

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEARNING MOTIVATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract: This article discusses the development of emotional intelligence among primary school pupils and its potential relationship with their learning motivation. Emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to recognize and regulate one's own emotions, understand the emotional states of others, and interact with them effectively. Developing these skills during primary education may support pupils' interest in lessons, classroom participation, self-confidence, and academic progress. Particular attention is given to the teacher's role in establishing an emotionally supportive classroom environment and to pedagogical approaches that may help strengthen learning motivation. The paper offers a conceptual discussion and practical recommendations rather than reporting findings from an experimental study.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; learning motivation; primary education; emotions; pupils; teachers; classroom environment; interest; encouragement; communication

1. INTRODUCTION

In primary education, pupils' emotional states are among the factors that can influence their engagement in learning. When children feel comfortable and psychologically safe in the classroom, they may be more willing to express their opinions, ask questions, and participate actively in learning tasks. Conversely, fear, intense anxiety, low self-confidence, or concern about constant criticism may reduce their classroom participation. Educational practice should therefore take pupils' emotional needs into account alongside their cognitive development.

Interest in learning and academic motivation are still developing during the primary school years. At this stage, teachers' encouragement, supportive attitudes, and constructive feedback can shape children's perceptions of learning. Providing pupils with opportunities to understand and correct mistakes, acknowledging small achievements, and respecting their views can help establish a positive psychological atmosphere. From this perspective, promoting emotional intelligence may be regarded as an important component of primary education. Encouraging children to recognize and manage their feelings, understand the emotions of others, and communicate constructively may also support their participation in learning. The relationship between emotional intelligence and learning motivation is therefore a relevant issue in contemporary primary education. The purpose of this paper is to discuss this relationship conceptually and identify classroom practices that may support both emotional skills and motivation. The discussion draws on the emotional intelligence literature (Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2008) and educational and activity-oriented psychology (Leontiev, 1975; Vygotsky, 1991).

2. MATERIALS AND APPROACH

This article is a narrative, conceptual discussion of emotional intelligence, learning motivation, and emotionally supportive teaching practices in primary education. It draws on theoretical and pedagogical works listed in the references and uses conceptual comparison and illustrative classroom examples to relate these ideas to primary school learning. It is not a systematic review or an empirical study: no database search protocol, participant recruitment, psychometric testing, or statistical analysis was undertaken. Therefore, the proposed relationships and classroom recommendations

should be interpreted as theoretically informed suggestions rather than experimentally established effects.

3. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Emotional intelligence and learning motivation

Emotional intelligence refers to abilities associated with recognizing, understanding, and regulating emotions and using emotional information in thinking and social interactions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mayer et al., 2008). Its development may help children regulate their behaviour, respond appropriately to different situations, and establish positive relationships with peers. Primary school pupils are still learning to identify and express their feelings. For example, a child may become upset after failing to complete an assignment, fear making mistakes, or struggle to manage emotions during a disagreement with a classmate. Rather than criticizing the child, the teacher can help the pupil understand these feelings and learn constructive ways of responding.

Learning motivation encompasses intrinsic and extrinsic factors that encourage pupils to acquire knowledge, explore unfamiliar ideas, and participate in educational activities (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It is particularly important in the early school years, when children begin to develop lasting attitudes towards school and learning. Motivated pupils may participate more actively, ask questions, attempt assignments, and persist when tasks become difficult. In contrast, declining interest in learning may adversely affect classroom engagement and academic progress. Teachers should therefore plan lessons that reflect pupils' ages and individual characteristics. Recognizing effort and small achievements, offering support, and allowing independent thinking can contribute to sustaining motivation.

3.2. The relationship between emotional regulation and engagement

Emotional regulation and learning motivation may be related, although the present paper does not test the strength or direction of this relationship. Pupils who can regulate their feelings may respond more constructively to learning difficulties and show greater persistence when completing challenging tasks. For instance, a child who cannot solve a difficult mathematics problem may interpret the experience as personal failure and abandon the task. With emotional regulation skills and confidence in their ability to succeed (Bandura, 1997), the pupil may instead examine the mistake and try again. This response can help sustain motivation. A positive classroom climate is also relevant: pupils may show greater interest in learning when they can express opinions freely and are not afraid of making mistakes.

3.3. Pedagogical approaches to developing emotional intelligence

A range of age-appropriate pedagogical practices can be used to foster emotional intelligence among primary school pupils:

Identifying and expressing emotions: Pupils learn to distinguish and appropriately describe emotions through expressions such as “I am happy,” “I feel sad,” “I am excited,” and “I am afraid.”

Situational activities: Pupils consider realistic scenarios and discuss constructive ways to respond.

Pair and group work: Cooperative activities provide opportunities to practise listening, collaboration, and respect for others' views.

Constructive encouragement: Teachers recognize not only achievement but also effort and perseverance. Feedback such as “You made a real effort; that matters” can support pupils' confidence.

Reflection: At the end of a lesson, pupils respond to questions such as “What did I learn today?”, “What did I enjoy?”, and “Which task was difficult?” to reflect on learning experiences and feelings.

3.4. The teacher's role in an emotionally supportive classroom

In primary education, teachers are not only providers of knowledge but also significant figures in pupils' emotional development. Their manner of communication, tone of voice, responses to mistakes, and approaches to encouragement influence the classroom's psychological climate. Teachers should account for individual differences, avoid unnecessary comparisons between pupils, and treat mistakes as a normal part of learning rather than a reason for punishment. Such an approach may help pupils develop self-confidence and positive attitudes towards education. This pedagogical perspective is consistent with the importance of social interaction in learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Practical pedagogical approaches have also been discussed in regional pedagogical literature (Azizxo'jayeva, 2006; Hasanboyev et al., 2011; Ishmuhamedov et al., 2008; Mavlonova et al., 2001).

4. CONCLUSION

Supporting emotional skills in primary education may strengthen pupils' social and personal competencies while supporting more positive attitudes towards learning. Children who can recognize and regulate their emotions and understand others' feelings may be more willing to participate in classroom activities and persevere when difficulties arise. Supporting learning motivation requires attention not only to grades and external rewards but also to pupils' interests, autonomy, self-confidence, and intrinsic desire to learn.

An integrated approach to emotional intelligence and learning motivation can therefore contribute to a more supportive educational experience. A caring, psychologically safe, and encouraging classroom environment may help pupils demonstrate their abilities, approach lessons with interest, and gradually become more independent and active learners. These conclusions are conceptual and should not be interpreted as experimental evidence of causal effects.

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