

Emotional support and its relationship to Emotional intelligence

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to reveal emotional support from family, teacher, friends, and social medial network among a sample of (732) ninth graders Jordanian students, and to investigate the relationship between emotional support and emotional intelligence. The results of the study showed a high level of emotional support, and revealed that there were significant positive relationships between emotional support (family, teacher, friends, and network) and emotional intelligence. In addition, family and friend emotional support contributed significantly in the variation of emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Emotional Support, Emotional Intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional growth is one of the manifestations of human growth and some consider it as the most important aspect in the development of the individual's behavior, personality, dreams, and ambitions. Psychologists considered Adolescence as a stormy, turbulent, and a revolutionary stage that is characterized by intense emotions due to a combination of unbalanced physiological and psychological factors.

The focus on emotion and coping with life successfully among individuals in general and adolescences in particular requires providing emotional support to ensure arriving to a good level of psychological growth, good human interaction and close personal relationships such as friends, family, or emotional relationships (Burlison, 2003). Cobb (1976) points out that emotional support is about information that leads individuals to believe that they have someone who cares and loves them, and there are those who appreciate them and they feel they belongs to a social network that provides them with mutual responsibility.

Catrona & Russell (1990) defined emotional support as the need for help and security in stressful times, resulting in an individual sense of caring for others. They are suggesting that emotional support is the emergence of susceptibility to the other direction to seek comfort and safety during times of stress, and to direct the person to feel the attention of others. Also, Sarafino (1998) points out that emotional support is the feelings of affection, friendship, care, attention, love and confidence that others demonstrate to the individual and his sense of comfort and belonging while dealing with them.

The concept of emotional support includes a wide range of behaviors such as empathy, Confront, compassionate participation, caring, encouragement toward others, love that appear in caring and attention, valued feeling, and dependable bonds of friendship (Gregory, et al., 1996; Campbell & Wright, 2002). In addition, emotional support shows care and attention that is presented orally or non-verbally, including listening, empathy, and reassurance. It also provides an opportunity to express emotions that may reduce hardship, improve interpersonal relationships, and provide some of the goals or meanings of life experiences. The emotional characteristics of personal life of the human being include communication, attention, moral guidance and trust, thus providing an opportunity to vent emotions (Cohen, 2004; Cohen & Wills, 1985).

The importance of emotional support emanates from the fact that individuals who receive more emotional support or realize that emotional support is available are happier, healthier, and able to cope with the problems and troubles of life (Catrona & Russell, 1990; Pierce, Sarason & Sarason, 1990). Receiving emotional support helps individuals to cope with problems, anxiety, and disappointments of hope and pain in their lives, but if left unchecked or treated, it will have serious negative effects that can affect the physical, psychological and emotional health of the individual (Burlleson, 1990).

Gregory, Sarson, and Sarason (1996) note that potential emotional support providers include family, friends, co-workers, colleagues, and experts such as counselors and clergy. Therefore, there are many sources responsible for providing emotional support, which can vary from culture to culture in terms of the sources or the importance of each source. People also see the ability to provide emotional support to close friends and loved ones by means of communication such as Facebook, Twitter, You-Tube, and WhatsApp (Burlleson, 2003).

Golman (1995) notes that emotional intelligence is more important to the individual's success in life than cognitive intelligence, as it plays an important role in success in work, study, and social life. The ability to adapt and cope successfully depends on the integrated recruitment of mental and emotional abilities, and that success in personal relationships depends on the individual's awareness and ability to think about his emotional experiences and information about them.

Golman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as a set of emotional skills that are necessary for success in professional interactions and in different life situations. He also added, it is the ability of the individual to know their feelings, feelings of others and manage their emotions and relations with others effectively. Mayer & Salovy (1997) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor an individual's feelings, and the use of information in guiding a person's thinking and actions. George (2000) stated that emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions through thinking, understanding emotional knowledge, and organizing emotions so that the individual can influence the feelings of others. While Bar-on (2006) defined emotional intelligence as a set of emotional, personal and social abilities that give the individual the ability to adapt to the difficulties and stress.

Golman (1995) has divided emotional intelligence into four dimensions, which are self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, and social skills. While Meyer and Salovy (1997) mentioned that emotional intelligence consists of four dimensions, which are perception of emotions, understanding and analyzing emotions, managing emotions, and emotional thinking.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

The availability of emotional support for the individual may contribute to happiness, adaptation and harmony of the adolescents and their relations with others. It will makes them able to understand their emotions and feelings and dealing with kindness and affection which is an important part of the characteristics of emotional intelligence.

Gregory, et, al, (1996) indicated that children continue to develop a different and evolving basis and reference for the strategies of comfort, consolation and empathy, so they can be able to provide emotional support in the form of sensitive, knowing, cooperative and conscious emotions to the other persons who need emotional support. Emotional support from parents or other adolescences are the most important factors that develop their emotional support skills. Depending on their specific personality, support from caregivers can affect individual support skills and may be catalysts for many emotional support mechanisms. Clearly learning by observation is an important mechanism; children learn how and when to provide emotional support by observing and imitating others.

Shaw, Krause, Connel & Dayton (2004) conducted a study in the United States designed to assess the relationship between recipients of emotional support from parents early in life and the health of an individual in adolescence. The emotional support of parents in childhood was strongly correlated with increased levels of symptoms of depression and chronic diseases in adulthood. The study also found that children who provide adequate emotional support from parents are less likely to suffer from mental and physical illnesses than children who received less emotional support than their parents did.

Emotional support was linked to so many factors related to emotional intelligence. Caldwell, Silverman, Lefforge & Clayton (2004) investigate the relationship of emotional family support to self-esteem, emotional well-being and delinquency of Mexican American adolescents. The study found a positive correlation between emotional support provided by mothers and emotional well-being and self-esteem among adolescents.

Frederick, Gwen, Dimitiri & Wayne (2005) conducted a study to reveal the relationship of emotional support in children to bullying. The results showed that emotional support for children at 4 years of age was negatively associated with bullying. Also, Sabihat (2011) conducted a study in Palestine aimed at revealing the relationship between forms of bullying and psychological security and emotional support. The results showed that the forms of bullying were inversely related to the level of emotional support for the student.

Radi (2002) conducted a study aimed at examining the correlation between parental maltreatment and neglect with cognitive, emotional and social intelligence for children. The aim was to identify differences in cognitive, emotional and social intelligence among children according to the level of abuse and neglect of parents. The results have linked abuse and neglect of parents negatively with the cognitive, emotional and social intelligence of children. Recently, Iruloh & Ukaegbu (2015) conducted a study aimed at investigating the relationship between emotional and social intelligence and the social support network among young people. The result showed a positive correlation between emotional and social intelligence and social support networks among young people.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY:

Many parents are often suffering in raising their children in the early stage of adolescence and face many difficulties in dealing with their emotional sensitivity and fluctuating moods that are often noticeable at this age. This could lead to problems between

adolescents and their parents or family members and could produce a lot of tension and fear in the relationship. The researchers also noted that many students at this age are in strong need for emotional support from those who care for them such as parents, teachers, friends, and other significant people.

Due to limited research that addressed the direct relationship between emotional support from various sources and emotional intelligence, the aim of the study was to find out the extent of the emotional support provided by various sources of emotional support, and to reveal the relationship between emotional support in general and emotional intelligence among 9th grade students in Jordan.

Specifically the study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of emotional support provided by family, friends, teachers, and social networking?
- What is the relationship between emotional supports provided by family, teachers, friends and social networks and emotional intelligence?

The importance of study

The importance of the study stems from the fact that it examines variables of importance in the lives of our students. Research on emotional support is rare in Jordan and no studies have examined the relationship between emotional support and emotional intelligence in Jordan or the region. The practical importance of this study is to provide parents, adults and educational staff with information that helps them care for adolescents by providing them with emotional support. The results of the study can reflect in increasing awareness of teachers and family of the impact of emotional support on emotional intelligence and the development of awareness programs, training and guidance to improve their practices in providing such support.

Study population and sample

The study population consists of ninth grade Jordanian students enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2016/2017 in Jordan (2932) students (1446 male students and 1486 female students). The study sample was chosen randomly based on gender and sub-districts. It consisted of (732) male and female students from the ninth grade (366 males and 366 females).

Study Tools

First: Emotional support Scale

The present study used the emotional support scale developed by Hasada, Senda, & Minoguchi (1989). The scale consisted of (16) items using 5 point liker-type responses. Items were divided among four dimension sources (family, friends, teacher, social networks). The original scale has good indicators of validity and reliability (Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquite, Reyes and Morling, 2009). The scale was translated from English to Arabic and translated back from Arabic to English to check for possible translation errors.

Validity: In order to achieve content validity for the new Arabic scale, it was presented to a panel of 10 specialists to check for content issues. Based on 80% agreement of panel judges, no items were removed or added and only few were clarified. Also, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between item score and source score based on a data collected from (36) exploratory sample. Correlations ranged from .21 to .75 which are considered acceptable.

Reliability: Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between the two applications of the scale (2 weeks interval) based on sources using the data from the exploratory sample. The correlation coefficients of the scale sources ranged from (.50 - .78) which are considered acceptable. The homogeneity of the internal consistency was calculated using the α -Cronbach equation on the exploratory sample data. The coefficients ranged between (0.83 - 0.89) for all four sources which are considered acceptable.

Second: Emotional intelligence Scale: The present study used

Shutte scale, which was translated to Arabic language by Badarin (2008). The scale consisted of 33 items divided into four dimensions which are emotional awareness, emotional management, managing the emotion of others, and use of emotions. The scale has good validity and reliability indicators in the original and translated forms (Badarin, 2008).

Validity: In order to achieve content validity for the translated copy of the scale, it was presented to a panel of 10 specialists to check for content issues. Based on 80% agreement of panel judges, 2 items were deleted and minor language changes were made to some of the items. The Scale consisted of 31 items after content validity. Also, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between item score, dimensions scores and total score based on a data collected from the previous exploratory sample. Correlations ranged from .18 to .77 and one item was below the .20 norm so it was deleted. The number of items became 30.

Reliability: Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between the two applications of the scale (2 weeks interval) based on data from the previous exploratory sample. The correlation coefficients ranged between (.57 - .70) and for the total scale (.85), which are considered acceptable. Also, the homogeneity of the internal consistency was calculated using the α -Cronbach equation on the exploratory sample data. The values of consistency coefficients ranged from 0.67 to 0.83 for the dimensions and for the whole scale (0.92), which are considered acceptable.

Study Procedures: To achieve the objectives of the study, the following steps and procedures were followed:

1. Translation of the measure of emotional support through its translation from English to Arabic and from Arabic to English, and then obtaining validity and reliability indicators.
2. Development of the measure of emotional intelligence and obtaining validity and reliability indicators.
3. Identifying the study sample after obtaining proper official approval to conduct the study.
4. Collecting data from subjects after explaining the objectives of the study and assuring them that all information to be obtained will only be used for scientific research purposes, they will be kept confidential, giving sufficient time for sample subjects to answer all items of the study tools, and answered all subjects' questions regarding the study.
5. Using the SPSS program for statistical analysis of data collected from the study sample.

RESULTS

First, to answer the first question "What is the level of emotional support provided by family, friends, teachers, and social networking?", means and standard deviations of the emotional support and dimensions as provided by students were extracted and shown in Table 1.

Table (1): Means and standard deviations of the level of emotional support provided by sources

Dimensions	Means	standard deviations	Levels*	Rank
My family	4.31	.741	High	1
my friends	3.95	.798	High	2
my teacher	3.48	.955	Average	3
Network	3.14	1.124	Average	4
Total Emotional Support	3.72	.666	High	-

Levels: (1.33 - 2.33 = low), (2.34 - 3.66 = average), and (3.67 - 5 = high)

Table (1) showed that the mean for total emotional support was (3.72) which indicates a high level of support. For the four sources, they ranged between (3.14 -4.31), Where the emotional support provided by members of my family in the first place with the highest average (4.31) and at a high level. While the networking support came last (3.14) with an average level.

Second, to answer the second question “What is the relationship between emotional supports provided by family, teachers, friends and social networks and emotional intelligence?”, simple correlations between emotional supports and emotional intelligence and the predicative ability of emotional supports on emotional intelligence were calculated. Pearson correlation coefficients between emotional supports provided by the family, teachers, friends, social networks, and emotional intelligence and its dimensions are shown in Table 2.

Table (2) Pearson correlation coefficients between emotional support and emotional intelligence

Variables	Emotional awareness	Emotional Management	Managing the emotions of others	Use Emotions	Total emotional intelligence
Correlation coefficient	.235 **	.293 **	.267 **	.275 **	.310 **
Statistical significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Correlation coefficient	.189 **	.166 **	.199**	.167 **	.209 **
Statistical significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Correlation coefficient	.113 **	.134	.181 **	.100 **	.157 **
Statistical significance	.002	.000	.000	.007	.000
Correlation coefficient	.043	.046	Positive	-.008	.053
Statistical significance	.240	.214	.022	.832	.153
Correlation coefficient	.181 **	.199**	.234**	.159 **	.227 **
Statistical significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

* Statistical function at the level of significance (0.05).

** Statistical function at the level of significance (0.01).

Results of table 2 showed:

- There were statistically significant positive correlations between the sources of family, friends, teachers, and total emotional support with emotional intelligence and all its dimensions.
- There was a statistically significant positive correlation between networks emotional support and the managing emotions of others.

Also, a multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of emotional support sources on total emotional intelligence among students, as shown in Table 3.

Table (3): Multiple regression analysis of the impact of emotional support sources on total emotional intelligence

The dependent variable	Sources	B	R	R ²	F	P
Total Emotional intelligence	My family	.254	.310	.096	77.578	.000
	my friends	.079	.324	.105	42.857	.000

Results of table 3 showed that emotional support provided by family and friends together accounted for about 10.5% of total emotional intelligence. Family members supported 9.6% of emotional intelligence and friends accounted for 0.9% of emotional intelligence.

To determine the predictive ability of emotional support sources on the dimensions of emotional intelligence, multiple regression analysis was used as shown in Table 4.

Table (4): multiple regression analysis of the impact of emotional support sources on the dimensions of emotional intelligence

The dependent variable	Forecasters	B	R	R ²	F	P
Emotional awareness	My family	.215	.235	.055	42.730	.000
	my friends	.097	.258	.066	25.950	.000
Emotional Management	My family	.261	.293	.086	68.711	.000
Manage the emotions of others	My family	.262	.267	.071	55.878	.000
	my friends	.103	.286	.082	32.494	.000
Use Emotions	My family	.279	.275	.076	59.912	.000
	Networking	-.052	.286	.082	32.383	.000
	my friends	.099	.300	.090	24.036	.000

The results of table 4 showed:

- Emotional support from family and friends explained 6.6% of emotional awareness. Family members supported 5.5% of the emotional awareness and friends supported 1.1% emotional awareness.
- Support provided by family members explained 8.6% of emotional management.

- Emotional support from family and friends explained 8.2% of managing the emotions of others. Family members supported 7.1% of managing the emotions of others and friends supported 1.1% of managing the emotions of others.
- The support provided by family members, networks and friends explained about 9% of the use of emotions. Support of family members explained 7.6%, support from network explained 0.6%, and support from friends explained 0.8% of use of emotion.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the level of support provided to students from all sources (family, friends, teachers, and social networks) is generally high. However, support from family and friends was high, while the level of teachers and social networking were average. Support from family members came first, followed by support from friends, teachers and social networks.

These results can be explain in term of the importance of family in adolescent development and the ability of family in meeting the demands and psychological needs that they face daily. Families in Jordan, as an Arab and Muslim country, considered a major supporter of adolescent because of the characteristics of the Jordanian family in terms of cohesion, compassion and communication. The role and duties of family toward raising children are very clear and demanding meeting all kinds of psychological needs.

High emotional support from family and friends is supported by Gregory, et, al, (1996) Ideas. They also confirmed by Lerner (2002) in which the family is the principal institution and pillar that works to promote the adolescent's emotional development. In the event of any imbalance, it may be due to the lack of information and shortcomings of the parents, with regard to the nature and characteristics of the adolescent and severe shortcomings in parental treatment methods.

The emotional support of friends, which came second among all four sources, could be explained by the fact that the Arab society values friendship among adolescent and are considered a high source of emotional support. Adolescents begin to expand their circle of social relationships and looking for people to share experiences early since the end of childhood. Teenager at this stage starts relying heavily at times on friends in the sense of security and assistance and self-development. This result is consistent with Eriksson theory stressing the role of friends in shaping the adolescent's personal identity, providing the emotional support needed, and the friendship that provides suitable opportunities for self-exploration and developing a deep understanding of others through safe and open communication processes (Berk, 2001).

Teacher's emotional support was ranked third with an average level of emotional support. This intermediate level may be due to the self-educational philosophy of the majority of teachers in imposing control and assuming that the teacher is the source of authority, in order to do his job perfectly. Some teachers ignore the role of emotional support believing achievement and learning are the basic role of teachers. This was confirmed by Jaber, Hunt, Sabin-Farrell and Alqaysi (1995) who found that some teachers may overlook their role of providing a safe environment free of fear, threats and punishment.

Network emotional support came in fourth and final rank with an average level. This intermediate level of support may explain that networks, as a virtual space, may allow adolescents to connect to individuals and sharing similar interests and tendencies but it is not the ideal place for emotional support. Many teenagers have reservations over sharing personal issues on social media due to problems of confidentiality and fear of being exploited by their

mates. Atoum and Hattab (2015) found that Jordanian teenagers fear addiction to internet and fear personal scandals by their social media mates.

The results also showed that there were positive correlations between each of the sources of emotional support (family, friends and teacher) and emotional intelligence and its dimensions, and between the emotional support from networks and management of emotions of others. Also, the results also showed the contribution of family, friends and network emotional support in predicting emotional intelligence with a clear contribution to family in accounting for the variation in emotional intelligence.

These results can be explained by the fact that family, friends and teachers can contribute to adolescents' emotional intelligence. Adolescents spend a lot of time at home, with friends and at the school. These sources are often in contact with the individual during crises or situations with personal or social or emotional nature. All components of emotional support generates empathy and understanding which in turn is an integral part of emotional intelligence. Atoum and Almunaizel (2011) found that Individuals who are able to understand their emotions and the emotions of others will be able to use and manage them effectively and provide the necessary support in the situations required.

Tomas & Alberecht (1980) argues that emotional support increases the individual's self-esteem and increases innovative abilities, and allow them to acquire skills through learning by observation and imitation. It also provides experiences of love, acceptance and form social relationships which in return makes them able to manage and use their emotions effectively.

Family emotional support has contributed to the prediction of emotional intelligence and all of its dimensions strongly in comparison to the other three sources. Family plays a major role in adolescents behavior such as self-esteem, decision making, future direction, and many aspects of their daily activities. Gregory, et, al, (1996) indicated that families that allow individuals to grows up in an atmosphere full of love and trust, they become emotionally balanced and can manage their social and emotional relations. Freeman (1983) emphasized that emotional intelligence needs an emotional state that is capable of intelligence, such as love and disciples; Which in turn frees responsible areas of the brain for these abilities .

In light of the findings of the study, the researchers recommend the followings:

1. Conduct more studies on emotional support and link it with self-esteem and psychological security of students.
2. Develop an integrated plan to train teachers on emotional support skills to become active support providers in the school community.
3. Explore the relationship between social media and other social and psychological aspects of Jordanian students due to the spread of such services.

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