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Investigating the relationship between library anxiety and emotional intelligence

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the relationship between library anxiety and emotional intelligence of *Bushehr University of Medical Sciences*' students and *Persian Gulf University*'s students in Bushehr municipality. In this descriptive study which is of correlation type, 700 students of Bushehr University of Medical Sciences and the Persian Gulf University selected through stratified random sampling. Required data has been collected using normalized Siberia Shrink's emotional intelligence questionnaire and localized Bostick's library anxiety scale. The results show that the rate of library anxiety among students is less than average (91.73%) except "mechanical factors". There is not a significant difference in all factors of library anxiety except "interaction with librarian" between male and female. The findings also indicate that there is a negative significant relationship between library anxiety and emotional intelligence ($r = -0.41$). According to the results, it seems that by improving the emotional intelligence we can decrease the rate of library anxiety among students during their search in a library. Emotional intelligence can optimize academic library's productivity.

Keywords

Library anxiety; Emotional intelligence; Bushehr University of Medical sciences; Persian Gulf University; Students

Introduction

Library anxiety is one of the main problematic matters in library and information science. Some researchers have founded that the main reason that makes a gap between users and librarians is the users' idea about dissatisfactory services in libraries (Anwar, AlKandari, and AlQallaf, 2004). Students who have experienced a specific level of the library anxiety in library environment think that other students have enough competencies and desired skills to use library materials while they themselves have not. They also believe that ask a question in library environment means that they are ignorant (Omran, 2001). These students do not pay enough attention to the library guides and signs; so they can't complete their search process. According to Collins and Veal (2004) anxious students will face the great problems during information-seeking process. So, if we can describe the term "library anxiety" clearly for students as well as its commonness among the majority of library users then these clientele will experience the lowest rate of anxiety in the library environment (Carlile, 2007).

By developing "library anxiety" theory (1985), various researches have been conducted to propose solutions for decreasing the library anxiety among users. Battle (2004) founded that information literacy skills have an undeniable effect on decreasing the library anxiety. Brown, Weingart, Johnson, and Dance (2004) realized that library instruction programs can significantly reduce library anxiety. Collins and Veal (2004) indicated that library instructions such as the access to electronic databases and the ability of using computers can improve the capabilities of users. Kwon, Onwuegbuzie, and Alexander (2007) suggested that critical thinking skills instruction can decrease library anxiety among students – specifically during their library searches; this finding has been approved by Gross and Latham (2007) too. Kwon (2008) has proposed the model which indicates the interactive relationship between critical thinking and library anxiety. Bowers (2010) found that the library anxiety relates with the parameters such as research experiences, technology usability, Internet access, and library perceived value. Finally, Erfanmanesh and Basirian Jahromi (2011) have found that information literacy skills instruction can reduce the library anxiety among students.

Problem Statement

According to the previous studies, it can be observed that none of the researchers have studied the relationship between emotional intelligence and library anxiety. In one hand, as mentioned above emotional intelligence and its parameters highlight the psychological characteristics as well as focus on the status of emotions and feelings in human's capabilities, and on the other hand library anxiety is considered as a psychological barrier to access these capabilities; so it can be supposed that there is a probable relationship between these two themes. By knowing various psychological characteristics, people first can identify their strengths and weaknesses; then they

can interact with the others effectively (Soltanifar, 2007). In this paper, we study on the relationship between emotional intelligence, as a key parameter in controlling emotions (Fletcher, Leadbetter, Curran, & O'Sullivan, 2009), and library anxiety among Bushehr universities students.

Questions

This descriptive study attempts to answer the following questions:

- Q1- What is the rate of the library anxiety of Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students and Persian Gulf University students?
- Q2- Is there any significant difference between the library anxiety of male and female students?
- Q3- Is there any significant difference between the library anxiety of Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students and Persian Gulf University students?
- Q4- Among the five library anxiety parameters (interact with librarians, emotional factors, uncomfortably in library, lack of the library skills, mechanical factors) which one of them has the highest impact on Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students?
- Q5- Among the five library anxiety parameters, which one of them has the biggest impact on Persian Gulf University students?

Hypothesis

The main objective of this study is to test the hypothesis under which “the students, who have a higher level of the emotional intelligence, will experience a lower level of the library anxiety”.

Method & Material

In this descriptive study which is of correlation type, 700 students of Bushehr University of Medical Sciences (Ministry of Health and Medical Education) and the Persian Gulf University (Ministry of Science, Research and Technology) were selected through Stratified random sampling according to Morgan's table of sampling. Data was collected by using normalized Questionnaire of Siberia Shrink's Emotional Intelligence and Localized Questionnaire of Bostick library anxiety scale and analyzed using SPSS. The face validity of these two questionnaires was approved by 13 specialists. The reliability of normalized Questionnaire of Siberia Shrink's Emotional Intelligence ($\alpha=0.77$) and Localized Questionnaire of Bostick library anxiety scale ($\alpha=0.69$) is also calculated using SPSS.

Findings

To analyze data in this research, first we should indicate the frequency distributions and the relative frequencies of our sample study (Table 1).

Table 1. The frequency distributions and the relative frequencies of students

University	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Bushehr University of Medical Sciences	316	48/24
Persian Gulf University	339	51/76
Total	655	100

According to Table 1, 655 students have been investigated by using normalized Questionnaire of Siberia Shrink's Emotional Intelligence and Localized Questionnaire of Bostick.

Q1- What is the rate of the library anxiety of Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students and Persian Gulf University students?

Table 2. One sample T-test for determining the rate of the library anxiety

		Average	Frequency	T	Df	Std Deviation	Sig
Library Anxiety	Bushehr University of Medical sciences	90.04	316	-10.93	315	-8.96	0.0001
	Persian Gulf University	93.3	339	-7.2	338	-5.7	0.0001
	Total	91.73	655	-12.7	654	-7.27	0.0001

To calculate the rate of the library anxiety of Persian Gulf University students and Bushehr University of Medical Sciences, 33 items of the library anxiety scale were analyzed via one sample t-test. According to the numbering of Likert scale (1= highly agree, 5= highly disagree), 3 was assigned as a "cut point".

Recognizing that the library anxiety scale has 33 items and the number 3 is assigned as a "cut point" then the score 99 is determined as an average score. According to Table 2, the rate of the library anxiety in these two universities is lower than average ($90.04 < 99$; $93.3 < 99$).

According to Table 3, students' scores have been graded by determining the rate of the library anxiety; in this grading, the scores between 82 and 102 indicate the medium level of library anxiety.

Table 3. The level of the library anxiety between two universities students

	Bushehr University of Medical sciences		Persian Gulf University		Total		Sig.
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
(low<82)	88	27.8	75	22.1	163	24.9	0.019
(mod 82-102)	170	53.8	172	50.7	342	52.2	
(high>102)	58	18.4	92	27.1	150	22.9	
Total	316	100	339	100	655	100	

According to Table 3, 52% of students have had a medium level of library anxiety. Since the majority of these two universities students have had a medium level of library anxiety but 27.1% of Persian Gulf University students and 18.4% of Bushehr University of Medical sciences students have had a high level of library anxiety (P value=0.019, $\chi^2=7.95$). In other words, these two universities students have had a medium level of library anxiety during opening hours of the library but the number of Persian Gulf Universities who experienced the high level of the library anxiety is more than Bushehr University of Medical sciences.

Table 4. One sample T-test for determining the rate of the library anxiety in 5 various scales

Scale	Average	Frequency	T	Df	Std Deviation	Sig.
Interactivity with Librarians	33.1	655	-10.1	654	-2.9	0.0001
Emotional Factors	29.61	655	-1.93	654	-0.39	0.054
Inconvenience with Library Environment	16.5	655	-12.13	654	-1.5	0.0001
The Lack of the Library Skills	6.38	655	-30.76	654	-2.62	0.0001
Mechanical Factors	6.14	655	0.14	654	2.11	0.035

According to Table 4 as well as localized questionnaire of Bostick library anxiety scale (12 items for *interactivity with librarians*, 10 items for *emotional factors*, 6 items for *inconvenience with library environments*, 3 items for *the lack of library skills*, and 2 items for *mechanical factors*), it has been indicated that in all of the scales except the last one (mechanical factors) the students have experienced low level of the library anxiety.

Q2- Is there any significant difference between the library anxiety of male and female students?

Table 5. An Independent T-test for determining the rate of the library anxiety in 5 various scales between female and male

<i>Scale</i>	Female	Male	F	T	Df	Std Deviation	Sig.
Interactivity with Librarians	33.47	32.69	0.07	1.35	653	0.77	0.2
Emotional Factors	29.58	29.64	8.72	-	653	-0.06	-
Inconvenience with Library Environment	16.41	16.61	0.08	0.8	653	-0.2	0.4
The Lack of the Library Skills	6.2	6.57	5.29	-	653	-0.36	-
Mechanical Factors	6.09	6.2	0.99	-0.85	653	-0.11	0.4
<i>Library Anxiety</i>	91.75	91.71	1.98	0.034	653	0.04	0.97

An independent T-test was used to compare the averages between male and female. According to Table 5, there is no significant difference between these two groups ($T=0.03$, $Sig=0.97$). In other words, it could be mentioned that male and female students have no difference in library anxiety. We should aware that there is just a significant difference in *interactivity with librarians* between these two groups. It means that the level of the library anxiety in female students is more than males.

Mann-Whitney test was used to compare male and female groups due to the different variances in two universities in the field of *the lack of library skills* and *emotional factors* items.

Table 6. The average of the scores in the field of the lack of the library skills and emotional factors

<i>Sexuality</i>	Emotional Factors	The lack of the Library Skills
Male	321.65	313.08
Female	334.85	334.11
Sig	0.1	0.1

According to Table 6, there is no significant difference between male and female groups in the field of *the lack of library skills* and *emotional factors* items (P value=0.1).

Q3- Is there any significant difference between the library anxiety of Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students and Persian Gulf University students?

Table 7. The average scores in the field of the library anxiety and its elements

<i>Scales</i>	Bushehr University of Medical sciences	Persian Gulf University	F	T	Df	Std Deviation	Sig
Interactivity with Librarians	32.07	34.06	0.22	-3.48	653	-1.99	0.001
Emotional Factors	29.34	29.86	0.3	-1.27	653	-0.52	0.2
Inconvenience with Library Environment	16.31	16.69	0.55	-1.54	653	-0.38	0.12
The Lack of the Library Skills	6.22	6.53	5.12	-	653	-0.3	-
Mechanical Factors	6.1	6.17	0.92	-0.51	653	-0.67	0.61
<i>Library Anxiety</i>	90.04	93.3	0.002	-2.85	653	-3.25	0.004

According to Table 7, the average scores of the library anxiety in Persian Gulf University students is significantly higher than Bushehr University of Medical sciences ($\mu=93.3$). In other words, Persian Gulf University students have experienced a higher level of the library anxiety than Bushehr University of Medical sciences students. It is observed that this significant difference between these two universities related with "*interactivity with librarians*" factor.

Mann-Whitney test was used to compare these two universities due to the different variances in the field of "*the lack of library skills*" item.

Table 8. The average scores in the field of the lack of the library skills

<i>University</i>	The lack of library skills
Bushehr University of Medical sciences	315.65
Persian Gulf University	339.51
Sig	0.1

According to Table 8, there is no significant difference between Persian Gulf University students and Bushehr University of Medical sciences students in the field of *the lack of library skills* (P value=0.1).

Q4- Among the five library anxiety parameters (interact with librarians, emotional factors, uncomfortably in library, lack of the library skills, mechanical factors) which one of them has the highest impact on Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students?

To answer this question “weighted average” scale has been used due to the various items in each factor.

Table 9. One sample T-test for determining the rate of the library anxiety in 5 various factors among Bushehr University of Medical sciences students

<i>Scale</i>	Weighted Average	Frequency	T	Df	Std Deviation	Sig
Interactivity with Librarians	2.67	316	-9.48	315	-0.33	0.0001
Emotional Factors	2.93	316	-2.35	315	-0.07	0.02
Inconvenience with Library Environment	2.72	316	-9.76	315	-0.28	0.0001
The Lack of the Library Skills	2.07	316	-24.12	315	-0.93	0.0001
Mechanical Factors	3.05	316	1.13	315	-0.05	0.26

According to Table 9, the average of the “mechanical factors” is higher than the other factors ($\mu=3.05$).

Q5- Among the five library anxiety parameters, which one of them has the biggest impact on Persian Gulf University students?

Table 10. One sample T-test for determining the rate of the library anxiety in 5 various factors among Persian Gulf University students

<i>Scale</i>	Weighted Average	Frequency	T	Df	Std Deviation	Sig
Interactivity with Librarians	2.84	339	-4.96	338	-0.16	0.0001
Emotional Factors	2.99	339	-0.48	338	-0.01	0.62
Inconvenience with Library Environment	2.78	339	-7.51	338	-0.22	0.0001
The Lack of the Library Skills	2.18	339	-19.87	338	-0.82	0.0001
Mechanical Factors	3.09	339	1.83	338	0.09	0.06

According to Table 10, the average of the “mechanical factors” is higher than the other factors among Persian Gulf University students ($\mu=3.09$).

Hypothesis: The students, who have a higher level of the emotional intelligence, will experience a lower level of the library anxiety.

Table 11. The average of the library anxiety and emotional intelligence in two universities

<i>University</i>	Frequency	Correlation between library anxiety and emotional intelligence
Bushehr University of Medical Sciences	316	-0.39*
Persian Gulf University	339	-0.43*
Total	655	-0.41*

According to Table 11, there is a negative significant relationship between library anxiety and emotional intelligence in Persian Gulf University students and Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students. So, the students who have a higher level of the emotional intelligence will experience a lower level of the library anxiety. It means that our hypothesis is verified.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the level of the library anxiety in Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students and Persian Gulf University students is lower than the average; this shows that these students have experienced a little anxiety in library's environment. According to the grading of the library anxiety in this research, it can be concluded that students have experienced a medium level of library anxiety; this finding is also verified the findings of Anwar, AlKandari, and AlQallaf (2004) and Bowers (2010) studies. In this research, the *mechanical factors* has the highest rank among the 5 different library anxiety factors; while *the lack of the library skills* has the lowest rank. Jiao & Onwuegbuzie (2001), Bowers (2010), Hariri and Nemati Lofamjani (2009) have concluded that mechanical factors have the highest impact on the level of the users' library anxiety. Also, Lee (2011) approved that mechanical factors – specially using computers in the library- have the undeniable impact on the level of the library anxiety among students.

It may be deduced that some factors such as “the lack of the required skills” among users to apply electronical devices like printers, scanners, etc. and “the lack of the mastery” among students to use new technologies like RFID security systems, and online catalogs result in the increases of the library anxiety in *mechanical factors* (Hariri & Nemati Lofamjani, 2009). This matter may relates to any problem which occurred in using copy-machines and printers in these two universities.

We should remember that in our localized questionnaire of Bostick library anxiety scale, there was only 2 items related with *mechanical factors*; this can also has an important effect on the increases of the level of the library anxiety in Persian Gulf University and Bushehr University of Medical Sciences.

Since *the lack of the library skills* in these two universities has located at the lowest level of the library anxiety factors, then it can be concluded that the students have had a good ability in using library possibilities; this may be related with an efficient instructions to library users. But we should memorize that answering to the questions of this item do not need a direct interaction with library and librarians, since the others need (Lee, 2011). So, it can be concluded that the students have answered to the questions of this item based on their concepts about their abilities; the matter which can be unreal.

The findings show that there is no significant difference in the level of the library anxiety between male and female. This has been approved in other previous researches except Omran (2001) and Erfanmanesh, Mohammadi and Didegah (2012); in these two last researches the results indicated that the level of the library anxiety in male students was more than females.

The results indicate that Persian Gulf University students have experienced a higher level of the library anxiety than Bushehr University of Medical Sciences students. As we mentioned above, this anxiety is observed in *mechanical factors*.

Finally, our hypothesis is verified and it shows that there is a negative significant relationship between library anxiety and emotional intelligence; it means that students, who have a higher level of the emotional intelligence, will experience a lower level of the library anxiety. According to the results of this research and the other related studies, we can conclude that use an emotional intelligence strategy is a mutual approach that not only should apply by librarians but users and students too. Also according to Mills and Lodge (2006) librarians require to understand the concept of “emotion” to communicate with their clientles.

Conclusion

Library anxiety among library users is a challenging topic in LIS field. It can be related with individuals' feelings, emotions, sentiments; e.g. emotional intelligence. As emotional intelligence and its parameters is focusing on psychological characteristics as well as focusing on the status of emotions and feelings in human's capabilities in a complex and different situation, so the current study aims to investigate the relationship between library anxiety and emotional intelligence of *Bushehr University of Medical sciences* students and *Persian Gulf University* students in Bushehr (Iran). The results reveal that the rate of library anxiety among students is less than average and there was a negative significant relationship between library anxiety and emotional intelligence.

Suggestions

- Providing a better environment and equipment to decrease the level of a library anxiety among students;
- Holding an instructional workshops for library users to introduce a new technologies and information-seeking approaches to them;
- Defining the importance of the occupational ethics for library staff to communicate better with users to decrease the level of the library anxiety;
- Applying a useful signs and distributing the instructional guides, leaflets, and pamphlets among library users;
- Holding information literacy skills workshops for students to teach them an up-to-date information-seeking skills in printed and electronic materials.

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