

# The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence And Literary Appreciation

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## ABSTRACT

*This study attempts to see if there was a relationship between EI (emotional intelligence) and literary appreciation. To explore this ninety university students who were all studying English literature were chosen from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. Out of the ninety participants, fifty participants were female and forty were male. They were aged from twenty to twenty seven. The Bar-On EQi (1997) was used in order to obtain the participants' EI level. Literary appreciation test was designed by Earl Foreman (1951) to assess literary awareness of detail, characterization and the sense of purpose and continuity. The findings show that students of literature are different in their ability to appreciate literature and literary texts. This study shows that there is a relation between literary appreciating and Emotional Intelligence.*

**Keywords:** EI (Emotional Intelligence), Literary Appreciation, Bar-On EQi

## INTRODUCTION

Intelligence is traditionally considered as a real, single, measurable, inborn and unchangeable entity. It is traditionally believed to determine our material success (Jarvis, 2005). Illeris (2008) mentions that although there have been many definitions of intelligence and these definitions have changed a lot since intelligence first appeared, it is yet hard to define intelligence. He defines intelligence as the ability to learn and think, to understand and solve problems. Dornyei (2005) also defines intelligence as the ability to learn. Binet (1905) was the first person who developed a true IQ test with Simon (cited in Illeris, 2008).

For years (1900-1969) emotion and intelligence were considered separate areas. In 1970-1989 the boundary between intelligence and emotion began to fade and research was done on how emotions interacted with thought. In 1990-1993, Mayer and Salovey wrote a series of articles about Emotional Intelligence and in 1994-1997 Goleman made it popular by writing his book *Emotional Intelligence*. He put too much emphasis on EI and considered it more important than IQ (Mayer, 2001).

Emotional intelligence is composed of two parts: emotions and intelligence. It is the reasoning that takes emotions into account. *Intelligence* as part of EI pertains to abilities such as the “power to combine and separate” concepts, to judge and to reason, and to engage in abstract thought. *Emotions* belong to the second, so-called affective sphere of mental functioning, which includes the emotions themselves, moods, evaluations, and other feeling states. (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Literary appreciation refers to commenting on literature. However, it ranges from simple everyday comments made by all people about works of literature and authors to serious reviews made by scholars (Pope, 1998).

Emotional Intelligence has always been important in learning and teaching. However, its role in literary appreciation was not taken into account to the researcher's knowledge. This study attempts to see if there was a relationship between EI (emotional intelligence) and literary appreciation. The study is expected to help teachers and educators understand whether students of English literature who possess a higher EI are better at understanding and appreciating literary texts. This study also gives literature teachers the predictive power to predict whether

students of literature will succeed in understanding literary texts or not. If a relationship is found between EI and literary appreciation, the teachers will also become aware of the problems those with a low EI might face as they are reading a literary text.

**Research Questions**

This study was set out to answer these questions: Firstly, is there a significant relationship between Literary Appreciation of English Literature students and their EI? Secondly, is there a significant relationship between EI and literary appreciation and short story grades of students of English Literature? And finally is there a significant difference between the performance of males and females majoring in English literature on the literary appreciation test?

Based on these questions, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no relationship between Literary Appreciation and EI of English literature students.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between EI and literary appreciation and short story grades of students of English Literature.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the performance of males and females majoring in English literature on the literary appreciation test.

**PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING**

Ninety university students who were all studying English literature were chosen from Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. Literature students were chosen so that their performance on literary appreciation test could be compared. Junior and senior students were chosen as students pass their short story course in the sixth term in Ferdowsi University. Out of the ninety participants, fifty participants were female and forty were male. They were aged from twenty to twenty seven.

**INSTRUMENTATION**

**EQ Questionnaire**

The Bar-On EQi was used in order to obtain the participants’ EI level. It is a self-report scale, including 133 items, which measures five broad areas of skills or competencies and fifteen factorial components (Bar-On, 1997) (Fahim and Pishghadam, 2007).

<b>Competencies</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Items</b>
Intrapersonal	Emotional self-awareness	8
	Assertiveness	7
	Self-regard	9
	Self-actualization	9
	Independence	7
Interpersonal	Empathy	8
	Interpersonal Interrelationship	11
	Social responsibility	10
Adaptability	Problem solving	8
	Reality testing	10
	Flexibility	8
Stress management	Stress tolerance	9
	Impulse control	9
General mood	Happiness	9
	Optimism	8

However, as the original test is too long, the questionnaire used in this study included 90 likert Scale items. Each item contains five response levels: never, seldom, usually, often, and always. The response levels will be weighted according to their positive perception toward the kind of feeling that is questioned in each one, ranging from five (most positive) to one (least positive). Each question belongs to a certain feeling. Like the original test there are five subscales- Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Stress management, General mood- which include fifteen categories: Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Self-Regard, Self-Actualization, Independence, Empathy, Internal Relationship, Social Responsibility, Problem Solving, Reality Test, Flexibility, Stress Tolerance, Impulse Control, Happiness, and Optimism. On this test all subscales include 6 questions.

For the EQ-i (Bar-On, 1996) high and low scores are identified by their distance from the mean score of 100. Scores exceeding the mean or falling below the mean by 1 SD (15 points) are considered to be within the normal range. Because of the cultural differences and to avoid any misunderstanding regarding the content of the questionnaire, the translated and modified version of this questionnaire (Samou'i, 2002) which was prepared in Esfahan, Iran was employed. The reliability of the questionnaire was reported to be high (Cronbach's alpha .89).

### **Literary Appreciation Test**

Literary appreciation test was designed by Foreman (1951) to assess literary awareness of detail, characterization and the sense of purpose and continuity. Three scales measure these three factors and each scale is scored on a five-point basis and the highest possible score is 15. The reliability is reported to be 0.89.

There are three stories in this test. Each story is followed by three general questions and three to five questions specific to the story. There was no time limit and the answers could be as long as the test taker wished. Longer answers are more valued because they give more information about test takers' literary appreciation level. As the test is scored subjectively, although it provides clear scales, it was rated by three scorers and interrater reliability was calculated to ensure reliability. Interrater reliability was reported to be 0.82.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Data Analysis**

The results gained from the tests taken by the participants fell within the interval data so the Pearson Product moment formula was used to calculate the correlation between each short story scores, scores on literary appreciation test and EI scores.

According to the result of the participants' performance on the EI test, two groups (high and low) were formed and the t test was run to see whether the difference between the means of the high and low EI groups were significant. The participants were rank ordered according to their EI. Then, each rank ordered group was divided into two groups. Each group contained forty five participants. Multiple regression analysis was also used to see which subscales of EI are better predictors of literary appreciation.

## **DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

The calculation of the mean, the standard deviation, maximums and minimums is common to many studies so they are reported in the

Table 1-1. shows the results of Descriptive Statistics calculations.

Table 1-1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Personal Skills	90	78	138	112.11	12.250
Interpersonal Skills	90	52	89	74.80	7.001
Adaptability	90	41	171	64.66	13.739
Stress Management	90	12	56	37.80	8.151
Mood	90	33	57	46.81	5.467
Total EI	90	265	401	334.68	30.243
Details	90	1.00	5.00	3.3369	1.09327
Characters	90	1.00	5.00	3.2406	.99405
Purposes	90	2.00	5.00	3.5294	.87949
Literary Appreciation	90	4.67	15.00	10.1329	2.64751
Valid N (listwise)	90				

## INFERENTIAL STATISTICS

### Correlation

Correlation shows the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. This study tried to investigate the relationship between EI and Literary Appreciation. As the scores obtained from these tests are interval data, the Pearson product moment formula was used.

Table 1-2: The Correlations between EI and Literary Appreciation

	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Adaptability	Stress	Mood	Total EI
Details	.306**	.110	.112	.179	.226*	.299**
Characters	.293**	.158	.159	.201	.215*	.328**
Purposes	.200	.088	.037	.111	.138	.196
Sum of Lit App	.301**	.122	.114	.190	.216*	.307**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As Table 1-2 presents, there is a moderate correlation between Total EI and Literary Appreciation ( $r = .307$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). Out of the three subscales of Literary Appreciation, Details correlate significantly with EI ( $r = .299$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). Characters also significantly correlate with EI ( $r = .328$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ).

Out of the five main subscales of EI, Intrapersonal Skills and Mood showed the highest correlation with literary appreciation and some of its subscales. Other subscales of EI did not correlate significantly with Literary Appreciation and its subscales.

Intrapersonal Skills did not correlate with Purposes. The correlation between Intrapersonal Skills and Details was the highest ( $r = .306$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). The correlation between Intrapersonal Skills and Characters was also calculated to be  $r = .293$ ,  $p \leq .05$  and the correlation between Intrapersonal Skills and Literary Appreciation was  $r = .301$ ,  $p \leq .05$ .

Like Intrapersonal Skills, Mood also correlated with Literary Appreciation and two of its subscales. The correlation between Literary Appreciation and Mood was calculated to be  $r = .216$ ,  $p \leq .05$ . Mood also correlated significantly with Details ( $r = .226$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ) and Characters ( $r = .215$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). Therefore,  $H_01$  can be rejected.

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EI, LITERARY APPRECIATION AND SHORT STORY GRADES**

The second question that this research tried to answer was whether there was any correlation between EI, Literary Appreciation and their subscales and the grades students had achieved in their short story class.

**Table 1-3: The Correlation between Short Story Grades and EI and Literary Appreciation**

	<b>Intrapersonal</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>	<b>Stress</b>	<b>Mood</b>	<b>Total EQ</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Literary Appreciation</b>
<b>Short Story</b>	.364	.294	.260	-.080	.098	.267	.193	.205	.027	.167

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As table 1-3 demonstrates, no significant correlation existed between EI, Literary Appreciation and their subscales and short story grades of students. Therefore, it seems that these scales are not related to each other and H<sub>02</sub> cannot be rejected.

**t test**

To further examine the data, t test was utilized. t test calculates the significance of the difference between two means. In this study, the third question that was investigated was whether there was any significant difference between the performance of males and females on the literary appreciation test.

**Table 1-4: Independent Samples Test of Males and Females on the Literary Appreciation Test**

					<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>					
<b>Sex</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Std. Error Difference</b>	
Total EQ	1	40	334.35	26.327	4.163	-.091	88	.927	-.590	6.452
	2	50	334.94	33.308	4.711	-.094	87.992	.925	-.590	6.286
Literary Appr	1	40	9.7580	2.46350	.38951	-1.205	88	.232	-.67480	.56020
	2	50	10.4328	2.77388	.39229	-1.221	86.999	.226	-.67480	.55282

The results indicate that the difference between the means of males and females is not significant in either EI or Literary Appreciation so H<sub>03</sub> cannot be rejected. Therefore, males and females perform the same on these two tests.

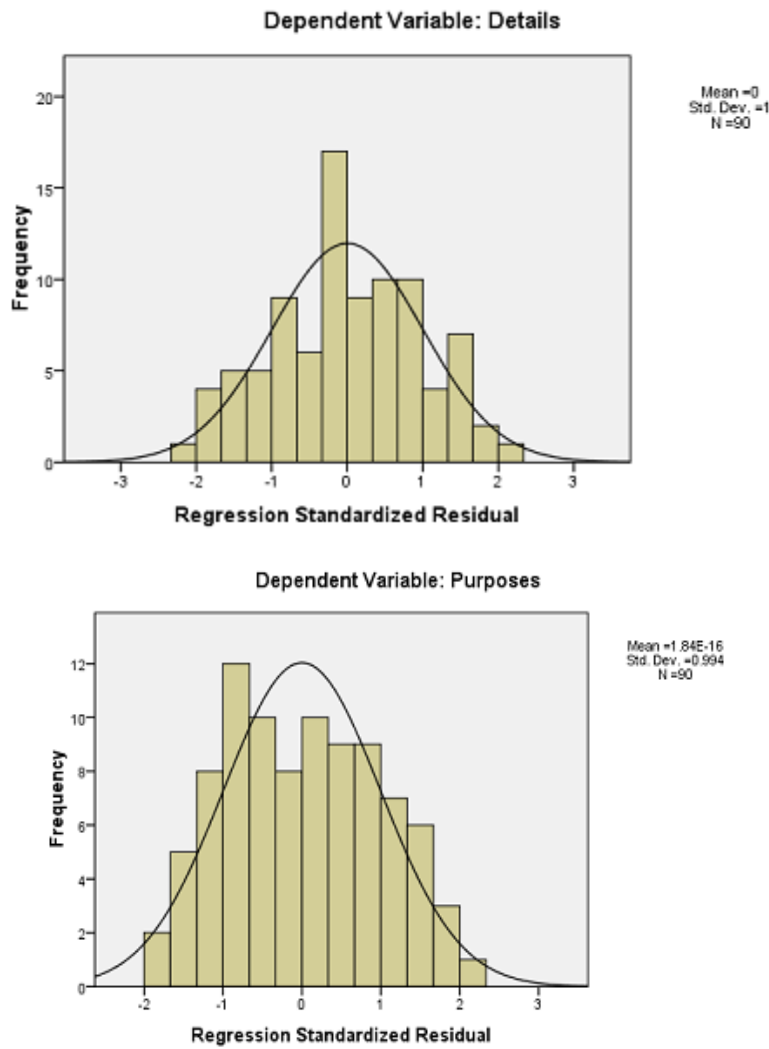


Figure 1: Histogram of the Residuals

In Figure 1, the histogram of the standardized residual is shown. The bars show the frequencies while the curve represents the ideal normal distribution. It is seen that the bars are rather in accordance with the normal distribution curve.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was set out to see if there was a relationship between EI and literary appreciation. It seems that students of literature are different in their ability to appreciate literature and literary texts. They do not all appreciate literature to the same degree and this can be the reason why some of them are not successful in it.

More correlations could be found when the subscales of EI were taken into account. Out of the five subscales of EI, Intrapersonal Skills and Mood showed the highest correlation with Literary Appreciation and its subscales while other subscales of EI – namely, Interpersonal Skills, Adaptability Scales, and Stress Management showed no significant correlation.

Intrapersonal Skills correlated with two subscales of Literary Appreciation, i.e. Details and Characters. Despite the correlation with these two subscales, it showed no significant correlation with Purposes Subscale of Literary Appreciation Test. Like Intrapersonal Skills, Mood also correlated with Literary Appreciation, Details and Characters. However, short Story Grades were correlated with EI and Literary Appreciation, no significant correlation was observed. Short Story neither correlated with EI and its subscales, nor with Literary Appreciation and its subscales.

The reason for lack of correlation of Short Story Grades with EI and Literary Appreciation might be that usually literature students are graded based on their performance on the tests taken at the end of the term and the tests are almost always based on what they have covered during the term. The questions are usually based on teachers' opinions and the answers the students provide are mostly what they have been told.

The findings also showed that the difference in performance of male and female participants was not significant. The comparison of the means of males and females indicated that males and females performed the same on this test.

Finally, the regression equations done also indicated that Intrapersonal Skills can be predictors of Details subscale of Literary Appreciation while Total EI and its other four subscales, i.e. Adaptability, Mood, Interpersonal Skills and Stress Management cannot predict performance on Literary Appreciation test. Regression equations also showed that Characters subscale of Literary Appreciation could be predicted by Total EI. Although Total EI could predict performance on this subscale of Literary Appreciation, none of its subscales was found to be a predictor of performance on Characters subscale of Literary Appreciation.

#### **AUTHOR INFORMATION**

**Zargham Ghabanchi** received his BA in English language and literature from Mashed University, Iran. Then he received his MA in TEFL from Tehran Tarbiyyet Moderres University, Iran. He started his Ph.D. at the University of Liverpool, the UK in 1993 and Ph.D. was conferred to him in 1998 in Applied Linguistics. Now he has a chair at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran. He has published several books and articles. E-mail: ghabanchi@um.ac.ir. Corresponding author.

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