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Testing the Multiple Intelligences Theory in Oman

Muna Saif Al-Kalbani[a]*, Suad Saleh Al-Wahaibi[a]

[a]Ministry of Eduaction, Sultanate of Oman

Abstract

The study aimed at testing the multiple intelligence theory in Oman using The Rogers Indicator of Multiple Intelligences (RIMI). Data was collected from a randomly selected sample of 874 subjects of high school students. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the indicator's reliability. Two advanced statistical methods were also used, namely: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory factors analysis (CFA). The EFA was used to identify the underlying dimensions of each construct of the instrument, while CFA was used to confirm the dimension and to analyze the fitness of the data collected in hypothesized model. The results provide evidence that the adapted scale achieved sound psychometric properties. An Arabic version of The Rogers Indicator of Multiple Intelligences could be used by school counselors to identify students' intelligence types.

Keywords: multiple intelligence; Oman students .

1. Introduction

The theory of Multiple Intelligences was first published in Dr. Howard Gardener's book, Frames of Mind in 1983. The theory suggests that intelligence is not one unit that can be measured by IQ tests. Instead, it claims that a human being has at least eight types of intelligences. They are musical intelligence, visual intelligence, verbal intelligence, logical intelligence, bodily intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalistic intelligence (Gardner, 1999).

Multiple intelligences (MI) theory has become very popular as it meets the global trend of making students the center of the educational systems. As learners are the most important element of any educational system, dealing with them should not be random. Their needs, learning styles, strengths and weakness should be addressed and

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* MunaSaif Al-Kalbani. Tel.:+4-345-434-342.
  E-mail address: Muna_alkalbani@yahoo.com

recognized in order to have effective and meaningful learning. MI is a new model of learning that helps students to learn effectively. It also can affect students' behavior in schools as it makes them more involved by recognizing their needs which make them less frustrated and confused (Armstrong, 1994).

Multiple intelligences model also helps students recognize their own strengths and weakness so they know which way of learning is better for them and develop the weakness they have (Nicholson & Nelson, 1999). In Spite of the spread of multiple intelligences model, it is not implemented in the Omani public school. One reason might be because of that all MI indicators being used are not suitable for the Omani culture. As a result, students are labeled as good or weak according to their marks. Some students are labeled as weak students while they have distinguished ability in other areas.

The Rogers Indicator of Multiple Intelligences (RIMI) is based on Howard Gardener's theory. It is a well-known indicator that is used widely. Standardizing this indicator to the Omani environment provides a diagnostic tool that helps teachers to recognize and address the students' needs and abilities. It also helps administrative staff to recognize the talented students in the school and help them develop their talents. In addition, parents can also benefit from using this indicator to know how best their children learn and to empower their strength and develop their weaknesses. The results of using this indicator can contribute to the curriculum development to meet the needs of students. This study is the first of its kind in Oman.

2. Purposes

There are three main purposes of this study. They are examining if multiple intelligence theory could explain the intelligence structure of school students in Oman, analyzing the factor structure of The Rogers Indicator of Multiple Intelligences in high school students in Oman (Rogers, 2011) , and determining the usability of this indicator in Oman.

3. Method

The study was conducted using a survey method of data collection. The participants for this study were a sample from high school students in the sultanate of Oman from the 11th and 12th grade. Stratified Random Sampling methods were used to select the participants. The specific sample consisted of 439 male students and 435 females (N=874), who were selected randomly from the graduating class of 2013 from Muscat region in The Sultanate of Oman.

4. Instruments

The Rogers Indicator of Multiple Intelligences (RIMI) is a self-inventory created by Dr. Keith Rogers based on Howard Gardener's theory, The Multiple of Intelligences (Rogers, 2011). The Indicator consists of 56 items that measure eight types of intelligences. Each type is measured by 7 items. The indicator uses Likert-scale ranging from rarely to almost always. By taking this inventory, students can pinpoint their dominate as well as weak intelligences. It takes approximately 15 minutes to complete this inventory.

5. Procedures

The procedure involved three main stages; cross cultural adaptation, pilot testing and data collection.

5.1. Cross- Cultural Adaptation

The Rogers Indicator of Multiple Intelligences requires a cross- cultural adaptation. The adaptation process consists of two components: translation and adaptation (Guillemin et al. 1993). The first involves a change from a source language to a target language to obtain a literal meaning (Salleh, 2001). In order to achieve a higher quality of translation, two main methods of translation used in educational and psychological literature, namely forward translation and backward translation (Brislin, 1970). Adaptation phase is a process in which the words of the first