

Original Article

Relationship between emotional intelligence and communication skills in PhD and master's students of Islamic Azad University

Sousan Alaei^{1*}¹ NorthTehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran**Corresponding author and reprints:** Sousan Alaei. NorthTehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.**Email:** s_alaei@iau-tnb.ac.ir**Accepted for publication:** 30 May 2018

Abstract

Background: Communication skills are the ability to establish interpersonal associations with others. Emotional intelligence is also the ability to increase domination over time and push towards goals and intentions. In the present study, the association between emotional intelligence and communication skills in PhD and master's students of Islamic Azad University was studied in 2017.

Methods: In a cross-sectional study, 321 PhD and master's students from Islamic Azad University, Northern Tehran Branch, who had the inclusion criteria were selected using simple stratified random sampling method. The data was collected using standard Brad berry and Greaves questionnaire of emotional intelligence that has 28 items. The reliability of this questionnaire was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha to be 0.88. To answer the questions, the Likert Spectrum Scale was used. Data collected were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0.

Results: Participants were 154 (48.6%) male and 163 (51.4%) female. There was a significant association between students' communication skills and emotional intelligence ($r=0.406$, $P<0.001$), knowledge ($r=0.276$, $P<0.001$), managerial variables ($r=0.378$, $P<0.001$), social awareness ($r=0.252$, $P<0.001$), and association management ($r=0.286$, $P<0.001$). Mean emotional intelligence of men was higher than that of women ($P<0.015$). The mean of emotional intelligence of PhD students was also higher than that of master's students ($P<0.036$). Moreover, mean communication skills were found to be higher in men than in women ($P<0.017$). In addition, the mean of communication skills of PhD students was observed to be higher than that of master's students ($P<0.024$).

Conclusion: Communication skills will increase through increasing students' emotional intelligent. Communication skills and emotional intelligence are associated with gender and levels of education.

Keywords: Communication Skills; Emotions; Emotional Intelligence; Intention; Self-Awareness; Self-Management

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Introduction

Human is a social inventory who is in need of communication and interaction with other fellows to fulfil his individual and social needs. Feeling sociable creates a sense of sociality in humans, and to maintain this, the individual

tries to achieve new skills and new attitudes, as far as organizations expand (1). One of the factors affecting the communication skills of individuals is their emotional intelligence. High emotional

intelligence is positively associated with greater health and compatibility and success. If emotional intelligence increases, indeed, their health, compatibility, and success will increase (2). Emotional intelligence is a collection of cognitive and emotional abilities that help one by receiving, evaluating, and expressing the excitement to become aware and by balancing your thoughts and excitement and having decent and responsible behaviors (3). Much evidence proves that people, who have emotional skills, those who know their feelings well and lead it and understand the feelings of others and interact with them effectively, are excellent in every dimension of their lives (4). Social skills are capable of establishing interpersonal associations with others, insofar as they are commendable, valuable, consistent with the custom and at the same time beneficial to the individual, family, and society and have two side beneficial rewards. One of the signs of mental and social health of people is the same social association. Having warm and intimate associations with other humans is the source of safety, trust, and comfort of all members of the organization and thus the society. People with high emotional intelligence have better social interactions, have a better association with friends and family, and are more successful in interpersonal associations (6-5). Increasing emotional intelligence increases the level of individual insight into the impact of communication as well as the level of individuals' insight towards the communication process. It can also increase individuals' mental health and help them feel that they increase their productivity and effectiveness in the organization (7).

Considering that few investigations have been conducted with different results in this field, the present study aimed to determine the association between emotional intelligence and communication skills of PhD and master's students at Islamic Azad University.

Methods

In the present cross-sectional study, the population of the study included all masters and PhD students of Management at Islamic Azad University, Tehran-North Branch, comprising 1821 individuals. Sample size was 321 people determined using Cochran Formula, and were selected via a simple stratified random sampling method. The data collection tool was standard emotional intelligence 2.0 questionnaire by Bradberry et al. that has 28 items. In this questionnaire, the self-awareness with questions (1 to 6), self-management with questions (7 to 15), social awareness with questions (16 to 20), and association management with questions (21 to 28) are measured. The reliability of this questionnaire has been confirmed by Ganji et al. with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 (8). Jerabek Communication Skills Test was used for measuring communication skills score. This questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.71 and 0.81 in previous studies (9). After collecting data, they were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0., running Cronbach's alpha, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Pearson correlation coefficient and independent t-test. P-values <0.05 were considered as significant.

Results

Overall, 317 questionnaires were completed (response rate: 98.75%). Of 317 participants, 154 (48.6%) were male and 163 (51.4%) were female. As for educational level, 18 (5.7%) were master's degree students and 229 (94.3%) were PhD students. The highest percentages were observed among master's degree.

With increasing emotional intelligence, communication skills increased. Also, with the rise of self-awareness, communication skills increased. In addition, as self-management increased, communication skills increased, too. There was a significant correlation between social

Table 1. Correlation between emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, association management, and communication skills

	Mean (SD)		Mean (SD)	r	P
Communication skills	3.19 (0.33)	Total emotional intelligence	4.11 (0.44)	0.406	<0.001
		Self-awareness	4.33 (0.56)	0.276	<0.001
		Self-management	3.75 (0.55)	0.378	<0.001
		Social awareness	4.33 (0.56)	0.252	<0.001
		Association management	4.33 (0.56)	0.286	<0.001

Table 2. Comparison of emotional intelligence in women and men, master's degree, and PhD students

Variables		Mean (SD)	P
Emotional intelligence	Women	4.03 (0.44)	0.015
	Men	4.18 (0.43)	
	Master's degree	4.10 (0.44)	0.036
	PhD	4.18 (0.44)	

Table 3. Comparison of communication skills in women and men, master's degree, and PhD students

Variables		Mean (SD)	P
Communication skills	Women	3.15 (0.31)	0.015
	Men	3.22 (0.33)	
	Master's degree	3.18 (0.32)	0.036
	PhD	3.36 (0.39)	

awareness, association management, and communication skills (Table 1).

Participants with PhD degree had significantly higher scores of emotional intelligence than their master's peers. Men had higher scores of emotional intelligence than female participants (Table 2).

Participants with PhD degree had significantly higher communication skills scores than their master's peers. Communication skills score of men was higher than female participants (Table 3).

Discussion

The results showed that there was a significant association between emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and communication skills of the students. The emotional intelligence and communication skills were higher in men compared with women. Also, emotional intelligence and communication skills among PhD students were higher compared with those with master's degree. In general, these findings are in line with the studies that demonstrate

the ability to encode, understand, and manage emotions with social and emotional compromise (10-14). Findings of the present study showed that people with high emotional intelligence have higher positive social interactions and associations with friends and family members, and are more successful in their individual associations in line with other findings (15-18). In the past few decades, with the clarification of the effect of emotional intelligence and emotional control on the success and mental health of individuals, research on the level of emotional intelligence to reduce intrapersonal problems such as anxiety, depression, alienation, and suicide attempts were considered. Several studies about the association between emotional intelligence and physical and mental health have been conducted.

The comparison of the level of emotional intelligence among PhD and master's students showed that the emotional intelligence of PhD students was higher compared with master's degree students. This conclusion is in line with the results of

Mayer et al., who showed that emotional intelligence is associated with increasing age and experience from childhood to adulthood (19).

Previous studies showed that students could have a happier and more active presence in their work and life by managing feelings, friends, and colleagues to prevent from depression and mental fatigue, which is the source of many physical illnesses and lack of person's mental health. This way, the general health of the community will be increased (20).

Accordingly, it can be stated that in general, people with high emotional intelligence have more physical and mental health and less physical and psychological problems. This finding is in line with the findings of Ghaderi et al., who showed that students of Azad Universities of Medical Sciences and Comprehensive (National of Jiroft) have higher emotional intelligence compared with the average level (21). Also, the Nazi Dizaji et al. study showed that the emotional intelligence of the architecture students of the Daylaman University of Lahijan was at the modest level (22).

The comparison of the emotional intelligence of male and female students showed that the mean of emotional intelligence of men is higher than that of women. This finding is in line with the results of Gorgich et al., who showed that emotional intelligence is higher in men (23), while Mollie et al. reported a contradictory result in their research (24). In explaining the difference in these findings, it can be argued that, as the result of Mayer et al.'s study showed, emotional intelligence increased with age and experience from childhood to adulthood. Therefore, it is expected that this ability will increase with student's higher education and experience (24). The results of the current study confirmed this issue and showed that the emotional intelligence of PhD students is higher than that of master's degree students. Therefore, the results of the research by Molaei et al., who conducted the study at the college and

undergraduate level, on students with an average age of 21 years, is different from those of the current study for the same reason. In addition, it should be noted that the comparison of the emotional intelligence of men and women in other similar studies also reported a little difference (24).

Also, the results of the present study showed that the mean of communication skills of all respondents is higher than the average level. Men's communication skills are more than women. On this basis, it can be concluded that men have better communication skills than women. Also, the findings showed that the average of communication skills of the students in the PhD degree is higher than that of master's students. This issue can be justified due to the positive association between emotional intelligence and communication skills that has been confirmed in the present study. Since the emotional intelligence of male students is greater than that of female students and the emotional intelligence of PhD students was found to be higher than master's degree students, it is natural that they also have better communication skills. The study of the association between emotional intelligence and communication skills showed that there was a positive and significant association between emotional intelligence and communication skills in students. Accordingly, by increasing emotional intelligence, communication skills will increase.

Communication skills will increase through increasing students' emotional intelligence. Communication skills and emotional intelligence are associated with gender and levels of education.

Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

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