

## Investigating the Relationship of Teachers' Emotional Maturity and Perception of Teacher Behavior and Students' Academic Buoyancy

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of this research was investigating the relationship of teachers' emotional maturity and perception of teacher behavior and students' academic buoyancy.

**Methodology:** Present study in terms of purpose was applied and in terms of implementation was descriptive from type of correlation. The research statistical population was all teachers and students of forth and sixth grade of elementary school (86 teachers and 2576 students) of Neyriz city in 2018-19 academic years. According to Krejcie and Morgan table, the research sample was 70 teachers and 350 students who were selected by cluster sampling method. The research tools were the questionnaires of emotional maturity (Singh & Bhargava, 1990), perception of teacher behavior (Sharifi, 1989) and academic buoyancy (Dehghani Zadeh & HoseinChari, 2012). Data were analyzed by methods of Pearson correlation coefficients and multivariate regression with enter model in SPSS software version 22.

**Findings:** The findings showed that teachers' emotional maturity and dimensions of social Incompatibility and lack of independence had a negative and significant relationship with perception of teacher behavior and teachers' emotional maturity and dimensions of personality collapse and lack of independence had a negative and significant relationship with students' academic buoyancy. Other results showed that the dimensions of teachers' emotional maturity could significantly explain 7.8% of changes in perception of teacher behavior and 11.7% of changes in students' academic buoyancy ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** According to the results of the present study, to improve the perception of teacher behavior and students' academic buoyancy can be increased the teacher's emotional maturity and its dimensions.

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## 1. Introduction

The Positive Psychology approach was developed in the late twentieth century and, unlike previous approaches that focused on disorders and injuries, emphasized the positive aspects and abilities and talents (Muro, Soler, Cebolla & Cladellas, 2018). One of the structures derived from positive psychology in the field of education is academic vitality, which refers to students' successful experiences in facing and overcoming academic obstacles and problems (Colmar, Liem, Connor & Martin, 2019). This structure as one of the protective factors against academic risks means a positive, constructive and adaptive response to all kinds of challenges and barriers in the current and continuous academic field (Hirvonen, Yli-Kivisto, Putwain, Ahonen & Kiuru, 2019). Vitality is energy emanating from within the individual, not energy emanating from the environment. In other words, vitality is the feeling of being alive, not the motivation and compulsion to do something (Cornerford, Batteson & Tormey, 2015). Students with higher academic vitality are better able to meet academic challenges, participate more in teaching and learning, report less academic and non-academic stress and anxiety, have greater academic motivation, hope and self-efficacy, and are more successful in solving psychological and educational problems. Hirvonen, Putwain, Maatta, Ahonen & Kiuru, 2019).

Another effective structure in education is the perception of teacher behavior (Vattoy & Smith, 2019). This structure means the student's perceptions and mental perceptions of the positive and appropriate teacher behavior or negative and inappropriate (Corbin, Downer, Ruzek, Lowenstein & Brown, 2020). In order for students to have a proper perception of teachers, teachers must have two characteristics of self-exploration (the teacher encourages them to explore while communicating positively with students, for which three skills of empathy, respect and love are important) and self-understanding (teacher). By increasing students' self-confidence, it teaches them in a confident classroom environment what they need to be three precise skills: talking about their feelings and attitudes, honesty in expressing feelings, and self-disclosure (Wei, Zhou, Barber & Brok, 2015). Academic success, school satisfaction, and other desirable outcomes at school depend to a large extent on the process of teacher-student interaction and students' perception of teacher behavior. Undoubtedly, positive and constructive interaction creates a sense of competence and independence in students while creating an opportunity to learn effectively (Moltafet & Khayyer, 2012). In order for students to have a positive perception of teacher behavior, the teacher must present the lesson material meaningfully; value the students' choices and perspectives, and present material that is not far beyond or below the student's level of ability. Emphasize the strengthening of intrinsic motivation and challenge students and present the content in a challenging way (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013).

One of the factors related to academic characteristics is the emotional maturity of the teacher (Menka, 2016). Emotional maturity is one of the most complex and problematic aspects of human development, which means the ability of individuals to accept, control and manage emotions (Jobson, 2020). In other words, this structure means the ability to guide and facilitate emotional tendencies, manage emotions, evaluate the emotional states of others in interpersonal relationships to make appropriate decisions and achieve goals (O'Connor, Hill, Kaya & Martin, 2019). Emotional maturity has five dimensions of emotional instability (inability to solve problems and meet emotional and psychological needs along with irritability, stubbornness, harshness and vulnerability), emotional return (including feelings of inferiority, restlessness, hostility, aggression and self-control), social incompatibility (Inability or low ability to adapt to society and with feelings of isolation and sometimes arrogance and lies), personality collapse (having a set of factors indicating personality collapse including reaction, reasoning, pessimism, destructive and immoral behaviors) and lack of independence (excessive dependence on Others and unwillingness to show their desires and abilities) (Nicholls, Levy & Perry, 2015). Due to their low ability to control and manage their emotions in stressful situations, people with low emotional maturity respond only by discharging emotions and maladaptive behaviors, have many maladaptive behaviors, and are often aggressive and

impulsive. In contrast, people with high emotional maturity have no problem expressing their emotions, do not hide their signs of weakness, are critical, have a relatively stable mood, and are usually kind and have high PR (Behera & RAngaiah, 2017).

There is no research on the relationship between emotional maturity and perception of teacher behavior and academic vitality, but the results of related studies indicate the relationship between emotional maturity and perception of teacher behavior and academic vitality. For example, Gupta & Sudhesh (2019) while researching concluded that emotional maturity had a positive and significant relationship with positive self-perception. The results of Malik & Kapoor (2014) showed that emotional maturity had a significant relationship with teacher effectiveness. In another study, Jafariharandi & Rajaiemoosavi (2019) reported that the emotional atmosphere of the family was significantly associated with emotional maturity and was able to predict it. In addition, Sharifi Rigi & Bassaknezad (2018) while researching concluded that emotional maturity had a positive and significant relationship with self-esteem, spiritual intelligence, university adaptation and cognitive flexibility. Also, Hirvonen & et al (2019) while conducting research concluded that students' emotions about learning experiences were related to academic vitality. The results of Shaikholeslami & Taheri (2018) showed that cognitive regulation of emotions had a significant relationship with academic vitality. In another study, Prathibha & Ashok (2017) reported that emotional maturity was significantly associated with academic performance.

On the one hand, perception of teacher behavior plays an effective role in students' academic motivation and performance, and on the other hand, academic vitality can contribute to students' academic success as a motivational variable. Factors related to the perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality can be mentioned as psychological factors in the classroom and one of these factors is the teacher's emotional maturity. Emotional maturity can be effective in improving social and academic skills, and past research has paid less attention to its role in academic variables. As a result, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between teacher emotional maturity and perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality.

## 2. Methodology

The present study was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of implementation method. The statistical population of the study was all teachers and students of the fifth and sixth grade of elementary school in the city of Neyriz in the academic year 2018-19, which had 86 teachers and 2576 students. According to Krejcie and Morgan's table, the sample of the study was 70 teachers and 335 students, who were selected as a sample to ensure the sample size of 5 students per teacher, ie a total of 350 students. The sampling method was cluster research. In this sampling method, the sample selection unit was the class. To conduct this research, after receiving a letter of introduction from the university and coordinating with the education officials of Neyriz, statistics and lists of all schools were prepared and then 24 schools were selected from among the schools and its fifth and sixth grade teachers were selected as a sample and The class also randomly selected five students and responded to the tools. It should be noted that in some schools there were several fifth or sixth grades and a total of 70 classes were selected as a sample.

To collect data, the questionnaires of teacher emotional maturity, perception of teacher behavior and academic vitality were used. The questionnaire of emotional maturity of teachers by teachers and questionnaires of perception of teacher behavior and academic vitality were completed by students.

**Emotional Maturity Questionnaire:** This questionnaire by Singh & Bhargava (1990) with 48 terms and five dimensions of emotional instability (10 items), emotional return (10 items), social incompatibility (10 items), personality collapse (10 items) and lack of independence ( 8 phrases) designed. Phrases are scored on a scale of five Likert options from one (never) to five (too much), so the range of scores for emotional instability, emotional breakdown, social incompatibility and personality breakdown is 10-50, the range of

scores for lack of independence is 8-40, and the total instrument scores range. It is 240-48 and the instrument score is calculated by averaging the phrase score and the higher the score, the lower the emotional maturity. Convergent validity of the instrument was obtained with Gaha compatibility questionnaire equal to 0.64 which was significant at the level of less than 0.05 and its total reliability was 0.75 by retest method and reliability by Cronbach's alpha method for emotional instability dimensions was 0.75, emotional return. 0.63, social incompatibility 0.58, personality collapse 0.86 and lack of independence were calculated 0.42. In Iran, the Cronbach's alpha value for the whole instrument was 0.80 and for the dimensions of emotional instability 0.61, emotional return 0.69, social incompatibility 0.75, personality collapse 0.85 and lack of independence 0.63 (Dehestani, Ebrahimi & Aboohashemi Moghaddam, 2020). In the present study, the reliability value was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method for the whole tool 0.83 and for the dimensions of emotional instability 0.65, emotional return 0.72, social incompatibility 0.73, personality collapse 0.84 and lack of independence 0.66.

**Teacher Behavior Perception Questionnaire:** This questionnaire was designed by Sharifi (1989) with 26 phrases. Phrases are scored on a scale of four Likert options from one (never) to four (always) scores (13 are positive and 13 are negative), so the score range is between 104-26 and the instrument score is calculated by averaging the score of the phrases. And a higher score indicates a more appropriate perception of the teacher's behavior. The face validity of the instrument was confirmed by specialists and experts of Shiraz University and its reliability was reported by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.89 and by retest method of 0.90 (quoted by Fani & Khalifeh, 2010). In the present study, the reliability value was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.87.

**Academic Vitality Questionnaire:** This questionnaire was designed by DehghaniZadeh & HoseinChari (2012) with 9 phrases. Phrases are graded on a scale of seven Likert options from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree), so the score range is between 9-63 and the instrument score is calculated by averaging the score of the phrases, and a higher score indicates greater academic vitality. The validity of the instrument structure was confirmed by Varimax rotation method and its reliability was reported by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.80 and retest method by 0.73. In the present study, the reliability value was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method of 0.85.

Data were collected and thanked by the subjects using Pearson correlation coefficient and multivariate regression with simultaneous model in SPSS software version 22.

### 3. Findings

Among 70 teachers, 28 were male (40%) and 42 were female (60%), and among 350 students, 140 were male (40%) and 210 were female (60%). Also, 180 students were studying in the fifth grade (51.43%) and 170 students in the sixth grade (48.57%). The results of mean and standard deviation of emotional maturity and its dimensions, perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality were presented in Table 1.

**Table1.** Mean and standard deviation of research variables

Variables	Average	Standard deviation
Emotional instability	1/87	0/71
Emotional return	1/69	0/59
Social incompatibility	1/83	0/52
Character collapse	1/60	0/56
Lack of independence	2/12	0/58
emotional maturity	1/78	0/48
Perception of teacher behavior	3/53	0/40
Academic vitality	5/22	1/40

In Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of the research variables can be seen. Examination of multiple regression assumptions showed that the assumption of normality based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov

test values was valid for all variables ( $P > 0.05$ ). Also, the value of variance inflation factor for the predictor variables ranged from 1.075 to 1.739, which was a long distance from 10, so the multiple linearity assumption was rejected. In addition, the Durbin-Watson value was 1.761, which ranged from 1.5 to 2.5, so the residual correlation hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there are assumptions for using multivariate regression. The results of Pearson correlation coefficients of emotional maturity and its dimensions with perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality are presented in Table 2.

**Table2.** Mean standard deviation and Pearson correlation coefficients of emotional maturity and its dimensions with perception of teacher behavior

Predictor / criterion variables	Perception of teacher behavior		Academic vitality	
	Correlation	meaningful	Correlation	meaningful
Emotional instability	-0/032	0/608	-0/041	0/471
Emotional return	-0/004	0/948	-0/098	0/080
Social incompatibility	-0/158	0/008	-0/044	0/433
Character collapse	-0/011	0/857	-0/154	0/007
Lack of independence	-0/171	0/008	-0/215	0/001
emotional maturity	-0/217	0/002	-0/302	0/001

According to the results of Table 2, teacher emotional maturity and dimensions of social incompatibility and lack of independence have a negative and significant relationship with perception of teacher behavior and teacher emotional maturity and dimensions of personality collapse and lack of independence have a negative and significant relationship with students' academic vitality ( $P < 0.05$ ). There is no significant relationship between other dimensions of emotional maturity and perception of teacher behavior and academic vitality ( $P > 0.05$ ). The results of multivariate regression to predict the perception of teacher behavior based on the dimensions of teacher emotional maturity are presented in Table 3.

**Table3.** Multivariate regression results to predict perception of teacher behavior based on dimensions of teacher emotional maturity

Predictive variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	meaningful	Beta	The value of t	meaningful
Emotional instability				-0/004	-0/039	0/969
Emotional return				-0/064	0/716	0/475
Social incompatibility	-0/280	0/078		-0/206	1/903	0/058
Character collapse			0/001	-0/021	-0/171	0/864
Lack of independence				-0/325	-3/920	0/001

According to the results of Table 3, the dimensions of teacher emotional maturity were able to explain 7.8% of the changes in perception of teacher behavior ( $P < 0.05$ ). The results of multivariate regression to predict academic vitality based on the dimensions of teacher emotional maturity are presented in Table 4.

**Table4.** Multivariate regression results for predicting academic vitality based on the dimensions of teacher emotional maturity

Predictive variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	meaningful	Beta	The value of t	meaningful
Emotional instability				-0/214	2/046	0/042
Emotional return				-0/005	0/068	0/946
Social incompatibility	-0/342	0/117	0/001	-0/210	2/145	0/033
Character collapse				-0/357	-3/144	0/002
Lack of independence				-0/289	-3/956	0/001

According to the results of Table 4, the dimensions of teacher emotional maturity were able to explain 11.7% of the changes in academic vitality ( $P < 0.05$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

Considering the role and importance of perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality in academic success and performance, the present study was conducted to investigate the relationship between teacher emotional maturity and perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality.

The findings of the present study showed that the emotional maturity of the teacher and the dimensions of social incompatibility and lack of independence were negatively and significantly related to perception of teacher behavior, but the dimensions of emotional instability, emotional return and personality collapse were not negatively and significantly related to perception of teacher behavior. Considering that a higher score in the emotional maturity questionnaire means lack of emotional maturity, so with the improvement of the teacher's emotional maturity and its dimensions, the appropriate perception of the teacher's behavior increase. This finding was in line with the findings of Gupta & Sudhesh (2019), Malik & Kapoor (2014), Jafariharandi & Rajaiemoosavi (2019) and Sharifi Rigi & Bassaknezad (2018). In explaining the lack of a significant relationship between the dimensions of emotional instability, emotional return and personality collapse with the perception of teacher behavior, we can point to the specific characteristics of these dimensions. People with emotional instability are usually quick-tempered, stubborn, irritable, and vulnerable, people with emotional recurrence often feel inferior, restless, hostile, aggressive, and self-centered, and people with pessimistic, destructive, and immoral behaviors. These characteristics cause students to not have a good understanding of teacher behavior and the results of the present study indicate the same relationship, but its rate is low and therefore not significant. This may be because elementary school students have difficulty understanding teacher behaviors. Explaining the relationship between teacher emotional maturity and dimensions of social incompatibility and lack of independence with perception of teacher behavior, it can be said that students' perception of teacher behavior depends on various characteristics of the teacher, including personality traits, intimacy with students, social and communication skills. Etc. pointed out. Adequacy of a teacher's emotional maturity means that he or she does not have the negative characteristics of prematurity, stubbornness, vulnerability, hostility, aggression, incompatibility, isolation, reasoning, destructiveness, immoral behaviors, dependence on others, and inability to express oneself. A teacher who does not have the above characteristics is usually at a good level in terms of knowledge and information, social and communication skills, ability to teach and manage the class, etc., and students trust such teachers well (Nicholls & et al, 2015). As a result, the above factors increase the perception of teacher behavior by improving emotional maturity.

Other findings of the present study showed that the emotional maturity of the teacher and the dimensions of personality breakdown and lack of independence had a negative and significant relationship with students' academic vitality. Due to the fact that a higher score in the Emotional Maturity Questionnaire means lack of emotional maturity, so with the improvement of the teacher's emotional maturity and its dimensions, the students' academic vitality increases. This finding was in line with the findings of Hirvonen & et al (2019), Shaikholeslami & Taheri (2018) and Prathibha & Ashok (2017). In explaining the lack of a significant relationship between the dimensions of emotional instability, emotional return and social incompatibility with academic vitality, we can point to the special characteristics of these dimensions. People with emotional instability are usually quick-tempered, stubborn, irritable, and vulnerable. People with emotional return often feel inferior, restless, hostile, aggressive, and self-centered. People with social maladaptation are often withdrawn, arrogant, and lying, and have little ability to adapt. They have a social. These characteristics cause a decrease in students' academic vitality and the results of the present study indicate the same relationship, but its rate is low and therefore has not been significant. This may be because elementary school students have difficulty understanding terms of academic vitality. Another explanation for the lack of significance of these relationships is that the relationship between teacher emotional maturity and students' academic characteristics (meaning academic vitality) has been evaluated, and perhaps if both tools were completed by one person about himself, there

is a significant relationship between these dimensions of emotional maturity and academic vitality. Could be found. Explaining the relationship between teacher emotional maturity and dimensions of personality breakdown and lack of independence with academic vitality, it can be said that one of the factors that affect students' academic vitality is the school context and school-related factors, including teacher (Martin & Marsh, 2008). Therefore, it is logical that the teacher's emotional maturity has an effect on students' academic vitality, and as their emotional maturity improves, so does students' academic vitality.

Also, the findings of the present study showed that the dimensions of teacher emotional maturity including emotional instability, emotional return, social incompatibility, personality breakdown and lack of independence were able to significantly predict the perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality. Explaining these findings, it can be said that the dimensions of emotional maturity include a set of characteristics such as inability to solve problems of emotional and psychological needs associated with irritability, stubbornness, irritability and vulnerability (emotional instability), feelings of inferiority, restlessness, hostility, aggression and selfishness. Emotional incapacity or low ability to adapt to society and with feelings of isolation and sometimes arrogance and lies (social incompatibility), having a set of factors indicating personality breakdown including reaction, causation, pessimism, destructive and immoral behaviors (personality breakdown) and over-dependence Excessiveness to others and unwillingness to show their desires and abilities (lack of independence) (Nicholls & et al, 2015). Since these traits have the ability to negatively predict positive psychological traits and the ability to positively predict negative psychological traits, and given that perception of teacher behavior and academic vitality are positive psychological traits, it is logical that the dimensions of teacher emotional maturity play an effective role in prediction. Have an understanding of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality.

One of the limitations of the present study is the use of self-reporting tools. In such tools, there is always the possibility of error compared to the interview. Subjects may not have sufficient self-control and respond responsibly to statements, which to some extent challenge the results of research using such tools. Another limitation is the lack of review of results by gender. Given the gender differences in most characteristics, different results may have been obtained if the research had been conducted separately on different sexes. As a final limitation, we can mention the limitation of the research community to teachers and students of fifth and sixth grade in Neyriz. Based on the limitations of using interviews instead of questionnaires to collect data, it is recommended to conduct this research on male and female teachers and male and female students separately and to conduct research on other cities and educational levels. The results of this research can have practical implications for professionals and curriculum planners to improve the perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality. To improve the perception of teacher behavior and students' academic vitality, they can improve the teacher's emotional maturity and its dimensions through workshops and in-service courses.

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