

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ADEQUATE DECISION-MAKING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. This article explores the socio-psychological mechanisms of adequate decision-making among university students and the role of emotional intelligence in this process. In contemporary society, rapid changes and unexpected situations require individuals to act thoughtfully and adaptively. Emotional intelligence, as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions, plays a critical role in guiding students toward adequate decisions. By analyzing cognitive, motivational, and interpersonal aspects, this study demonstrates that students with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of evaluating complex situations, managing stress, and making responsible decisions. Incorporating emotional intelligence development into academic programs enhances students' problem-solving skills, interpersonal relations, and overall psychological well-being.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, decision-making, university students, socio-psychological adaptation, cognitive processes, motivation.

Introduction:

In modern universities, students frequently encounter complex and unpredictable situations that require careful evaluation and responsible decision-making. These situations may include academic challenges such as group projects, time management under tight deadlines, ethical dilemmas in research, or social conflicts with peers and faculty. Adequate decision-making in such contexts is a multi-dimensional process influenced by cognitive abilities, emotional regulation, social environment, personal values, and prior experiences.

Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the capacity to recognize, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively, plays a pivotal role in facilitating these decisions. Students with higher levels of EI are able to manage stress, remain calm under pressure, and consider both their own feelings and the perspectives of others when making choices. Moreover, EI enhances self-awareness, empathy, and social skills, all of which contribute to better interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution in the academic environment.

From a socio-psychological perspective, understanding the role of EI in decision-making is essential, as it enables students not only to respond adaptively to challenges but also to align their actions with ethical norms and social expectations. This study aims to explore the interrelationship between emotional intelligence and adequate decision-making among university students, focusing on how cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions interact in shaping responsible behaviors and choices.

Literature Review Methodology:

A growing body of research emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in shaping students' decision-making processes. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) define EI as the ability to perceive emotions accurately, facilitate thought using emotions, understand emotional meanings, and regulate emotions to enhance personal and social outcomes. These four



components—perceiving, facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions—serve as a framework for analyzing how students navigate complex academic and social environments. Studies in educational psychology suggest that students with higher EI exhibit greater resilience, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability when confronted with novel or stressful situations (Goleman, 1995; Petrides et al., 2004). For instance, students with well-developed EI are more likely to manage interpersonal conflicts constructively, seek collaborative solutions in team projects, and regulate their emotional responses during examinations or presentations.

Socio-psychological factors also play a crucial role in this relationship. Peer influence, classroom norms, instructor feedback, and the overall educational climate can either enhance or impede the expression of emotional intelligence in decision-making. Students with high EI are better equipped to interpret social cues, anticipate reactions of others, and make decisions that are both ethically sound and contextually appropriate. Additionally, research indicates that emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between stress and decision quality, allowing students to make rational choices even in high-pressure academic settings (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

Overall, the literature suggests that emotional intelligence is not merely an individual trait but a socio-psychologically embedded capacity that interacts with cognitive and environmental factors. Understanding these dynamics provides a foundation for designing interventions and educational programs that enhance students' decision-making abilities, emotional regulation, and adaptive social behavior. The study surveyed 120 undergraduate students (ages 18–24) from various faculties. Emotional intelligence was measured using the **Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)**, and adequate decision-making was assessed through situational judgment tests designed to simulate academic and social dilemmas. Data analysis involved correlation and regression techniques to identify relationships between EI components and decision-making adequacy.

Results and Discussion:

Findings indicate a significant positive correlation between students' emotional intelligence and the adequacy of their decision-making ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$). Students with higher EI scores were better at:

- Recognizing their own emotional states and their impact on decision-making.
- Anticipating the emotional reactions of peers and adapting responses accordingly.
- Managing stress and maintaining composure in challenging situations.
- Selecting actions aligned with both personal values and social norms.

The socio-psychological context of university life, including peer interactions, academic pressures, and group dynamics, further amplifies the role of emotional intelligence in guiding adequate decision-making. These results suggest that fostering EI in higher education can enhance students' ability to make informed and socially responsible choices.

Conclusion:

Emotional intelligence is a critical socio-psychological factor in the development of adequate decision-making skills among university students. By enhancing students' abilities to understand and regulate emotions, educators can improve their resilience, problem-solving capacities, and interpersonal effectiveness. Integrating EI-focused programs and interventions in academic curricula is recommended to promote both individual and collective well-being in higher education settings.

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