

NURTURING SKILLS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Abstract

Emotion is an important and integral part of our life, as it affects all aspects of human life in totality. Undoubtedly, it is the soul of every action, reaction and relationship. Even Plato had written, about 2000 years ago, that “All learning has an emotional base”. Being an integral and significant aspect of human nature and the motivation for all behaviour, emotions serve as one of the most important ingredient of human nature. Emotion is the experience that demonstrates and defines human existence as a living being.

Emotional intelligence plays a very important role in our emotional social and personal life. By developing EI in childhood stage, one can make a happier and more successful adult. During stressful and terrible situations “emotionally intelligent” people manage their emotions better and react with clearer, more rational minds and make better decisions. In difficult situations, transmitting positive emotions can help people cope with negative circumstances. EI moderates conflict by promoting understanding and relationships, and fostering stability, continuity and harmony. It also links strongly with concepts of love and spirituality. EI adds emotional stability that makes us more capable and efficient in establishing successful interpersonal relationships as, it is a requirement for dispute resolution.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence, Emotions, General Intelligence, Academic Achievement, Intervention.

Introduction

Previous research results indicate that there are at least seven basic emotions; namely, happiness, interest, surprise, fear, anger, sorrow and disgust (Ekman et al. 1982). Each of these basic emotions are, according to Leventhal (1982) both a control mechanism and a monitor for one of the main aspects of human life. They act directly through the intra-organismic, behavioural and expressive functions and indirectly by supplying input or other sub-systems of the brain. Emotions are associated with mood, temperament, personality, disposition, and motivation. Emotions motivate for intellectual and social progress, generating trust and

confidence by their understanding. According to Akinboye (2002), emotions are the base of human integrity, honesty, fairness, dignity and other important human actions. Furthermore, emotions drive human behaviour and actions, and no human action is emotion free, whether good or bad. Infact, emotions determine an individual's feelings and conditions and can set the stage for an internal sense of motivation to do more (Franken, 2002). In recent years emotions are increasingly being viewed as signals that provide information, direct attention and facilitate attainment of goals and are seen as organizing processes that enable people to think and behave adaptively (Sibia, Misra, and Srivastava, 2005).

The suppression of one's feelings leads to abnormal behaviour across the life span (Plutchik, 2000). Therefore, expression of emotions, is necessary for our well-being but it is very important and pertinent to express the emotions at the right time, at the right place, to the right person and to the right extent. Expression of emotions in the above mentioned way require the ability to understand one's own emotions and that of others, and to deal effectively with them; more specifically, termed as 'Emotional Intelligence'. The emergence of emotional intelligence is comparatively recent in the field of psychology. This is the merge of both emotion and intelligence, as a cognitive ability and was proposed by psychologists, John Mayer and Peter Salovey in the year 1990.

Emotional Intelligence in Indian Context

Individuals approach emotions differently across cultures, sub cultures, within societies or families (Sibia, Misra, Srivastava, 2004). Therefore regulation of emotion is the attempt of the individuals to change their behaviours, actions etc. and also to adapt themselves according to the environment. Indian culture is different from that of the western culture in many respects, in the sense, that the in-built capacities develops a sort of shock absorbing power in them which is expected to result in better adjustment in comparison to the counterpart of other cultures of the world both in quantity and quality. An Indian family is based on emotion bonding which is unlimited and everlasting. Social concerns such as well being of others and fulfilling one's duty constitute a dominant part of Indian traditions, along with social skills such as respecting elders or helping others constitutes the salient features of Indian culture.

Emotion learning in Indian context is being viewed as a life-long process of investigating him/herself, towards the discovery of true self. The moral values like

non violence, caring, kindness, benevolence are actually the emotional expressions valued by Indians. These moral values provide the basis for emotional expression and response. The Indian view of emotional learning may therefore be related to the construction of 'self' through the process of self-perception and self-monitoring in accordance with the socio-cultural context. Models of emotional intelligence originated in the west but it could be applied effectively in the Indian context. There are rich resources within these two traditions for addressing the issues of emotional intelligence and various strategies for altering it (Larson, 2004). The concept of EI in Indian context is enriched with highly valued social concern, virtues, religious traditions, and cultural practices. In Indian context, the use of EI concept is extremely important because Indians, by and large, have high affiliation need which, if effectively tapped through the appropriate use of concept of EI, can lead to significant gains in the productivity. The Indian traditions has from time to time and through different systems of beliefs and practices, emphasized certain independent but interrelated concepts with reference to stress and suffering. It was also found that EI helps to minimize the negative impact of emotions on failure (Kumar and Bhatia, 2006).

The Indian tradition has emphasized some independent but interrelated concepts in relation to stress and suffering, from time to time and through different religions and health customs. These are Detachment, Impulse control, and Transcendence (Palsane and Lam, 1996). One of the important among these is the principle of 'Detachment', which involves one viewing pleasure as well as suffering with equanimity; that means, neither being too involved in the objects of pleasure and nor being too concerned about avoidance of suffering or pain. This is seen as part of one's essential nature and this helps to minimize the emotional impact of success and failure (Paranjpe, 1996). It is the foundation for emotional stability. Next is the concept of 'impulse control', which is related to the theme of desires. The religious practices in Indian culture help an individual to develop this one. These virtues of Detachment and Impulse control are combined in the 'Bhagvadgita' describing this a personality type called 'Sthitaprajna' which refers to "one whose intellect is stable". The empirical evidence to support this view is drawn by Naidu, 1986; Srivastava, Naidu and Misra, 1986.

Further, 'Transcendence' implies consideration of something beyond oneself, of other people, other things and the world. This type of thinking takes one away from

one's selfishness and is therefore, consistent with the course of development of a civilization from one's own self to a larger collective self. Eventually it may be realized that the concept of EI has linkages with the indigenous thinking of self-control. For example, the concept of 'Jitendriya' refers to a person's ability to manage and regulate one's emotions. Such person has full control over his impulses and actions. Similarly, the concept of 'Nishkam karma' also refers to the quality of non-attachment, which may be viewed as emotional self-regulation central to cognitive functioning and health. In addition to this, certain religious practices as conceived in Indian tradition help an individual to control and regulate his emotions by own. Consequently, these moral values and cultural traditions provide a frame for emotional competencies.

Relationship of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement

Research evidence demonstrating the predictive effects of emotional intelligence on academic achievement is growing enormously. A strong indication that emotional intelligence is predictive of academic success is provided in several studies (Parker, 2004; Swart, 1996) Pau et al. (2004). They found that students with a high level of emotional intelligence were more likely to adopt reflection and appraisal, social and interpersonal, organization and time management skills, whereas, low emotionally intelligent students were more likely to engage in health damaging behaviour. There are some factors that cause a student's low performance. Among that dysfunction personality is part of the composition of low emotional intelligence that causes student's low performance.

Petrides et al (2004) has looked at the relationship between traits of emotional intelligence, academic performance and cognitive ability, where it was found that emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between academic performance and cognitive ability. Parker et al (2004) in his study concluded that various elements of emotional intelligence are the predictors of academic success. They found that highly successful students scored higher than the unsuccessful group on three subsets of emotional intelligence (interpersonal ability, stress management and adaptability). A study conducted by Rode et al.(2007) predicted that emotional intelligence was related to academic performance for two reasons. First, academic performance involves a great deal of ambiguity. Second, majority of academic work is self-directed, requiring high levels of self-management. Therefore, individuals

with high emotional intelligence would perform better academically. Svetlana (2007) suggests the need to incorporate emotional intelligence training into secondary education curricula, due to a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement.

Mathur, Dube and Mallhotra (2003) have studied the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Data was collected on a sample of 83 adolescents (boys and girls) from a local public school. Results revealed that emotional intelligence corroborates and compliments academic achievement. The data also exhibits that adolescent who have higher level of responsibility do better on scholastic performance, make better adjustments and are more confident. The education sector, it has been reported that children with high EI are more confident, are better learners, have high self esteem and few behavioural problems, are more optimistic and happier, and also handle their emotions better (Ghosh and Gill, 2003). Parker, Hogan, Eastabrook, Oke et al., (2006) had examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic retention. Participants were selected from a sample of 1270 young adults (368 male, 902 female) making the transition from high school to university. Results revealed that student who persisted in their studies were significantly higher than those who withdrew on a broad range of emotional and social competencies.

Austin, Evans, Magnus and O'Hanlon (2007) have done a preliminary study of empathy, emotional intelligence and examination performance among medical students in year 2,3 (pre clinical) and 5 (clinical). In order to find out whether EI and Empathy are related to academic success, questionnaires assessing EI and empathy were made completed by students. Associations of EI and empathy with academic success were examined using Pearson correlation. Results showed that associations between academic performance and EI were sparse and there were none between academic performance and empathy, but the effects of EI on problem-based learned (PBL) groups were found positively correlated.

Another study examining the influence of emotional intelligence on academic self-efficacy and achievement was reported by Dey (2009), among 150 undergraduate students (age= 18-20 years). The result demonstrated that emotional intelligence and academic self-efficacy significantly correlated with academic achievement. On the basis of findings, it was suggested that emotional intelligence should be integrated into undergraduate curriculum. The results confirmed the positive impact of academic

self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and achievement.

Impact of intervention on skills of emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence has been related to numerous outcomes, including life satisfaction, transformational leadership, improved interpersonal relationships, and adaptive persistence toward goals. Goleman went so far as to claim that emotional intelligence can matter more than IQ (1995). As a consequence of revived interest in this concept and emerging models of a construct of EI, a variety of strategies for assessing and training emotional intelligence are now available. Results from studies on EI interventions designed to raise emotional intelligence vary depending upon the setting, definitions, and methodologies used, but research in academic settings largely supports the idea that emotional intelligence is learnable and positively related to the academic success and retention of students.

EI Interventions and Academic Outcomes

Numerous interventions based on emotional intelligence have been reported, though most were not designed specifically to raise overall EI scores. Typically, interventions were meant to modify one or more problem behaviors by developing particular components of EI, such as coping and social skills. When interventions were intended to raise EI scores, users frequently developed ad hoc models of EI based on an idiosyncratic mix of socio emotional variables and/or selected factors of validated instruments, such as the MSCEIT (Zeidner, Roberts, & Matthews, 2002). There is concern with these non-construct-based approaches that any noted improvements may not be due to intervention efforts, but represent an artifact of maturational trajectories during young adulthood. However, evidence supports the idea that overall emotional intelligence can be improved through construct-based interventions (Bar-on, 2006; Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002; Latif, 2004). Additionally, “the college setting is arguably one of the most important contexts for learning emotional skills and competencies” (Zeidner, et al., 2002).

Table 1: Studies of Intervention Outcomes with College & University Students

Authors	Assessment	Intervention & Model	Results
(Bond & Manser, 2009)	College Achievement Inventory, a 102-item self- report measure of emotional and social competency	Power for Positive Connections to Academic, Career, and Personal Success model, 3 hours/week for 15 weeks . Ability and trait approaches.	Students who completed the emotional intelligence course improved in all but one of the emotional intelligence scales (i.e., emotional self-control).
(Chang, 2006)	MSCEIT EQ-i ECI	Incorporated EI in psychology course throughout semester. Ability model.	Overall improvement in EI
(Izaguirre,2008)	EQ-i	Incorporated in freshmen courses	Subscales predictiveof academic success
(Jaeger, 2003)	EQ-i	Incorporated EI within business course through out semester. Ability and trait approaches.	Improved EI scores correlated with improved academic performance.

Kanoy, 2009)	EQ-i	Implemented in all FYE classes since fall 2008	Predictive validity of optimism and impulse-control variables for academic success and retention
Low & Nelson, 2006)	Javelina Emotional Intelligence Program	Incorporated EI instruction throughout freshman Student Success courses. Ability and trait variables.	Improved GPA and retention for students who complete the program.
(Nelis, et al., 2009)	Seven measures of EI, including the TEIQue	Four 2 1/2 hour sessions over four weeks. Theoretical knowledge and applied skills. Ability model.	Higher in emotion identification and management. Changes persisted at 6-month re-evaluation.
(Pool & Qualter, 2012)	MSCEIT	One hour daily in week-long summer orientation for new students. Ability model.	Improved EI and retention

(Qualter, et al., 2009)	EIS (Emotional Intelligence Scale)	One hour daily in week-long summer orientation for new students. Ability model.	Improved retention
(Reuben, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2011)	MSCEIT	Sixteen-hour emotional intelligence course. Ability model.	Improved EI and attendance

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