



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, STRESS AND
ANXIETY IN STUDENTS OF TEHRAN CITY'S UNIVERSITIES**

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ABSTRACT

Development of the emotional intelligence's components in psychological literature has opened a new array of research in this filed. The goal of the present study was to assess the relationship among the emotional intelligence, anxiety and stress.

To do so, 192 students of Beheshti, Alzahra and Payamnoor universities were selected using simple random sampling method and were assessed by the Bar on emotional quotient Inventory and DASS-21.

The results showed that there is negative significant relationship between inter personal and observed mood components with anxiety and stress. In addition, there is negative correlation among intra personal, adaptability, emotional intelligent management with anxiety and stress. Also this study indicated that the stress management is able to predict amount of anxiety.

In sum, the results indicated that the emotion intelligence is related to mental health, anxiety and stress measures.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, Anxiety, Stress

INTRODUCTION

In recent studies, emotional intelligence is considered as an important indicator to predict the potential success in life. Emotional intelligence is another type of being smart

includes understanding one's emotions during decision making in life. Emotional intelligence is the ability to control the state of anxiety and control reactions. Although the

term emotional intelligence suggested by **Goleman (1995)**, but before that **Salovey and Mayer (1990)** reviewing literature of existing research in the field of intelligence, emotion, aesthetics, artificial intelligence, brain structure and clinical psychology have been defined this component as the ability to review self and others feelings and emotions, the distinction between them and use this information to guide self-thinking and actions.

The other definition of emotional intelligence includes the ability to apply rigorous reasoning about emotions and the ability to use experience and emotional knowledge to enhance thinking, (**Mayer and Roberts and Barsade 2008**), Also, **Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000)** believe that the component of emotional intelligence has main criteria of traditional intelligence. In recent decades there have been various conceptualizations of emotional intelligence. (**Fiori & Antonakis, 2011; Meyer et al., 2000; Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts, 2002; Neubauer and Freudenthaler, 2005**). In general, in research on emotional intelligence there are two theoretical approaches in the range of ability and personality (**Fiori, 2009; Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough, 2009; Fiori and Antonakis, 2011**).

Even with a different conceptualization of emotional intelligence, it seems that personality traits or individuals capabilities are compatible with complementary domains of emotional assess (**Schutte, Malouff and Bhullar, 2009**). Along the way, **Petrides and Furnham (2001)** refers to important distinction between capability patterns and characteristics. They believe that emotional intelligence based on ability refers to the actual ability of the individual which is assessed through functional tests, however, attribute-based emotional intelligence refers to behavioral tendencies that is to be measured by self-report. These personality traits have a positive relationship with extraversion and openness. While the relationship is negative with neuroticism dimension (**Mayer et al., 2008**).

In sum, despite disagreements about emotional intelligence it seems that the component involved in many of individual's actions of those and are intertwined with different psychological components. This study focuses on the second model of emotional intelligence (personality trait), which called mixed pattern. In this branch, emotional intelligence has been conceptualized in terms of personality. In this pattern, emotional intelligence, is characterized as an attribute or emotional self-

efficacy. The main representative of this affair is the Bar on approach.

Based on the theoretical model of Bar-on (2000 and 1997) emotional intelligence is defined as a mixture of emotional and social competence. These adequacies show a way in which person describes himself or others and adapt social pressures and demands. Bar -On (2006) in review of his patterns, determined five realms or dimensions of emotional intelligence:

1. The interpersonal realm
2. The intrapersonal realm
3. The adaptability realm
4. The stress management realm
5. The general mood realm

In a broader perspective, it is possible to say that emotional intelligence, regardless of the personality trait, is central in an extentrage of normal and pathological behavior. In recognition of this fact, our results suggest that emotional intelligence is related to several psychological components and actions. These components include better social relationships in adulthood (**Bracket et al., 2006**), leadership ability (**Antonakis et al., 2009**), mental health (**Ciarrochi, Deane and Anderson, 2002**), the process of coping with stress (**Mikolajczak, lumintt and Menil, 2006; Mikolajczak, petrides, luminet and Coumans, 2009**), psychological well-being

(**Bracket et al., 2006**), positive affect and life satisfaction (**Schuttemalouff and Bhullar, 2009**; **Austin Saklofskeand Egan, 2005; Martins, Ramalhoand Marin, 2010**), the amount and quality of social networks (**Austin et al. 2005**), healthy physical and psychological interaction (**Tsaousis and Nikolaeu, 2005**), destructive behaviors in adolescence (**Mikolajczak, petridesand Hurry and Johnson, 2009**).

Based on the above findings, we can conclude that emotional intelligence is the core of understanding of various functions of behavior. Stress is one of the most important areas of behavioral actions that has a reciprocal relationship with emotional intelligence. Stress is a physiological response which disrupts personal balance in several ways. Hans Selye who is known as the father of stress research, defines stress as the nonspecific response of the organism against and to compatibility request and this type of compatibility request are known as stressors (**Sayeh, 1976**).

Lazarus and Folkman, (1984), stated the most reasonable approach to stress, which is a national approach and considered as a psychological theory on stress. They define stress as the relationship between the person and the environment that is assessed with person as a pressure and beyond his

ability and endangers his health. American behaviorists have shown that stress perception by man is dependent on the categories of variables:

1. Personal factors include the biological and psychological cognitions, verbal intelligence, personality and psychological investments and self-responsible for its own destiny.
2. External factors include age, education, income, employment, career and more.

According to the researchers, who more than anyone has good qualities, expertise and ability, are better able to cope with stressful situations (**Alipur, 2010**).

Lazarus (2000) proposed two types of assessment about stress:

1. Initial assessment indicates the amount of threat of the event.
2. The secondary assessment which happens after diagnosis stressful situations and man chooses what to do against this position and the result of this process is coping responses (**Alipur, 1389**).

Anxiety as a part of any man's life can be assumed relatively moderating. There are different definitions of anxiety. **Pieron (1985)** defines anxiety as mental and physical discomfort which is created from a vague fear and impending feeling insecurity in the individual.

Weber (1985) knows anxiety as an emotional state with direct consciousness of the meaninglessness, defects and dislocations of the world we live in. In fact, except some of the behavioral theories, the meaning of anxiety is often interpreted different from what the person is associated with painful experiences. Anxiety involves a sense of insecurity or threat that its source isn't actually clear (**Dadsetan, 2010**). Freud's second theory, which was his final theory of this concept, called anxiety as distress alarm that operates on a subconscious level to avoid the risk, activates Ego reserves.

Both external sources and internal sources can cause the alarm which Ego is related to mobilize defense mechanisms against an instinctive stimulation or reduce its amount. Freud's second theory about anxiety, knows neurotic symptoms caused by Ego relative failure to cope with distressing stimuli (**Sadukand Saduk, 2008**). In a study by **Bagherzadeh (2005)** was conducted on the relationship between emotional intelligence by stress sources, the results showed that there is no significant relationship between high emotional intelligence and academic achievement, but a significant negative relationship was found between emotional intelligence and sources of stress.

In another study by **Dehshiri (2004)** which were performed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and time management with teachers' stress, the following results were obtained, time management and emotional intelligence significantly predicted teachers occupational stress. Also components of emotional intelligence specially self-controlling components, geometry and consciousness have significant role in predicting job stress and explain 78% of the variation of occupational stress.

In a study by **Miri and Akbari (2006)** was done to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and school anxiety, the results showed that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and school anxiety. Moreover, among all the components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-motivation, social awareness and communication skills) and school anxiety, a significant relationship was seen and all factors were significant in predicting the criterion variable.

Also in this **Jafari Nasab Abadi (2009)** it is demonstrated that emotional intelligence can be effective in management of occupational stress. The results **Soltanipoor (2010)** proved an inverse and significant correlation between the total score of emotional intelligence and

anxiety signs. Moreover, between emotional intelligence components (emotional clarity and mood modification) and anxiety symptoms there was a significant and inverse relationship and regression analysis showed that the components of emotional clarity and mood modification have enough capability to predict the anxiety symptoms.

Guhem and colleagues (2005) examined individual differences in stress and its relation to emotional intelligence.

Their results showed that in some samples, the potential emotional intelligence was useful in reducing stress.

Emotional intelligence was relatively associated with low stress. But this relationship in individuals with features like confusion and potential stress wasn't observed, because they don't trust their emotional intelligence abilities and appropriateness of their emotional reflections.

In total, according to the concept of emotional intelligence and the attitude based on Bar-on attribute and theories of stress and anxiety in mental health, the importance of these three components in various fields of psychology, health psychology, pathology, psychotherapy and change psychology, investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and anxiety can lead to coping strategies to reduce anxiety and stress and

increase individual efficiency. It may also open the door to new research in this field. Thus, the present study investigated components of emotional intelligence, anxiety and stress.

METHOD

This research is fundamental and the methods of data collection belonging to correlational plans. The population society is consisted of all students enrolled in the undergraduate academic year from 2011-12 in PNU south of Tehran Center. Sampling technique was used to select participants. In the sampling process 142 students who agreed to participate were selected and individually completed emotional intelligence and scale DASS questionnaires.

Research tool: in Bar-on Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire 65 subscales located at 5 below:

1. The interpersonal dimension including emotional self – awareness, assertiveness, self – regard and self - actualization and Independence.
2. The intrapersonal dimension including subscales of interpersonal empathy, interpersonal relationships, social responsibility.

3. The adaptability dimension including problem-solving skills, reality testing, and flexibility.

4. The stress management dimension including stress tolerance and impulse control.

5. The general mood dimension including and happiness and optimism (Bar -on, **Brown Kikcaldy and Thome, 2000**).

Samoe (2007) in Iranian Culture has normalized this questionnaire in a student sample community of Isfahan with 500 persons that after Factor Analysis and internal consistency checking of questions number, their number was reduced to 90 items. However, the factor structure was maintained. The reliability test also is reported by Cronbach's alpha for male students 0.74, and for 0.68 and 93/0 have been reported for the general population. Moreover, the validity coefficients with method of two halves for male students 0.66, for female students 0.57 and for all the people, 0.78 and on retest (within 3 weeks) 0.68, were obtained.

The DASS-21 questionnaire totally consists of three scales of self-report for assessing affective negative states of depression, anxiety and stress (**Lavibond and Leviton, 1995**). Reliability and validity of the questionnaire were examined by **Samani and Jokar (2007)** that reported the retest

reliability for depression, anxiety and stress, respectively are equal to 0.80,0.76,0.77 and Cronbach's alpha 0.81, 0.74 and 0.78, respectively.

To check validity of this scale analytic statistic confirmatory method and with method of the principal components method was used. Each subscale consists of 7 items that the final score for each question by the sum of the relevant scores is obtained. Each question is scored from zero to three. Since the original scale has 42 items, the total score for each subscale should be two -fold.

Findings

Table 1, Descriptive indicators show the dimensions of emotional intelligence, anxiety and stress.

To investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence components and anxiety and stress, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used that results are listed in **Table 2**.

As can be seen in **Table 2** among the areas of interpersonal, adaptability and the stress management on emotional intelligence and

stress and anxiety there is a significant and negative relationship and between intrapersonal and general mood no significant relationship was observed.

To investigate the role of emotional intelligence to predict and explain the components of stress and anxiety Step by step regression analysis was used that the results are shown in **Tables 3 and 4** and to respect the principle of parsimony, only significant results are listed in the table.

According to **Table 3**, the Step by step regression analysis, the predictor variable affecting the anxiety within component of emotional intelligence is stress management variable and other components of emotional intelligence don't have a significant role in predicting anxiety .

According to **Table 4** Step by step regression analysis the predictor variable affecting stress within component of emotional intelligence is stress management and adaptability variables and other variables don't have meaningful role to predict stress.

Table 1: Statistical characteristics of the subjects in terms of emotional intelligence, anxiety and stress scores (n = 142)

dimension	average	SD	Max	Min
Interpersonal	71/44	0511	107	49
Intrapersonal	7/33	7/39	86	47
adaptability	58/72	6/29	81	46
Stress Management	33/12	7/13	50	19
General mood	37/8	4/22	50	28
Anxiety	22/51	4/22	28	7
Stress	19/09	4/24	28	8

Table 2: Results of Pearson correlation coefficient between the components of emotional intelligence, stress and anxiety (n = 142)

Dimension	Anxiety		Stress	
	Pearson correlation	Significance level	Pearson correlation	Significance level
Interpersonal Realm	-0/49	-0/03	-0/55	0/001
Intrapersonal Realm	-0/127	0/13	-0/04	0/65
Adaptability realm	-0/19	0/02	-0/166	0/04
Management realm	-0/51	0/007	-0/61	0/004
General mood realm	-0/06	0/42	-0/02	0/72

P<0/005

Table 3: Step by step regression analysis of the components of emotional intelligence and anxiety

Step	variable	Sources of Change	Sum of squares	Df	Average of squares	F
First	Stress management	regression	669/139	1	669/139	50/848
		residual	1842/333	140	13/160	
		sum	2511/472	141		

P< 0/001

Table 4: Analysis of step by step regression of the components of emotional intelligence and stress

step	variable	Sources of Change	Sum of squares	Df	Average of squares	F
first	Stress management	regression	958/780	1	958/780	85/440
		Residual	1571/030	140	11/222	
		Sum	2529/810	141		
Second	adaptability	regression	1062/274	2	531/187	50/316
		Residual	1467/436	139	10/557	
		Sum	2529/810	141		

P<0/001

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The study aimed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, anxiety and stress were performed. Research findings indicate that there is a negative relationship between the majority of the components of emotional intelligence and anxiety and stress. In other words, low emotional intelligence is associated with increased anxiety and stress. The results obtained in this study is consistent with the results of some research. For example, in research of **Miri (2006)** the

meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence and school anxiety was observed and also similar results in study of **Sadeghi** were obtained (2010) a study of the relationship between anxiety and depression and emotional intelligence, so that between emotional intelligence and anxiety and students depression a significant relationship was observed. The Sultanate Shoo, and **HashemiandZarrini (2010)** there was a significant and inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and anxiety symptoms.

From stress-related research study of **Gohem et al (2005)** can be noted that in some cases the potential emotional intelligence is useful in reducing stress, while in samples with high stress there is no relation between emotional intelligence and stress. In **Dehshiri study (2004)** there was a relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress among secondary school teachers. Self-controlling and empathy and awareness components also had major role to predict teachers' job stress and self- controlling component have the greatest role in explaining job stress.

In study of **Shahghalaian, Jan Nesarand Abdullahi (2008)** findings indicated emotional Intelligence variable and problem-oriented style of coping with stress styles can explain changes in variable of patterns of mutual constructive communication and also **Moradi (2005)** found a negative significant relationship between emotional intelligence and sources of stress. According to results of this research and studies discussed above these results can be explained that in subscales of interpersonal realm, emotional intelligence which includes independence, self- awareness, assertiveness, self-esteem and self-actualization, the higher a person's ability the lower levels of anxiety and stress.

The subscale of emotional intelligence suggests people who are unaware of their excitement or feel that they do not understand its meaning, will be anxious; therefore finding sources of feeling or various emotions in every moment and be aware of the reason of emergence of people, will reduce the amount of anxiety. In other aspect, a person who is ignorant to his emotions and feelings, this lack of awareness can have a projection in environment and therefore will not get the desired response from the environment. Naturally, returning to these emotions will be as stress or factor and higher than the man's ability to accept them, resulting in higher levels of cortisol and stress rise.

In this study, a significant relation between interpersonal components of emotional intelligence and stress and anxiety wasn't displayed. Components of this field are empathy and social responsibility and interpersonal communication. In both empathy and social responsibility components, no relationship can be derived from personality traits. High level of schema function in other direction schema may cause that an individual to earn love, attention and approval of others suppresses his needs and desires. Naturally, it also increases one's inner anxiety and environmental stress for the person attempt to maintain relationships with

relatives and get approval from them will go up.

In matching emotional intelligence with anxiety and stress there was a significant negative correlation. After correspondence with problem solving, there are reality-sensing and flexibility. Problem solving is including identifying and defining problems, creating and implementing effective and potential solutions which is associated with anxiety. Undoubtedly, one with this ability will have a strong Ego and anxiety perceived in Ego is less. In other hand, the other person who has good problem solving ability, against each of the everyday issues instead of increasing cortisol levels by analyzing problem and gathering information and other problem solving process will be dealt with and will keep his stress level down.

In reality-sensing which is defined as coordination between experienced excitement and the reality of the situation, undoubtedly, man experience lower confusion to recognize emotions or irrelevant emotions with resource and have more control over the situation. People who also have high flexibility and capability can adapt their thoughts and behaviors with the world changing every moment, and thus experience less anxiety and stress.

Another finding of the present study is confirming the negative relationship between emotional intelligence management and anxiety and stress. Other components in this field are stress tolerance and impulse control. Undoubtedly a strong Ego will not collapse in the face of external stress, will managed internal pressures and experiences less anxiety arises from the lack of good management of Ego. Also refrain from doing impulsive acts (which is created without thinking) prevents feedback from the environment that certainly will not be an adaptive response, and prevent new source of stress for the individual.

In General mood realm with anxiety and stress, no relation was confirmed. Ability of optimism and a sense of satisfaction are in this area of emotional intelligence. The optimism ability will find meaning with look at life and reinforce positive attitudes in the time of a significant incident, this may suggest that upbeat person just using the mechanism of denial appearances, holds it good according to his meta –self, but in his unconscious faces with signs of anxiety caused by conflict of Ego and Id. The results of Meybodi and Rahmanian study (under printing) confirms the positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence., creation areas and is immature defense

mechanism. Since the mechanism of denial, layer-building and non- valuable building belong this group, so it can be defense mechanism of an upbeat person deal with adversity in life.

In sum, today rely on extensive advances in the theoretical literature and the history of psychological research, it can be noted that the components of cognition and emotion are not independent of each other, but also emotional and sentimental experiences are related with the storage and retrieval of peripheral information. In other words, the sentimental, affective and emotional positions of people greatly effect on different components of information processing and emotional/social reactions of them. Finally, considering the limitations of the study such as reviewing emotional intelligence only on the angle of personality, investigating anxiety and stress and not attribute, select a sample from the student population and the use of self-report instruments in measuring interpersonal problems and emotional intelligence, it is suggested that in future research the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and anxiety, considering both trait and ability, be examined as well as studying the relationship with a questionnaire that measures anxiety trait and an examination of empathy and

investigation of social responsibility at emotional intelligence with the schema other direction, be considered.

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