

Emotions Regulations and Academic Performance of Elementary School-Aged Students

Nasreen Akhter*, Sabiha Iqbal** and Aks E Noor***

Abstract

Emotions regulations is the capacity that plays a necessary function in our routine lives and essential not only for the attainment of socialization but also necessary in achieving educational tasks. This research proposed to examine the association between the emotions regulations and academic achievement of elementary aged students. The quantitative research method was adopted to determine the results. The sample size of the study confined 209 students (boys & girls) of twelve elementary schools in district Bahawalnagar of Punjab Pakistan. The sample of the study utilized simple random sampling. A self-report questionnaire was used to collect the data from students regarding their emotions regulations. School records and Punjab Board Gazette (Punjab Examination Commission) was included to collect data of the study. Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation techniques were applied to analyze the data. The results of the study explored that most of the respondents practice positive strategies while expressing their emotions and have a high level of academic scores. It was also found that the students who could not able to express their emotions in positive ways; consequently, they show poor performance in education. Therefore, policy makers need to focus on attention to develop positive emotions regulations among elementary aged students.

Keywords; Emotions, emotions regulations, academic achievements, elementary education

*Professor, Deptt. of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

Email: drnasreenakhtar01@gmail.com

**Lecturer, Deptt. of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

***Visiting Lecturer, Deptt. of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

Introduction

Emotion regulation (ER) is the competence to properly understand, appraise, and analyze the emotional appearance and inner emotive states on oneself (Iqbal & Akhter, 2019). According to the views of experts in ER, self-regulation and emotional proficiency represent four primary skills. The first skill is self-awareness; the second is emotion regulation, which guides the individual to regulate their emotions according to the situation (Perry, 2005). The third skill is social awareness, which helps with understanding society, and the fourth one is psychosocial development, which defines proficiency towards understanding their affiliation (Finkel & Fitzsimons, 2011).

Emotions are not only associated with the lives of people; however, the entire atmosphere produces numerous moods and emotional reactions that are unique to them. An adolescent has his own emotions rarest form, which polishes over time by observing the others around him. ER is a group of unconscious and unrestrained procedures included in the commencement, conservation, and amendment of incident, extent, and length of feeling in situations (Taylor, Eisenberg, & Spinrad, 2015).

Based on theoretical and experimental methods, an integrative model of ER was suggested by the researchers. Based on this model, ER may be considered a group of different interconnected capabilities such as; identification of emotions, clarity of emotions, receiving of emotions, capacity to fulfill the preferred task despite the interference of negative emotions, and the capacity to practice suitable approaches according to the situation to modify the emotions. In the absence of any expertise, there could be difficulties in the process of ER (Gratz & Roemer, 2004).

According to the results of many studies, emotion regulation strategies are becoming prominent in the field of study because it helps the individuals to control their emotions by applying the strategies. Emotions regulations include several procedures like observation, assessment, and altering one's expression of emotions. The capability to control emotions is essential for emotional intelligence.

The researchers suggested that individuals almost keep busy to control their emotions in some way. So, such efforts to control the emotions may be spontaneous or controlled and enhance, maintain, or reduce positive and negative emotions (Trógolo & Medrano, 2012). They concluded that the emotional association and social capabilities depend upon the capabilities to control the emotions among students (Gumora & Arsenio, 2002). According to the views of Gross (1998), emotions can be controlled and altered. Emotions regulations is related to the modulation of emotions to modify what emotions are practiced as well as when and how they are practiced. This process can be controlled at five points in emotion generative procedure: 1- Selection of situation 2- Modification of situation 3- Attentional deployment 4- Cognitive change 5- Modification of response.

Yildiz (2016) found that emotion dysregulation is a term used in mental health socially that refers to emotional responses that are poorly controlled and do not lie within the accepted range of emotional feedback. Individuals decrease their positiveness by using the internal and external dysfunctional emotion regulation strategies such as thought, defeat, nervousness. On the other hand, internal and external functional emotion regulation strategies are healthy such as mental reconsideration, extroversion among youngsters. Evidences confirm that positive association among cognitive reappraisal as functional emotion regulation strategy and positive emotion, the pleasure of life, and mental health among adolescents exists (Verzeletti, Zammuner, Galli, & Agnoli, 2016). This concludes that emotions' positive development and training is necessary for pleasant life. Education process should focus to train users for positive emotions training.

Academic Achievement

In this world, education is considered as the steppingstone of every human action (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq, & Berhanu, 2011). Life opportunities and prosperity of the individuals depend upon their education. Therefore, the achievement of educational tasks and expertise are the guarantees for the better life of individuals. In the education system, the educational performance of students affects their noticeable and assessable attitude in the environment of a school. Academic achievements of students comprise scores at any specific time gained from their assessment (Battle & Lewis, 2002).

Association between Emotions Regulations and Academic Achievements of Students

Emotion supports the memory, working ability when the performance of students is analyzed in the classroom. Past researches point out that negative emotions are negatively related to the grade point average of students, and a high level of negative emotion becomes the cause of low-level academic performance of students (Arsenio & Loria, 2014).

The effects of emotions in education are becoming central in the present situation. Hence, it has examined that emotions are directly associated with the learning abilities of students (Pekrun & Perry, 2014). Negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, guilt, and hopelessness interfere in the educational performance of students (Fiedler & Beier, 2014). Results regarding the influences of negative emotions on the educational performance of students recommend that these are harmful to inspire, performance, and learning in various circumstances. Overall, negative emotions are harmful in achieving the educational tasks, working abilities, the process of cognition, and self-regulation among students (Rowe & Fitness, 2018). Social functionalist

approaches to regulate the emotions direct to individuals towards a suitable structure for understanding the specific emotion that are helpful in academic achievement.

Analysis of some studies describes that ability to control emotion assist in achieving the cognitive goals among adults (Phillips & Power, 2007). The evidence of studies explains that uncontrolled behavior has negative influence on the perception abilities of students and distract to complete educational tasks in school. Ability to control the negative emotions interferes in attaining the educational tasks among adults in the classroom (Graziano, Reavis, Keane, & Calkins, 2007).

It was examined by the experts that the students who display negative emotions while achieving the educational goals have a low level of academic achievement as compared to other students. But in contrast, the students who can regulate their negative emotions efficiently may achieve a high level of academic goals (Arsenio & Loria, 2014). The results of another research discovered negative emotions keep away the students from achieving educational tasks and demotivate the students towards their studies.

The current development in psychology and neurosciences exhibit that emotions play an important role in the rise of motivation, interactive resources, remembrance, and knowledge among students. Students who display aggressive attitude they face extra challenges in increasing and conserving interactions in school. On the other hand, the students who experience positive emotions they display better performance in education. Some researchers reported that negative emotions, just like anxiety, decrease the motivation level of students towards their studies. Sorrows and frustration become the cause of the low academic performance of students (Gilman & Anderman, 2006).

Several studies designate that capacities to control the emotion are crucial to mental health which can facilitate or interrupt the working abilities. Past researchers have discovered the positive relationship between the emotion regulation and educational achievement of students. It was also found that negative behavior becomes the cause of academic failure among students (Graziano et al., 2007). Students who have strong emotional competency, better socialization, and attached to promoting environment can be able to attain better educational results and can handle the issues related to the currents situation. Therefore, students must have better emotional intelligence and self-regulation to perform well in the field of education (Calkins, 2004; Calkins & Leerkes, 2011). Many researchers have explored that educational performance of students depends upon the influences of environment. Other researchers consider that personality also play an important role in academic performance of students. Therefore, it was explored that self-consciousness and self-perception of students influence the educational performance of students (Aremu & Oluwole, 2001).

The teachers need to develop emotional, social, and educational abilities among students by implementing the different strategies related to teaching and classroom management in schools that support them towards productive and healthy lives (Webster-Stratton, 1999). Teachers need to ensure the emotional stability of students and the availability of all the demands of well-being and assistance that can be effective in achieving the educational tasks successfully (Coetzee, 2007). Hence, the teachers are not only responsible for improving the cognition and knowledge of students but also responsible for the development of emotions of their students. Consequently, they can produce a useful, active, and dynamic member of the society.

The study analyzed that deterrence curriculum in school that concentrated on the growth of emotional capability of students resulted in student being improved accepted by their fellows and their capacity to control emotion and attitude in communities. It was observed by researchers that emotional growth starts at early stage (Kathawala & Bhamani, 2015). There is need to be focused that only limited researches available on emotion regulation and school performance of students (Lopes, Salovey, Cote, Beers, & Petty, 2005).

Few studies conducted regarding the academic success of students and its relation to the emotion regulation of students (Sufi, 2004). In the past, the educational structure of Pakistan did not consider the need for emotional development of students. It was discovered that the importance of effective emotional attitude for successful life is overlooked by the policy makers, stakeholders and teachers in Pakistan. (Gul, 2014). Consequently, present study was designed to examine the association between emotions regulations and academic performance of Elementary school aged students.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the use of emotions regulations strategies by the elementary school aged students in different circumstances.
2. To identify the association between emotions regulations and academic achievements of elementary school aged students.

Research Questions of the Study

1. What are emotion regulation strategies of elementary school aged students?
2. What is the relationship between emotion regulations and academic achievement of elementary school aged students?

Procedure of the Study

This quantitative study used a correlational design measuring the relationship between the variables of emotions regulations and academic achievement of elementary school aged children. This study was delimited to *elementary* school aged students (approximately 13-15 years old) of district Bahawalnagar Punjab, Pakistan. In Pakistan, elementary education is confined to primary and middle schools. Middle schools include 6th, 7th and 8th classes. The present study was delimited to 8th class only. So, the population of the study was students of class 8th of district Bahawalnagar in Punjab, Pakistan. Researchers used a questionnaire to get the data from students. Students responded regarding their own state of emotion regulation. Twelve elementary schools (6 male and 6 female) were selected by using a random sampling technique. A total of 209 students of class 8th were selected randomly from elementary schools in district Bahawalnagar. Equal representation was given to male and female students while sample selection.

Research Instruments

Data of the study were collected through REQ (regulation of emotion questionnaire) and school records. Questionnaire was used to collect data about the capacity of respondents to regulate their emotions. School records were consulted to investigate students' examination performance in the form of examination scores.

The REQ (regulation of emotion questionnaire) developed by Phillips and Power (2007). It had 14 items on seven-point scale. (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The REQ was developed to measure the capacity of respondents to regulate their emotions by using emotion regulation strategies which were classified into internal functional, internal dysfunctional, external functional and external dysfunctional.

Validation of Instruments

The questionnaire was a standardized. The validity and reliability were already known. Reliability of sections of English version of tools as investigated through literature review. This tool was applied on 225 male and female (12 to 19 years old) from U.K. Method of estimation of reliability was test retest ($r = 0.70 - 0.85$). The reliability of the tools in present study was 0.64 using the Cronbach's alpha method.

Data Collection Procedure

Study included two variables; emotion regulation scores and academic scores of the participants included in the sample. So, the sample of the study was contacted during last one month of the academic year. Only those students were chosen in sample who

were enrolled for appearing in board examinations through Punjab Examination Commission.

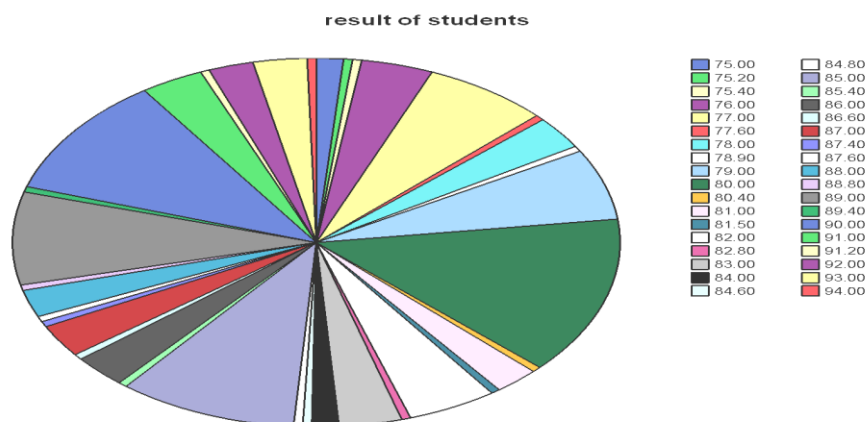
Researchers collected all the data required (state of emotion regulation) from students selected in sample during school hours with the written permission of school heads. Questionnaires were distributed among students and directed them about the purpose of study and procedure to respond on scale against each item. In this way, all the participants completed the questionnaire and returned to the researcher.

Secondly, researchers collected students' results from the schools after commencement of examinations of 8th class examinations (elementary examinations). The schools were requested to provide student wise result of board examinations (through Punjab Examination Commission). The researchers recorded scores of students in examinations keeping in view the list of students included in sample. Furthermore, a copy of Gazette was attained, and accuracy of results provided by schools was verified.

Data Analysis

Finally, data analysis was carried out applying statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistic was used to identify the state of emotion regulation of students. To explore the relationship between emotion regulation and academic achievement of students, correlation was applied.

Results of the Study



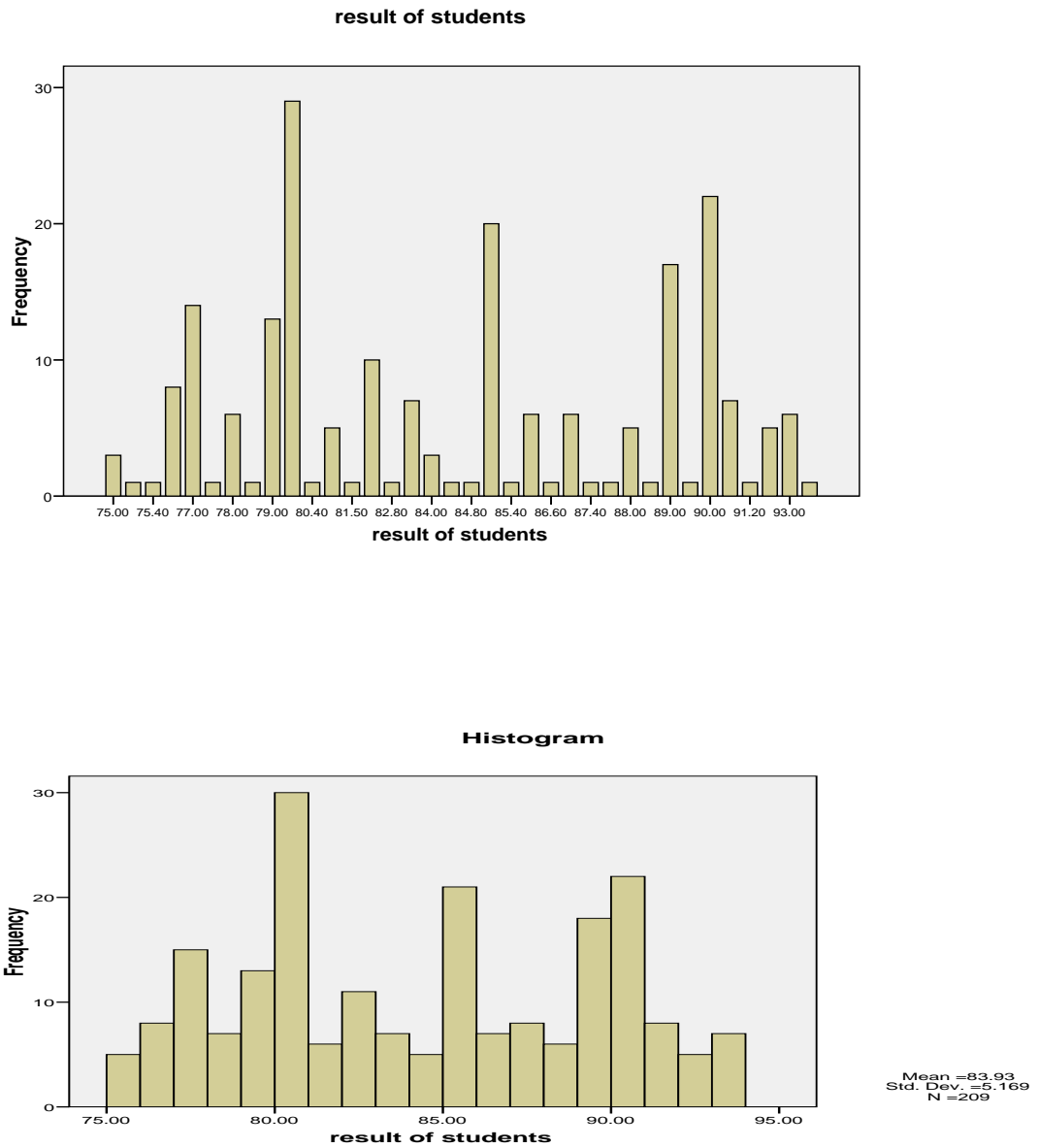


Figure 1: Result of Students

To evaluate role of emotion regulation in students’ achievement, scores of students in examinations were analyzed. Students’ results have showed in above graphs. This graph displays the frequency of the academic scores of students. This graph shows that

most of the students fall in 80% and 90% academic scores, which indicate the highly good performance of students in examinations.

To identify the strategies of emotion regulation experienced by the students in different situations descriptive statistics were applied on data. Results have given in table below.

Table 1

Expression of emotion regulation of Elementary aged children

Statistics	IFER	EFER	EDER	IDER	Total ER	Academic scores
Mean	5.23	4.44	3.61	3.51	4.57	83.93
S. D	1.28	1.16	1.25	1.11	0.73	5.16

IFER= Internal Functional Emotion Regulation; EFER= External Functional Emotion Regulation; EDER= External; IDER= Internal Dysfunctional Emotion Regulation; ER= Emotion Regulation

Results of table 1 shows that the score of internal functional emotion regulation (Mean 5.23, SD 1.28) is better than all. This means elementary school students mostly use internal functional emotion regulation strategies. Next to this, they adopt the external functional emotion regulation strategies (Mean 4.44, SD1.16). Analysis also exhibits that dysfunctional strategies may be external (mean 3.61, SD 1.25) or internal (mean 3.51, SD 1.11) are less in practice than the Internal and external Functional emotion regulation strategies. This explores that majority of students experience positive emotion regulation strategies during expression of their emotion. Mean score of academic score (Mean 83.93, SD 5.16) indicates the better performance of students in elementary class examinations.

The utmost aim of this research was to explore part of emotion regulation in academic performance of elementary school aged students. To gain this objective, relationship between scores of emotion regulation strategies and academic scores of students was calculated using correlation technique. The results have been given in next table.

Table 2

Relationship between Emotion Regulation and Academic Scores of Students

Statistics	IFER	EFER	IDER	EDER	Total ER
<i>r</i>	-.049	-.012	-.178*	-.091	-.091
Sig	.477	.862	.010	.191	.190

Note: Sig = significance Level, r = correlation coefficient; IFER= Internal functional ER; EFER= External functional ER; IDER= Internal dysfunctional ER; EDER= External Dysfunctional ER

Table 2 reveals the data regarding the association between academic scores of students and emotions regulations strategies applied by the Elementary school aged students. Correlation analysis reported in table reveals that strong negative significant relationship exists between internal dysfunctional emotion regulation and academic scores of students. It also indicates that no significant relationship found between academic scores and other emotion regulation strategies experienced by the students. Therefore, it was concluded that negativity in expression of emotion become the cause of poor performance of students in education.

Discussion

Effect of parenting on personality development of elementary school aged students cannot be ignored. Parents influence children in different ways during the growth period. Children normally behave like their parents in different situations. If parents are emotionally strong, there are more chances for better emotional training of children. Researches have indicated that parents' parenting styles have strong relationship with different personality traits of children (Akhter, Noor & Iqbal, 2019).

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between academic achievement and emotion regulation of students. The findings of this research suggest that the student who could not control their emotions they display poor performance in education and feel difficulty in achieving educational tasks. Limited previous studies discovered the relation of emotion regulation with the academic achievement of students. It was explored that emotional illness promotes demotivation among students and increase the dropout rate (Stein & Kean, 2000). Evidences advocate that negative emotions are negatively associated with the academic score of students (Gumora & Arsenio, 2002). Some studies explained about positive association between the positive emotions and educational performance of students (Valiente, Swanson, & Eisenberg, 2012). It was found that nervousness become the cause of demotivation among students towards their studies (Meece, Anderman, & Anderman, 2006). Depression and frustration promote the withdrawal system and negatively influence on learning process. So, students feel hesitation to take part in educational activities in school and then are involve in negative activities (Davidson & Verchot, 2000).

Students who display aggressive behavior, they face difficulty to maintain relationship in class (Pianta, Cox, & Snow, 2007). It was also observed that emotion dysregulation interrupts procedure of cognition of execution functioning which is

essential for education (Blair, 2010). Findings of another study suggest that children who don't have the ability to control their emotions, they usually face difficulties in classroom and could not complete their educational tasks effectively and appropriately (Graziano et al., 2007). The results of the research explored that the four negative emotions e.g. anxiety, hopelessness, disgrace and annoyance relate to poor performance (Daniels et al., 2009; Pekrun & Perry, 2014). It was also examined that moderating influence on negative emotions deliver some explanations on existing hypothetical suggestions on preventing role of negative emotions in academic performance of students (Ruthig et al., 2008).

Conclusion

This study makes a small but important step towards developing a better understanding towards the consequences of negative emotion on educational performance of *elementary* school aged students in Pakistan. The present research explored that most of respondents practice positive strategies to express their emotions and have a high level of academic scores. The results of this research display that the student who don't have the ability to express their emotions in appropriate ways. Consequently, they display poor performance in education and feel difficulty in achieving educational tasks. On the other hand, the findings of this study explored positivity in expression of emotions regulation of *elementary* school aged students.

Recommendations

The teachers need to adopt effective classroom management and teaching strategies to improve the emotional, social and academic abilities among students to become the skillful and healthy person of society. The current study provided the evidences regarding the significance of emotion regulation in the educational performance of students. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the policy makers to pay full attention on the development of emotion regulation skills to improve the academic performance of students.

However, the percentage of academic score was only considered to evaluate the academic achievement of students but the other performance of the students like home and class assignment, attendance, participation in class work and extra-curricular activities were not incorporated which may have the influences on the emotion development and educational achievement of students. This lead a basis for further investigation to search out role of emotion regulation strategies in other factors related to academic performance of students.

The search of role of emotion regulation strategies in participation and performance in co-curricular activities is also needed. Moreover, the present study

evaluated students' academic results provided by the examinations. In future research, a cumulative result including students' performance during the school hours throughout the years should be focused in analysis

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