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Emotional intelligence role in academic performance in smart and ordinary schools

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to determine role of emotional intelligence in academic performance of students in smart and ordinary schools. The method applied in this study is correlation in kind of prediction. Statistical population consists of all high school students of Tehran. The results obtained from the study showed that the direct and indirect effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance of students is significant. As a conclusion, it could be mentioned that role of smart schools in underlying variables such as emotional intelligence and academic performance can clear and highlight role importance of smart schools.

Keywords: Schools, Emotional Intelligence, Academic Performance.

El rol de la inteligencia emocional en el rendimiento académico en escuelas inteligentes y ordinarias

Resumen

El propósito principal de este estudio es determinar el papel de la inteligencia emocional en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes en escuelas inteligentes y ordinarias. El método aplicado en este estudio es la correlación en forma de predicción. La población estadística se compone de todos los estudiantes de secundaria de Teherán. Los resultados obtenidos del estudio mostraron que el efecto directo e indirecto de la inteligencia emocional en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes es significativo. Como conclusión, se puede mencionar que el rol de las escuelas inteligentes en las variables subyacentes, como la inteligencia emocional y el rendimiento académico, puede aclarar y resaltar la importancia del rol de las escuelas inteligentes.

Palabras clave: Escuelas, Inteligencia Emocional, Rendimiento Académico.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of success or failure in education is one of the most important concerns of every education system. Academic success and achievement in every society show the success of the education system in the field of targeting and paying attention to individual needs. Therefore, education system can be considered as a successful and efficient system when academic achievement of students in different levels is in the highest range. From about 1 century ago and with the advent of specialized fields of educational sciences, the study of educational achievement of students and factors affecting that has formed the main part of studies in the two fields. Academic performance of students in different levels of physical, social and mental growth needs taking benefit of a positive attitude to

educational field and strong motivations. Attitude to the educational field is apparently a personal issue. It is imagined that every student has some attitudes due to his/her personality, intentions, interests and traits; although educational attitude in view of psychology and sociology, in addition, to be personal, encompasses wide social dimension such as environment, people around the student, parents, teacher and other people in life of student, which can affect creation and growth of positive or negative attitudes towards educational field.

One of the most important performances expected from a child and adolescent is activity in the field of education. Sometimes, educational achievement is changed into the most important individual assessment factor to an extent that extremism is sometimes observed in this field. In view of the majority of teachers and parents, successful person is someone, who is successful in terms of educational achievements and educational bonuses. The parents at the today's society do their best for academic achievement of their children. In this way, they encounter problems, which are not caused by their inability and weakness, but also can show their challenges and responsibilities. The educational environment is an opportunity equal to replication of behaviors, gaining motivation for achievement and recognition of abilities of self. From this perspective, academic performance can be considered as a success in gaining more and more achievements and different capabilities. Along with this, gaining grade and score by students can be also another part of this issue (Mousavi, 2012; Choiru & Rijanta, 2019).

Lowe and Nelson have claimed that emotional intelligence can be a very important factor for personal health and academic achievement of

students. They mention that students with emotional intelligence skills are better capable to overcome difficult and complicated experiences of college compared to others. Reuven Bar-On, one of the fans and researchers of emotional intelligence, has recognized the effect of the non-cognitive ability on success of life of students. He assumes that ability of management of self-emotions, ability to confirm credit of self-emotions and solving personal and interpersonal problems can be underlying in the nature of successful academic educations. Moreover, it seems that educational performance can be facilitated by mean of ability to set personal goals and optimism attitude and motivation and realizing them (Baron, 2005). The majority of experts have emphasis on this issue that there is significant correlation between variables of emotional intelligence and academic performance in different age groups, so that increase or decrease in a variable can make changes in another variable (Mayer, 2001).

Smart school can be one of the environments with required potentials for the realization of such goals. These schools were presented for the first time by Perkins et al with the cooperation of Project Zero Research Center in Harvard University and was then published in the book titled Smart Schools: Better Thinking and Learning for every Child (Perkins, 1992).

In relevance to emotional intelligence, Mirzajani and Delaviz (2013) showed that students in smart schools have significantly higher emotional intelligence than students in ordinary schools. Schulz-zander believes that learning by means of computers can lead to enhanced interactions, which is however depended on suitable educational design

and plan. Siegle (2005) has claimed that studies have rejected the legend of isolation and lack of socialization in learning with computers. According to Siegle, children using the internet spend less time watching TV 37% less than others and are with their family and friends 16% more than others.

Improvement of academic performance of students is another reason for existence of smart schools. In this field, the results obtained by scholars Chandra (2013), Dortaj (2014) show that students educating in smart schools have higher academic performance than students in ordinary people. Chandra (2013) has attributed the improvement of academic performance of students in smart schools to cognitive growth, continuous encouragement of the children, organizing correctional activities, taking evolutionary exams and complementary lesson contents. Moreover, according to Husseinpour, using technology in smart schools can cause self-motivated activities of students in organizing their plans and this can be an underlying factor to increase the academic achievement of students. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to codify the academic performance prediction model based on emotional intelligence in students of smart and ordinary schools.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Smart school is a school, at which implementation of all processes, including management, supervision, control, learning-teaching,

educational sources and assistance sources, assessment, professor and office affairs, communications and the foundations of developing them are designed based on information communication technology (ICT) and to improve the research-oriented educational system. Emotional intelligence mainly is defined as ability of individuals to revise the emotions and feelings of self and others, differentiation of emotions and use of information of emotions to solve the problems and to regulate the behavior (Mayer, 2001). Educational performance refers to all educational the behaviors shown in two dimensions of academic achievement or failure in field of gaining knowledge. However, the performance can be also shown in relation to other academic factors such as classroom and academic activities and relationship with classmates and professors.

2-1 Literature review

Nikoogoftar (2008) has compared emotional intelligence, general health and academic performance of students and showed that teaching emotional intelligence can increase social skills and reduce difficulty in describing the emotions and ultimately, it can lead to better academic performance (Tehrani et al., 2012). Jeegar conducted a study on analyzing the levels of emotional intelligence in 150 students of management field and in general, among MA students in relation to their academic performance. Among these 150 students, the relation of emotional intelligence and academic performance was higher in students with schedule of emotional intelligence compared to their peers without such schedule. According to obtained results, it was found that emotional intelligence can be learnt and generalized respectively by teachers and

students. Jeegar Wagon conducted another study on more than 3500 first year students of a public university and showed that interpersonal factors, stress management and coping as components of emotional intelligence can predict the achievements of students significantly. They claimed that the ability to cope with stressful conditions in test anxiety management, emergencies, competitions and personal crises can provide good conditions. The author found that achievement of the educational success of students needs such abilities to make them be feeling comfort and have flexibility and realism when encountering stresses.

Vojud Mahmudi conducted a study under the title of analysis of challenges in the way of development of smart schools in Iran and prioritized the challenges of smart schools. 3 main challenges found by them are as follows: lack of required regulations in the ministry of education is one of these problems. As control, supervision and assessment in smart schools are based on computer technology and is taken in a smart way, in view of experts of smart schools, lack of sufficient resources in schools has made this issue as one of the most important challenges. Inconsistency of structure and formations of schools: unfortunately, the formation and infrastructures of Iranian schools are completely traditional and it has no position in these schools. Considering this issue that it plays key role in smart schools can specify the necessity of adjusting the structure and formation of Iran's schools with information technology. The research reports of Attaran and Seraj (2010), show that despite to endless financial resources provided by the ministry of education of Iran for the development of smart schools, the outcomes are not in consistent with the expectations.

Dortaj (2014) conducted a study to investigate the impact of smart schools in Lorestan on the academic achievement of students. Statistical population in the study consisted of all high school students of Lorestan Province. Statistical sample in the study consisted of 208 students and 99 out of them were students of smart schools and 109 students were educating in traditional schools. Data collection instrument in the study was social class determination scale. Applied method in the study in terms of data collection was a causal-comparative method. In the field of academic achievement, the average of pre-university grade of students of smart and ordinary schools in the fields of mathematics and empirical sciences were compared using t-test. The results showed that average point of students in smart schools was significantly different from average of students in traditional schools and smart schools could have positive effect on average of the students.

3. METHODOLOGY

According to research questions, hypotheses and objective, this study is a correlation study in kind of prediction. The main objective of correlation study is studying the limits of variances of one or more variables with limits of variances of one or more other variables. In this study, the author is aimed at analyzing the role of variables such as emotional intelligence in the prediction of academic performance of students in smart and ordinary schools. Statistical population in this

study consists of all high school students of Tehran Province. Sampling method in this study is multi-stage cluster sampling. Hence, the sample can introduce the studied population more carefully. To estimate sample size, Cochran formula is used.

Ultimately, 640 samples were selected. However, out of the questionnaires, 611 questionnaires were fulfilled and collected and after analyzing them, 28 questionnaires were excluded as they were not fulfilled carefully and because of incomplete data. Hence, the data of 583 questionnaires were analyzed. For purpose of data collection, The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and Dortaj Academic Performance Questionnaire were used. In this study, in the section of the descriptive data analysis, mean value, frequency, tables and diagrams were used and to test research hypotheses and causal relations of variables, path analysis was used. Data analysis was done in AMOS software.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4-1 Descriptive analysis of research variables

In table 1, descriptive statistics (mean and SD) of research variables are presented separated for components of variables.

Table 1: descriptive statistics relevant to research variables

Variable	Subscales	mean	SD
emotional intelligence	Intrapersonal	63.27	5.32
	Interpersonal	65.39	6.12
	Compatibility	53.61	6.29
	Stress management	57.62	7.39
	Public creation	61.32	5.89
academic performance	Self-Efficacy	17.25	4.58
	Emotional effects	13.29	4.27
	planning	24.42	5.36
	Lack of consequence control	9.32	3.53
	Motivation	22.18	4.89

4-2 Inferential results

For purpose of analysis of research hypotheses, path analysis has been used. The statistical method is, in fact, the extended form of regression method. In other words, in path analysis, the mediating role and the direct role of exogenous variables on endogenous variables and also the mediating role of mediating variables were studied.

4-3 Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: emotional intelligence has a direct effect on academic performance.

To test the hypothesis and the hypothesis 2, structural equation modeling (SEM) presented in figure 1 is used. In figure 1, the standard coefficients and factor loads relevant to each dimension are reported.

Before any interpretation of the results, the model fitness indices should be analyzed. In table 2, the path coefficients are reported.

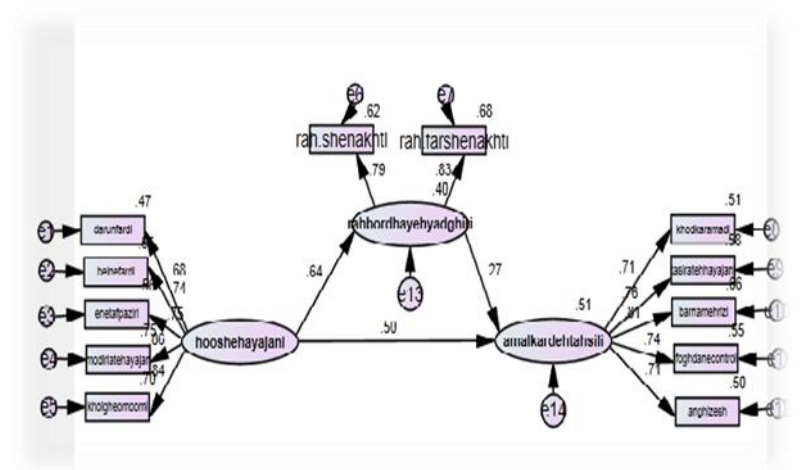


Figure 1: structural equation modeling to analyze the role of learning strategies in mediation between emotional intelligence and academic performance

According to table 2, it could be found that the 3 fitness indices are in favorable level. This shows that the data obtained from the model can be interpreted, since the model 2 is fit with the data.

Table 2: the fitness indices of data with model 2

acceptable amount	obtained value	Fitness index
non-significant	577.730 degrees of freedom equal to 41)	Chi square
higher 0.90	0.93	NFI
higher 0.90	0.91	CFI
higher 0.90	0.92	GFI
smaller 0.08	0.07	RMSEA

In fact, the results show that learning strategies can act as a mediating variable.

For a careful analysis of obtained results, standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients of prediction are presented in table 3. According to this table, it could be found that all path coefficients are significant statistically ($p < 0.01$). According to obtained results in table 3, it could be found that the standardized coefficient of academic performance prediction through emotional intelligence is equal to 0.335 and the value is significant at the level of $p < 0.01$. Moreover, the standardized coefficient of academic performance prediction through learning strategies is obtained to 0.362.

Table 3: standardized and non-standardized regression coefficients of academic performance prediction with emotional intelligence and learning strategies

Dependent		predictor	Non-standardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	Standard deviation	Critical value	significance level
learning strategies	→	emotional intelligence	.636	.320	.026	12.491	0.01
academic performance	→	learning strategies	.275	.362	.076	4.779	0.01
academic performance	→	emotional intelligence	.505	.335	.039	8.688	0.01

However, the most important part of the hypothesis is provided to specify that can emotional intelligence affect academic performance directly or not? To answer the question, direct standardized effects are reported in table 4. According to the table, it could be found that the direct effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance is equal to 0.505. The value of the regression coefficient is significant statistically.

Table 4: direct standardized effects for model 2

	emotional intelligence	Learning strategies	academic performance
Learning strategies	.636	.000	.000
academic performance	.505	.275	.000

Hypothesis 2: the direct effect emotional intelligence and academic performance is different between students of smart and ordinary schools. In hypotheses 2 and 3, type of school is studied as a moderating variable. To examine the role of school type in moderating the correlation between research variables, Chi-squared method for the difference between fitness indices and CFA are used. In fact, this method is a precondition for group comparison, which specifies that measurement models between groups are invariable. It means that they have similar regression coefficients. To take the comparison, all path coefficients in both groups should be considered same. Although the method of difference between Chi-Squares of two models is a well-known method, chi-square may be sensitive to special conditions such as small sample size and hence, CFA method and RMSEA method is used. According to the method provided by Chen, the difference higher than 0.01 for CFA and higher than 0.015 shows that

there is significant difference between two models and they are dissimilar. In other words, mediating variable plays key role in moderating the correlation of measurement variables of structural model.

In short, to analyze the moderating role of school type (ordinary or smart) in structural models, the fitness indices of two models should be firstly estimated and then, the difference of the indices should be analyzed based on Chen's method. If there is a significant difference between fit indices, it could be found that two models are significantly different in terms of structural correlations of variables. Through considering the same direct path coefficient for both groups and the implementation of AMOS software using Multi-Group SEM, it was found that the difference of RMSEA and CFA is higher than required levels for invariability of both groups. Therefore, it could be found that the two groups are significantly different in terms of path coefficient. Structural model analysis for both groups independently showed that direct path coefficient between emotional intelligence and academic performance of students in smart schools is higher than ordinary schools (figure 2 and figure 3).

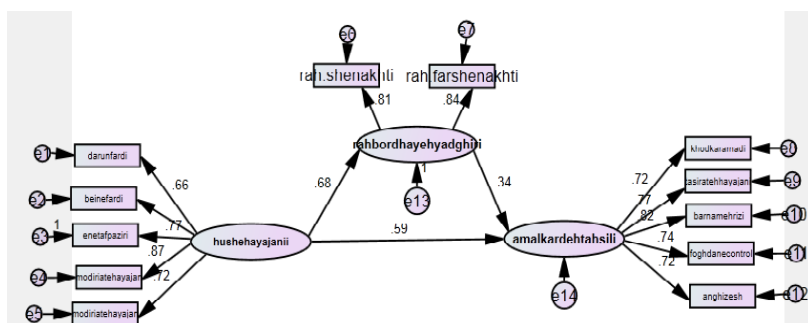


Figure 2: structural equation modeling to test the mediating role of learning strategies in mediation of emotional intelligence in academic performance (smart schools)

According to figure 2, it could be found that the direct path coefficient between emotional intelligence and academic performance is equal to 0.59. Moreover, according to figure 3, the path coefficient for ordinary school students is equal to 0.44.

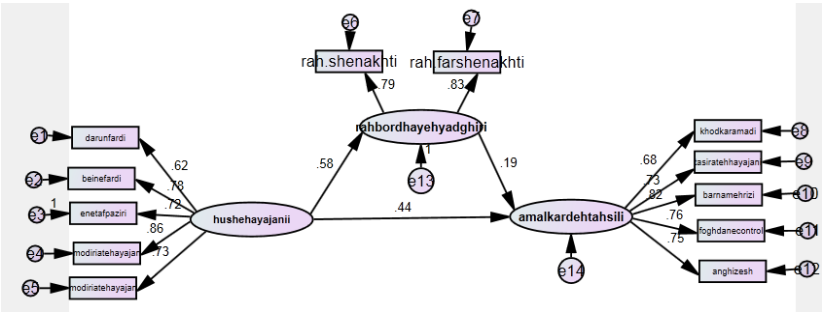


Figure 3: structural equation modeling to analyze the mediating role of learning strategies in mediation of correlation between emotional intelligence and academic performance (ordinary schools)

Hence, it could be found that the direct path coefficient between emotional intelligence and academic performance for students in smart schools is higher than ordinary schools.

Hypothesis 3: indirect effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance is different between smart and ordinary school students.

To test the hypothesis, at the first, the indirect path coefficients of the effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance; meaning regression coefficient of emotional intelligence on learning strategies and the regression coefficient of learning strategies on academic performance, are considered as an equal value for two structural models. Then, using Chen's method, the difference between RMSEA and CFA values is

estimated for two models. As the difference of the 2 indices was higher than the standard value of invariability of two groups, it could be found that the two models are different in terms of indirect coefficients. According to the reported values in figures 2 and 3, it could be found that standardized indirect coefficients for the students in smart schools are higher than coefficients in ordinary schools. Therefore, it could be found that the indirect coefficient of emotional intelligence on the academic performance of students in smart schools is higher than ordinary schools.

5. DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: emotional intelligence has direct effect on academic performance.

As it is obvious from data analysis, emotional intelligence has direct effect on academic performance. In other words, it was found that the direct effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance is equal to 0.505 and the regression value is significant statistically. The result is inconsistency with findings of Gross and is in consistency with findings of Jafari & Vahedzadeh (2014), Hatami et al. (2012), and Bakhshisureshjani (2008). It seems that academic performance can be facilitated by the ability to set personal goals and optimism attitude and motivation and realizing them (Baron, 2005). Bar-On assumes that assessment of emotional quotient level among students can be significantly used in their academic prediction. He infers that such information can identify the students needing guided intervention and help them to enhance their emotional-social intelligence competency and to

empower their skills to have better academic performance. Moreover, children with high emotional intelligence have high abilities to use problem-solving skills and this can lead to the improvement of their cognitive ability. On the other hand, students with interpersonal and intrapersonal skills can cope with stress better than others.

Accordingly, emotional intelligence can be more significant than cognitive intelligence and many students exposed to academic failure because of lack of emotional-social skills need to learn emotional intelligence skills. Emotional intelligence training can reduce negative emotions, aggressive behavior and drug abuse as a factor affecting academic achievement. The idea is in line with the Aristotle ideology that emotions play key role in experiencing emotions. The emotions are combined with wisdom and can be interfered for regular and systematic education.

Hypothesis 2: the direct effect emotional intelligence and academic performance is different between students of smart and ordinary schools

It has been revealed that (figures 2 and 3) the two groups are different in terms of direct path coefficient. Structural equation model analysis for both groups independently showed that direct path coefficient between emotional intelligence and academic performance of students in smart schools is higher than ordinary schools. According to this finding, it seems that in comparison to ordinary schools, emotional intelligence in smart schools play a key role in academic achievement of students and this result is in consistence with findings of Mirzajani and Delaviz (2013).

One of the strategies to growth emotional intelligence is to find a new attitude to school functions. To this end, the school should be considered as a place targeted to train all students. In other words, it is necessary to give thinking and emotions alongside in the classroom. Smart school is one of the environments with required potentials to realize such goals. For example, smart school can grow self-awareness in students as one of the main components of emotional intelligence. If self-awareness is defined as ability of self-thinking and ability of self-identification as a person independent from the environment and other people; education through computers and digital instruments can have a deep effect on self-awareness of students. On the other hand, flexibility of media and digital instruments can be undoubtedly a platform for creativity as one of the most factors of self-awareness.

Hypothesis 3: indirect effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance is different between smart and ordinary school students.

According to the values reported in figure 2 and 3, it was found that direct standardized coefficients for students in smart schools are higher than ordinary schools. Hence, it could be found that the indirect coefficient of the effect of emotional intelligence on the academic performance of students in smart schools is higher than ordinary schools. Accordingly, the effect of emotional intelligence of students in smart schools on learning strategies and the effect of learning strategies of the said students on their academic performance can be higher than ordinary school students and several notes can be given in order to explain this finding. As it was mentioned before, studies show that emotional intelligence of students in smart schools is in higher level compared to

emotional intelligence of students in ordinary schools (Mirzajani and Delaviz, 2013). On the other hand, such environments encourage students to form and determine the strategies and solutions (Wegerif & Dawes, 2008). Computer and information technology can provide opportunities for availability of wide range data using multiple resources and review of the information using various methods (text, animation and voice) for the students. More and deeper use of learning strategies by students in smart schools can ultimately lead to the enhancement of their performance in learning.

6. CONCLUSION

In the current world, academic performance has been considered as an underlying issue. The developed and developing societies have abundantly emphasized performance, competition and progress. Educational performance refers to all involvements of students at the school encompassing self-efficacy, emotional effects, planning, lack of control of the outcome and incentives. In fact, academic performance of students is one of the most important and explicit criteria for assessment of efficiency and effectiveness of education systems and all efforts of this system are focused on realizing this issue. Moreover, high portion of capabilities of families are allocated to providing educational facilities for family members; especially children.

Role of smart schools in underlying variables such as emotional intelligence, achievement incentives and academic performance can clear

and highlight the importance of smart schools more than before. Utilization of smart and up to date technology can cause improvement of learning-teaching of teachers and students on one hand and can improve performance of teachers and students with optimal use of world web to enhance their academic level and cause development of country on the other hand. However, lack of availability of required infrastructures such as a local network and connection to the internet, inconsistency of structure and formations, unfamiliarity of teachers with modern teaching methods, insufficient skilled and educated human resource, lack of financial resources and physical resources to equip smart schools with computer systems and required equipment of these schools can be the main problems reducing advantages and positive effects of smart schools in Iran.

Investment and qualitative and quantitative development of smart schools in Iran can lead to positive and long-term outcomes and the most important outcomes can be promotion of empirical and practical learning-teaching; research-orientation and student-orientation in educational processes; creating dynamic and attractive environment for perfect expression of talents and expression of individual and group creativities of students; providing ideal environment for continuous assessments and due to talents and achievement of students; growth and development of mental, physical, emotional, perceptual, social and technical skills of students; incased presence, support, cooperation and interaction of students, parents and teachers and other beneficiaries in learning-teaching process; development of field knowledge; information storage and cultural capital of human resource of school in different dimensions of belief, cultural, academic, educational and research dimensions and planning

based on achievement of the goal of producing knowledge in Iran and developing perceptual, verbal, social, professional and educational skills of students. As it was observed, the population in this study consists of high school students and the necessity of generalizing outputs of this study for primary school students can be specified on these bases. According to research limitations, it would be better to conduct this study on other samples and population with different demographic information (students in pre-school level, primary schools, smart schools and ordinary schools of cities and high schools for boys in Tehran and other Cities).

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