

# THE INTERACTION OF TRAIT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS

Mohsen Varzande<sup>1</sup> and Esmail Jadidi<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, IRAN

<sup>2</sup>Department of English, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, IRAN

## ABSTRACT

Evidence supports the fact that Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a predictor of better academic performance. Also, emotionally intelligent people are regarded to better function in workplace settings. Evidence shows that the interaction of EI and academic knowledge could influence the performance of individuals in workplace environments. In this regard, translators' job seems to be highly influenced by this combination. In fact, academic knowledge, professional and psychological conditions of translators may directly influence their translation job. The present causal-comparative study aimed at investigating the interaction of professional translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge on their job performance. Using purposive sampling method, a sample of 100 professional translators was selected. The participants were divided into two groups containing individuals with and without an academic degree in translation. Petrides & Furnham's (2001) Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) was administered to collect data on the participants' EI. The participants were asked to translate a text to assess the quality of their translation. To do this, Waddington's model D (2001) was used as the marking system. For data analysis, Two-way ANOVA statistical procedure was used to investigate the research hypothesis. The study results showed that the interaction of translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge does not predict their translation quality. However, this finding could not be sufficient to reject the hypothesis about the influence of EI on job performance of translators. One may imply that certain subscales of EI may affect performance in workplace settings and the role of individuals' EI besides their academic and professional knowledge could not be underestimated, as is the case of professional translators' job.

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## KEY WORDS

Trait Emotional Intelligence, Job performance, Academic knowledge, Translation quality

\*Corresponding author: Email: [esmaeil.jadidi@yahoo.com](mailto:esmaeil.jadidi@yahoo.com); Tel: +989173145087; Fax: +987143311172

## INTRODUCTION

A combination of individual differences and traits including translators' knowledge, professional and psychological conditions may directly influence their translation quality [1-3]. On the one hand, the basic step of a planned and organized approach for training competent translators is the mastery over theoretical frameworks which is made possible by flourishing translation theories and new ideas towards the process of translation [4]. Over the past decades, few studies have directly examined the relationship between individuals' level of education and their job performance. Years of work experience do not moderate the education-performance relationship because work experience indicates the quantity, not the quality of the job done; yet, education influences some dimensions of performance [5]. For instance, it was found that professional translators without an academic degree in Translation do not focus on the revision stage which can challenge the quality of their translation; on the contrary, qualified translators and academics recognize the significance of this stage. Thus, the academic status of the translator should be taken into account as one of the elements of his/her sense of responsibility which influences the quality of their job [6].

Furthermore, to perform a better job, a translator is expected to have good knowledge of other fields [7]; translators are expected to have a very good knowledge of all the domains with which their work interferes. That is why translation students expect to receive solid and complex training, including various specific knowledge and skills associated with their profession, which enables them to face the challenges of translating in real world situations [8]. On the other hand, translation has gone hand in hand with so many factors and should be studied along other fields, and it is not separate from them. Psychology is one of these fields. Emotions and being intelligent about them is an important factor, and may heavily influence the translation job [9]. The study of Trait Emotional Intelligence is one

of the most important dimensions of intelligence [10]. Trait Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Quotient (EQ level) are among the factors contributing to the task of translation [2]. It is hypothesized that emotional intelligence influences the success with which employees interact with the strategies they use and their overall job performance. Preliminary findings also suggest that emotional intelligence positively contributes to different aspects of workplace performance [11].

Translation is an intelligent activity, requiring creative problem-solving in novel, textual, social, and cultural conditions [12]. It is widely accepted that translation can be viewed as a problem-solving process in which the translator encounters problems of various sources and uses tools and resources to solve them. What makes Trait Emotional Intelligence important is that people with Trait Emotional Intelligence are able to control their feelings, utilize their affective data to lead their thoughts and activities and provide themselves with more opportunities to think and be more creative and to aim their emotions at solving problems which, in turn, link to successful translation and the quality of translation [13,14]. That is why the present study approaches Trait Emotional Intelligence in terms of job performance of the translators.

The process of translation needs to engage in a great deal of decision-making activities [15]. Considering the process of decision-making in translation as a particularly complex procedure, Willis suggested that the translator should pay attention to factors that lead to choices, rather than on the choices themselves [16]. There is also a general consensus among translation researchers that the decision-making process also plays a salient role in translators' performance and the quality of their translation [17]. The behavior, psychological disposition [14], cognitive, emotional [18] and individual characteristics [19,20,21,22] influence decision-making process. Furthermore, "according to popular opinion and work-place testimonials, Trait Emotional Intelligence increases performance and productivity" [23].

Therefore, the necessity of investigating translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence is of great importance to predict their job performance; For instance, there is a positive relationship between EQ and the quality of children's literature translation [2]. Briefly speaking, translators' degree in translation and academic knowledge positively affect the quality of the translation product, the process of translating and producing a good translation [3,6,24]. On the other hand, investigating Trait Emotional Intelligence is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the translation process [6]. Also, Trait Emotional Intelligence has proved to be correlated with successful task performance [7]. Translation as a career places a higher emphasize on Trait Emotional Intelligence abilities, which may successfully predicts translators' job performance [25]. Trait Emotional Intelligence influence academic achievement [26] and academic performance [11,23, 25, 27] as well as writing performance [28]. Job-relevant knowledge is a direct determinant of job performance on the one hand and individual differences in traits are an antecedent of job knowledge on the other hand [29]. Hence, emotional intelligence may only affect job performance through its effect on knowledge. This rationale highlights the importance of investigating the interaction of translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and their academic knowledge and the impact which it exerts on and their job performance.

The focus of the present study was to investigate whether the interaction of translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge influence their job performance. This study was designed to seek answers to the following question:

Does the interaction of translator's academic knowledge and Trait Emotional Intelligence significantly influence their translation quality?

Based on the aforementioned research question, the following hypothesis was formulated:

The interaction of translator's academic knowledge and Trait Emotional Intelligence significantly influence their translation quality.

The influence of translator's academic knowledge on the quality of their translations has been investigated in some studies. For instance, it was revealed that higher-quality of translations and better performance of translators is related to their training and experience [30]. Translators' academic knowledge enables them to produce a 'good' translation [24]. The education of translators enhances the quality of their work [31]. It was also reported that the translators' level of education influences their translation quality [32]. Some professional translators, mainly without academic degree in Translation, ignore or underestimate the role of revision on the translation product while qualified translators recognize the importance of the revision stage [6]. Translators' knowledge of pragmatics is one of the crucial elements to enhance the quality of their translation [33]. Finally, the translators'

academic knowledge plays an important role in predicting the quality of their job. Being aware of theoretical frameworks and having knowledge of theories of translation may affect the quality of the translation product [1]. Trait Emotional Intelligence is a completely new topic in translation studies and very little research investigated the impact it exerts on translation quality. It seems that Trait Emotional Intelligence may directly or indirectly influence the process and product of translation; however, one study provided evidence that there was not a significant relationship between Trait Emotional Intelligence and the quality of the translation among the students of translation studies [2]. On the contrary, there is a difference between Trait Emotional Intelligence scores of literary and non-literary translators in terms of emotion regulation. People with higher EI are able to handle the affective nature of texts much better. It is both necessary and desirable to investigate translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence to gain a deeper understanding of translation processes [20]. It was also demonstrated that a positive relationship exists between EQ and the quality of translation [2]. Also, the level of Trait Emotional Intelligence might be one of the possible factors manipulating the translators' mind. There was a positive and significant relationship between the learners' EQ and their success in oral translation performance [34]. Another study stressed the importance of Trait Emotional Intelligence in the work of interpreters; Emotionally Intelligent interpreters would not necessarily be better interpreters, but they would definitely be a more adjusted professional with a higher level of success in their career. The study further suggested that Trait Emotional Intelligence should be introduced in academic courses or in the training of interpreters [35].

To the best of our knowledge, very few studies have primarily investigated the interaction between Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge and the impact it exerts on translators' job performance. High educational background had a strong correlation with Trait Emotional Intelligence [36]. Moreover, job-relevant knowledge is a direct determinant of job performance on the one hand and individual differences in traits are an antecedent of job knowledge on the other hand. Hence, emotional intelligence may only affect job performance through its effect on knowledge. This rationale highlights the importance of investigating the interaction of translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and their academic knowledge and the impact which it exerts on and their job performance [29].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Design

The design of this quantitative study was causal-comparative in nature.

### Instruments

- 1) Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) was used for measuring the participants' global Trait Emotional Intelligence or EQ which was designed and validated by Petrides & Furnham (2003).
- 2) To assess translation quality of the participants, Waddington's translation quality assessment model D was used. This model is designed and validated by Waddington (2001).

### Participants

The study participants were a group of professional translators, working in official and non-official translation centers, and freelance translators. The inclusion criterion was: 2-7 years of experience. Individuals with both Bachelors' and Masters' degrees in translation were excluded from the study to minimize the influence of their knowledge and proficiency. Using purposive sampling method, 100 translators were selected. They were divided into two groups, each containing 50 subjects. Group A and group B contained subjects with and without a degree in translation, respectively.

### Data collection procedures

The study participants completed the TEIQue-SF questionnaire and the total EQ scores were computed. Then, both groups were asked to complete a translation task in 30 minutes. The translations were assessed and scored based on Waddington's model D. To do so, a paragraph from the Orwell's 1984 novel was given to be translated into Persian. The scores were entered in SPSS version 21.0 for statistical analysis.

### Data analysis

After data entry, the appropriate statistical analysis including descriptive statistics (Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation) were used to analyze demographic data; in order to investigate the hypothesis, inferential statistics including Two-way ANOVA was used.

## RESULTS

### Reliability of the measures

The Chronbach's alpha was estimated to be 0.86 and 0.82 for the translated version of Petrides and Furnham's TEIQue and Waddington's model D, respectively.

### Results of the descriptive and inferential statistics of variables

The mean age of the participants was 28.2 years (SD 6.8). **Table- 1** summarizes the results of descriptive statistics of the variables.

**Table :1. Descriptive statistics of variables**

	Workplace	Gender	Academic experience	Years of experience	Age
N	100	100	100	100	100
Mean				4.0404	28.2828
Std. Deviation				1.95312	6.83036

**Table- 2** reveals the results of total EQ of participants in each group. Mean total EQ of the participants in groups 1 and 2 was 97.9(SD 15.02) and 105.3(SD 17.01). In our study, participants without a degree in translation enjoyed a higher EQ.

**Table: 2. Descriptive Statistics of variables (Total EQ)**

		N	Mean	SD
Group A	Total EQ	50	97.96	15.021
Group B	Total EQ	50	105.36	17.012

**Tables- 3 and 4** present the results of scoring the translations based on Waddington's model D. This scoring system makes use of two subjective (holistic) and objective (error analysis) scoring methods. According to table 3, mean holistic, objective and total score of participants in group 1 was 5.3(SD 1.1), 5.7(SD 1.3) and 5.5 (SD 1). On the other hand, mean holistic, objective and total score of participants in group 2 was 5.1(SD 0.9), 5 (SD 1) and 5.1(SD 0.9). Mean total score in groups 1 and 2 was finally calculated to be 5.5(SD 1) and 5.1(SD 0.9).

**Table: 3. Descriptive statistics of variables (Total score)**

		N	Mean	SD
Group A	Holistic	50	5.32	1.114
	Objective	50	5.71	1.343
	Total score	50	5.59	1.078
Group B	Holistic	50	5.18	0.983
	Objective	50	5.08	1.083
	Total score	50	5.11	0.911

**Table: 4. Mean and Std. Deviation of variables (Total score)**

		N	Mean	SD
Total score	Group A	50	5.59	1.078
	Group B	50	5.11	0.911

For investigating the interaction of translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge on their job performance, Two-way ANOVA was run. According to **Table- 5**, there is no significant relationship between the interaction of translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge on their translation quality (sig = 0.49).

**Table: 5. Results of Two-way ANOVA**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	57.825 <sup>a</sup>	59	0.980	0.858	0.708
Intercept	2116.029	1	2116.029	1852.87	0.000
TOTALEQ	39.226	46	0.853	0.747	0.831
Academic	1.732	1	1.732	1.517	0.225

TOTALEQ*academic	13.318	12	1.110	0.972	0.491
Error	45.681	40	1.142		
Total	2968.860	100			
Corrected Total	103.506	99			

a. R Squared = 0.559 (Adjusted R Squared = -0.092)

## DISCUSSION

Hypothesis: The interaction of translator's academic knowledge and Trait Emotional Intelligence significantly influence their translation quality.

The results of Two-way ANOVA reveal that the interaction of translator's Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge does not significantly influence their translation quality ( $p > 0.05$ ). This finding could be predicted as no significant relationship was found between translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence and their translation quality [36]. On the other hand, the fact that Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge influence each other has been proposed in very few studies. The researcher believes that this should be further studied to determine exactly how and why these two variables may interact with each other and consequently impact the translators' translation quality and job performance.

Previous studies indicated that translators' degree in translation, academic knowledge and academic knowledge positively affect the quality of the translation product and producing a good translation. On the other hand, the translators' psychological conditions including their Trait Emotional Intelligence may influence their job performance. Trait Emotional Intelligence is considered as a factor which contributes to performing processes such as problem-solving and decision-making that are embedded in translation career. Translators' Trait Emotional Intelligence was found to affect the quality of the translation product and producing a good translation; while another study did not find a significant relationship between total Trait Emotional Intelligence and translation quality [2]. On the contrary, it was found that there is a difference between Trait Emotional Intelligence scores of literary and non-literary translators [20]. There is a positive relationship between EQ and the quality of translation [2]. Furthermore, some authors stressed the importance of Trait Emotional Intelligence for success in oral translation performance [35, 37]. Although no relationship was found in the present study between the interaction of Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge on job performance of translators, it is suggested that the concept of Trait Emotional Intelligence should be considered in assessing job performance of translators with academic knowledge in translation; this, for sure, leaves the subject open to further research and discussion.

## CONCLUSION

Even though very few studies have investigated this relationship, they have found that Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge influence each other and this fact may be used as evidence to suggest that this interaction may indirectly affect translation quality. Results of Two-way ANOVA in our sample rejected the hypothesis of the study; although this result is not in agreement with similar studies. For instance, our results are not in agreement with the results of a similar study, which found that Trait Emotional Intelligence and academic knowledge interact with each other to influence job performance.

The conclusions drawn indicate that translators can acquire a higher quality translation through further training in academic courses and problem-solving and decision-making strategies included in the academic environment. What is more, translation educators should not ignore the important role of Trait Emotional Intelligence in the act of translation. It is also recommended that the translation educational system develops a comprehensive curriculum for the benefit of all students with respect to their Trait Emotional Intelligence.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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## ABOUT AUTHORS

**Mohsen Varzande** ,Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, IRAN

**Esmail Jadidi** ,Department of English, Marvdasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht, IRAN