

Relationship between father's emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction with adolescent self-esteem and mental health

Ali Rasouli*, Islami Azad University of Khomein, 6351977439 Khomein, Iran

Hassan Heydari, Islami Azad University of Khomein, 6351977439 Khomein, Iran

Seyed Ali Alyasin, Islami Azad University of Khomein 6351977439 Khomein, Iran

Mansour Abdi, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Arak University, Arak 38156-8-8349, Iran

Suggested Citation:

Rasouli, A., Heydari, H., Alyasin, S. A. & Abdi, M. (2018). Relationship between father's emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction with adolescent self-esteem and mental health. *Global Journal of Guidance and Counseling in Schools: Current Perspectives*, 8(3), 165-172.

Received from March 10, 2018; revised from August 05, 2018; accepted from November 12, 2018.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Kobus Maree, University of Pretoria South Africa.

©2018 Sciencepark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

Emotional intelligence is the capacity of perception, expression, recognition, application and management of excitement of oneself and others. The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence of fathers and their adolescence self-esteem and mental health. A total of 384 students and their fathers selected through cluster sampling method completed a questionnaire which consisted of the following factors such as marital satisfaction, emotional intelligence, self-esteem and mental health. The research was designed as a descriptive-correlative survey, and data were analysed. For analysing data, correlation and regression were analysed using SPSS software. Results of stepwise regression showed that 26/6 of variance of adolescence self-esteem was explained by father's marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence and 53/9 of variance of adolescence mental health was explained by father's marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, mental health.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Ali Rasouli**, Islami Azad University of Khomein Khomein, Iran.

E-mail address: AliRasouli18@gmail.com / Tel.: +98 31 3366 0011

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence, an ability, is the capacity of perception, expression, recognition, application and management of excitement of oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). As the basic components of emotional intelligence is the ability of understanding other emotions, and inhibition of oneself and others, to mode green, it is expected that people with higher emotional intelligence have better social adjustment and social skills. So, social skills as a facilitate manufacturer of social life helps people to communicate better (Maloff & Schutte, 1998). To date, researches at excitement field, in comparison with recognition, had lesser extent. Nowadays, impacts of psycho-cognitive emotion have been emphasised, and it is accepted that the emotion not only interferes with other cognitive capacities but also increases them. In addition, emotions, as a primary source of motivation, raise and guide human behaviour (Salovey et al., 2000), and people who can recognise emotions of oneself and others have access to great success at their work and social life (Gheidar, 2009).

Emotional intelligence is influenced by rearing environment. Evidence suggests that a part of low emotional intelligence, due to distress by the primary relationship of mother-child (caregivers), which influences the evolution of cognitive and neural systems, is involved in processing emotional information. However, emotional interactions of mother-child effect some parts of the brain involved in regulating emotion, and low emotional intelligence might be the result of trauma such as emotional deprivation and neglected parenting, causing disrupted functioning of some brain structures and mental capacity associated with emotional processing (Taylor & Bagby, 2000). Mayer and Salovey (1997) stated that one of the significant benefits of regulating emotion is to improve negative emotions and nurture pleasant and positive emotions. Therefore, those who are skilful at regulating their emotions are more able to compensate the negative emotional states by participating in pleasant activities; moreover, emotional competence has a significant role in reducing stress and psychological health. Of course, one of the significant and noteworthy points is that the structures associated with academic achievement are mainly related to cognitive functions, particularly, memory and learning ability of the concerned person. People who are married expect to live with happiness and satisfaction and to enjoy every moment (Madahi, Javidi & Samadzadeh, 2013).

Therefore, what is more important than marriage is being successful in the married life or ensuring satisfaction between couples. Marital satisfaction is a condition where a married couple feels happy and satisfied with each other. Yung (1991) mentioned some factors, such as understanding the goals of life, spouse's moral attitudes, having a relationship with causal relatives and friends, and appreciating and supporting the spouse, as the factors of marital satisfaction. Also, Kaslo et al. (1994) believe that the couples who have a strong sense of belonging and dependency have high marital satisfaction and conclude, in their studies, that the highest amount of marital satisfaction is among the spouses who are compatible with each other and concerned about the philosophy of life, their perceptions of sexual satisfaction and the amount of time they spent with each other. Some studies showed that factors, for example, level of cooperation, emotional reactions, family relationships with spouse's relatives and friends and with one's own relatives, financial issues management, sexual relationship, spending leisure time, ethical and religious beliefs and doing them practically, social customs and traditions, emotional satisfaction, cognitive and intellectual understanding, level of education, and beauty, are among the factors affecting marital stability and satisfaction. Taking these factors into consideration, marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction dimensions are identified and categorised by experts in various areas. Emotional stability or instability, as a feature in the range of characteristics, can correct important issues related to family relationships in the form of interpersonal relationships, an issue that has been less researched. Emotional intelligence includes the following: emotional development, being emotionally stable, being calm and realistic in life, lack of nervous exhaustion and having comfort. The study shows that some strains of negative emotion, such as impulsivity, emotional instability, being fearful and depression, are poor predictors of marital adjustment. The weaker the adjustment, the lesser the amount of satisfaction. Several studies examined the effect of personality factor such as neuroticism in marital life. People respond to these

situations with general neurotic simulations in the form of fear, psychosomatic disorders, sleep disorders associated with hysterical behaviour, and obsession. Neurotic people are usually anxious, depressed with feelings of guilt, irrational, angered, shy, moody and emotional, and have low self-esteem and physical pains such as headache, stomachache, dizziness and unstable mood. One of the five factors of the neo questionnaire is neurotic factor which is introduced as the N factor by Mercury and Kousta. These individuals are quirky and oversensitive and are not satisfied with many aspects of life; show high levels of negative emotions and periods of psychological distress; have low self-esteem; and may also have unrealistic ideas and expectations. They are usually concerned and have a sense of insecurity regarding themselves and their future plans. These individuals are introduced by their friends and neighbours as anxious, responsible with great anxiety and vulnerable compared to normal people. These people are usually anxious, fearful and are prone to convergence and are usually angered by other people (Khalatbari, Ghorbanshiroudi, Niaz Azari, Bazleh & Safaryazdi, 2013).

According to the World Health Organization, health cannot be defined as lack of disease, but it is a physical, psychological and complete social welfare. The psychological encyclopaedia of Rir (1996) used the term *psychological health* to describe those who had the highest behavioural activation and emotional and behavioural adaptability and did not only mean that the individual is not ill (Edlin & Golanty, 2014). On the other hand, self-esteem is another synchronous structure with psychological health. Self-esteem is defined as a feeling of personal adequacy for encountering the fundamental challenges of life and deserving happiness. It is shown in some behaviours, such as assertiveness, decisiveness and politeness toward others, as a part of a person's self-concept. It includes cognitive, behavioural and emotional aspects (Cheung & Strachan, 2007). One of the fundamental concepts related to the individual's self-esteem and psychological health is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence balances the relationship between emotion and cognition, which leads to adaptive action (Salovey & Grival, 2005, as cited in Rahmani, 2013). The four-dimensional pattern of emotional intelligence shows that emotional intelligence is the product of related abilities which include: (1) emotional conception in self and others, (2) use of emotion for decision making easiness, (3) emotion perception and (4) emotion adjustment of self and others. Based on the combinational pattern of Baron (2005, cited in Sepehriyan, 2008), emotional intelligence is made up of emotional self-awareness and various characteristics and skills, which is presumed by the effective use or emotions adjustment such as a proper interpersonal relationship, problem solving and stress tolerance. Emotional intelligence covers the individual differences in individual emotional abilities (stress control) and interpersonal relationships (stress perception; Goleman, 1995). On the other hand, marital satisfaction is the total evaluation of the individual's mind and the amount of needs satisfaction, wishes, and personal and marital desires (Tabatabaei, Panahandeh & Hoseynabadi, 2012). Based on the synthetic pattern of Barron (2005, quoted from Greven, Chamorro-Premuzic, Arteche & Furnham, 2008), emotional intelligence is comprised of emotional self-awareness and different characteristics and skills which is deduced from an effective application or regulating emotions such as appropriate interpersonal relations, problem solving and stress tolerance. Emotional intelligence is conceptualised as a personality trait similar to extroversion and conscientiousness which is placed under the lower levels of personality hierarchy. Individual differences are covered by personal (stress control) and interpersonal emotional capabilities (stress perception) through emotional intelligence (Saklofske, Austin, Galloway & Davidson, 2007). In other words, people with high emotional intelligence are more acquired with stress management skills and are able to evaluate, express and manage their emotions (Greven et al., 2008).

Bar-On (2000), in his model of translation, not only studies intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships but also considers factors such as adaptability, impulse control and general mood to be parts of emotional intelligence (Serrat, 2009). The process and outcomes of emotional intelligence development also contains many elements known to reduce stress of individuals and, therefore, interpersonal relationships by moderating conflict, promoting understanding and relationships, and fostering stability, continuity and harmony. Last but not least, it links strongly with the concepts of love and spirituality (Kaplan & Maddux, 2002).

Marital satisfaction depends upon the individuals' expectations, needs and desires in their marriage. It refers to the degree of satisfaction between couples (Fitness, 2001). Many experts believe that emotional intelligence or at least some of its aspects have the ability to develop a more satisfying marriage. When a person gets angry, he/she needs to use advanced emotional skills and high level of empathy and self-control as well as have a deep understanding of other people's needs and emotions. Interestingly, these skills are quite similar to the components of emotional intelligence. People who are not able to manage their emotions struggle with their inner conflicts and are not be able to use their ability to do an efficient and focused job (Nasiri, Marashi & Raji, 2014). Having some emotional skills—being calm, moderating conflicts, listening and having sympathy—can increase the possibility of solving disagreements between the couples over different issues such as child training, sexual relationships, financial problems and other household issues. In a review of seven studies, the link between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relation was examined. This study indicated that the participants with higher scores on emotional intelligence had higher scores for empathic perspective taking, self-monitoring in social situations, social skills, cooperative behaviour, close and affectionate relationships, and greater marital satisfaction (Vadnais, 2005). Also, some studies showed a strong correlation between the couples' emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction (Fabien, 2014). In another study, the results of multistage regression analysis showed that attention accounted for 19% of marital satisfaction, clearance component for 7% and emotional reconstruction for 3% of marital satisfaction. It seems that, considering the efficacy and role of emotional intelligence in the domain of marital relationships, emotional intelligence may help resolve or eliminate the problems of discordant couples (Nasiri et al., 2014).

One study on pre-marital preparedness on marital satisfaction of women indicated that, compared to the middle- or high-income group, the low-income group had a poorer attitude towards marriage and less marital knowledge while having higher marital apprehensions and expectations. They also had lower marital satisfaction. It is indicated that higher neuroticism, lower agreeableness, lower conscientiousness and less positive expressivity are tied to marital dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the positive affect of the hallmark of well-being may be the cause of many desirable characteristics, resources and successes correlated with happiness. Another study investigated the positive correlation between marital satisfaction and happiness. In another study, among Brazilian couples, 'closeness' was the most important predictor for marital satisfaction. On the other hand, values, communication, commitment, decision-making, emotional intimacy, sexual relationships and forgiveness had the strongest impact on marital satisfaction. Another factor affecting marital satisfaction is the economic factor. For example, the lack of communication and financial planning has been the cause of marital financial problems among Brazilian couples. Another study on marital satisfaction in oil-rich regions and financial and social factors indicated that an increase in socio-economic status causes a decrease in marital satisfaction. One study indicated that couples with low income scored significantly lower on five of the six dimensions of marital quality: overall satisfaction, commitment, divorce proneness, feelings of being trapped in a marriage and negative interaction. Another interesting survey showed that there were no significant relationships between duration of marriage and family income and women's marital satisfaction.

Moreover, the most satisfied couples were those who did not avoid discussion of relationship problems and who rated their partners high in emotional intelligence. The findings also partially supported the hypothesis that, on average, participants of high emotional intelligence would engage more in effective and less in ineffective conflict resolution styles and have unsuccessful arguments less frequently with their partners. Satisfied couples tend to use constructive problem-solving strategies. They rarely use destructive strategies like escalation of conflict or withdrawal. Dialogue is the strategy connected with satisfaction in a most positive manner. Loyalty to oneself is a significant positive predictor of male satisfaction (Schramm & Harris, 2011).

The results of previous studies support the conceptual model of research.

Nasiri et al.'s (2014) study showed that emotional communication and economic factors play an important role in having a satisfying relationship and a more successful marriage. In this regard, we investigated the 10-year outcome of partners from three different economic levels regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. The research was designed as a descriptive–correlative survey and data were analysed using Pearson correlation test and stepwise regression. Participants were 159 couples ($N = 318$) who were randomly selected through clustered sampling. The questionnaires included Bar-On Emotional Intelligence (1997) and Enrich Marital satisfaction (1989). The findings revealed that the average values of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction were high in the under-rich region. Moreover, there was no significant relationship between interpersonal and marital satisfaction within the under-rich region. On average, emotional intelligence accounted for 40.8% of marital satisfaction within those three regions. The results of the regression analysis showed that general mood is the most effective factor changing the marital satisfaction in the three studied regions: rich, under-rich and semi-rich regions. The most influential factor changing the marital satisfaction in the under-rich region was found to be stress management.

So, regarding the youth's psychological health and the fact that due to a high vulnerability of this group which is exposed to some problems such as depression, nervousness, suicide, and crime and drug addiction, they spend leisure time with each other. Based on the importance of these points, the future of the country and according to the reviewed literature, this study was set out to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence, fathers' marital satisfaction, self-esteem and youths' psychological health.

2. Method

The design of the present study is descriptive (nonexperimental) and correlational. The population of the present study includes 10th-grade male students (studying humanities, natural sciences and mathematics in a public high school in Tehran in 2015–2016) and their fathers. The data were gathered through cluster sampling. To collect the data, some areas in Tehran were selected as random areas. Then, four boys' schools were randomly selected, and, in each school, one class was randomly selected. According to the Korgsy and Morgan table, the number of the population was about 984. To test the research questions, the Pearson correlation tests were carried out.

The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and state of marital students were investigated. Data were analysed by Pearson statistical correlation test.

2.1. Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

The individual's responses render the total EQ score and the scores on the following five composite scales that include 15 subscale scores: intrapersonal (self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence and self-actualisation); interpersonal (empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationship); stress management (stress tolerance and impulse control); adaptability (reality-testing, flexibility and problem solving) and general mood (optimism and happiness). A brief description of these emotional–social intelligence competencies, skills and facilitators measured by the 15 subscales is found in the appendix as was previously mentioned. In brief, the EQ-i contains 133 items in the form of short sentences and employs a 5-point response scale with a textual response format ranging from 'very seldom, or not true for me' to 'very often true for me or true for me'. Coefficients of reliability and validity of the questionnaire have been obtained with different methods. The mean score of Cronbach's alpha coefficients in calculating the internal consistency for all subscales is high from low Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.69) for the subscale of social responsibility to the high alpha coefficient (0.86) for the subscales of self-regard with the overall mean score of internal consistency coefficient (0.76). Bar-On, in his studies relying on subjects' responses and experts' opinions, concluded that the Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire has high face and content validity. In Iran, Dehshiri evaluated the validity and reliability of this instrument. In his

research, reliability was calculated for an interval of 4 months as 0.73. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire was obtained as 0.92.

2.2. Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire

The Enrich questionnaire includes 115 questions and is used to assess potential problem areas or to identify methods of enriching marital relationships. This questionnaire was developed by Olson, Fournier and Druckman. It is also used for couples who need advice to improve their relationship. In addition, this questionnaire has been used as a valid instrument in numerous studies to examine marital satisfaction, and it consists of 12 subscales. The first scale contains five questions and each of the other scales contains 10 questions. The subscales of this questionnaire are as follows: idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, equalitarian roles and religious orientation. In the form of 115 questions implemented in Iran, five choices are intended for each of the questions in this questionnaire. Alpha coefficients of the Enrich Questionnaire interpretation for the subscales of idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, equalitarian roles and religious orientation are 0.90, 0.81, 0.73, 0.68, 0.75, 0.74, 0.76, 0.48, 0.77, 0.72 and 0.71, respectively. The alpha coefficient of Enrich subscales in several different studies was from 0.68 (for equalitarian roles) to 0.86 (for marital satisfaction) with the mean score of 0.79. In Iran, Soleimanian assessed the validity and reliability of this test using internal correlation of the questions, by selecting 47 questions having the greatest correlation with the overall score and presented it as the short form questionnaire of marital satisfaction. The reliability coefficient of this test in his study was obtained as 0.93. However, the validity of this questionnaire was calculated as 0.96 by alpha coefficient method in our study.

3. Instruments

Goldberg Psychological Health Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire, Atrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire and Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire.

4. Findings

Table 1. XXXX

	Emotional intelligence	Marital satisfaction	Self-esteem	Mental health
Mean	2.7839	3.0573	1.5000	1.4635
SD	1.25690	1.34100	1.08153	1.10007

The mean and SD scores of the research variables are shown in Table 1. To answer the research question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used.

Table 2. XXXX

	Self-esteem	Mental health
Emotional intelligence	0.936	0.743
Marital satisfaction	0.938	0.943

As shown in Table 2, the significance value or Cronbach's alpha is less than 0.05, so the correlation between the variables is linear and has a direct relationship. The higher the emotional intelligence or marital satisfaction, the more self-esteemed and psychologically healthy the children are.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The conclusions of the study showed that there is a direct relationship between fathers' emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction with children's self-esteem and psychological health. The results of the present study are in line with Rahmani (2013) and Tabatabaei et al. (2012). To state the research results, it can be indicated that the family plays an essential and important role in the good upbringing of the children and, on the other hand, the improvement in interpersonal relations among the family members lead to the children's psychological health promotion. The cognitions and behaviours and parents perspectives can affect children and be affected by the children's cognitions, emotions and behaviours. If we pay attention to the relationship between the family members, it can be perceived that the mutual respect between parents in front of the children and their marital satisfaction causes an indirect upbringing. In such a family, self-esteem will be increased in children and they will be dutiful, responsible and skillful.

References

- Bar-On, R. (2006). The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI). *Psicothema*, 18(Suppl), 13–25 [PubMed].
- Bar-On, R. & Parker, J. D. (2000). *A handbook of emotional intelligence: theory, development, assessment, and application at home, school and in the workplace*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Cheung, G. & Strachan, J. (2007). Routine "Health of the Nation Outcome Scales for elderly people" (HoNOS65+) collection in an acute psychogeriatric inpatient unit in New Zealand. *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, 120(1259), U2660.
- Edlin, G. & Golanty, E. (2014). *Health and wellness*. XXX: Jones & Bartlett.
- Fabien, A. J. (2014, December 7). *The relationship between spiritual maturity, emotional intelligence, marital needs, and marital satisfaction: a correlational study among married students at AIIAS*. Retrieved from: <http://circle.adventist.org/browse/resource.phtml?leaf=10669>
- Fitness, J. (2001). Betrayal, rejection, revenge, and forgiveness: an interpersonal script approach. In M. Leary (Ed.), *Interpersonal rejection* (p. 2001). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Greven, C., Chamorro-Premuzic, T., Arceche, A. & Furnham, A. (2008). A hierarchical integration of dispositional determinants of general health in students: the Big Five, trait emotional intelligence and humour style. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44, 1562–1573.
- Kaplan, M. & Maddux, J. E. (2002). Goals and marital satisfaction: perceived support for personal goals and collective efficacy for collective goals. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 21, 157–164.
- Khalatbari, J., Ghorbanshiroudi, S., Niaz Azari, S., Bazleh, N. & Safaryazdi, N. (2013). The Relationship between marital satisfaction (based on religious criteria) and emotional stability. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84, 869–873.
- Madahi, M., Javidi, N. & Samadzadeh, M. (2013). The relationship between emotional intelligence and marital status in sample of college students. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84, 1317–1320.
- Maloff, J. M. & Schutte, N. S. (1998). *Games to enhance social and emotional skills*. Springfield, IL: Charles Thomas.
- Mayer, J. D & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: educational implications*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Nasiri Z, Marashi, M. & Raji, H (2014). The relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction: 10-year outcome of partners from three different economic levels. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry*, 9(4), 188–196.
- Rahmani, M. (2013). The impact of training on mental health promotion components of emotional intelligence and self-awareness, students, athletes. *Journal of Clinical Psychology and Personality*, (9), 84–75.

- Rasouli, A., Heydari, H., Alyasin, S. A. & Abdi, M. (2018). Relationship between father's emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction with adolescent self-esteem and mental health. *Global Journal of Guidance and Counseling in Schools: Current Perspectives*, 8(3), 165-172.
- Saklofske, D. H., Austin, E. J., Galloway, J. & Davidson, K. (2007). Individual correlates of health-related behaviors: preliminary evidence for links between emotional intelligence and coping. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 47, 421–502.
- Schramm, D. G. & Harris, V. W. (2011). Marital quality and income: an examination of the influence of government assistance. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 32, 437–448.
- Sepehriyan, F. (2008). *Emotional intelligence (EQ than IQ up and SQ)*. XXXX: Publications University of Urmia.
- Serrat, O. (2009). Glossary of knowledge management. *Knowledge Solutions*, 39, 1–4. Retrieved from: https://www.k4health.org/sites/default/files/Asian_Dev_glossary-of-knowledge-management.pdf
- Shamsabadi, R. (1383). *Norm-seeking and factor structure, Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire—it among high school students in Mashhad*. XXXX: Master of Clinical Psychology, Tehran Psychiatric Institute.
- Tabatabaei, M., Panahandeh, S. & Hoseynabadi, M. (2012). Check the general health and marital satisfaction in employees Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. *Behavioral Sciences Research*, 10(6), 491–499.
- Taylor, G. J. & Bagby R. M. (2000). An overview of the alexithymia construct. In R. Bar-On & J. D. A. Parker (Eds.), *The handbook of emotional intelligence: theory, development, assessment, and application at home, school, and in the workplace* (pp. 40–67). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Tiragi, A. (1383). *Emotional intelligence structural relationship with marital adjustment and developing and emotional intelligence to strengthen application of intervention program to reduce marital conflict* (PhD thesis). Tehran Psychiatric Institute, XXXX.
- Vadnais, A. M. (2005). *The relationship of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.