EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SCHOOLS AT KOLKATA

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The present study seeks to observe emotional intelligence (EI) among children from four Christian Missionary Schools in the Kolkata metropolitan area and stipulates the need to cultivate EI from the preparatory years of the children. 316 children were studied using a cross-sectional survey design. The results revealed the presence of a reasonably good amount of emotional intelligence where gender was associated with a statistically significant variation in EI scores. It also showed no association between parental education, choice of hobby, presence of sibling, family structure and locality of residence to one's own emotional intelligence. The results of the study recapitulate the effectiveness of the faith-oriented learning environment in the four missionary school settings for promotion of emotional intelligence among the children by developing self-control, empathy and values-based decision making.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, Missionary School, Faith-Oriented school setting, Gender Difference, Biblical Reflection

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize and express one's own emotion with respect to others. It has been acknowledged over the past 25 years by researchers around the globe that EI is one of the rudimentary attributes of

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human life, regulating and directing success in their personal and professional domain and aiding their competitive skills and accelerating their enthusiasm. But the concept itself is a holistic one and is considered as an umbrella term. The concept, although coined by John Mayer of University of New Hampshire and Peter Salovey of Yale University in 1990 (Weisinger & Cali, 1999) was popularised after publication of the famous book 'Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ' by Goleman (1995). According to him "Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth". As he pointed out only 10% to 20% of our success can be attributed to IQ, and another 80% of causes are due to other factors including emotional intelligence, but that is not sufficient to jump to the conclusion that EI is the sole determining factor (Goleman, 2011). Ground-breaking theories of EI i.e. Trait and Ability Approach (Petrides & Furnham, 2001), The Four-Branch Ability EI Model by Mayer and Salovey (1997), EI Based Performance Model (Goleman et al., 2003), Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (Bar-On, 2006) and Trait Model (Petrides et al., 2007) account for the focus of interdisciplinary researchers towards the field of emotional intelligence. Plethora of research studies are being carried out across the world which are highlighting a detrimental impact of emotional intelligence on almost all spheres of human life. It is found that emotional intelligence consists of multiple factors represented in five domains namely, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman et al., 2003), which are called emotional competencies. Further, a framework of emotional competencies suggested by Goleman asserted four major components of EI which are almost universal across people i.e. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management which are inclusive of self and others' emotions, recognition as well as regulation. Self-awareness is the process of cognitive self-procuring and self-management and is the ability to control one's emotional responses as a part of emotional maturity. Social awareness is understanding and recognizing others' emotions in an empathetic way, and lastly relationship management is a communicative ability to understand and manage relationships.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The scope of emotional intelligence is not only associated with professional and personal life success, but it also involves academic success. Numerous research studies were carried out to identify the relationship between EI and academic success (Audrey J. Jaeger, 2003; Parker et al., 2004; Bar-On, 2006),

academic performance (Audrey J. Jaeger & Eagan, 2007; A. J Jaeger et al., 2003) and found significant results. It was also found that EI improves educational success and helps teachers, students, and professionals in order to succeed in their educational careers and developing leadership skills as well as personal well-being (Low et al., 2004). It is evident that most of the studies suggest the value of emotional intelligence as the exquisite and indispensable instrument for paving our success stories regarding our academic achievements as well professional upliftment. In contrast, studies found that assessment of emotional intelligence can help pinpoint negative and ineffective coping strategies that can contribute to academic underachievement, dropping out of school, or the development of emotional and behavioural problems. Early identification of children with low EI, could help to tackle these problems (Ratnaprabha et al., 2013).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this competitive and complex world, merely possessing intellectual abilities and cognitive skills does not guarantee good performance and success in day to day tasks for children. Learning, knowledge, and skills acquired during the educational and personal endeavour seeks proper dissemination and application in the real world where managing a task largely requires something beyond the cognitive abilities to understand one's own as well as other peoples' emotions reflected through their behaviour. Along with personal intelligence and social intelligence, EI holds the key to successfully adapting to any challenging situation that an individual faces. Schools, where a significant amount of time and motivation is spent by the children, must encounter their emotional abilities and variations in a justifiable manner. In the present situation when everything around us, all of a sudden has become uncertain and vulnerable, schools must put efforts to make children recognize negative feelings and culture positive emotions and well-being. Therefore, identifying existing emotional intelligence is necessary to make any personal intervention and prospect. The present study tried to explore emotional maturity of children by assessing their emotional intelligence and also tried to find diversity in the perspective of different social and personal facets therefore establishing the need for comprehensive EI development within the broad domain of school activities. The components of EI i.e. empathy, emotion, social intelligence and cooperation is highly associated with the philanthropy of missionary schools. Therefore, this study examined the sub-values of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. It has also been presented in terms of their biblical reflection (Gliebe, 2012).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were established for the study:

- To know the extent of how emotionally intelligent the children are at Christian missionary schools in Kolkata.

- To identify significant variations of children's EI score in terms of few demographic (social and personal) indicators.

- To suggest a comprehensive need for developing EI among school children.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- H01: Gender does not cause any significant variation in the mean score of EI among the children.

- H02: Parental education is not a significant cause of variation in the mean score of EI among the children.

- H03: Choice of hobby has nothing to do with emotional intelligence scores of children.

- H04: Presence of siblings does not significantly cause a variation in the mean score of EI among the children.

- H05: Family structure is not a significant cause of variation in the mean score of EI among the children.

- H06: Children's mean score of EI is not significantly affected by their locality of residence.

SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

Students at Christian Missionary schools in Kolkata metropolitan area studying at junior secondary level (class 7,8) were considered as the population. 316 children from four missionary schools namely Holy Child School, St. Xavier's School, St. Peter's School (Moulali) and Queen of the Mission School (Park Circus) constituted the sample of this study. Basic demographic variables namely gender, family structure, locality of residence, parental education, number of siblings was considered along with choice of hobby to see any significant impact on their emotional intelligence score.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The Emotional Intelligence Inventory developed by Annaraja and Varghese (2000) was administered as the instrument for gathering information on children's emotional intelligence. This is a 40-item self-reporting style

questionnaire consisting of 10 items from self-awareness (maximum score 50) and self-management (maximum score 50) each, 7 items from social awareness (maximum score 35) and 13 items from relationship management (maximum score 65) dimensions of EI. A five-point Likert scale ranged between strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) was followed in the instrument. All the items were positively phrased and the score range lies within 40(minimum) to 200(maximum).

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Initially the demographic information sheet and the questionnaire was administered to 332 children after taking due consent from the school authorities as well as from the children. 16 response sheets were found as incomplete and therefore omitted from the dataset. Finally, responses of 316 children were recorded and analysed using IBM SPSS 20 software. Mean and standard deviation was calculated for each variable to get a comprehensive picture of the variations in emotional intelligence score in between the levels. As the objective of this study was to get an idea of how emotionally intelligent the children are and inform the school authorities suggesting ways to cultivate and improve EI, no such sophisticated statistical analysis was computed. An independent samples t-test and One-way ANOVA were conducted only to see if the differences of mean scores.

The overall EI score of the children (N=316) was good (79% of the maximum EI score, M=158.13) with a large variation (SD= 16.636) within the students as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Inventory, in the study. It indicates that the children of these four Christian missionary schools in Kolkata metropolitan area are emotionally intelligent to a satisfactory level (Table 1).

Table 1

Score by Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence Scale.

Dimension	Mean	SD	Max Possible Score	Percentage of Mean Score Within Dimension
Total EI score	158.13	16.636	200	79.06%
Self-Awareness	39.36	5.091	50	78.72%
Self-Management	39.26	5.049	50	78.52%
Social Awareness	28.09	3.791	35	80.25%
Relationship Management	51.42	6.413	65	79.10%

Students secured good mean scores in all four dimensions of emotional intelligence which is indicative of balanced EI among the children. Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were computed for each of

the four dimensions taking one variable at a time. Statistically significant [at p<.05 level] mean difference between male and female students in terms of relationship management were found to exist. Here male students are significantly better than the female students in managing relationships (Table 2).

Table 2

Significant Statistical Difference in Dimension of EI.

	Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	t-value = 2.467, p - value = .014 Remarks: **significant**
Relationship management	Female	191	50.71	6.600	
	Male	125	52.51	5.978	

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics based on t-test and One Way ANOVA.

Variable		Levels	N	Mean	SD	Results	p-value	Remarks
Gender		Male	125	160.40	16.406	t_{314} = 1.974	.049	Significant
		Female	191	156.64	16.660			
Parental Education	Father's Education	Up to HS	78	159.23	17.126	ANOVA $_{3,312}$= 0.758	.519	Not Significant
		Up to UG	121	156.45	16.928			
		Up to PG	74	159.76	14.839			
		Higher Studies	43	158.02	17.932			
	Mother's Education	Up to HS	92	158.57	16.900	ANOVA $_{3,312}$= 0.828	.479	Not Significant
		Up to UG	124	156.65	16.721			
		Up to PG	65	160.58	15.107			
		Higher Studies	35	157.63	18.396			
Choice of Hobby		Dancing	70	159.31	13.379	ANOVA $_{3,312}$= 1.031	.379	Not Significant
		Singing	67	155.36	16.593			
		Playing	27	161.11	20.890			
		Others	152	158.27	17.158			
Presence of Sibling	Brother	Have none	187	158.83	15.925	ANOVA $_{2,313}$= 0.501	.606	Not Significant
		Have one	102	156.78	18.092			
		Have more than one	27	158.30	16.021			
	Sister	Have none	194	158.03	16.372	ANOVA $_{2,313}$= 0.113	.893	Not Significant
		Have one	100	158.61	16.897			
		Have more than one	22	156.82	18.412			
Family Structure		Joint Family	100	158.83	16.519	t_{314} =0.511	.610	Not Significant
		Nuclear Family	216	157.80	16.718			
Locality of Residence		Urban	291	158.17	16.899	ANOVA $_{2,313}$= 0.173	.841	Not Significant
		Rural	14	155.93	14.536			
		Sub-urban	11	159.73	12.313			

From the data in Table 3 , we can see that :

- Female participants constituted the majority (60%) of the sample (N=191) but are found to have lower mean score (m=156.64, SD=16.660) with a higher variability within the in-group members than the male counterpart (M=160.40, SD=16.406). An independent sample t-test was computed for gender variable and found that the mean difference in between male and female participants was statistically significant [t314 = 1.974, p=.049] at p<.05 level. Therefore, the result rejects Null Hypothesis 1.

- Parental education of children was further divided into two categories namely, father's education and mother's education, both having recorded in four subsequent levels i.e. up to higher secondary (HS) level, up to graduation (UG) level, up to post-graduation(PG) level and higher studies (M. Phil and above).

  For father's education sub-variable, children whose father studied up to PG level were found to have recorded slightly better EI scores (M=159.76, SD=14.839) than the other three levels, but the mean difference was not statistically significant as found by a One-way ANOVA at p<.05 level. For mother's education sub-variable also, children whose mother studied up to PG level were found to have recorded slightly better EI scores (M=160.58, SD=15.107) than the other three levels, but the mean difference was not statistically significant as found by a One-way ANOVA at p<.05 level. Therefore, combining the analysis of two sub-variables, the Null Hypothesis 2 is accepted and it stands that parental education has nothing to do with children's emotional intelligence.

- Choice of hobby by children was divided into four categories by sorting the responses given. The categories were – dancing, singing, playing, and others. Children whose hobby was playing, were found to have the highest EI score (M=161.11, SD=20.890) than the other three categories. The One-way ANOVA analysis found no significant mean differences among the four categories of children based on their hobby, at p<.05 level. Therefore, the study failed to reject the Null Hypothesis 3 and retains that choice of hobby does not significantly impact emotional intelligence of children.

- Presence of siblings was further divided into two categories namely presence of brother and presence of sister both of which has three levels i.e. have none, have one and have more than one. For sub-variable presence of brother, children who have no brothers recorded slightly better EI score (M=158.83, SD=15.925) than the other two categories. For the sub-variable presence of a sister, children who have one sister are found to have scored higher (M=158.61, SD=16.897) than children who have no sister and who

have more than one sister. In both cases of the sub-variables, the results of the One-way ANOVA showed no statistically significant mean difference at $p<.05$ level. Therefore, the results failed to reject Null Hypothesis 4.

- Children from joint family structure scored higher (M=158.83, SD=16.519) in EI inventory than students from nuclear family structure (M=157.80, SD=16.718), but the mean difference was not statistically significant at all. Therefore, the study failed to reject Null Hypothesis 5.

- Children from sub-urban areas scored highest (M=159.73, SD=12.313) among the three levels of this variable, but the One-way ANOVA results showed no statistically significant mean difference among the three levels at $p<.05$ level. Hence, Null Hypothesis 6 was accepted.

The results of this study showed that only gender has a significant effect on the emotional intelligence of children. The other variables caused little variations in mean scores of EI at different levels, but none of those were statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

With increasingly complex lifestyles and rising pressure on children during the course of time, it becomes difficult for them to maintain a healthy mind and manage personal and social emotions. Failing to do this, affects their capabilities to deal with personal and social situations and adversities. Emotional intelligence being the ability to guide an individual's thinking and actions by monitoring one's own and other's feelings and emotions as well as discriminating among them (Salovey & Mayer, 2016). It is one of the significant human qualities that needs to be nurtured very importantly during early years of life (Paavola, 2017). For school children having a great deal of emotional intelligence also positively affects their school adaptation (Mavroveli et al., 2007), engagement, pro-social behaviour and peer competence (Mavroveli et al., 2009), scholastic achievement (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2009), happiness (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2007), emotion regulation (Mikolajczak et al., 2008), affective decision-making (Sevdalis et al., 2007) and many other qualities that the society expects from them to learn. The present study tried to observe emotional intelligence among children of four Christian Missionary Schools in the Kolkata metropolitan area and found adequacy of emotional intelligence among them. It is noteworthy to mention that the environment and support system of these schools may have contributed, to a great extent, in the development of emotionally intelligent children who are going to be more competent, social and happy citizens of tomorrow. This study also envisages the significance of emotional intelligence for parents, teachers, educators as

well as policy makers.

CONCLUSION

The study examined emotional intelligence of students at Missionary schools in Kolkata in terms of different variables viz. gender, parental education, choice of hobby, presence of sibling(s), family structure and locality of residence. They scored high in respect to each dimension of EI and total of it. But there was no statistically significant relationship between EI scores and different variables except gender, particularly in relationship management dimension. The boys secured more score than girls overall and also in terms of the relationship management dimension, where the difference was statistically significant. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to the girl child in those schools. The students under this study learned with the ethos of missionary community where the schools, in general, have the faith oriented learning environment and students, teachers and other stakeholders practiced formal and informal programmes of the school for sharing the biblical worldview and its implicit values and develop self-control, empathy and values-based decision making (Roy, 2013). This biblical reflection has been linked in their EI score under this study. Since, EI is predictor of the life success and reduces maladaptive behaviour and improve wellbeing of the student, therefore, more studies need to examine the impact of school settings on EI in terms of different variables with advanced statistical analysis.

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