

Research Paper

Modeling the Relationship Between Affective Balance, Social Intelligence, and Speech Anxiety With the Mediating Role of Consequence Expectation



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Citation Esmailzadeh Ashini M, Nasri S, Seadatee Shamir A. Modeling the Relationship Between Affective Balance, Social Intelligence, and Speech Anxiety With the Mediating Role of Consequence Expectation Among Teacher-Training Students. *Iranian Rehabilitation Journal*. 2022; 20(3):397-404. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32598/irj.20.3.1644.1>

doi <http://dx.doi.org/10.32598/irj.20.3.1644.1>

**Article info:**

Received: 25 Oct 2021

Accepted: 19 Mar 2022

Available Online: 01 Sep 2022

Keywords:

Affect, Intelligence, Anxiety, Expectancy

ABSTRACT

Objectives: There are several predictor variables for speech anxiety (SA) among students. Affective balance (AB) and social intelligence (SI) are two main factors in this field. In this study, we assess the mediating role of consequence expectation (CE) among these variables. Accordingly, this study aims to explore a model of the relationships between AB, SI, and SA mediated by CE among teacher-training students of Farhangian University.

Methods: This was a descriptive-correlational study and the population included students of teacher-education courses at the Farhangian University in Kerman Province, Iran, in the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample included 740 participants who were selected via the cluster sampling method. They completed the speech anxiety thoughts inventory, the Bradburn scale of psychological well-being (1969), the social intelligence questionnaire, and the personal outcome expectancy scale.

Results: The results showed that the model of explaining AB, SI, and SA through the mediating role of CE in teacher-training students of Farhangian University has an acceptable fit. Hence, AB has a direct effect on SA. SI has a direct effect on SA and AB has a direct effect on the expectation of CE. Meanwhile, SI has a direct effect on the CE and AB has an indirect effect on SA through the mediating role of the CE. And, SI has an indirect effect on SA by the mediating role of the CE.

Discussion: We can conclude the proposed model of the relationship between AB, SI, and SA with the mediating CE among teacher-training students of Farhangian University is fit and has proper values.

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Highlights

- Emotional balance has a direct and indirect effect on speech anxiety by the mediating role of consequence expectation.
- Social intelligence has a direct and indirect effect on speech anxiety by the mediating role of consequence expectation.

Plain Language Summary

This study shows that emotional balance and social intelligence are inversely related to speech anxiety. Emotional balance and social intelligence affect the expectation of outcome. Emotional balance and social intelligence mediate the expected effect on speech anxiety.

1. Introduction

Social phobia is also known as a social anxiety disorder (SAD). SAD as an anxiety disorder is identified by extraordinary and persistent social anxiety or performance anxiety. SAD causes significant distress or prevents participation in social activities. The social situation is most often avoided entirely, or it is endured with marked distribution or dread [1]. One of the most common features of SAD is speech anxiety (SA). An individual's ability to speak well publicly helps them meet personal needs and it plays a crucial role in their career and self-promotion processes [2]. Individuals with SAD may be inadequately assertive or excessively submissive or, less commonly, highly controlling of the conversation [3]. They do not tend to start communicating with others and avoid most situations that may be exposed to judgments by others with an abnormal fear. Children and adults who routinely have fear or anxiety of speech are least inclined to participate in social situations and communicate with others. They experience fear of negative evaluation in all social environments and interpersonal interactions [4]. The 12-month prevalence of SAD is approximately 7% in the United States and 2.3% in Europe [3]. The commonness of SAD in Iranian students was 5.2% to 18.8% [5, 6]; this is while the prevalence of public speaking anxiety is higher (15%-30%) than SAD [7].

The shared effects of students' attitudes and effective strategies should be considered for contributing to students' speaking performances [8]. When students can speak precisely and convincingly, it assists them to give achievement in their educational experiences and later professions [2].

Affective balance (AB) is one of the components that refers to subjective well-being and explains emotional responses when evaluating the quality of life. It is the result of considering both the positive and negative emotions experienced over a period of time [9]. AB refers to the emotion, mood, and feeling of a person. These can be all positive, negative, or a combination of both [10]. Some studies also indicate that the feeling of reward is separate from positive and negative affect [11]. Mood states and stress were mainly associated with a higher probability of pointing to a negative AB, even though more adult age and happiness were variable quantities associated with a more moderate chance [12]. Affective imbalance plays a crucial role in the etiology of social anxiety, especially public speaking anxiety among adolescents and young people. Therefore, weakness in AB is one of the possible problems for people with SA. Socialization means the compatibility of people with their reference group, social norms, values, and attitudes. During this process, people learn behaviors, skills, motivations, values, beliefs, fitting and desirable criteria, and characteristics of their culture. They also learn the knowledge and techniques of adaptation and the possibility of interrelationships in continuous interaction. AB is the beginning of behaviors that result in positive social interaction maintenance, such as helping, starting relationships, and mood control [13]. In addition, emotion regulation processes based on conscious emotional control facilitate positive affective experiences, contrary to automatic and preconscious experiences that are related to negative affect [14].

Social intelligence (SI) is progress in life and social relationships. SI refers to the ability to accompany other people, be aware of social affairs, and be sensitive to stimuli received from other people [15]. SI is defined as understanding others, representation of emotions and own opinions, interpretation of own demands, provision and receipt of feedback to or from the audience, motivating and inspiring

others, provision of innovative solutions to difficult circumstances, collaboration rather than individual activity, and being a great team member. People with high levels of SI are mainly able to resolve difficulties in routine experiences and cope with dangerous situations through the operation of proper approaches. Studies have also demonstrated that SI and various communication skills are vital for prosperous achievement in occupational and educational life [16].

Speaking in public is one of the vital skills needed for students, especially teacher students (students whose future job will be teacher) to succeed in a teaching job; hence, speaking is one of the basic principles. If a teacher fails to convey academic or non-academic content to students by persuading the audience, they will inevitably face a major problem in teaching. As declared, one of the main factors that can affect speech quality is SA. Accordingly, if a teacher suffers from SA disorder, this anxiety can affect the quality and quantity of their speech in the classroom or any other group, and they cannot convey the concepts and content to the audience, especially students. As a result, they encounter difficulties in transmitting educational materials. Therefore, investigating the roots and factors affecting SA is necessary. Many factors are associated with SA, including AB, SI, and consequence expectation (CE). However, the indicated correlations of these factors and the type of relationships that each of these variables may have with SA are unknown, thereby pointing out to the research gap. The present study aims to fill this gap by conducting field research and finding scientific answers to the following substantial question:

Is the proposed model (Figure 1) fit for the relationship between AB, SI, and SA mediated by the CE in teacher-training students of Farhangian University?

2. Materials and Methods

This was a descriptive-correlational study. The population included all 2200 students of the Farhangian

University in Kerman Province, Iran, in the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample size was 740 people. The participants were randomly selected by the cluster sampling method from 4 universities in 36 classes based on gender and educational courses. Data analysis was used to analyze hypotheses using the Pearson correlation coefficient, multiple linear regression, and the Sobel test via the SPSS software, v. 25. The structural equation modeling (SEM) method was used to assess the fitness of the conceptual model of the research. The data collection tool in this study consisted of four standard questionnaires.

Speech anxiety thoughts inventory

Cho et al. [17] developed the speech anxiety thoughts inventory questionnaire with 23 items. The questionnaire is scaled on a 5-degree scale from very high to very low. Factor analyses of the speech anxiety thoughts inventory revealed a 2-factor solution prediction of poor performance and fear of negative evaluation by the audience. In addition, the results exposed reliability across 4 weeks, high internal consistency ($\alpha=0.95$), and good convergent and discriminant validity (ranging from 0.52 to 0.85). In Iran, the internal consistency was found to be good ($\alpha=0.84$) [18].

Scale of psychological well-being (affect balance scale)

Bradburn et al. developed the scale of psychological well-being (affect balance scale) [19]. The scale includes 10 questions and 2 elements (5 items related to positive emotion and 5 to negative emotion), which are answered as yes (1) or no (0). They investigated the test-retest reliability of this scale for positive emotion, negative emotion, and AB, and found the reliability at 0.83, 0.81, and 0.76, respectively [19]. The internal consistency for positive emotion has also been reported in the range of 0.55 to 0.73 and for negative

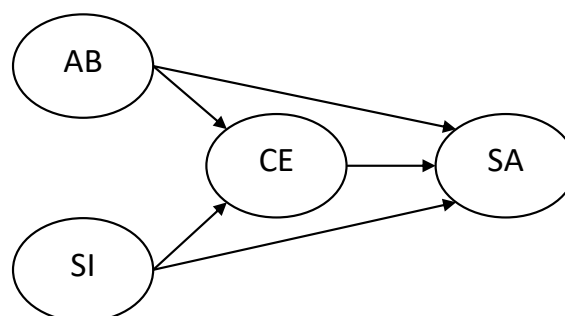


Figure 1. Proposed model of the study

AB: affective balance; SI: social intelligence; CE: consequence expectation; SA: speech anxiety

emotion it is calculated at 0.61 to 0.73. The validity of the questionnaire was 0.73. In the present study, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated by the Cronbach α method for positive emotion at 0.738, negative emotion at 0.792, and AB at 0.814.

Social intelligence questionnaire

The social intelligence questionnaire is a standard questionnaire developed by Rosaei [20] and includes three components: the process of social information, social awareness, and social skills. It is measured in response to each item in a 5-scale range. This questionnaire includes 21 items. The validity of this questionnaire was obtained at 0.85, and its reliability was equal to 0.91 via the Cronbach α method. In this study, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained by the Cronbach α method at 0.83.

Personal outcome expectancy scale

The personal outcome expectancy scale [21] was used to measure the CE. The scale has 8 items that measure personal CEs along with consequences of behavior. The personal outcome expectancy is scored on a 5-scale Likert-based framework. On this scale, items 2, 4, and 7 are scored inversely. Riggs and Knight [21] reported

the content validity of the scale and its reliability by calculating the Cronbach α coefficient. In Iran, the validity of the questionnaire with the appropriate factor analysis method was 0.67 with the factors. Its reliability via the Cronbach α method was obtained at 0.84. In this study, the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire via the Cronbach α method was obtained at 0.83.

Statistical analysis

The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics (such as frequency, minimum and maximum, Mean \pm SD, skewness, and kurtosis), as well as inferential statistics [22] by the SPSS software v. 21. The evaluation of the proposed model was estimated by the SEM in the AMOS software v. 24.

3. Results

Demographic characteristics of the participants

Among the participants, 413(54.49%) were male, and 345(45.51%) were female. A total of 221 participants (29.16%) were under 20 years old, and 537 participants (70.84%) were between 20 and 25 years old. Meanwhile, 43 participants (5.67%) had an associate degree, and 715 (94.33%) had a bachelor's degree. The

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables and indicators

Variables	Mean \pm SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Speech Anxiety	55.85 \pm 16.19	23	108	0.146	-0.464
Fear of negative evaluation	23.54 \pm 7.11	9	45	0.06	-0.285
Performance anxiety	16.72 \pm 5.41	7	34	0.137	-0.442
Anxiety, inability to speak	9.04 \pm 3.24	4	20	0.337	-0.359
Fear of not convincing	6.24 \pm 2.48	3	14	5470.	-0.332
Affective Balance	35.23 \pm 8.84	12	50	-0.29	0.512
Positive emotion	17.78 \pm 3.40	6	25	-0.304	0.284
Negative emotion	12.55 \pm 3.45	5	24	0.246	0.195
Social Intelligence	74.97 \pm 9.21	53	104	0.407	-0.064
Social information processing	23.97 \pm 3.45	15	35	0.33	0.112
Social awareness	25.85 \pm 3.72	13	35	0.232	0.115
Social skills	25.15 \pm 4.27	14	35	0.242	-0.518
Consequence Expectation	25.80 \pm 6.04	10	40	0.023	-0.418
Waiting for a reward	12.03 \pm 3.17	4	20	-0.025	0.061
Expect success	13.77 \pm 3.47	4	108	0.146	-0.464

Table 2. Fitness indicators for the developed models and the final model

Indicators	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	NPAR	GFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Proposed model	606.72	41	14.8	25	0.884	0.863	0.815	0.862	0.135
Modified model	172.10	35	4.92	31	0.946	0.949	0.920	0.949	0.079
Independent model	416.50	55	75.77	11	0.377	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.314

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GFI: goodness-of-fit index; IFI: incremental fit index; CFI: comparative fit index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA: the root Mean square error of approximation.

field of study of 72(9.5%) participants was counseling, 531(70.1%) in educational sciences, 48(6.3%) in physical education, and 107(14.1%) in other fields. A total of 284 participants (37.47%) had teaching experience, and 474 participants (62.53%) had no experience in teaching. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics of the variables and indicators of the study.

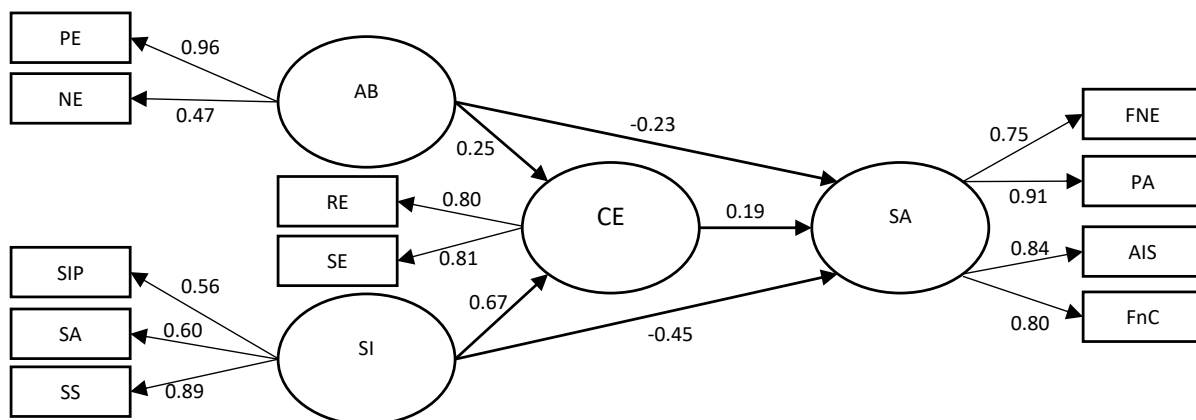
The results shown in the skewness and kurtosis columns indicate the normal distribution of the study variables. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test also confirms the assumption that SA ($z=1.445$, $P=0.054$), AB ($z=1.029$, $P=0.24$), SI ($z=0.872$, $P=0.432$), and CE ($z=1.283$, $P=0.068$) are normal.

Evaluating the proposed model using structural Equation modelling

The initial pattern fitting based on the fit indices used in this study was reported in the first row (the proposed model: Figure 2) in Table 2. Accordingly, the values of some of the initial paradigm indices indicate that the proposed model requires reform and improvement. For this purpose, in the next stage, given the modified indices at AMOS-24 outputs that were not significant, the proposed covariance paths (Figure 3) were added to the model.

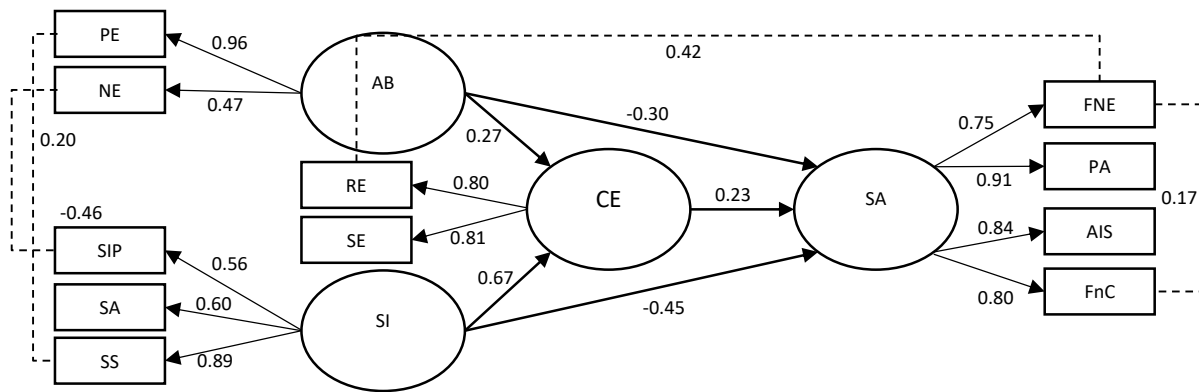
After applying these changes, the results of the fitness indices are listed in the second pattern of Table 2. As the contents of Table 2 show that the first pattern does not have good fitness, in the next step, by adding the path of the proposed corrective indices (modified indices), the proposed model was improved and the fitness indices of the final pattern were acceptable.

The results of Table 2 indicate that the modified model has good fit indices. The values of less than 5 in the χ^2/df index are suitable, and the closer to zero is better to the fitness of the model. For goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), a value close to 0.90 and above is considered an acceptable good fit, which indicates that the model is good. Concerning the root Mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) index, values adjacent to 0.05 or less indicate a good fit of the pattern, and a value of 0.08 or fewer points to a reasonable approximation error; a value higher than 0.10 indicates the need to reject the model. Therefore, considering the values of the final model fitting indices (formulated pattern) and the limit of acceptable values mentioned above, it can be stated that the model presented in this research is accepted. The regression coefficients of the model show



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Figure 2. Proposed model of the relationship between affective balance, social intelligence, and speech anxiety mediated by consequences expectation



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Figure 3. Modified model of the relationship between affective balance, social intelligence, and speech anxiety mediated by consequences expectation

that the mentioned variables predominantly explain the relationship between AB, SI, and SA with the mediation of CE in Farhangian University teacher students.

By using global fit indices, we can answer the following question regardless of the specific values reported for the parameters in general: is the proposed model supported by the collected experimental data? If the answer is yes, the model is acceptable. We can maintain that the presence of a non-significant Chi-square equal to 172.10 and the level of significance ($P=0.001$) shows a good result; however, the role of the degree of freedom (df) is also crucial (Table 2). In addition, considering the degree of freedom (df) of the modified model ($df=35$) is close to zero and close to the degree of freedom of the model of independence ($df=55$), the model should be considered favorable. The number of parameters (35) for the proposed model indicates that the degree of freedom is not easily consumed in the development of the model, and this situation is acceptable.

Regarding the relative indices, it should be maintained that the relative Chi-square value is 4.92, which indicates an acceptable situation for the model. Also, the value of 0.079 of the root-mean-square error (RMSEA) of approximation for the developed factor model indicates the acceptability of the model (Table 2). The TLI is equal to 0.92, and CFI is 0.95, and since their values are higher than 0.90, based on these indices, this model is fit; hence, it is considered acceptable. In the, the value of GFI is 0.95. The value of IFI is 0.95; both show acceptable values. The values of general fit indices that the measurement model of this research is quite suitable (Table 2).

4. Discussion

The results indicate that AB has a direct and significant effect on SA. By increasing AB, the amount of

anxiety during speech and speech among students decreases. In line with these results, the study by Danesh and Dadsetan [23] concluded that AB as an emotional maturity situation could affect students' SA. The results by Dehestani et al. [24] indicated that there were significant relationships between students' emotional maturity and social anxiety. Hampel et al. [25] concluded that achieving AB reduces SA and individuals with high SA have difficulty maintaining AB in disturbing situations. Students can accordingly establish constructive relationships with others. They can express their emotions logically in different circumstances. They are also adjusted to individual and social life and can regulate their emotion in dramatic situations. This could help them harmonize themselves to adapt to the rules, values, and attitudes of groups and societies. They will be less anxious and afraid when speaking in public by learning the knowledge and methods of adaptation and the possibility of mutual relations in continuous interaction and positive social actions (such as having help, starting relationships, and having mood control). In this regard, they adapt easily to the situation and easily communicate with the audience; therefore, they become more dominant in the speech environment.

According to the results, SI has a direct and significant association with SA. Therefore, people with higher SI will have less anxiety while talking. In confirmation of these results, Greco and Morris [26] found that people with higher SI are less likely to experience anxiety and social anxiety when speaking. Some studies recently [27, 28] indicated that higher SI has a significant association with reducing students' SA. Mohammadi et al. [29], reported that cognitive-behavioral skills affect reducing fear of speaking. Many researchers [16, 25, 30-32] conclude that social anxiety and SI are correlated. Therefore, student's SI has a significant association with SA;

therefore, students who have more SI experience less pressure when they speak publicly. Accordingly, they can establish interpersonal relationships in the group and work with others by using the power of mind and body to communicate with others and a better understanding of them improve the development of interpersonal relationships. Friendly behavior increases awareness of how to be friends with others and maintains it during lectures in the classroom and leads to calmness.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can posit that many scholars believe if a person is emotionally enabled, they can better face the challenges of life. Emotional competencies play a crucial role in the diagnosis of emotional responses in the face of everyday events, expansion of the scope of insight, and positive attitude about the events and emotions. Thus, characters with the ability to identify, control, and use these emotional competencies have higher social support and higher mental health and satisfaction.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Sciences and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University (Code: 162524319).

Funding

The paper was extracted from the PhD. Thesis of the first author, Sciences and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University.

Authors' contributions

All authors equally contributed to preparing this article.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments

The authors of the article consider it necessary to appreciate all participants in the research.

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