

Original Research

A Study of Relationship between Library Anxiety and Emotional Intelligence among Students of University of Tabriz and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University

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Abstract

The main objective of the present research was the possibility of predicting library anxiety (LA) concerning students' emotional intelligence (EI). This study's objective, practical research, data gathering, and research method are descriptive correlational studies. Graduate students of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University make up the statistical population of this research. Based on Morgan's formulae for sample size determination, 298 and 350 students were selected as the study's sample size. Then, the random sampling method was used to prepare the questionnaires, which were distributed and collected. The required information in preparing the questionnaires was taken from Siberia Schering's Emotional Intelligence and the "library anxiety questionnaire." For examining the research hypotheses, Pearson Correlation Test and stepwise regression were used. Based on the present study's findings, the average emotional intelligence scores of students of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University were above-average, i.e. 3.003 and 3.169, respectively. The correlation of the coefficients of emotional intelligence and library anxiety turned out to be -0.38. Also, the multiple regression analysis results showed that 17% of the changes in library anxiety can be predicted or revealed based on students' emotional intelligence, and that 83% percent of them depend on other reasons. The findings of this research can raise the awareness about the status of students' emotional intelligence and library anxiety among officials of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University and help with future decision-making and planning.

Keywords: Library Anxiety, Emotional Intelligence, Tabriz University, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, Iran

Introduction

Today, despite the great effort libraries and information centers make in preparing, organizing, and providing access to information sources, constant evaluation of the quality of library services and users' satisfaction with them is a requirement (Cleveland, 2004). Some users may experience different unpleasant feelings such as apprehension, fear, and anxiety when using the library (Hariri & Nemati, 2010). Encountering with elements such as: the building and the atmosphere of the library, new technology in libraries, large volumes of information resources, lack of research skills, and also issues related to students' interaction with library officials can make the experience of using libraries and information centers unpleasant (Mellon, 1988; Bostick, 1992; Jiao & Onwuegbuzi, 1997; Van Kampen, 2004; Ebrahimi, 2012). According to Bostick (1992), all sorts of negative affectivity about libraries, such as apprehension, hesitation, feeling the lack of ability in the face of obstacles, agitation, etc., can be defined under the term of library anxiety (LA).

Library Anxiety decreases or eliminates motivation in people for going to the library, or even causes people to leave the library before fulfilling their needs (Mellon, 1986; Butcher, 2005; Khadivi, 2007; Song, Zhang, & Clarke, 2014). It is even possible for an individual to get anxious (accompanied by fear, doubt, and apprehension) by merely thinking about going to the library and avoiding going to the library due to anxiety. Onwuegbuzi & Jiao (1998) have shown that students with high levels of library anxiety are less inclined to use the library. Also, students with library anxiety may postpone visiting the library and doing their research, which might harm their learning quality (Mellon, 1986; Butcher, 2005). It is worth mentioning that apart from library anxiety, one could point to computer anxiety, internet anxiety, research anxiety, mathematics anxiety, and exam anxiety in learning environments (Erfanmanesh, 2011; Parsaie Mohammadi, Jafari Mofrad, Haji Yakhchali & Fattahi, 2018).

Mellon (1986) and Bostick (1992) suggested a measuring tool, the first significant step to research library anxiety. Bostick's measuring tool had 43 items and 5 components (barriers related to staff, affective barriers, technology, library knowledge, and comfort with the library). Later, Van Kampen (2004) improved Bostick's tool to present a multidimensional criterion for library anxiety. It consisted of 54 items and six components (comfort and confidence when using the library, the process of searching for information, barriers related to interacting with librarians, the importance of library for the user, comfort with technology, and comfort with library building). Improving and perfecting these criteria have continued through numerous efforts and studies (Erfanmanesh, Abrizah & Noor Harun, 2002; Anwar, Al-Kandari & Al-Qallaf, 2004; Erfanmanesh, 2011; Świgoń, 2011). For example, Erfanmanesh et al. (2002) has introduced an information-seeking criterion consisting of six categories (barriers of information sources, barriers of computer and internet, the barriers of the library, barriers of looking for information, technical barriers, and barriers of topic selection).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an essential factor of library anxiety (Wong & Law, 2002). Students can effectively use the library in academic environments when they have the utmost peace of mind besides enjoying the good condition and facilities (Khosravi, Basirian Jahromi, Seyyed Hosseini & Motamed, 2012). Recognizing the individuals' psychological characteristics and emotional complexities is the first step in making peace of mind possible. Since emotional intelligence is linked to behavior, peace of mind, and psychology of individuals, it might also play a part in their feeling of library anxiety (Jan & Anwar, 2018).

Emotional intelligence induces better relations with others, behavior control, and adapting

to new settings (e.g., getting into a new environment such as a university) (Kapur & Rawat, 2016). Emotional intelligence – the ability to organize one’s feelings as a part of self-motivation and emotional self-regulation when dealing with others – plays a vital role in earning success for individuals (Wong & Law, 2002) and increasing their presence in different communities. In other words, individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence have a better performance in interpersonal relations and are more successful in the society.

Emotional intelligence came under the spotlight when psychologists observed that the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) does not guarantee success in every aspect of life the way it was imagined before (Goleman, 1995). Contrary to what many people imagine, some individuals with a low level of IQ have a quite successful social life due to a reason associated with emotional intelligence (Wong & Law, 2002). Unlike Intelligence Quotient, which is mostly static and does not correlate with success in life, emotional intelligence is dynamic and can be enhanced with targeted education (Kaput & Rawat, 2016). Also, increasing the level of IQ is not feasible, but the level of emotional intelligence (EI) or Emotional Quotient (EQ) can be heightened (Golman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013).

Emotional intelligence is associated with the works of Daniel Goleman. Goleman divides the components of EI into two categories of personal (self-consciousness, self-control, and self-motivation) and social (sympathy and social skills) (Goleman, 1995). Goleman argues that IQ is responsible for, at best, 20 percent of successes, and the remaining 80 percent of them are correlated with other factors. Success is mainly related to the skills which make up the EI. EI justifies the failure among individuals with a high IQ and surprising success among individuals with an average IQ. In other words, individuals with an average IQ and a high EQ might perform better than individuals with a high IQ and a low EQ (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2013). Individuals with high EI can adapt better to personal, social, and bureaucratic problems and better emotion management (Song et al., 2014).

Library anxiety (LA) has been a well-researched topic out of Iran (Shoham, Mizrahi, Jacobson & Brooks, 2001; Anwar et al., 2004; McPherson, 2015; Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick, 2004; Jan & Anwar, 2018; Van Kampen, 2004; Abusin, Zainab, & Karim, 2011; Sinnasamy & Karim, 2017; Song et al., 2014; Abusin & Zainab, 2010; Erfanmanesh, 2011; Świgoń, 2011; Shehata & Elglab, 2019) and inside Iran (Khadivi, 2007; Hariri & Nemati, 2010; Erfanmanesh & Basirian, 2011; Khosravi et al., 2012; Rafiei Moghadam & Jafari Mofrad Taheri, 2012; Erfanmanesh & Didegah, 2012; Abyari & Bigdeli, 2013; Bagheri, Shabaani & Abedi, 2013; Erfanmanesh, Didegah & Mohammadi, 2013; Seyyed Hosseini & Erfanmanesh, 2014; Ghaffari, 2014; Pakbaz, Kokabi & Bigdeli, 2014; Ghadesi, Farhadpour & Karimian, 2016; Seyyedhosseini, Khosravi & Basirian Jahromi, 2017; Jokar & Taherian, 2008; Gaffari & Fotouhi, 2018; Parsaiee Mohammadi et al., 2018). Also, there have been numerous studies about EI out of Iran (Abusin et al., 2011; Sinnasamy & Karim, 2017; Song et al., 2014) and inside Iran. For example, Black (2016) has found that librarians can alleviate or prevent library anxiety by providing help in using the library. However, Hardesty (2016) found that some physiological factors such as fear of approaching librarians, feeling of bewilderment, and fear of looking stupid may limit the effectiveness of librarians in relieving library anxiety. In Pakistan, Jan, Anwar & Warriach (2020) found that some factors such as gender and academic major impact bachelor students’ anxiety levels. They have also pointed out that library anxiety affects academic performance among students.

Sinnasamy & Karim (2017) have explored the relationship between library anxiety,

relationship anxiety, and foreign language anxiety and concluded that the emotional barrier is the most decisive factor in creating library anxiety. Also, research done by Karim & Ansari (2017) in Indonesia has shown that the level of students' library anxiety depends on their gender. Jiao & Onwuegbuzie (1997) have observed that students with higher anxiety commit more mistakes when making references in writing their theses. *Nature* (2019)¹ has reported that anxiety and depression in universities, especially among graduate students² are rising. The result of *Nature's* survey of 6300 graduated students worldwide shows that "more than one-third of respondents (36%) have sought help for anxiety or depression caused by their Ph.D. studies". Similarly, the result of a survey of 5000 graduate students in the UK showed that around 86 percent of students had reported high levels of anxiety.

Research on different backgrounds shows that, in general, EI plays a crucial role in many processes. In other words, EI has significant consequences for individuals' lives (Ahmadiraad, 2007; Mohammadkhaani, Salemi Langroudi, Ghasemi & Hakimpour, 2016). However, the type and intensity of the relation between EI and LI are unclear; doing further research about EI's role in LA is necessary. It should be noted that for writing a thesis, collecting information and doing background research and homework, graduated students need a library. Thus, LA can harm their academic performance and both the quality and quantity of their scientific outputs. Since a lion's share of EI is related to the acquired social, emotional, and behavioral abilities, understanding the relationship between academic performance and EI can inspire designing an educational program to alleviate LA. On the other hand, recognizing the relation between EI and LA may help library managers predict the LA level among individuals and plan to reduce it.

Tabriz University and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University are among the best universities at both national and local levels. Every year, a substantial amount of the budget is allocated to these two universities' personnel, equipment, and scientific resources with a justifiable expectation of good results. Identifying and planning to mitigate possible barriers and problems among students are two of the possible initiatives to increase the efficiency of the universities.

Regarding the points mentioned above, the present research is an effort to study the relation between EI and LA among the students of Tabriz University and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University to answer the following question and confirm the research hypotheses.

Research Question

What are the average emotional intelligence and library anxiety values among Tabriz University and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University students?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is a meaningful relation between emotional intelligence and library anxiety among students.
2. Emotional intelligence can predict the level of students' anxiety.

Methodology

This research is a descriptive correlational study. Graduate students of Tabriz University and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University make up the statistical population in this research. In 2019, there were 1344 and 3943 students in Tabriz University and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani

University, respectively. Based on Morgan's formulae for sample size determination, 298 and 350 people were selected as the study's sample size. Then, the random sampling method was used to prepare the questionnaires, which were distributed and collected. In Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, women made up 65% (194) of participants, and men made up 35% (104) of participants. In Tabriz University, 54% (192) of the participants were women, and 45% (158) were men. Furthermore, 35% (226) of the participating students were 23 to 30 years old, 30% were 31 to 38 years old, and 35% (227) were more than 38 years old.

Library Anxiety Questionnaire: The questionnaire used for this study is taken from Bostick's library anxiety scale, 1992; Shoham et al., 2001; Van Kampen; 2004; Anwar et al., 2004; Świgoń, 2011; Erfanmanesh, 2011; and Shehata & Elgllab, 2019. The new questionnaire made by the researcher included seven main categories and 42 items. The categories of the question included: 1. Environment and atmosphere of the library (6 items), 2. Personnel barriers (5 items), 3. Psychological barriers (5 items), 4. Emotional barriers (7 items), 5. Library literacy barriers (4 items), 6. Technology barriers (4 items), 7. Scientific resources barriers (5 items) and 8. Physical barriers "Building and equipment" (6 items).

Siberia Schering's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: This questionnaire is based on Goleman's theory (1995) and has 33 items, which are rated with Likert's 5 scales, and 5 components which include self-motivation, self-consciousness, self-control (self-management), sympathy, and social skills.

Face validity and content validity of the questionnaires were confirmed by information science (5 people), psychology (4 people), and educational science (3 people) faculty members. Both questionnaires' reliability was assessed with the help of Cronbach's alpha, and the resulting coefficients stood at 0.87 for the emotional intelligence questionnaire and 0.89 for the library anxiety questionnaire. Pearson's correlation coefficient test and multiple regression were used for answering the research question and hypotheses. SPSS was used as the required software.

Findings

Based on the findings (Table 1), the average values of emotional intelligence among Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University are 3.003 and 3.160, respectively. The average values of emotional intelligence in both universities are higher than the theoretical average (3), and the average emotional intelligence in Tabriz University is a little higher than that of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University. Also, library anxiety levels are 3.162 and 3.018, respectively, for Students of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University (Table 2). It is worth mentioning that library anxiety among students of Tabriz University is lower than students of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University.

Table 1

Average Emotional Intelligence among Sample Students of the Research (Theoretical Average=3)

University	Variables	Average	Standard Deviation	Average Standard Deviation
Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University (n=298)	Self-motivation	2.934	0.63	0.036
	Self-consciousness	3.085	0.47	0.027
	Self-control	3.206	0.81	0.047
	Sympathy	2.616	0.71	0.041
	Social skills	3.174	0.86	0.05
	Emotional Intelligence	3.003	0.45	0.027
Tabriz University (n=350)	Self-motivation	2.936	0.64	0.034
	Self-consciousness	3.399	0.48	0.025
	Self-control	3.418	0.81	0.044
	Sympathy	2.658	0.73	0.039
	Social skills	3.389	0.87	0.046
	Emotional Intelligence	3.160	0.52	0.028

Table 2

Average Library Anxiety among Research Sample Students (Theoretical Average=3)

University	Variables	Average	Standard Deviation	Average Standard Deviation
Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University (n=298)	Environment and atmosphere of library	2.676	0.96	0.056
	Personnel barriers	3.20	0.58	0.034
	Psychology barriers	3.201	0.44	0.026
	Emotional barriers	3.248	0.62	0.036
	Library literacy	3.249	0.46	0.027
	Technology barriers	3.223	0.55	0.032
	Scientific resources	3.219	0.46	0.027
	Building and equipment	3.226	0.50	0.029
	Library Anxiety	3.162	0.27	0.015
Tabriz University (n=350)	Environment and atmosphere of library	2.503	1.04	0.06
	Personnel barriers	3.106	0.75	0.40
	Psychology barriers	3.113	0.44	0.023
	Emotional barriers	3.102	0.62	0.033
	Library literacy	3.122	0.46	0.024
	Technology barriers	3.106	0.55	0.029
	Scientific resources	3.013	0.46	0.024
	Building and equipment	3.079	0.49	0.029
	Library Anxiety	3.018	0.27	0.015

Based on the findings (Table 3), the correlation between emotional intelligence and library anxiety variables is 0.038 and meaningful ($P \leq 0.05$). Also, the correlation between self-motivation, self-consciousness, self-control, sympathy, and "social skills" factors and library anxiety (Table 3) are meaningful and -0.39, -0.43, -0.37, -0.37, and -0.32, respectively. Findings indicate that the increase of students' emotional intelligence results is effective in decreasing

library anxiety.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix of Research Variables

Variable	Self-motivation	Self-consciousness	Self-control	Sympathy	Social skills	Emotional intelligence	Library anxiety
Self-motivation	1						
Self-consciousness	0.65**	1					
Self-control	0.63**	0.65**	1				
Sympathy	0.70**	0.64**	0.57**	1			
Social skills	0.55**	0.61**	0.58**	0.68**	1		
Emotional intelligence	0.53**	0.55**	0.63**	0.58**	0.53**	1	
<i>Library anxiety</i>	-0.39**	-0.43**	-0.37**	-0.37**	-0.32**	-0.38**	1

The regression analysis test was used for examining the possibility of predicting students' library anxiety, and the resultant Sig value was 0.001. Since this value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that library anxiety is reduced due to an increase in emotional intelligence (Table 4). The value of the determination coefficient ($R^2=0.17$) shows that 17% of changes in library anxiety are delineated or predicted with students' emotional intelligence, and the remaining 83% of them are dependent on other factors. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) value is 0.41, which shows the relation's meaningfulness between emotional intelligence and library anxiety (Table 5).

Table 4

The Summary of Regression Model, Variance Analysis and Statistical Indices for Predicting Library Anxiety Based on Emotional Intelligence factors

Variable	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig	R	R ²
Emotional Intelligence	1143.24	5	228.64	20.91	0.001	0.41	0.17

Table 5

Regression Analysis Coefficients for Describing Library Anxiety based on Emotional Intelligence Factors

Variables	B	Standard Deviation	Beta	t Value	Sig
Self-motivation	-0.27	0.06	-0.25	-4.29	0.001
Self-consciousness	-0.30	0.05	-0.27	-5.46	0.001
Self-control	-0.28	0.06	-0.26	-4.89	0.001
Sympathy	-0.29	0.07	-0.26	-5.18	0.001
Social Skills	-0.16	0.06	-0.14	-2.47	0.014
Constant Value	18.14	0.34	-	41.99	0.001

Criterion Variable: *Library anxiety*

Predictive Variables: *Self-motivation, Self-consciousness, Self-control, Sympathy and*

social skills

Discussion

The main objective of the present study was to study the status and the relation between LA and EI among students of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University. The findings indicated that library anxiety values among students of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University, i.e., 3.162 and 3.018, respectively, are higher than the theoretical average (3). The studies done by Ebrahimi & Khoshshima (2014), and Nokarizi, Kaashi & Sanaatjou (2017) also showed that students' library anxiety level was above the average. Moreover, *Nature*³ reported in 2019 that anxiety and depression in academic settings, especially among graduate students, are on the rise⁴. Nevertheless, Seyyedhosseini et al. (2017) found students' library anxiety below the average, which is not compatible with the current research findings. Also, Asgarpour Mehrabani & Sajedi (2013) found that at the University of Qom, the average library anxiety was higher among women than men.

Findings for answering the first research question indicated that average values for emotional intelligence among Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University are above the theoretical average and stand at 3.003 and 3.160, respectively. It should be noted that the average values for emotional intelligence in the two universities were reasonably similar. In various studies, students' emotional intelligence values were above average (Baradaran Tamadon, Ahmadi, Hosseini & Mehrabian, 2013; Akbari, Rezaeian & Moudi, 2007). For example, Akbari et al. (2007) found that the emotional intelligence among students of University of Arak is higher than the average. Alizadeh, Namazi & Kochakzadeh (2014), and Ghaderi, Nassiri, Zakeri & Khedri Meirghaidi, (2015) found students' emotional intelligence to be 3. Safarnezhad, Joybari, Fati, Sangoo & Vakili, (2016) also found that the average values for emotional intelligence among "exceptional talent" students and normal students in the field of medicine did not have a meaningful difference with each other. In other words, students with exceptional talents do not necessarily possess higher levels of different abilities such as emotional intelligence.

The findings showed a meaningful and negative ($r=-0.38$) correlation between library anxiety and emotional intelligence. In other words, higher emotional intelligence results in lower library anxiety. Many previous studies such as: Ebrahimi & Khoshshima, 2014; Khaledian, Amjadian & Pardegi, 2013; Malik, Akhter & Fatima, 2013; Mohammadi & Mousalou, 2012; Seyyedhosseini Khosravi & BasirianJahromi, 2014; and Valizadeh & Alavinia, 2013; Jan et al., 2020; Khosravi et al., 2012 found that emotional intelligence had a negatively significant relationship with library anxiety. Thus, the trend identified in the previous research has been endorsed by the present research results. For example, Malik et al. (2013) found a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and "exam anxiety" among intermediate students. Similar results were found by Khaledian et al. (2013) among the accounting students. They also reported a meaningful positive correlation between students' emotional intelligence and their academic performance. Seyyedhosseini et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and library anxiety among a sample of 700 Iranian students and found a significant negative relationship between the two. Also, Jan et al. (2020) found a significant negative association ($r=-.256$) between emotional intelligence and library anxiety among the students in Pakistan. In other research, Jan & Anwar (2018) found that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence experience lower levels of anxiety in academic settings.

Findings of the second hypothesis indicated that emotional intelligence predicts students' anxiety. Around 17% of changes in library anxiety are revealed (predicted) with students' emotional intelligence. In numerous similar studies (Hashemi, Akbari & Abbasasl, 2015; Keshavarz & Mirzaiee, 2018; Latifi, Allah Karami & Baba Moradi, 2013; Mashhadi, Soltani Shurbakhorloo & Hashemi Razini, 2010), the role of emotional intelligence in predicting anxiety has been highlighted. For example, Hashemi et al. (2015) found that their emotional intelligence justifies 33% of changes in exam anxiety among students. Keshavarz & Mirzaee (2018) also found that emotional intelligence explains 22% of school anxiety variance among students. Furthermore, Latifi et al. (2013) have reported that emotional intelligence, in general, accounts for 17% of computer anxiety variance among teachers. Mohammadkhaani et al. (2016) have indicated that emotional intelligence can predict behavior in different contexts. In other words, individuals' behavior can be predicted concerning their emotional intelligence. Nikolić, Vukonjanski, Nedeljković, Hadžić & Terek (2014) concluded that emotional intelligence could predict the success of people in different organizations.

The limitations of the present study should be considered when generalizing the implications of the findings. This research was about students of only two public universities; thus, generalizing the results to include other universities and organizations should be done with caution.

Conclusion

The present study results can raise the awareness of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University and Tabriz University about the status of emotional intelligence and library anxiety among graduate students. There is no doubt that an increase in the officials' awareness could positively impact their future decision-making and planning about the university. Based on the findings of this study regarding the inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and library anxiety, planning for increasing students' emotional intelligence seems necessary. Library managers of both universities can emphasize students' library anxiety and its causes for good. Vulnerability of students can be decreased, and their adaptability with different contexts can be increased by holding workshops with a focus on increasing emotional intelligence. Also, including emotional intelligence in the university's educational programs and reinforcing students' social skills would result in a more active presence in different environments and contexts to defeat educational effectively and research problems.

Endnotes

1. Nature's survey of more than 6,000 graduate students reveals the turbulent nature of doctoral research (13 November 2019). <http://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03459-7>
2. Germani, F. (2020). The mental health of PhD students is at stake: scientific journals should take the blame. <https://bit.ly/3mx6h4G>.
3. Nature's survey of more than 6,000 graduate students reveals the turbulent nature of doctoral research (13 November 2019). <http://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03459-7>
4. More than one-third of respondents (36%) said they have sought help for anxiety or depression caused by their PhD studies.

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