

Emotional Intelligence as A Key Driver of Professional Success and Personal Well-Being

(A Comparative Perspective among Students, Faculty and Corporate Professionals)

Authors- 1-Vijay Raj 2- Prof. (Dr.) Devendra Arora (Chief Advisor)
Corporate Advisor 3- Mr. Nishchal Verma & 4- Mr. Sonu Abhinandan Kumar
Krishna Group of Institutions, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract - Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as an important human capability in education, employment, leadership and personal life. Academic qualifications and technical knowledge remain essential, but the ability to understand emotions, regulate responses, communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy and maintain relationships increasingly influences how individuals perform in complex environments.

This paper examines Emotional Intelligence as a potential driver of professional success and personal well-being among three important stakeholder groups: students, faculty members and corporate professionals. It proposes a comparative research framework covering five major dimensions of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

The paper argues that the relevance of EI changes according to the individual's context. For students, EI may support academic resilience, employability and career preparation; for faculty, it may contribute to effective communication, mentoring and classroom leadership; and for corporate professionals, it may support teamwork, decision-making, leadership and career development.

Contemporary examples from Bollywood and Indian sports—including *Dangal*, Shah Rukh Khan's professional reinvention, M. S. Dhoni's leadership under pressure, P. V. Sindhu's resilience and Neeraj Chopra's management of performance expectations—are used as contextual illustrations rather than psychological assessments.

The paper proposes a quantitative research model in which Emotional Intelligence is examined against two major outcomes: professional success and personal well-being. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, ANOVA, regression and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) are recommended for empirical validation.

The paper concludes that EI should be treated not merely as a "soft skill" but as a strategic human capability that can complement academic knowledge, technical expertise and Artificial Intelligence in the future workplace.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Quotient, Professional Success, Personal Well-being, Students, Faculty, Corporate Professionals, Leadership, Resilience, Employability

1. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of success is changing.

For many years, academic qualifications, intelligence, technical expertise and professional experience were regarded as the primary ingredients of career success. These factors remain important. However, contemporary education and employment environments demand additional capabilities.

A highly qualified employee may fail to become an effective leader if the person cannot communicate with colleagues.

A technically excellent teacher may struggle to motivate students if the teacher cannot understand their emotional needs.

A brilliant student may perform below potential because of examination anxiety, fear of failure or lack of confidence.

A manager may possess excellent business knowledge but lose talented employees because of poor interpersonal behaviour.

These examples raise an important question:

Why do people with similar knowledge and qualifications achieve very different outcomes?

One important explanation is **Emotional Intelligence**.

Salovey and Mayer's foundational work described Emotional Intelligence in terms of the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and use of feelings to motivate, plan and achieve goals.

Emotional Intelligence therefore connects **what we know** with **how we respond**.

2. WHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MATTERS IN 2026

The workplace is experiencing simultaneous technological and human transformation.

Artificial Intelligence, automation, digital platforms and data analytics are changing how organizations operate. At the same time, organizations continue to depend on human capabilities such as resilience, leadership, empathy, collaboration and self-awareness. The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2025* identifies **resilience, flexibility and agility** among the leading core skills, followed by leadership and social influence.

Motivation and self-awareness and empathy and active listening also rank among the important core skills identified by employers.

This provides an important contemporary argument:

The future professional needs both technological competence and emotional competence.

The competitive advantage is therefore not:

AI OR Emotional Intelligence but: AI + IQ + EQ + Human Values

3. UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

For the purpose of this paper, Emotional Intelligence is understood as the ability to:

1. Recognize one's emotions.
2. Understand the causes and consequences of emotions.
3. Regulate emotional responses.
4. Understand the emotions and perspectives of others.
5. Use emotional information constructively in decision-making and relationships.

Five Core Dimensions

Dimension	Meaning	Example
Self-awareness	Understanding one's emotions, strengths and weaknesses	Recognizing anxiety before an examination
Self-regulation	Managing emotional reactions	Remaining calm during criticism
Motivation	Sustaining effort toward goals	Continuing after failure
Empathy	Understanding another person's perspective	Recognizing a student's difficulty
Social skills	Managing relationships effectively	Resolving a workplace conflict

These dimensions are applicable across educational, professional and personal settings.

4. THE THREE STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The present research framework focuses on three groups.

4.1 Students- Students are preparing for future professional and social responsibilities.

Their EI may influence:

- Examination stress,
- Academic resilience,
- Communication,
- Teamwork, Confidence,
- Employability,
- Career decision-making

A student who understands personal strengths and weaknesses may be better prepared to select an appropriate career.

4.2 Faculty- Faculty members influence not only academic learning but also student confidence, motivation and professional behaviour.

Faculty EI may contribute to:

- Classroom management,
- Student mentoring,
- Conflict resolution,
- Leadership, Communication
- Research collaboration,
- Academic decision-making.

A faculty member may possess outstanding subject knowledge, but students also remember **how the teacher made them feel about learning.**

4.3 Corporate Professionals- Corporate professionals work in environments characterized by:

- Deadlines,
- Competition,
- Performance targets,
- Organizational change,
- Team dynamics,
- Customer expectations,

- Leadership responsibilities

EI may support professionals in managing pressure, negotiating differences, leading teams and maintaining constructive relationships.

5. COMPARATIVE EI FRAMEWORK

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence Across Three Groups

EI Competency	Students	Faculty	Corporate Professionals
Self-awareness	Career and academic awareness	Teaching/leadership awareness	Leadership and performance awareness
Self-regulation	Examination pressure	Classroom conflict	Workplace pressure
Motivation	Academic goals	Teaching/research goals	Business/career goals
Empathy	Peer relationships	Student mentoring	Employees/customers
Social skills	Group projects	Academic collaboration	Team leadership

The same emotional competency therefore has different applications depending on the individual's role.

6. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

Professional success should not be defined only by salary or designation.

It may include:

- Performance,
- Employability,
- Promotion,
- Leadership,
- Job satisfaction,
- Productivity,
- Teamwork,
- Adaptability,
- Career growth.

A useful conceptual relationship is:

Emotional Intelligence → Better Self-Management

Better Relationships → Better Performance → Professional Growth

For students, the pathway may begin with employability.

For faculty, it may lead to teaching effectiveness and academic leadership.

For corporate professionals, it may contribute to leadership and career advancement.

7. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONAL WELL-BEING

Professional success without personal well-being may not be sustainable.

Personal well-being includes:

- Emotional balance,
- Resilience,
- Healthy relationships,
- Stress management,
- Life satisfaction,
- Confidence,
- Sense of purpose.

Consider two professionals.

Professional A

High position - High income - High stress - Poor relationships - Low emotional balance

Professional B

Good career - Healthy relationships - Better stress management -

Continuous learning - Sense of purpose

The comparison demonstrates why success should be considered more broadly.

Professional Success + Personal Well-being = Sustainable Success

8. BOLLYWOOD CASE STUDY 1: DANGAL

EI IN ACTION

The 2016 film *Dangal* provides a useful illustration of discipline, motivation, resilience, coaching and family relationships.

Aamir Khan's preparation for the film also involved intensive physical and performance preparation. Contemporary reporting described extensive wrestling, language and weight-training routines during preparation.

From an EI perspective, the story can be used to discuss:

- Long-term motivation,
- Discipline,

- Response to failure,
- Coaching,
- Performance pressure,
- Interpersonal relationships

Research Lesson - A goal provides direction.

Emotional discipline helps sustain the journey toward the goal.

Student Application- A student preparing for a competitive examination may not succeed on the first attempt. EI helps convert:

Failure → Reflection → Learning → Improvement

rather than:

Failure → Frustration → Giving Up

9. BOLLYWOOD CASE STUDY 2: SHAH RUKH KHAN

Shah Rukh Khan's career offers a useful contextual example of **professional resilience and reinvention**.

The period around *Pathaan* and *Jawan* can be discussed in terms of adapting to changing audience expectations and returning to large-scale commercial success.

The EI lesson is not that celebrity success proves a particular psychological trait. Rather, it provides an accessible case for discussing:

Setback → Reflection → Adaptation → Reinvention

Corporate Lesson

A professional who misses a promotion should not automatically conclude:

"My career is finished."

A more emotionally intelligent response is:

"What can I learn, what can I improve, and what should I do differently?"

Pocket Lesson

A setback is an event—not an identity.

10. SPORTS CASE STUDY 1: M. S. DHONI

M. S. Dhoni provides a particularly relevant example for studying **self-regulation and leadership under pressure**.

The ICC has documented Dhoni's comments about controlling his emotions and focusing on what needs to be done next rather than allowing frustration or disappointment to dominate decision-making.

This is an important distinction- **Emotional Intelligence does not mean having no emotions.**

It means:- **Recognize → Regulate → Refocus → Respond**

Dhoni's leadership can therefore be used as a case illustration of emotional regulation and short-term decision-making under pressure.

Corporate Application- During a business crisis, a leader cannot eliminate uncertainty.

The leader can control:

- Communication, -- Priorities,- Tone,- Decision-making,- Team confidence.

11. SPORTS CASE STUDY 2: NEERAJ CHOPRA

Neeraj Chopra provides a useful contemporary example for discussing **motivation, resilience and managing expectations after major success**.

Major sporting success changes the environment around an athlete.

Recognition increases. - Expectations increase.- Media attention increases.- Competition remains.

The emotional challenge therefore changes.

Before success:

"Can I win?"

After success:

"Can I continue performing at the highest level?"

This principle applies to corporate professionals as well.

A successful employee may receive:

- A Promotion - Increased responsibility- Public recognition- Larger targets.

Success therefore creates new emotional demands.

Pocket Lesson

Emotional Intelligence is required not only to handle failure—but also to handle success.

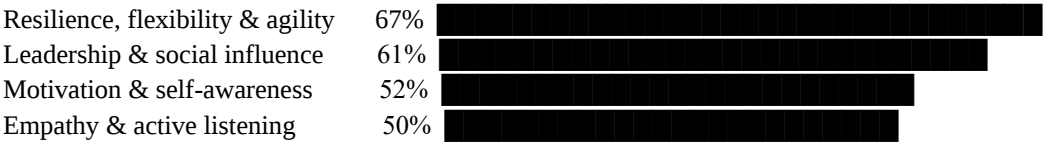
12. SPORTS CASE STUDY 3: P. V. SINDHU

P. V. Sindhu's international career provides a useful context for discussing resilience and learning from competitive setbacks. Elite sport teaches an important principle: **You cannot win every match.**
But you can learn from every match.
The same principle applies to students and professionals.
Examination failure → Job rejection → Missed promotion → Business loss
Research rejection
All can become sources of learning when individuals possess the emotional capacity to reflect rather than collapse.

13. GRAPH 1: EMPLOYER DEMAND FOR HUMAN-CENTRED SKILLS

The World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report 2025* provides useful current evidence. Among the core skills identified by employers, resilience/flexibility/agility was identified by 67% of surveyed employers, leadership and social influence by 61%, motivation and self-awareness by 52%, and empathy and active listening by 50%.

Figure 1. Employer-Identified Core Skills

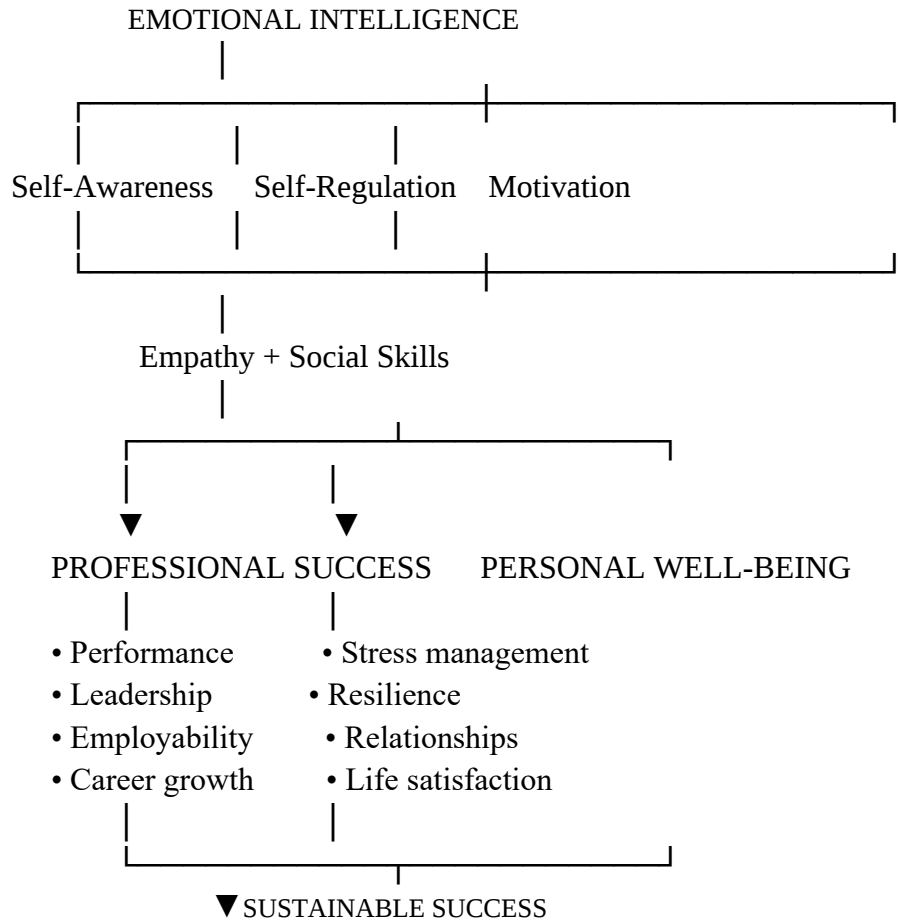


Interpretation:

These findings support the broader argument that human-centred competencies are not peripheral workplace abilities. They are increasingly recognized as core workforce capabilities.

14. GRAPH 2: PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL

Figure 2. Conceptual Model



Note: This is a **conceptual research model**, not an empirical results graph.

15. PROPOSED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed study may adopt a quantitative, cross-sectional research design.

Suggested Sample

A sample of approximately **600 respondents** may be considered:

Respondent Group	Suggested Sample
Students	250
Faculty	150
Corporate Professionals	200
Total	600

The final sample should be determined through appropriate sampling procedures and statistical power considerations.

16. PROPOSED QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire may contain four sections.

Section A — Demographics

- Age - Gender - Education -- Experience - Professional category

Section B — Emotional Intelligence- Items covering:

- Self-awareness - Self-regulation - Motivation- Empathy- Social skills

Section C — Professional Success- Items covering:

- Performance- Career satisfaction - Leadership- Employability- Team effectiveness

Section D — Personal Well-being- Items covering:

- Stress management- Resilience - Emotional balance- Relationships- Life satisfaction

A five-point Like scale may be used:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

17. PROPOSED STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The study offers considerable scope for statistical analysis.

1. Descriptive Statistics - Mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage.

2. Reliability- Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency.

3. Correlation- To examine relationships among EI, professional success and well-being.

4. ANOVA

To test whether EI differs significantly among:

Students vs Faculty vs Corporate Professionals

5. Regression - To determine which EI dimensions significantly predict:

- Professional success- Personal well-being

6. SEM - Structural Equation Modeling can test the overall conceptual model.

Important Research Note

No numerical empirical findings should be reported until actual survey data are collected and analyzed.

The graphs in this paper therefore distinguish between **published external data** and the **proposed research model**.

18. PROPOSED HYPOTHESES

H1 - There is a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence among students, faculty members and corporate professionals.

H2 - Emotional Intelligence has a significant positive relationship with professional success.

H3- Emotional Intelligence has a significant positive relationship with personal well-being.

H4- Self-awareness significantly predicts professional success.

H5- Self-regulation significantly predicts professional success.

H6- Empathy significantly predicts interpersonal effectiveness.

- H7- Emotional Intelligence significantly predicts resilience and stress-management capability.
 H8- Personal well-being is positively associated with Emotional Intelligence.

19. COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

Table 2. EI Application Across the Education-to-Employment Journey

Area	Student	Faculty	Corporate Professional
Pressure	Exams	Classroom/workload	Targets/deadlines
Failure	Low marks	Research/teaching setback	Missed target
Relationships	Peers	Students/colleagues	Team/customers
Leadership	Emerging	Academic	Organizational
Motivation	Career preparation	Teaching/research	Performance
Resilience	Academic	Professional	Organizational
EI Outcome	Employability	Effectiveness	Career growth

20. EI IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The future workplace will increasingly combine human and machine capabilities.

Artificial Intelligence can process information rapidly.

But successful organizations still require human beings who can:

- Inspire,
- Negotiate,
- Empathize,
- Listen,
- Build trust,
- Resolve conflict,
- Make ethical judgments.

The emerging formula can therefore be represented as:

Technical Intelligence + Artificial Intelligence + Emotional Intelligence

The professional of the future may not be the person who knows everything.

It may be the person who can:

Learn quickly + Adapt emotionally + Work intelligently with technology + Work effectively with people.

21. PRACTICAL EI DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The following five-step model can be used by students, faculty and corporate professionals.

STEP 1 — RECOGNIZE - What am I feeling?

STEP 2 — UNDERSTAND- Why am I feeling this?

STEP 3 — REGULATE - Do I need to react immediately?

STEP 4 — EMPATHIZE - How might the other person be feeling?

STEP 5 — RESPOND - What response will produce the best constructive outcome?

The EI Formula - Recognize → Understand → Regulate → Empathize → Respond

22. DISCUSSION

The comparative framework presented in this paper suggests that Emotional Intelligence has relevance across the complete education-to-employment journey.

For students, EI may support resilience and career readiness.

For faculty, EI may strengthen mentoring, communication and classroom leadership.

For corporate professionals, EI may contribute to leadership, teamwork and adaptability.

The Bollywood and sports examples provide a useful bridge between academic theory and everyday understanding.

M. S. Dhoni's publicly documented comments about emotional control illustrate the concept of self-regulation.

Dangal provides a popular cultural example through which motivation, discipline and resilience can be discussed. Contemporary reporting on the film's preparation also documents the demanding physical and training process associated with its production.

These examples should remain **illustrative rather than diagnostic**. A film role or public interview cannot establish an individual's psychological profile. Their purpose is to help readers understand EI concepts in familiar contexts.

23. RECOMMENDATIONS -

For Universities - Universities should consider integrating Emotional Intelligence into:

- Orientation programmes,
- Mentoring,
- Career development,
- Placement preparation,
- Leadership programmes,
- Group projects,
- Student development programmes

For Faculty - Faculty-development programmes can include:

- Emotional self-awareness,
- Classroom emotional management,
- Empathetic communication,
- Conflict resolution,
- Mentoring,
- Academic leadership.

For Corporate Organizations- Organizations can introduce:

- EI leadership programmes,
- Coaching,
- Mentoring,
- 360-degree feedback,
- Employee well-being initiatives,
- Communication workshops,
- Conflict-management training.

For Students- Students can strengthen EI through:

- Sports,
- Public speaking,
- Group projects,
- Volunteering,
- Reflection journals,
- Peer learning,
- Constructive feedback,
- Leadership activities.

24. LIMITATIONS

This paper presents a conceptual and research framework and does not claim empirical results from a completed survey. Future research should collect primary data from students, faculty and corporate professionals and test the proposed hypotheses statistically.

Longitudinal research would be particularly valuable because it could examine whether Emotional Intelligence measured during university predicts later employability, leadership and career satisfaction.

25. FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Future studies may examine:

1. Emotional Intelligence and employability among management students.
2. Emotional Intelligence and faculty effectiveness.
3. Emotional Intelligence and corporate leadership.
4. EI and entrepreneurship.
5. EI and women leadership.
6. EI and employee retention.
7. EI and workplace well-being.
8. EI and sports leadership.
9. EI and Artificial Intelligence adoption.
10. EI and Industry 5.0 competencies.

26. CONCLUSION

Emotional Intelligence is increasingly relevant to the changing world of education, employment and leadership.

Academic knowledge tells us **what to do**.

Technical competence helps us **do it**.

Emotional Intelligence influences **how we respond while doing it**.

For students, it can help transform academic pressure into resilience.

For faculty, it can transform knowledge into meaningful mentoring.

For corporate professionals, it can transform management into leadership.

For individuals, it can help connect professional achievement with personal well-being.

The contemporary workplace evidence reinforces this direction. The World Economic Forum's 2025 skills analysis places resilience, leadership, motivation and self-awareness, and empathy and active listening among important workforce capabilities. The message of this paper is therefore simple:

IQ may open the door.

Skills may help you enter.

Emotional Intelligence may determine how effectively you grow.

And in the age of Artificial Intelligence:

The winning combination is not AI versus humans.

It is AI + Intelligence + Emotional Intelligence + Human Values.

Final Thought

"The greatest success is not simply reaching the top; it is reaching the top without losing yourself, your relationships and your sense of purpose."

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Author(s) Profile –

1- Prof Vijay Raj (Chairman –Krishna Group of Institutions, Meerut.
(www.kgimeerut.com)

2- Prof Dr Devendra Arora –Group Advisor- Krishna Group of Institutions, Meerut

Honorary Board Member of Krishna Group of Institution, Meerut

<https://kgimeerut.com/about-us/corporate-advisory-board>

3- Mr. Sonu Abhinandan Kumar (Honorary Board Member – Corporate Advisory Board, KGI- Meerut)

Mr. Sonu Abhinandan Kumar is the Vice President and Business Head – SMB at ApnaTime Tech Pvt. Ltd. He has over 20 years of experience and is an alumnus of IIM Lucknow.

4- Prof. Nishchal Verma -(Honorary Board Member- Corporate Advisory Board , KGI Meerut)

Nishchal Verma have 30 Years' experience worked as Senior Vice President - Sales at Tata Play Ltd, a leading DTH service provider in India. He's had a stellar career, previously serving as Vice President - Service and General Manager - Sales Operations at Tata Play. Before joining Tata Play, he worked with Onida and INFRES METHODEX PVT. LTD.