

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS OF SCHOOLS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED

Research
Paper

ABSTRACT

The present study is concerned with the emotional intelligence of 64 teachers working in the schools for mentally retarded children in Chennai city of Tamil Nadu state. A five point Rating Scale to assess the emotional intelligence of teachers was used. The survey method was used. The results revealed that more than 85 percent of the teachers encompass only low and moderate level of emotional intelligence. Special education teachers' age, community, educational qualification, level of classes handled, nature of job, years of experience and monthly salary have significantly influenced their emotional intelligence; whereas the training they received in special education has not made any significant difference in their emotional intelligence. The Step-wise Multiple Regression Analysis revealed that the variables, nature of job, level of classes handled and the salary of the teachers have contributed to up to 70 percent of their emotional intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

According to Bar-On (2006), emotional intelligence is a cross section of inter-related emotional and social competencies, skills, and factors that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them and cope with our daily demands.

Success in teaching requires considerable capacities in emotional competence. In general, teaching professionals need social-emotional competencies to be able to build resilience to adversity in the field, to self-monitor performance, and to regulate emotions through both reactive and proactive coping.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Any special education programme, whether it is for the physically challenged, intellectually impaired, sensorially deprived, emotionally disturbed or talented should focus on the innate abilities of the child rather than expect the child to do extraordinary things. In other words, what is available in the child is more important rather than the things which are not available within the child. Special education teachers should have better patience, perseverance and cognizing the needs of not only the child, but also his / her parents. In other words, he / she

should have a mind to do something to others rather than the routine things. This is what we call emotional intelligence.

Specific research studies focusing on the emotional intelligence of special education teachers working in the schools for the mentally retarded are very limited and the present study is an attempt in this direction. The research studies exploring the emotional intelligence of the special education teachers will facilitate the teachers to understand the child, parents and administration and manage the environment appropriately. Thereby they can overcome occupational stress for better job satisfaction. This in turn facilitates the teacher to impart education to a mentally retarded child in a more comprehensive way.

OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the number and percentage of teachers with different levels of emotional intelligence working in schools for mentally retarded children.
2. To find out the significant difference, if any, in the emotional intelligence of teachers working in schools

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Table -1
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE
OF TEACHERS WORKING IN
SCHOOLS FOR MENTALLY RETARDED
CHILDREN WITH LOW, MODERATE AND
HIGH LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE (DIMENSION-WISE)

for mentally retarded children due to variations in age, community, educational qualification, training in special education, classes handled, nature of job, years of experience and salary received.

3. To study how far and to what extent the independent variables (age, community, educational qualification, training in special education) classes handled, nature of job (years of experience) and salary received influence the dependent variable (emotional intelligence of the special education teachers working in schools for the mentally retarded).

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence of teachers working in schools for mentally retarded children due to variations in age, community, educational qualification, training in special education, classes handled, nature of job, years of experience and salary received.

METHODOLOGY

The survey method was used in the study. For the purpose of the study, the investigator developed an Emotional Intelligence Scale with 58 items assessing four dimensions (self awareness, self management, social awareness and social skills) of emotional intelligence. The reliability of the Emotional Intelligence Scale was established by using the split-half method (0.95). Content validity, face validity and intrinsic validity (0.97) was also established for the tool. The sample consisted of 64 women teachers working in schools for mentally retarded children in Chennai city of Tamil Nadu state. The data was collected from the sample by using the Emotional Intelligence Scale. Statistical techniques like mean, SD, t / F test and step-wise multiple regression were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To know the number and percentage of teachers falling under low, moderate and high emotional intelligence, mean and SD of the emotional intelligence scores were calculated for each teacher working in schools for mentally retarded children. By using mean \pm 1 SD, the emotional intelligence scores of the teachers were divided into three levels i.e. low, moderate and high. The number and percentage of teachers falling under each group were worked out and they are presented in table-1.

| Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence | Level of Emotional Intelligence | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Low | Moderate | High |
| Self Awareness | 5 (7.81) | 49 (76.56) | 10 (15.63) |
| Self Management | 12 (18.75) | 41 (64.06) | 11 (17.19) |
| Social Awareness | 7 (10.94) | 51 (79.69) | 6 (9.38) |
| Social Management | 11 (17.19) | 43 (67.19) | 10 (15.63) |
| Emotional Intelligence as a Whole | 13 (20.32) | 41 (64.06) | 10 (15.63) |

Note : Numbers mentioned in the brackets are percentages

From table -1, it is observed that a majority of the teachers possess a moderate level of self awareness (76.56 %), self management (64.06 %), social awareness (79.69 %) and social skills (67.19 %). In self awareness 7.81 percent, self-management 18.75 percent, social awareness 10.94 percent and social skills 17.19 percent of teachers possess only a low level of emotional intelligence. In addition, 15.63 and 17.19 percent of teachers possess a high level of self awareness and self management skills followed by 15.63 and 9.38 percent of teachers with a high level of social awareness and social skills. When emotional intelligence as a whole is taken into account, a majority (64.06 %) of the teachers possess a moderate level of emotional intelligence and 20.63 percent have a low level and 15.15 a high level of emotional intelligence. From the above figures, it is inferred that more than 85 percent of the teachers possess only low and moderate levels of emotional intelligence. This trend indicates that there is a need to look into the emotional competencies possessed by the special education teachers.

Influence of the Independent Variables on the Emotional Intelligence of Special Education Teachers Working in Schools for Mentally Retarded Children.

To find out the significant differences if any, in the emotional intelligence of teachers working in schools for the mentally retarded due to variations in the independent variables, mean and SD were calculated for each group variable-wise. Accordingly, t / F- values were worked out to find out the significant difference between / among the means and they are presented in table - 3.

Table - 2

MEAN AND SD OF THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SCORES OF TEACHERS WORKING IN SCHOOLS FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN VARIABLES UNDER STUDY AND CALCULATED T / F-VALUES

| Independent Variables | M | SD | Calculated t / F-value |
|--------------------------------------|---------|--------|------------------------|
| Age Groups | | | |
| Below 30 yrs (n=17) | 189.65 | 21..42 | 6.06** |
| 31-45 yrs (n=27) | 205.19 | 17.13 | |
| 46 yrs and above (n=20) | 208.9 | 14.95 | |
| Community | | | |
| OC (n=11) | 201.27 | 21.78 | 4.39* |
| BC (n= 38) | 207.052 | 17.25 | |
| MBC (n=15) | 0.67 | 17.67 | |
| Educational Qualification | | | |
| Teacher Training (n=32) | 195.59 | 18.99 | 4.27* |
| Graduation with B.Ed. (n=22) | 208.32 | 17.09 | |
| Graduation with B.Ed and M.Ed.(n=10) | 210 | 17.89 | |
| Training in Special Education | | | |
| Diploma in Special Education (n=43) | 202.3 | 16.56 | 0.05@ |
| B.Ed. in Special Education (n=21) | 202.05 | 23.99 | |
| Level of Classes Handled | | | |
| Primary (n= 28) | 194.75 | | 9.25** |
| Secondary (n=24) | 202.04 | 16.52 | |
| Hr. Secondary (n=12) | 220 | 18.8 | |
| Nature of Job | | | |
| Permanent (n=48) | 207.48 | 15.98 | 4.31** |
| Temporary (n=16) | 186.44 | 19.5 | |
| Salary per Month | | | |
| Rs. 1,000 - 10,000 (n=36) | 196 | 19.24 | 8.01** |
| Rs.10,001- 20,000 (n=17) | 204.12 | 17.12 | |
| Rs. 20,001 and above (n=11) | 219.64 | 7.63 | |
| Years of Experience | | | |
| 1-10 yrs (n=30) | 195.53 | 20.49 | 4.11* |
| 11-20 yrs (n=23) | 206.39 | 15.23 | |
| 20 yrs and above (n=11) | 211.73 | 17.36 | |

Note : ** Significant at 0.01 level;
* Significant at 0.05 level; @
Not significant at 0.05 level



From table - 2, it is observed that the calculated t / F-values for the variables age (6.06), level of classes handled (9.25), nature of job (4.31) and salary per month (8.01) are significant at 0.01 level. The other variables - community (4.39), educational qualification (4.27) and years of experience (4.11) are significant at 0.05 level indicating their influence on the special education teachers' emotional intelligence. On the other hand, the variable training in special education has not significantly influenced the teachers' emotional intelligence as the calculated t-value was not significant either at 0.01 or 0.05 level. Further, the mean scores indicate that the teachers of higher age group, BC category, those with higher educational qualification, those handling higher secondary classes, holding permanent position, those of high salary group and with more years of experience showed higher rates of emotional intelligence than their counterparts.

These results corroborate with the results of Amirtha and Kadhiravan (2006), who found that the variables age and qualification of school teachers influenced their emotional intelligence. The results reported by Neelakandan (2007) support the above findings in the case of primary school teachers. He found that educational qualification has significant impact on emotional intelligence. Also, the studies conducted in the western world by Salami (2007) support the present findings. She found that the secondary school teachers' educational qualification has significantly influenced their emotional intelligence. This may be because of the fact that education brings in all-round development including emotional development which has influenced the teachers' emotional intelligence irrespective of the nature of school i.e. special schools or general schools in which the teachers are working. With respect to age, it may be because, like other developments (physical, intellectual, moral) that alter with age, emotional development too gets influenced with variations in age irrespective of the types of school they are working in.

Contribution of the Independent Variables to the Emotional Intelligence of Teachers Working in Schools for the Mentally Retarded



Table- 3

STEP-WISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE-WISE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

| Dependent Variable | Independent Variables | β Coefficient | Individual Contribution of the Variable (R2) | % wise Individual Contribution |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Emotional Intelligence | Nature of Job | -0.312 | 0.139 | 13.9 |
| | Level of Classes Handled | 0.18 | 0.189 | 18.9 |
| | Salary | 0.326 | 0.374 | 37.4 |

From table - 3, it is found that for the teachers working in schools for the MR, the independent variable 'salary' contributes 37.4 percent, followed by the variable 'level of classes handled' with 18.9 percent and 'nature of job' with 13.9 percent to their emotional intelligence. This shows 'salary' as the major predictor contributing more to the emotional intelligence of teachers working in schools for the MR. In addition to 'salary', the other variables 'nature of job' and 'level of classes handled' have also influenced the teachers emotional intelligence to a certain extent.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the results have revealed that more than 85 percent of the teachers have only low and moderate levels of emotional intelligence, there is a need for emotional intelligence training to special education teachers working in schools for the mentally retarded, both at pre-service and in-service levels. Also, while designing the curriculum for the teacher educators / special educators, the emotional intelligence components should be included. Further, the principal / head teachers should give due recognition to the teachers working under them in order to facilitate good interpersonal skills. They should be given the opportunity while making important decisions. In addition, the school management should assess the actual needs of the schools,

the competencies needed to handle those needs and also the teachers strengths and weaknesses by providing adequate feedback. The head teachers should encourage teachers to use their emotional intelligence skills in their job and they should provide a flexible environment that enhances teachers' insightfulness. All these steps will facilitate their utilizing the personal and social competencies (emotional intelligence aspects) more effectively in the work place and dealing effectively with the negative emotions that arise from their work situations.

The study revealed that the teachers of the younger age group, belonging to most backward community, with lower educational qualification, handling lower classes, those whose job is temporary, those receiving a low monthly salary and those with less years of experience possess only lower levels of emotional intelligence than their counterparts. This trend indicates that while giving training in emotional intelligence, these categories of teachers should be given due importance. The results based on the step-wise multiple regression analysis show that the independent variables such as nature of job, level of classes handled and the monthly salary of the special education teacher have predicted their emotional intelligence to a greater extent. This implies that, they should be placed in suitable jobs with a good salary and also be given responsibility to handle appropriate levels of class. This may be done by assessing the applicants' emotional intelligence skills (both personal and social competencies) during recruitment of teachers in special schools.

REFERENCE

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