

**Research Article**

## **THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE INTELLIGENCE AND STRESS-COPING SKILLS IN STUDENTS AT ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY**

**\*Elham Saber**

*Department of Clinical Psychology, College of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Garmsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran*

*\*Author for Correspondence*

### **ABSTRACT**

This study seeks to investigate the correlation between the emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills in students at Islamic Azad University of Central Tehran Branch. The statistical population of this study consists of all 23000 students during the academic year of 2013-14 and 384 samples are selected by simple stratified random sampling using Morgan table. The research tool includes 2 standard questionnaires, CIBRIA Shearing and Calat, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is equal to 0.89 in the emotional intelligence and 0.92 in stress-coping skills. The main dimensions of emotional intelligence are classified into 5 components with regard to the theoretical principles: 1. self-awareness, 2. self-management, 3. social awareness, 4. social skills, 5. self-motivation. The main components of stress-coping skills are classified into two main categories: 1- Skills of problem-focused coping methods, 2- Skills for emotion-focused coping method. The descriptive and inferential statistical tests (correlation coefficient, ANOVA, Friedman test) are utilized for data analysis. The research findings indicate that: 1- There is no correlation between the self-awareness component of emotional intelligence and skills of coping with stress, 2- There is a significant correlation between the self-motivation component of emotional intelligence and skills of coping with stress, 3- There is a significant correlation between the empathy component of emotional intelligence and skills of coping with stress, 4- There is a significant correlation between the social skills of emotional intelligence and skills of coping with stress. 5- There is no significant correlation between the self-regulation component of emotional intelligence and skills of coping with stress. According to Friedman rank test, the components are as follows: 1- self-awareness, 2- self-regulation, 3- empathy, 4- social skills, and 5- self motivation.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Stress-coping Skills, Students*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The emotional intelligence as a significant phenomenon not only contains the theoretical psychological aspect, but also its promotion can provide the appropriate responses to most of the hidden problems of life. Nowadays, the numerous articles, books and educational workshops are developed for EQ and all of them seek to indicate the new ways to cope with personal and interpersonal problems in today's complex communities. Today, there is a high difference between learning and gaining the score with the necessity for modern life and the current interpersonal complex relations.

All of us know the people, who are apparently higher educated and gained high scores, but they are too weak in practice and in society scene and responsibility and have not very good life and even no successful life. The nature of emotional intelligence and its components can also be responsive to most of the questions in this field. The statistics indicate that 80% of human success depends on their emotional intelligence. Nowadays, the emotional intelligence is explained as a kind of intelligence including the accurate understanding of self-emotion as well as the exact interpretation of other individuals' emotional states. The emotional intelligence assesses the person in terms of emotion; in other words, to what extent a person is aware of his own emotion and feelings and how he controls and manages them. According to the remarkable point about the emotional intelligence, the emotional intelligence abilities are not innate, but they are learned.

The emotional intelligence consists of the ability to perceive, express, understand and control the self and others' emotions. In other words, the emotional intelligence refers to the appropriate processing of

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information with emotional load and it is necessary to utilize it for thinking and communication (Akbarzadeh, 2004).

The concept of emotional intelligence has made a new depth for human intelligence and enabled the person to assess the self general intelligence. The emotional intelligence is associated with self and others' understanding, communication with others, and adaption to the surrounding environment in fulfilling the social demands. In fact, it can be concluded that the emotional intelligence has the much more important role than the general intelligence in achieving the self success in various education and job areas (Saveli and Yar, 1999).

According to the research by Perkin, Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (2007), the young people who have a high emotional intelligence, have the better ability to handle and manage than young people with poor emotional intelligence.

In a study entitled as "The correlation between the individual psychological pressure and compatibility", Carlton (2005) has found that if a coping mechanism is strengthened in them, it will have the effects such as the progress in individual, occupation, and education situation.

In a research entitled as "Investigating the relationship between the emotional intelligence and psychological and physical health performance", Shays and Nicola (2005) have found that there is a correlation between the emotional intelligence and psychological and physical health. Furthermore, those with higher levels of emotional intelligence will have higher psychological health.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer this question whether there is a correlation between the emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills among the students at Islamic Azad University of Central Tehran Branch?

### **Research Questions**

- 1- Is there a correlation between the self awareness component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?
- 2- Is there a correlation between the self-motivation component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?
- 3- Is there a correlation between the empathy component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?
- 4- Is there a correlation between the social skill component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?
- 5- Is there a correlation between the self-regulation component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?
- 6- What are the priorities of each of the emotional intelligence components?

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

With respect to the research subject, "Investigating the correlation between the emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills in students at Islamic Azad University of Central Tehran Branch", this research has descriptive-correlative type, thus it seeks to explore, describe and explain the data and information.

### **Statistical Population**

The statistical population of this research consists of all 2300 students educating at Islamic Azad University of Central Tehran Branch during the academic year of 2013-14.

### **Statistical Sample and Sampling Method**

Due to the size of statistical population, a sample with the size of 384 subjects is selected according to Morgan Table by simple stratified random sampling.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

**First research question:** Is there a correlation between the self-awareness component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?

Pearson correlation coefficient test is utilized to investigate this correlation.

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**Table 1: Pearson correlation test for the correlation between the self-awareness and stress-coping skills**

		Stress-coping skills
Self-awareness	Correlation coefficient	0.035
	Significance level	0.250
	Total	384

According to the value of Pearson correlation coefficient, the lack of linear relationship between the self-awareness and stress-coping skills is not rejected and thus there is no linear relationship between them. The self-awareness variable determines only 0.1% of variance in stress-coping skills.

**Second research question:** Is there a correlation between self-motivation component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?

Pearson correlation coefficient test is utilized to investigate the correlation between self-motivation component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills.

**Table 2: Pearson correlation test for the correlation between the self-motivation and stress-coping skills**

		Stress-coping skills
Self-motivation	Correlation coefficient	0.163
	Significance level	0.001
	Total	384

According to the value of Pearson correlation coefficient, the lack of linear relationship between the self-motivation and stress-coping skills is rejected and thus there is a linear relationship between them. In other words, there is a significant correlation between the self-motivation and stress-coping skills, so that the increase in self-motivation will lead to the decrease in stress and vice versa.

**Third research question:** Is there a correlation between the empathy component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?

Pearson correlation coefficient test is utilized to investigate this correlation.

**Table 3: Pearson correlation test for the correlation between the empathy and stress-coping skills**

		Stress-coping skills
Empathy	Correlation coefficient	0.137
	Significance level	0.004
	Total	384

According to the obtained value of Pearson correlation coefficient equal to 0.137 with significance level of 0.004 and comparing it with significance level of 0.05, it is found that the lack of linear relationship between the empathy and stress-coping skills is rejected and thus there is a linear relationship between them. In other words, there is a significant correlation between the empathy and stress-coping skills.

**Fourth research question:** Is there a correlation between the social skills component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?

Pearson correlation coefficient test is utilized to investigate the correlation between the social skills component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills.

**Table 4: Pearson correlation test for the correlation between the social skills and stress-coping skills**

		Stress-coping skills
Social skills	Correlation coefficient	0.184
	Significance level	0.000
	Total	384

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According to the obtained value of Pearson correlation coefficient equal to 0.184 with significance level of 0.000 and comparing it with significance level of 0.05, it is found that the lack of linear relationship between the social skills and stress-coping skills is rejected and thus there is a linear relationship between them. In other words, there is a significant correlation between the social skills and stress-coping skills so that the increase in social skills will lead to the decrease in stress and vice versa.

**Fifth research question:** Is there a correlation between the self-regulation component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills?

Pearson correlation coefficient test is utilized to investigate the correlation between the self-regulation component of emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills.

**Table 5: Pearson correlation test for the correlation between the self-regulation and stress-coping skills**

		Stress-coping skills
Self-regulation	Correlation coefficient	0.019
	Significance level	0.352
	Total	384

According to the obtained value of Pearson correlation coefficient equal to 0.019 with significance level of 0.352 and comparing it with significance level of 0.05, it is found that the lack of linear relationship between the self-regulation and stress-coping skills is not rejected and thus there is no linear relationship between them. The self-regulation variable determines only 0.1% of variance in stress-coping skills.

**Sixth research question:** What are the priorities of each of the emotional intelligence components?  
 Friedman test is utilized to prioritize each component of emotional intelligence.

**Table 6: The mean ranks of emotional intelligence components**

Components	Mean ranks
Self-awareness	3.48
Self-motivation	2.54
Empathy	3.01
Social skills	2.94
Self-regulation	3.02

**Table 7: Friedman test**

Total No.	384
Chi square statistic	69.365
Degree of freedom	4
Significance level	0.000

According to the Table of Friedman test and chi-square statistic equal to 69.365 with degree of freedom equal to 4 and the significance level of 0.000 and comparison this significance level with  $\alpha=0.05$ , it is found that the null hypothesis indicating the equal priority to each component is rejected. Furthermore, according to the table of mean ranks, it is found that the first component (self-awareness) has received the first priority, the fifth component (self-regulation): the second priority, the third component (empathy): the third priority, the fourth component (social skills): the first priority, and the second component (self-motivation): the fifth priority.

### Discussion

The findings of this research indicate that 45.8% of surveyed subjects are women and the remaining are men. 24% are educated in basic sciences, 20.1% in technical and engineering field, and 55.9 in humanities. The subjects' mean score of emotional intelligence for five scores is equal to 1.57, the median score of emotional intelligence equal to 1.48 and the standard deviation equal to 0.43. The subjects'

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minimum score of emotional intelligence is equal to 0.78 and the maximum equal to 2.72. Furthermore, 25% of surveyed subjects have obtained the emotional intelligence score of 1.25 and below; 25% from 1.25 to 1.48; 25% from 1.48 to 1.83, and another 25% more than 1.83. The distribution of subjects' emotional intelligence scores is asymmetric and a little skewness to the right; in other words, it has a little deviation from normal distribution. The subjects' mean score of stress-coping skills for 5 scores is equal to 1.55, the median score of stress-coping skills equal to 1.47 and the standard deviation equal to 1.49. The minimum score for stress-coping skills is equal to 0.68 and the maximum is 2.82. Furthermore, 25% of surveyed subjects have obtained the scores of stress-coping skills equal to 1.18 and below; 25% from 1.18 to 1.47; 25% from 1.47 to 1.87, and another 25% more than 1.87 (from 1.87 to 2.82). Therefore, there is a relatively symmetrical distribution for the score of stress-coping skills and it has no deviation from the normal distribution. In general, since 3 out of 5 components of emotional intelligence have significant direct correlation with stress-coping skills, the statistical tests suggest that there is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence and stress-coping skills.

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