

Improving Emotional Intelligence in Children: Early Childhood Emotional Curriculum

Leila Soltani¹, Ebrahim Mirshah Jafari² & Mohammad Reza Abedi³

Abstract

The present study aimed to compile and validate the early childhood emotional curriculum. A mixed qualitative and quantitative research method was used to compile and evaluate the validation of the curriculum. In case of compiling the curriculum, library research and research synthesis were utilized and for the validation, field studies were conducted. The data from various studies were collected and categorized based on practical needs and then they were combined to compile a comprehensive and detailed curriculum with different parts. The corpus of the study in the first section was selected purposefully and included papers from top universities along with prestigious research centers. In the validation section, the statistical population included all experts of early childhood education, managers and instructors in preschool centers from which five experts, 10 managers and 15 instructors were selected through purposeful sampling. The data for the first section was collected via factsheets along with coding the necessary titles. In the second section, a researcher-made questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92 and validity of 74.958% was used. Analyzing data in the first section was qualitative and was done using the data collected in factsheets and content coding based on emotional intelligence parameters in Bar-on theory. In the second part, data analysis was conducted via descriptive statistics and Kruskal–Wallis one-way analysis of variance. The outcome of the study was compiling a practical curriculum whose validity was confirmed. Findings from this study could improve modern methods of compiling practical curriculum including research synthesis and highlighted the importance of emotional and social dimensions of children development.

Keywords: Emotional curriculum, early childhood education, emotional development, emotional intelligence, early childhood curriculum

Introduction

Early childhood is the period in which children learn emotional faculties (Berk, 2010) entailing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, taking responsibility (Betsy, Rita, Catherine & Barber, 2011). Childhood is an important part of growing up in which essential academic and social skills are acquired. Thus, the acquisition of these emotional faculties is a milestone in childhood development. (Bornstein, Hahn & Haynes, 2010; Rose-Krasnor & Denham, 2009). In fact, reading, writing and mathematics are three basis keys in almost all educational systems which must be prioritized over other skills (Ciarrochi, 2007).

However, modern educational problems have made experts focus on the social and emotional aspect of the curriculum as opposed to seeking increased school funding. Schools traditionally tried to allocate resources to promote cognitive skills and improve students' academic achievement. This approach however has failed to reach a notable success. Since students do not receive systematic training in emotional capacity and competence, fundamental values, social skills and moral reasoning, they generally don't succeed in becoming caring, compassionate, responsible and sympathetic citizens (Hashemi, 2013).

¹ PhD student in Curriculum, Education and psychology department, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

² Faculty member of education and psychology department, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. E-mail: jafari@edu.ui.ac.ir.

³ Faculty member of education and psychology department, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

Novel approaches on early childhood education and emotional and social aspects of curriculum:

Attending emotional and social dimensions of child education is the outcome of a humanistic view of education. Educational goals of this approach are to create a positive self-conception, human self-actualization and an emphasis on intrapersonal skills in teamwork, compassion and respect. In this regard, conceptual, emotional, psychological and kinetic learning are mutually interconnected (Allyn and Bacon pub., 2006).

Principles and fundamentals of the curriculum designed for the present study utilize the priorities and principles of humanistic education, Freire theories and prominent models of early childhood education like the Reggio Emilia and Waldorf educational models. Humanistic education puts its emphasis on innovation and creativity, diverse teaching methods, self-assessment, self-expression, improving self-confidence and self-esteem in children, significance of the environment in which natural growth occurs, positive teacher-student relationship and finally the role of a teacher in realizing emotional and motivational purposes in teaching children (Allyn and Bacon pub., 2006). All these factors are considered in the curriculum.

The Reggio Emilia approach is one of the collaborative learning models which attempts to use principles of humanist psychology in order to bring education closer to children's needs. Loris Malaguazzi, the developer of this model, believed that most curricula merely see one dimension of children's growth and concentrate on children's intelligence. Nevertheless, children's social and emotional growth is as important as their intelligence; therefore, they should not be neglected. In this model, the significance of teamwork, researching and a close family relationship along with the role of art and self-expression in the emotional growth of children are of high priority (Soltani, 2011).

Furthermore, in another collaborative and humanistic model named active family, a huge emphasis is put on the role of family in children's education. This model is based on Paolo Freire's educational approach and not only highlights the role of family but also signifies the role of teachers and their profound views toward fundamental principles of this model (Yusefi, 2013). Some of the factors taken into account in the present study were parental collaboration, teachers' professionalism and most important of all, the confidence of principals and teachers in the significance of children's emotional growth.

Another model used in compiling the present curriculum was Waldorf's educational approach in which the main emphasis is on coordination of mind, body and spirit in children. The educational environment, including the use of natural tools, creating an environment with mild and peaceful colours like bright pink, little decoration, a quiet atmosphere, plain ornaments, artistic experience for children and their self-expression, and teachers' selection of a rich model for children to imitate and lead them toward healthy growth are all of huge significance. (Ulrich, 2008).

The curriculum designed for the present study utilizes Waldorf's model and its emphasis on real-life experiences, domestic activities and the role of art in early childhood education which emphasizes children's emotional growth and helps them express their feelings and also the role of educational environment. Further information is represented in the section discussing method of designing curriculum.

Moreover, very few curriculums are designed focusing on children's social and emotional skills. Here are some of these curriculums and it is worth mentioning that, some of these curriculums are used in the curriculum for the present study. For instance, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATH), Dina Dinosaur's Social Skills And Problem-Solving Curriculum, the MindUP program, the Michigan Model for Health (an emotional and mental health curriculum), the Resolving Problems Creatively Program (RPCP), the RULER Curriculum, and Personal and Social Development (PSD), the latter of which is aimed to promote children's social and emotional development.

Emotional competences and academic achievement

Children grow emotionally in their childhood, and enjoy various successes in their education and other social areas (Landry & Smith, 2010; Odom, McConnell & Brown, 2008; Rose-Krasnor & Denham, 2009). Yet, children with partial emotional competences constantly have disciplinary problems at school and are prone to unsuccessful academic lives (McClelland, 2006). Not only do these children suffer from social exclusion by their peers, but they are not successful in school, as their behavioural problems may affect their ability to behave in a way that induces learning (McCabb & Altamara, 2011).

Thus, nurturing emotions in a child is the best way to help them reach positive outcomes in their lives and academic careers (Richardson, 2000). Needless to say that school psychologists and educators should focus on this growth period in a child's life and use it to conduct interventions to nurture emotional well-being in children.

Emotional competences and mental health

Primary interventions concerning emotional challenges can prevent serious mental damage in the future. Conversely, nurturing emotional competences in preschool children could reduce stress and challenges in their future lives (Bornstein et.al. 2010; Rose-Krasnor & Denham, 2009). Payton et.al. (2008) conducted a meta-analysis on three studies and investigated the effects of emotional skills on a range of children, from preschool to the eighth grade, and revealed that these skills have various outcomes ranging from better social competences to fewer behavioural problems and emotional distress.

Aggressive preschool children demonstrate a stable pattern of social problems in their elementary school years. Thus, any intervention to reduce or hinder behavioural problems ought to begin early (Betsy et.al. 2011). Considering the fact that children's behaviour stabilizes when they are around eight years old (Berk, 2010), teaching them how to express their emotions effectively and engage in positive relationship diminishes their mental and behavioural problems.

In fact, one of the most efficient methods for reducing problematic behaviour in childhood is to teach emotional intelligence and skills to children (Betsy, 2011). Therefore, emotional competences are of huge importance in predicting positive mental, social and academic outcomes, and nurturing emotional skills during childhood (McCabb & Altamuara, 2011).

The present study

Nonetheless, the Iranian Educational System has failed to prepare a well-developed curriculum to teach social and emotional skills to children. The present study intends to fill this gap by compiling a comprehensive program to enhance social and emotional skills in children through domestic, local and social conditions of the country during preschool years. Using specialized curriculum design methods has increased the comprehensiveness of the curriculum so that it could be utilized in other countries and environments.

In other words, the designed curriculum has considered circumstances and conditions in a preschool centre to develop children's emotional skills; thus, it is not a sheer lesson plan for improving emotional intelligence skills. It contains principles and obligations all of which are segments of a multifaceted and complex set for children's emotional development. Needless to say that, this curriculum could not be executed unless all its aspects are fully realized.

Within the framework mentioned above, the main research questions the present study aims to answer is "How the early childhood emotional intelligence improvement curriculum should be compiled" and "if the level of validity of the curriculum is codified".

Research methods

The present study has taken a mixed approach to research method so that in its first stage; compiling the curriculum, the research method was qualitative and in its second stage; validation, the research method was quantitative. In order to answer the first research question on how to design and compile early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum, research synthesis was applied. The overall plan for the curriculum included making decisions about each element in the curriculum and taking the proper measures concerning them. These measures, according to Tyler (1973), cited in Mirzabeigi, (2002) are: 1- making decisions concerning goals of the curriculum, 2- how to select learning experiences in order to reach goals of the curriculum, 3- how to organize learning experiences for an effective teaching, 4- how to evaluate effectiveness of learning experiences.

In this study, research synthesis is utilized to conduct a comprehensive investigation on each single element of the curriculum. In other words, in order to compile the early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum, existing curriculums throughout the world were initially studied primarily and the cases concurring Bar-On theory on emotional intelligence in various parts of curriculum structure such as: principles, requirements, goals, methods, evaluation and the lesson plans, were coded under the names of each part.

Bar-On (1997) divided emotional intelligence into five categories based on intelligence and social behavior: 1- intrapersonal skills, 2- personal skills, 3- compatibility, 4- stress control, 5- general mood. According to this theory, these five categories of emotional intelligence have 15 factors: 1- Self-regard, 2- Emotional self-awareness, 3- Assertiveness/ emotional self-expression, 4- Independence, 5- Empathy, 6- Social responsibility, 7- Interpersonal relationship, 8- Stress tolerance, 9- Impulse control, 10- Reality- testing, 11- Flexibility, 12- Problem-Solving, 13- Self-actualization, 14- Optimism, 15- Happiness/Well-being (Golman, 2006).

In the present study, this theory is used as the basis for compiling the structure of the curriculum content, coding of the literature and resources under study and categorizing levels of the curriculum.

In general, Research synthesis is a method by which findings from different and sometimes scattered studies relevant to particular needs in practical fields are collected. Then, this body of knowledge is integrated and the resulting body is evaluated, reorganized and interpreted based on current needs. It should however be noted that research synthesis does not aim to put previous bodies of knowledge together; its goal is to combine various pieces of material in a specific perceptive framework whose outcome, emphatically, is the creation of novel perspectives. Thus, research synthesis is of certain stages and the level of adequacy of the knowledge yielded by it should be determined (Short & Edmund, 2009). According to Ward (cited in Short & Edmund, 2009), adequacy of the knowledge yielded by research synthesis is determined based on four criteria of: 1- inclusion: considering variables and important interactions, 2- unambiguity: not using expressions with ambiguous meanings, 3- practicality: guidance for practicality and 4- consensus: introduces being agreed and accepted by all related researchers and authorities. These criteria were utilized in the compiled curriculum:

1. Inclusion: compilation of the curriculum has been conducted considering all factors influencing implementation of the lesson plan. Variables like space and equipment, the role of principal, instructor and parents, educational methods, etc. have all been completely measured. For instance, an instructor's personal traits have been taken into account along with the role of learner-oriented and objective teaching methods.
2. Unambiguity: processes and expressions present in the curriculum are fully explained and their unambiguity were discarded.
3. Practicality: this curriculum includes various activities and opportunities designed and clarified fully to improve all aspects of emotional intelligence and their practicality and effectiveness on children's emotional intelligence has been proven by authors of the present paper in the test implementation.
4. Consensus: In order to compile the curriculum views from three professors of curriculum designing, some experts in early childhood education and parents along with experienced instructors and principals were utilized. And evaluating the validation of the curriculum has been proven.

Stages of research synthesis

Different stages of applying research synthesis are as follows:

- (1) Identifying the need, executing primary search and clarifying the need: lack of comprehensive curriculum in Iran and insufficient comprehensiveness in curriculum executed around the world necessitated the preparation of this curriculum.
- (2) Conducting a study to recover studies: at this stage, library research and internet resources were used to provide a package from common curricula in other countries, findings from prominent research centres, expert views from specialists in preschool education and ideas of parents and efficient teachers.
- (3) Selection, refinement and organization of studies: at this stage, resources are evaluated based on specific criteria, for instance, covering one of the emotional intelligence skills based on the Bar-on theory, coordination between content and children's age, coordination of childhood qualities with the execution of curriculum according to objective and subjective learning styles and coordination of primary principles of the compiled curriculum with the intended program.
- (4) Providing a perceptive framework and coordinating it with results from analyses: at this stage, structure of the curriculum is compiled through the classification of the structure, principles, obligations, purposes, methods and evaluations of the curriculum as well as a lesson plan designed for the study and opportunities predicted based on the situation.

Both the content of the lesson plan and the predicted opportunities and activities are organized according to different categories of skill selected from the Bar-On model for social and emotional intelligence. Bar-On's conceptual model describes an array of interrelated emotional and social competencies that determine how effective individuals are in understanding and expressing themselves, understanding others and interacting with them as well as coping with daily demands and challenges.

These competencies are clustered into the following five meta-factors: the ability to be aware of emotions as well as to understand and express feelings; the ability to understand how others feel and interact with them; the ability to manage and control emotions; the ability to manage change, adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature; the ability to generate positive effect to enhance self-motivation, in order to emotionally and socially facilitate intelligent behaviour. These five meta-factors comprise a total of 15 factors: emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, empathy, social responsibility, social skills, stress management, self-regulation, adaptability, flexibility, problem-solving, general mood, motivation and happiness. (Cherniss, 2004).

Thus, each factor is improved through a specific lesson plan. The lesson plan for each session is designed separately and each session includes introductory and closing activities. These sessions were held once a week, for a total of 35 weeks. Comprehensive activities of early childhood emotional and social curriculum were conducted in the early hours of a day. During the week the skills taught were reviewed and practiced. The Content of the curriculum for occasional opportunities and activities induces practical and definite solutions for improving emotional intelligence skills in children which enable the teacher, staff and parents to react appropriately when dealing with such incidents as fighting.

Statistical society of the study and sampling method

The statistical society of the first stage (compiling curriculum) included internet resources together with books and resources available in Iranian university, resources and scientific achievements of prominent Iranian scientific centers and research associations, experts and authorities in the field of early childhood education, efficient instructors and children's parents. Sampling method, however, at this stage was purposeful sampling. In the second stage (validation), from all experts in early childhood education and principals and instructors in preschool centers, five experienced professors and experts in the field of early childhood education, 10 principals and 15 instructors were selected with purposeful sampling, and the validation and efficiency questionnaires were given to them to be filled.

Data collection tools

In the first stage, data summary sheets with the coding needed for the curriculum including principles, requirements, curriculum structure, purposes, methods, lesson plans, evaluation and teaching solutions were used separately and expressively with their references. The collected data were collected qualitatively through results and documents existing in data summary sheets and coding of the content of lesson plan based on selected indices of emotional intelligence in Bar-On theory.

In the second stage, a researcher-made questionnaire was utilized to collect the data required. In order to investigate internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was used. Considering calculations conducted, reliability of the questionnaire was 0.92 which is larger than 0.7 in terms of research methodology and acceptable. In order to evaluate content validity, Lawshe method was used as a creditable quantitative method in the field. In this method, experts are asked to evaluate each component of the questionnaire. Then, the index of validity ratio for each component of the questionnaire is calculated. In the present study, all components of the questionnaire possessed content validity (CVR). Furthermore, structure validity of the questionnaire factor analysis method was used. However, to ensure validity of the data and adequacy of sampling before factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion was applied. Findings revealed that the KMO value for quality of sampling was 0.787 which is considered acceptable. This questionnaire could clarify 64.68% of the variance of the general concept.

Research findings

Stage five of research synthesis method is Processing, combining and interpretation in the form of tangible products. At this stage, the structure of the comprehensive curriculum for improving the emotional quotient in early childhood is based on data resources categorized with different dimensions as shown in the figure. Figure1 represents an overall view of the early childhood emotional curriculum.

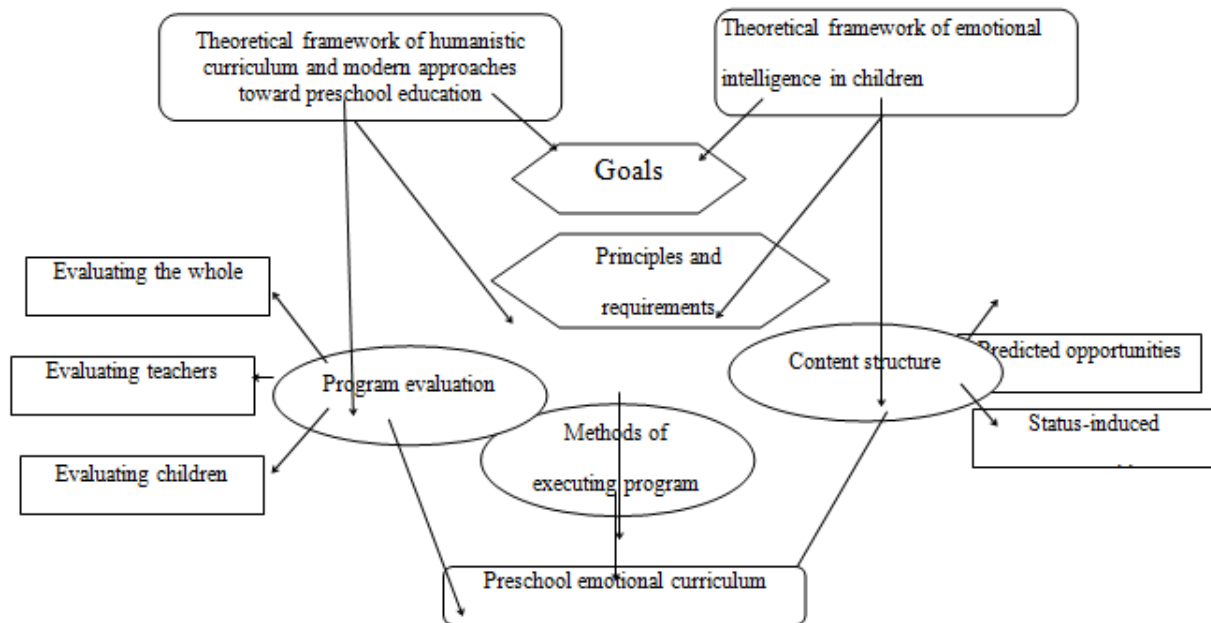


Figure 1: Structure of the preschool emotional curriculum

The present curriculum is based on the implications of humanistic curriculum and important models for early childhood education such as the Reggio Emilia and Waldorf approaches for teaching social and emotional skills to children along with the principles, methods and evaluation of curriculum in these approaches. In addition, the theoretical framework necessary for the content and structure of curriculum in predicted opportunities arising from circumstances is extracted from Bar-on theory on emotional intelligence and the programs mentioned in the first section of this paper.

The principles and obligations of the curriculum have been extensively compiled and described. However, due to the length of this paper we can only present a few of them. For instance, getting parents involved in the educational process is a requirement for executing this curriculum. In fact any deficiency in the emotional faculties of the early years may be closely linked to the quality of the child-parent relationship (McCabe & Altamura, 2011). The process of training and selecting teachers is also of vital importance in this curriculum. Without well-trained teachers to nurture the development of emotional intelligence skills and faculties in children their feelings and behaviours cannot be properly assessed and monitored (Betsy et.al. 2011).

The sixth stage of this method is Processing Representing the outcomes of composition that is dedicated to representing results from the combination. In this section, results from compilation of the comprehensive curriculum are represented separately.

1- Goals of the early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum

The goals of the curriculum could be organized with two different structures. The first one is the parallel relationship between goals in which the ultimate goal is divided into detailed ones each of which are separately of influence on reaching the ultimate goal. In the second structure, there is no relationship between goals and the continuous structure of goals in which the ultimate goal is reached continuously after each goal is reached. As a result, there is a priority order between goals (Safavi, 2001). In the present curriculum, goals may overlap covertly while implementation; yet, considering the separation of activities related to each skill, the goals of the curriculum may also be compiled and categorized naturally based on skills in a separate and parallel way under the name of trivial goals for each skill. The ultimate goal of the curriculum, however, is to improve all emotional intelligence skills which will be followed by each trivial goals. The goals of the curriculum in general are divided into three parts: goals related to the cognitive domain, goals related to the domain of skills, goals related to the domain of attitudes and evaluation (Mirzabeigi, 2002).

In this curriculum, goals in the cognitive domain are acquiring information on concepts related to emotional intelligence (knowledge), understanding concepts (comprehension), using them in new contexts (application), the ability to properly analyze social settings (analysis) and assessing and judging social and emotional problems and issues along with testing practical solutions to solve problems (evaluation). In the domain of skills, goals include application of knowledge and information so that virtuous behaviors in this domain are created in the child. Using skills in cases in which are trained together with other areas contributing to these skills is the concept of transmission in the curriculum emphasized by Rough Tyler (McNeil, 2004).

In the domain of changing attitudes of children and valuing of teachings, the curriculum is designed so that children learn values and attitudes that can result in the improvement of their emotional intelligence skills and facilitate application of these skills in children's future lives. At first, the instructor draws children's attention toward the value and significance of each skill (receiving stage). For instance, the instructor elaborates on the need for setting rules in the classroom. Then, the child is encouraged to do activities based on his/ her own interest and will (Responding stage). In the next phase, implementing skills is represented as a value and symbol of a virtuous behavior to the child (Valuing stage).

Each skill includes following a set of goals. For instance, the concept of friendship (cognitive domain), friend making skills (domain of skills) and having a positive attitude toward friendship and kindness (domain of attitudes) are among these skills and goals. Contemporary experts and theorists in the field of early childhood education believe that domain of attitudes has a special value and credit in helping the child to have a good life and a sense of satisfaction in children (Burrell & Riley, 2005).

2- Organizing content in the early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum

The horizontal and vertical relationships are among the most important dimensions of organization in the curriculum (Posner, 2004). Horizontal relationship is the relationship between running programs in a certain period of time so that they confirm each other and are in the same direction. This relationship, in other words, is the relationship between content of the lesson plan over time so that the prerequisite for each lesson is considered before the curriculum itself (Soltani, 2011). Content structure of curriculum in general includes a range of independent, intermediate and relevant plans in relation to the principle of horizontal and vertical relationship and the level of such relationship. In the present curriculum, there are only two prerequisite lessons and all other credits are completely independent from each other organized based on components of Bar-On theory on emotional intelligence. From among all spiral, hierarchical, linear and independent structures of curriculum (Posner, 2004), the content of the present curriculum is organized as independent and separate credits.

A- Content structure in predicted opportunities and activities (lesson plan)

In order to select the proper structure for compiling a curriculum, there are several options, one of which is adapting the structure of the related disciplines (Posner, 2004). In the case of the present early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum compiled based on theories existing in the field of emotional intelligence, the structure present in theories on emotional intelligence was utilized. In this regard, 10 emotional intelligence skills relevant to children's need at their early ages and their abilities were chosen. In order to improve each of the skills, particular opportunities and activities were predicted that would eventually end in better emotional intelligence skills and emotional growth in children. Content structure was designed based on separate structure model.

Activities related to each session are designed and explained individually. For each session, some preliminary and concluding activities are predicted which are almost always common and the same. Comprehensive activities in the early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum are conducted at early hours of the day once a week. Throughout the week, the skills taught are reviewed and practiced. The overall number of sessions are planned to be 35. Table 1 represented a sample from lesson plan.

Table 1 *Sample from lesson plan*

Education Activities	Estimated Time	Overall Content Of Each Part
Introductory activities	5 to 10 minutes	Morning meeting: at this stage, the teacher reviews previous discussions and assesses and evaluates knowledge of children on new content and this organizes their mind via recalling information and makes them ready for the new session. The teacher conducts activities related to class activities and prepares the tools needed. Just in case, the children are also grouped for teamwork. Class activities: content of activity, goals and methods used For instance: the game of bubbles Goal: how to relax the body and coordinate it with the slow motion of bubbles in the air; connecting children to new friends method: cooperative group play
Main activities	40 minutes	Content: the teacher first makes bubbles with some tools and draws children's attention to slow motion of bubbles in the air. Then, each pair of children stands in front of each other, take each other's hands and move with slow rhythm to simulate bubbles. They get closer to each other like bubbles and let go like the bubbles explode. After that, they take another friend's hand and form a new bubble.
Closing activities	5 to 10 minutes	summarizing class activities if necessary; giving feedback to class, children and groups on activities; practicing the skill and finally giving homework if necessary

B- Content structure of the curriculum on opportunities and activities arisen from situation (teacher guidance):

Content structure of the curriculum has also designed a detailed content for opportunities and activities arisen from situation to improve each emotional intelligence skill. In fact, the content includes certain practical solutions to improve children's emotional intelligence skills through which instructors, center's staff and parents could take proper measures with their high level of skill and domination in case a situation occurs.

3- Structure of methods in early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum

In case of the structure of methods in early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum, two separate methods in two parallel structures with two completely separate goals were considered. In the convergent structure, various learning methods and opportunities reach a common goal (Posner, 2004). The present curriculum is also of the same diverse structure and includes convergent implementation methods all of which will eventually help improve emotional intelligence of a child. Diversity of methods in a curriculum is, according to several prominent scholars in the field, a basic principle for compiling such a curriculum. For instance, according to Rough Tyler, variety of methods is a basic concept in designing his own curriculum texts. For him, several methods could be utilized to reach the goals and several other methods could be used to enrich learning activities. Besides, class activities could be perceived in different ways as well for in a class, a child uses the ideas according to his/ her own methods based on his/ her own experiences (Posner, 2004).

The present curriculum has also utilized a variety of methods based on preschool education methods and especially the humanistic approaches toward curriculum along with modern educational methods and other comprehensive curriculums to improve social and emotional skills to children. In fact, in this curriculum, children's short-term concentration span and their curiosity are considered to design particular educational plans with various approaches in different spaces all day long. The methods used, however, are selected considering the main priority of using tools instead of taking book-oriented approaches. In this curriculum, children's tendency to learn both practically and objectively, various posters, games and performances coupled with class worksheets are represented to stabilize skills. Methods like taking the instructor or cartoon characters as model, using poems, stories, songs, storytelling, problem solving, researcher-made class worksheets, cooperative and team works are all utilized along with project method, synectics and brainstorming, open questions and children's group discussions, psychodrama, self-expression, creative plays, purposeful games, role-playing, yoga and meditation.

4- Evaluation of the curriculum

Evaluation of the early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum is conducted in three levels: 1- evaluating the whole curriculum, 2- evaluating performance of the instructor, 3- evaluating the effects of implementing curriculum on children. In the first and second levels, evaluation is done using comprehensive checklists. In the third level, however, evaluation is conducted on the effects of curriculum on children and this is done using six different methods of evaluating outcomes of the curriculum. The method of recording observations is the basis for evaluation in this curriculum. On the other hand, conducting this method needs a great deal of skills. In this method, taking notes from observations at the right moment is of utmost importance. It is essential in this method observations be made in the most precise manner (Yousefi, 2013). In fact, precise observations of children's performance while using educational methods are critical for filling out the checklists and helping the instructor take the proper approach. Reviewing the footage recorded in classrooms will be of great help for probing instructors' performance and children's behavior in critical moments as well. These visual documentations will greatly help precise filling of checklists as well. Finally, using evaluation checklists in which presence or lack of a quality in children's behavior is investigated is another method of evaluating the results of implementing the curriculum on children and this curriculum utilizes it as well. These methods are among standard tests of curriculum evaluation methods conducted to analyze the effects of curriculum on children (Posner, 2004).

The test used in this curriculum is the early childhood emotional intelligence test (Marviha, 2010), which is in fact a test designed for the parents of children. Using self-evaluation methods for children or evaluation of self and peers is also used to evaluate the effect of implementing such curriculum on children. Complementary activities of the early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum (Posters, worksheets and educational tools):

The early childhood emotional intelligence curriculum utilizes certain posters and guiding image cards along with particular educational tools all of which aim the goals of the curriculum and intend to stabilize and enrich learning experiences in children. For instance, the tool for recognizing people's feelings in stories and memories, the poster of classroom rules, the poster of childcare center's rules, the poster of anger thermometer, the poster of today's feeling and the intensity of experienced feeling, the game of pieces of feeling, the poster of my annoying behaviors (cockroach behaviors), the poster of apologizing and forgiving, the poster of courageous behavior in case of conflict with friends, the poster of a kind heart (my sympathetic and kind behavior), various class worksheets which are all designed and created by researcher.

Findings on the second research question

Results from validation of the curriculum under study are represented in table 5. Considering the fact that none of the respondents to the questionnaire selected too little and far too little for questions of the questionnaire and due to abbreviating the table, these two rows are removed.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of the questions of the questionnaire

	Total	Far too much	Too much	Moderate	Mean	Standard deviation
1st Question	Experts	4 P (80.0%)	1 P (20.0%)	-	4.80	0.447
	Principals	7 P (70.0%)	3 P (30.0%)	-	4.70	0.483
	Instructors	11 P (73.3%)	3 P (20.0%)	1 P (6.7%)	4.67	0.617
	Total	22 P (73.3%)	7 P (23.3%)	1 P (3.3%)	4.70	0.535
2nd Question	Experts	1 P (20.0%)	4 P (80.0%)	-	4.20	0.447
	Principals	3 P (30.0%)	5 P (50.0%)	2 P (20.0%)	4.10	0.738
	Instructors	8 P (53.3%)	6 P (40.0%)	1 P (6.7%)	4.47	0.64
	Total	12 P (40.0%)	15 P (50.0%)	3 P (10.0%)	4.30	0.651
3rd Question	Experts	1 P (20.0%)	3 P (60.0%)	1 P (20.0%)	4.0	0.707
	Principals	2 P (20.0%)	7 P (70.0%)	1 P (10.0%)	4.10	0.568
	Instructors	9 P (60.0%)	3 P (20.0%)	2 P (13.3%)	4.33	0.976
	Total	12 P (40.0%)	13 P (43.3%)	4 P (13.3%)	4.20	0.805
4th Question	Experts	2 P (40.0%)	3 P (60.0%)	-	4.40	0.548
	Principals	1 P (10.0%)	8 P (80.0%)	1 P (10.0%)	4.0	0.471
	Instructors	3 P (20.0%)	9 P (60.0%)	3 P (20.0%)	4.0	0.655
	Total	6 P (20.0%)	20 P (66.7%)	4 P (13.3%)	4.07	0.583
5th Question	Experts	5 P (100%)	-	-	5.0	0
	Principals	7 P (70.0%)	3 P (30.0%)	-	4.70	0.483
	Instructors	11 P (73.3%)	4 P (26.7%)	-	4.73	0.458
	Total	23 P (76.7 %)	7 P (23.3%)	-	4.77	0.430
6th Question	Experts	1 P (20.0%)	4 P (80.0%)	-	4.20	0.447
	Principals	3 P (30.0%)	7 P (70.0%)	-	4.30	0.483
	Instructors	9 P (60.0%)	6 P (40.0%)	-	4.60	0.507
	Total	23 P (73.3%)	7 P (23.3%)	-	4.43	0.504
7th Question	Experts	3 P (60.0%)	2 P (40.0%)	-	4.60	0.55
	Principals	2 P (20.0%)	3 P (30.0%)	5 P (50.0%)	3.70	0.82
	Instructors	5 P (33.3%)	7 P (46.7%)	3 P (20.0%)	4.13	0.74
	Total	10 P (33.3)	12 P (40.0%)	8 P (36.7%)	4.07	0.78
8th Question	Experts	4 P (80.0%)	1 P (20.0%)	-	4.80	0.45
	Principals	8 P (80.0%)	2 P (20.0%)	-	4.80	0.42
	Instructors	6 P (40.0%)	6 P (40.0 %)	3 P (20.0%)	4.20	0.77
	Total	18 P (60.0%)	9 P (30.0%)	3 P (10.0%)	4.50	0.68
9th Question	Experts	4 P (80.0%)	1 P (20.0%)	-	4.80	0.45
	Principals	3 P (30.0%)	7 P (70.0%)	-	4.30	0.48
	Instructors	10 P (66.7%)	3 P (20.0%)	2 P (13.3%)	4.53	0.74
	Total	17 P (56.7)	11 P (36.7%)	2 P (6.7%)	4.50	0.63
10th Question	Experts	3 P (60.0%)	2 P (40.0%)	-	4.60	0.55
	Principals	5 P (50.0%)	4 P (40.0%)	1 P (10.0%)	4.40	0.69
	Instructors	7 P (46.7%)	5 P (33.3%)	3 P (20.0%)	4.27	0.79
	Total	15 P (50.0%)	11 P (36.7%)	4 P (13.3%)	4.37	0.72
11th Question	Experts	3 P (60.0%)	2 P (40.0%)	-	4.60	0.55
	Principals	4 P (40.0%)	4 P (40.0%)	2 P (20.0%)	4.20	0.79
	Instructors	5 P (33.3%)	8 P (53.3%)	2 P (13.3%)	4.20	0.68
	Total	12 P (40.0%)	14 P (46.7%)	4 P (13.3%)	4.27	0.69

P: Person or persons

As it can be seen in table 5, all questions with an average response of over 80% by all three respondent groups responding too much and far too much confirmed the validity and applicability of the curriculum.

Investigating the significant difference between questions of the questionnaire based on groups (Experts, principals, instructors):

This hypothesis attempts to find out if there is a significant difference between questions of the questionnaire based on the group (experts, principals and instructors). In order to test this hypothesis, Kruskal–Wallis one-way analysis of variance was utilized. Table 6 demonstrates the results for Kruskal–Wallis test.

Table 6: Kruskal–Wallis test to discover the existence of a significant difference based on groups (experts, principals and instructors)

	Chi square (X ²) statistic	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
1 st question	0.164	2	0.921
2 nd question	2.116	2	0.347
3 rd question	2.101	2	0.350
4 th question	1.969	2	0.374
5 th question	1.801	2	0.406
6 th question	3.412	2	0.182
7 th question	4.509	2	0.105
8 th question	5.57	2	0.062
9 th question	3.21	2	0.201
10 th question	0.628	2	0.730
11 th question	0.349	2	0.509

Table 6 demonstrates that there is no significant difference in the responses given to each question of the questionnaire based on groups (experts, principals and instructors) for the level of significance for all questions is more than 0.05.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main difference and advantage of this study in relation to other similar ones is compiling a comprehensive curriculum included specific preliminaries and requirements. For instance, one key aspect of this curriculum was the role of the instructor as a model. Thus, they were selected based strict criteria. The first requirement for a teacher was high level of tolerance and willingness to work with children. The next one was the teacher's dominance and experience about early childhood teaching methods and children's characteristics at those ages.

The final criterion was the teacher's dominance over discussions on children's emotional intelligence and strategies to improve it through a comprehensive model. Creativity in instruction is vital to teaching emotional intelligence skills for personal characteristics of the instructor and using everyday circumstances in teaching or executing the curriculum.

The instructor has to get a good score in their emotional intelligence test. His interview should approve of cheerfulness, stress control, fluency, and desirable communication skills. The test period should demonstrate how interested she is in teaching children and their feelings and last but not least should have the potential to gain parents' trust. Skills related to teaching career should be executed through novel leadership methods. The instructor has to be humorous and expressive about his own feelings.

Another important point is the role of the principal. The Principal's role in executing this model is key to optimal execution of the curriculum. The most important tent for principle is to accept and strengthen emotional intelligence skills in children and show a heartfelt belief in executing the curriculum in the centre under his management, as the curriculum falls under the direct personal supervision of the principal. Therefore, the principal's awareness, skills and expertise are crucial for execution of the comprehensive curriculum. This issue was dealt with easily since one of the authors of this paper was the principal in the centre under study.

Parents are of great importance in this curriculum as well. Since discussions on emotional intelligence are new to societies and most parents have little or no awareness about its vital importance in children, educational centres should teach parents along with their children. There are another 17 major principles. Tolerance with parents at the beginning of the school year to decrease stress, the principle of curriculum diversity, prioritization and giving the sense of value and potential to children are among these important principles. The curriculum was compiled considering ethnic and cultural conditions of the country. Execution of this curriculum is straightforward and could easily be repeated in other similar cases.

Executing this curriculum may seem simple, but it could have profound effects on children's futures. Children could be inoculated immunized against problems and mental pressures they will face in the future. This will give them independence and strength. On the other hand, behavioural problems could be avoided, and several other benefits along the lines of those discussed previously may come to fruition.

For instance, researches show that 10 to 15% of preschool children demonstrate emotional problems (Qi & Kaiser, 2003). Evidence also demonstrates that children without fully developed emotional competences have trouble acquiring basic scientific skills (Barbarin et.al. 2006). Academic success at school requires the development of the requisite emotional skills (Taylor & Dymnecki, 2007).

The present study has some implications for early childhood education. It also suggests the level of early childhood teachers' awareness of emotional development in children be raised and their skills to provide children with effective and motivating emotional learning be improved. Considering the comprehensiveness of the curriculum and its positive effects on developing emotional skills in children, the authors of the present study recommend that the teaching of emotional skills not be limited to a few class sessions. They believe that success and positive effects of the curriculum could be assured due to its comprehensiveness and its coverage of several other factors like selecting the educational board, teaching parents and so forth. Furthermore, it is recommended that this curriculum be added to early childhood educational program and similar curriculum be compiled for students in other levels of education.

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