

Enhancing Emotional Engagement in Higher Education: Leveraging Emotional Intelligence for Holistic Student Development



Dr. Syed Aulia

Department of Business Management Studies

Gulf College Muscat, Sultanate of Oman – Affiliated to Cardiff Metropolitan University UK

In the evolving landscape of higher education, fostering emotional engagement among students has emerged as a critical factor in enhancing learning outcomes, well-being, and interpersonal effectiveness. This keynote address explores the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) as a foundational framework for understanding and improving emotional engagement within academic environments. Emotions, defined as strong feelings arising from individual circumstances, moods, and relationships, significantly influence students' academic performance, decision-making, and social interactions.

The discussion highlights the theoretical underpinnings of emotional intelligence, including its early conceptualization and its expansion through contemporary models emphasizing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. These dimensions collectively enable individuals to recognize, regulate, and effectively respond to both their own emotions and those of others, thereby fostering meaningful connections and productive academic environments.

A central focus of the address is the diverse spectrum of emotions experienced by college students, ranging from anxiety, stress, and frustration to motivation, joy, and euphoria. These emotional states are often shaped by academic pressures, social dynamics, personal expectations, and future uncertainties. Understanding these emotional patterns is essential for educators and institutions aiming to create supportive and inclusive learning ecosystems. By promoting self-awareness and emotional regulation, educators can empower students to manage challenges more effectively, enhance empathy, and build stronger interpersonal relationships. Additionally, emotionally intelligent environments contribute to improved student engagement, reduced burnout, and greater academic resilience.

Keywords: Emotional Engagement, Higher Education, Emotional Intelligence, holistic student development.

Biography:

Dr. Syed Aulia serves in the Department of Business Management Studies at Gulf College, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, and brings over 24 years of experience in academia, executive training, research, consultancy, and academic administration. He has conducted numerous executive development programs on leadership, decision-making, team building, performance management, self-awareness, emotional management, industrial relations, and Emotional Intelligence (EI), in which he holds specialized expertise. His research spans Bhutan and Oman, including UNFPA/UNDP-sponsored projects on demographic transition and girls' access to primary education in Bhutan. In Oman, he served as Co-Principal Investigator for a MoHERI-funded project on enhancing logistics and supply chain competitiveness at Omani ports. He is currently leading a MoHERI-sponsored research project (2025–2026) as Principal Investigator, focusing on technology adoption, innovation, and institutional support to strengthen women entrepreneurs' competencies in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.