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Can Emotional Intelligence Reduce Materialism? Students' Attitudes in the Context of Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The analysis of scientific literature suggests that individuals who understand and regulate their emotions and are able to use them effectively tend to be more rational and better able to control tendencies toward materialistic behavior. The aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of emotional intelligence development on students' materialism. A quasi-experimental study was conducted with 36 students: 18 in the control group and 18 in the experimental group. The experimental group participated in an emotional development program, while the control group did not. Before and after the study, participants completed the materialism questionnaire by Richins (2004) and the emotional intelligence questionnaire by Schutte et al. (1998). The results revealed that participants in the emotional intelligence intervention group achieved a statistically significantly higher level of emotional intelligence ($N = 18$, $M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.26$) compared to the control group ($N = 18$, $M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.35$), $t(34) = 4.203$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.31$. The results of the independent samples t-test showed that materialism scores were significantly lower in the emotional intelligence intervention group ($N = 18$, $M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.50$) compared to the control group ($N = 18$, $M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.29$), $t(34) = -3.508$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.41$. These results indicate that the emotional intelligence development program was successful and confirm the assumption that respondents who participated in the program would exhibit lower levels of materialism compared to those in the control group.

Keywords: Control Group; Experimental Group; Intervention Program; Quasi-Experiment