

## MỐI LIÊN HỆ GIỮA TRÍ TUỆ CẢM XÚC VÀ MỐI LO LẮNG KHI HỌC NGOẠI NGỮ CỦA SINH VIÊN ĐẠI HỌC

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Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu mối liên hệ giữa trí tuệ cảm xúc EQ (khả năng nhận thức và điều chỉnh được cảm xúc, suy nghĩ, hành động của bản thân và của người khác) và mối lo lắng khi học ngoại ngữ của sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh. Đối tượng tham gia nghiên cứu là 300 học viên được lựa chọn ngẫu nhiên trong số sinh viên năm thứ nhất và năm thứ hai tại Trường Đại học Phòng cháy và Chữa cháy, trong đó bao gồm cả sinh viên là học sinh phổ thông và cán bộ, chiến sỹ đi học. Các tác giả đã sử dụng hai bảng câu hỏi để thu thập dữ liệu nhằm xác định mức độ lo lắng và mức độ trí tuệ cảm xúc của người học. Bảng câu hỏi đầu tiên là thang đo mức độ lo lắng trong lớp học ngoại ngữ (FLACS) của Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), bảng câu hỏi thứ hai là thang đo trí tuệ cảm xúc (EQ-i) của Bar-on (1997) (phiên bản ngắn gọn). Dựa trên kết quả phân tích, nghiên cứu đã chỉ ra rằng có mối tương quan nghịch giữa trí tuệ cảm xúc cũng như tất cả các thành tố của trí tuệ cảm xúc và mối lo lắng ở sinh viên khi học ngoại ngữ.

**Từ khoá:** mối liên hệ, trí tuệ cảm xúc, mối lo lắng khi học ngoại ngữ, sinh viên không chuyên ngữ, Trường Đại học Phòng cháy Chữa cháy.

*This study aims to explore any specific relationship between non-English major students' emotional intelligence and their foreign language anxiety levels. The population of the study were 300 participants randomly selected among first-year and second-year undergraduate students and in-service students at University of Fire Prevention and Fighting. Two questionnaires were employed to collect the data in order to determine the levels of foreign language classroom anxiety and emotional intelligence. The first questionnaire is foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and the second one is the adapted version of EQ-i by Bar-on (1997). The findings show that there is a negative correlation between the students' emotional intelligence as well as all of its factors and foreign language anxiety.*

**Keywords:** relationship, emotional intelligence, foreign language anxiety, non-English major students, University of Fire Prevention and Fighting.

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## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS CORRELATION WITH FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

### **1. Introduction**

Learning a language for second language learners is a complex process involving both cognitive and affective factors. The cognitive factors deal with mental processing, including mental intelligence, language aptitude and language learning. On the contrary, the affective factors are the emotional side of human behavior in the learning process such as motivation, attitudes, self-confident and language anxiety. Although both factors affect students' performance in language learning, the influence of emotional elements, especially emotional intelligence and foreign language anxiety is of great importance on students' academic achievements and is higher than that of cognitive factors (Chastain, 1975).

During the past few centuries, numerous studies have been carried out on the intelligence as well as its links to the learners' academic success in schools. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many philosophers like Immanuel Kant believed that humans possess different types and different levels of intelligence. Over the next century, several studies related to intelligence kept emerging, which, according to Cianciolo & Sternberg (2008), led to some significant research in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that shaped the public's opinion on intelligence. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Alfred Binet defined the intelligence in terms of good judgement, practical sense, initiative and the ability to

adapt to circumstances (Binet & Simon, 1916). The first intelligence scale called Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was first created by Binet and Simon (1916) to measure mental abilities in children in 1912. For decades, Intelligent Quotient (IQ) test was regarded as a reliable tool without any objection to differentiate students in schools or to choose potential employees in the workplace. However, ideas of intelligence started to change in the 1980s with the advent of Multiple Intelligences (MI) coined by Howard Gardner (1983). He claimed that human intelligence has multiple dimensions with different types of intelligences; thus, each individual seems to have their own special talents and can use their intelligence in a unique way to solve the problems in schools and to achieve success in life. This explains why a person is likely to be more superior than others in one particular area. Afterwards, the emotional intelligence (EQ or EI) gradually emerged and has increasingly gained significant importance and tremendous popularity in a variety of areas of research. Present studies indicate that IQ is not a determining indicator to one's success in all areas of his/her life but the ability to effectively control his/her own emotions. It has been suggested that whether individuals could achieve their goals and lead their life successfully or not depends much more on their emotional intelligence. The most widely accepted models of emotional intelligence are Goleman's

(1995) model, Mayer and Salovey's (1997) model, Bar-on's (1997) model and Petrides and Furnham's (2001) model. Since the publication of Daniel Goleman's (1995) best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, the topic of EI has become widely known and attracted the great attention from education, psychology to business areas. From then on, Emotional Intelligence is significant and useful for various fields and this is also justified by various studies. For example, Emotional Intelligence has become the topic of research in educational settings (Walker, 2001; Duman, 2003; Petrides, Frederickson and Furnham, 2004; Barani and Shakib, 2011; Ketabdar, Yazdani and Yarahmadi, 2014; Shakarami and Khajehei, 2015; Esmaeeli, Sabet and Shahabi, 2018) and work settings (Carmeli, 2003; Oginska-Bulik, 2005; Çekmecelioğlu, Günsel and Ulutaş, 2012; Tagoe and Quarshie, 2017).

In addition to Emotional Intelligence, Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is also another important affective factor in language learning process. Scovel (1991) stated that "psychologists define anxiety as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only associated with an object" (p.18). Anxiety in the literature has been categorized into three types including trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) believed that foreign language classroom anxiety is a typical situation-specific anxiety. They defined FLA as "the distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from

the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.128). They identified three components of FLA, as follows: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). As for MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) foreign language anxiety is the individuals' tense and anxious feelings, especially in foreign language contexts. MacIntyre (2007) added that foreign language anxiety may possibly be the factor to generate disturbing feelings that shows up in the language classroom, and that foreign language learning can obstruct natural language processing in receiving, remembering and collecting the data, hence the potential distraction of the language learners to concentrate on these activities.

## 2. Review of Literature

### *Emotional Intelligence*

The term Emotional Intelligence (EI) was first formulated and introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990). They suggested that emotional intelligence is "a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Then, they redefined Emotional intelligence as the competence to perceive, understand and control emotions and feelings to facilitate personality development (Salovey & Mayer, 1997).

Another pioneer researcher is Reuven Bar-on (1988) who was the first person to coin the term Emotional Quotient (EQ) in

his research. Reuven Bar-on (1997) defined emotional intelligence as groups of non-cognitive abilities, competences and skills which have big impacts on how an individual can cope with requirements and challenges in his own life. According to Bar-on (2006), a person who possesses emotional intelligence can think and express effectively, connect with people and the environment easily, and deal with daily situations, challenges, and pressures successfully.

Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as the abilities to encourage oneself and keep going in spite of setbacks and disappointments; to manage yourself and temporarily stay away from the pleasure; to manage stress to think rationally; to show empathy to others and to except the reality. Later, he redefined and developed this definition as the ability to manage emotions appropriately and effectively to facilitate people to work together towards shared aims (Goleman, 1998). He also suggested that emotional intelligence is made up of five components that are self-awareness, self-regconition, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Petrides and Furnham (2001) managed to develop a formation in order to measure the individuals' differences and their own perceptions of their ability, such as thinking, performing and acting. They assessed the correlation between personality aspects and emotions and feelings as their purpose is to examine how the affective factors affect one's life and whether this influence on his/her life is positive or negative.

Accordingly, there are three major models of EI, namely Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model of Emotional Intelligence, Petrides and Furnham's (2001) trait model of Emotional Intelligence, and mixed model of Emotional Intelligence including Daniel Goleman's (1995) Emotional Competencies model, and Reuven Bar-on's (1997) Emotional-Social Intelligence model. One of the above mentioned models, i.e. Bar-on's model which was used in this study is discussed in details in the next section.

#### ***Mixed Model of Bar-on (1997)***

It has long been accepted that Bar-on's model is the most comprehensive and practical model of emotional intelligence that can be observed today (Bar-on & Handley, 1999). In this model, five main factors: Intrapersonal EQ, Interpersonal EQ, Adaptability EQ, Stress Management EQ, and General Mood EQ, are included. Each factor consists of many sub-factors. Intrapersonal includes self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness and self-actualization. Interpersonal consists of empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationship sub-factors. Stress management components are stress tolerance, impulse control and independence. In terms of Adaptability, reality testing, flexibility and problem solving are named. For the last factor, General Mood, the sub-factors are optimism and happiness (Bar-on & Handley, 1999). The Bar-on's social-emotional intelligence model, including five factors and 15 sub-factors is clarified in Table 1 below:

EQ-i scales		The EI competency assessed by each scale
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	Self-regard	To accurately perceive, understand and accept oneself
	Emotional Self-Awareness	To be aware of and understand one's emotions and feelings
	Assertiveness	To effectively and constructively express one's feelings
	Independence	To be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others
	Self-Actualization	To strive to achieve personal goals and actualize one's potential
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Empathy	To be aware of and understand how others feel
	Social Responsibility	To identify with one's social group and cooperate with others
	Interpersonal Relationship	To establish mutually satisfying relationships and relate well with others
<b>Stress Management</b>	Stress Tolerance	To effectively and constructively manage emotions
	Impulse Control	To effectively and constructively control emotions
<b>Adaptability</b>	Reality Testing	To objectively validate one's feelings and thinking with external reality
	Flexibility	To adapt and adjust one's feelings and thinking to new situations
	Problem-Solving	To effectively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature
<b>General Mood</b>	Optimism	To be positive and look at the brighter side of life
	Happiness	To feel content with oneself, others and life in general

*Table 1. The Bar-on EQ-i Scales*

According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000), Bar-on's model has some scientific roots. This model was developed under the light of the data gathered by the EQ-i, which was accepted as the first and most reliable scale for measuring EI. For the purposes of this study, the Bar-on's model was chosen because it includes some social skills which are necessary in

the language classroom, such as empathy, flexibility, and interpersonal relations. Moreover, stress management, which is one of the main factors of the Bar-on model, is highly related to the feeling of anxiety. Besides, the instrument, EQ-i, is regarded as one of the most reliable tools of measuring emotional intelligence because of the well-prepared and

meticulous development process of the EQ-i. The test-retest reliability of Bar-on's EQ-i was assessed over a period of time and the coefficients ranged between .78 to .92 and from .55 to .82, respectively (Bar-on, 1997). Also, the factor analysis supported the construct validity of the questionnaire. A number of approaches have been carried out and examined for the convergent and discriminant validity of the EQ-i. Therefore, while exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and foreign language anxiety, the Bar-on model will provide a better basis for the study than other models.

Acar (2001) is a pioneering researcher to adapt Bar-on's EQ-i. The adaptation version has some differences with the original in terms of the number of the items in the questionnaire. The differences and the reasons for choosing the adaptation for this study were about to be mentioned in the Methodology section. The overall internal coefficient of the short form of EQ-i was .92. It has been accepted as a reliable tool, thereby having been used in varied studies like Yılmaz (2007), Şakrak (2009), Kazak (2010), Ergün (2011), and Gök (2020).

### ***Foreign Language Anxiety***

According to Krashen (1981), three powerful affective factors that can negatively influence or even block the process of foreign language learning are motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. He also claimed that learners with low affective filter are likely to get positive results in language acquisition. On the

other hand, those with high affective filter cannot learn the target language effectively since they experience high levels of stress or anxiety during the learning process. Horwitz (2001) claimed that one in three foreign language learners experience some level of language anxiety. Therefore, foreign language anxiety has been attracted much much interest and research in recent years (Ellis, 2008).

As stated by Dordinejad and Ahmadabad (2014), foreign language anxiety is of great significance since it can either hinder or facilitate one's achievement in foreign language acquisition. According to Scovel (1978) foreign language anxiety (FLA) is defined as "an emotional state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (p.34). As for MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) foreign language anxiety is the individuals' tense and anxious feelings, especially in foreign language contexts. MacIntyre (2007) added that foreign language anxiety may be the factor to generate disturbing feelings that shows up in the language classroom, and that foreign language learning can obstruct natural language processing in receiving, remembering and collecting the data, hence the potential distraction of the language learners to concentrate on these activities. Horwitz et al. (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as the different self-perceptions, beliefs, emotions, attitudes and actions associated with classroom language learning being the product of the exclusiveness of the language learning process. From this

perspective, one can easily realize the uniqueness of language anxiety since it only arises when it involves learners' self-concepts into the language learning process.

In the current literature, there have been three theoretical models of foreign language anxiety. The first model is three-component model proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The second model is Kim's (2002) model of foreign language anxiety consisting of five components which are Production Anxiety, Literacy Anxiety, and Aural and Evaluation Anxiety, the instructor-induced anxiety and culture (difficulties in learning a foreign language due to the cultural barriers). Meanwhile, based on a close review of the foreign language anxiety literature, Lou (2011) suggested that foreign language anxiety stems from four main sources, i.e. classroom environment, learner characteristics, target language and foreign language learning and she proposed a new model of foreign language anxiety consisting of four components which are speaking anxiety, listening anxiety, reading anxiety and writing anxiety.

#### ***Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) Three-Component Model***

In the Horwitz et al.'s (1986) identification, foreign language anxiety is categorized into three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The first component, communication apprehension, is characterized by being afraid of or worrying about having conversations with others and it is a type of shyness. The

second component, fear of negative evaluation, is the fear of being judged by not only their teachers but also their classmates, for this reason, learners may try to escape from evaluative tasks both in actual and imaginary circumstances. The last component is test anxiety which is being worried or anxious about the failure in examinations or academic performances. Generally, learners who suffer from test anxiety are identified as perfectionists and feel unsecured when they get lower scores than they expected.

In their study, Horwitz et al. (1986) developed Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure the level of anxiety among language learners. The scale was reported to have high internal reliability, with an alpha coefficient of .93 with all items producing significant corrected item-total correlations and a test-retest reliability, achieving a  $r = .83$  ( $p < .001$ ) (Horwitz, et al., 1986). Since this scale has been widely accepted as the most reliable tool to measure FLA and commonly used in numerous studies such as MacIntyre (1988); MacIntyre & Gardner (1989); Horwitz, (1991); Kim (2000); Liu (2006) and Batumlu & Erden (2007), this instrument was chosen for the current study.

By thoroughly examining the studies about the relationship between foreign language anxiety and emotional intelligence, the researcher found out that these studies were carried out in non-English speaking countries in which English is considered as a foreign language, thereby encouraging the

researcher to conduct a similar study in Vietnam which is also a non-English speaking country. Furthermore, Woodrow (2006) indicated that the cultural background of the students has significant effect on their foreign language anxiety, and emotional intelligence is also affected by the cultural values of the students (Ghorbani, Bing, Watson, Davison, & Mack, 2002). Therefore, the culture that the students are part of may affect the way they perceive emotions, especially their emotional intelligence and foreign language anxiety. However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge there have not had any studies to investigate the correlation between emotional intelligence and foreign language anxiety in Vietnam so far. It is clear that the findings of previous studies about the connection between foreign language anxiety and emotional intelligence may not be generalized to Vietnamese EFL students. Thus, there is a need to conduct a study to explore the relationship between these two constructs in the Vietnamese context.

In order to examine the correlation between emotional intelligence and foreign language anxiety among university students, this study will therefore address the following research questions:

1. What are the students' levels of foreign language anxiety?
2. What are the students' levels of emotional intelligence?
3. Is there a relationship between the students' foreign language anxiety and their emotional intelligence ?

### 3. Methodology

#### *Participants*

The study was conducted at University of Fire Prevention and Fighting, Vietnam. Participants of the present study were 300 non-English major students (168 undergraduate students and 132 in-service students) studying English as a foreign language which were randomly selected among freshmen and sophomores.

#### *Instruments*

In this study, the data were collected through quantitative data gathering instruments. Two different questionnaires were administered in order to investigate the research questions: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) and a short version of Bar-on-model-based questionnaire adapted by Acar (2001). To avoid any language barriers, two instruments were translated into Vietnamese; and in order to ensure the clarity and consistency of all the items, a well-qualified language translation center at Hanoi University was hired to produce the Vietnamese versions of these instruments. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Vietnamese versions of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and Emotional Quotient Inventory were found to be .93 and .92 respectively.

#### *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)*

The FLCAS contains 33 5-point Likert scale items created to identify students' foreign language anxiety, and it integrates



three related anxieties, which are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). The FLCAS is based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Some of the items on this instrument are negatively worded and reverse-scored. Possible scores range from 33 to 165. After filling out the FLCAS, a total score for the FLA level of a student can be determined. The higher the FLA scores represent, the more anxious learners are.

### ***Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)***

The second questionnaire, the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), was created by Reuven Bar-On (1997). The original version of the EQ-i comprises 133 items and employs a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1. Very seldom or not true for me, 2. Seldom true for me, 3. Sometimes true for me, 4. Often true for me, 5. Very often true for me or true for me). Regarding to the students's competence in English, in order for the students to thoroughly understand the questions and to avoid any misunderstandings, the researcher of this study used a shorter version of EQ-i adapted by Acar (2001). There is a difference in Acar's (2001) version from the original one in terms of the item numbers, specifically 15 items were taken out from the 133 statements. The reason for this is that those items are irrelevant to the sub-factors of the Bar-On EQ-i model and their aim is only to make an evaluation of the consistency of the students' responses. Also, Acar removed

some other items that were equivalent to others. Thus, the short version of the inventory comprises 88 items separated into five main factors and 15 sub-factors. The instrument is based on Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Agree, 3. Neither agree or disagree, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree).

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

In the first week of February 2020, the two questionnaires were distributed in the classes from which the subjects have been chosen randomly. Before administering the questionnaires, detailed guidelines and expectations of the researcher were given to and discussed with the English teachers of these classes. While the questionnaires were being administered, the researcher checked all the classes to prevent any misunderstandings in the questionnaires and were willing to answer any questions from the participants about the questionnaires. Since the questionnaires generally require approximately 35 minutes to complete, the teachers had to inform students about the study and its purposes before starting the lectures.

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

The data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative methods are employed to analyze the data by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. When entering the data into SPSS, 39 negative items in the EQ-i and 9 negative items in the FLCAS were reverse scored. Firstly, the total scores and the average response score of each participant

were computed and analyzed for both questionnaires. Secondly, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine whether there is a correlation between the students' foreign language anxiety scores and their emotional intelligence scores or not. Finally, the relationship between the FLA scores and scores of the five factors of EI was again explored by using Pearson product-moment.

#### 4. Findings

In order to investigate the relationship between foreign language anxiety and emotional intelligence, both descriptive and inferential statistics of the quantitative data were employed in this study.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Total FLA Score</b>	300	49	149	98.47	16.50
<b>Average Response</b>	300	1.48	4.52	2.98	0.50

*Table 2. Total foreign language anxiety and average response*

In Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), it is clear that the minimum and maximum FLA scores were 33 and 165 respectively. In this study, the participants' foreign language anxiety scores were found ranging from 49 to 149 as moderate anxiety with a mean of 98,47. Besides, the distribution of FLCAS scores can be classified as low, moderate and high as FLCAS is a 5-point Likert scale which is scored ranging from 1 to 5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neither agree nor disagree, 4. Agree, and 5. Strongly agree). Thus, higher scores of FLCAS represent the higher level of anxiety whereas the lower scores indicate

#### Research Question 1: What are the students' levels of foreign language anxiety?

Due to the fact that the data was gathered through the Vietnamese version of FLCAS, first of all, the internal consistency of the instrument was examined and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found as .93. Initially, the total scores of FLCAS of participants were computed to represent the students' levels of foreign language anxiety, including minimum, maximum and mean scores. Then, the average Likert scale response for each participant was calculated accordingly. Table 2 below showed the results of the calculations.

the lower level of anxiety. In line with this, 2.5 is the midpoint of the scale. The points between 1.0 and 2.4 reflect the disagree item of the scale and indicate the low level of anxiety, and between 2.5 and 3.5 represent the neutral answers and show the moderate level of anxiety, and the points between 3.5 and 5.0 point out the high level of anxiety. According to the distributions of the scale, the average mean response of 2.98 found in this study can be interpreted as moderate anxiety.

Based on the distribution of FLCAS scores, the researcher divided the participants into three groups as low

anxiety, moderate anxiety and high anxiety according to their mean values. Table 3 presented the descriptive statistics of three different anxiety groups.

Anxiety Level	N	Percent
Low anxiety	40	13.3
Moderate anxiety	207	69
High anxiety	53	17.7
Total	300	100

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics of anxiety groups**

As shown in Table 3, 13.3% of students fall in low anxiety group, 17.7 % of them are highly anxious. The table also showed that 69% of the students account for more than a half of them are moderately anxious. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the EFL students at University of Fire Prevention and Fighting, Vietnam are moderately anxious.

**Research Question 2: What are the students' levels of emotional intelligence?**

Initially, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of Vietnamese version of EQ-i

was calculated to examine the internal consistency of the scale and the value was found to be .92. The Cronbach's alpha values for five factors of the EQ-i scale were shown in Table 4 below.

EI Factors	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
Intrapersonal	.87
Interpersonal	.69
Adaptability	.74
Stress Management	.84
General Mood	.70

**Table 4. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for five factors of EI**

In the EQ-i questionnaire, the possible lowest point is 88 and the highest point is 440. The descriptive statistics showed that the university students' mean score is 308.18 with 235-428 points range. In addition, the mean score of average response found in this study falls into the high range (3.5 to 5) of EI Likert scale. Thus, it can be said that the mean values of EI are above average.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total EI Score	300	235	428	308.18	33.71
Average Response	300	2.67	4.86	3.502	0.38

**Table 5. Total emotional intelligence and average response**

**Research Question 3: Is there a relationship between the students' foreign language anxiety and their emotional intelligence?**

In order to explore whether there is a

relationship between foreign language and emotional intelligence, Pearson product-moment was used to investigate the correlation between these two constructs. The results were presented in Table 6.

	Total EI scores	Total FLA scores
<b>Total EI scores</b>	Pearson Correlation 1	-.418**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N 300	300
<b>Total FLA scores</b>	Pearson Correlation -.418**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N 300	300

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 6. Correlation between EI and FLA**

The results shown in Table 6 indicated that there is a moderate and negative correlation between students' foreign language anxiety level and their emotional intelligence scores ( $r = .418$ ,  $n = 300$ ,  $p = .000$ ). This result suggested that the higher level of emotional intelligent the students possess, the less anxious they feel. The correlation between the two

constructs was statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ), with a medium effect size ( $r = -.418$ ).

In addition, the correlations of five factors of EI with the total scores FLA were also examined using Pearson's coefficient. The findings of the analysis were shown in Table 7.

		Total FLA scores
<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	Intrapersonal $r$	-.428**
	Stress Management $r$	-.387**
	Adaptability $r$	-.379**
	Interpersonal $r$	-.280**
	General Mood $r$	-.262**

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 7. Correlations between Total Scores of FLA and five factors of EI**

As shown in Table 7, the correlation results between total scores of FLA and factors of EI: *Intrapersonal* ( $r = -.428$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), *Stress Management* ( $r = -.387$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), *Adaptability* ( $r = -.379$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), *Interpersonal* ( $r = -.280$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and *General Mood* ( $r = -.262$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) suggested that there are negative connections between the students's FLA scores and factors of EI. Notably, the strongest correlation is found on *Intrapersonal* ( $r = -.428$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the weakest correlation is found on *General*

*Mood* ( $r = -.262$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). That is to say, while *Intrapersonal* EQ has the strongest connection, *General Mood* EQ reflects the weakest connection with the students' FLA scores in this study.

The results of the third research question revealed a moderate negative relationship between students' emotional intelligence and foreign language anxiety. It is clear that the higher level of emotional intelligence students have, the lower level of FLA they experience.

## 5. Discussion

The first question of this study explored the FLA level of students at University of Fire Prevention and Fighting, Vietnam. The results of FLA scores revealed that students are moderately anxious. This result is consistent with other studies in the current literature. Çakar (2009) administered the FLCAS at Bilkent University and Pamukkale University and found mean values scores of 87.4, and 95.2 respectively. She interpreted both mean values as moderately anxious. Demirdaş and Bozdoğan (2013) found the participants' foreign language anxiety scores ranging from 37 to 145 as moderate anxiety with a mean of 93.5. Similarly, Kiliç (2018) also found the mean scores of FLA in her study as 95.59 and she concluded that the value indicated the moderate level of FLA among students. Thus, it can be interpreted that EFL students at University of Fire Prevention and Fighting are mainly moderately anxious about learning English. The similarity of results among studies may stem from the fact that the participants probably have the same experiences about learning English as a foreign language.

The second question of this study investigated the EI level of university students. The overall mean of the sample group was found to be 308.18 from a range of 88-440 points. In addition, the average mean response of 3.502 is interpreted as above average emotional intelligence level. It is possibly said that the emotional intelligence level of the

students in the study was found to be above average. In order to better understand the students' level of emotional intelligence, it is of great importance to compare with other studies. For instance, Hafızoğlu (2007) investigated the emotional intelligence level of students at a private high school, and she found that the minimum score was 181, the maximum score was 236, and the overall mean was 226. Another researcher, Gök (2020) indicated that the participants's EI mean score is 287.54 with 149-343 points range. Noticeably, the participants' emotional intelligence level in this study seems higher than the previous studies. It should be noted that 44% of the population size (132 students) in this study are in-service students aging from 23 to 30. According to Şakrak (2009) the disparity among study results may have a close connection with the age factor. Similarly, Bar-on and Parker (2000) stated that older participants have higher emotional intelligence than younger participants, i.e emotional intelligence level increases as age increases. Thus, it can be said that age factor may be a good predictor for the participants' level of emotional intelligence.

The third research question examined the relationship between emotional and foreign language anxiety. The correlation analysis results showed that there is a weak negative relationship between these two constructs ( $r = -.418$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In addition, there is also a weak negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and 5 factors of emotional intelligence. This result revealed that

students with higher EI scores have lower FLA, and students with high levels of FLA have lower EI scores. In the same vein, Chao (2003) conducted the research on Taiwanese students while Ahangari and Taghizadeh (2012) administered their study on Iranian university students. Notably, these researchers also found a negative correlation between EI and FLA levels of EFL students at university level. These findings are significant since they reveal the fact that by developing the EI of students, FLA can be diminished, thereby facilitating the students' language learning process.

The connection between FLA and the five factors of EI was also explored to deeply understand the nature of this relationship. The results showed that to some extent, all of the factors of emotional intelligence correlated negatively with foreign language anxiety. This finding suggested that when any of the students' factors of EI are high, their FLA level is lower. Among the factors, the strongest correlation could be seen between FLA and Intrapersonal EQ ( $r = -.428, p < 0.01$ ). This can be interpreted as, if students are able to be aware of their own emotional states and feelings, strengths and weaknesses, they tend to experience less anxiety during the language learning process. Based on the results, the weakest correlation was found between FLA and General Mood EQ ( $r = -.262, p < 0.01$ ). This weak connection can be explained as, apart from language anxiety, there may be other factors that can influence on the participants' General Mood in the foreign language classrooms.

## 6. Conclusion

The study provided a general background about both the FLA and EI levels of the EFL learners at University of Fire Prevention and Fighting. Further investigation also pointed out significantly negative connections among five EI factors and the participants' levels of FLA. That is to say, the more the participants improve their EI skills, the less anxious they feel in the language classrooms. In line with the results, it can be concluded that learning and improving EI factors and sub-factors may help the EFL learners to reduce their FLA level during the language learning process. Thus, in order to help the EFL learners to feel less anxious in the language classrooms, new approaches need to be adopted like focusing on developing their emotional intelligence by supplementing EI as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum.

In this study, it is evident that emotional intelligence correlates with foreign language anxiety of the students. However, other variables, apart from emotional intelligence, that can make EFL students anxious need to be investigated. Therefore, practical guidances to ELF students that can help manage and reduce their FLA levels in the language classrooms can be introduced and practiced. In addition, further studies should involve a larger sample size at different settings and adopt both quantitative and qualitative methods so that the results will be more reliable. Finally, while conducting the research, different scales of EI and FLA from different scholars should be employed so

that the data gathered from the participants can be crosschecked, thereby ensuring the reliability and objectivity of the results.

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