

## **Investigating Relationships between locus of control and Emotional Intelligence on Reading Comprehension of Indian ESL Learners at Aligarh Muslim University**

**Mohammad Rizwan Khan**

Professor,  
Department of English,  
Aligarh Muslim University, India

**Ahmad Kord**

Ph.D. Research Scholar,  
Department of English,  
Aligarh Muslim University, India

### **Abstract**

In recent years, locus of control and emotional intelligence abilities have increasingly attained attention in research correlated to students' achievement. A various body of educational study has reported the significance of locus of control ability and the constructive influence of locus of control and emotional intelligence on learners' achievement. This study explored the predictability of locus of control and emotional intelligence (reality testing, social responsibility, Assertiveness) on reading comprehension. 200 Indian ESL learners participated in the study. For data collection, an emotional intelligence questionnaire (Bar-On's EQ-itest"), locus of control questionnaire (Levenson Multidimensional locus of control scale) and a version of TOEFL reading comprehension test (TOEFL, 2010) were used. The data were analyzed by using path analysis and Pearson correlation. The results of the study indicated that reading score has the highest positive correlation with reality testing ( $r = .31, p < 0.05$ ), and the lowest correlation with Assertiveness ( $r = .05, p > 0.05$ ). In addition, there is a weak positive significant relationship between reading score and locus of control ( $r = .29, p < .05$ ). Hence, emotional intelligence is better predictor for reading comprehension. Current study has focused on only three factor of emotional intelligence (reality testing, social responsibility, Assertiveness) which had the highest correlations with other skills like speaking.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, Locus of Control

## 1. Introduction

In the past fifteen years, numerous researchers have discussed that reading is the most significant academic skill for second language students. Given the portability of books and other reading materials, reading is progressively being accepted as a valuable foundation of language input, specifically for students in learning contexts (as in some ESL environments like Indian universities) in which fluent native speakers of English are commonly not available to present language input (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Emotional intelligence is described as “the ability to understand and manage emotions” (Barchard & Hakstian, 2004). It is more regarded as a set of abilities hypothesized to contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others. Moreover it refers to the regulation of the emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings and emotions to enhance motivation, make and apply plans, and achieve the predetermined objectives (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). Bora (2012) discovered that learners who had high degree of emotional intelligence were more evolved in speaking and brain-based activities, because they had high degree of self-esteem and social abilities, and were able to collaborate with others. They also discovered that learners with low level of emotional intelligence did not have suitable associations with the society; as an outcome they were isolated from the classroom atmosphere, and denied participating in speaking and brain-based activities. Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2011) establish that there was an important association between students’ emotional intelligence and their critical thinking abilities. They also continued that among the aspects of emotional intelligence, flexibility and social responsibility had the highest correlations with critical thinking. Locus of Control is the degree to which annoying events are professed as aversive and consequently augment arousal depend if the circumstance is supposed as convenient. Locus of control direction is a confidence in relation to whether the results of our proceedings are conditional on what they do (internal control compass reading) or on actions outside their own control (external control compass reading). People who consider they cannot control their outcomes as an external locus of control is predictable to show signs of higher aggression in reaction to disturbance than individuals who usually suppose that they canister control results an internal locus of control. Internals are persons who believe they can eagerly persuade actions in a wide assortment of context. Conversely externals are people who imagine typically incapable to encourage the course of transactions just about to them (Baron & Richardson, 1994).

The aim of current study is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and locus of control on reading comprehension in ESL context.

## 2. Review of literature

Abdolrezapour and tavakoli (2011) examined the association between emotional intelligence and EFL learners’ success in reading comprehension. The aim of this research was twofold: (1) to see whether

it is possible to increase emotional intelligence through prepared literature response activities according to Goleman's framework, and (2) to see whether there is any association between EI and EFL learners' reading comprehension achievement. Consequences specified that the participants in the experimental group showed better achievement in reading comprehension and they scored higher on the EI test than students who were taught under the ordinary approaches that did not place any emphasis on the emotional content or words. The results also have some implications for EFL teachers and practitioners.

Hassan Soodmand Afshar and Masoud Rahimi (2013) explored the association among critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and speaking abilities of Iranian EFL students. The consequences of this research indicated that: a) emotional intelligence, followed by critical thinking, connected considerably highly with speaking abilities, b) all factors of emotional intelligence connected considerably highly with speaking abilities, c) there was an important positive association between critical thinking and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was a better predictor of speaking skills with critical thinking standing at the second place.

Numerous researches have exposed relationships between locus of control and all three aspects of burnout (Capel, 1992; Lunenburg & Cadavid, 1992). Additional study has specified how a correlation between classroom management and teachers' attributions: "external student-related attributions were connected with lower depersonalization feelings, whereas internal, student-related attributions were correlated to higher emotional exhaustion" (Bibou-Nakou, Stogiannidou, & Kiosseoglou, 1999, p. 215). External student-related attributions place the reason of misbehavior on students' mood or situation-specific behavior. Internal student-related attributions place the reason behind of the misbehavior on the student's personality or family upbringing. These results indicate that a teacher who attributes a student's misbehavior to the student's mood may feel a closer attachment to the student. A teacher who attributes a student's misbehavior to the student's personality may experience more emotional exhaustion Barjasteh and Vaseghi (2012) tried to discover the role of critical thinking skills on EFL learners' reading comprehension performance using Bloom's taxonomy. Thus, the role of critical thinking strategies training across two language proficiency levels, high and low was considered. Then the difference between females and males concerning their critical thinking was studied. The results showed that critical thinking skills significantly affected EFL learners' reading comprehension performance. However, the effects of critical thinking strategy training didn't contrast across different language proficiency levels. Generally, the findings offer empirical support for the facilitative effect of critical thinking strategy training on reading comprehension performance of EFL learners. Nour Mohammadi, Hedari and DehghanNiry (2012) investigated the relationship between critical thinking ability and reading

strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. Results of the study revealed that the most frequently used reading strategy was meta-cognitive strategy. Also, the statistical analyses showed a low positive significant correlation between learners' critical thinking ability and their overall use of reading strategies. The participants' critical thinking ability also correlated positively with their use of each of cognitive, meta-cognitive, and compensation strategies. An independent-samples t-test was used to examine the difference between critical thinking ability of males and females and the result revealed a significant difference between the male and the female learners in their critical thinking; the males' critical thinking ability was higher than that of females. While considerable studies have investigated the correlation between different aspects of emotional intelligence on different skills, few studies investigated the correlation between emotional intelligence and locus of control on Reading. So, this study tried to fill the gap by examining the correlation between emotional intelligence, locus of control and writing of ESL learner

**Research question:** Are there any significant relationship between reading comprehension, emotional intelligence and locus of control?

1. Which aspect of Emotional intelligence is more effective on the students' reading comprehension?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the above-mentioned research questions, the following null hypotheses have been formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between reading comprehension, emotional intelligence and locus of control.
2. There is no difference between aspects of emotional intelligence on the students' reading comprehension.

#### **6. Method**

The design of the study was quantitative and mainly correlational in nature and included multiple correlations and multiple regression. The study was carried out at Aligarh Muslim University. The population of the present study 200 students who are learning English in Aligarh Muslim University. In this study two questionnaires and a reading comprehension test have been used, after a brief explanation to the participant about the way of filling the questionnaires, the researcher distributes two questionnaires, that are, Levenson Multidimensional locus of control scale and Bar-On's (1980) emotional intelligence questionnaires, among the participants. After one week interval, the researcher administers a reading comprehension test (TOEFL, 2010) to discover whether there is any correlation between emotional intelligence, locus of control and students' reading comprehension. After the data collection, the data is coded and have been entered into the SPSS software (version 24) AMOS

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software (version 24). The researcher used path analysis and Pearson correlation to examine the correlation between students’ emotional intelligence, locus of control, and their reading skills.

## Results

Descriptive statistics of sub-components of emotional intelligence (Reality Testing, Social Responsibility, and Assertiveness), locus of control and reading scores, are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Variables*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Reality Testing</b>	250	10.00	30.00	20.13	3.04
<b>Social Responsibility</b>	250	14.00	30.00	24.15	2.91
<b>Assertiveness</b>	250	12.00	29.00	19.22	3.29
<b>Locus of Control</b>	250	18.00	43.00	30.76	5.14
<b>Reading Scores</b>	250	12.00	30.00	21.27	4.58

Table 2 summarizes the information obtained from Cronbach alpha analyses. As can be seen, the utilized questionnaires gained acceptable indices of Cronbach alpha

**Table 2**

*Results of Cronbach alpha*

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Subscales</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha</b>
<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>	<b>Reality Testing</b>	.79
	<b>Social Responsibility</b>	.84
	<b>Assertiveness</b>	.81
<b>Locus of Control</b>	.....	.76

The alpha coefficient for three sub constructs of Emotional Intelligence are between .79 to .84 and for total Locus of Control with 24 items (.76), suggest that the items have relatively good internal consistency.

To examine the research questions, the proposed model was tested using the Amos 24 statistical package. To check the strengths of the causal relationships among the components, the standardized

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estimates were examined. A number of fit indices were examined to evaluate the model fit. As Table 3 shows the chi-square/df ratio (2.11), RMSEA (.04), GFI (.94), NFI (.95) and CFI (.91), all the fit indices lie within the acceptable fit thresholds. Hence, it can be concluded that the proposed model had perfect fit with the empirical data.

Table 3

*Goodness of fit indices*

	X2/df	GFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
<b>Acceptable fit</b>	<3	>.90	>.90	>.90	<.08
<b>Model</b>	2.11	.94	.91	.95	.04

Figure 1 represents the schematic relationships between locus of control and emotional intelligence on reading comprehension.

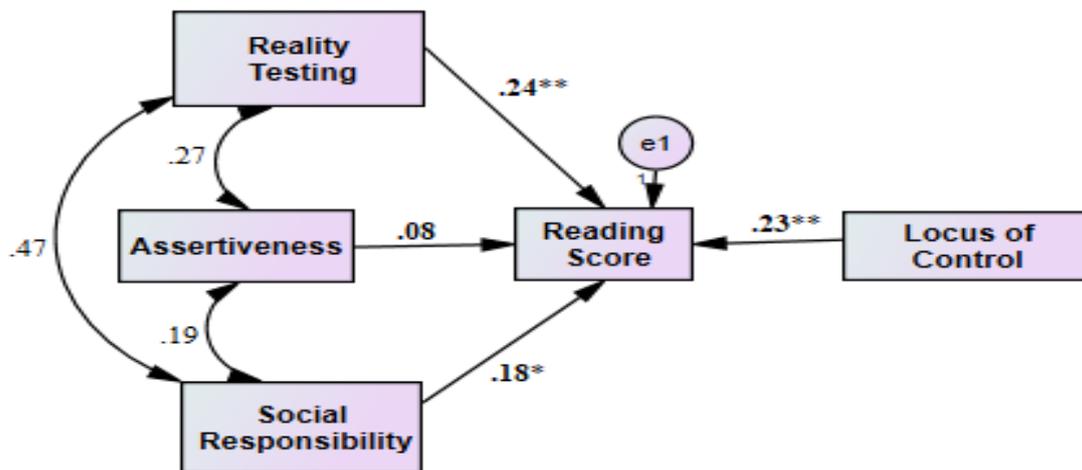


Figure 1. schematic relationships between locus of control and emotional intelligence on reading comprehension

The results demonstrated that reality testing ( $B=.24, p<.05$ ), social responsibility ( $B=.18, p<.05$ ), and locus of control ( $B=.23, p<.05$ ) are positive significant predictors of reading score.

The correlation coefficients between different sub-components of emotional intelligence, locus of control and reading score are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*The Correlation Coefficients between CPD and their self-efficacy*

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	reality testing	Assertiveness	social responsibility	Locus of control
<b>Reading score</b>	.31**	.05	.24**	.29**

\*\*Correlation is significant at the level of 0.01

As can be seen, reading score has the highest positive correlation with reality testing ( $r = .31$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and the lowest correlation with Assertiveness ( $r = .05$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). In addition, there is a weak positive significant relationship between reading score and locus of control ( $r = .29$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

### Discussion, Conclusion and implications

Although reading-comprehension proficiency was relatively associated with several aspects of emotional intelligence (reality testing, assertiveness, social responsibility), over all reality testing is the highest predictor of reading comprehension and assertiveness is the lowest predictor of reading comprehension. ESL learners' emotional intelligence tends to improve their beliefs in their reading comprehension skills to organize and execute the courses of action necessary for fruitful performance. Learners who are able to observe, control, and evaluate their emotions might be more skillful in their reading comprehension abilities. The findings are in line with Bora (2012), who revealed that students who had a high level of emotional intelligence were more involve in speaking and brain-based activities. He added that these students had a high level of self-esteem and they were more enthusiastic to cooperate with others. The results further suggested that students' emotions were more involved in their abilities in speaking than their critical thoughts. The students who are more able to control their own emotions and the emotions of others might be considered as better speakers than those who have the characteristic of thinking critically.

It is no wonder, though, that these subscales have a correlation with comprehension proficiency because learning a language is a communicative task in nature, and the ability to communicate and learn a language, knowing emotions, and being able to control them plays a significant role. In essence, the main outcome of this research was that the relationship between emotional intelligence and reading-comprehension proficiency is stronger than the relationship between locus of control and reading-comprehension proficiency. Although the amount of correlation is significant here, nevertheless, it cannot be used for generalizing to other university ESL learners because gender differences were not considered in this research. The students who are more assertive would always challenge things and ask more questions. Iranian ESL learners might benefit from the findings of the current study. The knowledge about what the levels of Indian ESL learners' locus of

control and emotional intelligence are might help teachers to improve their reading comprehension skills.

It seems that these findings are consistent with the theoretical position of Jensen (1998) that intelligence bears a causal relationship to achievement, not the other way around. That is, from a theoretical perspective, the construct of intelligence is expected to precede and influence the development of academic achievement because “school learning itself is gdemanding” (Jensen, 1998, p. 279). The study’s findings suggest that educators should be aware of the impact intelligence has on foreign language learning. Student intelligence needs to be developed in order to facilitate reading comprehension. Teachers can improve students’ intelligence by using the ideas of Buschkuehl and Jaeggi (2010), who believe that “intelligence can be improved by training on working memory and using some executive functions” (p. 267).

Furthermore, curriculum developers, intervention specialists, and educators need to be aware of the influence one’s intelligence and locus of control have on reading comprehension and foreign language learning. It is expected this study will present valuable and useful perceptions about second language learning by indicating that second language learning is an extremely complex phenomenon that can be affected by several components like emotional intelligence and locus of control studied in this research. To recognize students better by comprehending their emotional intelligence will be useful in presenting suitable support to students learning a second language. Results of current research would be beneficial in educational context as reading comprehension proficiency related to the emotional intelligence and locus of control of ESL learners. Thus, there is a necessity to use the principles of emotional intelligence in the domain of education, and particularly in second language learning. Without a doubt, a second language teacher cannot be expected to perform in the ability of a psychologist, still language teaching is a matter of dealing with individual differences. Considering intelligence differences is progressively essential in scheming teaching materials. To develop emotional intelligence abilities, Carr (2011) in his book stated that “Empirical findings from the field of cognitive behaviour therapy suggest that training in the skills for self-monitoring, self-regulation, communication, and problem solving might usefully be included in programs to enhance emotional intelligence” (p. 173). Since three of the emotional intelligence subscales have a significant correlation with reading comprehension, it is recommended that more attention be paid to this type of intelligence.

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