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Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Academic Achievement and Leadership

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, appraise and control one's emotions. It is the ability to motivate oneself even in stressful situations, to control impulsive behaviour and to manage feelings in perfect way. Emotional intelligence can be considered as a set of skills which contribute to the proper assessment and regulation of emotions, and the utilization of feelings for best achievement in academics, profession and life. Emotional Intelligence is an important predictor of success in life and has significant role in stress management and academic achievement. Students who are high academic performers, usually have higher emotional intelligence scores compared with children with scholastic backwardness. Individuals with high emotional intelligence will correctly understand emotional issues, manage stressful situations successfully and regulate emotions in the best way. They are balanced, empathetic, self-aware and sociable. They have very strong will-power and are intrinsically motivated. Emotional intelligence is also a crucial factor needed for successful leadership. It has significant role in academic and organizational success.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Academic Achievement, Leadership

Introduction

Research in the field of emotional intelligence (EI) has increased substantially since the first introduction of this term in scientific literature in 1990 [1]. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive and control the emotions and it is associated with good personality development [2]. EI includes perceiving, processing, regulating and managing the emotions [3]. Individuals with high EI have greater skills to carry out the information processing about emotions compared to others. Self-esteem and optimism are high in these individuals [4].

They can understand emotional information in the best way and apply that understanding for effective decision making and problem solving in life [5]. They will be also be able to carry out perfect reasoning about emotions and use the emotional knowledge to enhance their thinking [6].

EI has positive correlation with the quality of social interaction [7]. Self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation are the important components of EI. These skills have significant role in the academic performance of students. Intrinsic motivation is very important for

success in career and life. These competencies will definitely help individuals to cope with environmental demands and stressors [8].

Those with high EI will be able to make the emotions work to their own advantage. These individuals can use the emotions in the best way for guiding behaviour and for thinking in beneficial ways. They are open-minded and are good listeners. EI is a critically important factor for effective leadership and team performance [9, 10].

Emotional Intelligence and Exam Stress Management

Anxiety and stress related to exams will negatively affect the academic achievement of children. Students differ in how they appraise the stress, related to examinations. The exam stress can be experienced as motivating by interpreting the anxiety as facilitative [11].

EI has very important role in exam stress management. Higher EI contribute to better stress management [3]. Academic performance varies widely even among students with high intellectual capacity. There are several factors contributing to academic achievement. Motivational beliefs and emotions have significant impact on academic achievement of students. Good academic performance is related to intrinsic motivation and proper time management [12]. Students with inadequate skills for self-regulation usually develop intrapersonal problems. Those with intrapersonal problems usually experience significant stress related to internal conflicts and excessive anxiety can be debilitating [13].

Students with low empathy will have difficulty in interpersonal interactions with other students and also with their teachers. This in turn can lead to deterioration in academic performance. Strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential for students especially in the field of medical education. Interpersonal skills can be increased through emotional intelligence training [8]. Individuals with high EI will be able to motivate and endure themselves in stressful situations [14]. By increasing the emotional intelligence, exhaustion related to exams can be reduced and academic performance can be improved. Children with academic resilience will be able to successfully deal with challenges in the course of school life especially the exam pressure and difficult schoolwork [15].

Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance

Personality traits and increased self-esteem are proved to be predictors of academic achievement [16]. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence usually develop good interpersonal relationship among peers [17]. Results of a study conducted in Spain analysing 2182 secondary school students aged between 12 and 18 years, showed that emotional intelligence has positive relationship with well-being of students [18]. The contribution of emotional intelligence in promoting well-being of students was also proved in a study conducted in Italy on high school students [19].

Emotional Intelligence is a combination of stable behavioral and personality traits. The increased social competence of individuals with high EI can facilitate cognitive and intellectual development which in turn lead to better academic performance [6].

EI is a leading factor which can influence various aspects of human life and there is significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement.

Several international studies have proved that emotional intelligence has an important role in the academic success of students [20-23]. Students with high EI can have cognitive-based performance much above the level attributable to general intelligence [24]. High-grade academic performers have higher EI scores compared to low-grade academic performers. These students will accurately perceive emotions, understand emotional issues and manage emotions in perfect way [25].

Mavroveli S and Sanchez-Ruiz MJ investigated the associations between trait EI and scholastic performance in reading, writing, and maths in 565 primary school children. They found modest associations between trait EI and academic achievement [26]. Emotional Intelligence has a crucial role in academic success. Hence EI of students should be increased through scientific guidance [27,28]. Students need training for improving the emotional intelligence and emotional skill development can lead to better academic performance [21, 22].

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Emotional intelligence is a predictor of successful leadership [29]. Developing skills for leadership and teamwork are needed for providing high-quality services in the modern health care field [30]. Leaders in the field of public health require specific EI skills to deal with the complex demands of health care environment. A study conducted among Master of European Public Health (MEPH) students and graduates at Maastricht University, demonstrated a positive association between public health specific competencies and attributes of emotional intelligence [31]. Leaders with high EI will be capable of using their positive emotions to provide major progress in the management of their organization. These leaders who are high on emotional intelligence, can maintain a work climate supportive of creativity, by having good interpersonal relationship [32]. Good working climate will definitely help in establishing good relationship with the customers in any organization [33].

EI is positively associated with job performance [34, 35]. EI is a crucial factor for effective leadership and team performance [36-39]. The Sine Qua Non of effective leadership is emotional intelligence [40].

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is an extremely important factor for academic and organizational success. EI is also a key leadership skill. The most effective leaders have high degree of emotional intelligence. They will be ambitious, assertive, balanced, empathetic, enthusiastic, gracious, meticulous, motivated, predictable, self-aware, sociable, stable, strong-willed and systematic. Through scientific guidance, the emotional intelligence of children can be increased. By improving the emotional intelligence of students, we can lead them towards better academic performance and best career. The students who develop high emotional intelligence will have positive attitude, greater adaptability in stressful situations, improved interpersonal relationships and increased orientation towards positive values, which will definitely help them to become successful not only in exams, but also in their future profession and life.

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