

A Study of Correlates and Nurturance of Emotional Intelligence in Primary School Children

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The notion of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become a scientific construct for understanding implications of behaviour and adaptation of the individual to his environment. There is lack of scientific studies to understand the cultural notion of the Emotional Intelligence in the Indian context. Also, the social and educational implications of understanding characteristics of Emotional Intelligence in primary school children are immense.

Objectives: The main objective of the study was to develop a measure of Emotional Intelligence for primary school children, to examine the differences in Emotional Intelligence in different eco-cultural groups, to study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement, social performance and attentive abilities. The final objective of the study was to nurture Emotional Intelligence in a selected group of children.

Sample: Consisted of 200 children studying in the 4th standard of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) schools.

Methods: The study was conducted in three phases. In first phase, the original electronic English version of MEIS, developed by Mayer & Salovey (1997) was adapted into a paper pencil Hindi version. During the second phase, Emotional Intelligence of these children was assessed, analyzed and correlated with the social performance, attentive abilities and academic achievement. In the third phase, nurturance tools were devised and applied on a selected group of 25 children.

Results: All the four components of Emotional Intelligence, namely Identification, Assimilation, Understanding and Regulation of emotions correlate with each other and the overall Emotional Intelligence score. The present study points toward a possibility of two factor structure of Emotional Intelligence. The first factor components show correlation with socio-cultural and environmental variables. The second factor components show association with variables indirectly representing general intelligence, like, academic achievement. Among the different eco-cultural groups, rural children have higher Emotional Intelligence and rural boys have highest Emotional Intelligence scores, while urban boys are poorest among all the children. Girls, have higher Emotional intelligence in comparison to boys, rural girls are better at understanding and regulating emotions while urban girls are best at identification of emotions. Better regulators of emotions were also good at academics. Emotional Intelligence did not

show any relationship with social performance or deftness and attentive abilities. The study delineates that nurturing Emotional Intelligence has definitive positive influence on the overall Emotional Intelligence of the child. The positive influence of nurturance is not only component specific but also shows spill over effect on the other Emotional Intelligence factors.

Conclusion: Socio-cultural factors have definitive influence on the degree of Emotional Intelligence. The environmental influence is visible in rural and urban population among the different components of Emotional Intelligence also. Girls have higher Emotional Intelligence than the boys. Two factors constituting Emotional Intelligence correlate differentially, with variables, which are innate, and the one's which are environmental. Emotional Intelligence seems to be independent of the social performance and attentional abilities of children. Finally, Emotional Intelligence can be nurtured by easy to develop methods and learning on one component of Emotional Intelligence may help in enhancing capacities on other components.

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