

## The Impact of Emotional Intelligence Training on Aggressive Students' Social Adjustment

Karami Nejad, Reza<sup>1</sup>; Moradpoor, Zahra<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Master in Psychology and Education of Exceptional Children, Department of Education, Yazd

<sup>2</sup> BA in Speech Therapy, Department of Education, Yazd

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to design the emotional intelligence training program as well as investigating its impact on aggressive students' social adjustment. The research is conducted based on the experimental method and 31 aggressive students from secondary school (15 samples as the experimental group and 16 controls) are selected based on the report by school officials about the number of people referred to school office through stratified random sampling method. In this study, the California Psychological inventory (CPI) with the social adjustment subscale is utilized to assess the social adjustment. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is applied to analyze data. The results of ANCOVA indicate that there is no significant difference between the enhanced social adjustment of emotional group and the control group after 12 sessions of training the emotional intelligence. The difference is also seen at the social adjustment subscale, but the differences are not significant at the subscales of school and family ties.

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional intelligence, social adjustment, aggressive students

### INTRODUCTION

The adjustment or non-adjustment to surrounding world can affect every aspect of people's lives as well as their success in various fields. Therefore, the social adjustment is essential for all people to take advantage of opportunities in society. If people have a little ability to manage their emotions, they will not be able to obtain sufficient social support in stressful situations [20]. It seems that it is difficult to adjust to society without receiving the appropriate social support in problems of life. Therefore, it seems essential to acquire the necessary skills to adjust with these demands and changes. Despite the fact that the successful schools have come to this belief that it is essential to be professional in basic skills such as reading, writing, mathematics and strengthening the scientific bases in other fields such as sciences, history and foreign language, there is not still a serious belief in the need and importance of increased social and emotional skills and competence at some schools. The recent studies have indicated that the teachers and parents have currently supported more comprehensive curricula which enhance the social and emotional skills in teachers and students, and thus most of the schools have developed their non-educational skills such as social skills along with their traditional tasks (reading, writing, sciences and mathematics) [5].

After raising the emotional intelligence issue by researchers, a lot of attention is paid on it [27]. Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between the emotional intelligence and various areas of life. Some studies have indicated that the emotional intelligence can help the people's higher adjustment [3]. The emotional intelligence can create higher adjustment in people though the individual ability to resolve the contradictions and conflicts successfully [1 - 6 - 7 - 15 - 16 - 18 - 19 - 23 - 24 - 25 - 28 - 29].

From the perspective of emotional intelligence, it refers to the ability to monitor the own and others' feelings and emotions, distinguish them and use of this information to guide the thought and action [27]. In new definition, Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth [22]. In this model, the emotional intelligence consists of four skills, Perceiving Emotions, Understanding Emotions, Using Emotions to Facilitate Thought and Managing Emotions [21].

According to another definition, the emotional intelligence is a set of non-cognitive abilities, skills and capacities which affect the individual ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures. In this model, the emotional intelligence includes the interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, adjustment, stress management and general mood [3]. The emotion management and adaptability are the major factors of emotional intelligence. In fact, the emotional intelligence is the ability to establish a positive relationship with ourselves and others. On the other hand, when the individuals have a little ability to manage their emotions, they will not be able to gain sufficient social support in stressful situations [20]. The social support can create the adjustment for person. While dealing with a stressful event, the individual positive mood leads to active coping way, social

support and better adjustment [2]. Furthermore, the ability to manage the stress and to have the emotional stability will lead to the social adjustment [11].

The conflict resolution and interpersonal issues are significantly important in individual adjustment after understanding the perspective of others. The problem solving ability, which is considered as the ability to use the emotions in problem solving process, is effective as the core emotional competencies through the adjusting approach [4]. The individual evaluation of skills in solving the problem is closely related to social adjustment, so that the negative evaluation of skills in solving the problems is along with difficulties in adjustment, and the positive evaluation of skills in problem solving is along with further adjustment. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between social problem-solving ability and adjustment [25]. Therefore, it seems logical and accessible that the people with higher ability to solve the problems and conflicts with people are more successful in adjustment with society.

The relationship between three variables of positive perceptions (including the self-confident, positive attribution style and optimism) and adjustment is investigated and confirmed [6]. The optimism is one of the dimensions of emotional intelligence in Bar-On model and this study indicates the relationship between the effectiveness of this subscale and adjustment. It seems that the positive perception and optimism about the surrounding world can help a person to adjust more to it and this positive orientation provides a field for acquiring more enjoyment for surrounding world. Furthermore, the high emotional intelligence and the ability to adjust the emotions can enhance the human enjoyment for life [31].

The people, who have better ability to understand and get their own and other individuals' emotions, have this opportunity to have more adjusting behavior in dealing with various life situations by taking the advantages of these types of information. Based on these findings, the students, who have difficulties in understanding the emotional facial expressions, significantly have problems. Furthermore, the skill of understanding the nonverbal emotional states (understanding the facial states without verbal expression of that case) plays an important role in social and scholastic adjustment [15]. The emotional intelligence skills can predict the psychological adjustment; moreover, the ability to understand the emotions accurately and regulate the emotions has a significant positive correlation with better adjustment [12].

Furthermore, this study indicates that the success of social adjustment has a correlation with precise understanding of changes in other individuals' emotional states and this indicates that it is essential to understand the other individuals' emotions for achieving the adjustment at different social levels. Different conducted studies in our country investigate the correlation between the adjustment and emotional intelligence in various groups. The findings indicate that there is a positive and significant correlation between the emotional intelligence and individual and social adjustment [10-13-26].

Despite the fact that some of the studies have confirmed the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training on increased adjustment, there is a need for designing the appropriate programs for this field and increasing the emotional intelligence skills.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is experimental with a control group and random assignment. The statistical population consists of all aggressive students at secondary schools of Yazd during the school year of 2012-13. To identify the aggressive individuals, first six schools are selected by stratified random sampling method. Furthermore, the students who had the highest aggression at school according to the survey of principals and there were more reports about it, are selected for sampling. Three schools were selected as the experimental group and 3 ones as the control group. A pre-test was implemented at both groups and the post-test was done for each group after the intervention.

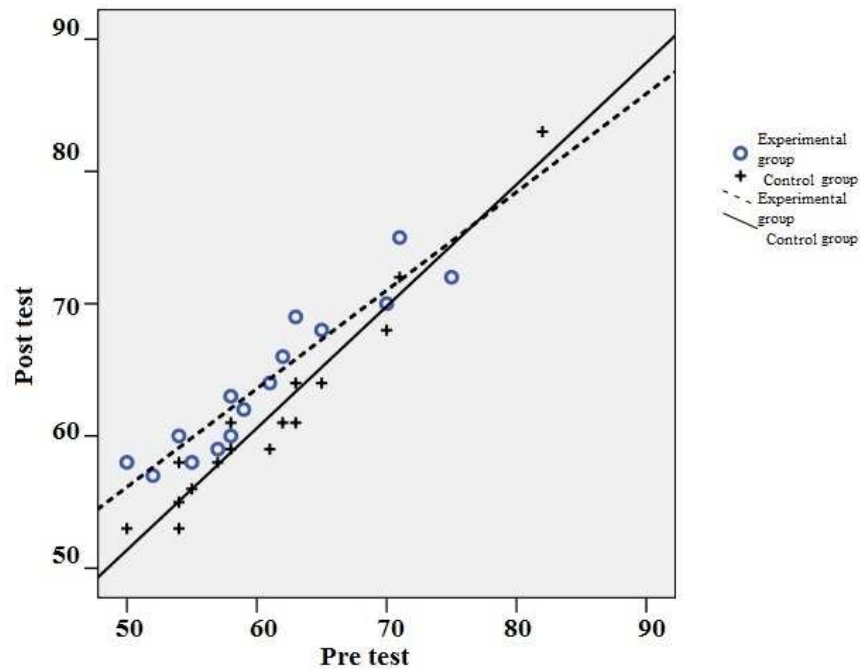
**Emotional intelligence Training Program:** This program is based on Bar-On theory and 15 skills are taught at one-hour 12 sessions.

**Research tool:** The California Psychological inventory (the social adjustment as the subscale) is applied to evaluate the social adjustment in this study. The California Psychological inventory is designed by Thorpe, Clark and Tiegs and revised in 1953. This test has 5 age levels of pre-school, elementary, secondary, and high schools. The California Psychological inventory is designed for measuring various life adjustments and is between two poles of personality and social adjustments and thus a half of these questionnaires are applied for measuring 6 types of adjustment and the other half for measuring 6 types of social trust. Each of these axes separately has 90 questions with two Yes and No options which constitute 180 questions of this questionnaire [30].

In this study and according to the subscale of social adjustment translated into Persian, each scale of social and individual adjustment has 6 subscales and each subscale has 15 questions. The social adjustment subscales are as follows: 1. Social features, 2. Social skills, 3. Antisocial interests, 4. Familial relationships, 5. Scholastic relationships, and 6. Social relationships.

## RESULTS

This research has the experimental type and investigated through the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The ANCOVA test is applied for more investigation of the impact of EI training on the enhanced social adjustment in secondary school students. Therefore, the linear relationship between the covariance and dependent variables is investigated as well as the equality regression slope of both experimental and control groups.



**Diagram (1) Variance Plot of pre-test and post-test scores of adjustment**

According to the Diagram (1), there is a linear relationship between the pre-test and post-test scores. Furthermore, the slopes of two regression lines of experimental and control groups are equal and this approves the assumptions of ANCOVA test. According to the available evidence, the ANCOVA test is an appropriate method for assessing the effect of training ways on the mean experimental group compared with the control group as follows.

**Table (1) Analysis of covariance for investigating the impact of emotional intelligence training on the aggressive students' adjustment**

Variance Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.	$\omega^2$
Covariance	1083.70	1	1083.70	221.31	0.0001	0.93
Group	92.88	1	82.88	16.92	0.001	0.51
Error	78.34	28	2.78			
Total	77270.00	31				

According to the data of Table (1), there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups after adjusting the impact of covariance variable (pre-test) in post-test of adjustment ( $\omega^2= 0.51$ ,  $P=0.001$ ,  $F= (1, 28)$ ). The adjusted mean scores of adjustment indicate that the group, for which the intervention of emotional intelligence training is done (experimental group), has higher score of adjustment than the group which has not received the EI training (control group). Thus, the response to the first question of research is positive and it can be concluded based on the data that the EI training increases the aggressive students' adjustment at secondary school.

**Table 2 Analysis of covariance for investigating the impact of EI training on social adjustment and its subscales**

Variance Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Social features subscale					
Covariance	51.24	1	51.24	28.52	0.001
Group	8.60	1	8.60	4.78	0.04
Error	28.75	28	1.02		
Social skills subscale					
Covariance	26.04	1	26.04	21.53	0.001
Group	7.58	1	7.58	6.27	0.02
Error	19.34	28	0.69		
Antisocial interests subscale					
Covariance	22.25	1	22.25	17.17	0.001
Group	8.79	1	8.79	6.78	0.019
Error	20.73	28	0.74		
Familial relationships subscale					
Covariance	42.31	1	42.31	24.01	0.001
Group	0.24	1	0.24	0.14	0.71
Error	28.18	28	1.00		
Scholastic relationships subscale					
Covariance	69.13	1	69.13	59.20	0.001
Group	0.77	1	0.77	0.66	0.42
Error	18.18	28	0.67		
Social relations subscale					
Covariance	90.79	1	90.79	41.79	0.001
Group	11.62	1	11.62	5.35	0.03
Error	34.76	28	1.24		

According to the data of Table (2), significant changes are made at the subscales, namely, the social features, social skills, antisocial interests and social relationships due to implementing the emotional intelligence training program, but the changes are not significant at familial and scholastic relationships subscales.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research data indicates that the scores of social adjustment test for experimental group have been significantly increased compared to the control group after implementing the EI training program. According to this research, the emotional intelligence training can help the individuals' better adjustment and this research is consistent with the studies of [12 - 16 - 18 - 19 - 23 - 28].

The adjustment helps the establishment of good and positive relationships with people and environment. The impact of emotional intelligence training on the enhanced adjustment can be investigated according to various dimensions of emotional intelligence.

The emotional self-awareness is one of the subsets of interpersonal skills and refers to the ability to understand the self feeling and emotions. The findings have indicated that the emotional states affect the social judgment, but how the emotions affect our thinking and judgment? In some studies, the impact of emotions is confirmed on the human understanding of events in surrounding environment [14]. The human subjects have the abilities to understand the environmental events in an exaggerated forms or too less than their fact; and the emotions determine our perception of facts. Some researchers believe that the human judgment and understanding of environment is not affected by human cognitive intelligence and the factors other than the cognitive intelligence affect the human judgment. The emotions reduce the rate of human use of signs; despite the fact that it is an advantage in some cases, it often leads to the reduced performance control [9].

Being happy or sad affects the content and style of thinking because these emotions affect the importance of relevant issues [8]. The adjustment to environment is not obtained without the exact evaluation and understanding; and on the other hand, the human evaluation is affected by his emotional states. Therefore, it is obvious that it is essential to understand and identify the emotional states for being adjusted to environment because identifying the emotions enables the human to control its impact on the self-judgment or at least be aware of the impact of these emotional states on understanding, receiving and judging the environment and other humans. On the other hand, there is a significant negative correlation between the accurate processing and perception of emotions and the non-adjusting responses to them such as the social panic and anxiety [17]. It seems that, the person understands his excitement more than the actual size and thus shows the non-adjusting responses. Through accurate identification of self emotions, the EI helps to adjust to environment more properly.

Furthermore, the interpersonal skills refer to an accurate understanding of other individuals' and emotions and the efforts to look at the world according to their view. Some studies have confirmed the impact of individual accurate assessment and understanding of others' emotions on his more adjustment, so that the

accurate understanding of emotional states is essential and important for social adjustment [11]. According to this issue, it can be concluded that we need to understand the individuals' emotional states through their facial and body expressions, volume and intensity of voice and other evidence in order to be adjusted to them. It is impossible to understand the individuals' needs and demands without understanding their emotional states; and understanding the individuals' emotions is the initial step in understanding their needs and demands. The empathy, which is the skill of understanding the other individuals' views and looking at the world according to the other individual's view, has a positive and significant with adjustment [11]. Sometimes, it is difficult to reach an agreement without considering the other individual's view on the target issue. Meanwhile, the skill of understanding the nonverbal emotions and feelings (understanding the facial expressions without saying a word about it) plays an important role in social and scholastic adjustment [15]. Understanding the other individuals' emotional states is one of the emotional intelligence dimensions which can be improved by proper training. Therefore, the individuals can gain the social adjustment by enabling them to understand the other individuals' emotional states.

The stress management is another emotional intelligence subscale which refers to the way of coping with pressures and demands of environment and stressors. The stress management and adjustment ability are among the main factors of emotional intelligence. In fact, the emotional intelligence is the ability to make a positive relationship with ourselves and others [3]. Whenever the people have a little ability to manage their emotions, they will not be able to gain sufficient social support in stressful situations [20]. The ability to manage the stress and utilizing the emotional stability will lead to social adjustment [11]. Probably it seems that the people do not tend to have relationship with those who have unstable emotions and it is assumed that the relationship is difficult with those people and the established relationship is very fragile. The raised issues indicate the importance of stress management in adjustment. Perhaps, this relationship can be explained as follows: When the person is not able to manage the stress and pressures of life, he will fail while facing these pressures and lose the ability to respond to the requirements and needs of adjustment.

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