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## Emotional intelligence (EI) among students of School of Nursing and Midwifery, Zahedan in 2016

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### ABSTRACT

In the educational system, the emphasis is purely on academic ability, and Emotional Intelligence (EI) is ignored, but social and emotional abilities and competencies are considered among the determining factors in academic success. Given the importance of EI and lack of attention to this issue in the curriculum of the students and the quality of the performance of the educational system in this regard, this study was conducted to investigate EI among students of the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Zahedan. This study is a descriptive-analytical one of cross-sectional type. It has conducted on 120 nursing and midwifery students in 2016. To collect data, a two-part questionnaire was used. The first part was related to demographic characteristics and second part was standard EI questionnaire by Bradbury-Graves. After collecting the questionnaires, data were analyzed using SPSS 19 software. The results showed that the mean age of people was  $36.54 \pm 10.03$ . The overall mean of EI among students was  $110.81 \pm 15.8$  that is reported to be high according to the rating of the questionnaires. This mean for of self-consciousness was  $25.90 \pm 4.34$ ; self-management,  $32.67 \pm 6.07$ ; social awareness,  $20.12 \pm 3.50$  and relationship management,  $32.10 \pm 6.04$ . The relationship between age and marital status with mean scores of EI and each of its components was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). The results of the study showed that EI is high among nursing and midwifery students. Given the importance of EI in health promotion and subsequently academic achievement, it is recommended that EI and the need to promote it be taken into consideration in university curriculum.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, students.

### INTRODUCTION

In Iran educational system, there is the problem of simply focusing on academic ability and ignoring EI, which is a collection of attributes that are extremely important in the fate of individuals, while social and emotional competences and capabilities are among the factors affecting academic success. Academic achievement refers to the ability learned or acquired by the person in school subjects, which are measure through standardized or teacher-made tests (1). In recent decades, EI and its attractive and extensive aspects have attracted the attention of not only psychologists and psychiatrists but also the public. Based on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, there are two major types of intelligence: first, the inner intelligence and consciousness of the individual that allows the

identification and differentiation of complex emotions of human, and the second is the knowledge in interpersonal relationships that brings about the ability to recognize and distinguish emotions and incentives of others (2). EI is a multidimensional construct and involves interaction between the knowledge emotion, which leads to adaptive functioning (3) Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso see EI as containing four interconnected abilities: perception of emotions in oneself and others, using of emotion to facilitate decision making and understanding and managing emotions (4).

There is so much evidence proving that people who have emotional skills, those who know their feelings well and guide them and understand others' feelings and effectively dealt with them, are excellent in each area of life, whether in emotional relationships or in understanding the unspoken rules that lead to progress in the organization's policy. These people are happy and efficient in their lives and have the mindset that makes them productive and efficient. According to some researchers, determining factors in academic achievement are intelligence, family environment, parents' education, the relationship between patterns, motivation, self-concept, and psychological adjustment (5).

In general, there are two major patterns towards conceptualization of EI. The ability pattern, which refers to the fact that this structure, like other ability structures such as cognitive intelligence and traits pattern, considers structures like personality traits including extraversion and conscientiousness. In the first model, EI is divided into three categories, emotion regulation, emotional assessment, and using emotions in solving problems. Emotional adjustment refers to the ability to adjust negative emotions and remove their damaging effects on psychological adjustment and the ability to maintain positive emotions that have hedonic value. In fact, emotional productivity is the understanding and using emotions and emotional information. In addition, emotions are used to pay attention to the important aspects of the social world, creativity, flexible viewpoints, and maintaining motivational factors to achieve the goals. Emotional assessment refers to the ability to detect emotions correctly in oneself and others, as well as the ability to detect differences in honest and dishonest expression of emotions (6).

Given the importance of EI and lack of attention to this issue in the curriculum of the students and the quality of the performance of educational system in this regard, this study was conducted aimed at reviewing EI among students of School of Nursing and Midwifery of Zahedan.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a descriptive-analytical one of cross-sectional type that was conducted on 120 nursing and midwifery students in 2016. To collect data, a two-part questionnaire was used where the first part was related to demographic characteristics (age, sex, and major) and second part was standard EI questionnaire by Bradbury-Graves that has 28 questions divided into total EI scale and subscale of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The four components are described as 1. Self-awareness: this is the ability to identify emotions accurately when they occur and understanding one's own usual way to respond to people in different situations. 2. Self-management: this is the ability to control emotions, through which one can remain flexible and while facing people and different situations can respond positively and effectively. 3. Social awareness: this means the ability to understand the emotions of others individually or as a group that is necessary to control and manage the relationship. 4. Relationship management: this is the ability to use emotions of oneself and others for constructive and positive management of interactions and relationships. The questionnaire scoring methods is using a 6-point scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, usually, and always) from 1 to 6 where the total scores the subjects get in each of the questions makes up the total scores. According to the questionnaire, scores greater than 80 indicate a high EI, 60 to 80 represents average EI, and score lower than 60 indicates low EI. The validity of the questionnaire is approved by Qadri et al, the reliability coefficient is obtained for the four skills as follows: self-awareness (0.90), self-management (0.87), social awareness (0.80), relationship management (0.78) and the total score of EI (0.84) (7).

To collect data, the researcher referred to the School of Nursing and Midwifery. First, the aim of the study was explained to people, and after obtaining oral consent, the required number of questionnaires was distributed among them. Finally, after collecting the questionnaires, the data were analyzed using SPSS 19, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, analysis of variance, and t-test.

### Findings:

The results showed that the mean age of the individuals was  $36.54 \pm 10.03$ ; there were 85 women (70.2%), 50 subjects (41.3%) were nursing students, 54 (44.7%) operating room, and 16 subjects (14.0 percent) midwifery. The overall mean of  $\bar{Q}$  in EI was  $110.81 \pm 15.8$  that is reported to be high according to the rating of the questionnaires. This mean for of self-consciousness was  $25.90 \pm 4.34$ ; self-management,  $32.67 \pm 6.07$ ; social awareness,  $20.12 \pm 3.50$  and relationship management,  $32.10 \pm 6.04$ . The relationship between age and marital status, with mean of total scores of EI and each of its components was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). EI was higher among women. The relationship between major, EI, and each of its components is listed in Table 1.

Table 1: The relationship between major, EI, and each of its components

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	P Value
EI total score	Nursing	109.3200	17.01912	35.00	149.00	0.670
	Operation room	111.6481	14.89860	53.00	136.00	
	Midwifery	112.5882	15.46390	95.00	156.00	
Self-awareness	Nursing	25.5200	4.59476	6.00	36.00	0.713
	Operation room	26.2037	4.48216	8.00	33.00	
	Midwifery	26.1176	3.14011	21.00	34.00	
Self-management	Nursing	32.0400	6.43003	11.00	50.00	0.607
	Operation room	33.0185	5.59140	14.00	46.00	
	Midwifery	33.4706	6.66256	26.00	54.00	
Social Awareness	Nursing	20.2200	3.67723	7.00	29.00	0.313
	Operation room	19.7037	3.44022	12.00	30.00	
	Midwifery	21.1765	3.14713	17.00	30.00	
Relationship Management	Nursing	31.5400	6.22113	11.00	43.00	0.599
	Operation room	32.7222	5.30367	16.00	43.00	
	Midwifery	31.8235	7.73171	13.00	45.00	

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that EI of the students is at a high level. In the study by Shahbazi et al that was conducted on students from three universities in Ahvaz, it was showed that EI level of most students is average (8). The study by Jannati et al that was conducted on nursing and midwifery students of Mazandaran also concluded that EI of the students is at an average level. The results of other studies have also been similar (9, 10). Emotions are an important part of the communication network. Problem in cognition, expressing organizing and managing emotions cause defects in a person's relationship with others. Therefore, a reduction in EI, this network becomes faulty. According to various studies, EI is associated with psychological adjustment processes. Due to their shifting nature, emotions can be experienced in different states of consciousness and unconsciousness. In addition, those emotions that are source of anxiety are driven to unconscious by defense mechanisms. Research has shown that the people who have high EI can express their emotions better and more effectively without causing discomfort for self and others (11). One part of emotional intelligence is an innate capacity, but the other part is acquired through human experience, and this part can be promoted by effort, practice, and experience by psychotherapy, thinking, raising awareness, counseling, and coaching (12).

No statistically significant difference was observed in the average score of EI in male and female students. However, the average score of EI in girls was more than in boys. Sioberg (2001) observed that the women have higher social EI than men (13).

Although comparing our findings with the results of other studies indicates that the level of EI of students is at a high level, but it can be improved through effective programs. A study showed that total EI and its subscales in the experimental group before and after training are significantly different. Then they concluded that EI training and promoting it in people are effective (14). For this purpose, it is better to consider a series of training courses to improve and maintain the level of EI to affect the rate of progress of people positively, so that in dealing with problems and stress instead of withdrawing, the person welcomes the challenges and despite the risk does not give up.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that EI is high among nursing and midwifery students.

Given the importance of EI in health promotion and subsequently academic achievement, it is recommended that EI and the need to promote it be taken into consideration in university curriculum. Training skills related to EI can increase academic success both in long-term and short-term. Thus, it is suggested that in colleges, in addition to attention to intelligence and cognitive talents, some practical actions be carry out by the inclusion of the concept of EI in training program for students in the form of training sessions on improving social skills and life skills, and emotional and social growth. Moreover, the students should be helped to cope with the social and academic pressures better and thus reduce the failure in studies.

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