

## Importance of Cultivating Emotional Intelligence in Children

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### Abstract

Educating children in the present age is not easy. Various challenges and disturbances to be encountered. Educating children not only with only enough food, clothes and education. The emphasis is only concerned with the aspect of intellectual intelligence regardless of their feelings will leave a negative impact on the emotional development of children (Poh Siew Boon, 2001). According to Boon Siew Boon (2001), elements of emotional intelligence should be taught to children as the world now has a complex change in patterns of human social relations that much negative influence that can be seen through the mass media and television. This causes children present irritability and aggressive due to change this phenomenon. This paper will discuss the conceptual concept of emotional intelligence instilled in preschool children. This paper also discusses the problems faced by pre-school teachers in the implementation of teaching and learning practices of emotional intelligence preschoolers. Limitations of teaching aids (BBM) in teaching and learning elements of emotional intelligence in the preschool lead teachers teaching hard to deliver this element to a child. Finally, teachers are making element of emotional intelligence as a side subject only infused with any other subject that are important in the learning process. This shows lack of emotional intelligence elements emphasized by pre-school teachers in the teaching and learning of children. In fact, this element is very important in the development and formation of a stable of kid emotional. It is important to produce individuals who can and are able to control and manage emotions well and be able to avoid the temptations of the things that should not be a result of failure to control his emotions when faced with the pressures experienced in life (Saarni, 1999).

*Keywords:* Emotional intelligent; preschooler

### Abstrak

Mendidik anak pada zaman sekarang adalah tidak mudah. Bermacam cabaran dan gangguan yang perlu ditempuhi. Mendidik anak bukan sahaja dengan hanya memberi makan pakai yang cukup serta pendidikan yang sempurna. Penekanan yang hanya menitikberatkan kepada aspek kecerdasan intelek tanpa menghiraukan perasaan mereka akan meninggalkan kesan yang negatif ke atas perkembangan emosi anak-anak (Poh Siew Boon, 2001). Menurut Poh Siew Boon (2001), elemen kecerdasan emosi perlu diajar kepada kanak-kanak kerana dunia kini telah berlaku perubahan yang kompleks dalam corak perhubungan sosial manusia yang banyak mendatangkan pengaruh negatif yang boleh dilihat melalui media massa dan juga televisyen. Ini menyebabkan kanak-kanak sekarang mudah naik radang dan agresif disebabkan perubahan fenomena ini. Kertas ini akan membincangkan secara konseptual konsep kecerdasan emosi yang diterapkan dalam diri kanak-kanak prasekolah. Kertas ini juga membincangkan masalah-masalah yang dihadapi guru-guru prasekolah dalam pelaksanaan pengajaran dan pembelajaran penerapan kecerdasan emosi kanak-kanak prasekolah. Keterbatasan Bahan Bantu Mengajar (BBM) dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran elemen kecerdasan emosi di peringkat prasekolah menyebabkan guru sukar untuk menyalurkan pengajaran elemen ini kepada kanak-kanak. Akhirnya guru hanya menjadikan elemen kecerdasan emosi sebagai subjek sampingan sahaja yang diselitkan dengan mana-mana tunjang yang lain yang dianggap penting dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Ini menunjukkan elemen kecerdasan emosi kurang dititikberatkan oleh guru-guru prasekolah dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran kepada kanak-kanak. Pada hakikatnya, elemen ini amat penting dalam perkembangan dan pembentukan emosi yang stabil dalam diri kanak-kanak. Hal ini penting bagi melahirkan individu yang dapat dan mampu mengawal serta mengurus emosi dengan baik dan berkebolehan menggelak diri daripada terjebak dengan perkara-perkara yang tidak sepatutnya akibat kegagalan dalam mengawal emosi ketika menghadapi tekanan-tekanan yang dilalui dalam kehidupan (Saarni, 1999).

*Katakunci:* Kecerdasan emosi; kanak-kanak prasekolah

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## ■1.0 INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is the capacity of the emotions and the ability to use emotions to enhance thought. It involves the ability to accurately detect emotion, using emotion as improvement mindset, understand emotions and emotional knowledge and the ability to regulate emotions as a trigger for the development of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Child's success in learning is to start with healthy emotional development. Emotional development component focuses on the mastery of skills of emotional maturity which is fundamental to the learning and development of children. By going through the development of healthy emotional, it helps children build self-confidence, self-reliance and a positive attitude towards education as they are able to understand and manage the emotions of itself and achieve emotional intelligence. Pupils who have emotional self-management capabilities enable them to develop social skills in a pluralistic society that is friendly and harmonious. This is because they can understand the emotions, needs and respect the views of others (National Preschool Curriculum, 2007).

## ■2.0 THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CHILDREN

Emotional element must be disclosed in advance, especially for children who are in preschool. According to Erikson (1950), children at this stage aged three to six years is a very fast learner and quickly moved to do something of what they want to do. They are very sensitive to whether something is right or wrong. According to Erikson, at this time appropriate emotional knowledge instilled in children because they are easy to construct a negative attitude when have bad feelings. Feelings of guilt in the child's behavior will arise when they laughed at if doing something wrong. If this protracted to adulthood, will give birth of individual who failed to manage their life properly. This is because they are not able to navigate feelings with good or emotions when faced with problems due to the growth of not strong emotions (Mohd Azhar, 2004).

According to Piaget (1970), mental and emotional development of children is influenced by the social spirit. He suggested that when reached a certain period, the child will suffer from movement or displacement of the egocentric to the sociocentric, from the failure to understand the views of others on the state's ability to understand the differing views of others when constantly interacting with the surrounding community.

Emotional intelligence is important for children, because this is a regulation skills, the promotion of social behavior and positive learning behaviors (Fantuzzo, Bulotsky, McDermott, McWayne, Frye & Perlman, 2007; Izard, Trentacosta, King & Mostow, 2004). Based on the results of a study conducted by Fantuzzo, Bulotsky, McDermott, McWayne, Frye and Perlman (2007) and Raver and Knitzer (2002), emotional intelligence is important and fundamental to the success of a preschool environment. According to Denham (2006), children who have good emotional intelligence is able to build an advanced learning environment that is able to follow instructions, pay attention and listen, able to solve a problem and patient.

Statistically, children are able to apply emotional intelligence in the classroom is able to perform better on a test or in any other academic achievement (Elias & Weisberg, 2000, Payton, Wardlaw, Graczyk, Bloody, Trompsett & Weissberg, 2000). Emotional intelligence is instilled in children allows

them to form a good behavior in learning process which results a better achieved in academic achievement (Ulutas & Omeroglu, 2007). Thus, emotional intelligence is very necessary in the early developmental stages of children. This is because there have been many studies that show there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and future educational success (Fantuzzo, Bulotsky, McDermott, McWayne, Frye & Perlman, 2007; Izard, 2004; Raver & Knitzer, 2002).

According to Mok Soon Sang (2009), emotional intelligence important to learn to allow individuals to understand the emotional self. When emotions are identified, easy to find out the reason that evokes feelings and be able to distinguish feelings and rationally actions. He added that the individual will be able to manage and harness emotions better when having a good emotional level. They are able to show their anger with a reasonable way without a fight and could control destructive or aggressive behavior especially involving discipline problems in the classroom. This individual will be responsible and able to focus carefully on the work done. This is because they are able to act in a more rational and sustainable.

From Aristotle's expression that is *"Everyone can get angry - that is easy. But to be angry at the right person, at the right level, at the right time, with the right purpose and in the right way-this is not easy"* (Richburg & Flechter, 2002). Therefore, an emotional intelligence need and importance to instilled in children from the start. This is to avoid any problems when they enter primary school later. Act like a fight and hurt others occur due to the child's emotional development was interrupted because of the growth of the less emotionally stable and robust (National Preschool Curriculum Standards, 2010).

## ■3.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING APPLICATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN MALAYSIA.

Emotional intelligence is very important to emphasize to produce individuals who are not only successful in academics or career but also successful and able to live a more orderly and peaceful. The importance of emotional intelligence has also been shown in the National Education Philosophy (Philosophy of Education), which shows the government's efforts to create a balanced and harmonious human being physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and socially to produce people who are knowledgeable, competent, honorable, responsible and capable achieve personal well-being. So here there has been an emphasis on the emotional elements by the government in order to create a stable development of individual emotions (Standard Curriculum Education, 2010).

Through the goals of the National Standard Curriculum for Preschool (2010), the National Standard Curriculum for Preschool (KSPK) under the administration of the Ministry of Education (MOE) has put a target for the development of children aged four to six years in the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social. The aim is to equip individuals with the skills, confidence and positive self-concept so that they succeed in the existing environment and be ready to address the challenges and responsibilities in school soon. So, here we also see that the emotion be addressed and taken care of by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

The objectives of the National Standard Curriculum for Preschool (KSPK) also, emotional infusion is intended to produce children who grow up with a positive self-concept, a high level of self-confidence, dare to try, and has the emotional maturity and respect for the feelings and rights of other. When

an individual has the emotional maturity, they can easily collaborate with others. In the same time, they are able to express their thoughts and feelings without hurting the feelings of others. With this positive relationship does not matter whether between adults or peers can be well-formed (National Standard Curriculum of Preschool, 2010).

Therefore, based on what has been discussed above, clearly shows that emotional intelligence is very important in the development of each individual. In preschool, elements of emotional intelligence are under the grooming subject (socio

emotional). Figure 1.1 below shows the grooming subject (socio emotional) is also a facet of emphasis on preschool and the subject is just as important as the other subject, such as Communication subject, Spirituality, Attitudes and Values subject, Human subject, Physical and Aesthetics subject and final Science and Technology Literacy subject. All of subject formed in the KSPK is intended to produce a balanced with critical and creative thinking and innovation person.

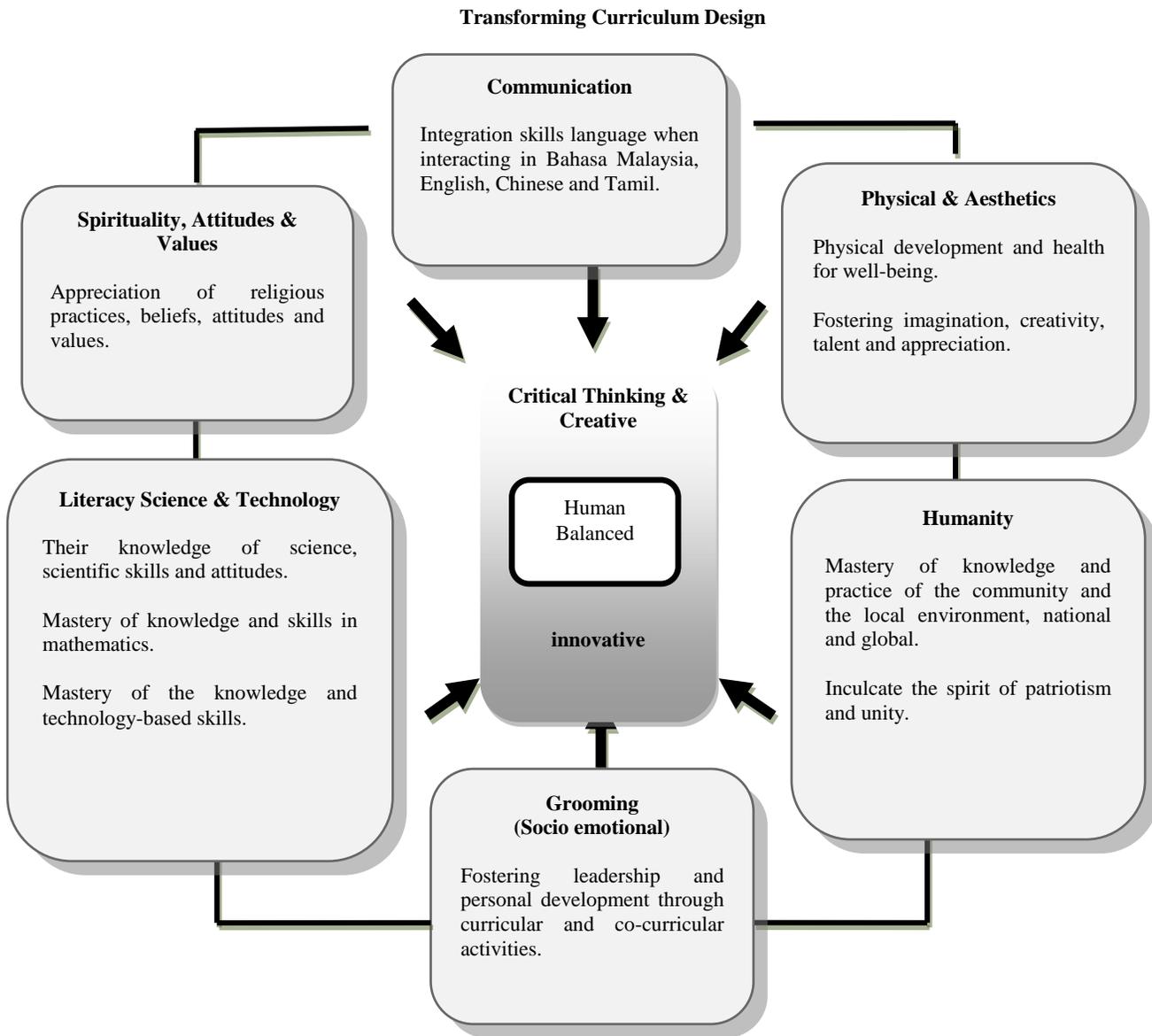


Figure 1.1 Subject in preschool standards curriculum

Based on Figure 1.1 discussed earlier, as well as being central elements of emotional intelligence also emphasized as important as other subject. However, its implementation is not weighing in comparison with other subject. Preschool children performed poorly in capturing elements of emotional

intelligence contained under the socio emotional subject. Besides that, the results of interviews conducted to preschool teachers in the schools, according to those the elements of emotional intelligence was used as an ancillary subject only to be combined with others subject that are considered important

as science and technology subject, communication subject and so on (Nor Aizal Akmal, Azlina & Nora, 2012). While very important element of emotional intelligence need to dominated as a guide for individuals survival of this painstaking (Mohamad Zamri, Melor & Nik Mohd Rahimi, 2010).

The problem limitation of teaching aids or specific learning module cause teachers difficult to carry out the lessons of emotional intelligence to apply to the children because there are limited modules that provide information or knowledge available and planned and systematic base on syllabus to facilitate their teaching. According to the teachers through interview done before, most of the teaching and learning process in the elements of socio-emotional intelligence simply run just by talk and talk and this causes students difficult to understand the information received as well as reducing the interest in learning and attention in class (Nor Aizal Akmal, Azlina & Nora, 2012).

We will acknowledge the limitations of the child at this stage that according to Piaget (1970), preschool children ranging between the ages of four to six years of being in the pre-operation between the ages of two to seven years. At this point, the child is undergoing the process of transition to the next stage of concrete operations between the ages of seven to 12 years. However, during the transition process, the child can not yet think abstractly. They are not able to reflect the process of transformation, even the inverse operation and the conservation concept (Mok, 2008).

At this point, they are just as egocentric thinking only of assessing the views of others is similar to their views (Piaget, 1896 to 1980). Children can only think of a specific instance to a specific instance only known as transductive thinking. They cannot think of an inductive (from specific examples to general) or deductive (from general to specific examples). Children at this point cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality because to them all objects have a soul.

Therefore, elements of emotional intelligence should be taught explicitly, systematic and structured manner. According to Ausubel (1968), a subject learn by child must be meaningful. Meaningful learning is a process of linking new information to the relevant concepts in a cognitive structure. Cognitive structures are the facts, concepts, and generalizations that have been previously studied. Meaningful learning is also a learning process where new information is linked to the structure of meaning that is already owned by a child who is going through a learning process. Meaningful learning occurs when a child is able to associate a new phenomenon in the structure of their knowledge. This means that the subject must be appropriate and relevant to the cognitive structure of ownership. Therefore, the module is one example of a suitable material that can serve as mediation to help children learn new things. This is because in the modules have a suitable activities and organized can be done by children to relate new information learned with what they had learned previously.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From what has been discussed above, clearly shows that individuals who want to succeed in life depends not only on intellectual wits but also need emotional stability. Good emotional control is very important when a person is in a stressful situation. This is because of failure to control his emotions will cause a person to act out of control. They are still sane, but due to the lack of emotional intelligence causes those to take a drastic action to escape from problems incurred.

Thus, emotional intelligence should be instilled in children so that they can grow up emotionally stable growth. To be someone who is always patient, calm and able to think rationally when faced with tense situations and thus succeed in life, one must achieve emotional intelligence. To achieve these objectives, teaching and learning elements of emotional intelligence should be conducted in a more systematic and structured like the use of modules. According Norasyikin and Faridah (2008), with the compilation of the module according to the syllabus content, it will really make the process of teaching and learning to be effective with fun activities.

Use module is an alternative to the teacher as a teaching tool for teaching and learning environment that is more active. With this module can help teachers save time to implement the learning process and enable the learning objectives are achieved (Norasyikin & Faridah, 2008). According to Mohd Faizal (2004), the module is a concrete material that can serve as a catalyst for the success of teaching and learning. In the same time, the use of these modules can reinforce pupils' understanding of a subject of study.

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