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Comparative Study of Part-Time and Full-Time Students' Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Well-Being and Life Satisfaction in the Era of New Technology

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Abstract

Many students who enroll in distance learning programs claimed that they feel very stressful when completing their assignments, poor performance and difficulties to cope with studies and work. This study compared the part-time distance learning students and the full-time students' emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and life satisfaction. This study employed a survey method involving 67 students. The finding revealed that there was a significant difference in emotional intelligence between the part-time and the full time students. However, there were no significant differences in psychological well-being and life satisfaction between the two groups of students. Implications and recommendations are discussed accordingly.

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Keywords: Psychological well-being; emotional intelligence; life satisfaction; learning environment

1. Introduction

With the rapid growth of technology, educational and learning environment nowadays is not confined in the traditional classroom anymore. Students can now be educated electronically by distance learning method, which means, they can choose to enroll in a distance learning program or e-learning program where they meet their lecturers on the internet without leaving their home. This method of instruction is

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getting more and more popular in many countries around the world. Usually, students who take up this kind of learning methods enroll as part-time students rather than full-time students. Students who are working full-time prefer this e-learning method than the traditional classroom method because they get to study without quitting their job. However, there are many complaints from the lecturers that the part-time students are having difficulties balancing their studies and their work. It is interesting to note that the academic achievements of these part-time students are quite well. All the same, some lecturers also complain that the full-time students are not serious with their studies, which results to poor grades. This study compares the part-time students and the full-time students' emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and life satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

Most teaching and assessment in higher education focus on cognitive skills of knowledge understanding rather than on affective outcomes of values, attitudes and behaviors (Shepard, 2007). The affective domain describes the way people react emotionally such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes. (Krathwohl, Bloom, Masia, 1973). Besides, students' motivation to learn and their emotional state whilst learning are also elements of the affective domain (Beard et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, educators have traditionally been reluctant to pursue affective learning outcomes but often program of study simply fail to identify and describe their legitimate aims in these terms (Shepard, 2007). Hence, the constructs of emotional intelligence, psychological well being and life satisfaction which were categories under the affective domains in the learning process have also been neglected. The idea that emotional intelligence (EQ) is an important aspect of well-being and everyday coping has generated a great deal of interest. According to Segal and Smith (2013), "Emotional intelligence (EQ) is the ability to identify, use, understand and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict." Emotional intelligence influences a person's daily life and it can be seen in the way he or she behaves and communicates with others. Goleman (1995) defined EQ by exclusion as any variable feature of personal character not represented by cognitive intelligence. EQ is also defined as an array of emotional and social abilities, competencies, and skills that enable individuals to cope with daily demands and be more effective in their personal and social life (Ayiro, 2009; Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg and Bechara, 2003). A lot of researchers found that EQ is linked to a person's life satisfaction, the quality of interpersonal relationships and success in occupations (Zeidner and Olnick-Shemesh, 2010).

2.1. Emotional intelligence

In accordance to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence or EQ is the ability to motivate oneself whenever there is a downfall in life as well as able to control impulse from reacting in an aggressive manner. Moreover, EQ is also the ability to delay gratification and keep one's mind focus even though one is in a stressful situation. Someone who is emotionally intelligent is said to have the ability to regulate his or her own emotions (Goleman, 1995; Song et al., 2010; Federer, 2011). This is crucial in enhancing emotional and intellectual growth. Federer (2011) added that managing feelings is vital because people need to express their emotions appropriately and effectively which will enable people to work together harmoniously toward their goals. Federer (2011) believed that EQ develops in a human being through experiences and learning. EQ can keep growing in a human being and will continue to develop through life experiences. EQ has also been said to be related to life satisfaction (Gallager and Vella-Brodrick, 2008; Palmer, Donalson and Stough, 2002). Research found that the higher the EQ level

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