



Into the Minds of Middle Schoolers in India: Assessing Social-emotional Learning Inside and Beyond Classroom

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Abstract

Studies on Socio-emotional learning (SEL) and its measurement studies have affirmed the positive role of socio-emotional development in school achievements and overall emotional well-being of school children. Existing studies on SEL measurement largely stems from the advanced western countries, restricting its application to developing countries like India. SEL measurement in India so far has largely been observation based and qualitative in nature. Addressing this gap, we constructed a new tool to measure SEL, where we surveyed 6-8th graders ($N=1647$) in selected government schools in four districts of Maharashtra state. The tool consisted of 28 items and used a 3-point Likert scale of frequencies. Questions focused on self-management, decision making, self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills based on the CASEL framework. The tool showed acceptable reliability Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.69$) in the first pilot. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.80, above the commonly recommended value of 0.600. Results reveal that overall scores for self-awareness were lowest across the sample, while scores for relationship skills were highest. No gender differences were found for all the five domains of SEL. This first step in tool development will open conversations around SEL in Indian school. Through this study we shed light on improvements in the school environment and would be able to recommend SEL based programs.

Keywords: Life skills, Measurement, Middle school, Public schools, Socio-emotional skills