A comparative and exploratory study of the Nfer-Nelson Emotional Literacy Scale in an Irish context

Submitted by

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Abstract (paper 1/2)

Culturally specific development of Emotional Literacy (EL) skills suggest that self report and observer ratings on EL scales would differ across cultures. This study is the first of two which explores and compares the Nfer-Nelson Emotional Literacy scale (Faupel, 2003) scores reported in the manual with those found in an Irish sample with a view to demonstrating its appropriateness as a cross cultural measure of EL. The three part scale comprise student (N=188), teacher (N=163) and parent (N=175) scales. The scales were completed in schools with a disadvantaged (74% of sample) or non-disadvantaged status (26%). Irish scores were organised into categories using percentile ranges to allow for comparative analysis with the original UK sample. Overall patterns of scores were similar but the cut off point for children in need of intervention was higher in the Irish sample. Within sample differences were explored using t-tests and children from disadvantaged backgrounds rated themselves with statistically lower EL than their non-disadvantaged counterparts. Inter-correlations were run to explore the relationships between and within the three scales. A mixed pattern of correlations was found and some evidence supporting Goleman's construct of EL came from strong consistent relationships (correlation range 0.41-0.77) between the empathy and self-regulation subscales in the three scales. Differences between teacher scores suggests cultural differences in perception of EL and strong relationships between parent and student scales suggests a qualitatively stronger understanding of emotions shared between Irish children and parents compared with their counterparts in the UK. A major limitation of this study is that the Irish sample was largely disadvantaged (74%), whereas the UK sample was nationally representative.
Abstract (paper 2/2)

This is the second of two papers which explores and compares the Nfer-Nelson Emotional Literacy scale in an Irish context. Emotional Literacy (EL) Scores obtained in paper one are used to explore the reliability (Study 1) and predictive validity (study 2) of the tripartite Nfer-Nelson scale. This scale is comprised of parent, teacher and student scales. Reliability is established, using internal consistency measures for the Total EL for all three scales (α range 0.77-0.92) and also for the majority of component subscales in the teacher scale (α range 0.77-0.88). The children (n= 153) who completed the student scale for paper one were assessed for their academic achievement using a reading attainment test, the Mary Immaculate College Reading Attainment Test (MICRA-T) and also for self esteem using The Culture Fair Self Esteem Inventory (CFSEI). Bivariate regression analysis indicated that academic achievement is predicted by the majority of the components (r range 0.247-0.329) comprising EL and the Total EL (r=0.314) from the teacher scale. Self esteem is predicted by all the components (r range 0.212-0.272) and the Total EL (r=0.285) from the teacher scale and the majority of components (r range 0.2-0.361) and the Total EL (r= 0.384) from the student scale. The items which constitute the scales were investigated and overlaps between the: self-awareness subscale and self esteem items as well as: motivation subscale and aspects of academic achievement bring the discreteness of the associated EL subscales into question. Statistical findings suggest the cross cultural use of the Nfer-Nelson scale. However, difficulties with the face validity of the scale items question the appropriateness of the items used to assess the EL construct. These findings suggest the EL construct to be otherwise acceptable.
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