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Emotional intelligence as a correlate of academic achievement among first year degree students in Puducherry, India

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A B S T R A C T

The importance of Education in building the destiny of the Nation can hardly be over-emphasized. Education is not merely an ingredient and instrument of Human Resource Development but rather the most powerful means by which social, political and economic changes can be brought about in national life. Thus it goes without saying that best performance or excellence in academic achievement is the hallmark of success. While general intelligence contributes a lot towards academic success of an individual, there are many research studies that have focused our attention on emotional intelligence as a contributing factor towards success or academic achievement. Hence this research study was undertaken to establish the correlation if any between emotional intelligence and academic achievement at the level of higher education and a sample of 310 first year degree students from various subjects and colleges both Government and private were involved in the research process wherein the results have highlighted a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement further justifying the greater need and importance of emotional intelligence as a contributing and influencing factor of Academic progress, achievement and success.

Introduction

Education is the all-round development of the capacities and potentials of an individual so as to enable him and prepare him to be most successful in a specific living environment, habitat, society or culture. Education, in its broadest sense, may be defined as a process designed to inculcate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to enable individuals to cope effectively with their environment and its primary purpose is to foster and to promote

individual self-realisation which requires understanding of commitment to the proposition that education is a primary instrument for social and economic advancement for human welfare.

Academic achievement and its significance

In this modern world with ever growing competition in all spheres of activity, quality of performance has become the key factor

for personal growth and progress. Parents of children and students always desire that their wards perform very well and achieve their very best which eventually adds pressure on students, teachers, schools, colleges and in general the education system by and large. As such it appears that the whole system of education revolves round the academic achievements of student although various other outcomes are also expected from the system.

Thus a lot of time and effort of the schools and colleges are used for helping students to achieve better in their scholastic endeavours. As such the importance of scholastic and academic achievement has raised important questions for educational researches who are struggling to analyse and identify factors which promote and contribute towards academic achievement. Researches done in the field of academic achievement have helped identify factors like intelligence, study habits, personality, attitudes of pupil towards school/college, socio-economic status etc. as variables that influence scholastic and academic achievement. Besides these, researchers have also helped to identify factors such as motivation, learning style, teaching methods, training, study habits, self-concept and emotional intelligence as major contributors of academic achievement out of which the new concept of EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE and its correlation with academic achievement is being researched with added significance and priority in the field of psycho pedagogy.

Emotional intelligence

Dr. Daniel Goleman, a pioneer in the field of emotional intelligence has identified five qualities that comprise emotional intelligence. They are (1) knowing our emotions (Self-awareness), (2) managing

our emotions (Impulse control), (3) motivating ourselves to achieve goals (persistence, zeal and self-motivation), (4) recognising emotions in others (empathy) and (5) managing relationships with others (social skills). He sees these as the steps necessary to achieve high emotional intelligence. As emotional intelligence is learned rather than inherited like general intelligence, it can be nurtured and strengthened. Thus parents, teachers, schools and colleges play an important role in sculpting a child/student emotional intelligence, contentment and success in life. It may be mentioned in this context that while higher level of emotional intelligence facilitates success, deficits can create serious problems in relationships which may otherwise impact achievement and physical health.

Goleman's writing on the subject of emotional intelligence has found its way into the main curricula of schools especially in the deprived areas of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and the result is formation of an environment where one's own emotions and those of others around are understood with decisions rationally made congenial to social wealth. This approach stimulates emotive concepts such as self-esteem and confidence to interact with others, which inherently lead to improved abilities in leadership and team work.

Emotional intelligence and academic performance

Researchers have been able to find a connection between emotional intelligence and academic intelligence and the best among them is the findings of the study conducted by James DA Parker and Christopher Michael (Trent University). They studied full-time students (New Entrants) who joined Trent University

within two years of leaving high school. For the purpose of the study, they selected two groups – academically successful students (who scored 80% plus) and academically unsuccessful students (who scored 59% or less) and measured their emotional intelligence to see if there was a connection between academic success and emotional intelligence.

The findings of the research was that the students who had high academic scores also had high EQ. Thus a higher emotional intelligence may help academic performance but this certainly does not mean that all those with high emotional intelligence score very well academically. It's just that emotional intelligence has been proved to be a better predictor of academic success as compared to other academic, socio-economic and demographic factors. This concept and finding mentioned is also justified by other researches done in the field by Bhuvanewari (2006), Darsana (2007), La Civita (2004), Nidhi Srivastav (2007), Ringness (1963), Smith (1965), Hatiwal (1971), Joshi (1967), Kumar (1963), Panda (1983), Shanwal (2004), Sutars Toto et al (1996), Tapia Martha and Marsh George (2001), Wall (1969), Rosen (1956), Striver (1958), Christiana (1977), Gandhi (1987), Mehta (1967) and Wells et al (2000) who all have established through their research finding a positive correlation between emotional intelligence, achievement and success in life.

Thus in the light of the facts presented, it may be perceived that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in the academic performance of students and that is why this study titled “a study of emotional intelligence as a correlate of academic achievement among first year degree students in puducherry” has been undertaken with the hope that the findings would go a

long way in understanding the importance and significance of the correlation/relationship between student's emotional intelligence and academic achievement at the level of Higher Education.

The above mentioned research studies have clearly established correlation between emotional intelligence and performance of children/students at various levels of academic study. Further, the findings of the above researches clearly illustrate and emphasize the need for understanding of the importance of research in this area of psycho-pedagogy. As such it is observed that while much of the research study done in this area has been undertaken abroad, there is a greater need for similar studies to be undertaken in the Indian context so as to assess, measure and analyse various components of emotional intelligence especially that of its influence on academic performance of students. Hence it is highly expected that this study and its findings would benefit much the research fraternity in general especially the Social and Educational Psychologists in the field.

Method

Objectives of the study

1. To study the level of academic achievement (AA) among first year degree students in Puducherry.
2. To find out the level of emotional intelligence among first year degree students in Puducherry.
3. To find out the relationship between academic achievement and emotional intelligence among first year degree students in Puducherry.

Hypothesis tested

H.O. No significant relationship is identifiable between the scores of students on academic achievement and emotional intelligence.

Sample

In this study 310 first year degree students were involved in the research process covering various subjects from various Institutions – both Government and private in Puducherry.

Variables

As far as this study is concerned, academic achievement is considered as a dependent variable and emotional intelligence as an independent variable.

Tools

1. Academic achievement scores of first year University Exams.
2. Emotional intelligence scales prepared by Anukool Hyde, Sanjyot Pethe and Upindar Dhar (India).

Statistical techniques

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique has been used, using SPSS software to study the significance of differences among the various groups in relation to academic achievement.

Analysis and interpretation of data

The research data collected from 310 first year degree students were analysed and interpreted after studying their MEAN, MEDIAN and STANDARD DEVIATIONS before employing the technique of ONE WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA).

Verification of the above table indicated that the calculated value of “F” in relation to academic achievement is greater than the table value. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the obtained value of “F” indicates that there is a significant relationship which can be attributed between academic achievement and emotional intelligence among the first year degree students involved in this study in Puducherry.

Comparison with other studies

This research finding is much in correlation with other research findings in the same area of study conducted by (i). MONK, THELMA YOUNG (2000), (ii). SPENCER (1997), (iii). HARDLY AND BAR-ON (1998) and (iv). NIDHI SRIVASTAVA (2007) were emotional intelligence has played a significant role in enhancing performance in general and academic performance in particular.

Findings and conclusion

This study has clearly established a significant relationship/correlation between academic achievement and emotional intelligence among first year degree students in Puducherry. The findings are also in tandem with other research results in India and abroad. Hence it may be perceived that emotional intelligence plays a critical and vital role in enhancing performance of individuals in general and that of academic achievement of students in particular.

Thus in conclusion, it may be stated in the light of this research findings that importance may be attached to inculcation and inclusion of emotional intelligence in scholastic and collegiate curriculum in such

a manner as to enable students acquire the knowledge and assimilate the components of emotional intelligence which would ultimately result in enhancement of all the five qualities that comprise emotional intelligence viz. (1) Knowing our emotions

(2) Managing our emotions (3) Motivating ourselves to achieve goals (4) Recognising emotions in others and (5) Managing relationships with others as postulated by Dr. Daniel Goleman, the pioneer in the field of Emotional Intelligence.

Summary of ANOVA

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	1032.835	2	516.417	3.704	0.026
Within groups	42807.001	307	139.436		
Total	43839.835	309			

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