

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL ANXIETY, IRRATIONAL BELIEFS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WITH HOMESICKNESS IN DORMITORY STUDENTS OF TEHRAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to examine the correlation between social anxiety, irrational beliefs and emotional intelligence with homesickness in students that living in the dormitories of Tehran University. For this reason (235 Person, 109 male, 126 female) undergraduate students of Tehran University were selected by using a random cluster sampling method.

Subjects in these studies responded to the social anxiety questionnaire (SAQ) (Watson and Frennd, 1969), irrational beliefs test (IBT) (Jones, 1968), emotional intelligence questionnaire (Petrides and Furnham, 2001) and homesickness questionnaire (Van, 2001).

Results of the correlation coefficient and multivariate regression analysis showed that there were a significant positive correlation between social anxiety and irrational beliefs with homesickness, but between the emotional intelligence with homesickness there were a significant negative correlation.

The results of multivariate regression showed that there were the multiple correlation between predictor variables (social anxiety, irrational beliefs and emotional intelligence) with homesickness ($MR=0.743$) the three predictor variable can explain 0.55 of the criteria variable variance. Generally, through three predictor variable, the variable social anxiety had more power in predicting college student's homesickness.

Keywords: Social Anxiety, Irrational Beliefs, Emotional Intelligence, Homesickness

INTRODUCTION

Today one of the problems that with advancement of science, technology and transportation are taken into consideration is any types of migration. This migration sometimes has academic, economic, commercial or marriage aspects, but the common feature of all these migrations is the problems related to adaptation and cope with the new environment (Hndryksun *et al.*, 2010).

Every year many students are leaving their home to go to the University, such a transition simultaneously brings new opportunities, new challenges and new stress for individual that are inevitable. By transition students has been away from their country, their family and their friends thus, this students encounter with emotional and social stress that homesickness is a common form of this stress (Aegean *et al.*, 2009).

Homesickness is a normal reaction to the new environment and potentially is a debilitating phenomenon that immigrant's people from all cultures and from each age group will be influenced by this phenomenon. People who migrate for higher level of education and students show the largest percentage of homesickness.

When students entered to the university, in addition to getting a new learning situation, they must be coordinate with new cultural and social conditions of their educational environment. They also, experience independent life and previously support from their families will be significantly reduced, because for cultural reasons and the distance between parents location and student location. On campus the students must accept responsibility for their actions because each student is responsible for his own behavior, not his family (Askoplayte, 2010).

Fisher and Hood (1987); Fleet (2001) states that, in total, 50% to 70% of people at least for one time in their life's have experienced homesickness, And between 30% to 60% of English male and female students during the first year of their college are suffering from homesickness.

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Although many students simply do not admit their homesickness problem, But 60% to 70% of student that have moved to stay at the University, may have homesickness, of which approximately 7% to 10% will suffering from severe forms of homesickness (Fan Fleet, 2011)

Homesickness considers as a depression-like response than leaving the familiar environment that characterized by think about the home and tend to return to the familiar surroundings.

According to Fisher and Hood, homesickness is a complex cognitive, emotional and motivational status that is associated with subjective preoccupation about previous environment and desire to return to it. This condition is experienced by depressed mood and psychiatric symptoms (Fisher and Hood, 1987).

Several approaches have been proposed in connection with homesickness but in the present study we only explain the belongingness theory, social psychology and Van Tilburg views.

Based on the belongingness theory humans inherently needs the number of fixed and permanent relationship, this network of connection will be broken in geographic displacement. According to this theory, if a person could to create satisfactory networks of friendship in a new environment and find a sense of belonging to new people so less likely suffer from homesickness. It depends on the number of new friends and the quality of relationship with them it also depends on the same intellectual point and same view (Puyrazly and Lopez, 2007).

Based on social psychology view, individual attitudes is considered as an important factor in interact with the environment. attitudes toward the new environment is a strong predictor of homesickness, the people who thought that the new environment provides appropriate background to gain experience and progress have easier adapt to the new conditions than people who have negative attitudes (Lamp, 2009).

One of the most important variables in this context is tented to confirm the basic assumptions and beliefs about the new location and its cultural and geographical features. From the Van Tilburg perspective (1997), homesickness is an emotional experience that understood after leaving the home and characterized by physical symptoms and negative emotions, cognitive errors, primary perceptions and returned thoughts about the house. Tilburg believed that, emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence consider as key factors in the regulation and control of emotions and forming the interpersonal relationships, these factor scan play a decisive role in homesickness. Nyjhuf and Engels (2007) showed that students with high emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence rarely experience the homesickness.

In the present study in a parallel manner reviewed homesickness, this review is based on a dual process model (DPM) that has been developed by Strobe and Shat (1999). This pattern describes homesickness from the cognitive stress theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) and attachment theory (Balby, 1979).

Cognitive stress theory suggests that, the antecedent factors (situational and individual) mediated by cognitive factors (appraisal and coping) lead to immediate and long-term consequences. Accordingly, leaving home cause the loss of balance between the personal resources and the demands of new position, then individual evaluate the imbalances, if the position is minatory then deal with it and if a deal is not done successfully, the immediate consequences such as symptoms of homesickness arise (feeling alone) and if homesickness continue, long-term effects such as depression and anxiety will be arise (Fan Fleet, 2001).

Balby (1979) argued that in face with threats and unavailability of attachment figures, individual suffering from anxiety and stress. In the case of homesickness, leaving home can somehow be considered as loss of attachment figures and followed with a small grief, this condition eventually lead to anxiety and homesickness.

Based on mentioned issues, homesickness is a variable that influenced by various factors such as personal characteristics (Kamuro *et al.*, 2007 and Kegel, 2009), coping styles (Vorgara *et al.*, 2010), social anxiety (Andalib, 2013 and Vorgara *et al.*, 2010), emotional intelligence (Nyjhuf and Engels, 2007 and Ghanbari *et al.*, 2007) and attachment styles (Soltani *et al.*, 2011), therefore, the present study is an attempt to examine the simple and multiple relationships of social anxiety, irrational beliefs and emotional intelligence with homesickness in student.

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The relationship between anxiety and homesickness is very important and in some cases homesickness defined as anxiety that caused by disturbance in the order of routine life and separation from family (Craford and Mansys, 2011).

Social anxiety is one of the Axis I chronic disorder (psychiatric association of America, 2000) and is the most common type of anxiety disorder (Alden and Taylor, 2011), that is known as ignored disorder (Lybovytz *et al.*, 1985; Khorshydzadh *et al.*, 2011).

Social anxiety makes underlying disorder in social activities and communication fields and reduced social interest and trust to the environment and reduced the life quality and life satisfaction (stein *et al.*, 2005; quoted by khorshydzadh *et al.*, 2011; Wang *et al.*, 2012).

Social anxiety disorder implies to the clear and consistent fear of social situations or functional status, this is due to a person's belief that in social position will act in an embarrassing and humiliating way. Normally People with social anxiety disorder avoid from phobic situations and in faced with social situation and functional status will experience severe anxiety (Alden and Taylor, 2011).

Person's attitude and his interpretation of homesickness can be effective on how to cope and deal with this phenomenon. According to Ellis' Rational- Emotional theory many psychological problems are due to distorted perceptions and irrational beliefs, when people with this problems enter into a new situation, encounter with several negative emotion. These problems are not caused by external triggers and events, the way of thinking, perceptions and irrational beliefs toward events can create stress and negative emotions (Bridges and Harnysh, 2010)

According to these findings, in addition to anxiety and irrational beliefs that can be effective on homesickness, emotional intelligence is also one of the most effective variables in association with homesickness (Mayer *et al.*, 2004, Bell and Brumnyk, 1998).

Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to understand, describe, receive and restrain the emotion. Anyone with a degree of emotional intelligence deal with positive or negative life events and reconciliation with them. Human with emotional intelligence give order and stability in their life and, shows more consistent in their life, so basically, someone with high level of emotional intelligence, experience fewer negative events in his life.

Bar-n and Parker (2000) in their model of emotional intelligence showed that Person's internal relations and his relations with others are not the only things that considered in connection with emotional intelligence. But elements such as compromise, pressure tolerance and public mood are the fundamental elements for emotional intelligence. They believed that high level of emotional intelligence lead to greater individual consistency, the mental health and more favorable communication with the environment.

Leaving the home and away from the subject and attachment sites is a common event for immigrant students. This phenomenon has put enormous strain on them and generally impairs their mental health. In this case, students who have more consistency, better adapt with new conditions, and high level of emotional intelligence, have a more positive attitude towards homesickness phenomenon.

With respect to the matters that mentioned in this study we try to examine the simple and multiple relationships of social anxiety, irrational beliefs and emotional intelligence with homesickness in students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of this study is a descriptive method and has correlational research design. The research sample included all undergraduate students that living in the dormitories of Tehran University, were enrolled in the academic year 2012-2013, from this community, a sample of 235 participants (126 girls and 109 boys) were selected by random cluster sampling method. Thus from each dormitory, four blocks randomly was selected and from each block 11 rooms was selected as a research sample. For data analysis, the significant coefficient test, the Pearson correlation coefficient and multivariate regression analysis was used.

Tool

*To measure students' homesickness, Fan Fleet homesickness Questionnaire (2001) was used. This Questionnaire was translated and validated for the first time by the Agean *et al.*, (2009).

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This questionnaire consists of 45 articles which formulated based on five degree Likert scale from never (1) to very much (5). This scale has five subscales: 1 - Nostalgia for family 2 - feel alone 3 - tend back to home 4 – compromise problem 5- nostalgia for familiar environment and people.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients in Fan Fleet sample that contain 439 people, for each components respectively was 0.90,0.85,0.87,0.88,0.80.

The reliability coefficient for all agents that was reported by Agean *et al.*, (2009) by using Cronbach's alpha method was 0.90, in the present study Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this scale was 0.79

* To measure social anxiety, Watson and Friend (1969) social anxiety Questionnaire (SAQ) was used; this scale by Mehrabi *et al.*, (2000) had been translated and validated.

The scale contains 58 articles that each article has two options (correct - incorrect). This scale measures two subscales that are avoidance, social distress and fear of negative evaluation. The reliability coefficient of this scale by using retest was 0.94, in the present study the reliability coefficient of this scale by using Cronbach's alpha was 0.88

* To measure irrational beliefs Jones (1968) irrational beliefs test (IBT) were used, this questionnaire had 40 articles. Irrational Beliefs Test (IBT) made based on Ellis rational - emotional theory. This scale by using Likert way has been set to five degrees (strongly agree to strongly disagree), that subject by selecting one options determined their comment.

High scores imply on high level of irrational beliefs and low scores implies on low level of irrational beliefs. Jones (1969) by retest reported the reliability coefficient of irrational beliefs about 0.92, the reliability coefficient of this scale in the Gavyta *et al.*, study (2011) by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.83 and in the present study was 0.81.

* To measure emotional intelligence of students, Praydz and Fornham (2001) emotional intelligence scale used that have four subscales: self-awareness, social skills, optimism and understanding, assessment and control of emotion.

This scale contains 30 articles and was formulated by using Likert way has been set to seven degrees totally disagree (1) to totally agree (7).

Reliability coefficient for this scale in Andalib research (2013) with Cronbach's alpha was 0.83 and in present study was 0.85

Findings

The descriptive parameters (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum score) for all sample studied and reported in Table 1. Calculations of mean and standard deviation show that the scores has well distributed.

Table 1: Descriptive indicator of research variables (n=235)

Statistical indicators Variables	mean	standard deviation	minimum score	maximum Score
homesickness	73.34	14.71	56	178
Social Anxiety	31.56	6.92	9	52
Irrational Beliefs	113.80	19.38	64	153
Emotional Intelligence	197	18.12	48	178

According to collected data, the correlation coefficients between variables were calculated and this coefficient presented in the correlation matrix (Table 2).

Table 2: Correlation matrix of research variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
homesickness	1			
Social Anxiety	0.56*	1		
Irrational Beliefs	0.28*	0.32*	1	
Emotional Intelligence	-0.52*	-0.35*	-0.29*	1

* $P < 0.01$

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As you can be see, the correlations between all predictor variables (social anxiety, irrational beliefs and emotional intelligence) with criterion variables (homesickness) at 0/01 is significant, in this case the social anxiety ($r=0.56$) has the highest correlation and irrational beliefs ($r=0.28$) has the lowest correlation with homesickness.

Next, to examine the role of social anxiety, irrational beliefs and emotional intelligence in explaining the changes of homesickness in student, hierarchical regression analysis was performed (Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of hierarchical regression analysis to predict the criterion variable based on predictor variables

Step	Predictor variables	Change Sources	Total Squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Sig
First	Social Anxiety	Regression	391.28	1	391.28	89.90	P<0.01
		Residual	1012.76	233	4.35		
		Total	1404.04	234			
Second	Social Anxiety	Regression	461.51	2	230.75	56.77	P<0.01
		Residual	942.53	232	4.06		
		Total	1404.04	234			
Third	Emotional Intelligence	Regression	479.18	3	159.72	39.87	P<0.01
		Residual	924.86	231	4		
		Total	1404.04	234			
	Irrational Beliefs						

Information about regression coefficients of each step are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Information about regression coefficients

Step	Predictor variables	B	β	R	R^2	T ratio	Sig
First	Social Anxiety	0.27	0.56	0.56	0.32	13.22	<0.01
	Social Anxiety	0.19	0.43		0.48	8.65	<0.01
Second	Emotional Intelligence	-0.13	-0.23	0.69		-5.23	
	Social Anxiety	0.16	0.31		0.55	6.17	<0.01
Third	Emotional Intelligence	-0.09	-0.16	0.74		-3.84	
	Irrational Beliefs	0.07	0.13			2.15	

As shown in Tables 3 and 4 the effect of social anxiety, emotional intelligence and irrational beliefs are significant in explaining the homesickness changes in student.

Based on the results of the multiple regression and hierarchical method, total correlation coefficients for linear combination of predictor variables (social anxiety, emotional intelligence and irrational beliefs) equal to $R=0.74$ and the determination coefficient equal to $R^2=0.55$ that in level of $p < 0.01$ is significant.

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Thus the research hypothesis, based on the relationship between social anxiety, emotional intelligence and irrational beliefs with homesickness are confirmed and based on the obtained determination coefficient, we can say that about 55 % of the homesickness variance determine by three predictor variables.

Regression coefficients show the positive effects of social anxiety, irrational beliefs and negative effects of emotional intelligence on homesickness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As noted above, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between social anxiety, emotional intelligence and irrational beliefs with homesickness among students. In this study, three assumptions were introduced, in this section review and explain the results of each assumption.

The first hypothesis was that there is a relationship between social anxiety and homesickness, the results showed a significant positive correlation between social anxiety and homesickness is ($r=0.56$ and $p=0.01$) these findings is consistent with Longo results (2010) and Warshow (2004, as quoted by Andalib, 2012).

In explaining of these findings we can say when a person placed in a new environment causes many skills that formerly uses, does not work normally, or this skills in an environment with new culture could act as misconduct.

So person always is worried about accepted of his behavior in a new community, because in early experience has learned that community response to his behavior is not predictable. As a result, individual presence in society is associated with high level of anxiety; this characteristic can intensifies the characteristics of homesickness and being away from home.

Being in an environment where people have not a proper communication network makes they have very few social protection, lack of support from others in difficult position severely reduces the safety feeling in an individual. When a familiar person was in a new environment, the level of insecurity severely reduced because a familiar person gives him the information that led to his proficiency in relation to the new environment, and this eventually leads to a reliable communication network and consequently will reduce homesickness.

The related Findings to the second hypothesis (Table 2), indicating that the correlation between emotional intelligence and homesickness, is negative and significant ($r=0.52$ and $p=0.01$). This finding is consistent with Ghanbari *et al.*, research (2007); and Yaghobi *et al.*, research (2009). In explaining of these findings we can be stated that, people who have higher level of emotional intelligence in understanding the verbal and nonverbal emotional symptoms are more capable and therefore represent a more appropriate response (Mayer *et al.*, 2004) which may facilitate their relationships with others and provide the wider social networks and more social support for them. People who have more social support deal more effectively with stressors such as homesickness and they will experience fewer stress and homesickness. On the other hand, one of the characteristics of people with high level of emotional intelligence is to have more control over their emotions, and in face with stressful events, such as homesickness, they have greater use of problem-focused strategies. Also, these people have a better understanding of their mental and emotional states, and they know how to relax in stressful situations, and less affected by environmental exposure conditions (Strobe *et al.*, 2002).

The related Findings to the third hypothesis (Table 2), indicating that there is a positive and significant correlation between irrational beliefs and homesickness ($r=0.28$ and $p=0.01$). These findings are consistent with Nyjhuf *et al.*, research (2007) and Van Tilburg *et al.*, research (1999). According to the rational – emotional theory of Ellis, many of the psychological problems caused by irrational beliefs.

When people entering into a new situation this irrational beliefs, can cause several problems. These problems are not caused by external conditions and events, but also due to their mentality and attitude towards events (Bridges and Harnysh, 2010). These irrational and inaccurate beliefs when formed in relation to the new location, then mind tries to put together the facts and interpretations and show the situation worse than what it is. This can exacerbate the symptoms of homesickness.

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