

## **Philosophy for Children (P4C) and Adaptation, Tension Control, and General Mood: Evidence from the Ninth Grade Students of Shahr-Rey District 2 Schools in 2014-2015**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the current study was to examine the effect of implementing the philosophy for children (P4C) program on adaptation, tension control, and general mood of 9th-grade students of two Shahr-Rey District 2 schools in the academic year 2014-2015.

The present study had a quasi-experimental design, the statistical population of which is made up of the 9th-grade male students of Dar al-Funun School in Shahr-Rey, District 2, who studied in the academic year 2014-2015. For this purpose, 30 ninth-grade male students of Dar al-Fonun school in Shahr-e Ray were divided into two groups of 15 people, namely intervention and control groups, using the convenience sampling method. Both groups were tested for emotional intelligence. The experimental group was administered the P4C program, while the other group did not receive the training. The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory was used to obtain information in this research. Furthermore, inferential statistics and T-student tests (generalized co-variance is an independent t-test) were used for the independent group to test research hypotheses.

The findings indicated that the performance of the students in the experimental group regarding the subscales of the adaptation component of emotional intelligence improved as follows: Problem-solving with a 5.45% increase, Reality testing with a 2.06% increase, and Flexibility with a 3.64% increase. That is, the P4C program had a positive effect on increasing adaptation skills. The performance of the students in the experimental group regarding the subscales of the stress control component of emotional intelligence improved as follows: Stress tolerance with a 19.5% increase, impulse control with an increase of 4.03% of growth. As such, the findings of the study revealed that administering students the P4C programs promote the ability to withstand psychological pressure and control impulses. Also, the performance of the students in the experimental group shows the growth of the subscales of the general mood component of emotional intelligence regarding Happiness and Optimism grew respectively by 5.42% and 4.4%.

**Key words;** Adaptation, tension control, general mood, emotional intelligence

### **Introduction**

There is simply no society that would disregard children and teenagers as the prospective pillars of their economy and industry (Irhan , Oran , 2022). Evidence from around the globe suggests that households, and by inference societies, are experimenting outbursts of emotions, despair, and carelessness, and hence the children and adolescents of the current generation are perceived, rightfully, to be facing more emotional complications than the previous generation (Goleman, 2004; Bashir, et al., 2021; Zedgenizova, et al., 2021). As such, attending to the states of emotion and its proper function in human relationships, understanding one's situation and that of others, being pleasant and mastering instant gratification demands, empathizing with others, and using emotions, thinking, and cognition appropriately are all elements of utmost significance that are the subject of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence was first coined in 1990 by Peter Salovey, a professor

at Yale University, and his colleagues who sought to scientifically measure the difference between people in the field of emotions. The notion of emotional intelligence seeks to revisit and recognize the status of emotions and feeling and their important role in various rational and mental human practices. It had been long assumed in the field of education that the success of people is merely a function of their cognitive development, which is measured and reported through a quantitative index called IQ, and the attitude of the government was such that would subject the future progress of people in social and occupational life only to their cognitive development and intelligence.

That is, evidence suggests that the intelligence of people cannot solely secure their success in the long term, as other characteristics are also necessary to establish proper human communication and success in life, which is called emotional intelligence. In other words, the application of emotions in education and developing a comprehensive and coherent program based on the training of social and emotional skills can help children and teenagers in this regard (Alvand, 2004, p. 12).

The corresponding adverse effects are exacerbated by the fact that schools emphasize cognitive development and even mnemonic approaches, and, as such, train students who, even though can be deemed academically successful, perform poorly in other areas of life, such as expressing, managing and regulating emotions, among others, achieving milestones in a specific case while lagging in other aspects (Dini, 2002, p. 22).

Regarding the roots of the P4C program, Lippmann states that “When I became a professor of philosophy at Columbia University in New York in the late 1960s, I thought my students lacked the power of reasoning and clear judgment, yet it was too late to significantly enhance their thinking power at that stage. I simply concluded that this should have been done way earlier in childhood, and at that time, I was almost the only one to believe this.”

The Philosophy for Children movement provides uniform [textbooks](#), namely, Philosophical Stories for Children while offering an integrated teaching plan in which students of different levels begin the class by reading part of a story aloud, followed by raising questions about the story and discussing them. Mutual criticism and expression of opinions are the main practices sought to be implemented with utmost care. The instructor shall in turn recognize and adopt this method as an educational approach, thereby seeking to guide the children to become citizens in the democratic system.

The significance of the P4C program is to reform the state of thinking in schools and to introduce the component of contemplation into the educational system. The next stage would be to naturally train rational, curious, law-abiding, critical, analytical, self-aware, wise, morally and socially responsible, self-critical, and sensitive citizens. This program tries to teach reasoning, judgment, and discrimination to people from childhood, empowering them with efficient decision-making early on. Raising children who would become intelligent, thoughtful, and rational and structuring the country's educational system towards prosperity requires the authorities and specialists of the education system to consider the important goals of teaching philosophy to children, and hence pay attention to the gaps in the path of educational sciences and education (Mehrlon 2011, p.32)

It can be directly inferred from Lipman's views on teaching philosophy to children that implementing practices such as willfully listening to others, not interrupting others, offering reason-based arguments, sharing ideas with others, helping others, managing anger, empathizing, controlling anxiety, and creating a close relationship with others, among others, would simply lead to students having stronger reasoning and the ability to discuss arguments among themselves. All these matters are intended to take place in an atmosphere without anger and hostility, where anger-induced physical violence is replaced by empathy, and the P4C is used to identify, control and guide emotions. To achieve the above goals, i.e., raising children with the ability to manage and control their emotions and have a reforming spirit, it is necessary to start working from childhood, which is the best age to develop these characteristics. Therefore, teaching P4C leads to a generation that is not only equipped

with logical and flexible thinking but is also successful in managing and controlling their emotions concerning environmental elements.

Given the aforementioned discussions, the purpose of the current study was to examine the effect of Implementing P4C protocols on the emotional intelligence of ninth-grade students of Shahr-e Ray schools in 2014-2015.

**Research Methodology**

The present study used a quasi-experimental research design. The statistical population of this research was 9th-grade male students of Dar al-Funun School of Shahr-e Ray in the academic year 2014-2015. For this purpose, 30 ninth-grade male students of Dar al-Fonun Ray School were divided into two groups of 15 people, experimental and control, using convenience sampling. In the intervention group, the students would sit down with the researcher for twelve sessions in weekly one and half hour sessions, read the text, one paragraph at a time, of the philosophical story of Sophie's World that was predetermined based on the manual, and discuss the contents afterward. The arrangements were designed such that the students would sit facing each other to see each other and hear each other's voices. For the study, pieces of *Sophie's World* by Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder, which contains philosophy-seeking stories, were used.

**Research Instruments**

In this research, The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory was used to obtain information. In the early 1980s, Bar-On started a comprehensive study to examine factors that were perceived to be the basic components of effective social and emotional functioning leading to mental health (Bar-On, 1997).

This 90-item questionnaire is the first emotional intelligence scale that started with the question of why some people are more successful than others in life. The inventory of emotional intelligence has five scales, namely, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, stress management, adaptability, and general mood, and fifteen subscales. The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale (from strongly agree, to strongly disagree).

Descriptive statistics (i.e., frequency, percentage, mean) were primarily used to analyze data. Research questions were further examined using inferential statistics and the T-student test (generalized co-variance in the independent t-test) for the independent group.

**Findings**

Table 1 shows the scores of emotional intelligence subscales for the experimental group.

Table 1: Emotional intelligence subscale scores for the experimental group

Component	Stage	Frequency	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Problem-Solving	Pre-test	15	26	38	30.10	3.745
	Post-test	15	33	44	65.35	235.5
Reality Testing	Pre-test	15	20	38	36.31	057.4
	Post-test	15	28	46	42.33	952.4
Flexibility	Pre-test	15	18	29	10.28	213.3
	Post-test	15	23	35	74.31	841.4
Stress Tolerance	Pre-test	15	20	36	25.31	547.4
	Post-test	15	26	46	46.36	541.5
Impulse Control	Pre-test	15	20	38	23.32	744.4
	Post-test	15	26	44	20.36	541.5

<b>Happiness</b>	Pre-test	15	24	37	10.35	652.4
	Post-test	15	32	46	52.40	874.5
<b>Optimism</b>	Pre-test	15	20	37	98.27	321.3
	Post-test	15	23	41	54.31	854.5

Table 2: Emotional intelligence scale scores for the experimental group

Scale	Stage	Frequency	Mean	SD
<b>Adaptability</b>	Pre-test	15	89.20	8.10
	Post-test	15	98.07	9.98
<b>Stress management</b>	Pre-test	15	72.34	9.35
	Post-test	15	79.02	10.22
<b>General mood</b>	Pre-test	15	73.27	8.64
	Post-test	15	79.20	10.12

Results from Table 2 indicate that participating in the P4C program resulted in improved scores on adaptation and stress management skills in all scales of emotional intelligence in the post-test measurement.

**Research hypothesis test**

- Implementing the Philosophy for Children protocol improves adaptation skills. Considering that the t-value obtained from the student's t-table is greater than 1.7, the null hypothesis is rejected, and hence there is a significant difference between the scores of the experimental group and the control group in the adaptation scale. That is, administering Philosophy for Children program is effective in increasing adaptation skills.

Table 3: Independent T-test scores on the differential mean of the experimental and control groups for the adaptation skills scale

Group	Frequency	Differential mean	SD	Difference of means	T	Df	Sig. level
<b>Intervention</b>	15	5.60	15.395	11.012	1.892	28	0.05
<b>Control</b>	15	-4.80	4.122				

- Implementing the Philosophy for Children protocol improves stress management skills. Considering that the t-value obtained from the student's t in Table 4 is greater than 1.7, the null hypothesis is rejected, and hence there is a significant difference between the scores of the experimental group and the control group in the stress management scale. That is, administering Philosophy for Children program is effective in increasing stress management skills.

Table 4: Independent T-test scores on the differential mean of the experimental and control groups for the stress management skills scale

Group	Frequency	Differential mean	SD	Difference of means	T	Df	Sig. level
<b>Intervention</b>	15	10.52	9.504	1.400	1.816	28	0.05
<b>Control</b>	15	2.90	13.095				

- Implementing the Philosophy for Children protocol improves general mood. Considering that the t-value obtained from the student's t in Table 5 is greater than 1.7, the null hypothesis is rejected, and hence there is a significant difference between the scores of the

experimental group and the control group in the general mood scale. That is, administering Philosophy for Children program is effective in improving general mood.

Table 5: Independent T-test scores on the differential mean of the experimental and control groups for the general mood scale

Group	Frequency	Differential mean	SD	Difference of means	T	Df	Sig. level
Intervention	15	-3.07	11.585	1.533	1.918	28	0.05
Control	15	-4.60	10.301				

**Discussion and conclusion:**

the purpose of the current study was to examine the effect of Implementing P4C protocols on the emotional intelligence of ninth-grade students of Shahr-e Ray schools in 2014-2015, on which the following results were obtained:

1- Administering the P4C protocol improved the performance of the students in the experimental group on the subscales of the adaptation scale of emotional intelligence as follows: Problem-solving with a 5.45% increase, reality testing with a 2.06% increase, and flexibility with 3.64% increase. That is, participating in the P4C has a great effect on adaptation skills, and the purpose of this component is the ability to put aside the mental frameworks of the past and the ability to examine new thoughts and accept the most appropriate and efficient beliefs. Moreover, the framework asserts that the more creativity and innovation, the more flexibility, problem-solving, and reality testing, and hence less time will be spent protecting and defending the wrong thoughts of the past. The findings were consistent with those of Eysenck (2000), Ebrahimzadeh (2005), Khazami (2010), Malikdar (2012), and Gharibabadi (2010) regarding the adaptation subscale.

2- Administering the P4C protocol improved the performance of the students in the experimental group on the subscales of the stress management scale of emotional intelligence as follows: Stress tolerance with a 19.5% increase, and impulse control with a 4.03% growth. That is participating in the P4C improved the ability of students to withstand psychological pressure and to control impulses increases when facing challenges and complications, encouraging them to indulge in informed decision-making. The findings are consistent with those of Desoko (2005), Hedayati (2010), Lippman (2003), and Barkhordari et al. (2012) regarding the stress management subscale.

3- Administering the P4C protocol improved the performance of the students in the experimental group on the subscales of general mood as follows: Happiness with a 5.42% increase, and optimism with a 4.44% increase. The findings of the current research are consistent with those of Topping (2003), Jafari and Talebzadeh (2010), and Soltani (2006) regarding the general mood subscale

Certain protocols were sought to be implemented among the students in this research, the results of which made a difference in the students' communication performance within a few sessions. These rules include listening to others, not interrupting others, giving reasons, sharing ideas with others, managing anger, supporting group interactions, and helping each other. During the sessions, the students helped each other to express their ideas more clearly and to use more solid arguments. That is, they thought about each other's ideas even in the intervals between the sessions and discussed the ideas at the beginning of the next session without questioning the ownership of ideas. All these matters take place in an atmosphere without anger and hostility or confrontation. Philosophy for children is a tool to help them think and analyze. There is no denying that behaviors are rooted in attitudes and mindsets. To change every behavior, the emotion feeding that behavior must be altered beforehand, in many cases resulting in long-lasting effects. Philosophy for children enables youngsters to be satisfied with their emotional opportunities in early childhood, realized through

providing a cognitive environment brimming with positive content. Having high emotional intelligence in people makes children better able to deal with failures and manage potential anger situations. That is, children with high levels of emotional intelligence are shown to fail less, exhibit fewer emotional complications, and have a greater sense of optimism, happiness, and self-confidence.

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