



The relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction and determining their communication skill test effectiveness

Shohreh Ghorbanshiroudi¹, Javad Khalatbari², Mohammad Salehi³, Sona Bahari¹
and Mohammad Mojtaba Keikhayfarzaneh⁴

¹Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

²Department of Psychology, Ramsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ramsar, Iran

³Department of Educational Management, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran

⁴Young Researchers Club, Zahedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Zahedan, Iran
s.shiroudi@toniau.ac.ir

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction and determining their communication skill test effectiveness. The study group includes all the students of Islamic Azad University, Sarab branch, in the school year 2008-2009. The statistical sample consists of 40 students who had a low score in life satisfaction and emotional intelligence and are randomly involved in a two groups including 20 people of test and control. Communication skills training program has been conducted for the test group in 1-5 hours 8 sessions and post-test is done on both groups after training. The Bar-On emotional intelligence and life satisfaction questionnaire were used. To check the assumptions, Pearson correlation test, T student, and Covariance analysis are used and the data are evaluated through SPSS 16 software. The results have shown that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Communication skill training significantly enhanced the emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Thus, this study confirms the effectiveness of communication skills in increasing emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Hence, we recommended for this pattern be used as educational patterns for enhancing the skills among people and different groups.

Keywords: Communication skills, Emotional intelligence, Life satisfaction

Introduction

In recent years, the nature of emotion and its relationship with cognition has lead to new perspectives by introducing the new concepts of emotional intelligence (Mayer, 2001). The concept of emotional intelligence was firstly proposed by Mayer in 1990s and presented by Salovey and then was highly applied by Goleman in 1995 (Bar - on, 1997).

Today, different models are presented for defining and explicating the notion of emotional intelligence (Bar - on, 2000). According to Karberdif's view, the theorists believe that there is a significant relationship between efficient abilities of emotional intelligence, understanding the emotions, adapting the emotional feelings and applying the emotional understanding with psychological adaptation, success and its prediction and the overall life satisfaction (Pellitterri, 2002).

The research performed before on the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction are not very consistent and a range of weak to moderate correlation between these two structures have been reported (Extremera & Fernandez, 2005; Ganon & Ranzijn, 2005). Therefore, this relation has been always questioned and explored (Palmer *et al.*, 2002). Concerning the conflicts, it is generally suggested to the two factors of the conflicts resulted from the type of implemented tools and the interaction or intermediation of other variables as personality or demographic features

concerning the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.

According to earlier reports, emotional intelligence components are considered as a main prediction for psychological well-being indicators (such as life satisfaction) and interpersonal functioning (Extremera & Fernandez, 2005).

Mahanian *et al.* (2006) concluded, in considering the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction in female teachers, that there is a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. Amongst the emotional intelligence items, social skills, self-awareness, self controlling and empathy have a positive significant relationship with marital satisfaction, respectively. There is a correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational success and also between marital satisfaction and occupational success. About 13 % of marital changes are indicated through emotional intelligence (Mahanian *et al.*, 2006).

Kardamas (2006) studied optimistic items in emotional intelligence and a self-efficient relationship and comprehended social support with different aspects of psychological well-being, as life satisfaction is reduced and causes extended using of problem coping strategies and adapting emotions.

The significant matter is that not only emotions cause internal phenomena, but also inter-personal and relational. For example, the emotions like anger, sin, jealousy and love are manifested in social life, and

emotional intelligence theorists must take into account more data and theoretical insights in adaptive functions, especially in dealing with behavioral interactions of marital issues, because the problems are exacerbated in emotional relation establishment and also meeting personal needs and an appropriate response to other's needs and demands, perceiving marriage and family life devotionally (Fitness, 2001).

Of the emotional capabilities is emotional intelligence which consists of perception capacity, expression, recognition, application and managing the emotions in oneself and in others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence is related to interpersonal communications quality (Palmer *et al.*, 2002).

Communicational skills encompasses the process individuals can share their information, thoughts and feelings through exchanging verbal and non-verbal messages with each other (Harigie & Dickson, 2004). These skills consist of subsidiary skills or micro skills related to "perceiving the verbal and non-verbal messages", "making order the emotions", "listening", "having insight towards communication process", and "solidarity in communication", which are the basic principles of communication skills (Hasan Chary & Fadakar, 2005). These skills are so important that their insufficiency causes feelings like loneliness, social anxiety, depression, low value, and the lack of occupational and educational success (Spitzber & Cupach, 1989; Inderbitzen- Pizaruk & Foster, 1990; Riggio *et al.*, 1990; Inderbitzen-Pizaruk *et al.*, 1992; Bijstra *et al.*, 1994; Segrin, 1998; Williams & Zaidi, 2001; Spoitzberg, 2003).

In the above-mentioned emotional intelligence, individuals communicate more positively with others and have less negative interactions with others (Lopes *et al.*, 2003). The social behaviors and also positive communications with family members are increased within it (Mayer *et al.*, 1999). Golman (1995) believes that a general approach for making a marriage more constructive is to raise the emotional intelligence between the couple, because peoples with high emotional intelligence are more successful in dealing with stressful conditions.

Other results of the researches indicate that not only the two variables named emotional intelligence and problem style have positive and significant relations, but explicate the changes in mutual effective communication pattern. It seems that emotional intelligence help individuals make order their thoughts in a more coherent way in dealing with the matters and challenges concerned with social milieu. This has a positive effect on interpersonal communications. One of the items of emotional intelligence is emotional cognition (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

According to some studies performed, emotional intelligence components are significant predictors for

psychological well-being indexes and interpersonal performances (Extremera & Fernandez, 2005).

According to the above-mentioned contents and the significance of the research and experiment in emotional intelligence and its relationship with life satisfaction and also communication skills effectiveness upon these two variables, the following assumptions are presented and considered in the current research:

1. Emotional intelligence and family satisfaction have mutual relationship with each other.

2. Training the communicational skills is effective on increasing the family satisfaction among Islamic Azad University, Sarab Branch.

3. Training the communication skills is effective on increasing the emotional intelligence among Islamic Azad University of Sarab Branch.

Method

The current research is a kind of correlation, experimental and pre test-post test research design or control group type that includes two groups and both these groups have been evaluated twice. The first measure was done by performing a pre test and the second measure was also performed after the independent variable being applied for the test group with a post test on both the control and experiment group. For forming the control and experiment group by random sampling, half of the individuals being tested was replaced in group one and half of them in group two. By random sampling, the two groups were similar and measuring the dependent variables was performed in one time and in one condition. Pearson correlation test, T student and covariance analysis is used and the data are analyzed through SPSS software.

Population, sample and sampling method

The statistical population in this research consists of all the students of Islamic Azad University of Sarab branch who were educating in the year 2008-2009. For determining the statistical sampling, 320 students were chosen from both genders and by considering the Morgan and colleague's volume determination table by random sampling. The Bar-N's emotional intelligence and Diener's life satisfaction questionnaire were completed for indicating the emotional intelligence and life satisfaction through them.

In the next stage, from the main sample of 320 students, 40 students were chosen who scored a lower mark in terms of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction by simple random sampling and treated as two groups of 20 each. One of the groups received 90 minutes 8 sessions of training for communication skills and the other as control group which did not receive it. A post test was applied on both the control and experiment groups after the test.

The research tools

Life satisfaction questionnaire

These five questions scale were designed by Diener and colleagues (1985) for assessing overall life satisfaction. They reported a desirable convergent validity with the differential and reliability method (Cronbach's alpha= 89/0) for this scale (Diener *et al.*,1985). The Likert's 5 points range is intended for each question. In the present study, reliability coefficient of this test is obtained as 78/0 by Cronbach's alpha.

Bar-On's emotional intelligence questionnaire

This test has 117 questions and 15 scales which is executed by Bar-On on 3831 people and was standardized systematically in North America. The results taken from this standardization showed good reliability and validity. For our study, the questionnaire was narrow-downed to 90 questions after some reorganization as it is required that some measures to be taken concerning the quality of psychometric value of the new form (Bar-On, 2000). The narrative validity of this questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha as 0.93 which indicates the reliability of the changed questionnaire.

Experimental interference

In the current research, a training program which was presented in the form of eight 90-minute session for the experiment group is defined as independent variables or experimental factor according to the subject's conditions and with regard to gender and position considerations. Meetings are subjected to the following headings:

Session one: getting acquainted with the notion of efficient communication and its effects on life.

Session two: recognizing the difference between hearing and listening.

Session three: getting acquainted with reflective listening and its benefits.

Session Four: getting acquainted with body language and the ability in interpreting it.

Session Five: getting acquainted with assertive ways
Session six: getting acquainted with types of conflicts and how to deal with them.

Session Seven: getting acquainted with ways of problem solving.

Session Eight: helping the members in applying the skills.

Table 1. Pearson correlation test between variables of x & y

Row	Test Statistics	Amount
1	Correlation coefficient	0.225
2	Significant level	0.225

P<0.01

Findings

Research hypothesis

Hypothesis one: there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. The correlation test is used for considering this hypothesis and the results achieved are shown in Table 1. Because of the fact that the significant level is less than 01/0, so there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction in the 99 percent level.

Table 2. Average and standard deviations of life satisfaction scores of the two subject groups in the two stages during the test application

Group	statistic	Mean		Standard deviation	
		experiment	control	experiment	control
Post test	Position /variable				
pre test	Life satisfaction	10.90	10.40	2.68	1.506

Hypothesis 2: communication skills training are effective in increasing life satisfaction.

To test this hypothesis, analysis of ANCOVA single variable covariance was used. The descriptive findings of this hypothesis are presented in Table 2. There are considerable changes in all the variables in post test stage, but these changes are not seen in control group. To analyze the research hypothesis, their pre test - post test average was first calculated and the statistical analysis of variance was then used as a variable.

The experiment received 16608 scores in post test; after reducing the scores, hike in average seen in post test stage indicates the positive changes and a growing trend. To check the point that this increase is the result of independent variable effect (training communicational skills), the ANCOVA analysis was used by which the results obtained are given in Table 3.

Table 3. ANCOVA result analyses in pre test - post test on life satisfaction variable

Group	SS	MS	F	DF	Sig	Test Ability
Pre Test	196.619	196.619	149.504	1	0.000	1
Post Test	50.143	50.143	38.127	19	0.000	1

As revealed by Table 3, sig<0.0005 and F=149.504, the communication skills training has a negative effect on life satisfaction which shows that the second hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis 3: communication skills training are effective in increasing the emotional intelligence.

To test this hypothesis, the ANCOVA single variable covariance analysis was used. The descriptive findings of this hypothesis are presented in Table 4. A considerable change is observed in post test of all the variables, but such changes are not observed in control group. For analyzing the research hypothesis, the pre test- post test average was first calculated and the statistical analysis of variance was used as a variable.



Table 4. Mean and SD scores of emotional intelligence in the two groups of the stages during the test

Group	Statistic / Variable	Mean		Standard Deviation	
		Experiment	Control	Experiment	Control
Pre test	Emotional Intelligence	191.60	171.10	30.108	28.88
Post test	Emotional Intelligence	240.537	180.263	10.455	10.455

As shown in Table 4, after reducing the experiment group scores, the score of 240 was increased to 537 in post test marking the positive changes and growing trends. To check the point that this increase is due to the result of independent variable (communicational skills training), the ANCOVA analysis is used and the results obtained are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of ANCOVA analysis in pre test-post test for emotional intelligence variable

Group	SS	MS	F	DF	Sig	Test Ability
Pre Test	16016.381	16016.381	15.634	1	0.001	0.961
Post Test	6242.993	6242.993	6.272	1	0.023	0.656

The $\text{sig} < 0.005$ and $F = 15.634$ reveals that communication skills training has a significant effect on emotional intelligence, confirming the third hypothesis.

Conclusion

This experiment has three hypotheses which are discussed respectively:

Hypothesis one: there is a mutual relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. The cause of this relation is that emotional intelligence components can be effective in life satisfaction, because having the intimate and extended relationship with others require communicational skills, such as considering the matters from other's point of view, having ability in mutual understanding of what others have experienced and also being sensitive and aware of other's needs. Therefore, because of the fact that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, this issue has a significant role in individual's personal and social efficiency, and a safe and efficient human is the most fundamental element in the development, progress and social health. Emotional intelligence increases the emotional well-being and life satisfaction through psychological health enhancement, having ability to empathy with others and social adaption, and causes the improving of social relations and easy emotional understandings and recognizing the emotions and managing them, and the emotional intelligence is a better indicator for life satisfaction. In addition, among the emotional intelligence components, emotional self-awareness, social skills, self-avoidance and empathy have significant effect on life satisfaction, respectively.

Hypothesis 2: communication skills training are effective in increasing the life satisfaction. People with high communication skills create suitable and extended

social relations with others, which this extended network immune them from many disease as OCD, such as depression and isolation, which this in turn increase individual's life satisfaction and on the other hand, individual's life satisfaction extended their satisfaction in various economical, social, political and cultural fields, and makes social cooperative mood, cooperation, and social trust among people.

Hypothesis 3: communication skills training are effective in increasing the emotional intelligence. The communicational skills training is generally lead to increasing psychological capacities, the power of adaptability and dealing with challenges and life's problems. Not only has constructive ways of problem solving and also the appropriate ways of dealing with conflicts and assertive training an effect on people's psychological health, but it is effective on many personality characteristics as one's respect, self-regulation of behavior, self-esteem, self-development and self-actualization. On the other hand, individuals with high communication skills who have high listening skills, have more insights in dealing with communications with others and show more solidarity in their behaviors. Their skills in making the emotions in order are better than others. Communication skills training is thus associated with the individual's ability to codifications, understanding and managing the emotions with social and emotional adoptions.

The research limitations

The research finding is reported by its own scales and can be influenced by internal and external factors. One of the reasons of this problem was inattentiveness and low motivation for accurate responses to the questions despite having tried to communicate with students with high question numbers (90 Bar-On emotional intelligence questions).

Regarding the limitations in research application time, training and learning of communication skills in increasing the emotional intelligence and life satisfaction requires repetition, and this training is not seems sufficient during two months.

Resource shortage and suitable literature review regarding communicational skills training can also attribute to the limitation.

Research suggestions

- It is suggested that the effectiveness of such an experiment be considered in future research on individuals with having problems and psychological disorders.
- The amount of effectiveness of other types of communication skills is considered in individual's psychological health in future research.
- Conducting vertical experiments for accurate analyzing of the communication skills training in emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.

- Conducting the comparative analysis about these variables in different age groups and various micro-cultures in Iran and comparing their results.

Concerning the significance of communication skills in life satisfaction and individual's emotional intelligence in society, it is suggested that these skills be implemented in offices, organizations and universities for preventing the psychological disorders as anxiety, depression, isolation and withdrawal.

References

1. Bar - on R. Bar-on (1997). Emotional quotient inventory. Toronto: Multi- Health system Inc.
2. Bar - on R. Bar- on (2000). Emotional and social intelligence. In: Bar - on R, par ker JDA (Eds.). Handbook of emotional intelligence. Jossey - Bass, Sanfrancisco. pp:363-388.
3. Bar-On, R (2000) Emotional and social intelligence: insights from the emotional quotient inventory.
4. Bijstra JO, Bosma HA and Jackson S (1994) The relationship between social skills and psychosocial functioning in early adolescence. *Personality & Individual Differences*. 16(5):767-776.
5. Diener E, Emmans RA, Larsen RJ and Griffen S. (1985) The satisfaction with life satisfaction scale. *J. Personality Assessment*. 49. 71-75.
6. Extremera N and Fernandez P (2005) Perceived emotional Intelligence and life satisfaction: Predictive and incremental validity using the trail meta- mood scale. *Personality & individual Differences*. 39. 937-948.
7. Fitness J (2001) Emotional intelligence and intimate relationships. In: Emotional intelligence in everyday life. Ciarrochi J. Forgas JP & Mayer JD (Eds). Taylor & Francis, Philadelphia. pp:112.
8. Ganon N and Ranzijn R (2005) Does emotional intelligence predict unique variance in life satisfaction beyond IQ and personality? *Personality & Individual Differences*. 38. 1353-1364.
9. Goleman D (1995) Emotional intelligence. Bantam Book, NY.
10. Gottman JM (1979) Martial interaction: experimental investigations. Academic Press, NY.
11. Harigie OH and Dickson D (2004) Skilled interpersonal communication: Research, theory and practice. Routledge, NY.
12. Hasan Chary M and Fadakar MM (2005) The study of the effects of university on communicational skills based on the comparing the university students and high school ones. *J. Daneshvar, New Period*. 15, 31-33.
13. Inderbitzen-Pisaruk H and Foster SL (1990) Adolescent friendship peer acceptance: implications for social skills training. *Clin. Psychol. Rev.* 10, 425-439.
14. Inderbitzen-Pisaruk H, Clark ML and Soalno CH (1992) Correlates of Loneliness in midadolescence. *J. Youth & Adolescence*. 21, 151-167.
15. Karademas EC (2006) Self-efficacy, social support and well-being. The mediating role of optimism. *Personality & Individual Difference*. 40. 1281-1290.
16. Lopes PN, Salovey P and Straus R (2003) Emotional intelligence, personality and the perceived quality of social relationships. *Personality & Individual Differences*. 35, 641-658.
17. Mahanian, Khamaneh, Mehri, Yarjali, Ahamd and Salimizade, Muhammad Kazem.(2006). " The studying of the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction", the journal of psychology, 10 (3) 308-320.
18. Mayer JD and Salovey P (1997) What is emotional intelligence? In: Emotional development and emotional intelligence. Salovey P & Mayer JD (ed.), Basic Books, NY. pp:331.
19. Mayer JD, Caruso DR and Salovey P (1999) Emotional intelligence meets irrational standard for an intelligence. *Intelligence*. 27, 267-289.
20. Mayer JD (2001) A field guide to emotional intelligence. In: Emotional intelligence in everyday life. Ciarrochi J. Forgas JP & Mayer JD (Eds). Taylor & Francis, Philadelphia. pp:3-24.
21. Pellitteri J (2002) The relationship between emotional intelligence and ego defense mechanisms. *J. Psychol.* 136 (2), 182-194.
22. Palmer B, Donaldson C and Stough C (2002) Emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. *Personality & Individual Difference*. 33. 1091-1100.
23. Riggio RE, Throckmorton B and Depaola S (1990) Social skills and self-esteem. *Personality & Individual Differences*. 11, 799-804.
24. Segrin C (1998) Interpersonal communication problems associated with depression and loneliness. In: Handbook of communication and emotion: research, theory, applications, and contexts. Andersen PA & Guerrero LK (Ed.). Academic Press, San Diego. CA. pp:215- 242.
25. Spoitzberg BH (2003) Methods of interpersonal skill assessment. In: Handbook of communication and social Interaction skills. Greene JO & Burleson BR (Eds.), Erlbaum, Mahwah. NJ. pp:93-134.
26. Spitzber BH and Cupach WR (1989) Handbook of interpersonal competence research. Springer-Verlag, NY.
27. Williams K and Zadiro L (2001) Ostracism: On being ignored, excluded and rejected. In: Interpersonal rejection. Leary M (Ed.). Oxford University Press, Oxford.