


# Chapter 7

## Emotional Intelligence in Higher Education: Humanising Technology for Holistic Student Development

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### ABSTRACT

*Emotional intelligence represents a transformative paradigm in higher education, aligning technology with human values and fostering holistic student development. This abstract underscores the importance of integrating emotional intelligence into pedagogical practices, faculty development initiatives, and institutional strategies to create inclusive, empathetic, and technologically enhanced learning environments. Future research should continue to explore innovative approaches for cultivating emotional intelligence in higher education and leveraging its potential to humanise technology in the service of student success and well-being.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Contextual Overview of Higher Education in the Digital Age

The landscape of higher education is experiencing a profound transformation, largely driven by rapid technological advancements that have reshaped pedagogical practices and learning environments (Reis da Silva and Mitchell, 2024a). The integration of digital tools into educational frameworks has the potential to revolutionise the way students engage with knowledge, interact with peers, and communicate with educators. This shift towards digitalization, however, presents a myriad of challenges, particularly concerning the preservation of interpersonal connections and the emotional well-being of students in increasingly virtualized settings. As traditional face-to-face pedagogies give way to blended or fully online learning environments, there is an urgent need to prioritise human-centred approaches that foster meaningful interactions and emotional support among students and educators alike (Calabrese et al., 2019; Nguyen Van & Nguyen Dong; 2023). The transition to digital learning environments has height-

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-7011-7.ch007

ened the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) as a critical competency for both students and educators. Emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and influence emotions—both one's own and those of others (da Silva, 2022; Reis da Silva, 2024a). In the context of higher education, EI is pivotal in navigating the complex social and academic landscapes that students and educators encounter. As educational environments become increasingly digitised, the integration of emotional intelligence becomes essential to ensure that technological advancements do not undermine the humanistic aspects of learning and development (Nabi et al., 2022).

Moreover, the role of emotional intelligence extends beyond individual academic performance; it plays a crucial part in enhancing interpersonal relationships among students and educators, thereby fostering a supportive and collaborative learning environment (da Silva, 2022; Reis da Silva, 2024a). Research has shown that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit better academic performance, improved mental health, and enhanced social interactions (Bhati, 2023). As such, the cultivation of emotional intelligence within higher education institutions is not merely an ancillary consideration but a fundamental aspect of promoting holistic student development and well-being in the digital age (Tyszkiewicz-Bandur et al., 2017; Ada & Okoli 2019).

## **1.2 The Emergence and Importance of Emotional Intelligence**

The concept of emotional intelligence, initially articulated by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer and popularised by Daniel Goleman, has gained significant traction in educational discourse. Emotional intelligence is defined as the capacity to recognise and manage one's own emotions while also being attuned to the emotions of others (da Silva, 2022). This multifaceted construct encompasses several key components, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Walter et al., 2023; Xu, 2023). In the context of higher education, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a vital predictor of academic success, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being (Ulutas and Karaoglu, 2016). Research has consistently demonstrated a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic performance among students in higher education. For instance, a study conducted among students at Vietnam National University revealed that higher emotional intelligence was associated with better self-evaluated academic results, echoing findings from other studies that highlight the significance of emotional competencies in academic settings (Mohamed, 2019; Nguyen Van & Nguyen Dong; 2023). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has been linked to resilience in the face of academic stress, enabling students to navigate challenges more effectively and maintain a positive outlook on their educational experiences (Laborde et al., 2020; Nogueira et al., 2023).

The integration of emotional intelligence into higher education curricula is essential for fostering a supportive learning environment that prioritises the emotional and psychological well-being of students. Educational interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence have shown promise in improving students' self-efficacy, stress management, and overall mental health (Abbasi et al., 2018; Katsora et al., 2022). As institutions increasingly adopt online and blended learning models, the need for emotional intelligence becomes even more pronounced, as students may experience feelings of isolation and disconnection in virtual settings. By equipping students with emotional intelligence skills, educators can help mitigate these challenges and promote a more inclusive and empathetic educational experience (Nasir et al., 2022). Moreover, the role of emotional intelligence is not limited to students; educators themselves must also cultivate emotional competencies to effectively engage with their students and foster a positive learning environment. Research indicates that teachers with higher emotional intelli-

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