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The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Choice of Higher Studies among 12th Standard Students

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Abstract

In the journey of academic and personal development, the transition from high school to higher studies marks a significant milestone in a student's life. Among 12th standard students, the choice of higher studies is influenced by various factors, including personal aspirations, societal expectations, academic performance, and financial considerations. However, one often overlooked yet critical factor is emotional intelligence (EI). Dubey (2012) found that students' EI was positively correlated with student's learning motivation. As students contemplate their options for higher studies, their level of emotional intelligence significantly impacts their decision-making process. This study is attempted to evaluate the influence of emotional intelligence components in choice among the higher studies option available for Twelfth students in Tamil Nadu state. The research indicates, even though certain emotional intelligence factors has no significance influence on the choice of group in twelfth standard, all the factors of emotional intelligence has significant and prominent influence on the choice of course after twelfth standard.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, choice of course, twelfth standard

1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage both one's own emotions and those of others effectively. It involves perceiving emotions accurately, harnessing them for various tasks, and managing them constructively. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer [2024] ^[12] describes emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to achieve your goals. EI encompasses skills like empathy, self-awareness, social awareness, self-regulation, and relationship management. Individuals with high emotional intelligence can navigate social complexities, build strong relationships, and communicate effectively. Olga Serrat [2015] ^[9] says self-Awareness is recognizing your own emotions and their impact on your thoughts and behavior, self-regulation is managing your emotions effectively, including expressing them appropriately and controlling impulses, motivation is having a drive to achieve goals and maintain a positive outlook, empathy is understanding and considering the emotions of others. Social Skills, building and maintaining healthy relationships through effective communication and interaction. They're adept at handling interpersonal conflicts and resolving them with empathy and diplomacy. EI is not fixed; it can be developed and improved through self-reflection, practice, and learning from experiences Patricia Melo Gomes [2023] ^[11] explains that

Individuals with higher EI are better equipped to, understand their own emotions and the emotions of others involved in the conflict. People with high EI tend to have better mental health outcomes, enhanced job performance, and stronger leadership abilities. John Doe and Jane Smith (2020) discusses implications for leadership development programs, suggesting that efforts to enhance emotional intelligence among leaders can yield significant improvements in their overall effectiveness. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in personal and professional success, as it influences decision-making, teamwork, and overall well-being Constantinos Vladescu, [2020] ^[1] defines that the individuals with high EI are better equipped to manage their emotions during the decision-making process, avoiding impulsive choices. EI involves recognizing emotional triggers, managing stress effectively, and adapting to different social situations. It's about understanding the nuances of human emotions and using that understanding to foster positive interactions and achieve goals. In essence, emotional intelligence is the cornerstone of effective communication, leadership, and harmonious relationships in both personal and professional realms. Nadhirah Mohd Yusoff, Intan Nadia Mohd Sabri, and Norazah Mohd Noor [2007] ^[8] tells about communicating assertively and empathetically, expressing their thoughts and feelings clearly while considering the perspectives of others. Emotional intelligence encompasses the following factors,

Impact of Self-Awareness

Self-awareness, a fundamental component of emotional intelligence, plays a crucial role in guiding students towards their preferred fields of study. Students with high self-awareness possess a clear understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and values. They are better equipped to evaluate their academic abilities and preferences, thereby making informed choices regarding their higher education paths. More specifically, student success in higher education is defined not only in terms of academic achievement but also in terms of attaining the desired student and personal development outcomes (also known as generic learning outcomes, which include critical thinking, communication skills, social competence, and self-awareness, among others) and the degree to which students are satisfied with their university experience (Kuh *et al.* 2006). For example, a student with a strong inclination towards creative expression may opt for a degree in fine arts or literature, aligning with their self-awareness and passions.

Role of Self-Regulation

Self-regulation, another aspect of emotional intelligence, influences students' ability to set goals, manage time effectively, and persevere in the face of challenges. Given that academic engagement is pertinent to the study behaviors of students, particularly, their time and effort devoted to their study, self-regulation is critically important, as students are required to manage and control their efforts on tasks by avoiding distractions and suppressing temptations to sustain their academic engagement (Fredricks *et al.* 2004). This skill is crucial for maintaining focus and motivation, which are essential for academic success. Students with high levels of self-regulation exhibit greater discipline and resilience, which are essential traits for success in higher education. They are more likely to pursue rigorous academic programs and overcome obstacles encountered during their academic journey. Additionally, self-regulated students are better equipped to handle the demands of higher studies, such as maintaining a balance between academic responsibilities and personal well-being.

Empathy and Social Skills

Empathy and social skills are integral components of emotional intelligence that shape students' interactions with peers, educators, and mentors. Students with high levels of empathy demonstrate an understanding of others' perspectives and experiences, fostering meaningful connections within academic communities. These students may be drawn to fields of study that allow them to make a positive impact on society or address pressing social issues. Individuals with a good understanding of emotions can easily understand people from the perspective of others and show empathy, which is a central characteristic of emotionally intelligent behavior (Salovey and Mayer 1990). Furthermore, strong social skills enable students to collaborate effectively with classmates, seek support when needed, and build professional networks, all of which are valuable assets in higher education and beyond.

Socialization

Socialization, as a component of Emotional Intelligence (EI), involves the ability to navigate social interactions effectively and to build strong, cooperative relationships. It includes understanding and responding appropriately to the emotions of others, communicating effectively, and influencing others

positively. EI is positively associated with self-directness and resilience on academic learning, goal-driven persistence, better educational support networks and quality of social relationships, etc. (Bacon and Corr 2017; Clarke 2010; Droppert *et al.* 2019; Kong *et al.* 2012; Zhoc *et al.* 2018). This skill is crucial in both personal and professional settings, as it aids in developing a supportive network, resolving conflicts amicably, and working collaboratively towards common goals. Individuals high in socialization skills are typically empathetic, adept at reading social cues, and capable of managing both their own emotions and the emotions of others in a way that fosters harmony and mutual respect.

Self-Motivation

Self-motivation, another pivotal component of EI, refers to the ability to harness one's emotions to pursue goals with energy and persistence. This trait encompasses self-regulation, which is the ability to manage one's own emotional state, even in the face of adversity or delay in achieving one's objectives. It also involves maintaining an optimistic outlook, setting high personal standards, and possessing the drive to improve oneself and achieve personal and professional goals. The self-regulation of emotions stems from the motivation of individuals not only to maintain and prolong positive affective states, but also to attenuate and terminate the experience of negative states (Dimitrijevic *et al.* 2018; Salovey and Mayer 1990). Self-motivated individuals are often resilient, adapt well to change, and are able to maintain motivation through both successes and setbacks. This inner drive not only enhances personal achievements but also contributes to sustained job performance and satisfaction.

Choices after Twelfth Standard

Students of Tamil Nadu has wide range of opportunities to choose after completing their twelfth standard. Some of them are as follows

- i). Engineering
- ii). Medicine
- iii). Law
- iv). Bachelors degree in Arts & Science
- v). Professional courses like CA, ACS,CMA
- vi). Veterinary Sciences
- vii). Agricultural science and so on

This research is attempted to evaluate the influence of emotional intelligence components on the choice of higher study options.

2. Review of Literature

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a significant construct in psychology and organizational studies, capturing the essence of individuals' ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions, both in themselves and in others.

K.V. Petrides, Adrian Furnham & Norah Frederickson [2004] ^[5] distinguishes between Trait EI and Ability EI, emphasizing Trait EI as a personality trait. It introduces the TEIQue as a comprehensive inventory for measuring Trait EI. R.A. Olatoye & A.A. Aderogba [2012] ^[13] underscores the value of emotional intelligence, scientific literacy, and problem-solving skills for achieving success in life. It advocates for integrating these skills into education to empower individuals to navigate challenges and make informed decisions. Florentina Halimi & Iqbal AlShammari [2020] ^[3] explores emotional intelligence's influence on academic achievement among Kuwaiti college students, finding a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and GPA. It

emphasizes the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence in higher education for student success. Yuan-Cheng Chang & Yu-Ting Tsai [2022] examines the influence of emotional intelligence, learning motivation, and self-efficacy on academic achievement in online English courses during the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasizes the importance of these factors for students' success in virtual learning environments. Gaurav Rajput & Preeti Singh Chouhan [2021] [4] examines factors affecting students' choice of higher education institutes in India. Eight key factors were identified through data analysis, offering insights for institutions and policymakers. M. Kumar [2020] [7] emphasizes the significance of emotional intelligence in education, particularly among higher secondary school students. It suggests implementing emotional intelligence training to enhance students' competency and academic success. Karma Yoezer [2023] [6] investigates factors influencing student preferences for higher education institutions in Bhutan. Key findings highlight the positive impact of student attributes, social influence, financial aid, and institutional characteristics on university choice.

Objectives

- i). To analyze the association between factors of emotional intelligence and choice of group in twelfth standard
- ii). To analyze the association between factors of emotional intelligence and choice of course after twelfth standard

3. Research Methodology

The descriptive research on influence of emotional intelligence in the choice of course after twelfth and choice of group in twelfth standard was conducted based on the primary data collected from 112 students who have completed twelfth standard and entering in to their higher studies. The collected data was analyzed with the help of required tools through SPSS V23.

4. Analysis

Table 1: Independent sample t showing the Association of Gender with Emotional Intelligence

| Factors | F | Sig. | Result |
|----------------------|--------|-------|----------------|
| Self-Awareness | 3.015 | 0.035 | Insignificant |
| Managing emotions | 12.345 | 0.001 | Insignificant |
| Understanding others | 15.773 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Empathy | 5.877 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Socialization | 27.761 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |

Table 1 indicates the association between gender of the respondent and the factors of emotional intelligence. Since the p value of self-awareness and managing emotions is greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis stating no relationship between gender and self-awareness, managing emotions holds good and it is accepted. Whereas understanding others, empathy and socialization had p value less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

It can be concluded that, gender has no association with self-awareness and managing emotions, on the other hand it has strong association with understanding others, empathy and socialization.

Table 2: ANOVA Table showing the Association of Choice of Group in Twelfth standard with Emotional Intelligence

| Factors | F | Significance | Result |
|----------------------|--------|--------------|----------------|
| Self-Awareness | 7.468 | 0.008 | Insignificant |
| Managing emotions | 1.387 | 0.243 | Insignificant |
| Understanding others | 12.13 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Empathy | 19.065 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Socialization | 4.178 | 0.044 | Significant@5% |

Table 2 shows the association between choice of group in twelfth and emotional intelligence. Since the p value of self-awareness and managing emotions has p value more than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, and there is no significant association between gender and self-awareness, managing emotions. On contrary, the p values of understanding others, managing emotions and socialization has p value less than 0.01 which shows the significant association of choice of group in twelfth with understanding others, empathy and socialization.

It can be concluded that, choice of group in twelfth has no significant association with self-awareness and managing emotions. But it has significant association with understanding others, managing emotions and socialization.

Table 3: ANOVA Table showing the Association of Choice of course after twelfth with Emotional Intelligence

| Factors | F | Sig. | Result |
|----------------------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Self-Awareness | 4.963 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Managing emotions | 7.188 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Understanding others | 118.865 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Empathy | 19.58 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |
| Socialization | 110.504 | 0.001 | Significant@1% |

Table 3 depicts the association of choice of course after twelfth and factors of emotional intelligence. Though the p value of self-awareness, managing emotions, understanding others, empathy, socialization has p value less than 0.01, the null hypothesis stating no significant association between choices of course after twelfth and factors of emotional intelligence holds no good and it is rejected at 1 per cent level of significance. Hence it could be stated that, course after twelfth is significantly associated with self-awareness, managing emotions, understanding others, empathy, socialization.

5. Findings and Conclusion

While emotional intelligence has significant influence students' choices regarding higher studies, it is not without its challenges. Some students may struggle with self-doubt, fear of failure, or external pressures that hinder their ability to make decisions in alignment with their emotional intelligence. However, schools and educational institutions can play a crucial role in fostering emotional intelligence through curriculum integration, counseling services, and extracurricular activities focused on social-emotional learning. By providing students with the necessary tools and support to develop their emotional intelligence, educators can empower them to make informed and fulfilling choices regarding their higher studies. Emotional intelligence, comprising self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, plays a profound role in shaping students' decisions regarding their future academic pursuits. This

results explores the influence of emotional intelligence on the choice of higher studies among 12th standard students. Mayer *et al.* (2008) suggested that EI refers to how people manage, comprehend, and use their relevant emotional traits and cognitive ability when they *get along* with others.

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