



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The purpose of the study to examine the relationship between EQ and family environment. The sample of the study was selected as 274 parents who live in Istanbul including 152 female, 122 male. Data were collected by EQ-NED and "Family Environment Scale" to determine the EQ and family characteristics. The results of the study indicate that there was a relationship between EQ and family cooperation.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Family Environment, Parent.

DUYGUSAL ZEKA VE AILE ORTAMI

Özet

Bu araştırma, duygusal zeka düzeyinin aile ortamıyla olan ilişkisini incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, İstanbul ilinden seçilen 274 anne ve baba oluşturmuştur. Bu 274 ebeveynin 152'si kadın 122'si erkektir. Verilerin toplanmasında, duygusal zeka düzeyi Duygusal Zeka Ölçeği ile aile ortamı ise Aile Ortamı Ölçeği ile belirlenmiştir. Veriler, Pearson Korelasyon tekniği kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Genel olarak sonuçlar, aile ortamı ölçeğinin birlik beraberlik alt boyutu ile duygusal zeka arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duygusal Zeka, Aile Ortamı, Ebeveyn.

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotion, the discussion of the meaning of which has been going on for ages, is a focus subject for both psychologists and philosophers. The definition given for emotion in dictionaries is as follows; a general stimulation that can change from a deep feeling to a tense feeling in response to a certain situation (Erkuş 1994). When considering how emotions occur and whether or not they change from person to person, it is agreed that emotions get socially structured through an assembly of cultural sections. From this point of view, the repertoire of emotion is likened to that of the language. Although people are born with an innate capacity to speak a language, they learn the language of their culture they are born into by getting influenced by the structure, idioms, expressions and meanings native to their culture. However, it is possible to say that every single culture has got some unique emotional structures acquired through social life and that members of every culture acquire the meaning of emotions through social interaction.

Developmental researchers have found out that emotions play an important role in social communication, personality functions and even in cognitive processes. While emotions bring in healthy functions, capacity for being motivated and organised, they also have a crucial role in development and formation of behaviours. Emotions are generally regulated by others. However, neurophysiologic development, consciousness and language development and emotional awareness of the self and self regulation forms in the period of early development. Studies on emotional regulation show the emotional development and the relationship between this emotional development and individual development. Emotion is a behavioural regulator and it is regulated developmentally. The emotional self regulation strategies that the individuals use while adapting themselves to their emotions and the concept closely related to the intellectual control is called 'Emotional Intelligence'. It is accepted that on the basis of the concept of emotional intelligence there lies the opinion that there may be differences among people on their capabilities to control their emotional lives (Mayer et.all., 1993).

Mayer et all.(1993) have regarded the above mentioned definition as insufficient upon studies they have carried out in time and worked out a new definition in the year 1997. According to this definition emotional intelligence is 'the capability to understand the emotions, to produce and enhance emotions in an aim to support thinking, to understand the emotional data and to regulate the emotions as a reflector in order to ensure emotional and intellectual development' (Mayer et all., 1997).

Family environment where the foundations of emotional intelligence are first laid is a setting the child grows up and acquires some information relating to life. Family environment bearing healthy and high quality characteristics affects the development of the child in many ways like ego concept of the child and his/her emotional and social development. Social status of the parents, the residence, relations within the family, the number of siblings and the relations among the siblings determine the characteristics of the family environment. Wiltfang et all. (1990) have defined the family environment so that the definition will cover the characteristics determining the social status of the parents like educational level, occupational status and professions of the parents as well as the quality of the residence, working conditions of the parents and relations of the siblings. Grolnick et all.(1994) define the environment in which the family lives as a setting of learning which has vital effects on the child. The child is affected by the sources of the family environment to a great degree while gaining experiences relating to life. On condition that the social status of the parents is high, the quality of the environment in which the child grows up increases with this increasing quality.

An assessment is feasible considering various factors in child development. The relationship between the family environment and the development in social or academic processes in different cultures has been observed. In these studies, different family structures in different cultures have been formed and then the reflection of these structures on the emotional development of children has been researched.

Manuel (2002) has carried out a study on the effects of parents on emotional intelligence among 109 young people between the ages 11 and 15. Along with emotional intelligence, effects of families on some other dimensions like responsibilities, social functions and symptoms of depression have also been studied. Upon the assessment carried out by Path analysis technique it has been determined that parent models with methods like encouraging, giving rewards and guiding have crucial effects on matters of emotional intelligence, social activities and symptoms of depression.

Zhiwei, et al.(2000) have studied on 4th and 5th class students in an aim to see the relationship between problem behaviours, academic successes of children and family environment. The relationship between the educational level of family, family environment, family relations, conflicts within the family, emotional definitions, religion, types of entertainment, academic success, discipline, social activities, social harmony or internal and external behaviours and gender has been examined.

Nixon et al.(1999) have made a research on the relationship between individual differences and family experiences of 40-75 month children on becoming aware of their emotions and making assessments on their emotional capacities. As a result they determined that there is a relationship between understanding the negative emotions of children and family experiences to some extent. They determined that experiences within the family are connected with the first emotional experiences.

Nakao et al. (2000) have made a study about the effects of family environment on personal traits. In this study carried out with 150 children 13 characteristics relating to behaviours have been determined as follows: personal traits covering some characteristics as being active, talkativeness, being social, social skills, complying with the rules, aggressiveness, emotional control, anxiety, cognitive intelligence. Characteristics relating to the family have been determined as to include the participation of mother and parents in raising the children, styles of raising the children, relations between the spouses, number of the siblings, status in the course of birth and socioeconomic status. As a result they have found out that introverted children with high level of cognitive intelligence are influenced more by the family environment compared to extroverted children with low intelligence.

It is emphasized in the studies that the family environment is highly important in the emotional and social development of the child. Emotional processes are affected by the family environment much. And also it is possible to say that studies on the relationship between the family environment and the emotional intelligence of the parents are limited in Turkey. Investigating whether there is a relationship between the family environment and the emotional intelligence of the parents or not constitutes the case of this study.

We have searched for the answers to the following questions. Is there a relationship between the emotional intelligence of the parents of elementary school students and family scale with, unity and control sub-dimensions?

2. THE METHOD

2.1 Participants

274 parents who are mothers and fathers of elementary school students randomly selected out of the universe of province of Istanbul form the sampling of this research. The sampling group consists of 152 women and 122 men. The educational levels of the parents are as follows: 21% primary school, 21.85% secondary school, 30.25% high school, 26.89% university graduates. 14.34% of the parents in the sampling is not working (looking for a job) and 19.01% is women; 63.74% is not working (not looking for a job) and 66.09% is women; 21.91% is working and 14.08% is again women.

2.2 Measures

Two measuring tools have been utilised in an aim to collect data; 'EQ-NED Emotional Intelligence' for determining Emotional Intelligence and 'Family Environment Scale' for characteristics of the family environment.

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EQ-NED) has been developed by Ergin et al., (1999) in order to determine the level of emotional intelligence. EQ-NED is a scale of Liker type consisting of 108 items. The sub-dimensions of EQ-NED are; EQ-1: defining one's own emotions, EQ-2: defining others' emotions, EQ-3: guiding the emotions. Validity and reliability studies have been carried out. Cronbach alpha coefficient is set as .60 on the total.

Family Environment Scale is an abridged form made up of 30 items prepared by Fowler. Factor analysis made by Fowler has shown us that the scale has two dimensions. These dimensions are called Unity and Control. Upon calculating item-total score coefficients of the scale, which has been translated into Turkish and adapted for the Turkish Culture by Usluer (1989), for the original 30 item form, 4 items (6,10,27,30) were removed from the scale as these items were below the correlation coefficient level of .15 which is accepted as a criterion. The remaining 23 items constituted the final form in Turkish. Kuder-Richardson 20 formula has been used while determining inner consistency in an aim to determine the level of reliability and .82 alpha values has been for 'Unity' sub-dimension, .74 for 'Control' sub-dimension.

2.3 Procedure

Data has been collected by using 'EQ-NED Emotional Intelligence Scale' and 'Family Environment Scales' given to the parents of students attending 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th classes in some public and private elementary schools randomly selected out of the universe of province of Istanbul.

Descriptive research method has been used in this study and also we have resorted to the research method relating to relations in order to determine the relationship among the variables.

Pearson Moment Correlation Technique has been used in order to determine the relations among the data collected in the study.

3. RESULTS

After data analysis, findings acquired by relational scanning method were presented as follows. Table-1 shows the average family environment points and average of standard deviations.

Table1. Mean and SD points for Family Environment

Family Scale	N	\bar{X}	SD
Unity	274	3.13	.41
Control	274	2.78	.41
Total	274	2.97	.42

Considering the average characteristics of the family environment on Table 1, it is clear that an average score of (mean=2.97) in total values relating to the characteristics of the family environment has been achieved. On this occasion it is possible to say that parents have displayed all characteristics of family environment on an average level. Characteristics of family environment have been examined regarding two sub-dimensions and in the first sub-dimension, which is unity, an average of (mean=3.13) and in control dimension an average of (mean=2.78) has been obtained.

The fact that the values in the unity dimension is higher shows us that parents highly possess the characteristics of this dimension, but on the other hand they at the same time possess the characteristics of control dimension less.

Table-2 shows the average emotional intelligence points and average of standard deviations.

Table2. Mean and SD Points for Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence	N	\bar{X}	SD
Controlling the Emotions	274	3.07	0.29
Other People's Emotion	274	2.95	0.23
Understanding One's Own Emotions	274	2.86	0.30
Total Emotional Intelligence	274	2.96	0.22

Considering the average characteristics of Emotional Intelligence on Table 2, we see that an average score of (mean=2.96) has been attained in total values at Emotional Intelligence level. Emotional Intelligence levels have been examined regarding three dimensions and the average scores respectively for controlling the emotions (mean= 3.07), understanding one's own emotions (mean=2.86) and understanding others' emotions (mean= 2.95). High values in the dimension of controlling the emotions shows us that parents possess the characteristics of this dimension more when compared to the other characteristics.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix for Emotional Intelligence and Family Environment

	Emotional Intelligence	Understanding one's own emotions	Understanding others' people emotions	Controllin the emotions
Family Environment	r=0.38 p<.01 N=274	r=0.24 p<.05 N= 274	r= 0.29 p<.01 N=274	r= 0.37 p<.01 N=274
Unity	r= 0.44 p<.01 N=274	r=0.24 p<.05 N=274	r=0.37 p<.01 N=274	r=0.44 p<.01 N=274
Control	r= 0.15 - N=274	r=0.16 - N=274	r=0.06 - N=274	r=0.12 - N=274

As seen on Table, 3 the total intelligence scores have been figured out as a correlation of ($r= 0.38$). Considering this result, it is possible to mention about a logical relationship between Family Characteristics and Emotional Intelligence. Thus, with changes in the level of emotional intelligence also the characteristics of family environment may change. Considering the relationship between the total of three dimensions and two scales of family environment scale, a logical relationship was achieved between emotional intelligence levels of parents and family environment Unity ($r= 0.44$) within the family increases with increasing level of emotional intelligence. However, no significant relationship could be found between three dimensions of emotional intelligence scale and control ($r= 0.15$) dimension of family environment scale.

4. DISCUSSION

A logical relationship was achieved between unity dimension of family environment scale and self-understanding dimension of emotional intelligence scale. The increase in the level of self-understanding may prompt the idea that this situation reveals the need for the individual to demand the same thing from the people living in the same place. This also brings about the need to tell oneself to the others and to be understood by the others. This situation may be a means to becoming closer within the family.

There is no relationship between unity dimension of family environment scale and understanding others' emotions dimension of emotional intelligence scale. This situation causes individuals to try to understand family members and urges them to make assessment about their desires and expectations by trying to understand their psychological and emotional needs. The results of being understood or the effort to understand reveal themselves as becoming closer and acting altogether. A relationship was achieved between unity dimension of family environment scale and controlling the emotions dimension of emotional intelligence scale. When the members within the family are making effort to explore themselves and the others emotionally, it is possible to think that they are beginning to better know and make correct assessments about each other. Thus, the feeling to be understood and the effort to understand give shape to the behaviours accordingly. Individuals in that kind of a setting may tend to reveal themselves to each other more, share and take support from each other.

With regard to these results it is clear that emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in regulating the family environment. The possibility to ensure the unity within the family environment increases when families understand themselves, the emotions of the others and guide their emotions. The need to inner control of a family decreases when the individuals control their behaviours and take support from the family. This situation may be interpreted as children are positively affected from the family environment.

Isreal, et all.(2001) determined that academic successes, social choices and emotional approaches of high school students, who were the subjects of a long term study carried out, were affected by the family structure and the communication between parents and children.

In the result of this study it was determined that there is a logical relationship between family characteristics and emotional intelligence. While emotional intelligence of parents increases, also some changes occur in the family environment. The effort of the individual to understand himself/herself and the others and to guide his/her behaviours upon these assessments ensure the increase in the number of the activities made together in the family environment, making decisions together and sharing responsibilities.

Considering the findings of this study, some suggestions may be mentioned as follows. There should be some studies seeking for the relationship between emotional intelligence and some different variables. As the effect of parents in the development of emotional intelligence levels of individuals are highly emphasized, some programs supporting emotional intelligence may take place in parent education.

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