

IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS IN WEST BENGAL: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a fundamental skill that enables individuals to recognize and manage their own emotions and understand those of others. In the context of academic administration, EI has emerged as a crucial competency, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly disrupted the traditional teaching and learning process. The transition to remote learning and the subsequent shift to a hybrid education model required academic administrators to develop new abilities, particularly EI skills, to effectively manage relationships, solve issues, and make informed decisions in both online and offline environments. This study examines the impact of EI on academic administrators' effectiveness, emphasizing its role in fostering a student-friendly atmosphere, improving communication, and ensuring quality education through motivation and emotional support. While prior research has explored EI's role in academic management, this study is distinctive in its attempt to compare the influence of EI before and after the pandemic. It utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the relationship between EI and administrative efficacy from the perspective of students in both periods. The study involved 217 academic administrators and 452 students from various schools, colleges, and educational institutions in West Bengal. The findings indicate that EI plays a significant role in academic administration across both time periods, but its impact varies based on demographic factors such as age. Older administrators tend to have higher EI, likely due to their life experiences, which enhance their ability to regulate emotions and understand others better. However, the study also reveals differences in administrative effectiveness perception across different education levels, with school students rating their administrators more favorably than university students. This could be attributed to a lack of institutional support during the crisis, which hindered administrators from providing adequate guidance to higher education students. A Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach was used to develop models demonstrating the relationship between EI and administrative effectiveness. The study highlights that academic administrators need formal EI training to manage emotions efficiently, enhance student engagement, and create emotionally supportive learning environments. Additionally, it underscores the importance of government and institutional support in equipping administrators with resources necessary to assist students in navigating the uncertainties of the new educational landscape. Ultimately, the research establishes that EI remains a crucial factor in academic administration, both pre-pandemic and in the new normal scenario. Its role in enhancing resilience, adaptability, student engagement, and institutional effectiveness makes it indispensable for future educational leadership and management strategies.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence (EI), academic, administrators, analysis, education, students, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), administrative effectiveness