

Mediating Role of Distress Tolerance in Relationship of Emotional Maturity and Spiritual Intelligence with Adjustment to University

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Abstract

Background and Objective: Adjustment to university is an important factor in different dimensions of students' life such as mental- physical health and social adjustment in the fields outside the university. The aim of this study was to determine mediating role of distress tolerance in the relationship of spiritual intelligence and emotional maturity with adjustment to university.

Method: In this correlation study, based on Krejsi and Murgan table, 273 students of Shahid Chamran University in Ahvaz city were selected via multistage cluster sampling method during the fall semester of the academic year of 2016-2017. The participants completed the items of Emotional Maturity Scale, Distress Tolerance Scale, Spiritual Intelligence Inventory and Adjustment to College Scale. The data were then analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient, structural equation modeling. All ethical issues were observed in this study and the researchers declared no conflict of interests.

Results: The findings showed that emotional maturity, spiritual intelligence, and distress tolerance had positive significant correlation with adjustment to college. There was also a positive significant correlation between emotional maturity as well as spiritual intelligence and distress tolerance. The proposed model for relationship between these variables has acceptable fit with a correction and removal of direct path of spiritual intelligence with adjustment to college. Direct path of emotional maturity to adjustment to college was significant. The analysis based on Bootstrapping indicated that all indirect paths were significant.

Conclusion: It is proposed that to raise adjustment to university, educational programs for emotional maturity and spiritual intelligence with an emphasis on enhancing distress tolerance should be developed.

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Summary

Background and Objective: Nowadays, adjustment to university in students due to exposure to environmental and psychological stressors requires a number of features and capabilities, among which an effective coping strategy that is considered one of the subsets of general intelligence, and it has the most important role in matching the individual with the

environment and others, is the spiritual intelligence (1). The spiritual intelligence is a set of compatibility capacities in the mind based on non-physical and transcendental aspects of reality causing flexibility in behavior, deep insight into life and purposefulness, and this leads to psychological adjustment of the individual due to an attempt made to satisfy God (2, 3). Research findings indicate a positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and adjustment to university (1, 4). Additionally, people who have higher levels of

distress tolerance in different living conditions will be able to adapt sooner. Distress tolerance is a variable of individual differences that refers to the capacity of experience and resistance to emotional disturbances (5). Another structure that is related to compatibility is emotional maturity. Emotional maturity is defined as the ability of individuals to manage their emotions, along with assessing the emotional states of others in interpersonal relationships in order to make appropriate decisions and actions (6). Research findings (7, 8) indicate that emotional maturity is an important predictor of the level of success and adjustment of individuals in life. Considering the theoretical foundations and also the importance of adjustment to university in mental health of students and its impact in non-university contexts, this study seeks to explore the relationship between spiritual intelligence and emotional maturity with adjustment to university through distress tolerance mediation using the structural modeling method, and considering the lack of research in this field, a greater awareness of the university environment and student problems will be achieved.

Method: In a correlational design, using Krejcie and Morgan's table, 285 undergraduate students at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz were selected and responded to Adjustment to College, Emotional Maturity, Spiritual Intelligence, and Distress Tolerance Questionnaires. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling.

Results: Fitness indices (other than χ^2) indicate the optimal fit of the final model with data. Findings of this study indicate a direct and significant correlation between spiritual intelligence (0.40) and emotional maturity (0.52) and adjustment to college. In addition, distress tolerance has a direct and significant correlation with adjustment to college (0.47). In addition, in the final modified model, emotional maturity in both direct and indirect forms (through distress tolerance) has a significant correlation with adjustment to college, but spiritual intelligence only indirectly (through distress tolerance) has a direct correlation with adjustment to college.

Conclusion: Findings of this study indicate a positive and significant correlation between the distress tolerance and adjustment to college, which is consistent with the findings of previous research (9, 10). When exposed to stress and tension, people who have less distress tolerance have a hard time adjusting and controlling their emotions because they have less capacity to experience and resist emotional disturbance, thus they are more likely to resort to maladaptive behaviors and strategies. In this study, a positive and significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and distress tolerance was found, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies (4,11,12). In explaining the above, it can be said that spiritual intelligence actually represents a set of abilities, capacities, and resources for the meaning of experiences and problems that its application increases tolerance and resilience and reduces emotional

disturbance. Another finding of this study is a significant correlation between emotional maturity and adjustment to college through distress tolerance. To explain this, it can be argued that people with emotional maturity due to high tendency to self-regulation and self-control, have a high ability to cope with their needs and, when exposed to stress and tension, perform better in regulating and managing their emotions (6), and these individuals have a greater capacity for experiencing and resisting emotional disturbance, so levels of distress tolerance are increasing in their stressful situations, and because they use more effective coping strategies, they are more able to adjust to different situations stand against hardships, and as a consequence, they also achieve more adjustment (7,13,14). The other findings of this study suggest that in the final model, spiritual intelligence with adjustment to college, due to distress tolerance, has a significant correlation, and this conclusion is consistent with the findings of research (4,11,13,15). In explaining the above, it can be said that people with high spiritual intelligence consider life as meaningful and purposeful, and since they interpreted events in the light of the general meaning of life and beyond the material goals, while facing with the hardships of life, they are less disappointed and hoping for God make them experience less mental disturbance, more easily cope with it, have higher levels of tolerance to stressful problems and events, and thus achieve higher levels of adjustment. According to the results of this research, it is necessary that the experts involved in mental health, by providing educational strategies and workshops, try to develop emotional skills and enhance the emotional maturity and spiritual intelligence of the students in order to boost tolerance of emotional disturbances in students through management of emotions and to elevate levels of adjustment of individuals.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

The Ethics Committee in Biomedical Research of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences confirmed this research.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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