

A Comparative Study on Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Tendency among Intelligent and Average Students

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Abstract: The present study was conducted to compare the emotional intelligence and leadership tendency among intelligent and average students. The samples of this study included all high school intelligent and average students of Ardabil (Iran) in 2007-08 years of education. Among samples, 286 were selected randomly and they responded to Schute's 32-item emotional intelligence questionnaire and 16-item leadership ability questionnaire in groups in their schools. A two-factor variance analysis test was used to compare 2 groups in interaction with the sex variable. The results of study showed that mean score of leadership tendency and emotional intelligence among girl students are higher than that of boy students.

Key words: Leadership, emotional, intelligence, variable, education, tendency

INTRODUCTION

Most of the earlier theories have summarized intelligence as an educational ability and have focused on achievement talent. But, today there is a belief that some of the individual's non-intelligence characteristics such as being emotional, conscientious, moral sensitivity and leadership ability were mentioned as a separate dimension of intelligence. On the basis of many theories, which have been presented on intelligence definitions, intelligence comes to existence through reciprocal effects of intelligence and non-intelligence characteristics, which include environmental skills and is to a great extent responsible for development and change in the present world. In 1972 federal definition of intelligence was beyond the cognitive ability so that leadership ability was mentioned as a separate and independent model of intelligence. Marland's definition indicates that intelligent and talented children are who show high performance ability in combination of the following 7 areas: general intelligence ability, university educational talent, creativity, leadership, performing and visual arts, psychomotor ability (Young Lee and Olszewski-Kubilius, 2006).

Some of the theories consider man's non-intelligence characteristics as an independent aspect of intelligence and particularly qualities, like emotional intelligence, moral sensitivity, inter-personal and intrapersonal intelligence, wisdom and leadership have been suggested as separate forms of intelligence. It can be said that not all these characteristics are completely uncognitive, but each of

them has a cognitive part and includes the levels of intelligence skills and ability. In this study, since emotional intelligence and leadership have not attracted much attention in research and educational programs, we decided to study these two non-intelligence characteristics-emotional intelligence and leadership-among average and intelligent students.

Emotional intelligence is not opposed to the concept of IQ, but is a separate independent part. Using Mayer *et al.* (1999) early definitions of emotional intelligence, five main parts were considered for emotional intelligence, which include self-awareness (to self-aware of one's feeling), emotion management (management of feelings and emotions) self-excitement, domination and control (self-motivation), empathy (identification of other people's feelings), social qualification (relation management). Later, a developed definition was shown as follow accurate perception ability and complete expression of emotions, ability of understanding feelings, emotions controlling ability in one self and others (Mayer *et al.*, 1999). Also, there are two schools of thought about emotional intelligence basic structure. Both of them believe that emotional intelligence must have capability in predicting special cases. The studies, which believe in the model of emotional intelligence must have prediction capability in different types of social skills and other factors (Mayer *et al.*, 2001). The proponents of emotional intelligence combination model combine personality traits and emotional skills and believe that emotional intelligence must be related to an extensive

range of behaviors. They believe that these variables are varied from educational success to romantic relations. Schute's Self-report Scale of Emotional Intelligence (SSRI) is considered as a combinational scale (Humphry, 2002). The concept of leadership included uniting human forces in order to achieve the planned objectives. The leaders must use emotional intelligence in order to improve intra group cooperation, give motivation to their followers and improve the relations. According to Maryland's report, leadership has been distinguished as a distinct dimension of intelligence. Mayer *et al.* (1999) have emphasized leaders to be informed of their followers' emotional reaction and management in oneself and others is an indispensable part of leadership. Some researchers believe that those who have high emotional intelligence are informed of one's and others' emotions and they can manipulate and apply these emotions. These people are more successful than those who don't have these abilities and this success causes these people to have a higher self-confidence in their life's experiences (Downey *et al.*, 2006). Mayer *et al.* (1999) suggest that emotional intelligence must be related with leadership. In another study, which investigated the emotional intelligence and its relationship on 49 managers, they concluded that using emotional intelligence in a transformational leadership style is considered as an essential part (Wolff *et al.*, 2002). Emotional intelligence has more effects on leadership, because it is considered as a social interaction. If the leaders weren't sensitive to the emotional information, which is received from their followers, there might be a conflict among them. If a leader is aware of others' emotions and can control them. She can make a friendly relation and create appropriate inter personal interactions in the group (Barling *et al.*, 2000). Mayer and Geher (2002) studied individuals' differences in connection ability of thoughts and emotions. Those who did well in creating a relation between thoughts and emotions, perhaps could better understand their thoughts emotional signs and also, they could even understand others' well. The results of the study showed that some forms of solving emotional problem need emotional openness as well as intelligence (Mayer and Geher, 2002). Observing the studies related to intelligent children, we find that one of the general traits among them is management ability and leadership tendency (Chan, 2007). However, the relationship between leadership and intelligence is not clear and it is not necessarily a linear relation. Most of the teachers believe that intelligent children like to be a leader and to have developed cognitive skills and also, they are interested in the world and subjects surrounding it (Sosik and Megerian, 1999). Although, some people believe that the leaders, like

political leaders, have a very high IQ, they have little influence, because this intelligence makes a gap between them and people, so those leaders who can't communicate well with other people can not have effect on them. A large number of studies have shown that intelligent students compared to their average peers show a moderate level of adaptability not only in university education, but also in a better social and emotional development. The leader with emotional intelligence knows how to manage feelings and emotions so that they can have the ability to concentrate, to think well under environmental pressures and to be flexible in critical conditions. Most leaders, in order to confront international world changes effectively and creatively, not only do they have enough and appropriate skills and knowledge but also, need a high level of emotion and wisdom (Young Lee and Olszewski-Kubilius, 2006). Oakland *et al.* (1996) cited leadership generally includes: Strength and effect, Behavior management skill, Personality traits, Reaction and interaction among personality traits, sources and environmental needs. In a study, which reviewed 5000 studies, leadership has different definitions, which include personality traits, behavior and action, a pattern of beliefs, creativity, strong or effective relation with other people. Often the leadership includes a main part of intelligence (Smyth and Ross, 1999).

Humphrey (2002) focused on analysis and review of seven articles on emotion and special leadership. In his analysis, Humphrey discussed the articles according to four key elements of leadership. The first element focuses on essential characteristic for leadership. Empathy was mentioned as an important variable in leadership and emotional intelligence. The second element focuses on emotional relation in leadership processes and they believe that the leaders manage group members' emotions, particularly, according to the feelings, which are related to failure and optimism. The third one is related to our perception of the leaders. It was proved managers' emotional features have a high influence on people's perception of managers. The fourth element is related to the relationship between leadership and performance. The leader's impression on emotional process variables is considered as an important factor for optimal performance (Charbonneau and Nicol, 2002). Considering the aforementioned literature, there were 4 hypotheses in this study. The first hypothesis considers emotional intelligence in intelligent students more than that of average students. The second hypothesis supposes more leadership among intelligent students than in average students. The third hypothesis predicts that emotional intelligence is different, in interaction with sex, in

intelligent and average students. The fourth hypothesis predicts that leadership tendency is different among intelligent and average students in interaction with sex.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population and sampling: The population of this study included all high school intelligent girls and boys of Ardabil (2006-2007). The samples were 256 students including 128 intelligent students (64 girls and 64 boys), which were selected randomly and 128 average students (64 girls and 64 boys), which at first were selected through cluster sampling method and then randomly.

Data collection instruments: Schute's emotional intelligence questionnaire: This questionnaire included 33 items, which was made by Schute on the basis of Malvey and Solvay's theory. The reliability of this questionnaire was reported 84% and in some studies 89% (Lonski *et al.*, 1998). Also, the finding of present study shows that emotional intelligence scale has a very high reliability among average students (81%).

Leadership ability questionnaire: This questionnaire is a self-report instrument, which measures leadership ability in 16 items, in which 13 items are multiple-choice (1-7) and 3 items (8, 11, 16) are choices through, which subjects must determine their agreement and importance degree with one other in a 4-degree scale. It measures two kinds

of leadership styles: imposing and bossy leadership, which lacks emotional intelligence and psychological skills and clever leadership style, which emphasizes leadership psychology and emotional intelligence. During a basic study on 50 students, the Alpha Cronbach coefficient of this questionnaire was 69%. In order to compare 2 groups in terms of the required variables, a causal-comparative method was used. Finally, in order to analyze the data, a two-factor variance test was used.

RESULTS

The average and intelligent students' mean of age was 45 and 34% were in the first grade, 32.2% in the second grade and 32.8% in the third grade of high school (Table 1 and 2).

According to Table 3, there is a significant difference in 2 sexes, in schools for intelligent students and ordinary schools and in scores of leadership and emotional intelligence.

In a way that there is a significant difference among intelligent and average students in the emotional intelligence and leadership tendency's scores and intelligent students have obtained higher scores in emotional intelligence and leadership tendency. Also, a significant difference was found among girl and boy students in the emotional intelligence and leadership tendency scores, as girl students had a higher mean of scores in the emotional intelligence and leadership.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of intelligent students in emotional intelligence and leadership

Parameters	Intelligent students		
	Girl	Boy	Total
Self evaluation emotion	6.53±2.14	6.54±1.88	6.54±2.01
Others' emotion evaluation	19.55±4.60	20.73±3.69	20.14±4.19
Emotion expression	6.80±1.99	6.82±1.69	6.81±1.84
Self regulation emotion	26.36±13.64	25.62±3.76	25.99±9.93
Emotion benefit	12.33±2.99	12.96±2.24	12.65±2.65
Others' emotion regulation	16.33±3.23	16.34±2.43	16.33±2.84
Global emotional intelligence	07.199±186.31	142.85±97.00	170.74±150.27
Bossy leadership	17.56±5.50	17.11±6.09	17.33±5.78
Clever leadership	15.71±4.48	16.03±4.98	15.87±4.72
Leadership (global)	33.27±5.48	33.15±5.41	33.21±5.43

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of average students in leadership and emotional intelligence

Parameters	Average students		
	Girl	Boy	Total
Self evaluation emotion	7.38±1.31	7.23±1.78	7.35±1.56
Others' emotion evaluation	20.81±2.67	20.34±3.07	20.58±2.87
Emotion expression	7.23±1.65	6.79±1.77	7.01±1.72
Self regulation emotion	28.61±17.34	25.76±2.71	27.20±12.49
Emotion benefit	13.89±2.12	13.56±2.11	13.72±2.12
Others' emotion regulation	17.43±2.35	16.89±2.08	17.16±2.23
Global emotional intelligence	128.49±49.46	121.39±85.97	124.69±69.81
Bossy leadership	17.86±4.60	15.61±4.35	17.21±4.60
Clever leadership	14.41±3.60	14.08±3.90	14.24±3.74
Leadership (global)	32.28±3.95	29.69±4.93	30.97±4.64

Data are expressed as mean±SD

Table 3: Subjects' variance analysis test

Subjects	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Gender					
Emotional intelligence	64146.31	1	64146.31	4.80	0.02
Leadership	117.08	1	117.08	4.69	0.03
School					
Emotional intelligence	135571.79	1	135571.79	10.14	0.00
Leadership	316.35	1	316.35	12.69	0.00
Gender x School					
Emotional intelligence	38597.01	1	38597.01	2.88	0.09
Leadership	96.56	1	96.56	3.87	0.05

DISCUSSION

The present study indicated that intelligent students obtained higher scores in emotional intelligence and leadership than their average peers. If we compare the results from this study with other studies, there is so much correspondence among them. Smith and Ross (1999) express that among intelligent adolescents leadership skills are significantly higher than those of average adolescents. Also, in a study conducted by Young Lee and Olszewski-Kubilius (2006) on 200 intelligent students, it was shown that intelligent students were above the middle level of leadership in comparison with the average students. Some researchers in a longitudinal study concluded that children with a high IQ showed positive psychology and social adaptability pattern (Young Lee and Olszewski-Kubilius, 2006). In addition, the studies have shown that intelligent students (from primary school to high school) got higher scores than average students regarding emotional intelligence. Considering the definitions made about intelligence the results of the present study can be justifiable since today emotional intelligence and leadership are known as separate dimensions of intelligence. Moreover, the third and fourth hypotheses of the study-interaction among genders, emotional intelligence and leadership tendency were the next aim of this study. According to the findings of this study, a significant difference was obtained between girl and boy students' leadership tendency and emotional intelligence that is, the mean score of girl students was higher in leadership tendency and emotional intelligence. Reviewing the previous studies, we see similar findings in this respect; for example some studies have shown women's leadership ability to be more than men's (Carless, 1998). Carless (1998) studied gender differences of a big international bank employees' transformational leadership. This study showed that women's management in transformational leadership style is much higher than men's and women have more interpersonal orientation. According to Mandell and Pherwani (2003) women's emotional intelligence mean of scores was more than that of men. These researchers believe that

women, compared to men, can manage their and others' emotions better. Mayer *et al.* (1999) and Mayer and Geher (2002) obtained similar findings about women's high emotional intelligence. In a study, on 34 primary school intelligent students, girl students obtained higher means than boy students in empathy (interest and tolerating others), responsibility (ability in taking on responsibility and commitment) and micro scales of leadership (As cited by Mandell and Pherwani, 2003) while, other studies obtained no difference between men and women in leadership dimension (As cited by Mandall and Phrwani, 1990). According to meta-analysis of Eagley and Johnson (1990) unlike the common beliefs in gender and the expectation, in which women must have a relation centered leadership style and men an activity-centered leadership style, studies have indicated that men and women have no differences in these leadership styles. However, in democratic and dictatorial leadership, women have a more tendency to democratic leadership than do men. Generally, Eagley and Johnson (1990) believe that the findings of this study and other studies show the theory of social role in gender differences resulting from social behaviors.

To explain the results of this study, it must be said that although the origins of men and women's emotional differences is almost natural, it goes back to people's childhood and emotional world, in which girls and boys grew up. Girls and boys take many different lessons in order to control their emotions. In general, parents talk to their girls more than boys about emotions and compared to boys, they provide more information about emotions to girls.

The presence of conflicts in developing emotions leads to very different skills. So, girls are more able to find verbal and nonverbal emotional signs to express their feelings and transfer them to others and as a result they have higher emotional intelligence. Moreover, having skill regarding emotional traits in leadership is so important. To be matched with the feelings of whom we work with, to have the ability to solve the problems before they worsen and to be involved in what one is doing are important qualities in leadership. In fact leadership does not mean dominance, but is an art of convincing people to work towards a certain goal (Barling *et al.*, 2000). Considering what was said before, we except high emotional intelligence and leadership tendency among girl students.

CONCLUSION

Generally, results of the present study show that leadership and emotional intelligence are based on interpersonal relations and therefore, are related to each other.

According to results, those who obtain higher scores in emotional intelligence can be good leaders. Therefore, in order to have effective and successful leaders in future, we have to focus on human forces of the society and prepare them to play a leadership role according to long-term plans.

The important limitations of the present study could be the limitation of samples to the city of Ardabil (Iran) and the reliance on individuals' self report for evaluating emotional intelligence and leadership tendency. This study suggests further investigation to be done on more samples particularly on research circles.

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