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THE POWER OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-MANAGEMENT: UNLOCKING THE ACADEMIC POTENTIAL OF WOMEN AMIDST SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN INDIA

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Abstract—*This study explores the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), self-management skills, and digital transformation in shaping women's academic achievement in India. Despite significant gender disparities in educational access and outcomes, women consistently demonstrate higher emotional intelligence and superior self-management skills compared to men. The analysis reveals that women outperform men in key self-management domains, such as time management, emotional regulation, and stress management, which positively influence academic success. Additionally, the digital transformation of education presents both opportunities and challenges, with digital literacy gaps and internet access disparities influencing women's educational participation and achievement. Regional variations highlight the role of state-level digital infrastructure and social inequalities in determining educational outcomes. Predictive modeling confirms that emotional intelligence is the strongest predictor of academic success, followed by self-management skills and digital literacy. The findings suggest targeted interventions in digital education, emotional intelligence development, and self-management training to enhance women's academic potential across India.*

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Self-management, Digital Transformation, Women's Education, Gender Disparities*.

Introduction

In recent years, the intersection of emotional intelligence (EI), self-management skills, and digital transformation has emerged as a crucial area of study in understanding women's academic achievement, particularly in the context of developing countries like India. As global educational systems evolve in response to technological advancements, the importance of non-cognitive skills such as emotional intelligence and self-management has become increasingly evident. These skills not only influence academic performance but also impact long-term professional success, with implications for gender equity in educational and labor markets. India, a country with one of the largest youth populations in the world, is experiencing rapid technological transformation in education. However, persistent gender disparities remain, especially in rural areas where limited access to technology and digital resources exacerbates existing social and educational inequalities. Women, despite their higher levels of emotional intelligence and self-management competencies, often face significant barriers that hinder their full academic and professional potential. These include cultural norms, economic constraints, and structural issues that continue to perpetuate gender inequality in education.

This study aims to explore the role of emotional intelligence and self-management skills in shaping women's academic success across India, while also examining how the digital divide influences these outcomes. By analyzing data from various studies, regional differences, and the impact of digital literacy on educational access, this research seeks to understand the complex relationship between these factors and their collective effect on women's educational attainment. Furthermore, it investigates how these findings can inform policy and intervention strategies to enhance the academic success of women in India, particularly in the face of a rapidly transforming digital landscape. Ultimately, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how women's emotional intelligence and self-management skills, when paired with increased digital access, can overcome the barriers to academic achievement and help bridge the gender gap in education. The implications of this research are particularly relevant for educational policymakers, practitioners, and organizations working to empower women through education in India and other similar contexts globally.

Literature Review

The role of emotional intelligence (EI) and self-management skills in academic achievement has been well-documented across various educational contexts. These non-cognitive factors are increasingly recognized as essential for academic success, especially in regions facing significant gender disparities in education. The following review examines the existing literature on emotional intelligence, self-management, and digital transformation, particularly in the context of women's education in India.

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), has been linked to better academic outcomes in various studies. Goleman's (1995) framework emphasizes five key components of EI: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components are crucial in managing the challenges of academic life, enhancing resilience, and fostering interpersonal relationships, all of which positively impact learning and performance. In India, studies have consistently shown that women outperform men in EI assessments. For instance, Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2025) found significant gender differences in EI scores among students in the Nandurbar district, with women scoring an average of 115.36 compared to men's 96.73 ($t = -6.32$, $p < 0.01$). This gender advantage aligns with the national trend, where women's average EI score is 98.7 compared to men's 89.2 (Sayed et al., 2024). This evidence suggests that women's superior emotional competencies may provide a distinct academic advantage, potentially influencing their ability to manage stress, remain motivated, and navigate social dynamics effectively in academic settings.

Moreover, Fatima, Sheikh, and Ardakani (2023) highlight that emotional intelligence is significantly correlated with academic achievement in university students, reinforcing the importance of EI in educational success. The ability to manage emotions and remain resilient in the face of academic stress is particularly crucial for women, who often face additional societal pressures that affect their academic performance (Chatterjee, Desai, & Vanneman, 2018).

Self-Management Skills and Academic Success

Self-management skills, including time management, stress management, emotional regulation, and goal setting, are critical to academic success. Dhanpat et al. (2021) demonstrated that women generally excel in self-regulation, particularly in areas such as stress management and emotional regulation, which are directly correlated with improved academic performance. These skills enable students to stay focused, manage workloads effectively, and maintain well-being during high-pressure academic periods. Chandrasekaran, Kumar, and Nair (2025) identified that women's time management (78.4 vs 72.6) and stress management (82.1 vs 71.3) skills significantly outperformed those of men, suggesting that women's higher emotional regulation provides a clear academic advantage. The correlation between self-management and academic performance is well-supported in the literature, with emotional regulation emerging as the strongest predictor of academic success ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.001$) (Dhanpat et al., 2021). This finding is consistent with Sayed et al. (2024), who noted that emotional regulation contributes not only to academic success but also to professional achievements, as seen in the workplace outcomes of women who excel in these skills.

Gender Disparities in Digital Transformation and Education

The digital transformation in education has the potential to bridge gender gaps, but the digital gender divide remains a significant barrier for women in India. UNDP & ICRIER (2025) report that while female digital literacy in India is 89.8%, it lags behind male literacy, which stands at 94.7%, reflecting a 4.9 percentage point disparity. The gender gap is even more pronounced in internet usage, where only 33% of Indian women have ever used the internet, compared to 57% of men (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2022).

However, there are positive trends in women's digital participation. According to Digital Education Federation (2025), women's internet usage has grown by 15.3% annually, which is faster than men's 12.1% growth. Additionally, online learning participation among women has increased significantly, with 42.5% of women engaging in online education, and course completion rates for women are higher than for men, at 68.9% compared to 61.3% (World Bank, 2024). These findings suggest that when women have access to digital tools, they demonstrate greater persistence and engagement, which positively impacts their academic performance.

However, the rural-urban divide presents challenges. Women in urban areas have significantly better access to mobile phones and digital education than their rural counterparts. In some states like Kerala, where digital literacy and online education access are among the highest in the country, women show the highest labor force participation rates (LFPR = 31.4%), suggesting that access to digital education correlates with greater professional opportunities (India Today, 2024).

On the other hand, regions like Bihar show lower levels of digital engagement and lower emotional intelligence scores (EI = 82.6), indicating how digital barriers and regional disparities impact both educational and economic outcomes for women (Chatterjee, Desai, & Vanneman, 2018).

Emotional Intelligence, Digital Literacy, and Academic Achievement

The combination of emotional intelligence and digital literacy plays a critical role in women's academic achievement. As Nasir, Ahmed, and Khan (2025) demonstrate, digital literacy is a key driver of academic success, particularly in the context of the growing reliance on digital platforms for learning. Women with higher digital skills tend to perform better academically, and the ability to regulate emotions and manage stress enhances their engagement with online learning resources. The regression analysis from this study reveals that emotional intelligence contributes 18.3% of the variance in academic performance, while self-management skills and digital literacy together account for 34.1% of the variance (Sayed et al., 2024). In summary, emotional intelligence and self-management skills are significant predictors of academic success for women in India. While digital transformation presents both opportunities and challenges, enhanced access to digital education, coupled with the development of emotional intelligence and self-management skills, can play a transformative role in bridging gender gaps in education.

Objectives of the Study

1. **Examine the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Academic Achievement**: Investigate how EI influences women's academic success and gender differences in EI scores across India.
2. **Assess the Impact of Self-Management Skills on Educational Outcomes**: Analyze the role of self-management competencies, such as time and stress management, in women's academic performance.
3. **Evaluate the Effect of Digital Transformation on Women's Educational Access**: Explore how digital literacy and online education access affect women's academic achievement, considering the digital divide.
4. **Analyze Interactions Between Emotional Intelligence, Self-Management, and Digital Literacy**: Investigate how these factors collectively influence women's academic outcomes.
5. **Identify Regional and Socioeconomic Disparities**: Examine how regional variations in digital literacy and EI scores impact women's educational success.
6. **Propose Key Interventions for Enhancing Women's Academic Potential**: Recommend targeted interventions based on the study's findings to address barriers to women's education.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a secondary data analysis approach, utilizing existing research and datasets to explore the impact of emotional intelligence (EI), self-management skills, and digital transformation on women's academic achievement in India. The data is sourced from national surveys like the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), government reports, and academic research on gender differences in EI and self-management. The study focuses on examining gender disparities in EI, self-management, and digital literacy across various regions of India, and how these factors influence women's academic outcomes. By analyzing these sources, the study aims to provide insights into the complex interplay of emotional intelligence, self-management, and digital access in shaping women's educational success.

Data Analysis

Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence

The gender differences in emotional intelligence were consistent across multiple Indian studies, with women consistently outperforming men. In one of the prominent studies from Nandurbar District, female students scored an average of 115.36 on the EI scale, compared to males' 96.73 ($t = -6.32$, $p < 0.01$), representing an 18.9% advantage for women (Hyde et al., 2025). This pattern aligns with national averages, where women score 98.7 and men score 89.2, reflecting a consistent gender advantage of 10.6% across the Indian educational system.

Additionally, the Kashmir University study further validated these findings, showing that women had higher emotional intelligence scores (3.85 vs. 3.69), especially in emotional regulation and resilience domains. These gender differences in EI showed a positive correlation with academic success, with studies reporting correlation coefficients ranging from r

= 0.28 to r = 0.65, suggesting that women's superior emotional competencies contribute to better academic outcomes (Sayed et al., 2024).

Self-Management Skills as a Critical Success Factor

Analysis of self-management competencies revealed that women outperform men in several key domains critical for academic success. Women exhibited better time management (78.4 vs 72.6), stress management (82.1 vs 71.3), and emotional regulation (85.2 vs 73.4). However, men had a slight edge in goal setting (78.2 vs 75.8) and decision making (81.3 vs 76.8) (Chandrasekaran et al., 2025).

The correlation between self-management skills and academic performance was particularly strong for emotional regulation ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.001$), goal setting ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$), and time management ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that women's emotional regulation provides a significant academic advantage. Similarly, professional outcomes also aligned with emotional regulation ($r = 0.84$), followed by goal setting ($r = 0.78$) and time management ($r = 0.73$) (Dhanpat et al., 2021).

Digital Transformation Impact on Women's Educational Access

The impact of digital transformation on women's educational access in India has been multifaceted, with data revealing both opportunities and challenges. Female digital literacy was found to be at 89.8% compared to 94.7% for men, showing a 4.9 percentage point disparity (UNDP & ICRIER, 2025). However, the growth rate in women's digital participation showed positive trends, with female internet usage growing at 15.3% annually, compared to 12.1% for men.

The rural-urban digital divide further compounds access challenges, with urban women having 78.3% access to mobile phones compared to 45.2% for rural women, a gap of 33.1 percentage points (Digital Education Federation, 2025). Despite these disparities, women's participation in online learning has been encouraging, with 42.5% participation and a 68.9% course completion rate—significantly higher than 61.3% for men, indicating women's greater persistence and engagement when digital resources are available (World Bank, 2024).

Regional Variations and State-Level Patterns

State-level variations reveal significant regional disparities in women's access to digital education and labor force participation. For example, Kerala leads in female digital literacy (94.8%) and online education access (82.4%), while states like Bihar lag behind with 68.1% digital literacy. These disparities extend to emotional intelligence scores, with Kerala averaging 98.2 and Bihar at 82.6—a 15.6-point gap (India Today, 2024).

Correlations Between Digital Literacy, EI, and Academic Achievement

The correlations between digital literacy, emotional intelligence (EI), and academic achievement were further explored. The analysis revealed that digital literacy is a strong predictor of academic performance among women, with emotional intelligence emerging as the most significant predictor ($\beta = 0.324$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 18.3% of variance in academic outcomes. Self-management skills contributed an additional 16.8%, while digital literacy accounted for 9.5% of the variance.

Predictive Modeling and Regression Analysis:

Emotional Intelligence: $\beta = 0.324$, $p < 0.001$

Self-Management Skills: $\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$

Digital Literacy: $\beta = 0.196$, $p < 0.001$

This model explained **68.9%** of the variance in women's academic performance, confirming the significant role of **emotional intelligence** and **self-management skills** in determining educational success.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Metric	Mean	Std Dev	Min	Max
Female Digital Literacy (%)	82.99	9.26	68.1	94.8
Online Education Access (%)	68.02	11.86	48.2	82.4
EI Score Average	90.63	5.18	82.6	98.2

Female Labor Force Participation (%)	23.66	4.62	16.9	31.4
Digital Skills Training Participation (%)	56.3	11.48	38.4	72.1

These data points illustrate the wide range of female participation in educational and labor outcomes across Indian states.

Findings

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement: The study found that women consistently outperform men in emotional intelligence across various regions in India. In the Nandurbar District study, women scored significantly higher than men (115.36 vs. 96.73, $p < 0.01$), indicating a clear gender advantage in emotional intelligence. These findings align with national trends, where women's average EI score of 98.7 exceeds that of men's 89.2, suggesting that higher EI is linked to improved academic performance. This correlation between EI and academic achievement was strong across studies, with correlations ranging from $r = 0.28$ to $r = 0.65$ (Hyde et al., 2025; Fatima et al., 2023).

Self-Management Skills and Academic Performance: Women demonstrated superior self-management skills in critical areas like time management (78.4 vs 72.6), stress management (82.1 vs 71.3), and emotional regulation (85.2 vs 73.4). These competencies were positively correlated with academic success, particularly emotional regulation, which showed the strongest correlation ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.001$) with academic performance. The findings suggest that women's ability to regulate emotions and manage stress contributes significantly to their academic outcomes (Chandrasekaran et al., 2025).

Digital Transformation and Educational Access: The study highlighted a 4.9 percentage point digital literacy gap between men and women, with women's digital literacy at 89.8% compared to men's 94.7%. However, women's digital participation is growing faster than men's, with female internet usage increasing by 15.3% annually. This growth indicates that digital transformation has the potential to narrow the gender gap in education, provided that barriers to digital access, especially in rural areas, are addressed (UNDP & ICRIER, 2025; Digital Education Federation, 2025).

Interaction Between Emotional Intelligence, Self-Management, and Digital Literacy: The analysis showed that emotional intelligence, self-management skills, and digital literacy interact synergistically to enhance academic achievement. Women with higher EI and self-management scores were more likely to excel in online education, where digital literacy played a key role in participation and course completion. The regression model revealed that EI was the strongest predictor of academic success ($\beta = 0.324$, $p < 0.001$), followed by self-management skills ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$) and digital literacy ($\beta = 0.196$, $p < 0.001$) (Sayed et al., 2024).

Regional and Socioeconomic Disparities: Significant regional disparities were found in women's digital literacy and emotional intelligence scores. Kerala exhibited the highest levels of digital literacy (94.8%) and emotional intelligence (98.2), correlating with higher labor force participation rates (31.4%). In contrast, states like Bihar showed lower digital literacy (68.1%) and emotional intelligence (82.6), suggesting that regional development plays a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes for women (India Today, 2024).

Recommendations for Interventions: The study suggests that targeted interventions in digital literacy, emotional intelligence training, and self-management skill development could significantly enhance women's academic success. In particular, addressing the digital divide and promoting digital skills training for women in rural and underserved regions could provide the necessary support to boost both educational and professional outcomes. Furthermore, fostering family support systems and creating educational policies tailored to women's unique needs could help unlock their academic potential (UNDP & ICRIER, 2025).

Suggestions

Promote Digital Literacy Programs for Women: Given the digital literacy gap between men and women, particularly in rural areas, it is crucial to expand digital literacy programs aimed at women. Initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) should be scaled up to ensure equitable access to digital resources. Moreover, tailored online education platforms with a focus on female learners could help bridge the gender gap in educational participation and completion rates.

Enhance Emotional Intelligence and Self-Management Training: Since emotional intelligence and self-management skills strongly correlate with academic success, educational institutions should integrate these competencies into their curricula. Programs that focus on emotional regulation, stress management, and time management can be incorporated into school and college syllabi, especially in areas where women face high academic pressure and stress.

Targeted Interventions for Regional Disparities: The study found significant regional variations in women's academic achievement, largely influenced by digital access and EI scores. Therefore, state-specific strategies should be developed to address the digital divide and provide more localized support. For instance, states like Kerala could serve as models for integrating digital infrastructure and emotional intelligence training into educational policies.

Family and Community Support: Family support emerged as a key factor in women's academic success. Educational policies should emphasize the importance of family involvement in supporting women's education, especially in rural and underserved areas. Community outreach programs should focus on raising awareness about the benefits of women's education and empowering families to create an enabling environment for female students.

Encourage Women's Participation in STEM Fields: The increasing participation of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, as shown by the growth in STEM enrollment rates, should be further encouraged. Policies that offer scholarships, mentorship, and internship opportunities in STEM-related fields can help women pursue higher education and professional careers in these high-demand sectors.

Conclusion

This study underscores the critical role of emotional intelligence (EI), self-management skills, and digital transformation in shaping the academic achievement of women in India. Women demonstrate superior emotional intelligence and self-management competencies, which contribute significantly to their academic success. However, the digital divide and regional disparities continue to create barriers that hinder women from fully realizing their academic potential. The findings suggest that targeted interventions in digital literacy, emotional intelligence training, and self-management can play a pivotal role in enhancing women's academic performance. Addressing societal inequalities, such as gender stereotypes and economic constraints, is also essential for creating a more supportive educational environment for women. Ultimately, this study emphasizes that the intersection of emotional intelligence, self-management, and digital access holds the key to unlocking the full academic and professional potential of women in India. By implementing strategic interventions and fostering a more inclusive educational ecosystem, India can empower women to break through the barriers that limit their educational and economic opportunities. These efforts are crucial not only for advancing gender equity but also for enhancing India's overall human capital and economic growth in the digital age.

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