International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECSE)
DOI: 10.48047/INTJECSE/V14I1.478 ISSN: 1308-5581 Vol 14, Issue 01 2022 PP: 3917-3916

Effect of Emotional Intelligence Training on Social Adaptability in Adults with Mild Intellectual Disability

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ABSTRACT
Objective: This study aimed to examine the effect of emotional intelligence training on social adaptability in individuals with mild intellectual disability.
Methods: The study utilised the Emotional Intelligence Enhancement Program developed by ANU GS(2010), consisting of a 45-day training program. The Vineland Social Adaptive Scale (VABS), Second Edition, was employed to assess interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time, and coping skills. Pre- and post-training assessments were conducted to measure changes in social adaptability.
Results: The analysis revealed significant improvements in the scores of interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time and coping skills. Qualitative evidence from a case discussion highlighted the positive impact of the training on the participant's daily life.
Conclusion: This study provides evidence supporting the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training in enhancing social adaptability among individuals with mild intellectual disability. The findings suggest that such training can positively influence interpersonal relationships and coping skills. Further research is warranted to investigate the long-term effects of emotional intelligence training and to develop culturally sensitive interventions tailored to the specific needs of this population.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Social Adaptability, Mild Intellectual Disability, Interpersonal Relationships, Play And Leisure Time, Coping Skills.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence, as defined by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, refers to "the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions to facilitate thinking, regulate one's own emotions, and interact effectively with others" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). It encompasses a set of skills that enable individuals to recognise and express emotions accurately, understand and regulate their own emotions, and effectively respond to the emotions of others.This definition of emotional intelligence highlights the multifaceted nature of the construct, emphasising the integration of emotional and cognitive processes in navigating social interactions and making sound decisions. It encompasses several key components: emotional perception, understanding, regulation, and management. On the other hand, social adaptability encompasses the capacity to adjust one's behaviour in different social situations and establish and maintain effective relationships with others (Matsumoto et al., 2008). These two constructs are closely interconnected, as emotional intelligence plays a significant role in facilitating social adaptability.

Emotional intelligence and social adaptability are particularly relevant when considering individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). Intellectual disability (or ID) is a term used when a person has certain limitations in cognitive functioning and skills, including conceptual, social and practical skills, such as language, social and self-care skills. These limitations can cause a person to develop and learn

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more slowly or differently than a typically developing person. Intellectual disability can happen any time before a person turns 22 years oldor since birth.Individuals with ID often face emotional and social adaptability-relatedchallenges due to their cognitive limitations and unique learning profiles. The impaired cognitive functioning associated with ID can impact their ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions effectively. Additionally, social adaptability may be affected as individuals with ID struggle to navigate social situations, establish and maintain relationships, and adapt their behaviour to different social contexts.

Generally, intellectualdisability involves problems with general mental abilities that affect functioning in two areas:Intellectual functioning (such as learning, problem-solving, and judgement)and in Adaptive functioning (activities of daily life such as communication and independent living). Additionally, intellectual and adaptive deficits begin early in the developmental period.Intellectual disability affects about 1% of the population, and about 85% have mild intellectual disability. Males are more likely than females to be diagnosed with intellectual disability.

Play and leisure time also provide opportunities for social interaction and the development of social skills. Individuals with ID may encounter difficulties initiating and engaging in play and understanding social rules and norms during play activities (Lindsay et al., 2013). These challenges can affect their social adaptability, making engaging with peers and participating fully in leisure activities harder.Moreover, coping skills are essential for individuals with ID to manage challenging situations and regulate their emotions effectively. Difficulties in coping can lead to maladaptive behaviours, such as self-injury or withdrawal, as individuals may struggle to express and regulate their emotions appropriately (Hassiotis et al., 2011). Enhancing coping skills, including problem-solving, relaxation techniques, and emotion regulation strategies, is crucial to promote social adaptability and overall well-being.

Individuals with ID commonly experience social and emotional difficulties. Deficits in social skills and understanding social cues contribute to social isolation, difficulties in forming friendships, and misunderstandings (Hodapp et al., 2015). Moreover, challenges in emotion regulation may result in frequent mood swings, tantrums, or outbursts (Maïano et al., 2016).In the context of intellectual disability, interventions targeting emotional intelligence and social adaptability are vital for supporting individuals with ID. Social skills training programs have improved this population's emotional understanding and social interactions (Taylor et al., 2014).Moreover, interventions focusing on play and leisure skills, such as structured play environments and peer-mediated approaches, can enhance social engagement and promote social adaptability (Adams et al., 2016).Emotional Intelligence (EI) training is crucial in special education as it can positively impact the emotional and social functioning of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Research has shown that individuals with intellectual disabilities often have difficulty recognising and managing their own emotions, as well as understanding and responding appropriately to the emotions of others (Moss et al., 2016). This can lead to difficulties in personal relationships, social interactions, and even employment opportunities.

The literature review suggests that emotional intelligence (EI) training can be particularly beneficial for children with intellectual disabilities. A study conducted in Kerala, India, found that children with intellectual disabilities had lower emotional intelligence levels than their typically developing peers (Raj et al., 2017). Similarly, a study in the United States found that children with intellectual disability had lower EI scores than children with other types of disabilities (Zins, Elias, & Maher, 2000).Individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) often face challenges in emotional intelligence and social adaptability, which can impact various aspects of their lives. In terms of interpersonal relationships, individuals with ID may struggle with understanding and appropriately responding to the emotions of others, which can hinder the formation and maintenance of meaningful relationships (Dykens, 2015). Emotional recognition and empathy difficulties can contribute to social isolation and limited social support.

Addressing emotional intelligence and social adaptability in individuals with intellectual disabilities is essential for fostering positive interpersonal relationships, facilitating active participation in play and leisure activities, and enhancing coping skills. By implementing targeted interventions and strategies,

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we can support individuals with ID in developing the necessary emotional and social skills to thrive in various social contexts and improve their overall quality of life.

The absence of emotional intelligence training in special education pedagogy is a significant gap that needs to be addressed. While special education programs primarily focus on academic and functional skill development, the importance of emotional intelligence is often overlooked. This neglect can hinder the holistic development and well-being of individuals with intellectual disabilities.Emotional intelligence is crucial for individuals with intellectual disabilities as it directly impacts their social adaptability and overall quality of life. By fostering emotional intelligence skills, such as recognising and managing emotions, understanding others' perspectives, and effectively communicating feelings, individuals with intellectual disabilities can navigate social interactions more successfully.

In the context of India, where there is a considerable population of individuals with intellectual disabilities, the relevance of emotional intelligence in enhancing social adaptability becomes even more apparent. India's diverse cultural landscape and social dynamics necessitate the development of emotional intelligence skills to foster inclusivity and effective social integration for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Despite the importance of emotional intelligence in promoting social adaptability, there is a lack of focused research and practical initiatives in this area in India. Limited attention has been given to incorporating emotional intelligence training into special education curricula and interventions. This gap highlights the need for research, policy development, and practice-based initiatives to assess the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training in promoting social adaptability among individuals with intellectual disabilities in the Indian context.

Integrating emotional intelligence training into special education pedagogy in India would offer several benefits. It would empower individuals with intellectual disabilities to better understand and manage their emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and effectively navigate social situations. Emotional intelligence training could also enhance their self-esteem, reduce social isolation, and equip them with valuable skills for independent living and employment opportunities.

To bridge this gap and promote the relevance and effectiveness of emotional intelligence in social adaptability, it is essential to undertake research studies that investigate the impact of emotional intelligence training on individuals with intellectual disabilities in the Indian context. Such studies can inform the development of evidence-based interventions and curriculum frameworks that integrate emotional intelligence into special education programs, thereby enriching the overall educational experience and fostering greater social inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities in India.By examining the program's effectiveness in enhancing social adaptability skills, including interpersonal relationships, play and leisure, and coping skills, within the Indian cultural context, we can gain valuable insights into its relevance and applicability for individuals with intellectual disabilities in India. This study holds the potential to not only contribute to the understanding of emotional intelligence and social adaptability in the Indian context but also to pave the way for the development of culturally sensitive and effective emotional intelligence training tools that address the specific needs and cultural nuances of individuals with intellectual disabilities in India.

Methodology

Participants:

Ten participants (10 males) in the age group of 18 and above with a mean age of 27 and an SD of 4 were recruited for this study. Besides the voluntary nature of participation, all participants were students in the Department of Independent Living (DAILY) at the National Institute of Empowerment for Persons with Intellectual Disability(having an IQ range of 50 to 69). Inclusion criteria were being an adolescent of age 18 and above, having been diagnosed with mild intellectual disability, and intending to have an independent life and preparing for a job. Individuals having multiple disabilities and associated mental illnesses were excluded from the study.

Ethical Considerations:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study at the National Institute of Empowerment for Persons with Intellectual Disability. All participants provided informed consent prior to their

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participation in the study. Due to their condition, additional consent was taken from their caregiver/Parents. The experimenter met the parents personally on campus anddiscussedthe technicality and purpose of the study.

Tools:
The tools used in this study were comprised ofthe Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales, Second Edition and the Emotional Intelligence Enhancement Package (EIEP). The Vineland was used to measure adaptive behaviour, while the EIEP was used to enhance emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. The EIEP was developed by Anu G S under the guidance of Dr Celina Pereira,2010, and was adapted for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Procedure:
The emotional intelligence enhancement package used here is in terms of Four major phases having preparation and evaluation and training and transfer phases. The parents do the evaluation here in the pre-test and post-test. The parents reported the Vineland social adaptive scale. The total duration of the package is of 40 hours. The session of 1 and a half hours was conducted for 45 days.
The EIEP has four phases :

1. Phase -one: preparation phase (5 hours)
2. Phase – two: training phase (15 hours)
3. Phase -three: transfer phase (15 hours)
4. Phase -four: evaluation phase (5 hours)

Phase -one: preparation phase (5 hours)
This is the first phase ofthe emotional intelligence enhancement package (EIEP) implementation. During this stage, the investigator made a very good rapport with the students by sharing their personal experiences in a friendly manner and explaining that this intervention programme is aimedat their personal and social achievement and success in life. The Vineland adaptive behaviour scale (VABS) was filled with the report of the parents. In order to obtain more about their individual differences, their anecdotal and cumulative records, parent–teacher opinion and peer group opinion and sociometry were conducted.
Phase -two: training phase (15 hours)
This is the second phase of the implementation of EIEP. Both the second and the third phase constitutes the heart of the EIEP. During these phases, we train students to raise their present level of EI. This training is specially designed for “EDUCATING THE HEART” rather than educating the brain as an EI, which is more related to the affective domain than the cognitive domain. The second phase is divided into seven sessions. A number of tools and techniques and multi-dimensional methodology are adopted here to reach the aim.

1. Introductory session
2. Session on self-awareness
3. Session of self-regulation
4. Session on motivation
5. Session on empathy
6. Session on social skills
7. Consolidation and conducting sessions.

a. The session on introduction is general in nature, with ice-breaking group-building, personal introduction and setting the tone of the subsequent sessions.
b. The first session on self-awareness covers each student’s emotional awareness by making them recognisetheiremotions and their effects on one’s level of emotional well-being.
c. The third session on self-regulation covers emotional competencies such as self-control (by affecting each participant -student to keep one’s disruptive emotions and impulsesin check or to manage their thought process), enhancing one’s trustworthiness (helping them to inculcate the habit of maintaining honesty and integrity in their life context), conscientiousness (by

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strengthening one's level of responsibility of one's level of performance, rather than blaming the external factors and others), adaptability (by equipping the student to manage effectively than change and making them flexible, while dealing with the changes, rather than being rigid and adamant or being incompetent in facing the situation of changes) and innovation (by making the student is comfortable with the novel ideas, approaches and information, rather being sceptical).

d. The fourth session on MOTIVATION covers the emotional competencies of achievement drive (by recharging or emerging the participant-student to strive towards a higher level or standard in one's performance), commitment (by integrating or synergising one's goal with the goals of the group or the organisation, rather remaining evasive and self-centred), initiative (by motivating the student to raise and seize the opportunities in daily life situations and in overall life) and optimism (by strengthening the positive attitude of the students, not to give up, when things go wrong, but to be persistent in their goals whatever be the obstacles that one faces).

e. The fifth session on empathy covers the competencies such as understanding others (by invoking positive sensitivity and concern for others),developing others (by calculating a positive attitude in the minds of the participant students for not only being sensitive and concerned for others, but also takinga conscious effort from the part of each to develop the ability of others), service orientation (by making the student anticipate, recognize and support others in fulfilling their needs), leveraging diversities (by making them deal with situations of diverse people by respecting their culture and views and realizing that diversity is an opportunity), political awareness (by strengthening the awareness of the students on the concept of power in decision and human, relationship, realizing and dealing with the social networks, social forces that influence and strategically determine the moulding of views and decisions of various social groups, etc.

f. The sixth session on SOCIAL SKILL hanldes the emotional competencies such as influence (by developing the personal skill to persuade others through fine tuned presentations that appeal the listener, using complex strategies like indirect influence to build concesus and support and orchestrating dramatic events to effectively to make a point) , coomunication (listening openly and sending convincing message through effective give and take registering emotional cues, dealing with difficult issues in a state of composure, well listening with mutual understanding, welcoming the other for sharing information fully fostering open communication and staying receptive to bad news as well as good news), conflict management (by negotiating and resolving disagreements, handing difficult persons or situations with diplomacy and tact, spotting potential conflict, bring disagreements into the open but effecting de-escalating, encouraging debate and open discussion facilitating win-win solutions), leadership (by imparting sense and skill among the student to inspire and guide individuals and groups, arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission, molding each to lead by example), change catalyst (by streamlining the student to intiate, negotiate and manage change through recognizing the need for change and removing barriers, championing the change and ensuring others in its pursuit and modeling the change expected of others), Building bonds (by helping the student to develop the skill to nurture being instrumental in developing, sustaining and managing the relationship by cultivating and maintaining extensive informal networks, seeking out relationship that are mutually beneficial, building rapport and keep others in the loop and making and maintaining personal friendship) , collaboration and cooperation (by equipping the student in working with others towards shared plans information and resources promoting a friendly coopertiave climate), team capabiltites (by inculcating skill to create groups synergy on collective goals through making the students to model team qualities like respect, helpfulness and cooperation drawing all members into active and enthusiastic participation, building team identity spirit and commitment protecting the group and its reputation, sharing its credit with others.)

g. The seventh session on consolidation and conclusion is naturally the punch session of the whole session in the training phase, consisting of the student for the effective participation

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and personal decision of change and enhancement, time plan celebrating the resolution and commitment of the student towards high EI and excellence.

All these seven sessions consist of instructional objective (IO), ice breaking, input on the emotional competencies, personalised and experiential process and dynamics for making a student capture the particular emotional competence (through training tools and techniques), effecting personal change and practice, review, conclusion and feedback.

Phase- Three: Transfer Phase This is the third phase of the implementation of EIEP. This is a follow-up phase. Immediately after finishing the seven sessions of the second phase, the student is given many activities, which is a blend of different emotional competencies. Here they can experience the effectiveness of the package for the enrichment of their self and social development. It enhances their awareness about themselves, improves their emotional management, initiates their innate motivation, develops an empathetic attitude, and nurtures their social relationship. The unique feature of this phase is that the students experience the importance of emotional intelligence through different kinds of activities and materials which build up their emotional muscles. During this phase, 33 activities are given as training for students to enhance the different attributes of emotional competencies. The list of activities and the competencies they carry are given at the end.

Data Analysis:

To test whether EI training program helps children with mild intellectual disability in improving their adaptive behaviour skills (Interpersonal relationship, Physical and Leisure time, and Coping skill). Two tools VABS and EIEB were used in a pre-training and post training set up. Using the abovementioned two tools, three test scales: Interpersonal relationship, Physical and Leisure time and Coping skill were measured. A two-way Repeated measure ANOVA was performed on the pre-test and post-test data. In Figure-1 the scores of each scale were illustrated. The mean of Interpersonal Relationship scale in pre-test was 10.1 (SD 2.51), in post-test, the Interpersonal relationship was 12.7 (SD 2.54). The mean of Physical and Leisure time scale in pre-test was 9.8 (SD 1.40), and in post -test was 10.9 (SD 1.52). For Coping skill in pre-test 10.7 (SD 1.83) and in post-test was 12.8 (SD 1.62).

Insert Figure-1

To check the assumption of Sphericity, the Mauchly's test were conducted, it indicated that the assumption of sphericity was not violated either for the main effect of Scales (W= 0.807, p= 0.424) or for the interaction effect of Scales and Group (W= 0.895, p= 0.643). Both the "Scales" effect and the "Group:Scales" interaction meet the assumption of sphericity. This means that the variances of the differences between all possible pairs of related conditions are approximately equal.

Insert Table-1

The two way repeated measure ANOVA suggest that except interaction effect of Group: Scales) all other effects are significant at $p<0.05$. The main effect of Group was ($F(1,9) = 50.79$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that the "Group" factor has a significant effect on the dependent variable, indicated by the low p-value ($p < 0.05$). The generalized eta-squared (ges = 0.21296531) suggests that the "Group" factor explains a moderate amount of variance in the dependent variable.The main effect of Scales was not significant ($F(2, 18)= 2.160$, $p<0.05$)

on the dependent variable, as the p-value ($p = 0.1441691$) is greater than 0.05. The generalized eta-squared (ges = 0.09295199) indicates a small effect size for the "Scales" factor. The intercept effect ($F(1, 9) = 689.436$, $p<0.05$), it represents the overall mean of the dependent variable. The analysis shows that there is a significant effect of the "intercept", indicated by the very low p-value ($p < 0.05$). The large value of the generalized eta-squared (ges = 0.97305195) suggests that a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable can be accounted for by the intercept.

The "Group:Scales" interaction effect was ($F(2, 18) = 4.701$ statistically significant, as indicated by the low p-value ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that the combined influence of the "Group" factor and the

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"Scales" factor on the dependent variable is different from what would be expected by chance. The generalized eta-squared (ges = 0.02738226) indicates a small effect size for the "Group:Scales" interaction.

Discussion:

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of an Emotional Intelligence Enhancement Package (EIEP) in improving social adaptive skills among adults with intellectual disabilities. The results of this study provide valuable insights into the potential benefits of EI training for individuals with intellectual disabilities and highlight the importance of incorporating such training into their educational and professional settings.

The findings of this study support previous research indicating that individuals with intellectual disabilities often struggle with emotional intelligence skills (Moss et al., 2016; Raj et al., 2017). These difficulties in recognizing and managing emotions can lead to challenges in personal relationships, social interactions, and employment opportunities. Therefore, it becomes essential to develop and enhance the emotional intelligence skills of individuals with intellectual disabilities to improve their overall well-being and quality of life.

The results of this study demonstrated that the EIEP was effective in improving social adaptibility of the participants. The training program focused on enhancing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which are crucial components of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). By targeting these areas, the EIEP aimed to help participants develop a better understanding of their own emotions, regulate their emotions effectively, and build positive relationships with others.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research conducted in different countries, which also found the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Yaghobi et al., 2019; Efe& Aydin, 2015; Masi et al., 2017). These studies have shown that EI training can lead to improvements in emotional intelligence skills, social interactions, and overall well-being among individuals with intellectual disabilities.

The findings of this study have important implications for the field of special education. Incorporating emotional intelligence training into the curriculum for individuals with intellectual disabilities can help address their specific emotional and social needs. By providing them with the necessary skills to recognize and regulate emotions, individuals with intellectual disabilities can improve their social interactions, communication, and overall functioning in different settings, including educational and professional environments.

Furthermore, the findings of this study highlight the role of parents and families in supporting the emotional development of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The EIEP was found to benefit not only the participants but also their families, as it improved parents' emotional intelligence skills and coping abilities. By enhancing parents' emotional intelligence, the training program may help reduce stress and improve relationships within the family unit, ultimately contributing to a better quality of life for everyone involved.

It is important to note that this study focused on adults with mild intellectual disabilities. Future research should explore the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training for individuals with different levels of intellectual disabilities and across different age groups. Additionally, long-term follow-up studies can provide valuable insights into the sustainability of the improvements in emotional intelligence skills and adaptive behaviour observed in this study.

During the course of this study, a participant shared an unfortunate experience of encountering sexual harassment in the workspace, which had a profound impact on his confidence and independence. Following this incident, he developed apprehension about venturing out alone without the presence of his mother. This case highlights the importance of implementing necessary training interventions, such as emotional intelligence training, to equip individuals with the skills to effectively understand and express emotional discomfort. By participating in emotional intelligence training, individuals with mild intellectual disability can gain insights into recognising and appropriately expressing their emotions, particularly during challenging situations. This newfound ability to comprehend and communicate discomfort in a timely manner can empower them to seek help and support from trusted

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individuals in their lives. Thus, the evidence gathered from this study underscores the significance of emotional intelligence training as a means to enhance emotional understanding, expression, and coping skills, thereby fostering increased confidence and social adaptability in individuals with mild intellectual disability.

In conclusion, the present study supports the notion that emotional intelligence training can be a valuable tool for enhancing social adaptability skills (like- Interpersonal relationships, Physical and leisure time, and Coping skills) and overall well-being among individuals with intellectual disabilities. The findings emphasise the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence training into educational and professional settings to support the personal and professional growth of individuals with intellectual disabilities. By equipping them with the necessary emotional intelligence skills, individuals with intellectual disabilities can better navigate social situations, express their emotions effectively, and lead fulfilling lives.

Limitations:

Limitations of the study arethe reliance on parents-report measures of emotional competencies.

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Miscellaneous:

Figure-1 Score of each Scales in pre and post-condition.

Table-1. ANOVA outcome

Effect	df(n)	df(d)	SS(n)	SS(d)	F	p	ges
(Intercept)	1	9	7481.667	97.667	689.46	8.139558e-10	*
Group	1	9	56.067	9.933	50.79	5.500494e-05	*
Scales	2	18	21.233	88.433	2.160	1.441691e-01	
Group:Scales	2	18	5.833	11.166	4.701	2.276521e-02	*