Research Article

Mediating role of Emotional Intelligence in the Correlation between Early Maladaptive Schemas and Coping Styles

Raziye Sadat Sade¹, Rozita Zabihi²,

¹Department of Psychology, Islamshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Islam shahr, Iran. ²Department of Psychology, Islamshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Islam shahr, Iran.

ABSTRACT: This research aimed at investigating the relationship between mediating role of emotional intelligence with early maladaptive schemas and copying style. Correlation method was adopted and all of the participants were among the students of Islamic Azad University-Islamshahr Branch. From the pool of 22300 students, 380 participants were chosen by stratified sampling method according to the Morgan Table. The questionnaire of Shering Emotional Intelligence, Yang's schemas questionnaire (short form), Yang and Yang avoidance questionnaire and Yang Compensation questionnaire were administered and analyzed. The results gained from data analyses utilizing multiple regression statistical method and line analyses showed that this method had appropriate fitting with the available data. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence had a mediating role in relationship with early maladaptive schemas and students' copying style. The early maladaptive schemas had a direct and significant impact on emotional intelligence. There was a positive relationship between early maladaptive schemas and students' copying style. Furthermore, the early maladaptive schemas had a direct and significant impact on students' copying style.

Key words: emotional intelligence", "early maladaptive schemas", "copying style

Introduction

Emotions, cognitions, and defenses are pure psychological procedures. These complex multi-dimensional variables are inextricably intertwined. Discovering new aspects of these variables in relationships can significantly improve intrapersonal as well as interpersonal communications.

The deepest cognitive structures – mainly associated psychologically with works of Piaget – are schemas. Schemas, once facing new stimulants, decode and assess obtained data based on their former structure and therefore influence individuals' outlook on themselves and the world (Bekr&bech, 2004).

Schemas may be positive or negative, adaptive or maladaptive, and can develop early or later in life (Young & Klosko, 2003, translated by Hamidpour & Andouz, 1394). Maladaptive schemas, however, develop as a result of traumatic childhood experiences (Tim, 2010).

Early maladaptive schemas mainly consist of cognitive impairments which lead to illogical and unreal interpretations of different conditions which by activating flawed defense mechanisms rid the individual of anxiety and strengthen and sustain primary schemas (Young & Klosko, 2003, translated by Hamidpour & Andouz, 1394).

In general, schemas influence the way an individual thinks, feels, acts, and interacts with others. They are activated when the individual's mind is made to flash back to childhood resulting in encountering strong negative emotions (According to Yung, early maladaptive schemas stem from essential emotional needs which remained unfulfilled). When early maladaptive schemas are aroused, individuals experience high levels of anger, anxiety, grief, or guilt (Murise, 2006). To conform to schemas in early life, individuals create certain responses so that they are not forced to encounter strong daunting emotions (Young & Klosko, 2003, translated by Hamidpour & Andouz, 1394). The concept of coping was psychologically acknowledged decades ago, and a lot of research and studies have been conducted on coping procedure and coping styles in recent years (Mohammadkhani & Bash Ghare, 1387)

There have been many different coping styles classifications that are supported by a lot of research evidence. The main criteria for classifying coping styles include individuals' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attempts which occur in case of environmental challenges (Stiner & colleagues, 2002). According to Folkman and Lazarus (1980), coping includes an individual's cognitive and behavioral attempts to reduce the stress (anxiety) caused by inner or outer desires; these desires, in accordance with the individual's understanding, exceed the individual's resources that are supposed to fulfill them (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, quoted by Mansouri, 1385).

Although a majority of coping mechanisms are behavioral, individuals may also opt for cognitive and emotional mechanisms to cope with schemas (Yung & colleagues, quoted by Moeini, 13912).

There are generally three maladaptive coping methods based on schema therapy approach: coping styles of surrender,

avoidance, and extreme compensation with three of which resulting in the persistence of schemas (Lensperry 2006).

Coping styles can be observed when schemas are aroused. Generally, coping styles are not in tune with schemas, and thus may act as mechanisms to tolerate disturbing emotions caused by schemas (Young & Klosko, 2003, 99, 103).

Emotional intelligence is rooted in Gardner's intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence first suggested by Mayer and Salovey (1990). Basically, emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to understand themselves and their tools as well as to understand others and to interact with them, and to handle problems in everyday life effectively (Rounak, 2009, quoted by Bahramian, 1392).

In Goleman's (1995) view, emotional intelligence involves both inner and outer elements. Inner elements include a certain level of self-awareness, self-image, autonomy, selfactualization, and determination. Outer elements include interpersonal interactions, sympathy, and a sense of responsibility. Furthermore, emotional intelligence involves an individual's capacity to face up to realities, flexibility, the ability to resolve emotional problems and to deal with stress

Faculty	pool	sample
Sciences	1996	34
Literature and the Humanities	3979	68
Engineering	6979	119
Physical training	1038	18
Management and Accounting	5709	97
Educational Sciences	2615	44
total	22320	380

and impulses.

With respect to coping styles and emotional intelligence, Mayer and Salovey (2002) – quoted by Mohammadkhani & Bashghare (1387) - believe that emotional abilities effect accurate and effective emotional response, clear understanding of events, expansion of outlook, and positive attitude towards them. Moreover, research into correlation between active schemas and the extent to which coping styles are used showed a correlation between inhibition and some specific areas of schemas such as overvigilance, disconnection and rejection (Bayrami, & etal, 2012).

According to some research, there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and various structures. These structures include satisfaction of life (Gannon & Ranzijn, 2014, quoted by Shahni Yeylagh, 1388), self-efficiency (Sikank, 2008, quoted by Shahni Yeylagh, 1388), educational performance and delinquency trends (Frederickson, 2002, quoted by Shahni Yeylaghi, 1388), mental and psychological well-being (Ciarrochi, Deane, & Anderson, 2000, quoted by Shhni Yeylaghi, 1388).

Schutte & etal (2001, quoted by Khanjani 1389) showed in their research that high emotional intelligence can effect better understanding and management of emotions leading to a prevention of maladaptive emotional responses. Research results suggest that high emotional intelligence has a correlation with better psychological performance and higher level of welfare (Austen and etal, 2005, Palmer & etal, 2002), better psychological, physical, and social life (Extremera,Fernandez, Broucal, 2002, Yousefi & Safari, 1388), lower level of depression (Shutt & etal, 1998, Dehghani, 1393), and higher self-esteem (Shutt & etal, 2002, Dehghani, 1393). On the other hand, studies suggest a correlation between the feature of emotional intelligence and personality aspects with stronger emotional core (Saklofske & etal, 2003, Sutt & etal, 1998, Shafieitabar & etal, 1387).

A revision on the studies done into the three foregoing variables shows that most studies concern simple correlation between two or more variables, and no special study similar to this has been done before. There have been many studies into emotional intelligence, coping styles, and maladaptive schemas. Nonetheless, there is no single study which examines the three variables altogether interactively. Therefore, regarding the correlation between early maladaptive schemas, coping styles, and the emotional intelligence, and their impact on interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions, we decided to examine the mediating role of emotional intelligence in an attempt to answer this question: Is there a correlation between early maladaptive schemas and coping style based on the mediating role of emotional intelligence?

Study Method

Correlation method was adopted and all of the participants were among the students of Islamic Azad University-Islamshahr Branch. From the pool of 22300 students, 380 participants were chosen by stratified sampling method.

Study Tools

Yung Schema Questionnaire (short form) (1998)

This 79-item questionnaire was designed by Jeffery Yung (1998) to assess eighteen early maladaptive schemas. This questionnaire is scored based on Likert Scale. Questions are classified based on schemas. Various studies have been done into psychometric features by Baranoff, Rijkeboer, and Welburn. The first comprehensive study into psychometric features of this questionnaire was conducted by Smitt. In this study, coefficient Alfa was gained from 0.83 for enmeshment schema to 0.96 for shame schema, and retest coefficient in non-clinical society was between 0.50 to 0.82.

They also showed that this questionnaire is appropriately in line with psychological sadness, self-worth, cognitive vulnerability to depression, and semiology of personality disorders. In their study, Cronbach's Alfa internal consistency coefficient of the whole questionnaire was obtained at 0.94 and for five different areas as follows: disconnection and rejection 0.91, impaired autonomy and performance 0.90, impaired limits 0.73, other directedness 0.67, and over vigilance prohibition 0.78.

Young Avoidance Questionnaire (1996)

Young (1996) stated that early maladaptive schemas stem from negative interpersonal encounters in the early life inside

and outside the family. These basic beliefs basically determine the individual's evaluation of the world, others, and interaction with others. Early maladaptive beliefs are the

deepest level of cognition that are established in childhood and are inefficient in adulthood. Schema stimulation (essential emotions remaining unfulfilled) is a threat to which the individual responds utilizing three coping styles (surrender, avoidance, and overcompensation). In avoidance coping style, which consists of various coping responses, the individual tries to avoid facing and activating early maladaptive schemas. Avoidance strategies based on this questionnaire include: deliberately avoiding thinking about unpleasant matters, drug addiction, distress denial, extreme control and sensibility, anger suppression, mental and physical symptoms, social isolation, memory denial, avoidance by means of sleeping/lethargy, oblivion caused by involvement in different activities, calming oneself down, eating, shopping, passive inhibition, passive spasm, daydreaming, and avoiding unpleasant situations. Young avoidance questionnaire is a 40item questionnaire designed by Yung (1994) to examine coping avoidance strategies. In one study, the Cronbach's alfa of eleven coping strategies were reported as shown in the table below. Sadoghi and Agilar Vafaie (1387) reported the internal consistency at 0.70.

Young compensation questionnaire (1995)

Young compensation questionnaire is a 48-item questionnaire based on a rating scale of six. All items with scores 5 and 6 were selected. Salavati (1386), assessing content validity of this tool, obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.78 by means of split-half method.

Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (1996)

This test was designed in 1996 based on Goleman's theory, and was standardized by Mansouri upon MA students of Elame University. The main form included 70 questions which evaluated different aspects of emotional intelligence (selfconsciousness, self-regulatory, motivation, sympathy, and socials skills). Due to some complications, the number of questions was reduced to 33. This test evaluates five elements of emotional intelligence. These elements include: selfconsciousness, self-regulatory, motivation, sympathy, and social skills. Mansouri (1380) gained a coefficient Cronbach's alfa internal consistency of 0.85 in his thesis which proves the test's appropriateness. Examining construct validity, correlation between scores obtained of Tehran universities' students and self-esteem inventory Smith was studied upon a sample of 30 individuals. According to results, the correlation between participants' scores obtained in two tests was statistically significant (Mansouri, 1380). To analyze the data, Pearson's coefficient correlation, and to present the model, structural equation modeling and LISREL were utilized. To fit the model, different fit indexes including chi-square (x2/df), goodness of fit index (CFI), fitness index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), and root mean square error of approximation RMSEA were utilized.

To examine variables distribution, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was utilized.

Table one- variables distribution

Variables	Kolmogorov-	Significance		
v artables	Smirnov	level		
Self-consciousness	1/172	0/118		
Self-regulation	1/156	0/127		
spontaneity	1/208	0/091		
sympathy	1/141	0/112		
Social skills	1/339	0/056		
Emotional intelligence total score	1/218	0/103		
Emotional deprivation	1/296	0/07		
instability	1/314	0/062		
Defectiveness and shame	1/257	0/08		
failure	1/327	0/059		
Total score	1/210	0/101		
Not thinking about unpleasant matters	1/178	0/120		
Drug addiction	1/126	0/124		
Sadness denial	1/278	0/08		
Extreme sensibility	1/111	0/142		
Anger suppression	1/341	0/055		
Psychosomatic symptoms	1/984	0/452		
Social isolation	1/248	0/092		
Memory denial	1/321	0/068		
Avoidance by means of sleeping/lethargy	1/219	0/089		
Distraction by means of activities	1/087	0/131		
Self-soothing	1/241	0/093		
Passive Blocking	1/312	0/064		
Passive Attention	1/116	0/147		
Avoiding annoying situations	1/272	0/079		
Avoidance style	1/123	0/132		
Compensation style	1/326	0/056		

As seen in the table, emotional intelligence and its aspects (self-consciousness, self-regulation, spontaneity, sympathy, and social skills), maladaptive schemas (emotional deprivation, instability, defectiveness and shame, failure), and avoidance style and its strategies (deliberate negligence of unpleasant matters, drug addiction, sadness denial, extreme sensibility, anger suppression, psychosomatic symptoms, social isolation, memory denial, avoidance by means of sleeping/lethargy, self-soothing attention, passive blocking, unpleasant situations) were distributed normally among Eslam Shahr Azad University students (p> 0.05). To respond to study hypothesis, therefore, parametric tests are utilized.

The main hypothesis: emotional intelligence has a mediating role in relation to early maladaptive schemas and students' coping styles.

To certify the conceptual model, and to examine multilateral interaction of variables with each other, structural equation modeling was utilized. Emotional deprivation, instability, defectiveness and shame, and failure were attached to a latent variable called maladaptive schemas. The elements of selfconsciousness, self-regulation, spontaneity, sympathy, and social skills were measured variables for emotional intelligence. Students' avoidance and compensation coping styles were considered as dependent variable in the model which was designed accordingly. Then the model's fitness indexes were calculated and evaluated with the results shown in the table below.

Table two –	Model's	Fitness	Indexes	

Fitness Indexes	X2	df	X2/df	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI
Index figures	82.39	37	2.23	0.063	0.89	0.84	0.92	0.91

According to the table, chi-square (X2/df) for the study measuring model was 2.23 which shows appropriate fitness with the data. Most experts maintain that the chi-square less than 3 means appropriate fitness index of the model (Gils,2002).

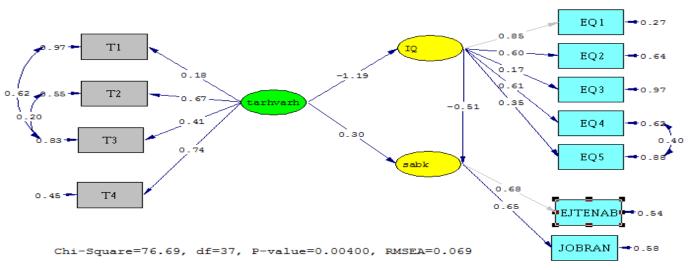
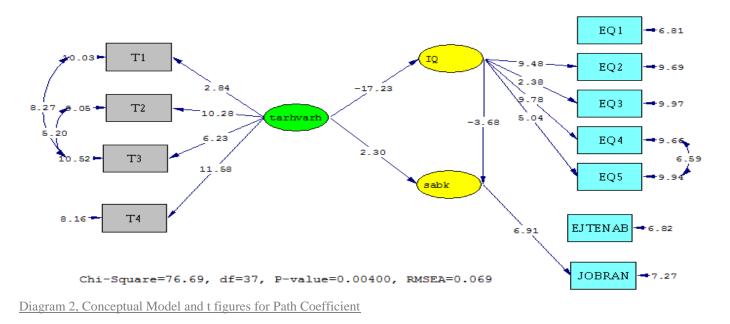


Diagram 1, Conceptual Model and Standard Path Coefficient



Path coefficients and t test results and significance level the model's variables were as follows:

Paths	Standard	t	Significance Level
	Coefficients		
Maladaptive Schemas upon Emotional Intelligence	-1/19	-17/23	0/001
Emotional Intelligence upon Coping Style	-0/51	-3/68	0/007
Maladaptive Schemas upon Coping Styles	0/30	2/30	0/033
Emotional Deprivation upon Maladaptive Schemas	0/18	2/84	0/021
Instability upon Maladaptive Schemas	0/67	10/28	0/001
Defectiveness and Shame upon Maladaptive Schemas	0/41	6/23	0/001
Failure upon Maladaptive Schemas	0/74	11/58	0/001
Avoidance Coping Style upon Coping Style	0/68	4/72	0/001
Compensation Coping Style upon Coping Style	0/65	6/91	0/001
Self-consciousness upon Emotional Intelligence	0/85	9/59	0/001
Self-regulation upon Emotional Intelligence	0/60	9/48	0/001
Spontaneity upon Emotional Intelligence	0/17	2/38	0/024
Sympathy upon Emotional Intelligence	0/61	9/78	0/001
Social Skills upon Emotional Intelligence	0/35	5/04	0/001

This table shows path coefficients, t test results, and significance level. The main study hypothesis is confirmed according to the table 3, i.e. emotional intelligence has a mediating role in relation to early maladaptive schemas and students' coping styles.

According to the results obtained from study conceptual model:

- Early maladaptive schemas with coefficient of -1.19 have a direct and significant impact on students' emotional intelligence, i.e. students who use more early maladaptive schemas, have higher emotional intelligence.
- Early maladaptive schemas, by means of emotional intelligence, have an indirect and significant impact on students' coping styles with path coefficient of X (-0.51) 0.607 -1.19.
- Early maladaptive schemas with path coefficient of 0.30 had a direct and significant impact on students' coping styles.
- Emotional intelligence of latent variable concerned five scales of self-consciousness, self-regulation, spontaneity, sympathy, and social skills. Regarding bigger factor loading, it can be maintained that self-consciousness was the best, and spontaneity was the weakest indicators of emotional intelligence in students.
- Emotional deprivation, instability, defectiveness and shame, and failure existed upon a latent variable called maladaptive schemas. Regarding bigger factor loading, it can be maintained that sense of failure was the most prevalent maladaptive schema, and emotional deprivation was the weakest indicator of maladaptive schema.
- Coping styles included two coping styles of avoidance and compensation. Regarding bigger factor loading, it can be maintained that students utilized avoidance style more than compensation style.
- Emotional deprivation and defectiveness and shame have a significant correlation and have an impact on one another.

- Instability and defectiveness and shame have a significant correlation and have an impact on one another.
- Sympathy and social skills have a significant correlation and have an impact on one another.

Conclusion

The findings of this research and the results of studies

done by Ciarrochi, Deane, & Anderson (2002), which confirmed a correlation between emotional intelligence and maladaptive coping and psychological pathology, as well as the results of research by Fernaldez-Brrocal & Extremera (2002), Davis & Humphrey (2012), Ciarrochi & etal (2002), Pau & Croucher (2003), Mikolajczak & etal (2008), Danny (2010), show that the feature of emotional intelligence has an impact on selecting coping strategies. Studying the correlation between early maladaptive schemas and coping styles and emotional intelligence of grade-four senior high school students in Tehran, Hakimian (1394) showed that there is a significant correlation between maladaptive schemas and coping styles, and that can predict emotional intelligence. It can be maintained, therefore, that an increase in undeveloped defending style leads to a decrease in emotional intelligence, while an increase in developed defending styles increases emotional intelligence as well. Salovey & etal showed that emotional intelligence predicts passive coping skills negatively and active coping skills positively. Examining emotional intelligence, stress, and coping strategies in medical students, Rodriguer (2010) showed that high emotional intelligence score have a correlation with low perceived stress. Investigating the correlation between nursing students' emotional intelligence and perceived stress, coping strategies, well-being, Nightingale & etal (2010) suggested the correlation between emotional intelligence, problem-focused coping styles, perceived nursing competency, and perceived stress. Saklofsky & etal (2012), and Mac Con & etal (2011) also validate the mediating role of emotional intelligence in correlation between personality components and psychological

consequences. Dimitriu & Negrescu (2015) that there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and some components of inefficient maladaptive schemas. Nourbakhsh & etal (2010) investigated the correlation between emotional intelligence and stress coping styles in students. According to results, emotional intelligence is positively correlated with focused coping style on positive emotions, and has a negative correlation with focused coping style on negative emotions. Mohammadi, Torabi, and Gharaei (1387) suggested as well a significant correlation between the components of emotional intelligence and referring to others, efficient and inefficient coping styles. Research done by Basak zadeh, Esfahani Asl, and mahmoudi Ghalenoei (1391), also suggested a correlation between emotional intelligence and coping styles and its impact on Islamshahr Adad University students' mental wellbeing. Dehghani, Izadikhah, and Akhbari (1393) validated the mediating role of emotional intelligence as the only possibility in the correlation between early maladaptive schemas of defectiveness and shame and the mental well-being of people of Esfahan. Based on foregoing studies, it can be maintained that schemas have a significant impact on thinking, feeling, behavior and defense mechanisms in individuals; yet, high emotional intelligence increases autonomy, identity, freedom ofI expressing needs and appropriate emotions, spontaneity, and self-restraint in individuals, leading them to adopt more practical strategies such as avoiding unpleasant situations, deliberate negligence of unpleasant matters, self-soothing, and anger suppression.

Regarding the significant mediating role of emotional intelligence in correlation between early maladaptive stigmas coping styles in students, it is recommended that Azad University officials run different curses to enhance emotional intelligence in students. As schemas develop as result of abandonment, misbehavior, and rejection in childhood, it is recommended that family support centers run courses to enhance parenting awareness and skills. Moreover, raising awareness in students about early maladaptive schemas can increase their self-awareness, self-regulation, spontaneity, sympathy, and social skills. Promotion of coping strategies such as deliberate negligence of unpleasant matters, anger suppression, psychosomatic symptoms, social isolation, avoidance. self-soothing. memory passive blocking. unpleasant emotions, avoidance by means of sleeping/lethargy, passive attention, avoiding unpleasant situations can change students' self-image and increase their self-awareness.

The results of the current study suggest that education on emotional intelligence improves mental well-being as well as stress coping strategies in students with defectiveness schemas. Therefore, identifying students with defectiveness schemas and educating them accordingly can enhance their lives.

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