

PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FORMATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CHILDREN IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: The article theoretically analyzes the psychological and pedagogical foundations of the formation and development of emotional intelligence in children under conditions of inclusive education. The concept of emotional intelligence is examined within a contemporary scientific context, and the specific characteristics of the social-emotional development of children with special needs are elucidated. By systematizing the factors influencing the development of emotional intelligence in an inclusive environment (the teacher factor, the family environment, pedagogical technologies), the author identifies the existing problems in this field and outlines prospective directions of research.

Key words: inclusive education, emotional intelligence, psycho-pedagogy, children with special needs, social-emotional development, pedagogical technologies

Introduction

One of the most important directions of the modern educational paradigm is the formation of an inclusive education system that ensures the full integration of every child — including children with special educational needs — into the general educational environment. Inclusive education implies not only that children are educated together in the same physical space, but also the comprehensive

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support of their cognitive, social, and emotional development. In this regard, the problem of developing emotional intelligence in children becomes one of the leading factors determining the quality of inclusive education. Research shows that various aspects of emotional intelligence within the education system have been brought into focus. (Jabbarov et.al, 2020 ; Jabbarov, 2017).

Emotional intelligence is understood as an individual's ability to recognize and manage his or her own emotions, to understand the emotional states of others, and to build social relationships on this basis. Children functioning within an inclusive educational environment — whether typically developing children or children with special needs — continuously interact with peers whose abilities differ from their own. Research shows that the dependence of emotional intelligence on self-affirmation—including feedback—has also been studied from a broad perspective. (Jabbarov et.al, 202; Jabbarov and Memmedova, 2024) . On the one hand, this process creates a favorable foundation for the development of empathy, tolerance, and cooperation skills; on the other hand, it may give rise to certain psychological difficulties (stigmatization, social exclusion, communication barriers) that must be addressed in a timely manner through psycho-pedagogical support.

The relevance of the problem lies in the fact that, although the process of strengthening the institutional foundations of inclusive education in Azerbaijan is ongoing, systematic psycho-pedagogical support mechanisms aimed at children's emotional and social development remain insufficiently developed. It is precisely for this reason that investigating the theoretical and methodological foundations of the development of emotional intelligence within the context of inclusive education is of both scientific and practical significance.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the problem and analysis of recent research

The scientific evolution of the concept of emotional intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence entered scientific circulation in the early 1990s. J. Mayer and P. Salovey defined emotional intelligence as an individual's ability to monitor his or her

own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). D. Goleman, who brought the concept of emotional intelligence to a broad public audience, presented it as a model comprising five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1995). R. Bar-On, in turn, developed a model of emotional-social intelligence, linking this phenomenon to an individual's ability to adapt to the demands of the environment (Bar-On, 2006).

A synthesis of these theoretical approaches shows that emotional intelligence is not a static indicator but a dynamic quality that can be developed through purposeful pedagogical influence. This substantiates the necessity of purposeful psycho-pedagogical activity during childhood, particularly at primary school age.

The conceptual framework of inclusive education

The international legal and conceptual foundation of inclusive education was laid by the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, adopted in 1994; this document affirms the right of all children, including those with additional educational needs, to be educated in regular mainstream schools (UNESCO, 1994). T. Booth and M. Ainscow interpreted inclusive education not merely as a process of integration, but as a process of adapting the education system as a whole to diversity, removing barriers, and ensuring the participation of every child (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). M. Ainscow, in turn, emphasized that the development of inclusive education systems is possible only on the basis of the unity of school culture, policy, and practice (Ainscow, 2005).

These conceptual approaches indicate that, alongside academic achievement, a child's emotional well-being and social participation should also be recognized as indicators of the quality of education within an inclusive environment.

Psychological foundations of children's social-emotional development

According to L. S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory, a child's mental development, including the emotional sphere, is shaped through the process of social interaction, within the "zone of proximal development." Vygotsky argued that the secondary (socially derived) difficulties experienced by children with special needs including problems in the emotional domain can be compensated for through properly organized pedagogical intervention (Vygotsky, 1993). U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory shows that a child's emotional development is shaped through interactions at the micro- (family, classroom), meso-, and macrosystem levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which underscores the importance of taking into account all levels teacher, family, school culture, and state policy when designing an inclusive educational environment.

S. Denham distinguished three core components of children's emotional competence emotional expression, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation and demonstrated that these components are directly related to social adaptation (Denham, 1998). M. Elias and his co-authors developed the concept of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and empirically confirmed that systematic programs integrated into the school curriculum improve both the academic and emotional outcomes of children (Elias et al., 1997).

Synthesis of recent research

The theoretical analysis conducted shows that, although emotional intelligence and inclusive education have developed as relatively separate scientific fields over recent decades, a new research trend has been forming in recent years at the intersection of these two areas. Such studies reveal that the implementation of social-emotional learning programs in inclusive classrooms has a positive effect on the quality of relationships between both typically developing children and children with special needs. However, the majority of studies conducted in this direction have been carried out in a

Western context, while local studies reflecting the socio-cultural characteristics of national education systems remain limited.

Methodological approach of the study

This article is theoretical in nature and is devoted to an analysis, based on scientific literature, theoretical approaches, and normative documents, of the psycho-pedagogical factors influencing the formation of emotional intelligence in children within an inclusive educational environment. The methodological basis of the study consists of theoretical analysis, systematization of scientific sources, comparative analysis, and generalization. The article does not involve the collection of empirical data or statistical processing.

Conceptual model of the development of emotional intelligence in an inclusive educational environment

The theoretical analysis conducted shows that the development of emotional intelligence under conditions of inclusive education is not the result of isolated pedagogical interventions, but of a system of interrelated psychological, pedagogical, and social factors. On the basis of this generalization, a conceptual model is proposed that systematizes the main psycho-pedagogical factors influencing the development of emotional intelligence in an inclusive educational environment.

The foundation of the model is the inclusive educational environment. Within this environment, the teacher's professional and emotional competence, family-school cooperation, and inclusive school culture act as the main factors supporting the social-emotional learning process. The interaction of these factors creates the conditions for the development of the components of emotional intelligence, namely: recognition and expression of emotions, emotional regulation, empathy, social communication, and responsible decision-making.

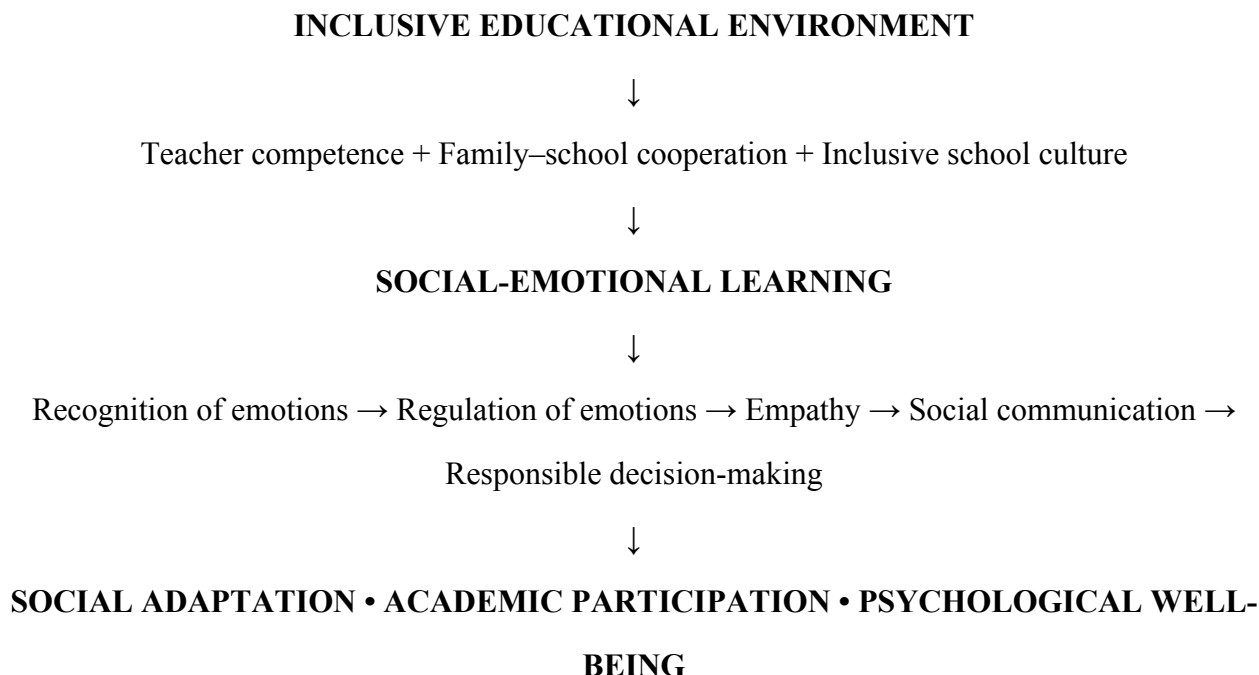


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the psycho-pedagogical factors influencing the formation of emotional intelligence in children within an inclusive educational environment

Source: developed by the author.

Limitations of the study

Since this study is theoretical in nature, the conclusions drawn are based on the analysis and generalization of scientific literature. The conceptual model proposed in the article has not been empirically tested. In this regard, it is considered appropriate for future research to conduct empirical studies covering different age groups, children with different developmental characteristics, and various inclusive educational environments.

Unresolved aspects of the problem

An analysis of the existing scientific sources on the topic reveals a number of unresolved

issues:

- 1) the absence of diagnostic tools, adapted to the national context, for assessing the development of emotional intelligence in inclusive classroom settings;
- 2) the insufficient level of teachers' professional training in developing emotional-social competencies within an inclusive environment;
- 3) the underdevelopment of systematic mechanisms of family-school cooperation aimed at the development of emotional intelligence;
- 4) the insufficient elaboration of differentiated psycho-pedagogical approaches for children with various types of developmental disorders (autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, behavioral problems).

Addressing these problems should be regarded as a priority scientific and practical task, both for improving the quality of inclusive education and for ensuring the comprehensive development of all children.

Conclusions and prospects for development

On the basis of the theoretical analysis conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn:

First, the development of emotional intelligence in children within an inclusive educational environment should be organized not as an isolated, occasional pedagogical measure, but as a systematic activity integrated into all stages of the educational process. Second, the teacher's professional training is a decisive factor in this process. The teacher should act not only as a transmitter of academic knowledge, but also as the shaper of the classroom's emotional climate; to this end, it is advisable to incorporate specialized modules on the diagnosis and development methodology of emotional intelligence into teacher training programs.

Third, since the family environment is the primary source of a child's emotional experience, it is necessary to strengthen school-family cooperation and to provide parents with education on

emotional support skills.

Fourth, the development of methodological tools based on the principles of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) that incorporate game- and project-based activities, and their integration into the national curriculum, appears to be a promising direction.

Prospective directions for future research include the development of national diagnostic methods for measuring the level of development of emotional intelligence in inclusive classrooms, the construction of a model for developing teachers' emotional-social competencies, and the elaboration of differentiated psycho-pedagogical programs for different age groups (preschool, primary, and secondary school).

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