Emotional Capital Within the Cultural Dimensions Framework

Somaye Piri[a],*; Zohreh Eslami Rasekh[b]; Reza Pishghadm[c]

[a]Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, US.
[b]Professor, Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, US.
[c] Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran.
*Corresponding author.

Abstract

Emotional capital (EC) has become an important concept in educational and intercultural communication. It is shown to be a booster capital potentializing human, social, and cultural capitals. The competencies comprising emotional capital are learned from the early ages through socialization process and get consistently reshaped in different contexts. Accordingly, the present study aims at exploring how cultural dimensions and emotional capital are related using Hofstede's cultural framework. To this end, Emotional Capital Questionnaire was distributed among 180 students from Iran, the Unites States, China, Brazil, and India. The results revealed considerable cultural differences in the level of learners' EC. Also, cultural specificity of emotional skills was confirmed using MANOVA. Further analyses have shown that cultures which emphasized maintenance of social order—that is, those with higher levels of masculinity and long-term orientation tended to have higher scores on EC. In contrast, in countries where people minimized the maintenance of social order and emphasized uncertainty avoidance tend to have lower scores on EC. In the end, practical implications of these findings are discussed, and future research directions are provided.

Key words: Emotional capital; Culture; Cultural dimension; Second language learning

INTRODUCTION

Among various factors contributing to the complex process of learning, affective dimension stands out as an integral facet (Johnson, 1994) since unlike other cognitive and socio-cultural factors, it is within the power of the teachers to be improved (Horwitz & Young, 1989). Based on Bourdieu's ideas of "habitus" and "field" (1986), learners' emotional backgrounds can affect numerous aspects of learning. Their previously acquired system of emotional dispositions which is referred to as "emotional capital" (Reay, 2000) is generated through their affective socialization in certain fields. According to Nowotny (1981), emotional capital (EC) is "knowledge, contacts and relations as well as access to emotionally valued skills and assets, which hold within any social network characterized at least partly by affective ties" (p.148). She maintained that EC develops through different layers of habitus such as personal, institutional, national, and societal networks.

As an aspect of habitus, culture determines the way we perceive and regulate our emotions (Eid & Diener, 2001). During the socialization process, different cultures with their different norms and rules have distinct influence on the way we express, suppress, and experience emotions. Individuals are socialized to behave according to appropriate emotional behaviors which are in line with their cultural norms. On account of the fact that by studying in a new learning context, one will get progressively soaked into a new culture, s/he needs to adapt to the emotional demands of that culture, yet still, their culture has normalized many emotional practices. A learner with an acquired EC (in a certain habitus) needs to reshape his/her emotional resources to meet the demands of the new learning context (as a new habitus), considering that habitus is dynamic and it is adaptable to changes in the environment (Hoy, 2004). Gaining this new cultural insight into EC, teachers will understand that some of the students' abnormal

emotional practices are not the violation of the emotional norms of the class. Rather, their behavior in the class manifests the dispositions they have gained from their past experiences.

In spite of the centrality of emotions for learning, it is surprising that researchers have not paid due attention to the emotional aspects of learning (Horwitz, 2001). Moreover, recent attempts to study the importance of emotions in learning (e.g., Hurd, 2008; Pishghadam, 2009) have not concentrated on learners' previously acquired emotional dispositions. An endeavor to study the development of emotional capital in different cultural contexts can yield new insights into the social construction of emotions. This socio-psychological study of emotions suggests how our emotional schema is shaped by our acquired cultural categories.

Thus, the current study seeks to investigate how cultural background is related to the emotional resources one has accumulated. Through a cross-cultural perspective, at least two major questions are investigated: (a) Is emotional capital a cultural variable? and (b) Are any of Hofstede's cultural dimensions related to learners' emotional capital?

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

It has been shown that our cognitive states are profoundly influenced by our various emotions like happiness, excitement, worry, and so on (Oatly & Nundy, 1996). However, it was not until 1900 that researchers started to recognize the importance of emotions and individual differences in the process of learning. Perhaps the introduction of the concepts of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996) was one of the most influential milestones in this trend.

Bourdieu's (1986) pioneering research introduced the influential concept of capital into the sociology of education. He suggested four types of capital: economic capital (economic resources), social capital (possession of networks of relationships), cultural capital (social advantages like education, accent, appearance, and mannerisms) and symbolic capital (like prestige and honor). Bourdieu (1986) never mentions emotional capital explicitly, but he refers to the affective role of the mother in the family. In fact, the term emotional capital was first introduced by Nowotny (1981) as a special form of social and cultural capital which is generated through affective relations. However, the concept of emotional capital has only recently received significant attention. In the realm of education, Reay (2000, 2004) has made significant contributions in exploring the notion of emotional capital. For him, emotional capital is a "heuristic device" referring to "the emotional resources passed on from mother to child" (p.284). He focused mainly on mothers' emotional contributions to children's education. He demonstrated a close relationship between educational success and EC.

According to Gendron (2004), one of the prominent properties of EC is the management of desirable and undesirable emotions through acquiring proper emotional competencies. She sees EC as a component of emotional intelligence. Such a definition of emotional capital is contrary to what Bourdieu attempted to offer. According to Reay (2004), Bourdieu refuted the prevalent assumptions regarding the attribution of success or failure to any kind of intelligence. He highlighted the significant inequalities between the established concept of emotional intelligence and the relatively new concept of EC.

In his reference to EC, Cahill (1999) highlighted the role of biographical background and early training in the socialization of emotions. He used Bourdieu's idea of "habitus" to explain that childhood affective socialization occurs in an emotional habitus or socially generated system of emotional dispositions. Note that according to Bourdieu, habitus is "a system of acquired, permanent, generative dispositions" (1990, p.53). Through habitus, historical, social, and cultural contexts have strong effects on individuals.

Examining the contrast between successful and unsuccessful mortuary science students, Cahill (1999), drew on Bourdieu's concept of habitus to explain the observed difference regarding students' biographical backgrounds. He introduced the concept of emotional capital to refer to individuals' acquired system of emotional disposition that "generates emotional perceptions, reactions, expressions, and emotion management strategies across various situations, including those not encountered previously" (p.112). He used this concept to explain the role of mortuary science students' prior emotional socialization in their success in coping with challenging medical situations. His significant study implies that culture has a major influence on the formation of EC and can be used as a framework to study the impact of cultural factors on individuals' emotional dispositions.

Likewise, the differentiation between the terms *emotion* and *affect* highlights the role of cultural categories in shaping and controlling our emotional experiences. According to Zembylas (2007), affect is defined as a feeling that is first experienced in the body and then re-experienced through culture. However, emotions cannot be reduced to either body or culture, and they belong to both dimensions. According to McNay (1999), habitus acts like a filter screening affects into emotions.

Culture as an antecedent of our emotions was investigated by Taras, Kirkman, and Steel (2010).Their meta-analysis showed that cultural values are strongly

related to emotions, attitudes, and perceptions. Also, Ekman (1972) argued that emotional rules which we learn in early life and we use in expressing our emotions throughout our lives are culture-specific. Cultural norms and values to regulate the way we experience emotions (Scherer, 1997), show them (Matsumoto, 1990) and interpret them (Matsumoto, 1989). Similarly, Saarni (1997) noted that cultural contexts alter individual's emotional competence. While individuals are universally emotional, their emotional socialization determines the diversity of emotional norms, values, and meanings in social relationships.

Barbalet (1998) also speaks of individuals' collective identity in his reference to EC. He believes that system of emotions which is shared by social groups (i.e., emotional capital) forms political and social identities. Emotional patterns of love, hate, faith, fear, and so on are shared by social groups' members. That is how societies handle emotions of their members to accomplish political purposes. Likewise, Zembylas' (2007) ethnographic study in Europe demonstrated that negative feelings about the other non-members are derived from past hatred against another ethnic group. He explicated that EC generates a particular habitus which regularizes students' emotions and actions through which educators can change EC into other forms of capital.

According to Matsumoto, Yoo, and Nakagawa (2008), cultural values are especially relevant to an understanding of emotion. The most pertinent values are either related to emotions or interpersonal relationships. Relationship styles and values are referred to in the individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and power distance orientations. On the other hand, values related to emotions include uncertainty avoidance, indulgence versus restraint and long-term versus short-term orientation.

A wide range of cultural characteristics and concepts have been used as a basis to classify various cultures across the world. Many scholars believe that operationalizing culture by country restrains the results of the study, and they chose to use a set of cultural dimensions and values as a framework to expand their research results. Some of the proposed models comprise multi-dimensional classifications (e.g., Triandis, 1994) and some include bi-dimensional classifications (e.g., Hall, 1976). However, Hofstede's cultural theory (1980, 1983) which is based on a country-level empirical investigation categorized 40 countries along four dimensions: Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), Power Distance (PD), Masculinity versus Femininity (MF), and Individualism versus Collectivism (IC). Uncertainty avoidance refers to people abstain from vague and unclear situations. Power distance emphasizes the nature of social relationships when there is a difference in power. Masculinity echoes the emphasis on gender differentiations. Lastly,

individualism reflects the degree to which people emphasize on individual goals.

Later on, the fifth dimension was added to the original classification by Hofstede and Bond (1988) and the sixth dimension by Minkov (2007). The fifth dimension, Long-term versus Short-term Orientation (LSO), refers to the orientation of people's efforts to the future, the present and past; and the sixth dimension, Indulgence versus Restraint (IR), is related to the amount of joy and happiness each society dictates its members by social norms.

More than 50 countries were scored along Hofstede's dimensions in indices ranging from 0 to 100. Scoring people along these dimensions makes it possible to measure and compare their values, attitudes, behaviors, and conduct of life cross-culturally (Triandis, 1989). Hofstede's cultural model was utilized in the current study since it is the most comprehensive and the most widely cited model in the literature (Bond, 2002; Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996). Many empirical studies have been inspired by Hofstede's operationalization to examine the influence of cultural values on the behavior of people (i.e., Hofstede & McCrae, 2004; Pheng & Yuquan, 2002; Wu, 2006). Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) emphasized that many of cross-cultural differences can be explained using Hofstede's theory. In keeping with this research interest, the present study tries to probe any probable cultural difference in the level of EC of the people from different cultures. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions helps make a patterned comparison so that countries with similar ratings on the dimensions can be categorized systematically according to their level of emotional resources.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

This study comprised two phases: the validation phase and the main study. A total number of 250 university students were recruited from a large public university in the Southwest USA. They were originally from 5 countries: Iran, United States of America, China, Brazil, and India. These participants represent the largest international student groups studying at the universities in the United States. Except for the American participants, the rest have been in the US for 1 to 5 years, so they know English fairly well. Convenience sampling was used in a way that participants' selection was based on their accessibility and also their willingness to cooperate. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the University. For the validation phase, 70 participants and for the main study, 180 participants were selected. The main sample of 180 participants included 34 to 37 individuals from each of the countries. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1
Participants' Demographic Information

	Gender		Age			Education		Nationality				
	M	**F**	**<20**	**20-32**	**32 <**	**BS/ BA**	**MA/PhD**	**US**	**Iran**	**Brazil**	**India**	**China**
N	83	93	21	130	25	77	99	34	36	34	35	37

2.2 Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was Emotional Capital Questionnaire (ECQ) designed and validated by Piri 1 (2016) in Persian. She elicited the most relevant indicators of emotional capital by reviewing the related literature (e.g., Gendron, 2004; Goleman, 1998; Reay, 2000, 2004; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Then, four specialists in the field of psychology of education approved the five-factor model of EC which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social awareness, and social skills. For each indicator, 8 to 10 items were constructed. The items were revised by three experts in the field of psychology of education to remove any deficiencies. Furthermore, to pilot the newly developed questionnaire, 11 EFL learners were asked to answer the survey to remove any ambiguities. The final version of the questionnaire comprises 40 items which measure learners' level of EC through a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *very little*, (2) *rather little*, and (3) *to some extent*, to (4) *fairly well*, and (5) *very well*.

To use this instrument with participants who all know English (as their first or second language), the researchers used back-translation. The reliability and validity of the instrument were assessed for the participants in this study. The Cronbach Alpha estimated the reliability of all the items as 0.89. All the five factors comprising the EC model yielded good reliability estimates ranging from 0.54 to 0.71. The result of the validation phase will be presented in part 4.1. Google Forms was used to conduct the survey so that participants could fill an on-line questionnaire easily. Biographical information was collected through the same online survey.

2.3 Procedure

The translated version of the scale was first administered to 70 participants, and the data was used to assess the reliability (by using Cronbach alpha's estimate) and the construct validity of the scale (using Structural Equation Modeling). An additional 180 participants completed the validated questionnaire.

The purpose and the process of the study were explained to the respective participants. They were assured that all their responses are confidential and there is no major risk or harm in this study. An email was sent to the potential participants with a link to fill out the questionnaire. The consent form was also attached to the email. The email was sent to around 350 individuals, and the return rate was 70%. Therefore, a total number of 250 university students answered the questionnaires.

Cultural differences were captured by using Hofstede's cultural dimensions' theory (1980) which determines where the individuals in the mentioned cultures, on average, fall along the six dimensions. The indices can be obtained through Hofstede's home website (www. geerthofstede.nl). Figure 1 depicts the relative scores along the six cultural dimensions for the five mentioned countries. According to Matsumoto, Nakagawa, and Yoo (2008), cultural values are especially relevant to an understanding of emotion. The most pertinent values are either related to emotions or interpersonal relationships. Relationship styles and values are referred to in the individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and power distance orientations. On the other hand, values related to emotions include uncertainty avoidance, indulgence versus restraint and long-term vs. short-term orientation.
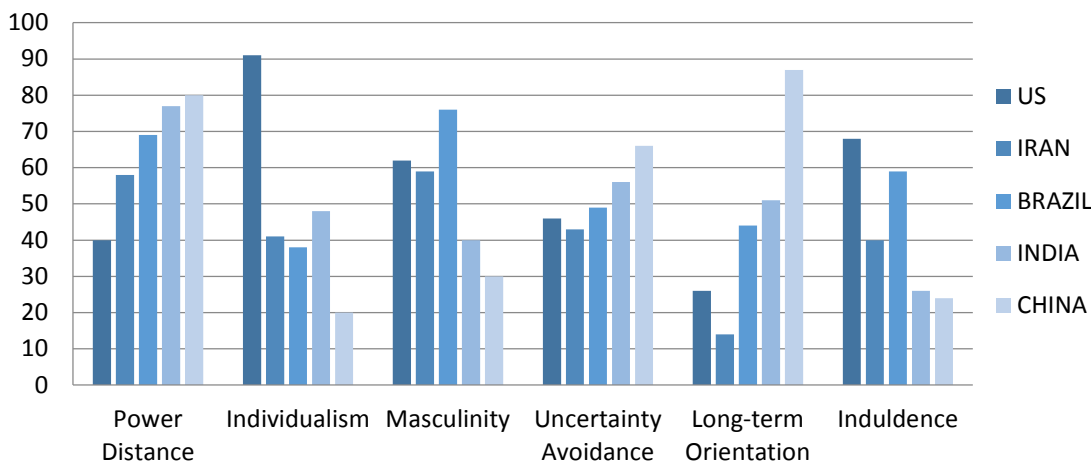

Figure 1
Cultural Dimensions for Iran, US, China, Brazil, and India

3. RESULTS

3.1 Validation Phase

To confirm the factor structure of the hypothesized model of EC in the present study, Structural Equation Modeling was employed. The viability of the proposed model was reassessed using the goodness of fit indices in LISREL. These indices include Chi-square/degree of freedom ($x2/df$) which should be less than 3 to have an acceptable fit model, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) which should be above .90, and Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) which should be less than .08. According to obtained results, all the indices were appropriate (see Table 2) and the factor structure of EC was confirmed (see Figure 2).

Table 2
Goodness-of-Fit Indices

$\chi2/DF$	RMSEA	NFI	GFI	IFI	CFI
2.70	0.05	0.93	0.91	0.95	0.93
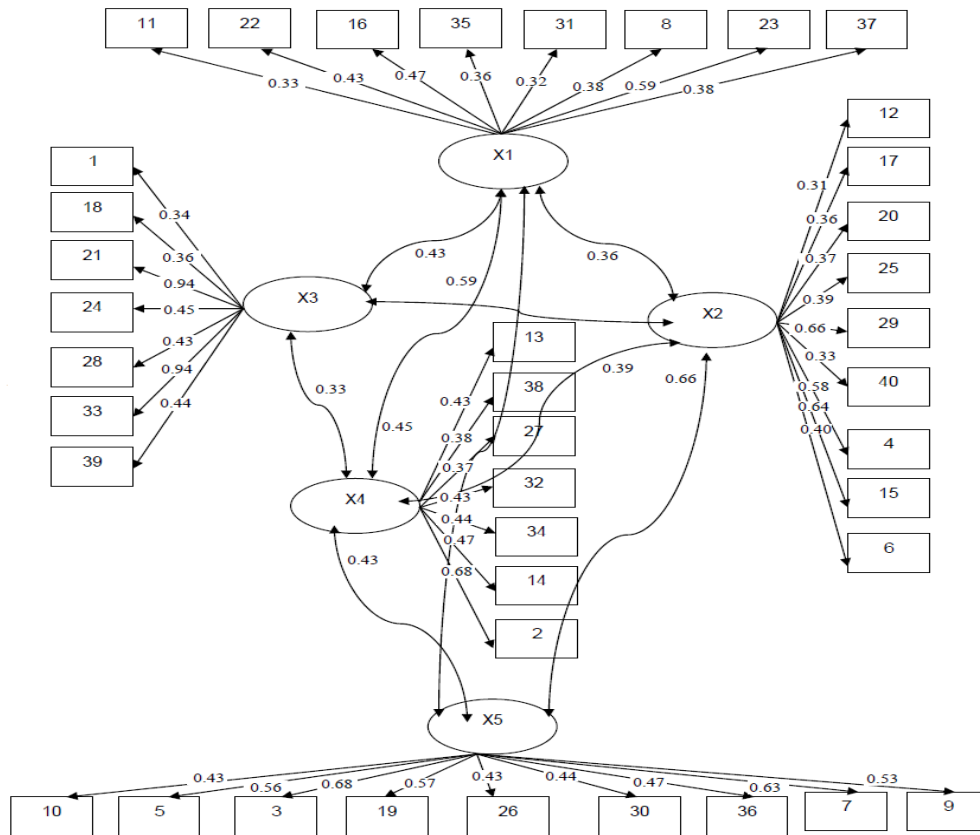
Figure 2
The Result of CFA for ECQ

3.2 Main Study

In order to determine whether culture has a significant influence on levels of emotional capital, an one-way ANOVA was performed on participants' ratings of ECQ (Tables 3&4). The results indicated significant differences between the five nations' mean scores: $F (4, 174) = 15.33$ $p < .05$. The effect size was 0.26 which is considered as a large effect size according to Cohen (1988, p.284-287).

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Emotional Capital

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error	95% confidence interval for mean	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
American	37	142.14	17.81	2.92	136.20	148.08
Iranian	36	120.13	18.22	3.03	113.96	126.30
Brazilian	34	132.58	15.79	2.70	127.07	138.09
Indian	35	144.94	18.46	3.12	138.60	151.28
Chinese	37	145.76	11.94	1.96	141.77	149.74
Total	179	137.19	19.09	1.42	134.38	140.01

Table 4
The Results of ANOVA for the Participants' Emotional Capital

	Sum of squares	*df*	Mean square	*F*	Sig.
Between groups	16923.27	4	4230.81	15.33	.000
Within groups	48010.92	174	275.92		
Total	64934.19	178			

Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for Iranian participants (M=120.13, SD=18.22) was significantly different from American (M=142.14, SD=17.81), Brazilian (M=132.58, SD=15.79), Indian (M=144.94, SD=18.46) and Chinese (M=145.76.13, SD=11.94) participants. Also, the mean score for Brazilian participants was significantly different from Chinese and Indian participants.

Furthermore, a one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate cultural differences in individuals' level of EC skills comprising self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social-awareness and social skills. All the five skills reached statistical significance (Tables 5 & 6), using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .01: self-awareness $F_{(4, 174)}$=8.21, p=.000, partial eta squared=.15, self-regulation $F_{(4, 174)}$=13.55, p=.000, partial eta squared=.23, motivation $F_{(4, 174)}$=10.58, p=.000, partial eta squared=.19, social awareness $F_{(4, 174)}$=16.1, p=.000, partial eta squared=.26 and social skills $F_{(4, 174)}$=8.06, p=.000, partial eta squared=.15).

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for the Participants' Emotional Capital Skills

	Nationality	Mean	Std. deviation	*N*
Self-awareness	American	28.70	4.30	37
	Iranian	25.70	4.00	36
	Brazilian	26.41	4.21	34
	Indian	30.08	3.81	35
	Chinese	29.11	2.88	37
	Total	28.02	4.17	179
Self-regulation	American	30.00	4.71	37
	Iranian	26.13	4.92	36
	Brazilian	29.70	3.81	34
	Indian	33.20	4.99	35
	Chinese	31.69	2.52	37
	Total	30.14	4.86	179
Motivation	American	23.78	4.12	37
	Iranian	19.22	4.31	36
	Brazilian	21.94	3.65	34
	Indian	24.00	4.43	35
	Chinese	26.61	7.63	37
	Total	23.14	5.59	179
Social-awareness	American	26.48	4.04	37
	Iranian	20.54	3.49	36
	Brazilian	23.58	3.49	34
	Indian	25.22	3.75	35
	Chinese	25.61	2.69	37
	Total	24.31	4.07	179
Social skill	American	33.16	4.02	37
	Iranian	28.52	4.38	36
	Brazilian	30.94	3.85	34
	Indian	32.42	4.63	35
	Chinese	32.72	2.91	37
	Total	31.57	4.30	179

Table 6
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source		Dependent variable	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial eta squared	Noncent. parameter	Observed power[b]
Nationality	Dimension1	Self-awareness	492.44	4	123.11	8.21	.000	.15	32.87	.99
		Self-regulation	1000.34	4	250.08	13.55	.000	.23	54.23	1.00
		Motivation	1089.27	4	272.31	10.58	.000	.19	42.35	1.00
		Social-awareness	795.76	4	198.94	16.01	.000	.26	64.05	1.00
		Social skills	515.97	4	128.99	8.06	.000	.15	32.25	.99
Error	Dimension1	Self-awareness	2606.34	174	14.97					
		Self-regulation	3209.58	174	18.44					
		Motivation	4474.79	174	25.71					
		Social-awareness	2161.62	174	12.42					
		Social skills	2783.81	174	15.99					

Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the self-awareness mean score for Iranian participants (M=25.70, SD=4.00) was significantly different from American (M=28.70, SD=4.30), Indian (M=30.08, SD=3.81) and Chinese (M=29.11, SD=2.88) participants. Also, the mean score for Brazilian participants (M=26.41, SD=4.21) was significantly different from Chinese and Indian participants. Regarding self-regulation, mean score for Iranian participants (M=26.13, SD=4.92) was significantly different from American (M=30.00, SD=4.71), Brazilian (M=29.70, SD=3.81), Indian (M=33.20, SD=4.99) and Chinese (M=31.69, SD=2.52) participants. Also, the mean score for Indian participants was significantly different from Brazilian and American participants. Iranian participants' motivation mean score (M=19.22, SD=4.31) was significantly different from American (M=23.78, SD=4.12), Indian (M=24.00, SD=4.43), Chinese (M=26.61, SD=7.63) and participants. Also, the mean score for Brazilian participants (M=21.94, SD=3.65) was significantly different from Chinese participants. Likewise, Iranian students' social-awareness mean score (M=20.54, SD=3.49) was significantly different from American (M=26.48, SD=4.04), Brazilian (M=23.58, SD=3.49), Indian (M=25.22, SD=3.75) and Chinese (M=25.61, SD=2.69) participants. Also, the mean score for Brazilian participants was significantly different from American participants. Social skills mean score differences are evident between Iranian (M=28.52, SD=4.38) and American (M=33.16, SD=4.02), Indian (M=32.42, SD=4.63) and Chinese (M=32.72, SD=2.91) learners.

For further exploration, Pearson bivariate correlations were conducted to explore the relationship between emotional capital (EC) and its comprising skills, (i.e., Self-awareness (SFA), Self-regulation (SR), Motivation (M), Social-awareness (SCA) and Social Skills (SS)), and cultural dimensions (i.e. Power Distance (PD), Individualism vs. Collectivism (IC), Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), Masculinity vs. Femininity (MF), Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation (LSO) and Indulgence vs. Restraint (IR)). Emotional capital was negatively correlated with UA [r=-.295, n=179, p<.0005], and positively with MF [r=.368, n=179, p<.0005] and LSO [r=.356, n=179, p<.0005]. It means that high levels of emotional capital are associated with lower levels of uncertainty avoidance and higher levels of masculinity and long-term orientation.

The pattern of the correlations (Table 7) shows that all the five EC skills were negatively correlated with UA [r=-.280, -.279, -.302, -.184, -.159, n=179, p<.0005], and positively with M/F [r=.262, .361, .382, .267, .221, n=179, p<.0005] and LSM [r=.228, .347, .378, .267, .220, n=179, p<.0005]. Moreover, self-awareness shows a significant negative correlation with indulgence [r=.152, n=179, p<.0005]; self-regulation is also positively correlated with indulgence [r=.185, n=179, p<.0005]. It is positively correlated with power distance as well [r=.252, n=179, p<.0005]. Motivation is positively correlated with power distance [r=.171, n=179, p<.0005] and negatively with indulgence [r=.147, n=179, p<.0005]. Also, social-awareness is positively correlated with individualism [r=.190, n=179, p<.0005].

Table 7
Correlations Between Emotional Capital, Emotional Capital Skills and Cultural Dimensions

		PD	IC	UA	M	LTO	IR
EC	Pearson correlation	.14	.06	-.29**	.36**	.35**	-.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.05	.42	.00	.00	.00	.13
	N	179	179	179	179	179	179
SFA	Pearson correlation	.11	.06	-.28**	.26**	.22**	-.15*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.14	.42	.00	.00	.00	.04
	N	179	179	179	179	179	179

To be continued

Continued

		PD	**IC**	**UA**	**M**	**LTO**	**IR**
SR	Pearson correlation	.25**	-.03	-.27**	.36**	.34**	-.18*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.67	.00	.00	.00	.01
	N	179	179	179	179	179	179
M	Pearson correlation	.17*	-.04	-.30**	.38**	.37**	-.14*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.02	.51	.00	.00	.00	.04
	N	179	179	179	179	179	179
SCA	Pearson correlation	-.00	.19*	-.18*	.26**	.26**	.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.94	.01	.01	.00	.00	.55
	N	179	179	179	179	179	179
SS	Pearson correlation	.01	.12	-.15*	.22**	.22**	.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.80	.09	.03	.00	.00	.89
	N	179	179	179	179	179	179

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

The present study allows insight in the way different cultural values affect learners' situated emotions referred to as emotional capital. The results have shown that EC is a cultural variable. Emotional assets which learners bring to the class show considerable cultural differences. Numerous studies have confirmed this finding by explaining that through emotional socialization, culture offers standards for appropriate perception, expression and regulation of emotions (e.g., Ekman, 1972; Matsumoto, 1989; Matsumoto, 1990).

Further analysis revealed that Iranians' level of EC was significantly different from those of the other cultures and Brazilians' EC was significantly different from those of the Chinese and the Indians. As compared to the cultural characteristics of the countries being studied, Iranian culture scores the lowest on masculinity and future orientation and Brazilian culture scores the highest on uncertainty avoidance. It seems that there is a relationship between the level of EC and these cultural dimensions which will be discussed succeedingly.

Regarding the five skills which comprise EC, it was shown that culture influences the level of self-awareness (SFA), self-regulation (SR), motivation (M), social-awareness (SCA) and social skills (SS).

The findings of the study regarding culture specificity of SFA add to the existing body of research surrounding the influence of cultural values and categories in shaping and conditioning one's awareness of his/her own life, identity, values and biases (e.g., Roysircar, 2004; Singelis & Pedersen, 1997). As Singelis and Pedersen (1997, p.190) have noted, "identity is shaped by cultural influences." The salient cultural characteristics of Iran in reaching the lowest score on masculinity (M/F) and future orientation (FO) and of Brazil in getting the highest score on uncertainty avoidance (UA) echo a possible relationship between SFA and these cultural dimensions. The results of the correlation analysis confirmed this possibility. The negative correlation between SFA and UA shows that

higher tolerance of ambiguous situations can help people to practice diverse thoughts and to be less restricted by rigid rules (Hofstede, 1991). Being free from regulations can provide the flexibility to a clearer perception of all the possible aspects of one's own emotions, strengths and weaknesses and self-worth. Also, the positive correlation between SFA and FO can be justifiable considering that SFA involves an understanding of one's future standing. The more future-oriented perspective one holds, the better appreciation of self s/he has (Duncan, 2004). In future-oriented countries, one tends to prepare for the future by controlling the gratification of his/her needs. This can be an explanation of the negative correlation between SFA and indulgence since as Wilcox, Kramer, and Sen (2011) indicated that higher SFA can help increase self-control in the face of happiness, joy, and leisure (i.e., higher restraint). Furthermore, in an independent and ego-centered masculine culture "in which social gender roles are clearly distinct" (Hofstede, 2001, p.280), a higher level of SFA is plausible.

Cultural variation in SR element of EC was also revealed by other studies (e.g., Hamamura & Heine, 2006; Trommsdorff, 2010). Trommsdorff (2009, p.3) confirmed that "self-regulation is based on models of agency and related self construals, which vary cross culturally". Regarding cultural dimensions, positive correlations between SR and LTO, M/F and PD and its negative correlation with UA, and I/R are in line with the findings of other studies. Explicitly referring to the influence of LTO on SR, Miller and Brickman clearly noted that (2004, p. 1) "personally valued future goals influence proximal self-regulation through their impact in the development of proximal subgoals leading to future goal attainment." Also, Zhang, Winterich and Mittal's (2010) study support the association between PD and resisting impulsive decisions and self-control. The positive association of SR and M/F was also evident in Worthley, Hostetler, and Frye's study (2016) which emphasized that masculine norms foster self-reliance and emotional control. It is also suggested that high self-control is experienced by more restraint than

indulgent people (Gailliot & Baumeister, 2007). Shuper, Sorrentino, Otsubo, Hodson, and Walker (2004, p.461) further accentuate the relationship between SR and UA by stating that uncertainty-oriented people "try to understand and discover aspects of the self and the environment about which they are uncertain". The significant difference in SR of Iranian and Brazilian culture and the other cultures reflect the above-mentioned relationships between SR and Iranians' the lowest score on M/F O and the Brazilians' the highest score on UA.

Cultural values influence the reason of our actions and our motivation to act in a particular way (Deci et al. 2001). Following this line of thought, this study suggests positive relationships between M and PD, M/F and LTO and negative relationship between M and UA and I/ R. Many studies have provided evidence that LTO is a strong motivator of people's behavior (e.g., Husman & Lens, 1999; Lens, Simons, & Dewitte 2001). Also, in cultures which show high PD and accept the hierarchical order, the need to depend on higher ranking individuals is a strong motivator of actions (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Similarly, in masculine cultures, the desire for achievement, acknowledgement and material rewards motivates people to succeed (Greckhamer, 2011). The lower level of UA involves the willingness to accept risk which signal a high level of M (Adler & Gundersen, 2007). Furthermore, Vohs, Baumeister, and Schmeichel (2012) points to the positive mutual relationship between M to achieve goals and restraint of desires (i.e., I/R). Accordingly, significant differences in M of Iranian, and Brazilian culture and the other cultures are expected considering the cultural characteristics of Iran (the lowest score on M/F and LTO) and Brazil (the highest score on UA).

Recent studies have increasingly examined the cultural process of empathy and the association between SCA and culture (such as Atkins, 2014; Trommsdorff, Friedlmeier, & Mayer, 2007). Concerning cultural dimensions, the results of this study in showing positive correlations between SCA and LTO, M/F and I/C and its negative correlation with UA are in line with the findings of other studies. Bohart (1993) emphasized on the association of LTO and empathy which results in effective problem-solving attempts. Regarding the troubled relationship between M/F and SCA, Karniol, Gabay, Ochion and Harari (1998) believed that there is a positive correlation between M/F and empathy. Though very surprising, some studies like Furrer, Liu, and Sudharshan (2000) found a similar positive relationship between empathy and I/C. Similar to the results of the current study, Camillo (2015) suggest a negative relationship between UA and empathy as the major indicator of SCA. The significant difference in the level of SCA between Iranian and, Brazilian and other cultures is quite reasonable considering the cultural characteristics of Iran (the lowest score on M/F and LTO) and Brazil (the highest score on UA).

The effect of cultural differences in the development of SS and the importance of culture in providing guidelines for proper SS were also the focus of other studies (e.g., Cartledge & Milburn, 1996; Jay, 2010). The current study suggests positive relationships between SS and M/F, and LTO and negative relationship between SS and UA. Similarly, Trommsdorff (1983) illustrated how SS determines the development of LTO. Furthermore, Hirokawa, Yagi, and Miyata (2004) have found similar results regarding the positive relationship between M/F and communication skills. The negative relationship between SS and UA is supported by Atkins' (2000) research on the influence of students' UA in the improvement of the quality and quantity of interactions in teaching a multi-cultural class. The significant differences in SS of Iranian and the other cultures are quite logical regarding Iranian culture's lowest score on M/f and LTO.

To conclude, the three cultural dimensions found to have a significant relationship with EC. Positive associations between EC and LTO and M/F and negative association between EC and UA are quite evident and logical considering the above descriptions for the same associations found in the comprising skills of EC.

These findings shed light on the nature of emotional backgrounds in language learning. Acknowledging that students' emotional behavior in the class reflects their cultural backgrounds makes the evaluation and handling of their emotions easier and more reasonable. Cross-cultural study of emotions leads ESL learners, teachers and teacher educators to become more aware of the complexity of individual differences in language learning. A better understanding of the cultural dimensions that are associated with EFL learners' EC can inform teachers' efforts to apply strategies to improve EC in learners.

Results of the current research should be interpreted considering some limitations. For example, the sample size is rather small. In order to ensure a more representative population and more comprehensive investigation, future studies will benefit from a larger sample. This study did not examine whether controlling for variables like age, gender, and education can yield similar outcomes. Future studies might include more nations differing in cultural dimensions. Using other models of cultural values and dimensions (other than Hofstede's) might also reveal more aspects of emotions in ESL classes.

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APPENDIX 1

Age:

Nationality:

Bilingual: yes   no

First language:

Major:

Gender: male   female

Educational qualification: undergraduate   post graduate

	Very 100%	Most of the time 80%	Sometimes 60%	Not very 40%	Rarely 20%
1 My goals for the future are clear.					
2 I will help others solve their problems.					
3 I can easily establish good relationship with others.					
4 I can adapt quickly to the changes.					
5 I can easily convince others.					
6 I am not afraid of challenging and hard work.					
7 I can easily resolve disputes.					
8 I have good self confidence in doing my works broadly speaking.					
9 I have a great desire to do teamwork.					
10 I will guide others in their work.					
11 I know in which situations I am happy, sad, angry, hopeful, hating and etc.					
12 I can easily control my own emotions in different situations.					
13 I can understand the feelings and behavior of others well.					
14 Members of my family encourage me to help others.					
15 My family helps me adapt to life changes.					
16 My family members help each other identify their strengths and weaknesses.					
17 My family members guide me to control my different emotions.					
18 Members of my family have tried to make me more motivated to study.					
19 My family members encouraged me to have effective communication with others.					
20 The communication between my family members and school/university authorities has helped me control my feelings and behavior.					
21 The communication between my family members and School/university authorities has been effective in raising my motivation to study.					
22 School / university has helped me raise my self-awareness.					
23 School / University has an important role in enhancing my self-confidence.					
24 The educational system has been successful in creating my motivation to study.					
25 Schooling in university/school has been effective in controlling my emotion and behavior.					
26 School / university has been effective in encouraging me to have effective communication with other people.					
27 The education in school / university helps me care more about other people's concerns and problems.					
28 My friends have been effective in raising my motivation for education.					
29 My friends help me in controlling my behavior and emotions.					

Continued

		Very 100%	Most of the time 80%	Sometimes 60%	Not very 40%	Rarely 20%
30	My relationship with friends helps me communicate with others more easily and effectively.					
31	My friends help me raise self-awareness of my actions and behavior.					
32	My relationship with friends helps me care more about other people's concerns and problems.					
33	Religion has made me more motivated for education.					
34	Religious regulations have made me help my fellows more.					
35	Religious regulations have been effective in encouraging me to gain more self-knowledge.					
36	Culture has influenced the quality of my social relations.					
37	Culture has been effective in raising my self-confidence.					
38	Culture has been effective in my sympathizing with others.					
39	Culture has been effective in raising my motivation for schooling.					
40	Culture has been effective in controlling my behavior and emotions.					