

Studies in Learning & Instruction
Vol. 3, No. 2, 2012, Ser. 61/2

Extended Abstract

A Study of Causal Relationship between Social and Emotional Learning and School Success in Iranian's Adolescents based on Zins's Model of Social-Emotional Learning

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Introduction

Numerous parents, educators, community leaders want young people to:

- Be fully literate, able to benefit from and make use of the power of written and spoken language, in various forms;
- Understand mathematics and science at levels that will prepare them for the world of the future and strengthen their ability to think critically, carefully and creatively;
- Be good problem-solvers;
- Take responsibility for their personal health and well-being;
- Develop effective social relationships such as learning how to work in a group and how to understand and relate to others from different cultures and backgrounds;
- Be caring individuals with concern and respect for others;
- Understand how their society works and be prepared to take on the roles that are necessary for future progress;
- Develop good character and make sound moral decisions.

All of these are aspects of what some refer to as the 'education of the whole child'.

Educating the whole child is not a new idea. It is rooted in the writings and teachings of many ancient cultures. Yet, achieving the

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kind of balance that encourages all children to learn, work and contribute to their fullest potential has been a continuing challenge as our world has grown more complex and our communities more fragmented.

Social-emotional skills are all the things that students need for success in school and in life. Social-emotional skills, or ‘emotional intelligence’, is the name given to the set of abilities that allows students to work with others, learn effectively, and serve essential roles in their families, communities and places of work. Social and emotional learning is the process through which children enhance their ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behaviour to achieve important social tasks. They learn to recognize and manage their emotions; establish healthy relationships; set positive goals; meet personal and social needs; make responsible decisions; and solve problems. They are taught to use a variety of cognitive and interpersonal skills to achieve in an ethical manner developmentally and socially relevant goals. Further, environmental supports are created to foster the development and application of these skills to multiple settings and situations. Among the relevant SEL skills fostered are stress management; problem solving, decision-making, communication, social, and conflict resolution skills; self-management; and so forth, all of which can contribute to school success.

The aim of this study was to examine Causal Relationship between Social and Emotional Learning and School Success in Iranian adolescents based on Zins’s Model of Social-Emotional Learning. On the basis of existing evidence, our hypotheses were: First it was expected that social-emotional competency and school attachment to be as mediator variables in relationship between social emotional school climate as an exogenous variable and academic successes as endogenous variable. Second, it was predicted that sex to be a variable that affects relationship between variables.

Method

Participants and procedure

A total of 241 highschool students (97 girls and 144 boys) from Shiraz high schools were participants of this study selected by cluster sampling method. All participants were asked to complete psychological sense of school membership (PSSM) (Goodenow, 1993), School Attitude Assessment Survey (SAAS-R), (McCoach, & Seigle, 2000), school culture scale (Higgins-D'Alessandro, & Sath, 1997), and Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) (Petrides, & Furnham, 2005).

Measures

Psychological sense of school membership (PSSM) (Goodenow, 1993): The PSSM is a 19 item scale that measures attachment to school in adolescents and university students. The PSSM is a 19-item scale designed for use in adolescent populations. Scale items (containing a five-point response format) are intended to capture perceived liking, personal acceptance/belonging, and inclusion in school activities as well as respect and encouragement for participation. Factor analysis of the PSSM identified three distinct dimensions: feelings of acceptance, respect, and inclusion in activities (6 items, e.g., other students in this school take my opinions seriously, feelings of acceptance and respect from teachers (4 items, e.g., teachers here are not interested in people like me; and feelings of general acceptance and belonging (3 items, e.g., it's hard for people like me to be accepted here. Adequate psychometric property of scale and a four factor structure of this scale have been reported by Marshal (2009). In this study the internal consistency reliability of the scale was about 0.84 and validity of this scale was high and good.

School Attitude Assessment Survey (SAAS-R), (McCoach, & Seigle, 2000): The SAAS-R is a revised version of an oldest version by McCoach (1993). The SAAS-R employed a 5-point Likert-type agreement scale. Examples of questions from the SAAS-R include: "I put a lot of effort into my schoolwork" (motivation/goal-valuation), "I

am confident in my scholastic abilities" (academic self-perceptions), "My teachers make learning interesting" (attitudes towards teachers), "I am glad that I go to this school" (attitude toward school), and "I want to get good grades in school". Adequate psychometric property of scale and a four factor structure of this scale have been reported by McCoach, & Seigle (2000, 2001). In this study the internal consistency reliability of the scale was about .95 and validity of this scale was high and good.

School Culture Scale (Higgins-D'Alessandroand, & Sadh, 1997): In order to examine school climate, we examined teacher support, peer support, student autonomy and clarity and consistency in school rules. These four dimensions were assessed through subscales of the School Climate Scale developed by Higgins-D'Alessandroand Sadh, (1997). Adequate psychometric property of scale and a four factor structure of this scale have been reported by McCoach and Seigle (2000, 2001). In this study the internal consistency reliability of the scale was about 0.93 and validity of this scale was high and good.

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire--Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF) (Petrides, & Furnham, 2005): The TEIQue-ASF is a simplified version, in terms of wording and syntactic complexity, of the adult short form of the TEIQue. The ASF version comprises 30 short statements, two for each of the 15 trait EI facets, designed to measure *global* trait EI. The internal consistency reliability of the scale is usually above 0.80 and has never dropped below 0.70 in any of our studies. The form has been successful with children as young as 11 year old. Example items include 'I can control my anger when I want to', 'I feel good about myself' and 'I'm good at getting along with my classmates'. In this study the internal consistency reliability of the scale was about 0.90 and validity of this scale was high and good.

Results

A correlational analysis was performed to assess the kind of association existing among variables. Analysis of the data involved

descriptive and inferential including means, standards deviation, t test and multiple regression analysis. The results revealed that two hypotheses of this study were supported by data and show that social-emotional competency and school attachment were as mediator variables in relationship between social-emotional school climate as an exogenous variable and academic successes as endogenous variable. Gender performed as moderator variable in the relationships and between variables.

Discussion

The present study found that social-emotional school climate can predict social-emotional competency and school attachment. Social-emotional school climate was a fundamental variable for academic successes and achievement motivation. Valuing learning, and believing in the importance of the task and attachment to school were variables that had relation with school culture and were fundamental predictors of academic success. Relationships between endogenous, exogenous and mediator variable in girls and boys were different.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning, Social-emotional competency, School attachment, Academic successes and academic success.