

Level of Cognitive-Emotional Empathy and Empathic Concern Predicts the Interpersonal Skills of Students: Basis for an Enhanced Homeroom Guidance Activities

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ABSTRACT: The study was conducted to identify the level of students' profile, cognitive, emotional empathy and empathic concern be a predictive factor of interpersonal skills and constituted the basis for enhanced Homeroom Guidance activities.

Using a descriptive correlational design, two hundred (200) Grade 9 students from Sico 1.0 Integrated National High School during school year 2022-2023 were conveniently selected as respondents of the study. Four (4) expert teachers validated the instrument. This study used standardized tests namely: Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) of Davis (1980) with 28 items, and Empathy Formative Questionnaire with 15 items were the questionnaires and answered by a 5-point Likert scale. Interpersonal skills questionnaire was made by the researcher consisting of 35 items. The Pearson Product- Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data.

The results revealed that cognitive empathy has a high significant relationship ($r=.609$) and level of the emotional empathy has a moderate positive significant relationship ($r=.621$), while, empathic concern of respondents has a low positive significant relationship to interpersonal skills of respondents ($r=.465$) at a significance level of 0.01, Sex was significantly associated with emotional empathy at the .05 level of significance. Moreover, monthly income was significantly associated with empathic empathy at the .01 level of significance. Marital status, birth order, and place of residency were not significantly associated with any of the types of empathy.

Sex was found to have a significant relationship with interpersonal skills, as indicated by a chi-square value of 9.994 and a p-value of .019. Marital status, birth order, monthly income, and place of residency, on the other hand, did not demonstrate a significant relationship with interpersonal skills.

The model as a whole is statistically significant in predicting students' interpersonal skills, as evidenced by the F-value of 51.003 and a p-value less than .01. This suggests that the combination of cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and empathic concern significantly contributes to the prediction of students' interpersonal skills.

KEYWORDS: students profile, cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, empathic concern, interpersonal skills

I. INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has changed the world. Pandemic became a nightmare and a realization to value things in human existence. The threat of being infected resulted in self-isolation, social distancing and wearing of protective equipment. People were working from home, students were synchronously and asynchronously learning, livelihood closed, and community were locked down. Furthermore, people experienced stress, fear, isolation, frustration and worry to catch the disease. No one can deny that students were greatly affected by this pandemic. Our current situation has clearly affected the teaching and learning process. Learners studied at home for almost two academic years and cannot avoid the impact to the domains of development. Consequently, the Department of Education has been very responsive thru the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan- a package of education intervention that respond to the challenges brought by COVID 19. Despite the situation, it is crucial to provide the life skills development of learners which will be a great impact in overcoming different challenges and changes brought by the "new normal". The Department of Education assures the quality education shall continue through the adjustments in the alignment of learning materials, provision of training and webinars to teachers and school leaders, orientation to parents and learners, and considering learning delivery modality. Modular distance learning, radio-based instruction, blended learning, online learning, and television were the modalities provided for every learner enrolled in the academic year 2020-2021, 2021- 2022 and more than two months in the present year.

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In this time of pandemic, social interaction is strictly prohibited and strict compliance to health protocols were lifted, thus, resulting to a shift of communication. People used to change conversation through online modes such as phone calls, texts, emails, and video calls. There might be face to face but with strict observance of safety measures. Due to limitations, “people lose the benefit of seeing someone’s body language or facial expressions” [1]. This may result to “losing the chance of identifying what is the real emotion of the person”. Creating a misinterpretation and miscommunication of persons involved. Since, relating of oneself to others refers to as “glue that holds communities together” [2]. It is a struggle how a relationship be strengthen with existing gap of distance. With less contact, people tend to be suspicious to other person [3] and brought selfishness [4]. Moreover, other study revealed that “distancing conflicts with the human tendency to connect with others and severely limits opportunities to have contact with people outside one’s household [5]. The need to “connect with others is especially pronounced in adolescence”. Adolescence period requires crucial development of social skills, however, temporarily halted due to pandemic.

Revised Implementation of Homeroom Guidance (HG) during Crisis Situation for S.Y. 2021-2022 or DM-OUCI-2021-346 was formulated by the Department of Education to address the needs and life skills development of learners in this time of pandemic. Homeroom Guidance was born as an important information component of mental health in the K to 12 Curriculum under the Guidance and Counseling Program. This shall serve as the tool to promote proactive, preventive, and educative methods in promoting learner’s life skills development.

II. TABLES

Table I. Test of Significant Relationship between Cognitive Empathy and Interpersonal Skills

	Interpersonal Skills							Overall Interpersonal Skills
	Active Listening	Dependability	Flexibility	Leadership	Motivation	Patience	Teamwork	
Cognitive Empathy								
Imagination	.453**	.397**	.436**	.382**	.370**	.389**	.407**	.496**
Perspective Taking	.517**	.368**	.421**	.462**	.388**	.495**	.456**	.543**
Understanding Feelings	.522**	.465**	.539**	.502**	.479**	.464**	.496**	.609**
Overall Cognitive Empathy	.556**	.454**	.514**	.496**	.455**	.502**	.504**	.609**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table I shows that cognitive empathy in terms of imagination, perspective taking and understanding feelings has a moderate significant relationship to interpersonal skills ($r=.609$, $p<0.01$).

The overall assessment that the result of the level of cognitive empathy predicted the interpersonal skills of learners.

Based on the findings, the researcher identified that imagination has low positive significant relationship in active listening, dependability, motivation, patience, and teamwork. The result revealed that respondents are more likely to; (a) depend on the statement of the speaker rather than to assume and judge the person & highly engaged in respecting other’s opinion and emotion before giving comments (b) highly focused on the rules and regulations prescribed rather than exploring things that might happen, (c) work independently rather than collaboratively participating, (d) daydream and speculate about what might happen caused them to be less likely to respond calmly and (e) hesitate to cooperate due to absence of involvement.

These findings were supported and emphasized that the fundamental aspect of human judgment: evaluative judgments are dependent on evaluative information [6]. It is revealed that the crucial type of information used for judgment and decision-making is information gleaned from our own feelings.

Moreover, another study supported the result, stating that understanding emotions can help every individual perceive own feeling and others, as well as improve interactions [7]. This result concluded that through remaining cautious about the differences of situation is important in understanding and perceiving feelings.

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Table II. Test of Significant Relationship between Emotional Empathy and Interpersonal Skills

	Interpersonal Skills							Overall Interpersonal Skills
	Active Listening	Dependability	Flexibility	Leadership	Motivation	Patience	Teamwork	
Emotional Empathy								
Emotion Recognition	.475**	.322**	.370**	.423**	.390**	.387**	.488**	.500**
Shared Emotions	.488**	.421**	.440**	.478**	.461**	.442**	.532**	.572**
Personal Distress	.368**	.396**	.360**	.357**	.311**	.321**	.376**	.437**
Overall Emotional Empathy	.542**	.477**	.484**	.516**	.477**	.472**	.570**	.621**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table II shows that emotional empathy in terms of emotion recognition, shared emotions and personal distress has a moderate significant relationship to interpersonal skills ($r=.621$, $p<0.01$).

Based on the findings, the researcher determined that there is low positive significant relationship in emotion recognition to active listening, dependability, flexibility, leadership, motivation and patience. The result revealed that respondents are; (a) less likely to imagine how their parents are feeling to avoid assumptions and judgments, (b) remembering the days when they are upset and less confident about self, (c) focusing too much on how someone feels on a certain situation and less likely to perform own task efficiently, (d) having insufficient encouragement to face challenges, (e) inadequate experience to desire the optimal outcome and (f) feeling of disturbance due to unforgettable situations.

These results are supported by an author, stated that when emotion is shared, feelings are collective, and intrinsically not owned by one, nor two but to all. Overall, shared emotions strengthen relationships [8].

These result is supported by another author, which stated that if someone experiences lack of control, the sense of helplessness in one situation could lead to us feel helpless in every circumstance, leading to withdrawal, apathy and depression [9]. This emphasized that when someone experiences a difficult situation it is results to an uncomfortable situation.

Table III. Test of Significant Relationship between Empathic Concern and Interpersonal

	Interpersonal Skills							Overall Interpersonal Skills
	Active Listening	Dependability	Flexibility	Leadership	Motivation	Patience	Teamwork	
Empathic Concern								
Tenderness	.286**	.237**	.278**	.316**	.323**	.391**	.312**	.375**
Sympathy	.006	.150*	.090	.089	.039	.037	.112	.093
Compassion	.283**	.240**	.263**	.333**	.367**	.265**	.364**	.374**
Soft-heartedness	.340**	.369**	.428**	.340**	.303**	.391**	.312**	.434**
Overall Empathic Concern	.328**	.365**	.381**	.396**	.379**	.393**	.408**	.465**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table III shows that empathic concern in terms of tenderness, sympathy, compassion and soft-heartedness has a low significant relationship to interpersonal skills ($r=.465$, $p<0.01$).

These result revealed that when an individual experienced risky dilemmas made them more compassionate for strangers [10] in an urgent and non-urgent situations. Furthermore, individuals demonstrated evident risk-taking behavior when helping others.

Findings are in the same vein of study suggested that techniques aimed at teaching children to pay attention to interdisciplinary cues - compared to self-serving ones - may be beneficial, particularly for children who are generally less sympathetic [11].

Furthermore, these finding stated that soft- heartedness is a predictive factor in prosocial behavior of an individual [12]. As a result, respondents acknowledged that being a soft-hearted person strengthens one's ability to empathize with others in need.

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Based on the findings, the overall empathic concern has a low significant relationship to interpersonal skills ($r=.465$) at the significant level of 0.01. The researcher discovered that the respondents are (a) not usually disturbed with others' misfortunes to avoid assumptions and judgments, (b) don't feel too sorry to others when having a problem though can contribute something helpful, (c) misfortune of others affects the performance of the concern, (d) occasionally feels pity to others that prevent to take initiative, (e) don't feel sorry for the unaccomplished goal and (f) taking time to think before helping others in an urgent situation.

Overall, the level of empathic concern of respondents has a low positive significant relationship to interpersonal skills of respondents ($r=.465$, $p < 0.01$). The result revealed that empathic concern predicts the level of active listening, dependability, flexibility, leadership, motivation, patience and teamwork of students.

Table IV. Test of Significant Relationship between Students' Profile and Types of Empathy

Profile	Types of Empathy					
	Cognitive		Emotional		Empathic	
	χ^2 -value	p-value	χ^2 -value	p-value	χ^2 -value	p-value
Sex	6.402	.094	8.076*	.018	4.604	.203
Marital Status	15.529	.810	10.712	.709	21.185	.448
Birth Order	7.278	.608	6.801	.340	15.008	.091
Monthly Income	21.074	.134	12.956	.226	34.617**	.003
Place of Residency	4.024	.259	3.770	.152	3.702	.295

**Significant at .01 level; *Significant at .05 level

Looking at the results, it appears that sex was significantly associated with emotional empathy at the .05 level of significance. Moreover, monthly income was significantly associated with empathic empathy at the .01 level of significance. Marital status, birth order, and place of residency were not significantly associated with any of the types of empathy.

Based on the findings, female were emotional empath rather than male, which population is 116 with 58%. This revealed that female are more likely to feel someone else's shoes and try to understand how others feel. This study revealed that when students are from a lower-class status of family, they were considerate with the feelings of others and value the relationship.

Table V. Test of Significant Relationship between Students' Profile and Types of Interpersonal Skill

Profile	Interpersonal Skills	
	χ^2 -value	p-value
Sex	9.994*	.019
Marital Status	25.098	.243
Birth Order	10.249	.331
Monthly Income	10.063	.816
Place of Residency	2.203	.531

*Significant at .05 level

From the results, it can be observed that sex was found to have a significant relationship with interpersonal skills, as indicated by a chi-square value of 9.994 and a p- value of .019. Marital status, birth order, monthly income, and place of residency, on the other hand, did not demonstrate a significant relationship with interpersonal skills.

Based on the findings, sex is significantly related to the interpersonal skills, which revealed that female are more likely to respect others' opinion, follow rules and regulations religiously, contribute something helpful to others, respect other's capabilities and viewpoints, encourage teammates to do better, participate in all class activities, take time to think, and accept responsibilities as member of the group.

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Table VI. Test of significant prediction of empathy on students' interpersonal skills

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.292	0.205		6.294	0.000
Cognitive Empathy	0.300	0.083	0.308	3.603	0.000
Emotional Empathy	0.371	0.082	0.363	4.515	0.000
Empathic Concern	0.054	0.072	0.054	0.750	0.454

R = .662; Adj. R² = .430
F(3, 196) = 51.003; p < .01

The results indicated that the model as a whole is statistically significant in predicting students' interpersonal skills, as evidenced by the F-value of 51.003 and a p-value less than .01. This suggests that the combination of cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and empathic concern significantly contributed to the prediction of students' interpersonal skills.

The model's goodness of fit is also provided, with an R-value of 0.662 and an adjusted R-squared value of 0.430. This indicates that approximately 43% of the variance in students' interpersonal skills can be explained by the combination of cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and empathic concern.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the investigation led to the following conclusions:

1. The null hypothesis is rejected since there's a significant relationship between cognitive empathy and interpersonal skills.
2. The null hypothesis is rejected since there's a significant relationship between emotional empathy and interpersonal skills.
3. The null hypothesis is rejected since there's a significant relationship between empathic concern and interpersonal skills. However, indicators considered in sympathy are not strongly related to interpersonal skills.
4. The null hypothesis is partially sustained since there's a significant relationship between students' profile and types of empathy. However, sex is significantly related to the emotional empathy and the monthly income is associated with emphatic concern. The rest of the indicators were not significantly associated with any type of empathy.
5. The null hypothesis is partially sustained since there's a significant relationship between students' profile and interpersonal skills. However, sex was found to have a significant relationship with interpersonal skills, the rest did not demonstrate a significant relationship.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research article would not have been possible without the help and encouragement of various individuals, this manuscript would not have satisfied the study's objectives; without them. The researcher wishes to express her heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals:

Hon. Mario R. Briones, EdD., the University President, and the Panel of Examiners' Chairperson, who embodies the university's mission and vision in many ways, inspiring every researcher to pursue graduate studies.

Eden C. Callo, EdD., the LSPU, VP for Academic Affairs, for her advice. Providing support for all researchers obtaining their degrees;

Prof. Joel M. Bawica the Campus Director of LSPU-SPCC, for his unwavering support and efforts in the field of research;

Edilberto Z. Andal, EdD., Dean of the CTE-GSAR, for his never-ending reminders and time in each consultation, giving the researcher the motivation to complete her degree;

Annalyn A. Delfino, RGC, the researcher's adviser, for dedicating her time, expertise, and encouragement, and for her patience, sacrifices, and understanding in examining the researcher's work;

Karen Chris Latade, RGC, the researcher's subject specialist, for her remarks and recommendations for improving this study paper;

Remedios Almanza, the researcher's statistician, for her prompt response and late-night talk during data collection, as well as her advice on how to present the findings specifically;

Daisy Aranguren, EdD., the researcher's technical editor, for her time and effort to improve this paper;

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The Validators, Mrs. Maricel M. Lopez, Mrs. Vanessa D. Barcelos, Mrs. Ma Alona T. Dimaculangan, and Ms. Mary Jane R. Marco, for their time and contributions to the discussion, validation of research instrument, as well as the creation and improvement of assessment tools;

Jocelyn P. Arquillo, the School principal of Sico 1.0 Integrated National High School, for permitting the researcher to conduct the study, for her unwavering support and understanding all throughout the writing process;

Forty students from Grade 10 level of Sico 1.0 Integrated National High School, SY 22-23, the respondents of pilot testing, for their time and cooperation during the conduct,

Two-hundred students from Grade 9 level of Sico 1.0 Integrated National High School, SY 22-23, the respondents of the study, for their time and cooperation during the conduct, which resulted to the best research outcomes;

Michael Shell and other contributors for developing and maintaining the IJSSHR LaTeX style files which have been used in the preparation of this template.

Marites L. Mabiling (Inay) and Expedito R. Mabiling (Papa), the parents, Erica M. Kamus and Monette L. Mabiling, the siblings, for the inspiration, motivation, and encouragement throughout the study;

Emmanuel A. Lina, the fiancé, for the inspiration, guidance, patience, never-ending encouragement, and unconditional love, that kept the researcher going;

Most of all, to our Almighty God, for giving His endless blessings, knowledge, and strength to make this research possible.

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