

Investigating  
emotional intelligence  
level of aggression  
psychology essay



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This study has explored links between emotional intelligence, aggression level and coping strategies, as well as the variables contribute during students academic life. In this study, it is sought to hypostasise three variables (1) students with low Emotional Intelligence level will have a prediction of higher level of Aggression (2) students with higher level of Aggression have effective Coping Strategies and (3) there will be a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Coping Strategies. It will be investigated to calculate the level of student's academic performances amongst undergraduate university. This study focuses on ways to measure the participant's emotional intelligence, level of aggression and preventative measures to coping strategies. The results gave a reason to understand why the university of Bedfordshire students are affected by low emotional intelligence level and high level of aggression. A sample of 77 undergraduates' university students participated in this study.

This study met these triplets' research aims through an extensive study of relevant literature and the implementation of practical research. The latter was carried out through a correlation study using three types of self report questionnaires measuring the participant's emotional intelligence (TEIQue-SF Questionnaire), level of aggression (Buss and Perry, 1992, Aggression questionnaire) and coping strategies (Psychology department project 2006 Attitudes, coping, control and psychological well-being questionnaire. The SPSS programme carried out the data analysis findings.

Furthermore, the findings had shown a two positive outcome; hypothesis 1 was supported, hypothesis 2 was not supported and hypothesis 3 was supported.

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The main conclusion drawn from this research were that current approaches to..

## **Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Aggression, Coping, Coping Strategies, Measure**

### **2. Introduction**

For many years the study of intelligence and emotions has been focused mainly on the adaptive use of cognition (Wechsler, 1939 & Piaget, 1972). In the recent years it has been suggested there have been more encompassing approaches to understanding intelligence (Gardner, 1984 & Sternberg, 1988). Everyone is unique as we all behave and react differently to events. Our intelligence and emotions can be defined as a complex state of feelings that result in the physical and psychological changes that influence thought and behaviour. There are many theories which attempt to understand why we experience emotions. Individuals experience many emotional states that can affect our behaviour or how individuals might respond to a situation which may include, anger, kindness, fear, admiration and are all emotional states that you may respond to events.

The James-Lange theory of emotion (1920) argues that different events cause physiological arousal then individuals interpret this arousal. After the interpretation of the arousal one can experience emotions. If the arousal is not noticed then one will not experience any emotions based on the event. For example, one is walking down the alley way in the dark and hears footsteps behind and one begins to tremble and heart beats faster and ones breathing deepens. These physiological changes are interpreted as ones body's preparation for a fearful situation. One is experiencing fear.

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Likewise, Cannon-Bard theory (1927) argues that one experiences physiological arousal and an emotion at the same time but gives no attention to the role of thoughts or outward behaviours. Using the example above his theory starts from; one is walking down the alley way in the dark and hears footsteps behind and begins to tremble, your heart beats faster and ones breathing deepens. At the same time as these physiological changes occur one can also experience the emotion of fear.

Mayer and Salovey (1990) who first used the term 'Emotions and intelligence' they both formulated a model of emotional intelligence. They defined 'the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions' to guide one's thinking and behaviour. They also provided a demonstration of 'how an aspect of emotional intelligence could be measured as a mental ability (Mayer, DiPaolo & Salovey, 1990). Furthermore, to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others emotional intelligence (EI) is a useful strategy to evaluate emotions. EI includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; we define emotional intelligence as the power to reason about emotions. (Mayer & Salovey, 1957).

It has been previously hypothesised that life successes can be attributed to emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence levels have been correlated with a myriad of benefits and negative or positive life outcomes. Advantages include the high levels of happiness, well-being and health 'better academic performances' and an increased ability to cope with changes (Qualter, 2007). The advanced emotional abilities show a lower stress level, fewer signs of aggression, and demonstrate a smaller likelihood  
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of drug and alcohol uses. If one has a high emotional intelligence you are able to recognise your own emotional state and the emotional state of others and engage with people in a way that draws them to you. This can aid forming a healthier relationship, and attain greater success at work, and lead to a more fulfilling life.

Levels of emotional intelligence have been demonstrated to be beneficial. Low levels have been of emotional intelligence create recognizable deficits (Goleman, 1996). However, if someone with a low emotional intelligence level has never really had anyone to talk through their emotions with, individuals generally wouldn't know how to deal with their emotions and they may come to a rage such as signs of aggression, drinking, using drugs, weak academic performances etc, when they are going down in life or show the ability of stress. Low emotional intelligence tends to have a hard time understanding situations from the outlook of others and will also tend to be less sympathetic (Henley & Long, 1999).

Recent studies have been investigated by Hannah Jean Moskat & Katelyn Marie Sorensen (2012), ' investigation of Emotional Intelligence and Aggression predicted Juvenile offense'. They emphasised the nature of emotional intelligence; their study sought to test the relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression in the context of juvenile delinquency. It was predicted that EI would be negatively correlated with aggression, and also relate it to sex and offense type. The participants were tested using the Bar-On EQI: YV (S) and the Aggression Questionnaire to measure their emotional intelligence and aggression levels. The overall results found that lower emotional intelligence levels were correlated with higher aggression <https://assignbuster.com/investigating-emotional-intelligence-level-of-aggression-psychology-essay/>

levels. They also found that a low emotional intelligence level was correlated with higher aggression scores and that participants scored the highest in physical aggression. It was discussed in terms of aggression prevention programmes like the rehabilitation for the youth offenders.

Moreover, previous psychological studies that have been undertaken in the previous years studied by Andrew. W. Johnson (2003), study was based on a correlation study of emotional intelligence and aggression within adolescents. He investigated 'how the relationship was linked to each variable, and how aggression affected their emotional intelligence level'. Overall, the results clearly showed how the females had a high level of emotional intelligence due to less aggression and how males scored high on aggression.

Kartika Aprillia & Ritandiyono (2007) also investigated the relationship on emotional intelligence and aggression. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression in adult's behaviour. Results from the study have shown that a scale of emotional intelligence showed it had a negative hypothesis.

### Coping and Stress

In the terms of coping, is defined as trying to reduce the consequences of stress. There are several different ways in which coping is applied, which can be caused by many negative emotions like stress, anger etc. Coping is described as a cognitive and behavioural response to a stressful situation. It can overcome with high demands and critical events that pose a loss, harm, threat, loss, or challenge to a person. (Lazarus, 1991)  
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Coping responses (thoughts, feelings and actions) deals with problematic situations that are normally encountered in everyday life with particular circumstances, Sometimes problems are solved and sometimes they are ignored in an individual's attempt to deal with the environment. Thus an examination of the ways in which people may cope with stresses and concerns provides a means of understanding their stress and concerns which might affect their behaviour. The procedure of determining how people deal with their stress in daily life involves the observation of behaviour through the reporting by self or others. By far the most common what to determine how people cope is to ask them to report, by filling out a questionnaire, ' what is it they do' it to ask them ' to describe in interviews or written text'.

There are many ways of coping with stress; the effectiveness really depends on the type of stressors, the individual and the circumstances. For example, if you think about ' how your friends deal with stressors' like exams you will see a range of different coping responses. Some people will pace around or tell you how worried they are or others will revise or ask their teachers for clues. This topic was introduced by Lazarus in 1984.

Moreover, Lazarus's ' Transactional model' takes to an account of the dynamic nature of human behaviour. This model emphasises between the stress experience and respondent to the environment. The model proposes that individuals can be taught to manage their stress and cope with their stressors. They may learn to change their perspective of the stressor and provide them with ability and confidence to improve their everyday life and have the ability to handle all types of stressors. Overall this has results for

support for a conceptualisation of coping that has emerged from Richard and Lazarus and the Berkeley group.

Each individual will have different coping responses, especially dealing with low level of emotional intelligence. Moreover, to reduce the level of low emotional intelligence (including anger), coping strategies help one to increase the negative emotions. It refers thoughts and actions we may use to deal with threatening situation. For example, when you're going through high level of aggression, you may be recommended to anger management or counselling therapy. This current study will evaluate students coping strategies that may help to indicate the low level of emotional intelligence and aggression.

Additionally, this current study focuses on the high and low level of emotional intelligence, which may lead to aggression, as predicted. Hence this might be one of the reasons for low emotional intelligence level. Emotional intelligence is often measured by self-report and psychological testing. David Wechsler (1940) described the influence on intelligent behaviour and argued that our models of intelligence would not be completed until we can effectively describe these factors. Self report will be used in this study to measure the level of emotional intelligence and level of aggression, along with coping strategies evaluation to support both of the variables.

There have been recent researchers that have proven " Students with higher levels of emotional intelligence achieve more academically". There have been a recent study based on undergraduate students who are taking

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information technology studies, the study measured ' how well students in computer science and information defined as the ability of perceived, positively influenced personal and others emotions'. The researchers examined the effects of these intrapersonal factors on their academic grades. Six hundred undergraduate students participated in the study; which was based on a series of questionnaires designed to measure coping strategies and levels of emotional intelligence. It was found that students emotional intelligence was not directly linked to academic success, students with higher levels of emotional intelligence had more self confidence and knowledge that can handle any problems (including frustration, stress etc) and that having more self-efficacy in improving their academic performances.

Coping IV and DV research? There have been previous research studies indicating the coping strategies method is a dependant variable.

### Aggression

In the term of ' Aggression' it refers to a range of behaviours that can give a result to both physical and psychological harm to one, even in the environment. The expression of aggression can occur in a number of ways which can be verbal, emotional, physical or mental. (Baron, & Richardson, 1994)

The act of aggression behaviour has been a huge part of human society from the day we were born and even yet still today plays a role in our society and our lives. Whether it is at a rugby or boxing match competing with one another, on the streets with riots between rival teams, or in another country <https://assignbuster.com/investigating-emotional-intelligence-level-of-aggression-psychology-essay/>

altogether fighting terrorist threats there is no doubt that aggression is such a prevalent part of our society. It is important for psychologists to study the cognitive processes involved in greater detail as it has a huge role in our lives.

Psychologists have been interested in problems of aggression; they have been focused on the assessment of conditions leading to the performance of aggressive behaviour. Social behaviour can be one of the influences around each other such as peer pressure, copying individual's behaviour and thinking it's alright to act like that. Buss (1994) claimed how the adaptive problem likely be confronted by men who are lower in relative value than women, for example men who experience a decrement (e. g. failure) they tend to be aggressive.

Albert Bandura (1977) stated that social behaviour is learnt through by observing and imitating actions by others. She looked at the way individuals behave in certain situations. According to her theory by being rewarded or punished for negative actions. For example if a child sees his older sister bring home a good report and gets a reward, the child may observe this and see the older sister gets rewarded then the child will learn being good will get you rewarded so they should do it to.

Bandura's social learning theory (1977) refers to aggression acts. Bandura looked at the theory of operant conditioning, as well as Skinner (1953), if behaviour is rewarded it will positively reinforce behaviour therefore making it more likely to be repeated again. On the other hand of the scale shows if behaviour is punished it will negatively reinforce that behaviour making it less likely to occur in the future. From this study Bandura proposed that a

person's aggressive behaviour in a given context is predicted by their previous experiences with their own and others peoples aggressive behaviour. (Albert, 2004)

A classic example of this theory was known as the ' Bobo doll experiment' also by Bandura. This experiment reflected on children watching a video of an adult either being aggressive or non aggressive to a bobo doll. After they have watched the video, the children were then put in a room with a bobo doll and observations were made how they would react. Before the children saw the Bobo doll the frustration in the child was intentionally built by showing them toys that they were not permitted to play with. in result, when the children were put in the room with the bobo doll it was discovered that children who saw the aggressive behaviour reproduced the same aggression the model had shown on the doll. In contrast children in the non aggressive condition displayed no aggressive signs towards the doll. This experiment showed that children were very easily influenced to copy others. (Martin, Carlson & Buskit, 2010)

Aggression may not occur in a vacuum, there are many situational factors that may influence aggression. There is evidence regarding the importance of situational factors in predicting aggressive behaviour which may apply to university students.

Frustration: There are some typical responses to frustration especially during the hard times which may include the environment of being stressed and always intense maybe in your workplace, at home, or during your university life. Frustration includes anger, loss of self esteem, depression, stress or self-

confidence. As we are focused more on aggression in university students, anger and aggression is expressed towards the object perceived as the cause of frustration. For example, you might have an assignment deadline within two days and yet haven't started it, the feeling of being really frustrated and you start to show signs of aggression to others or if your laptop doesn't work you might hit the laptop for it to work. If someone gets in your way, you could verbally threaten them or push them on aside. Frustration is powerful for direct aggression, displaced aggression is often used. Someone angry often acts without thinking.

In 1939, University from Yale researchers published a report on frustration and aggression, the theory has been influenced by Freud's theory. The authors, (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939) proposed that aggression was due to frustration, frustration plays a big role in aggression and the development of aggression starts from frustration. The frustration-aggression theory study states that aggression is caused by frustration. When someone is prevented from reaching their ambition or goal they become frustrated. This frustration can then turn into aggression when something triggers it. For example, if you fail in your final exam you will definitely become frustrated. But if someone randomly told you " you're such a loser", just to put your confidence down so you don't pass your exam, then in that case your frustration will turn into aggression. When people perceive that they are being prevented from achieving a goal, their frustration will result in aggression. The closer you get to your goal, the greater the frustration you get by being held back. An unexpected occurrence of

frustration may also increase the likelihood of aggression. (Barker, Dembo & Lewin, 1941)

Factors generally associate with aggressive behaviour and alcohol-related aggression from the age of 12-18 years (Helene Raskin White, John Brick, Stephen Hansell, 1993)

Alcohol: substances such as alcohol play a part to an increase in anti-social aggressiveness in people. It is thought that the lowering of inhibitions may result in an increase in aggressive levels. Alcohol is coming from university party life; researchers have shown that alcohol consumption can make people more prone to social influence while also being less able to think through the consequences of their own actions for themselves or other people. Combining results in a large increase in the likelihood of committing aggressive acts especially when drinking in groups which will glorify aggressive acts. "Alcohol intoxication is involved in at least 50% of all violent crimes". (Bushman & Cooper, 1990)

Other factors that might associate with aggression could be;

Aggressive cues: students that may own weapons for many reasons, including self-defence or sporting events (e. g., hunting). Yet simply being in the presences of weapons has enough influence to increase aggressive behaviour, (Berkowitz & LePage, 1967). Maybe living out for university and being alone and for them to keep weapons might be a safe option for self defence. There have been recent events that university students are getting robbed, or attacked when there on their own.

Intangible entities (e. g., bad odors, noise): many times students experience being unpleasant due to intangible entities, such as bad odors and loud noises. Although people can't really behave aggressively towards these intangible entities, triggers can increase aggression. For example as a student you are working on an assignment or reading a book, there are other people making loud noise and you can't concentrate and it carries on for days, this may increase your level of aggression frustration and anger about the situation. When people feel a lack of control over the noise they tend to behave quite aggressively (Green & McCrown, 1984).

These factors may affect the academic level of education for most students.

The aggression literature has a set of rich theoretical perspectives, the aggression theories have offered frameworks from which a hypothesis regarding the causes and consequences of aggression could be tested. Each theory is distinctly more likely to contain several theories that share a considerable degree of overlap. The aggression theories have been reviewed in order to understand how aggression may be formulated.

### Coping with aggression

Learning how to control your aggression will allow you to be more successful in your academic life, stay healthy and happy and help you get most out of your life. Many researchers feel that aggression is one of the strongest predictors of anti-social behaviour. Interestingly, some researchers believe as youths grow older they will learn how to control their anger. Regardless, learning and practicing productive and healthy coping strategies is a good idea.

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An inability to cope with stress, disappointment, and difficulty can affect your life in many negative ways. Being an adult can be very stressful like physical changes in your body, academic demands, peer pressure, learning how to deal with gangs, family issues, concerns about your future may become stressors and can lead to negative effects. Learning how to deal and control your negative emotions and behaviour and take responsibility for them is a lifelong process.

According to Berkowitz's 'Cognitive Neo-association Theory' (1989, 1990) he proposed that an event such as frustrations, loud noises, and provocation, produces negative effects. The negative effect produced by unpleasant experiences automatically stimulates various thoughts, expressive motor reactions, memories, flight and fight tendencies. The fight associations may give rise to undeveloped feelings of anger, whereas the flight associations give a rise to undeveloped feelings of fear. This theory reflects back to the frustration-aggression theory, it's been assumed that signs of aggression have been associated to be in response by triggered events, which may give the thoughts, memories, psychological effects due to the events.

Moreover, successful coping may involve many strategies; problem solving, positive thinking, logical thinking, social support, or seeking professional help. People cope differently, what work for one person may not always work best for the other, most effective strategy for someone else. Your method for coping may be very according to the situation. You may handle it differently when you're at home and when you're at school. Professional help like counselling, anger management group, and group talk can help you reduce aggression levels.

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## Rationale

The rationale of the study is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and aggression and coping strategies among undergraduate university students. This study will examine their emotional intelligence and level of aggression and to see if there is a link between the effect of coping strategies and emotional intelligence and aggression. The outcome of the study aims is to calculate student's emotional intelligence and aggression level and being correlated to high level of aggression.

Statistically, in the results section it will show my prediction was significant then relevant programmes can be used to facilitate and develop student's emotions and low level of aggression.

The study is guided by three research questions; Firstly, students with low emotional intelligence level will have a higher level of aggression. Secondly, students with high level of aggression have effective coping strategies. Third, there will be a correlation relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies.

## **3. Methodology**

### 3.1 Design

The design that's going to be used is an independent measure which will have a non-parametric data, there is one Independent Variables (IV) which is Emotional intelligence (EI), and two Dependent Variable (DV) which are Aggression scores and Coping Strategies. This will be a correlation design as I will be comparing the three variables.



### 3. 2 Participants

Questionnaire data were collected by seventy seven volunteer participants. Opportunity sampling will be used in this study amongst Undergraduates Students in University of Bedfordshire. In total the complete sample comprised of seventy seven students of who were 39 females and 38 males, the age range was from 18 to 40 year olds (M=... and SD = 4. 11809). Participants attended a number of fields of studies with different courses.

### 3. 3 Materials

Measures; self report measurement of participants own emotions and behaviour, there will be three type of self-report questionnaires (see in appendices)-

(1) Emotional Intelligence (TEIQue-SF Questionnaire) - (appendix 1)

This questionnaire form contains 30 item based questions which are designed to measure overall trait emotional intelligence. It is based on the full form of the TEIQue. It uses a 7 point scale for the items from 0-7 to evaluate ones emotions. (Petrides & Furnham, 2006)

(2) Level of aggression (Buss and Perry, 1992, Aggression questionnaire) - (appendix 2)

The Buss and Perry (1992) questionnaire has 29 items based on a self-report aggression questionnaire, where the participants rank certain statements along with a 5 point scale from ' extremely uncharacteristic of me' to ' extremely characteristic of me'. The scores are normalized on a scale of 0-1

with 1 being the highest level of aggression. Participants will be responding to statements like ' When frustrated, I let my irritation show'. In the end, the questionnaire scores have 4 dimensions of aggression levels; physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger or hostility. (Buss and Durkee, 1957)

(3) Coping Strategies (Psychology department project 2006 Attitudes, coping, control and psychological well-being questionnaire) - (appendix 3)

This questionnaire is based on six sub-scales about the participant's psychological well being, attitudes, and childhood experience. It's a multidimensional scale for evaluating general coping styles.

#### Coping with life problems

The first survey is based on psychological wellbeing the questions are concerned with how you generally cope with problems in your life. Questions that had been asked were ' how do you generally cope with real life problems' and the participant will be rating the scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

#### Degree of control or influence you have over your life

The second survey is asked about the participant's ' degree of control or influence you have over your life' the rating scale is from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree).

#### Family events which may have been encountered in childhood

The next survey is asked a number of questions concerning family events which may have been encountered in childhood which the participant may have experienced. The rating scale is from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very often).

#### Hospital anxiety and depression

Moreover, the next survey is based on hospital anxiety and depression statements, the participant are asked ' I feel tense or wound' following statements like ' most of the time' or a lot of the time'. Each question has different statements.

#### Views people hold about Themselves

Furthermore, the next survey is asked ' views people hold about themselves' which may best represent the participant. The rating scale is lead to a 1 (Almost never) to 4 (almost always).

#### Thinking style questionnaire

Lastly, the last survey is asking how the participants ' thinking styles' reflect on their attitude or belief which people sometime hold. The participants is asked to rate the scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree).

The questionnaires will take at least 15-20mintues. The overall results will be indicative towards my predicted hypotheses.

### 3. 4 Procedure

Participants who are involved in the study will be volunteers; I will be selecting at random within the university and ask if they would participate in

the study which will be carried out, they will be told what the study was about and have to read the brief overview of the study on the consent form. Before the participants continue they will be asked to tick all boxes on the consent form to show they understand the information which will be provided and if they don't understand any information regarding the study they will be able to ask before participating. I will explain to the participants that they will be able to withdraw from the experiment at any time and it was reinforced on the consent form which participants have to sign, date and state their gender and age before answering the questionnaire. The participants then will answer the questionnaire and will permit me to carry out the interpretations of the scores and they will be thanked for taking time out to help with the study. Participants will be aware before the study takes place there would be no need for a follow up regarding this study.

Participants will not be debriefed but thanked again for their participation.

Before conducting research, ethics will also taken into consideration, each participant will not in any way be harmed and will be fully explained what the experiment is going to be about. All participants will have the choice to withdraw from the research at any time and also have the choice to decline to answer any question although this would mean a termination of their participation.

### 3. 5 Ethics

The BPS ethical guideline will be a consideration to the study, a lot of data will be used including the three questionnaires, valuable data is collected, and you need to ensure that participators give you permission to use the

data part of a research before ensuring you are taking actions to the ethical issues like;

Confidentially- results should only be shared between participants and the researcher

Consent the participant about the study- I will have to gain consent from the participants before giving the questionnaires to them.

Hide personal information- I have to hide any details about the participants due to the privacy regulation.

Choice of withdrawal from the research at any time- it is entirely up to the participant if they feel they would like to stop the research study and withdraw.

Responsibility to the participant such as giving them feedback if they consist for feedback by the end of the research- if the participant would like to know the results at the end of my research study I will leave them my email or contact details to get back to me or vice versa.

Informed consent before the participant volunteers- a consent form will be given to them so they can sign the agreement form about willing to take part of the study without forcing them. (Appendix 4)

## **4. Results**

In this part of the research, the correlation between emotional intelligence, aggression and coping strategies for students in university were presented.

The three hypothesis of the research was based if there will be a positive correlation between the three variables, in ord