



## **IDENTIFYING THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG TEACHER'S MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THEIR BURNOUT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to identify the relationship among teachers' mental health and emotional intelligence and their burnout. The population consisted of Zanjan high school teachers (n=450). A sample of 208 teachers was selected using multi stage sampling, consisting both cluster sampling and simple random sampling method. Data was collected using Goldberg's mental health questionnaire, Maslach and Jackson's burnout questionnaire and Bar-On's emotional intelligence questionnaire. Researcher used structural equation modeling and regression analysis methods for data analysis. The results showed that there is a relationship among teachers' mental health and emotional intelligence and dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, inefficiency and depersonalization and pessimism). evidences of how collaboration between organizations could facilitate.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Emotional Intelligence, Burnout, Teachers



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mental Health, which has a critical role in having sustainable development, is one of the most vital human needs. The concept of mental health includes an inner feeling of comfort, self-efficiency, self-dependence, competitiveness, inter-generation reliance, and self-development of potential thinking abilities.

Mental health refers to our cognitive, and/or emotional wellbeing - it is all about how we think, feel and behave. Mental health, if somebody has it, can also mean an absence of a mental disorder. Your mental health can affect your daily life, relationships and even your physical health. Mental health also includes a person's ability to enjoy life - to attain a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience (NORDQVIST, 2015).

While having life satisfaction, a mentally healthy individual can face with problems in a logical manner. In other words, they can sustain their individualism and adapt themselves to their environment at the same time (KOUSHAN; VAGHEI, 2005). There is a significant relationship between job burnout and the symptoms of psychological disorders (SARSANGI et al., 2015).

Therefore, identifying and preventing job burnout can improve personnel's mental hygiene and their offered services. Happiness, life satisfaction, and an inner feeling of well-being are words used to describe mental healthiness in modern psychology. One of the indices showing mental healthiness is an individual's level of life satisfaction which is defined as his or her attitude toward his life in general or a particular aspect of it such as his/her family life, occupational, or educational life (DIENER et al., 1999).

Parslow (2004), having examined the effect of job stress and organizational position on 806 social servants' mental health, observed that job stress and position can affect employees' mental health and sense of well-being. Another study, Farmer (2014) carried out on 253 nurses showed that there was a significant negative relationship ( $r = -0.63$ ) between job burnout and emotional quotient (EQ) for nurses with low experience (6 to 18 months). Moslesh's job exhaustion questionnaire and Baron's EQ questionnaire were used in that study.

Fooladvand (2005) found a significant relationship between organizations' working atmosphere and the personnel's mental health. Mental health is necessary



for society members to protect and perpetuate their social, occupational and educational functions. Mental health care is the main goal of mental health programs executing in the society (JAHOUA, 2011).

Improving occupational mental health is one of the main aspects of human resource development and nowadays so many institutes including economic, didactic and industrial institutes concentrated on healthy members, both physically and mentally, to increase efficiency (FERROLL, 2012).

As a sign of this age, mental pressure (stress) affects all society members regardless of age, gender and even social and economic class. (BAKSHI, 2010). Work-related stress is normal and a moderate level of work-related stress can lead people to creativity. But abnormal negative work-related stress will influence public health (WILEY, 2011).

Burnout is the psychological result of long high level work-related stress (AHMADI; SHEIKHZADE, 2011). Mental pressure results from imbalance between environmental demands and persons' abilities to properly response them. It is a negative experience and its continuation will end in burnout (POORREZA, 2013).

In recent decades most organizations and researchers paid attention to Emotional Intelligence. The popularity of the emotional intelligence during the past decade has led researchers to examine its potency in various areas of human functioning.

Thus, it has been found ability of EI is related to life success (BAR-ON, 2001), life satisfaction and well-being (ARDAHAN, 2012), interpersonal relationships (PETROVICI; CODRESCU, 2014), occupational stress (KRISHNAKUMAR; LALITHA, 2014), work success and performance (SHAHHOSSEINI et al., 2012), leadership (OVANS, 2015), etc.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in how emotional reactions and experiences affect both physical as well as psychological health. Emotional intelligence is an appropriate foundation to have an effective relationship (OMARAE et al., 2011). Both human resources management and social skills theorists believe that emotional intelligence is a necessary factor for people to be successful. It helps them to control and contain their feelings and emotions (CARR, 2010). Researchers found that people with high level of emotional intelligence have

more effective leading, more satisfaction, and more loyalty to their job and organization and less isolation (JORDAN, 2012).

Burnout causes undesirable consequences and imposes large costs to organizations and employees, such as: job replacement, losing motivation and energy, decreasing function, increasing absences and leaves, lack of quality and quantity, decreasing employee's mental health, stagnation and delay (ZAMINI et al., 2012).

Education is one of the most important infrastructures of development in societies. Having direct contacts with an important group of people (students), teachers play a significant role in education. So, teachers need to be healthy, succulent and motivated (GHALTASH et al., 2011).

High level of occupational stress causes a negative sense to service recipients and leads to lack of service quality (EKERMAN; BRAND, 2012). In recent years, educational system and organization has become the target of widespread scrutiny and criticism, while at the same time the rewards of teaching are often obscured by the difficult working conditions that are prevalent in many of our schools.

The experience of stress for teachers is qualitatively different from the work stress experienced by many others in the work context. Van Der Linde (2000) describes teaching as characterized by great responsibility, with no freedom to leave the classroom for more than a few moments, and pressure to control one's emotions. In the school settings, there is little respite from the severe demand for emotional labor.

The body's stress reaction is designed to prepare the organism to fly or fight when confronted with a threat to well-being. For teachers however, situational constraints impinge heavily on their capacity to manage stress, regardless to its intensity (DORMAN, 2003).

The Burnout syndrome is considered a public health problem due to its increasing frequency and the negative consequences it has on the healthcare system. This hampers the medical system, either directly, by affecting the health of the professionally exhausted medical employees or indirectly, through the consequences it has on the quality of medical care.

According to expert studies, the burnout syndrome has been identified as a risk factor for future heart disease incidence (TOKER; MELAMED; BERLINER; ZELTSER; SHAPIRA, 2012) and a predictor for subsequent development of musculoskeletal pain among people apparently healthy (ARMON; MELAMED; SHIROMA; SHAPIRA, 2010).

Professional exhaustion (the burnout syndrome) can be defined as a severe consequence of prolonged subjection to stress at work, which develops when demands from the professional area and the personal capacities are unbalanced for a long time (KALIMO; PAHKIN; MUTANEN; TOPPINEN-TANNER, 2003). It can be found in any profession (BAKKER; DEMEROUTI; SCHAUFELI, 2002), but it mostly affects those who have chosen to work with people (medical personnel, social workers, therapists, teachers, educators, lawyers, civil servants).

It can also coexist with other illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, alcoholism (AHOLA; VAANANEN; KOSHINEN; KOWVONEN; SHIROM, 2010). Researchers in the field have converged to the fact that burnout does not show immediate symptoms, but appears as a gradual response to emotional exhaustion and prolonged exposure to stressors, which in turn lead to an increase in the degree of dehumanization and professional dissatisfaction (LEITER, 1991; MASLACH, 2003).

Emotions are closely linked to a person's professional goals, desires, and plans and needs (BROWN; GEORGE; SMITH, 2003). Defined in terms of awareness, understanding and expression of emotions, emotional intelligence is considered the one which, along with cognitive intelligence, helps a person adapt more easily to situations and challenges that may arise in personal and professional life.

The diversity of the patterns of emotional intelligence determined their classification. Since job burnout can negatively affect employees' mental health, the present study was an attempt to check the relationship between individuals' mental health on the one hand and their job burnout and life satisfaction on the other hand. Therefore, this study aims to identify the relationship between teachers' mental health and emotional intelligence and their burnout. Accordingly, the research hypotheses are as follows:

- H 1: There is a relationship between teachers' mental health level and their burnout.
- H 2: There is a relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence level and their burnout.
- H 3: There is a relationship between teachers' mental health level and their emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout.
- H 4: There is a relationship between teachers' mental health level and their inefficiency dimension of burnout.
- H 5: There is a relationship between teachers' mental health level and their depersonalization and pessimism dimension of burnout.
- H 6: There is a relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence level and their emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout.
- H 7: There is a relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence level and their inefficiency dimension of burnout.
- H 8: There is a relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence level and their depersonalization and pessimism dimension of burnout.

## 2. METODOLOGY

This research is a practical descriptive correlation surveying study. The population consisted of Zanjan high school teachers (n=450). Data was collected using library resources, scientific magazines and supplies, network sites and standard questionnaires: Maslach & Jackson's burnout questionnaire, Goldberg's mental health questionnaire, and Bar-Ann's emotional intelligence questionnaire.

A sample of 208 teachers was selected Using Cochran formula and cluster sampling and random sampling method to answer questions. Cluster sampling is a sampling technique used when "natural" but relatively heterogeneous groupings are evident in a statistical population.

In this technique, the total population is divided into these groups (or clusters) and a simple random sample of the groups is selected. Simple random sampling is a basic type of sampling, since it can be a component of other more complex sampling methods. The principle of simple random sampling is that every object has the same



probability of being chosen. In this research, first, Zanjan high schools divided to 4 parts (4 eras) using cluster sampling and then 4 schools selected from each part using random simple sampling.

From each school 13 teachers were selected using random simple sampling. Respondents were asked to response questions and determine the level of mental health and emotional intelligence and burnout to identify the relationship.

Public questionnaire: this questionnaire investigated demographic factors like age, gender, education, marital status, job experience and income.

Maslach & Jackson's burnout questionnaire: a questionnaire with 12 questions which investigates three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, inefficiency, depersonalization and pessimism. Answers were scored using Likert five-item spectrum.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to determine the reliability of questionnaire. Coefficients were in the range of 0.71 to 0.90. Considering the coefficients higher than 0.7 for all variables, this indicates acceptable reliability of data collection tool.

Goldberg's mental health questionnaire: this questionnaire investigated five dimensions of mental health, here two dimensions have been used: 1- Physical status that influences mental health. Enjoying high level of physical health leads to high level of mental health. 2- Social function indicating decision-making ability and sense of utility. Answers were scored using Likert five-item spectrum. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.85.

Bar-on's emotional intelligence questionnaire: this questionnaire investigated five dimensions of mental health; here three dimensions have been used: 1- Interpersonal skills 2- General mood 3- Compatibility. Answers were scored using Likert five-item spectrum. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.85.

Data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software to describe demographic information, assess normal distribution of sample, and determine the average of variables, and LISREL software to test the hypotheses using structural equation modeling and regression analysis methods. For this purpose, the structural model of research hypotheses was designed in LISREL software. Based on correlation coefficient and multiple regression equations, the

relationships between variables were measured. Then, the findings were analyzed according to results of testing research hypotheses by structural equation modeling method and their outputs including fitness indices and regression coefficients of structural model.

Findings:

### 2.1. Demographic Findings

The sample (n=208) included 42 men (20.2%) and 166 women (79.08%). Also, most of the participants were in age range 41 to 45 years (65.4%), had bachelor degree (71.2%), were married (94.2%), had job experience more than 20 years (59.6%) and had income in the range of 10 to 15 million Rials per month. (71.2 %).

### 2.2. Data Normal Distribution Findings

The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which evaluated distribution normality of data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Structure	Number of data	Mean	Standard Deviation
Burnout	208	1.9343	.66314
Emotional intelligence (compatibility)	208	3.8413	.68096
Emotional intelligence (general mood)	208	3.9106	.69580
Emotional intelligence (interpersonal skills)	208	4.1933	.63440
Mental health (social function)	208	2.3215	.94908
Mental health (physical health)	208	2.9271	1.00654

The results showed that most variables were close to the mean or even more than it. So the normality of data distribution was confirmed.

## 3. THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The results of testing first hypothesis (considering the regression significant (-0.55) of relationship among variables) shows that the level of mental health has an independent linear combination with teachers' burnout and there is a middle reverse relationship between mental health and burnout. And this relationship is significant at 99%. In other words, 30% of variance of burnout can be explained by mental health.



The results of testing second hypothesis (considering the regression significant (-0.48) of relationship among variables) shows that 23% of variance of burnout can be explained by emotional intelligence. There is a middle reverse relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout. In other words, with increasing levels of emotional intelligence the amount of burnout decreases.

The results obtained from testing third hypothesis (the relationship between mental health and emotional exhaustion) according to path analysis, standard coefficient of independent variable(mental health) to dependent variable (emotional exhaustion) is -0.38 and ( $t=-5.60$ ), there is no reason to reject third hypothesis and it is confirmed with a possibility of 99%. So there is a relationship between mental health and emotional exhaustion.

The results of fourth hypothesis (the relationship between mental health and inefficiency) according to path analysis, standard coefficient of independent variable (mental health) to dependent variable (inefficiency) is -0.37 and ( $t=-6.12$ ), there is no reason to reject hypothesis and it is confirmed with a possibility of 99%.

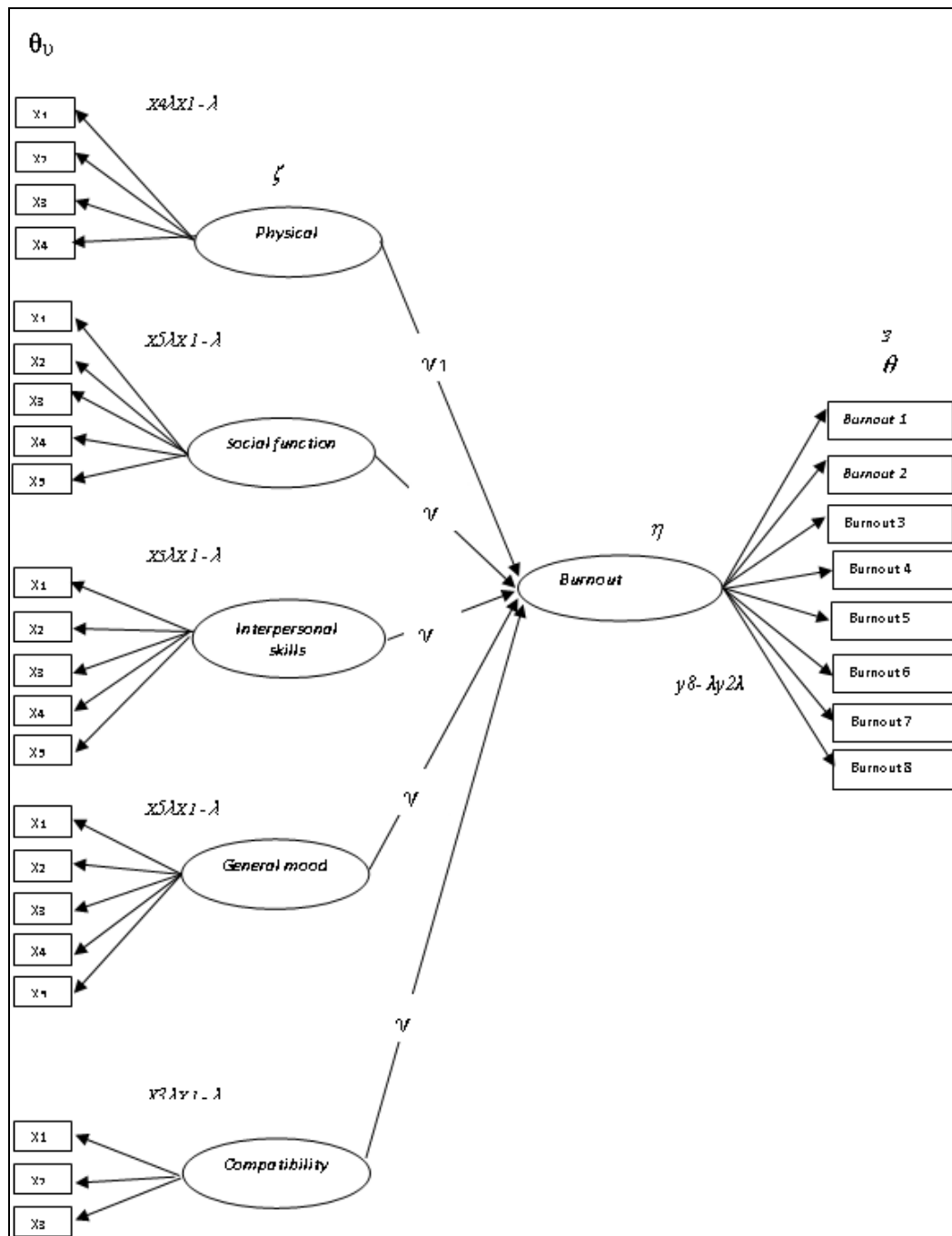
The results of fifth hypothesis (the relationship between mental health and depersonalization and pessimism) according to path analysis, standard coefficient of independent variable (mental health) to dependent variable (depersonalization and pessimism) is -0.29 and ( $t=-4.69$ ), there is no reason to reject hypothesis and it is confirmed with a possibility of 99%.

The results of sixth hypothesis (the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional exhaustion) according to path analysis, standard coefficient of independent variable (emotional intelligence) to dependent variable (emotional exhaustion ) is -0.17 and ( $t=-2.50$ ), so we can say there is no reason to reject hypothesis and it is confirmed with a possibility of 99%.

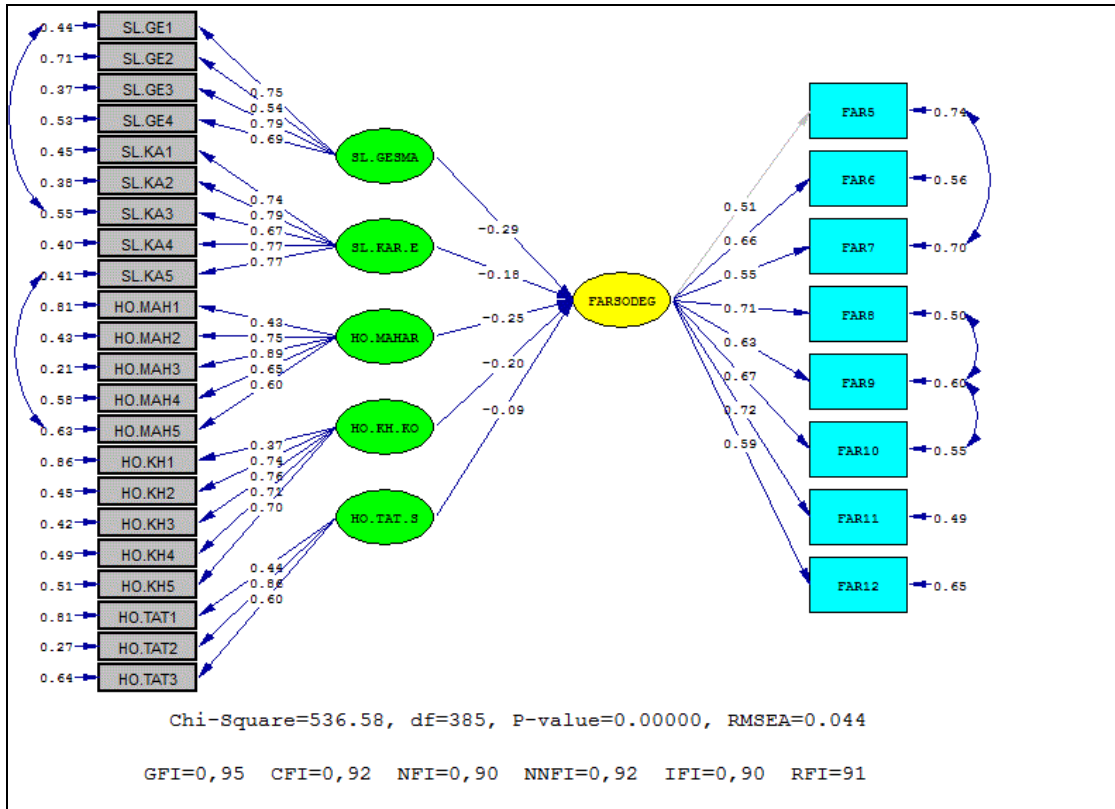
The results of seventh hypothesis (the relationship between emotional intelligence and inefficiency) according to path analysis, standard coefficient of independent variable (emotional intelligence) to dependent variable (inefficiency) is -0.33 and ( $t=-5.48$ ), there is no reason to reject hypothesis and it is confirmed with a possibility of 99%.

The results of eighth hypothesis (the relationship between emotional intelligence and depersonalization and pessimism) according to path analysis,

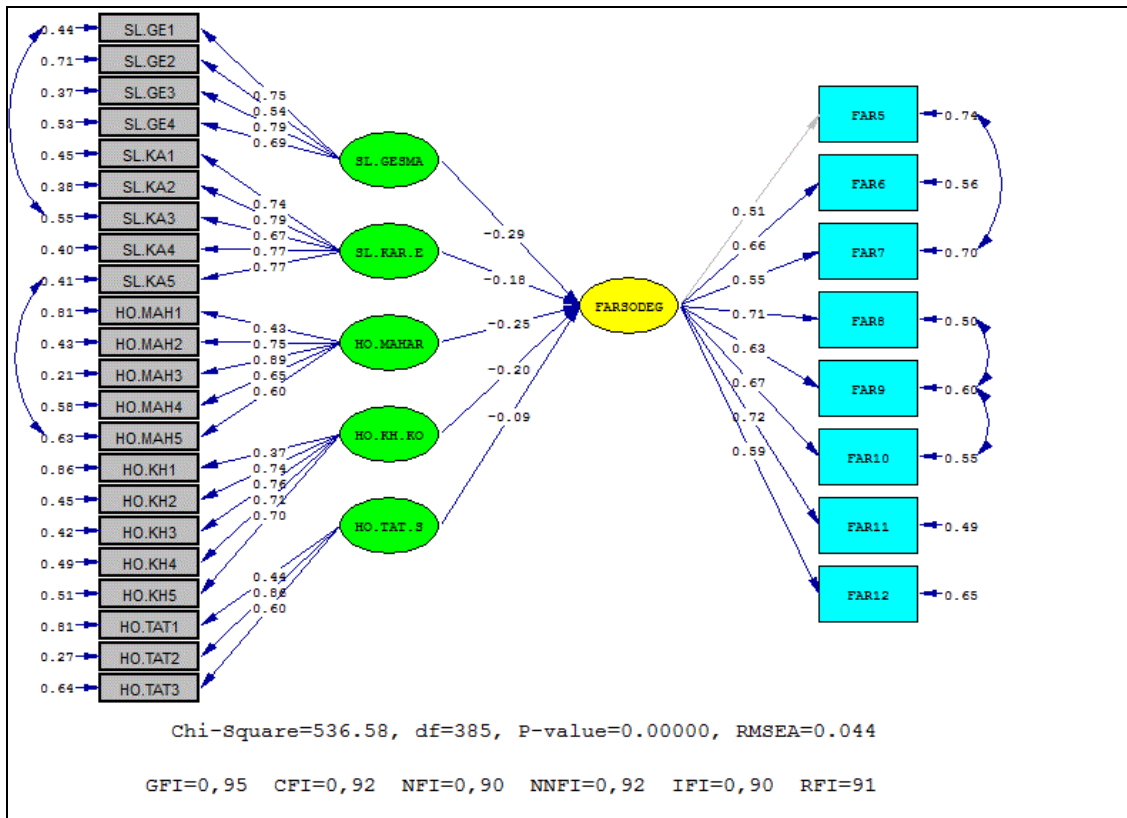
standard coefficient of independent variable (emotional intelligence) to dependent variable (depersonalization and pessimism is -0.38 and (t=-5.99), there is no reason to reject hypothesis and it is confirmed with a possibility of 99%.



Model 1: matrixes of SEM



Model 2: research structural equation modeling in the case of T-values.



Model 3: research structural equation modeling in the case of Standard Solution.

Table 2: Some important fit indicators of graphical model

Indicator	Amount	Acceptable range
Chi-Square	53	Chi-Square > 5%
GFI	0.95	GFI > 90%
AGFI	0.92	AGFI > 90%
RMR	0.06	RMR > 0.08
NNFI	0.92	NNFI > 90%
NFI	0.90	NFI > 90%
CFI	0.92	GFI > 90%
RFI	0.91	RFI > 90%
IFI	0.90	RFI > 90%
PNFI	0.71	PNFI > 50%
RMSEA	0.044	RMSEA < 10%

Table3: Summary of results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Type of relationship	Test results
H1	Mental health to burnout	Significant	Confirmed
H2	Emotional intelligence to burnout	Significant	Confirmed
H3	Mental health to emotional exhaustion	Significant	Confirmed
H4	Mental health to inefficiency	Significant	Confirmed
H5	Mental health to depersonalization and pessimism	Significant	Confirmed
H6	Emotional intelligence to emotional exhaustion	Significant	Confirmed
H7	Emotional intelligence to inefficiency	Significant	Confirmed
H8	Emotional intelligence to depersonalization and pessimism	Significant	Confirmed

Table 4: Ranking of variables due to effectiveness

Arrangement of variables regardless of the type of variables (dependent/ independent/ mediator)	coefficient	Rank
Emotional intelligence to depersonalization and pessimism	-0.38	1
Mental health to emotional exhaustion	-0.38	2
Mental health to inefficiency	-0.37	3
Emotional intelligence to inefficiency	-0.33	4
Mental health to depersonalization and pessimism	-0.29	5
Mental health to burnout	-0.29	6
Emotional intelligence to burnout	-0.23	7
Emotional intelligence to emotional exhaustion	-0.17	8

Descriptive indicators of teachers' burnout show that there is a significant relationship between gender and burnout and 11% variances of burn out can be explained by gender.

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research findings confirmed that there is a reverse significant relationship between teacher's mental health and emotional intelligence and their burnout. In other words with increasing level of teachers' emotional intelligence and mental health, their burnout decreases. This argument is consistent with research results of Bakhshi Sorshejani(2010), Hamid et al. (2010), khoshouei and Bahrami (2014).

Emotional intelligence enables people to manage and control their emotions and feelings. People with high level of emotional intelligence have more effective leading, more satisfaction, and more loyalty to their job and organization and less isolation. So, they are more successful in their job and have a high sense of job security. This helps them to control mental pressures and leads burnout to occur later (BEIKZADE, 2012).

Research results shows that teachers enjoying high level of emotional intelligence have less stress and mental pressure and more interpersonal relations, responsibility and flexibility. These factors help them to experience less burnout. Researcher investigated three dimensions of emotional intelligence: general mood, interpersonal skills and compatibility. Among these, interpersonal skills have greater impact on burnout.

Mental health is a form of welfare by which every person can know his/her capacities to manage and control natural pressures of daily life, work effective and participate in community. Mental health is different from physical health. It is the central core of health and all relations depend on mental health. Mental health is considered as individual's compatible psychological skills. The World Health Organization experts believe that mental health has a great relationship with individuals' ability to have a compatible well-balanced engagement with others, improve personal and social environment, solve conflicts and control personal leanings logically. This argument is consistent with research results of Saberi (2008), Ehiakonande (2008), Arizi et al. (2013).

Burnout is one of the results of stress and appears in the form of psychological symptoms like depression and inability to compromise. Because of burnout, the person is not able to communicate with others properly and becomes involve in behavioral-social disorders. Burn out is a state of physical, emotional and mental fatigue which is generated as a result of direct long communications with different people under difficult overwhelming emotional circumstances, a syndrome that causes a feeling of aversion or wasting life and makes people confused about their job and their own influencing.

So they feel inefficiency and lose their interest and motivation (ASADI, 2012). Examining relationship between teacher's mental health and emotional intelligence

and their burnout shows the greatest impact is concerned with the relationship between emotional intelligence and depersonalization and pessimism. Depersonalization is a negative hard response to service recipients. In this way aggression brings the ball, active aggressions (verbal and non-verbal) and inactive aggressions (sabotage and deliberate delay). Also the less impact is concerned with the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional exhaustion. This argument somewhat matches with research results of Ehiakonande et al. (2012), Beirami et al. (2011) and Khoshouei and Bahrami (2014).

Lateral findings of research states that burnout in male teachers is more than female teachers. Finally the main result of study is determining variables affecting burnout and its dimensions. Knowing this point is very important for education senior executives and enables them to plan appropriate programs in order to decrease burnout and increase teachers' efficiency.

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**APPENDIX**

**Table 1: Descriptive analysis of central indicators of six variables**

Burn out	EI (Adaptation)	EI (General Mood)	EI (Interpersonal skills)	Mental Health (Social Function)	Mental Health (Health)	correct Missed	total
208	208	208	208	208	208	correct	total
0	0	0	0	0	0	Missed	
1/9343	3/8413	3/9106	4/1933	2/3215	2/9271	Average	
1/7500	4/0000	4/0000	4/2000	2/2000	3/0000	Middle	
1/67	4/00	4/00	4/00	1/00	2/25	View	

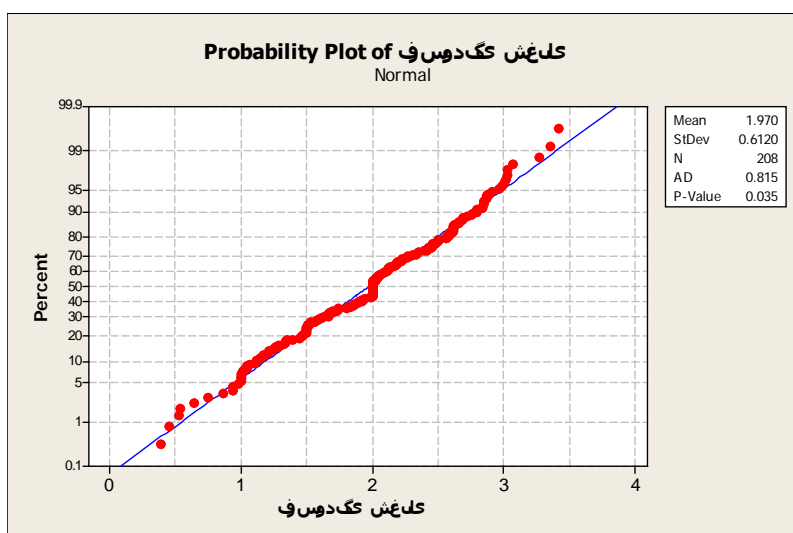


Chart 1: The normal test of variable of burn out

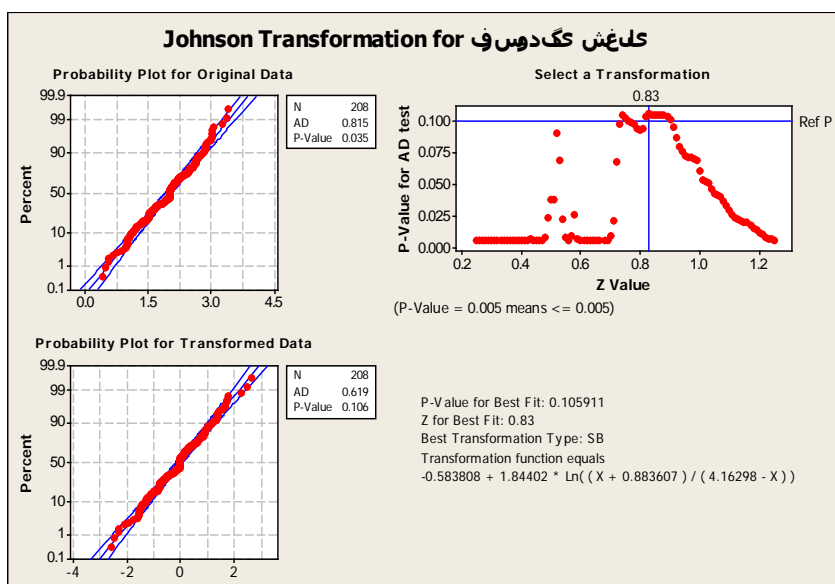


Chart 2: The test of data conversion and the normal test of variable of burn out

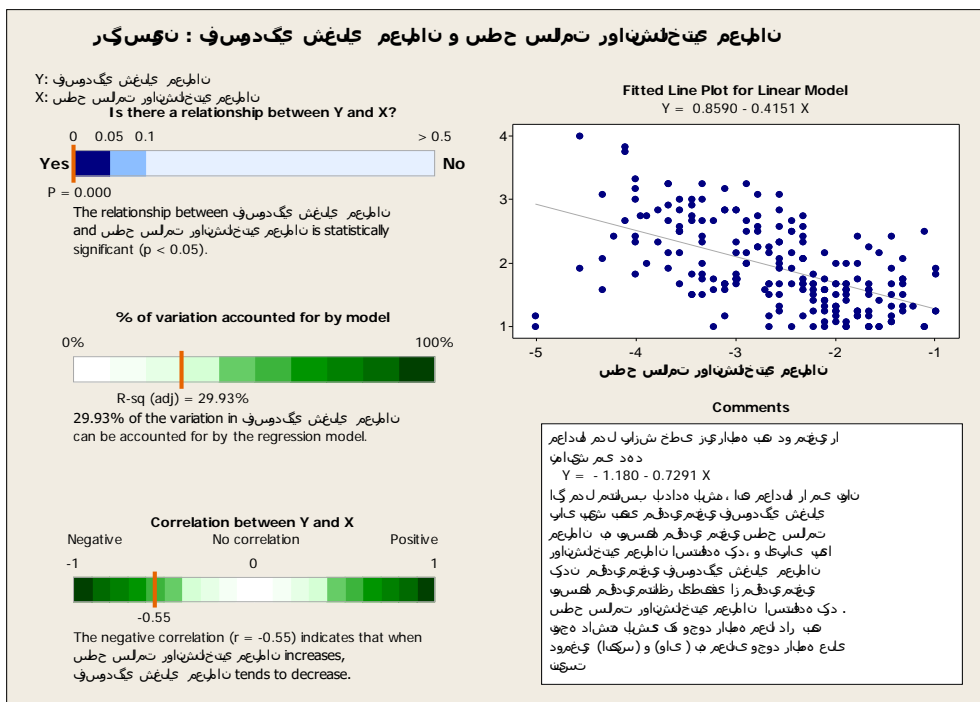


Chart 3: The regression of teacher's burn out and the level of mental health

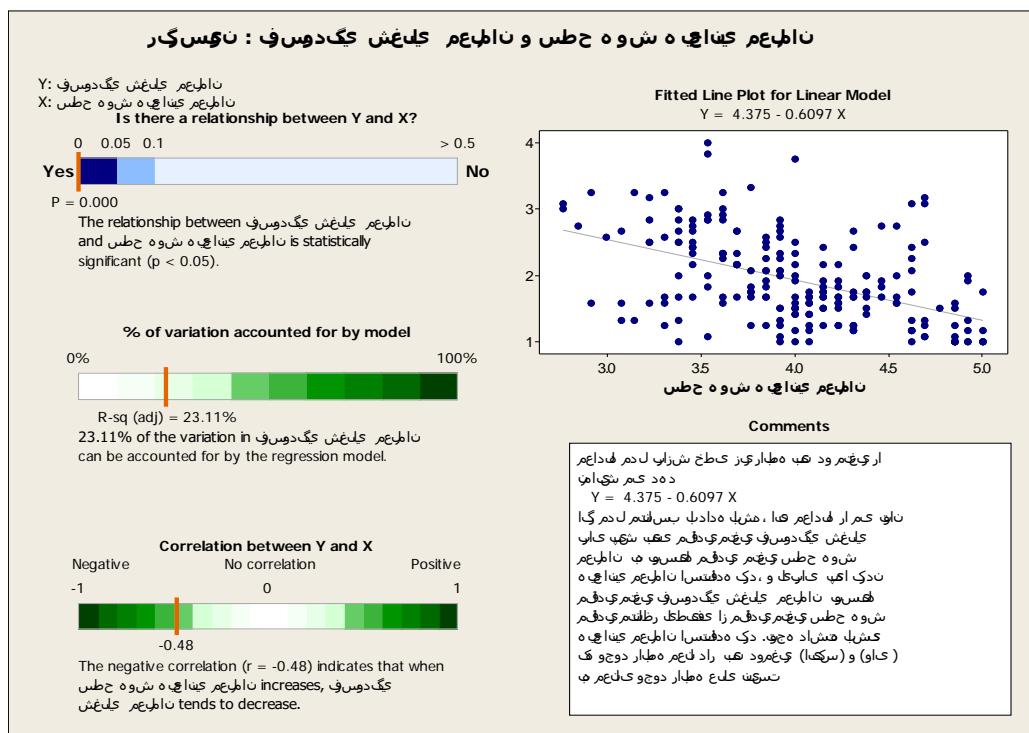
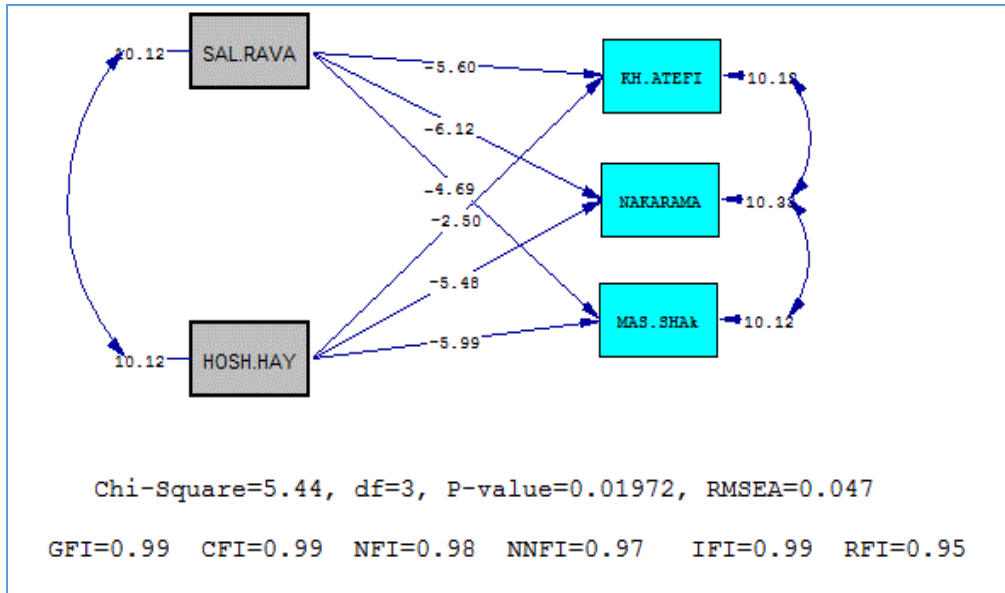
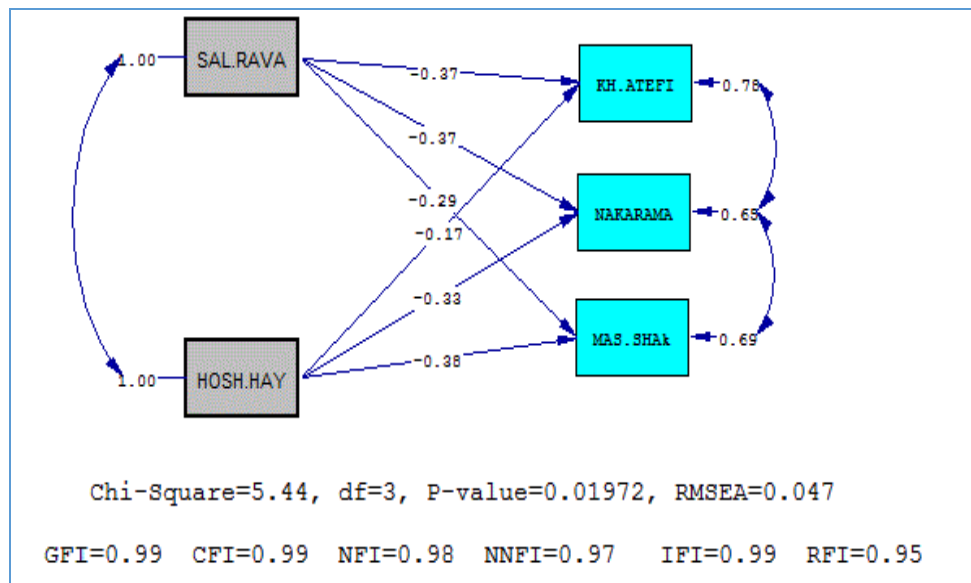


Chart 4: Teacher's burn out and the level of emotional intelligence



Model 1: Structural equation modeling of research in state of T-values



Model 2: Structural equation modeling of research in state of T-values Standard Solution