Psychreg Journal of Psychology OPEN ACCESS

Volume 10, Issue 1, June 2026 ISSN 2515-138X | pjp.psychreg.org

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cultivating emotional intelligence: A transformative workshop series for students

Elizabeth Kaplunov[1*], Fatemeh Azizi[2], Emma Buhtina[2], & Alex -Claudiu Avadanei[3]

[1] Arden University (United Kingdom)
[2] Regent College London (United Kingdom)
[3] Birbeck, University of London (United Kingdom)

[*] **Correspondence:** ekaplunov@hotmail.co.uk

Cite as: Kaplunov, E., Azizi, F., Buhtina, E., & Avadanei, A.-C. (2026). Cultivating emotional intelligence: A transformative workshop series for students. *Psychreg Journal of Psychology*, *10*(1), 1 to 12. https://doi.org/rmst

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of a structured workshop series designed to enhance emotional intelligence (EI) in university students across key dimensions including empathy, self-awareness, emotional management, resilience, and decision-making. Three validated measures were used to assess EI: the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), the Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU), and the Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM). EI is increasingly recognised as a significant factor in both academic and professional success, with implications for communication, teamwork, resilience, and decision-making. The workshops were designed to strengthen self-regulation, resilience, and interpersonal skills in academic and professional contexts. Three pilot formats were tested with 109 university students in the UK. Quantitative analyses revealed no statistically significant improvements in EI scores across pilots, though mean scores showed marginal increases post-intervention. Qualitative feedback consistently indicated that students found the workshops valuable for both personal development and professional preparation, with themes relating to emotional regulation, conflict management, and communication. These mixed findings suggest that short-term workshop interventions may be insufficient to produce measurable changes in EI, while still offering perceived benefits to participants. Larger, longitudinal studies are needed to determine whether structured EI training can produce significant and sustained improvements in this population.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; emotional regulation; higher education; university students; workshop intervention

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions in oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). It is particularly relevant for students in higher education, as it supports both academic achievement and personal development during university. Higher EI is associated with stronger interpersonal skills, including relationship building and collaboration, alongside intrapersonal capacities such as motivation, self-regulation, and stress management, all of which facilitate effective learning (Duncan et al., 2013; Rivers et al., 2013). Evidence from meta-analyses confirms that EI predicts academic success and performance with moderate effect sizes (Akpur, 2020; MacCann et al., 2020), and its influence has been documented across a wide range of educational and professional contexts.

Two principal theoretical models have shaped how EI is conceptualised, measured, and applied. Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed an ability model in which EI is understood as a set of cognitive capacities for perceiving, using, understanding, and regulating emotions. This model treats EI as a form of intelligence that can be assessed through performance-based tests, in much the same way as other cognitive abilities. A distinct but complementary perspective is offered by the trait model, which defines EI in terms of personality characteristics and self-efficacy beliefs rather than measurable cognitive abilities (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Under this model, emotional experience is treated as inherently subjective, and EI is understood through traits such as adaptability, assertiveness, emotional expression, emotion management, emotion perception, and emotion regulation. Trait EI has been studied across diverse contexts, including healthcare, work, interpersonal relationships, and online social networks (Gkintoni et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2009; Quoidbach & Hansenne, 2009; Smith et al., 2008). The two models are not mutually exclusive; rather, they capture different dimensions of emotional functioning, and both have informed the design of EI interventions in educational settings.

Received: 19 August 2025 | Accepted: 01 June 2026 | Published: 01 June 2026
© The Author(s). Published by Psychreg Ltd under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

The relevance of EI extends beyond personal development into professional life. EI training has been shown to improve relationship-building, communication, and teamwork, and to enhance motivation and problem-solving across multiple professional roles (Boyatzis et al., 2002; García-Martínez et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2016; Labby et al., 2012). These findings are particularly pertinent to students in health and social care, where effective interpersonal functioning is not merely advantageous but professionally essential. For students studying in this field, developing EI during their training may therefore have direct implications for both their academic trajectories and their future practice.

Within the academic literature, a consistent distinction has been drawn between academic success and academic performance. Academic performance refers to objective indicators such as grades and examination results (Fallahzadeh, 2011; Ganyaupfu, 2013; Kember et al., 1995), whereas academic success is understood more broadly to encompass learning, subject knowledge, employability skills, and a sense of personal and intellectual development (Cachia et al., 2018). York et al. (2015) identify six components of academic success: achievement, engagement, satisfaction, skill acquisition, persistence, and post-university outcomes. Research suggests that students themselves conceptualise success in these broader terms, which has implications for how the value of EI training is evaluated and measured.

Evidence linking EI to both dimensions of academic outcomes is extensive. Drago (2004) found that students with greater awareness of their own EI were more likely to complete their degree, and Low et al. (2004) demonstrated that high EI was associated with broader academic development encompassing professional and personal growth. The relationship between EI and academic outcomes is sufficiently robust that EI has been recommended as a predictor of academic success above other forms of intelligence (Goleman, 1998; MacCann et al., 2020). At the level of performance, Parker et al. (2005) found that students with stronger academic records tended to have higher EI, with stress management skills emerging as a particularly important mediating factor. Petrides et al. (2004) similarly demonstrated links between trait EI, cognitive ability, and academic performance. Further evidence connects EI to specific performance outcomes, including mathematics attainment (Shahinzadeh & Barkhordari Ahmadi, 2015) and examination results in medical education (Chew et al., 2013).

Despite this body of evidence, relatively little research has examined whether structured, workshop-based interventions delivered as part of a curriculum can produce measurable improvements in EI among university students, particularly those from international and widening participation backgrounds. Most existing work on EI training has been conducted in workplace or clinical contexts, and the translation of such approaches into higher education settings remains underdeveloped. There is also limited evidence on how delivery format, session pacing, and assessment methodology affect both the measurability and the perceived usefulness of EI interventions. The present study addresses these gaps by piloting three distinct delivery formats for a six-session EI workshop series with students at a UK further and higher education college. EI was assessed using three validated measures: the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte et al., 1998), the Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU; Allen et al., 2014), and the Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM; Allen et al., 2015). Alongside these quantitative measures, qualitative data were collected before and after the workshops to explore students' perceptions of their own EI and the usefulness of the sessions. The study aimed to assess both the measurable impact of the workshops and the conditions under which structured EI training may be most effectively delivered in a higher education context.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 109 students at Regent College London, UK, took part across three pilot studies (aged 18 to 64 years). Pilot 1 included 83 students, Pilot 2 included 10, and Pilot 3 included 16. All participants were studying BSc Health and Social Care at Level 3 or Level 7 and were recruited through their existing classes, with module lecturers informing students of the study's purpose and inviting them to participate. Participation was voluntary, and students were free to withdraw at any time. The sample comprised adult learners from international and widening participation backgrounds, reflecting the demographic profile of the institution.

Attrition varied across pilots. In Pilot 1, of the 83 students who attended all six sessions, 68 completed the STEU (18% attrition), 66 completed the STEM (21% attrition), and 64 completed the SSEIT (23% attrition), with attrition attributable to absence, incomplete responses, or withdrawal. In Pilot 2, all 10 recruited students completed the pre- and post-test SSEIT, though one participant's data was excluded as an outlier, resulting in 10% attrition for analysis. In Pilot 3, all 16 students completed pre- and post-test measures, with one participant excluded as a minor outlier (6% attrition for analysis).

Design

The study used a within-subjects, mixed-methods design. All participants attended six EI workshops and completed surveys before and after the intervention. Quantitative data captured changes in EI scores, while qualitative data provided insight into students' perceptions and experiences of the workshops.

Materials

Six one-hour workshop sessions were delivered by a team comprising two chartered psychologists and one wellbeing staff member. Sessions combined lecture-style content with active learning through group discussions and case studies. The first three sessions addressed personal EI skills, covering self-awareness, emotional regulation, resilience, and motivation. The remaining three sessions focused on social EI skills, including empathy, conflict resolution, and relationship-building.

Workshop topics were grounded in both the ability model and the trait model of EI. Drawing on the four-branch ability model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), session content addressed perceiving emotions through self-awareness and empathy, understanding emotions through self-awareness and conflict resolution, using emotions to facilitate thought through motivation, decision-making, and resilience, and regulating emotions through relationship-building, regulation, and conflict resolution. The trait model (Petrides & Furnham, 2001) further informed session content, with adaptability addressed through resilience and regulation, assertiveness through conflict resolution, emotional expression through relationship-building, and emotion perception through self-awareness and empathy. The use of self-report measures was also consistent with the trait model's emphasis on subjective emotional experience.

Three validated EI measures were used in Pilot 1: the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT; Schutte et al., 1998), the Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU; Allen et al., 2014), and the Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM; Allen et al., 2015), administered online before and after the workshops. The SSEIT has excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$), the STEM acceptable to good reliability ($\alpha = .84$), and the STEU acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .63$). All three measures have been validated with university student samples (Hellwig & Schulze, 2021; Libbrecht et al., 2014; MacCann & Roberts, 2008; Schutte et al., 2001; Sjöberg, 2001; Thingujam & Ram, 2000). An end-of-session feedback survey, developed by the research team, was also administered following workshop delivery, asking students to rate the sessions, identify the most useful content, and describe how they intended to apply their new EI skills.

For Pilots 2 and 3, the SSEIT alone was retained on the grounds of its high reliability, its assessment of general EI, and its relative brevity and accessibility compared to the STEU and STEM. In addition to the SSEIT, a pre-workshop qualitative survey was introduced to capture students' existing knowledge and attitudes towards EI, using open-ended questions such as "What is emotional intelligence?", "Why is emotional intelligence important?", and "How do you deal with conflicts?" The end-of-session feedback survey was also administered post-test. Following Pilot 1, a subset of students ($n = 16$) provided follow-up data offering suggestions for improving future workshop delivery.

Procedure

Students were provided with information about the study aims one week before the workshops began, with the opportunity to ask questions. Consent was obtained via the survey platform. In Pilot 1, all six sessions were delivered in a single day with a lunch break, and surveys were completed one week before and one week after delivery. In Pilot 2, three sessions were delivered per day across two sittings with a two-week gap between them. In Pilot 3, two sessions were delivered per day across three weeks, with one-week intervals between each sitting. All surveys were administered online via links and QR codes provided before and after the intervention.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the Regent College London ethics committee. Students were fully

informed of the study's aims and procedures in advance and were assured that participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time without consequence, that their data would be anonymised, and that all information would be stored securely and reported only at group level.

Data analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS. Where data met the assumptions of normality, assessed via the Shapiro-Wilk test and inspection of skewness and kurtosis values, paired samples t-tests were used. Where assumptions were violated, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were applied. Given the pilot nature of the study and the small sample sizes, effect sizes and confidence intervals were not calculated.

Qualitative data were analysed using a grounded theory-inspired approach (Saldaña, 2021). Data were imported into NVivo (version 15) to facilitate coding and the organisation of emerging categories. Analysis proceeded through initial open coding, followed by grouping of related codes into broader categories and refinement into overarching themes. Analytical rigour was maintained through peer debriefing, with codes and themes reviewed and discussed with colleagues at multiple stages to examine alternative interpretations.

RESULTS

Quantitative results

Prior to analysis, normality was assessed for each measure using the Shapiro-Wilk test alongside inspection of skewness and kurtosis values (George & Mallery, 2010). Non-parametric tests were applied where assumptions were violated or where outliers were identified; parametric tests were used where data met normality criteria.

In Pilot 1, the STEU was analysed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test due to the presence of three outliers. The STEM was analysed using a paired samples t-test, as skewness and kurtosis values fell within acceptable ranges (between -2 and +2), though two minor outliers were present. The SSEIT was analysed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, as the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated a significant departure from normality and three outliers were identified, one of which was large. In Pilot 2, the Shapiro-Wilk test was non-significant and one minor outlier was present, supporting the use of a paired samples t-test. In Pilot 3, skewness and kurtosis values were within acceptable limits and the Shapiro-Wilk test was non-significant, again supporting parametric analysis.

Results across all three pilots are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Pre- and Post-Intervention EI Scores Across Pilots

Table 1. Summary of Pre- and Post-Intervention EI Scores Across Pilots

Pilot	EI Measure	Pre-Intervention *M*	Post-Intervention *M*	Statistical Test	Test Result	*p*-value
	STEU	0.47	0.42	Wilcoxon Signed-Rank	$Z = -0.121$	> .05
Pilot 1	STEM	0.46	0.47	Paired *t*-test	$T(66) = -0.642$	> .05
	SSEIT	130	127	Wilcoxon Signed-Rank	$Z = -0.54$	> .05
Pilot 2	SSEIT	131	132	Paired *t*-test	$T(9) = -0.347$	> .05
Pilot 3	SSEIT	120.8	121.4	Paired *t*-test	$T(16) = -0.207$	> .05

Note: SSEIT scores range from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating higher emotional intelligence.

n Pilot 1, workshop participation was not associated with statistically significant changes on any of the three EI measures. For the STEU, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated no significant change following the intervention (z = -0.121, p > .05), with mean scores declining marginally from .47 pre-intervention to .42 post-intervention. Notably, 28 of 68 participants (42%) showed higher STEU scores after the workshops. For the STEM, a paired samples t-test similarly revealed no significant change (t [66] = -0.642, p > .05), though the post-intervention mean (M = .47) was marginally higher than the pre-intervention mean (M = .46). For the SSEIT, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test found no significant difference between pre- and post-intervention scores (z = −0.54, p > .05), with mean scores falling slightly from 130 to 127. Despite this, 33 of 64 participants (52%) recorded higher SSEIT scores following the workshops.

In Pilot 2, a paired samples t-test indicated no significant change in SSEIT scores between pre-

and post-intervention assessments (t [9] = −0.347, p > .05). The post-intervention mean (M = 132) was marginally higher than the pre-intervention mean (M = 131). In Pilot 3, a paired samples t-test similarly showed no significant difference (t [16] = −0.207, p > .05), with the post-intervention mean (M = 121.4) slightly exceeding the pre-intervention mean (M = 120.8).

Across all three pilots, mean EI scores showed minimal change and no statistically significant improvements were observed. Given the small sample sizes involved, these findings should be treated as preliminary and exploratory. No conclusions can be drawn about workshop effectiveness on the basis of quantitative data alone.

Qualitative results

As no statistically significant changes in EI scores were observed, qualitative data provide complementary insight into students' perceptions of the workshops and their perceived value. All themes were derived inductively. Although quantitative analyses did not detect significant change, students consistently reported perceived improvements in their emotional awareness and their capacity to apply EI skills. Thematic analysis revealed benefits across both personal and professional domains, with students highlighting the value of EI for communication, stress management, and conflict resolution, particularly in care-oriented contexts. Many framed EI not only as an academic or professional resource but as a broader life skill supporting self-growth, interpersonal effectiveness, and more considered approaches to communication and problem-solving. Qualitative data are presented across three time points: pre-test surveys, end-of-session feedback, and follow-up reflections.

Before the workshops, students already demonstrated awareness of EI as a relevant skillset for both personal and professional life. Two domains were prominent. In relation to personal growth and regulation, students described a range of strategies for managing emotions, including reflection, relaxation, and seeking support. Representative responses included “By first of all understanding myself, capabilities and abilities and being able to work around things” (P3, pre-test) and “I will pause and relax, identify the emotions, practice deep breathing” (P6, pre-test). In relation to professional and relational relevance, students connected EI to relationship-building and broader life success. One participant described EI as essential to “actively listening, understanding emotions, responding appropriately, managing stress, showing empathy, communicating clearly, resolving conflicts constructively, and maintaining self-awareness and self-regulation to build positive relationships” (P1, pre-test), while another noted that “emotional intelligence is essential because it impacts every aspect of me, from personal wellbeing to professional success and social interactions” (P2, pre-test).

Following the workshops, end-of-session feedback indicated that students anticipated applying their new skills across several domains. In relation to emotional regulation and self-awareness, one student noted they would “take it very seriously, because it will really help me to control my emotion” (P2, end-of-session). On conflict management, responses included “I will know how to handle conflict in future” (P3, end-of-session) and “I will use it to express my feelings and overcome the conflict” (P4, end-of-session). Students also highlighted anticipated benefits for communication and relationships, with comments such as “To help me to communicate and understand others better” (P2, end-of-session) and “I will adopt the new skills in my relationship with people around me” (P3, end-of-session). Professional application was a prominent theme, with students noting intentions to apply the skills “at my workplace” (P5, end-of-session) and in health care settings (P6, end-of-session). Students also identified benefits for critical thinking and decision-making, describing intentions to “think twice before doing something” (P7, end-of-session) and to apply “active listening techniques before responding” (P8, end-of-session). Taken together, these responses suggest that participants viewed the workshops as equipping them with transferable strategies applicable to both personal and professional contexts.

Follow-up reflections focused primarily on suggestions for improving future delivery. Students called for greater interactivity, with one noting that “incorporating more interactive elements such as group discussions, role-playing exercises, and live polls can enhance engagement and participation” (P34, follow-up). Others emphasised the value of structured reflection time, suggesting that “allocating time for peer feedback and reflection would also be beneficial” (P36, follow-up). Post-workshop continuity was also raised, with one participant recommending “offering follow-up

support, such as discussion forums or additional Q&A sessions, can reinforce key concepts and encourage continued learning" (P32, follow-up). These responses point to the importance of designing future interventions that allow adequate time for engagement, collaborative reflection, and sustained learning beyond the sessions themselves.

DISCUSSION

Across all three pilots, participation in the EI workshop series did not produce statistically significant improvements in measured EI. This finding, while seemingly negative, is not uncommon in pilot intervention research and carries important implications for the design of future studies. Mean EI scores remained largely stable across pre- and post-intervention assessments, with only marginal descriptive increases observed. Given the small sample sizes and the pilot nature of the study, these results should be interpreted cautiously and treated as a foundation for more adequately powered future research rather than as evidence against the efficacy of EI training.

The absence of significant quantitative change is consistent with broader challenges in demonstrating short-term, measurable shifts in EI through brief interventions. EI, particularly as measured by ability-based instruments such as the STEU and STEM, reflects relatively stable cognitive and emotional capacities that may require sustained and repeated practice to develop (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The condensed delivery format of Pilot 1, in which all six sessions were delivered in a single day, is likely to have been insufficient to produce lasting change and may also have introduced fatigue effects that suppressed post-test scores. This interpretation is supported by the qualitative follow-up data, in which students explicitly called for more time between sessions to process and reflect on the material. The progression from Pilot 1 to Pilot 3, which distributed sessions across three weeks, was a direct methodological response to this feedback and represents a meaningful improvement in intervention design.

Baseline SSEIT scores in the current study were broadly consistent with those reported in the original validation study (Schutte et al., 1998), suggesting that the measure functioned appropriately within this sample. However, baseline STEU and STEM scores (M = .47 for both) were notably lower than those reported in the original normative studies (M = .67 for STEU, Allen et al., 2014; M = .53 for STEM, Allen et al., 2015). The STEU assesses the ability to understand emotions, drawing on concepts such as empathy and self-awareness (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), while the STEM measures emotional management capacities including self-regulation and rational decision-making (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The SSEIT, which is grounded in the broader ability model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and covers emotion perception, effective use of emotions, and the management of self-relevant and others' emotions, produced scores more in line with established norms. The divergence between SSEIT and STEU/STEM scores may reflect the relative linguistic and conceptual complexity of the latter two instruments. The STEU and STEM present situational vignettes requiring nuanced interpretation, which may have posed challenges for students from international and widening participation backgrounds for whom English is not a first language. Survey fatigue is also a plausible contributing factor in Pilot 1, where participants completed three lengthy instruments alongside six hours of workshop content in a single day.

The qualitative findings offer a richer and more nuanced picture of the workshops' impact. Students entered the intervention with an existing awareness of EI and its relevance to their personal and professional lives, describing strategies for emotional regulation, conflict management, and relationship-building prior to any formal input. This baseline knowledge is consistent with research suggesting that higher education students, particularly those studying in health and social care contexts, already possess some degree of emotional awareness shaped by their personal and professional experiences (Arora et al., 2010; Quoidbach & Hansenne, 2009). Following the workshops, students described intentions to apply EI skills across a range of contexts, including managing emotions more deliberately, communicating more effectively, navigating conflict, and applying EI within their professional roles in health care settings. These perceived benefits align with evidence that EI training enhances communication, relationship-building, and problem-solving in professional contexts (Boyatzis et al., 2002; García-Martínez et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2016; Labby et al., 2012).

The connection between EI and academic outcomes, well established in the broader

literature, provides an important frame for interpreting the current findings. Research consistently demonstrates that higher EI is associated with greater academic success, including stronger stress management, persistence, and engagement (Akpur, 2020; MacCann et al., 2020; Parker et al., 2005). Jaeger (2003) showed that EI training in graduate professional education was associated with improvements in both EI and relevant competencies, suggesting that structured curricula can serve as a vehicle for emotional skill development. The present study did not directly measure academic performance, but the qualitative data suggest that students anticipated the workshops would support them academically and professionally, which is consistent with prior evidence linking EI development to broader academic success (Akpur, 2020; Kumar et al., 2016; MacCann et al., 2020). Future research should address this gap by incorporating objective measures of academic performance alongside EI assessments, enabling a more direct examination of the pathways through which EI training may influence student outcomes.

The three delivery formats piloted in this study yielded useful methodological insights. Pilot 1, with its intensive single-day format and three concurrent measures, placed considerable demands on participants and is unlikely to represent optimal conditions for either learning or measurement. Pilot 2 introduced a two-week gap between session blocks, and Pilot 3 further distributed sessions across three weeks with weekly intervals. The progressive spacing of sessions in Pilot 3 appears to offer the most promising format, allowing greater opportunity for reflection, consolidation, and application between sessions. This is consistent with evidence on spaced learning and the importance of reflection in developing complex skills (Jaeger, 2003). The decision to use only the SSEIT in Pilots 2 and 3 also proved pragmatic; its simpler response format and shorter length reduced cognitive burden while still capturing general EI, and its scores were consistent with established norms.

Several limitations of the current study should be acknowledged. Sample sizes were small across all three pilots, which substantially limits statistical power and the likelihood of detecting genuine pre- to post-intervention change. Convenience sampling from a single institution further restricts the generalisability of the findings, and the predominantly international and widening participation composition of the sample means that results may not transfer to more general UK university student cohorts. The linguistic demands of the STEU and STEM may have introduced systematic measurement error for students with lower English proficiency, and the absence of a control group prevents any causal claims about the workshops' effects.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study makes a useful contribution to the emerging literature on EI interventions in higher education. It demonstrates the feasibility of delivering structured EI workshops within a curriculum context, identifies Pilot 3's distributed format as the most methodologically sound approach, and provides qualitative evidence that students from international and widening participation backgrounds find EI training personally and professionally relevant.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured six-session EI workshop series delivered to university students in a UK further and higher education setting, using a mixed-methods design across three pilot formats. Quantitative findings did not demonstrate statistically significant improvements in EI, but the marginal descriptive increases observed across pilots, combined with rich qualitative evidence of perceived benefit, suggest that the workshops were meaningful to participants even where measurable change was limited. Students entered the intervention with existing emotional awareness and left with a clearer sense of how to apply EI skills in both personal and professional contexts, particularly within health and social care.

The progressive refinement of delivery across the three pilots was itself a substantive finding. Pilot 3, which distributed sessions across three weeks with weekly intervals and used a single, accessible measure, emerged as the most methodologically sound and participant-friendly format. This has practical implications for institutions seeking to embed EI development within curricula in a way that is both manageable for students and amenable to evaluation.

The study also raises important questions about measurement and population fit. The lower STEU and STEM scores observed in this predominantly international and widening participation sample

point to the need for more careful consideration of instrument accessibility when working with linguistically diverse cohorts. Future research should prioritise larger and more diverse samples, longer intervention periods, control conditions, and the inclusion of objective academic performance measures, so that the relationship between structured EI training and student outcomes can be examined with greater rigour and generalisability.

Acknowledgements: None declared
Conflict of interests: None declared
Ethical approval: Regent College London
Funding: Regent College London

REFERENCES

Akpur, U. (2020). A systematic review and meta-analysis on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, *20*(4), 51–64. https://doi.org/10.19044/ejes.v10no2a207

Allen, V. D., Rahman, N., Weissman, A., MacCann, C., Lewis, C., & Roberts, R. D. (2015). The Situational Test of Emotional Management – Brief (STEM-B): Development and validation using item response theory and latent class analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *81*, 195–200. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.01.053

Allen, V. D., Weissman, A., Hellwig, S., MacCann, C., & Roberts, R. D. (2014). Development of the situational test of emotional understanding – brief (STEU-B) using item response theory. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *65*, 3–7. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.01.051

Arora, S., Ashrafian, H., Davis, R., Athanasiou, T., Darzi, A., & Sevdalis, N. (2010). Emotional intelligence in medicine: A systematic review through the context of the ACGME competencies. *Medical Education*, *44*(8), 749–764. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2010.03709.x

Boyatzis, R. E., McKee, A., & Goleman, D. (2002). Reawakening your passion for work. *Harvard Business Review*, *80*(4), 86–94.

Cachia, M., Lynam, S., & Stock, R. (2018). Academic success: Is it just about the grades? *Higher Education Pedagogies*, *3*(1), 434–439. https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2018.1462096

Chew, B. H., Zain, A. M., & Hassan, F. (2013). Emotional intelligence and academic performance in first and final year medical students: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Medical Education*, *13*, Article 44. https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6920-13-44

Drago, J. M. (2004). *The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement in nontraditional college students* [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University].

Duncan, L. R., Bertoli, M. C., Latimer-Cheung, A. E., Rivers, S. E., Brackett, M. A., & Salovey, P. (2013). Mapping the protective pathway of emotional intelligence in youth: From social cognition to smoking intentions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *54*(4), 542–544. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2012.09.002

Fallahzadeh, H. (2011). The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement in medical science students in Iran. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *30*, 1461–1466. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.283

Ganyaupfu, E. M. (2013). Teaching methods and students' academic performance. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, *2*(9), 29–35.

García-Martínez, I., Pérez-Navío, E., Pérez-Ferra, M., & Quijano-López, R. (2021). Relationship between emotional intelligence, educational achievement and academic stress of pre-service teachers. *Behavioral Sciences*, *11*(7), 95. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs11070095

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2010). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference, 17.0 update* (10th ed.). Pearson.

Gkintoni, E., Halkiopoulos, C., Antonopoulou, H., & Togias, P. (2016). Emotional intelligence in social network consumers. In *4th International Conference on Contemporary Marketing Issues (ICCMI)* (pp. 22–24). https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/z4r9b

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-6248.1999.00375.x

Hellwig, S., & Schulze, R. (2021). Emotion theories as a scoring rationale for tests of emotional understanding. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *181*, Article 111034. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.111034

Jaeger, A. J. (2003). Job competencies and the curriculum: An inquiry into emotional intelligence in graduate professional education. *Research in Higher Education*, *44*(6), 615–639. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1026119724265

Johnson, S. J., Batey, M., & Holdsworth, L. (2009). Personality and health: The mediating role of trait emotional intelligence and work locus of control. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *47*(5), 470–475. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.04.025

Kember, D., Jamieson, Q. W., Pomfret, M., & Wong, E. T. T. (1995). Learning approaches, study time and academic performance. *Higher Education*, *29*(3), 329–343. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01384497

Kumar, A., Puranik, M. P., & Sowmya, K. R. (2016). Association between dental students' emotional intelligence and academic performance: A study at six dental colleges in India. *Journal of Dental Education*, *80*(5), 526–532. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.0022-0337.2016.80.5.tb06112.x

Labby, S., Lunenburg, F. C., & Slate, J. R. (2012). Emotional intelligence and academic success: A conceptual analysis for educational leaders. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, *7*(1), 1–11.

Libbrecht, N., Lievens, F., Carette, B., & Côté, S. (2014). Emotional intelligence predicts success in medical school. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *99*(6), 1263–1273. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034392

Low, G. R., Lomax, A., Jackson, M., & Nelson, D. B. (2004, March). *Emotional intelligence: A new student development model* [Paper presentation]. National Conference of the American College Personnel Association, Philadelphia, PA, United States.

MacCann, C., Jiang, Y., Brown, L. E. R., Double, K. S., Bucich, M., & Minbashian, A. (2020). Emotional intelligence predicts academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *146*(2), 150–186. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000219

MacCann, C., & Roberts, R. D. (2008). New paradigms for assessing emotional intelligence: Theory and data. *Emotion*, *8*(4), 540–551. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012746

Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications* (pp. 3–31). Basic Books.

Parker, J. D. A., Duffy, J. M., Wood, L. M., Bond, B. J., & Hogan, M. J. (2005). Academic achievement and emotional intelligence: Predicting the successful transition from high school to university. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, *17*(1), 67–78. https://doi.org/10.65005/154230705813695182

Petrides, K. V., Frederickson, N., & Furnham, A. (2004). The role of trait emotional intelligence in academic performance and deviant behaviour at school. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *36*(2), 277–293. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0191-8869(03)00084-9

Petrides, K. V., & Furnham, A. (2001). Trait emotional intelligence: Psychometric investigation with reference to established trait taxonomies. *European Journal of Personality*, *15*(6), 425–448. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.416

Quoidbach, J., & Hansenne, M. (2009). The impact of trait emotional intelligence on nursing team performance and cohesiveness. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *25*(1), 23–29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2007.12.002

Rivers, S. E., Brackett, M. A., Omori, M., Sickler, C., Bertoli, M. C., & Salovey, P. (2013). Emotion skills as a protective factor for risky behaviors among college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *54*(2), 172–183. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2013.0012

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, *9*(3), 185–211. https://doi.org/10.2190/dugg-p24e-52wk-6cdg

Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Bobik, C., Coston, T. D., Greeson, C., Jedlicka, C., Rhodes, E., & Wendorf, G. (2001). Emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *141*(4), 523–536. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224540109600569

Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Hall, L. E., Haggerty, D. J., Cooper, J. T., Golden, C. J., & Dornheim, L. (1998). Development and validation of a measure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *25*(2), 167–177. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0191-8869(98)00001-4

Shahinzadeh, M., & Barkhordari Ahmadi, M. (2015). Study the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of school students. *Academic Journal of Psychological Studies*, *4*(1), 1–6.

Sjöberg, L. (2001). Emotional intelligence: A psychometric analysis. *European Psychologist*, *6*(2), 79–95. https://doi.org/10.1027//1016-9040.6.2.79

Smith, L., Heaven, P. C. L., & Ciarrochi, J. (2008). Trait emotional intelligence, conflict communication patterns, and relationship satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *44*(6), 1314–1325. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.11.024

Thingujam, N. K. S., & Ram, U. (2000). Emotional intelligence scale: Indian norms. *Journal of Education and Psychology*, *58*(2–3), 40–48.

York, T. T., Gibson, C., & Rankin, S. (2015). Defining and measuring academic success. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, *20*(5), 1–20.