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The relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and tendency to addiction of male and female students



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ABSTRACT

Background: Individuals with high EI are less likely to require cognitive efforts for solving EI problems. Conversely, individuals who lack the ability of emotional regulation are more likely to be influenced by environmental factors.

Objective: This article aimed to study the relationship between the Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Tendency to Addiction and compare EI of male and female students. This is an applied, comparative, and correlational study.

Method: The statistical population consisted of all male and female students of 2nd grade of high school in the academic year of 2014-2015. A total of 380 students (180 male and 180 female) were enrolled as the sample using multi-stage random sampling. The data were collected

using two questionnaires: Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and Addiction Potential Scale (APS). Result: Descriptive statistics were employed. For the hypothesis testing, MANOVA and Pearson correlation were concurrently used. The results showed that a significant difference was found between male and female students in terms of EI and its components (appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion).

Discussion: Female students obtained higher EI scores. Thus, individuals who are not capable of controlling their EI skills are more likely to tend to addiction.

Conclusion: EI and its components have a significant relationship with a tendency to addiction.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Tendency to Addiction, Male and Female Students.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a stage of life characterized by physical, cognitive, social and emotional changes.¹ It is a sensitive period of life to create and expand coping behaviors and response to environmental needs. Many risk factors of health and risky behaviors begin in this stage of life progressively.² This age is the period of psychological adjustment transformation, which is an important factor for the adulthood performance. It is a risk period for the onset of anxiety and mood disorders and narcotics consumption.³

Substance abuse* and dependency is one of the reasons that cause the failure of the damages, especially in adolescence and adulthood.⁴ It is one of the most important challenges and problems of public and psychosocial health, imposing numerous individual, social, medical, and economic problems in the communities. This is a complex topic in Iran due to the young population.⁵ According to the statistics by Drug Control Headquarter of Iran, almost 45% of substance abusers are younger than 29.⁶ Substance abuse is a combination of different factors.

The risk factors increase the hazard; while protective factors reduce the substance abuse.⁷ What gains importance in this regard is not to find

the role of the risk factor in deviant behavior but to realize to what extent the internal resources of behavior control are capable of coping with external stimuli.²

EI is one of the important factors in this regard. EI is considered a promotion factor of public health and prevention of the psychological disorder. It is the capability to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.⁸ In fact, it shows a series of capabilities and tendencies to perceive, manage, and apply one's emotion.⁹ Individuals with high EI are less likely to require cognitive efforts for solving EI problems. They have effective interpersonal relationships, are less likely to have behavioral problems, and avoid self-destructive and negative behaviors such as smoking, excessive use of alcohol and drug, and violence against others.¹⁰ Conversely, low EI is associated with anti-social disorders.¹¹ Individuals who lack the ability of emotional regulation are more likely to be influenced by environmental factors. Environment harms these people.^{12,13} Low EI is a significant predictor of the problems associated with substance abuse, and alcohol.¹⁴ Low EI is also associated with substance abuse and alcohol consumption.¹⁵

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The study by Ciarrochi et al. on the role of EI in daily life showed that almost half of alcohol and substance abusers had low EI.¹⁶ EI can be learned and increased over time.¹⁷ Increasing social and emotional competence helps the prevention of risky behaviors such as substance abuse and violence.^{18,19}

Addiction is one of the most important challenges of today's communities. Considering the statistics, age of onset of addiction, sexual differences, and the vastness of problems among the youth, preventing addiction requires the identification of the contributing factors including psychological ones. In this regard, this article aimed to provide a solution. Therefore, the article is theoretically of great importance to increase the information in this regard.

Narimani et al. (2014) studied the effectiveness of EI training in preventing the tendency of students to substance abuse.¹² They concluded that training EI had a significant effectiveness. Promoting EI can be effective in preventing the tendency to substance abuse. Karami Rad et al. (2013) studied the effectiveness of EI training in addiction readiness of male students. They concluded that EI training reduced the addiction readiness of male students in experiment group compared to the control one.²⁰ As a result; training EI can be used as an effective intervention for preventing addiction of those who have the potential for.

Ghanbari Talab et al.¹³ found out that appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion had a negative, significant relationship with addiction potential. Emotional perception and regulation were found to be the predictor of addiction potential.¹³ The study by Habibi et al. (2012) showed that students who abuse substance had lower interpersonal and intrapersonal EI compared to those who do not abuse substance.²

The study by Manshaee and Mazaheri (2009) showed that addiction had a negative, significant relationship with a problem-solving component of EI.²¹ This finding indicated that individuals who are engaged in substance abuse had less capability of problem-solving skill. Khalili Azar compared the EI of gifted and normal students and its relationship with the academic progress.²² The results showed that EI was greater among female students than male ones.

Khosrojerdi and Khanzadeh (2007) studied the relationship between EI and public health of students of Tarbiat Moallem University of Sabzevar. They concluded that male students had greater EI than female students.²³ The study by Davis and Humphrey (2012) showed that EI acts as a source of protection against environmental stressors and prevents the tendency to addiction.²⁴

Nadalinezhad and Abbasalipour compared EI and tendency to the addiction of addicts and ordinary individuals. They concluded that a significant difference was found between the two groups in terms of EI components.²⁵

Homayouni (2011) compared EI of addicts and non-addicts. He concluded that a significant difference was found between two groups in terms of EI components.²⁶ Kun and Demetrovics (2010) found out that the youth and adolescents who obtained greater scores in Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale test had very low substance abuse, smoking, and alcohol consumption.²⁷

The study by Parker et al. (2008) on EI and the problems of adolescence showed that low EI and inability to effectively cope with emotions and manage them were found to be effective in the onset of substance abuse.²⁸ Johnson (2002) on EI and alcohol and tobacco consumption in adolescence showed that greater scores of EI had a significant relationship with lower smoking and alcohol consumption of a group of students.²⁹

The study by Ciarrochi et al. (2001) concluded that EI was greater among women than men.¹⁶ Women's Different experience and perception of the world is a scientifically proven psychological and social reality.³⁰ Various studies showed EI differences among males and females. Therefore, this article aims to compare EI and find the relationship with a tendency to addiction of male and female students.

METHODS

Research method, Statistical Population, and Sample Size

This is a causal-descriptive applied study. The correlational method was used for some findings. The statistical population consisted of 36895 male and female students of 2nd grade of high school in Kermanshah, Iran academic year of 2014-2015.

A total of 380 students (180 male and 180 female) were enrolled as the sample using multi-stage random sampling. The city was divided into three geographical sections (north, center, and south). In each geographical section, two male and two female schools, two classes of each were randomly selected. Volunteer students were assigned as the subjects of the study.

Data Collection Tool SCHUTTE SELF-REPORT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TEST (SSEIT)

SSEIT is a 33-item self-report using a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale for responses. It has three sub-scales: appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization

of emotion. The reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha by Ciarrochi et al. and Mohamamdi and Khosro Javid^{16,31} as shown in the following table:

The scales are 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Almost agree, and 5= Strongly Agree. Reverse scoring is used for items 5, 28, and 33 (5= Strongly Disagree and 1= Strongly Agree)

Addiction Potential Scale (APS)

It is 39-item scale developed by Wood et al.³² The content scale is quite inhomogeneous. It does not seem that most of the items are directly associated with substance abuse. Some of the items are related to extraversion, sensation-seeking, and risk-taking. Other items are related to uncertainties, self-alienation, and cynical attitudes toward others.³³ Minouee and Salehi investigated the reliability and validity.³³ The study was carried out among 1000 male high-school students of Tehran and 200 of volunteers to quit addiction who were similar in age with the students. T value shows the significant difference between the scores of an addict and non-addict subjects on the sub-scale of a tendency to addiction (Alpha=0.01).

Considering the fact that the mean scores of addict subjects were greater than non-addicts, it is claimed that the scale is reliable and valid. The reliability of the test was 0.338 using Cronbach's alpha for sub-scales (AAS, APS, and MAC.R). The reliability was 0.5332 using bisection. The subject is supposed to respond the questions by "Yes" or "No". Then, the answers are analyzed.³³

Data Analysis

This is a casual and correlational study. In addition to the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, etc.),

1. MANOVA was employed to compare the male and female students in terms of EI and its components (appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion).
2. Pearson correlation was used to study the relationship of EI and its components (appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion) with a tendency to addiction of male and female students.

Data were analyzed using SPSS20.

Table 1 Reliability of SSEIT

Reliability	Appraisal Expression of Emotion	Regulation of Emotion	utilization of emotion	Total
Ciarrochi	0.76	0.66	0.55	0.84
KhosroJavid	0.67	0.78	0.50	0.81
Mohammadi				0.84

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of EI and Its Components

Variable	Gender	Mean	St.D
EI	Male	79.12	10.45
	Female	85.96	8.11
Appraisal and Expression of Emotion	Male	29.71	3.59
	Female	31.45	2.54
Regulation of Emotion	Male	22.47	3.36
	Female	28.75	3.74
Utilization of Emotion	Male	25.26	2.72
	Female	28.45	2.98

Table 3 Homogeneity of Variance for EI and its Components

Variable	Levene Stat.	Freedom 1	Freedom Degree 2	P
EI	1.105	1	378	0.294
Appraisal Expression of Emotion	0.486	1	378	0.486
Regulation of Emotion	0.391	1	378	0.532
Utilization of Emotion	0.528	1	378	0.468

RESULTS

Descriptive Findings

Descriptive findings of the study as can be seen in [table 2](#), female students had better scores than male ones in terms of EI and its components.

Inferential Statistics

MANOVA was used to compare male and female students in terms of EI and its components. [Table 3](#) shows the result. In order use MANOVA, homogeneity of variance must be used for EI and its components.

According to [table 3](#), Levene stat. is minor for all variables. P is greater than 0.05 error level for all variables. Therefore, it is concluded that all variables have homogeneous variance. Therefore, MANOVA can be used.

As seen in [Table 4](#), a significant difference was found between male and female students in terms of EI and its sub-scales. It is therefore concluded that EI and its components were greater among female students than male ones.

Pearson correlation was employed to study the relationship of EI and its components (appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion) with a tendency to addiction of male and female students. As seen in [table 5](#), EI and its components had an inverse relationship with a tendency to addiction among male

Table 4 MANOVA for Significance test between male and female students in terms of EI and its Components

	Test	Value	F	Freedom Degree	Sig. Level	Effect Size
EI and its Components	Pillai Trace Test	0.136	7.7	4	0.01	0.136
	Wilks Lambda	0.864	7.7	4	0.01	0.136
	Hoteling Effect	0.158	7.7	4	0.01	0.136
	Roy's greatest root	0.158	7.7	4	0,01	0.136

Table 5 Pearson Correlation of EI and its Components with Tendency to Addiction

		Tendency to Addiction
EI	Pearson Correlation	-0.280
	Significance Level	0.000
	Number	380
Appraisal and Expression of Emotion	Pearson Correlation	-0.220
	Significance Level	0.000
	Number	380
Regulation of Emotion	Pearson Correlation	-0.245
	Significance Level	0.000
	Number	380
Utilization of Emotion	Pearson Correlation	-0.310
	Significance Level	0.000
	Number	380

and female students. Therefore, it is concluded that an increase in EI and its components caused a decline in the tendency to addiction and vice versa.

DISCUSSION

After verifying the homogeneity of variance for EI and its sub-scales, MANOVA was employed to compare the EI and its components (appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion) between male and female students. The results showed that EI and its components were greater in female students than male ones. These findings are consistent with the studies by Katyal and Awasthi,¹⁷ Mayer et al.,³⁴ Harrod and Scheer,³⁵ Mandella and Pherwani,³⁶ Nasir and Masrur,³⁷ Petrides and Furnham,³⁸ Ciarrochi et al.,¹⁶ Schutte et al.,¹⁴ Mollae et al.,³⁹ Kahliliazar,²² Khosrojerdi and Khanzadeh.²³

EI involves numerous interpersonal and intra-personal skills.¹⁷ This cognitive skill helps human incompatibility with the living environment, stress management, and ultimately better life.³⁴ Studies have shown that the ability to express emotion and empathy is greater in women than in men. Women are better at interpersonal relationships than men. Some studies have shown that women's EI is greater

than men.^{34,35,36} Some studies indicate a lack of difference between male and female in terms of EI.^{37,38}

Credible texts indicate the sexual difference in terms of EI. They mainly state that women and girls have greater EI than men and boys.³⁹ Men with greater EI are sociable, modest, friendly, and cheerful and are resistant against disturbing and frightening thoughts. They enjoy a significant capacity in terms of helping people, solving problems, and taking responsibility ethically. They are compassionate and caring in their relationships, rich in emotional life, have easier relationships with others and society they live in.

Conversely, women with high EI tend to express, directly state their emotions, have positive emotion about them, and have a meaningful life. Like men, they are sociable and welcoming, state their opinions, are compatible in pressure, meet new people easily, are comfortable enough in order to be playful, and are welcoming to emotional experiences.⁴⁰

Pearson correlation was employed to study the relationship of EI and its components (appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion) with a tendency to addiction of male and female students. Findings showed that EI and its components (appraisal and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and utilization of emotion) had a relationship with a tendency to addiction of male and female students. This is consistent with the results of studies by Parker,²⁸ Trinidad and Johnson,²⁹ Taylor, Eastabrook, Schell, and Wood,³² Bar-On,¹⁸ Kahn and Demirovic,²⁷ Davis and Humphrey,²⁴ Habibi et al.,² Homayouni,²⁶ Khan mohammadi Otaghsara,³¹ Narimani,¹² Karami Rad,²⁰ Mehrabi Honarmand,²⁰ and Manshaee and Mazaheeri.²¹

When individuals are under pressure by peers for substance abuse, not giving up for peer pressure is considered one of the main EI factors to reduce substance abuse. The ability to control and manage emotions enables individuals to use coping strategies in problematic situations including substance abuse.¹³

People who are unable to control their emotional skills are more likely to tend to addiction. Those who seek variety and mobility are more likely to follow substance abuse. Addicts are engaged in problems to identify their emotions and others, causing abnormalities in establishing positive, constructive, and directive emotional relationships. This, ultimately, causes the tendency to addiction.¹³ EI and related skills grow and change over the course of time. Training can help accelerate the growth.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

Since the study was carried out in Kermanshah, Iran, it is essential to generalize the results to other regions cautiously. Considering the population of adolescents,

and the importance of addition, it is recommended to consider other effective factors in the tendency to drug abuse such as negative perfectionism, perceived parenting behavior, parenting styles, etc. Then a comparison can be made with our study.

It is also advisable to study the older population such as university students and compare the results with ours. Considering the relationship with EI and tendency to addiction, parents can be invited for workshops on the importance of EI and promotion of their children's knowledge concerning the tendency to addiction. It is also advisable to consider EI in the curriculum since childhood.

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