Relationship of Emotional Inteligence and Emotional and Behavior Problems Scales of Children 10-12 Years Old – Parents Report

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the correlation of emotional intelligence total score and three broad band of emotional and behavior problems at 10-12 years old children. It was hypothesized that there will be negative relationship between scales. The sample included 236 children (123 or 52. 1% boys and 113 or 47. 9% girls), with a mean age of 11 years (SD. 835) (range: 10-12 years). 236 parents participated in the study, 92 of them or 39. 0 % were mothers, while only 144 of them or 61. 0 % were fathers. In the chi-square test, there were important differences reported in the distribution of the percentages of parent's gender and their employment rates. The TEIQue-Child Form questionnaire, contains 75 items responded to on a 5-point scale and measures five distinct facets. Also the CBCL 6-18 years, was used emotional and behavior problems. Descriptive statistics, chi-square test, Pearson correlation, and T-test, were used to explore and analyse the correlations of interest variables in the study on total EI and EB broad band scales. Correlation analysis mostly indicated low and negative but non-significant relationship between EI and EB scales, for all children and by gender. We did not found gender significant differences on EI total scores and EB broad band scale scores.

Keywords: relationship, children, differences, gender, emotional intelligence, emotional and problem behavior, parent.

Introduction

The ability to recognize and moderate one's own and others' emotions, while simultaneously processing the information in order to make an informed decision about the present situation, can be defined as emotional intelligence (Mayer & Solovey, 1993; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Mayer et al. (1999) defined emotional intelligence using a theoretical model focusing on emotional skills that can be developed through learning and experience. Mayer et al. (1999) posited that emotional intelligence is comprised of three central abilities: 1) perceiving (i. e. the entering of affective information into one's perception), 2) understanding (i. e. the act of processing affective information), and 3) managing emotions (i. e. regulation and expression of emotions.)

Research has shown emotional intelligence to be related to mental, social, and physical health. It has also been associated with stress (Mikolajczak et al., 2008), and life satisfaction (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000).

Regarding the emotional and behavior problems, research generally suggests two key entry points in the development of behavioral problems – early childhood and early adolescence with potentially different risk factors associated with each of them (Lahey, Waldman, McBurnett, 1999). Several international longitudinal studies have provided a picture of the changing forms of behavioral problems from early childhood through to adolescence. Adolescence is a key stage of life development when children require an understanding of the life challenges they face and need to develop basic skills to cope with difficult emotions. It is a time of increased risk of poor mental health with anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, and substance misuse becoming more prevalent as well as an increasing risk of deliberate self-harm and suicidal behavior (Department of Health & Children, 2006). Some young people begin to exhibit problem behaviors during early adolescence. In such cases, entry into conduct problems generally occurs through associations with peers. Externalizing behavior problems can intensify during this period when peer influences can lead to rule breaking behavior

such as delinquent and antisocial behaviors, substance use, and in some cases, gang involvement and drug dealing (Hann & Borek, 2001). Research suggests, that, in isolation, risk factors may make relatively little contribution to the development of behavioral problems, whereas such factors in combination may be powerful determinants of negative outcomes (Klein & Forehand, 2000; Kolvin et al., 1990). Problems result from interactions between characteristics of the child and situations within the family, peer group, school and community. Therefore, it can be expected that families with multiple risk factors experience more problems and thus also a greater need for support. Cummins and McMaster's study (2006) found that children who screened positive for mental health difficulties were more socially disadvantaged, had more behavioral difficulties and adaptive behavior problems, more physical health problems, more family problems, more life stress and poorer coping skills.

Several studies have shown that emotional abilities are of particular relevance to psychological health and wellbeing. In addition, it has been found that emotional problems are related to the tendency to get involved in deviant behavior and self-destructive.

Our study aimed to: (1) to test the relationships of emotional intelligence total score and emotional and problems behavior broad band scales, and (2) to test the differences in such variables regarding the gender of children. It was hypothesized that there will be differences between girls and boys and there will be negative relationship between scales.

METHODOLOGY

The study sample

The sample included 236 children (123 or 52. 1% boys and 113 or 47. 9% girls), with a mean age of 11 years (SD. 835) (range: 10-12 years). 86 of them (36. 4%) were in the fourth grade; 72 of them (30. 5%) were in the fifth grade and 78 or 33. 1 % from the total number of children were in the sixth grade. In the chi-square test, no important differences were reported in the distribution of the percentages of gender and grade representation in this study.

From 236 parents participated in the study, 92 of them or 39. 0 % were mothers, while only 144 of them or 61. 0 % were fathers. In the chi-square test, there were important differences reported in the distribution of the percentages of parent's gender. The parents voluntarily completed the questionnaire.

Table 1

Descriptive data for children by gender, grade, and by gender for parents.

	Valid Nr.	*Percentile*	*Chi-square test*
Male	*123*	*52. 1*	
Female	*113*	*47. 9*	*χ2 (1) =. 424, p =. 515*
Grade 4	*86*	*36. 4*	
Grade 5	*72*	*30. 5*	*χ2 (2) = 1. 254, p =. 534*
Grade 6	*78*	*33. 1*	
Fathers	*144*	*61. 0*	
Mothers	*92*	*39. 0*	*χ2 (1) = 11. 458, p =. 001*

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation for Parents Age and Level of Education and Childrens Age.

	Mean	*SD*
Children Age	*10. 97*	*. 835*
Parents age	*40. 36*	*5. 89*
Fathers education level	*12. 76*	*2. 50*
Mothers education level	*11. 61*	*2. 81*

Instruments and data collection

The TEIQue-Child Form questionnaire, contains 75 items responded to on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 2 = *disagree*; 3 = *neither; 4= Agree; 5=strongly agree*), and measures nine distinct facets (Mavroveli, Petrides, Shove, & Whitehead, 2008). For our study we used the total score of EI. The Child Form that has been specifically developed for children aged between 8 and 12 years. The TEIQue scales have been shown to have a consistency of. 760. The CBCL the 2001 edition (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) contains 118 items items rated 0-1-2 (0 = *not true* (*as far as you know*); 1 = *somewhat or sometimes true*; or 2 = *very true or often true*) plus 1 open-ended problem items, that describe the behaviour of children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 18 years. It is self-administered, and it takes about 30 minutes to complete. By summing the scores three broad band scales are measured (the Internalizing scale is made up of: Withdrawn, Somatic Complaints and Anxious/Depressed scales; the Externalizing scale is made up of Aggressive Behaviour and Delinquent Behaviour scales, and Total problems score. A higher score represents a higher severity. The CBCL scales have been shown to have a consistency of. 946

The procedure of data analysis

The statistical package SPSS for Windows, version 19 was used to analyse the quantitative data collected. During the analysis a specific code was used for the identification of information for each child and parent. Descriptive statistics, chi-square test, Pearson correlation, and T-test, were used to explore and analyse the differences, correlations of interest variables in the study on total EI and EB broad band scales.

RESULTS

To characterize the sample population, the outcome variable was stratified by demographic variable. Table 3 shows the difference in number, mean scores and standard deviations by gender and for all children.

Table 3

Number, Mean scores and standard deviations for EI and EB scales by gender.

	Total children			
	Gender	*N*	*MA*	*SD*
Internalizing	*F*	*113*	*7. 47*	*6. 85*
	M	*123*	*5. 82*	*6. 73*
	F+M	*236*	*6. 61*	*6. 82*
Externalizing	*F*	*113*	*3. 73*	*4. 06*
	M	*123*	*3. 52*	*4. 17*
	F+M	*236*	*3. 62*	*4. 11*
Total Problems	*F*	*113*	*17. 43*	*16. 71*
	M	*123*	*15. 17*	*16. 58*
	F+M	*236*	*16. 25*	*16. 64*
	F	*113*	*263. 54*	*19. 85*

Total EI	*M*	*123*	*264. 72*	*21. 48*
	F+M	*236*	*264. 16*	*20. 68*

Table 4

The inter correlation between EI and EB scales

		Total EI	*Total problem*	*Externalizing*	*Internalizing*
Total EI	*Pearson Correlation*				
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Total problem	*Pearson Correlation*	*. 036*			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 584*			
Externalizing	*Pearson Correlation*	*-. 027*	*. 900***		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 680*	*. 000*		
Internalizing	*Pearson Correlation*	*. 075*	*. 942***	*. 796***	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 249*	*. 000*	*. 000*	
	N	*236*	*236*	*236*	*236*

***. Correlation is significant at the 0. 01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 5

The inter Correlation Between EI and EB Scales by Gender

gender			*Total EI*	*Total Problems*	*Externalizing*
Male Female	*Total Problems*	*Pearson Correlation*	*-. 057*		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 528*		
	Externalizing	*Pearson Correlation*	*-. 145*	*. 889***	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 110*	*. 000*	
	INTER	*Pearson Correlation*	*. 000*	*. 950***	*. 798***
		Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 999*	*. 000*	*. 000*
	Total Problems	*Pearson Correlation*	*. 150*		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 114*		
	Externalizing	*Pearson Correlation*	*. 117*	*. 915***	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 216*	*. 000*	
	Internalizing	*Pearson Correlation*	*. 171*	*. 936***	*. 801***
		Sig. (2-tailed)	*. 070*	*. 000*	*. 000*

The Pearson correlations analysis did not revealed significant relationships between in EI and EB scales. The results obtained indicated low and negative relationships, but without the statistical significance.

The t-test analysis did not revealed differences in EI and EB broad band scales regarding the gender

DISCUSSION

The main aim of this study was to test the relationships of emotional intelligence total score and emotional and problems behavior broad band scales, and to test the differences in such variables regarding the gender of children. It was hypothesized that there will be differences between girls and boys and there will be negative relationship between scales.

Our results did not show statistical differences between boys and girls of the total EI scores and Total problem, internalizing and externalizing at children 10-12 years old. From the results obtained from the correlations analyses, there was no statistical significance. It is clear that the low values are the result of weak associations between the constructs themselves.

It was expected that the variables of emotional intelligence and behavior problems have a strong effect on each other in a way that the higher emotional intelligence will expect lower problem behaviors. There are a lot of studies revealed that EI is negatively related to several indices of psychopathology (Malterer, Glass, & Newman, 2008) such as personality disorders (Petrides, Pérez-González, et al., 2007) and anxiety disorders (Summerfeldt, et al., 2011) as well as self-harm (Mikolajczak, Petrides, & Hurry, 2009) and externalizing behaviors in adolescents (Downey, Johnston, Hansen, Birney, & Stough, 2010).

Considering the present study results, there is not statistical relationship between our interest variables, which is inconsistent with the findings of Taghavi et al. (1999); Cicchetti & Toth (1998); Schmidt & Andrykowski (2004); Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, (2004). Since emotional intelligence has been proposed as a construct that predicts adolescent' adjustment and behavior, there is a need for further studies involving cultural variables in order to explore more in depth the issue.

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