popularity in the psychological field in the 1900s due to its significant role in an individual's life. Emotional intelligence is closely linked with an individual's thinking and intelligence and contributes to his success and ability to adapt to life situations in which he interacts with his community.

According to studies, intelligence alone does not ensure an individual's success and supremacy. Instead, it also requires emotional intelligence, which is essential for success in the scientific and practical fields (Vincent, 2003). The concept of emotional intelligence was first used by (Mayer &Salovey 1990). They considered it the ability to monitor one's and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and employ this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

Goleman (1996) defined Emotional intelligence as a set of emotional skills that an individual possesses, which is necessary for success in professional interactions and various life situations. George (2000) defines it as the ability to perceive feelings through thinking, understand emotional knowledge, and regulate feelings so that an individual can influence others' feelings.

Emotional intelligence components differed according to each researcher's view of this concept. Some linked it to cognitive abilities, while others linked it to non-cognitive abilities. For example, Goleman (1996) divided emotional intelligence into four dimensions: self-awareness which means understanding self-mood and emotions when they occur. Self-regulation involves the individual's ability to withstand strong emotions. Motivation implies the ability to employ emotions to increase self-emotion. Social awareness means knowing and perceiving the feelings of others, which leads to the ability to share with others and achieve emotional harmony. Finally, social skills require dealing with others based on understanding and knowing their emotions and effectively managing interaction with them, allowing the best results.

Mayer & Salovey (1997) categorized Emotional intelligence into four branches: a. Perceiving emotion, which means the ability to recognize emotional expressions and behavior's and identify and evaluate feelings. B. Understanding emotions donate being aware of the extent of honesty that stands behind a specific emotion, distinguishing between similar and simultaneous emotions. c. Managing emotions refers to the capacity to control one's own emotions as well as those of others after being exposed to intense feelings. Finally, the fourth branch is using emotions to facilitate thought which donates the capacity of the emotions to enter into and guide the cognitive system and promote thinking.

Emotional intelligence has a notable role in engaging students in educational activities, as it is one of the crucial issues that educators should pay attention to and enhance inside and outside the classroom (Parsons & Taylor, 2011). Student engagement can be achieved through various methods, such as working with civil society organizations by participating in voluntary work and community service. In addition to joining peer groups in different sports, artistic, musical, political, and religious activities (Pender, 2007).

One of the significant issues in the field of education is the academic engagement of university students, which aims to increase a student's interaction and communication within the university setting as well as their social development, adherence to academic standards,

encouragement to pursue ambitious goals, and intensification of the time and effort required to master academic tasks (Diab, 2014).

Academic engagement is a term used to describe various behaviors between peers, including two fundamental components: social engagement and social conversation. Social engagement is related to social behavior, particularly positive behavior. In contrast, a social conversation involves formal language and dialogue regarding the suitable speech style and good listening to others (Bauminger-Zviely et al., 2013).

The academic engagement has been described in many different ways, but Williams and Destin (2009) characterized it as a sense of engagement and belonging in campus life. According to Zolob (2014), a student's daily exposure to various social contacts impacts their engagement inside and outside the classroom.

There are seven types of academic engagement which are (Krause & Coates, 2008): Transitional immersion refers to the extent to which the experiences of new students adapted to university life during the transition process, Academic immersion refers to the study strategies used to achieve success for students, Peer immersion refers to the foundations of developing students' knowledge through cooperation with peers, students' immersion with faculty members refers to the interest and help provided by faculty members, mental immersion refers to thinking and making the necessary effort to understand difficult and complex ideas, immersion Online refers to students' immersion in websites, and matters related to modern technology, immersion beyond the classroom refers to belonging to the university community, forming closed and intimate relationships with students, and participating in cultural and sports activities offered by the university.

Numerous studies have examined emotional intelligence in university students, and they revealed that university students have a high degree of emotional intelligence (Alzubi, 2020; Ben Amr, 2015; Ghaith & Halh, 2014; Al-Rabee, 2019; Yahi, 2015), while other studies showed an average level, and still other studies revealed a low level (Alla & Bentahar, 2019; Al-Khasawneh, 2011).

Furthermore, various studies have indicated gender differences in the level of emotional intelligence. The studies (Al-Alwan, 2011; Yahi, 2015; Alzubi, 2020) demonstrated statistically significant gender differences in the level of emotional intelligence in favour of females, while the study (Yahi, 2015) showed no statistically significant differences in the level of emotional intelligence due to the variables of academic major and academic level. Academic major (Humanity) has statistically significant differences in the level of emotional intelligence in the studies (Al-Alwan, 2011; Alzubi, 2020), While there were no statistically significant differences due to the variables (Gender, major, and academic level) in the study (Al-Rabee, 2019).

Studies regarding the level of academic engagement among university students exhibited high to medium degrees. For example, the studies (Isa, 2021; Mehdinezhad, 2011) showed a high level, whereas the studies (Diab, 2014; Mahasneh et al., 2019) revealed a medium degree of academic engagement.

Studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic engagement were scarce. However, emotional intelligence was positively correlated with employee participation in work in the studies (Karamustafa & Kunday, 2018; Selvi & Aiswarya, 2022; Shukla et al., 2013), and it explained (15.9%) of the variance in employee participation in work.

Study Problem and Questions

Emotional intelligence can express a set of skills that urge the individual to set his long-term goals in light of his self-esteem and current capabilities in a different way that facilitates his self-assessment and achievement. Additionally, it forces the individual to try to succeed, improves his capacity for internal judgement, and gives him emotional experiences that make him avoid shyness in situations where interaction does not call for any form of shyness.

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Hence, students' poor emotional intelligence abilities adversely impact their academic environment, typically resulting in low academic performance and poor acculturation to the university setting. Therefore, it is crucial to develop emotional intelligence abilities to ensure an appropriate level of engagement in university life and to accomplish the highest degree of adaptation and interaction with university life settings, whether academic or social. The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic engagement among university students, considering the factors of gender and academic majors.

The research specifically aimed to respond to the following queries:
- What is the level of emotional intelligence among Al al-Bayt University students?
- Are there statistically significant differences at the signicance level(α=0.05) in the emotional intelligence of Al al-Bayt University students due to the variables of gender and?
- What is the level of academic engagement among Al al-Bayt University students?
- What is the predictive ability of emotional intelligence to academic engagement in Al al- Bayt University students?

Study Significance

The theoretical significance of this study lies in its novelty and the knowledge expected to be added to the literature in this field through its results. Therefore, the theoretical relevance of this study stems from the fact that it attempts to reveal the predictive ability of emotional intelligence to academic engagement. Practically, the results of the current study may help decision-makers in educational institutions and officials in the counselling and mental health fields to pinpoint the elements that contribute to students' emotional intelligence so that they can access a learning environment that fosters the growth of these elements. The study's findings can also help those in charge of advising and supervising students at universities raise the degree of student engagement and contribute to raising awareness of the value of emotional intelligence in people's lives.

Study Limitation

The study was limited to students at Al al-Bayt University who were registered in the second semester of the academic year 2021/2022. Accordingly, the generalization of the results of the current study is limited to the study population and similar societies, and the generalization of the results of the study is also determined in light of the indications of validity and reliability of the study tools.

Study Concepts

Emotional intelligence: is defined as a person's ability to monitor his own emotions as well as the feelings and emotions of others, to discriminate between them, and to use these emotions to guide thoughts and behavior (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Operationally, it is the score respondents obtained on the emotional intelligence scale.

Academic engagement: It is students' participation in educational activities, self-inclusion, and acceptance of values. Academic engagement primarily includes the student's educational behavior, such as the student's adherence to the regulations of the educational institution, attendance at the lesson on time, and participation in class between the student and his colleagues, as well as the student and the teacher (Diab, 2014). Operationally, it is the score that the student receives on the university engagement scale used in the current study.

Methods and Procedures

Study Approach

The descriptive correlative approach was employed in the current study, for it is the most appropriate approach to achieve the study's objectives.

Population and Sample

The study population consists of all undergraduate students (n=15,669) at Al al-Bayt University who enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2021/2022, according to the statistics provided by the Admission and Registration Department. Two hundred thirty-five male and female subjects participated in the current study, who were chosen by the convenient sample method.

Instruments

Emotional Intelligence Scale

The Emotional Intelligence Scale of (Mayer & Salovey 1997) was used in this study after it was developed by (Al-Adamat & Atoum, in press) to suit the Jordanian environment. It consisted of (41) items under four fields: Emotional knowledge (1-8), which addresses the ability to concentrate, awareness, discrimination, and appropriate expression of one's feelings and emotions. The Emotion control field (9-17) measures the ability to achieve emotional balance and self-control. Empathy (18-28) addresses the ability to perceive and understand the emotions and feelings of others and respond to them appropriately. Finally, social communication (29-37) is represented by the ability to interact and positively influence others.

Validity and reliability in present study:

Content Validity: Nine experts in educational psychology were invited to check the the scale for clarity and the construction of the scale items and domains. 80% was the norm for agreement to change the items of the scale and 4 items were deleted and some linguistic corrections were made, so the final scale consisted of (37) items.

Construct Validity: The scale was administered to a pilot sample of (40) male and female students. Correlations coefficients between items and the total score were (0.86-0.70), and between items and domains scores were (0.32 to 0.81).

Reliability: To verify the reliability of the emotional intelligence scale, internal consistency was used (Cronbach's alpha equation) on the previous pilot sample and alpha

values for the domains ranged from (0.85) to (0.66) while it was (0.88) for the total score of the scale.

Academic Engagement Scale

The academic engagement scale, adapted by (Atoum & Al-adamat, in press) to suit the Jordanian environment, was utilized in this study. The scale consisted of (36) items under five sub-scales: Transition Engagement Scale (TRS) represented in Items (1-6), Academic Engagement Scale (AES) represented in items (7-15), Peer Engagement Scale (16-23), Student—staff Engagement Scale (SFS) (24-32), and Intellectual Engagement Scale (IFS) (36−33)

Validity and reliability in present study

Content Validity: To check for content validity, it was presented to a committee of nine faculty members who are specialists in educational psychology and measurement and assessment. (80%) was the norm to accept any changes on the scale. In light of the judges' remarks, 2 items were deleted, and the wording of some of the items has been revised. Thus, the final version of the scale comprised of (36) items.

Construct Validity: To verify the construct validity of the Academic Engagement Scale, it was applied to a pilot sample (n=40) of male and female students from outside the target sample. The values of the correlation coefficients between items and their domains ranged between (0.45-0.88), and the values of the correlation coefficients between items with the overall score ranged between.(0.77−0.24)

Reliability: The scale was applied to (40) male and female students from outside the study sample to test its reliability by utilizing internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha). Cronbach's alpha for all domains ranged from (0.71) to (0.91), and (0.94) for the whole scale. The previous indicators of validity and reliability represent an adequate indicator for using the scale for the current study.

Scale Correction Method

A five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) was utilised with the corresponding scores (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) for all items. The statistical standard was used to determine students' emotional intelligence and academic engagement levels. The following equation was employed to determine the range based on the arithmetic averages: the highest score - the lowest score/number of levels, that is 5-3/1= 1.33, this value is added to each range (1-2.33= low), (2.34-3.67 =medium), and (3.68-5= high) level.

Results

Results of the first question: What is the level of emotional intelligence among Al al-Bayt University students**?** Means and standard deviations of the subjects' responses on the EIS were obtained, as indicated in Table (1).

Table 1
Results of the descriptive analysis of Emotional Intelligence Scale

Rank	N	Domain	Mean	Std.	Level
2	1	Emotional knowledge	3.91	0.75	High
3	2	Emotion control	3.82	0.74	High
1	3	Empathy	3.93	0.77	High
4	4	Social communication	3.65	0.70	High
		Total	3.83	0.67	High

Table (1) summarizes the results of the arithmetic means of the subjects' responses on the EIS. The mean scores ranged between (4.00-3.70). The empathy field ranked first with the highest mean, 4.00, followed by the field of emotional knowledge with a mean of 3.91. The social communication field ranked last with a mean of 0. 38. All the fields obtained a high level. The overall mean score of the level of emotional intelligence in Al al-Bayt University students was (3.89) which is a high level.

Results of the second question: Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the emotional intelligence of Al al-Bayt University students due to the variables of gender and academic majors? A descriptive analysis was calculated to answer this question, as shown in Table (2).

Table 2
The results of the descriptive analysis by gender and academic major

Variables	Category	Mean	Std.	N
Gender	Male	3.66	.921	87
	Female	3.93	.440	148
Academic major	Scientific	3.76	.733	164
	Humanities	3.99	.466	71

There are considerable differences in the means scores and standard deviations of the level of emotional intelligence among Al al-Bayt University students due to gender and academic major. Therefore, the two-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the significance of the statistical differences between the mean scores, as shown in Table (3).

Table 3
The results of the 3-way ANOVA by the study variables

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS	F value-	P-value
Gender	3.695	1	3.695	8.651	.004
Academic majors	2.252	1	2.252	5.273	.023
Error	99.095	232	.427		
Total	105.432	234			

Data in Table (3) demonstrates that:
- There are statistically significant gender differences ($\alpha = 0.05$). F-value is 8.651 and has a statistical significance of 0.004. Table (2) shows that females outperformed males on the scale.
- There are statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) due to the effect of academic majors. The f-value is 5.273, with a statistical significance of 0.023. The differences are in favour of the humanities colleges.

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Results of the third question: What is the level of academic engagement among Al al-Bayt University students? A descriptive analysis was extracted to answer this question. See Table (4).

Table 4

Results of the descriptive analysis of Academic Engagement Scale

Rank	N	Domain	Mean	Std.	Level
3	1	Transition Engagement	3.96	0.65	High
3	2	Academic Engagement	3.96	0.60	High
5	3	Peer Engagement	3.86	0.71	High
1	4	Student—staff Engagement	4.00	0.65	High
1	5	Intellectual Engagement	4.00	0.70	High
		Total	3.96	0.58	High

Table (4) illustrates the arithmetic means of the fields of the AES, which ranged between (4.00-3.86). Student—staff Engagement and Intellectual Engagement topped the five fields with a mean of 4.00 and a high level. On the other hand, the peer Engagement field got the lowest mean (3.86) and a high level. The overall mean score of the AES was 3.96 and with a high degree.

Results of the fourth question: What is the predictive ability of emotional intelligence to academic engagement in Al al-Bayt University students? The values of linear correlation coefficients were calculated for the explanatory predictors (emotional knowledge, emotion control, empathy dimension, social communication) and the dependent variable (academic engagement among Al al-Bayt University students). The results are shown in Table (5).

Table 5

matrix of inter-correlation coefficients between the predictors and the predicted variable

Variables	Emotional knowledge	Emotional Control	Empathy	Social communication	Academic Engagement
Emotional knowledge					
Emotional Control	.763(**)				
Empathy	.772(**)	.793(**)			
Social communication	.747(**)	.707(**)	.705(**)		
Academic Engagement	.411(**)	.403(**)	.388(**)	.370(**)	

* Statistically significant at the significance level (0.05)
** Statistically significant at the significance level (0.01)

A positive, statistically significant correlation exists between the predictors and predicted variables. Thus, to determine the percentage of variance explained by the predictive variables, a Multiple linear regression analysis (the stepwise method) was employed, as shown in Table (6).

Table 6
The results of the regression hypothesis test and its multiple correlation coefficients

Sub-form	R	R^2	R^2 Adjusted	SE	change statistics				
					R^2 Change	F Change	DF1	DF2	P value
1	.411	.169	.165	.525	.169	47.275	1	233	.000
2	.433	.188	.181	.520	.019	5.488	1	232	.020

1-Predictors: (y-intercept), emotional knowledge field.

2.Predictors: (y-intercept). emotional knowledge field, emotion control field

* Statistically significant at (0.05).

The second predictive model, where the predictor variables (emotional knowledge and emotion control) used to predict the variable (academic engagement), was statistically significant at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) with a combined effect of the independent variables, explaining (18.8).

However, the independent variable (the emotional knowledge field) contributed in the first place with a relative effect, explaining (16.9%) of the total explanatory variance of the predictive model. Then the independent variable (the emotion control field) contributed to the second place with a relative effect, explaining (1.9%) of the total explanatory variance of the predictive model.

Considering the previous results, the non-standardized and standardized regression weights and the T-test values of the independent (predictor) variables and the (predicted) variable (academic engagement) were calculated as shown in Table (7).

Table 7
The results of <u>non-standardized and standardized regression weights and the T-test values</u>

Sub-model	Predictors	B	SE B	β	T	p
2	(Constant)	2.594	.190		13.650	.000
	Emotional knowledge	.189	.070	.247	2.701	.007
	Emotional Control	.166	.071	.214	2.343	.020

* Statistically significant at level (0.05)

Table (7) sums up the results of the second predictive model. According to the analysis in Table (7), whenever the emotional knowledge increases by one standard unit (SD), the level of academic engagement rises by (0.247) standard unit. Furthermore, whenever emotion control rises by one standard unit (SD), the academic engagement level rises by (0.214) standard unit. Therefore, the regression equation to predict academic engagement is as follows: Academic engagement = 2.594 + 0.247 (emotional knowledge) + 0.214 (emotion control).

Discussion

The findings demonstrated that students at Al al-Bayt University have a high level of emotional intelligence. The researcher may attribute this finding to the nature of the development stage of the students, in which they have attained a level of mental and emotional maturity and possess a high level of self-awareness and emotional control and responding appropriately. Additionally, they have a strong capacity for empathizing with and perceiving other people's emotions, contributing to their ability to live in proper harmony with themselves and others.

The findings of this study are consistent with those of other studies (Ghaith & Halh, 2014; Ben Amr, 2015; Yahi, 2015; Al-Rabee, 2019; Alzubi, 2020), which found that university students had a high degree of emotional intelligence. However, the findings of this study contrast with those of a previous study (Al-Khasawneh, 2011; Alla & Bentahar, 2019), which found that university students had an average level of emotional intelligence.

The findings demonstrated statistically significant gender differences in emotional intelligence that favour females. The researcher may revisit this finding in light of family upbringing and the differences in how men and women deal with emotions, wherein parents talk about emotions with their daughters more than with their sons and where girls are permitted to cry and express their feelings while males are not. This result is in line with the assertion made by (Goleman, 2000) that thousands of studies have found that women are more empathic than men due to their capacity to discern another person's hidden emotions from their body language, tone of voice, and other nonverbal cues.

This study's findings support previous research (Al-Alwan, 2011; Yahi, 2015; Alzubi, 2020), which found statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence levels related to the gender variable, favouring females. However, the results are inconsistent with those of a previous study (Al-Rabee, 2019), which exhibited no statistically significant changes in emotional intelligence levels due to gender.

Due to the academic speciality factor and in favour of the humanities, there are statistically significant disparities in emotional intelligence levels. As a result of the nature of the courses they study at the university, humanities majors have more opportunities to interact with other students and to develop positive relationships with them based on empathy, respect, and harmony. The researcher may use this finding to support this theory. Because their studies and curricula are exclusively scientific, unlike students of other academic fields, they are less interested in issues about emotions and interpersonal relationships because their subjects are inert.

This result is consistent with (Al-Alwan, 2011; Alzubi, 2020), which revealed statistically significant differences in the level of emotional intelligence due to the variable of academic specialization, and in favour of human majors. However, this result differs from the result (Yahi, 2015; Al-Rabee, 2019), which found no statistically significant differences in the level of emotional intelligence due to the variable of academic specialization.

The findings indicated that Al al-Bayt University students had a high level of engagement in their academic environment. The researcher may attribute this finding to the significance of academic engagement among students, as it is one of the essential objectives they want to accomplish. University students' engagement in educational activities reflects educational institutions' importance and faculty members' role in encouraging students to

immerse themselves. the higher the student's academic achievement, the higher the student's motivation and academic involvement in the educational process.

This finding agrees with the results of (Mehdinezhad, 2011; Isa 2021), which indicated that university students' academic engagement level was high. However, it differs from the study of (Mahasneh et al., 2019; Diab, 2014), which revealed a moderate level of academic engagement among university students.

The findings of the fourth question showed that the dimensions of emotional knowledge and emotion control explained (18.8%) of the variance in academic engagement. The researcher relates this outcome to the traits held by a person who has the capacity to understand and control his emotions and use them in the right situation, allowing him to concentrate these abilities in the area of accomplishing the desired goals. Since he views failure and success as reinforces that help him get more ingrained in the performance of his academic activities, this trait may enable him to renew his mood in keeping with high levels of academic engagement in cognitive subjects. As a result, it helps in some way to accomplish the goals and discover answers to the different challenges that concern him.

Studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic engagement were scarce, according to a 2013 study by (Shukla et al., 2022) which also found a link between emotional intelligence and employee engagement at work. And 15.9% of the variation in employee participation in the workplace was explained by emotional intelligence. Selvi and Aiswarya's (2022) study also showed a link between emotional intelligence and labour engagement. The Karamustafa & Kunday (2018) study also revealed a link between employee engagement at work and emotional intelligence.

Recommendations

Considering the findings of the current study, the researcher suggests:

- Ensuring university students fully engage in their studies and retain high emotional intelligence.
- Focus on the growth of students at universities in general and male students at scientific colleges in particular regarding emotional intelligence skills.
- Encouraging faculty members to educate individuals about the value of acquiring emotional intelligence skills and their reflection on the depth of their academic engagement and success.

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