

Emotional Intelligence- A Tool for the Development of Adolescence

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I. Introduction

As we venture into the dawn of the new millennium, adolescent development has Emerged as a major area of psychological research. Adolescents have long been regarded as a group of people who are searching for themselves to find some form of identity and meaning in their lives (Erickson, 1968). They have also been regarded as a unique group with a wide range of difficulties and problems in their transition to adulthood.

One aspect of adolescents is their emotions, and within schools and society as a whole, this aspect has often been overlooked. Students are measured in terms of their performance and grades. They are assessed on how well they can play, act, draw, sing, and so forth. However, an intrinsic aspect of adolescents as well as all of us and one that is usually not assessed is what has been defined as emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (1993), define emotional intelligence as “ a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p.433). Emotional intelligence is now considered by many as being essential for successful living (Goleman, 1995). Teaching adolescents about their emotions and how they deal with others as well as their own actions can be very helpful in their daily struggles. Furthermore, in order to encourage a smooth transition from adolescence to adulthood, a good understanding of emotions for adolescents is important in determining their psychological wellBeing.

In the last decade or so, science has discovered a tremendous amount about the role of emotions play in individual’s life. Emotions are the root forces in the dynamics of human behavior and personality. But it has been seen that within families, schools and society as a whole, this aspect has often been overlooked. Emotional intelligence is the efficiency of a person to deal with emotions effectively. It helps the individual to perceive, understand regulate and harness emotions adaptively in interpersonal relationships (Fitness, 2001). Researchers have found that even more than IQ, our emotional awareness and ability to handle feelings will determine success and happiness in all walks of life, including family relationships (Goleman, 1995; Bar On 2001; Palmer, Walls, Bergess & Stough, 2002). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more successful than counterparts. They are more socially adept, display better social skills and are able to build long term, satisfying relationships (Schutte et al.2001).

Family life is child’s first school for emotional learning (Goleman, 1997). In this intimate cauldron child learns how to feel about himself and how others will react to his feelings; how to think about these feelings and what choices he has in reacting; how to read and express hopes and fears.

Home is the primary and the most important socializing agency, which integrates and regulates the individual’s behavior as he strives to satisfy his/her basic needs. Home provides the basic environment for building the personality of the individual with its warm interpersonal relationship contributing to their feeling of security and belongingness.

Studies of emotional intelligence have shown its relevance to many aspects of life and the role it plays in the inter-actions and adjustments in daily life. Safavi et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and socio-emotional adjustment in pre- university girl students in Tehran. The results of the study showed that there was a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and socio-emotional adjustment.

II. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. It is the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict. Emotional intelligence impacts many different aspects of your daily life, such as the way you behave and the way you interact with others. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it is an inborn characteristic. If someone has high emotional intelligence then he/she is able to recognize his/her own emotional state and the emotional states of others and engage with people in a way that draws them to him. He

can use this understanding of emotions to relate better to other people, form healthier relationships, achieve greater success at work, and lead a more fulfilling life.

Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. In their influential article "Emotional Intelligence," they defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (1990).

The first use of the term "emotional intelligence" is usually attributed to Wayne Payne's doctoral thesis, *A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence* from 1985. However, prior to this, the term "emotional intelligence" had appeared in Leuner (1966). Stanley Greenspan (1989) also put forward an EI model, followed by Salovey and Mayer (1990), and Daniel Goleman (1995). The distinction between trait emotional intelligence and ability emotional intelligence was introduced in 2000.

Emotional intelligence consists of four attributes:

- ❖ **Self-awareness** – Recognizes one's own emotions and how they affect thoughts and behavior, knows strengths and weaknesses, and have self-confidence.
- ❖ **Self-management** – Able to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage emotions in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.
- ❖ **Social awareness** – Can understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people, pick up on emotional cues, feel comfortable socially, and recognize the power dynamics in a group or organization.
- ❖ **Relationship management** – Know how to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict.

As we know that the smartest people are not always the most successful or the most fulfilled people in life. Sometimes we see that academically brilliant people become unsuccessful at work or in their personal or social relationships. Intellectual intelligence or IQ isn't enough on its own to be successful in life. It is emotional intelligence that can help us to manage in both social and personal relationships to become successful in life along with the other important aspects.

III. Adolscence Period

Adolscence is a period of life in which the individual's subjective perception of his or her abilities may determine how these abilities are used. Furthermore, these self-perceptions can vary depending on the characteristics of the group in which the adolescent is immersed, and this can have a positive or negative influence on the use of coping behaviors (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). In educational settings, adolescents are grouped into significant contexts, namely classes, in which interpersonal interaction requires the expression of emotions, the assignment of meaning to emotional experience and the regulation of feelings. These behaviors have been considered important coping abilities as they are particularly relevant to psychological and social adjustment in adolscence (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007; Ruiz-Aranda, et al., 2012), and they also form the basis of individual emotional intelligence (EI; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Today's youth needs to cope with lots of factors in order to succeed in life. During the crucial period of physical and psychological maturation adolescents are expected to establish their own identity and prepare for adulthood by developing skills necessary for socially acceptable behavior (Kopp, 1989; Thompson, 1994; Sroufe, 1996) as cited in Arati and Prabha (2004). At this stage they suffer from swing moods and emotional instability. Therefore, it was essential to investigate level of emotional intelligence of adolescents. The adolescent's transition from childhood to adulthood can be a smooth process facilitated by the guidance of securing, nurturing and understanding parents in an emotionally conducive home environment. Teaching adolescents about their emotions and how they deal with others as well as their own actions can be very helpful in their daily struggles and maintaining good relationships.

Emotional intelligence is a part of human personality, and personality provides the context in which emotional intelligence operates.

IV. Literature Review

With two recent meta-analysis indicated that, irrespective of gender, the higher the perceived EI, the better the mental health (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2007).

In adolescents, the EI trait increases the positive effects of active coping strategies and reduces the negative effects of avoidant coping strategies for mental health (Davis & Humphrey, 2012).

EI also reduces negative mood states (Mikolajczak, Petrides, Coumans, & Luminet, 2009) and it is negatively related to perceived stress and depressive thoughts (Downey, Johnston, Hansen, Birney, & Stough, 2010; Zavala & Lopez, 2012).

In a similar vein, Saklofske, Austin, and Minski (2003) reported a negative relationship between EI and depression-proneness, and a positive relationship between EI and subjective happiness and life satisfaction among adolescents.

In line with these findings, Ciarrochi, Deane, and Anderson (2002) showed that individuals who are able to manage the emotions of others seem to respond less intensively to stressful situations and also exhibit less depressive symptoms. Specifically, several studies have found that individuals who perceive greater emotional clarity and a greater ability to repair their own emotional states also report higher emotional adjustment (Berking, Orth, Wupperman, Meier, & Caspar, 2008) and higher levels of mental health and lower depression (Salovey, Woolery, Stroud, & Epel, 2002).

In the field of education, emotions have come to be regarded as central in terms of exploring class interactions and for understanding patterns of coping behaviors among students (Beilock & Ramirez, 2011). Depending on the context (i.e., the class) to which individuals are exposed they tacitly acquire different information about emotional behavior. This means that emotional phenomena (including depressed mood) have a social component which makes emotional states open to change (Monroe & Harkness, 2011). As regards the dimensions of EI, they show different patterns of association with the growing period. Emotional clarity and regulation have been shown to be negatively related to depressive symptoms.

V. Conclusion

As we know that emotional intelligence can help in navigating the social complexities of the workplace, lead and motivate others, and excel in career. In fact, when it comes to gauging job candidates, many companies now view emotional intelligence as being as important as technical ability and require EI testing before hiring. We know that if we're unable to manage our stress levels, it can lead to serious health problems. The first step to improving emotional intelligence is to learn how to relieve stress. Uncontrolled stress can also impact our mental health, making us vulnerable to anxiety and depression. By understanding our emotions and how to control them, we are better able to express how we feel and understand how others are feeling. This allows us to communicate more effectively and forge stronger relationships, both at work and in our personal life. To improve our emotional intelligence—and our decision-making abilities—we need to understand and control the emotional side of our brain. Emotional intelligence can be developed by developing the skills like- ability to quickly reduce stress, ability to recognize and manage your emotions, ability to connect with others using nonverbal communication, ability to use humor and play to deal with challenges and ability to resolve conflicts positively and with confidence.

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