

**RELATIONSHIP OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
WITH MENTAL HEALTH AMONG EMPLOYEES**

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence as the ability to manage emotions and feelings has an important role in the life and success of an individual. Emotional and affective disturbance are an important factors in developing psychological problems related to mental health. The present study examined the association between the emotional intelligence and mental health of school teachers. The sample comprised 100 employees (M=50, F=50). Emotional intelligence was evaluated with Emotional Intelligence Scale by Hyde, Patbe & Dhar (2001) and mental health was evaluated with Employee's Mental Health Inventory by Dr. Jagdish (1985). Results showed that high emotional intelligence was positively and significantly related to mental health of employees. Further, no significant differences for gender in this regard were shown. Implications have been discussed.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Mental Health and Employees.*

The strongest asset of all companies and business is their workforce. They can gain benefits from their workforce by investing in them, on the other hand they can go in lose if workforce is not efficient and with companies for its welfare. That is why it is very important to take care of employees' mental health and emotional intelligence, which are important variables to influence the work efficiency and have taken in the present study. Good mental health is a prime factor to achieve success. Sound health makes sound mind, adds to the happiness of a person and leads to a meaningful and active life. "The preamble of WHO's charter defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (Monopolis et al., 1977). So, it is not just the absence of mental disorders and disabilities but more than this. Bhatia (1982) defined mental health as "**the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions, and ideals in one's daily living.**" In this positive sense, mental health is the foundation for individual's well-being and the effective functioning of a community and organization. Mental health is considered an important factor on workplace because it is associated with higher productivity, better performance, more consistent work attendance and fewer work accidents. Moreover, this is an attitude, a way of life, nurturing of competencies to deal with the exigencies and demands of organization and demands of normal life. Mental health is an important component for an individual itself and for an organization too. Mental health is affected by many factors. These factors are categorized mainly into two categories: risk factors and protective factors. The brief discussion of these factors is given below:

Risk Factors

Throughout our life, many forces shape our emotional well-being, both internal and external. Sometimes life throw us a curve ball and combination of stressful events which can burden our ability to cope emotionally, triggering anxiety, depression or other mental health conditions. Some risk factors that can impact mental health are given below:

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Lack of connection with primary care taker during childhood can have life long repercussions. Feelings of loneliness, isolation, confusion, lack of safety or abuse felt as a child can negatively color one's behaviour into adulthood; Serious trauma, death of a parent, war, hospitalization, tragic accidents and other devastating events; Learned helplessness can undermine our faith in ability to cope with life's problems; Chronic and disabling illness can isolate an individual from other people, denying the necessary social support of friends and family; Medication side effects can affect mental health, particularly in the elderly who generally take multiple medications, creating the potential for problematic drug interaction; Alcohol and drug abuse can both cause and exacerbate preexisting mental health problems; Poverty: The impact of poverty is measurable. The evidence reported that people in the lowest strata of income, education, and occupation are about two to three times more likely than those in the high strata to have mental health problems.

These risk factors that negatively impact the mental health can be counteracted by the protective factors which are discussed as follows:

Protective Factors: A number of factors have been identified which seems to reduce the probability of mental health problems. In general, health and security, and sense of connection to others seem to be important in the prevention from mental health problems. The following protective factors have been suggested: Connectedness- a sense of connection with family, school or community; Significant others- the presence of a caring adult to provide support for a young person or the presence of caring partner or family member for an adult; Responsibility for children- for adults, having the responsibility for family communication is protective factor in vulnerable situations; Personal resilience- some personal attributes enhance resilience, such as problem solving skills and positive coping styles; Spirituality and beliefs- protective factors may include a strong spiritual and religious faith, a sense of higher meaning or purpose in life, or a belief that suicide is wrong; Economic security- is an important protective factor, particularly in older people; Good health- is a protective factor for good mental health; Effective treatment- the early identification and effective treatment of mental health problems may prove a protective factor; Restricted access- lack of access to a means of suicide can help to reduce the risk of suicide, such as restricting the presence or accessibility of guns or certain medications.

Some of the biological and psychological protective factors for maintaining mental health include an easy-going temperament, Optimistic thought pattern/ a positive attitude and an affective coping skills repertoire. Thus, these are the protective factors which save an individual from mental health problems. There are some more variables which influence mental health of an individual.

Emotional intelligence is another variable which has been taken up for the present research. Emotional intelligence is the ability to observe one's own and others' feelings, to distinguish among them and to use this evidence to guide one's thinking and actions. Goleman (1995) describes emotional intelligence as "it is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in the relationships." Mayer & Salovey (1997) defined it as the ability to perceive, access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and its knowledge, and to regulate emotions so as to

promote emotional and intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence is an important factor for healthy, happy and successful life. The main components of emotional intelligence are Self-regulation, Self-awareness, Self-control/ self-management, Social consciousness and Social skills. So, basically Emotional intelligence, as the ability to manage emotions and feelings, has an important role in life and success of individual. Emotional intelligence has now become more popular for plentiful applications in various fields such as education, careers, personal development (Mohtashani, 2009; Omaral, 2008) and differences between individuals. Thus, in today's scenario emotional intelligence is becoming the center point for researchers because of its important role in successful career, participation in organization and success in personal life. In present study, emotional intelligence will be seen in relation with mental health of employees in schools.

Review of Literature: Research has started to emphasis on the role of emotions on the workplace and a development from this method has been to conceptually scrutinize the relationship between cognition and emotions. This movement has largely been credited to new research about the construct of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves behaviours related to the experience of emotion: specifically emotional intelligence involves expressing, recognizing, understanding and managing emotions. Emotional intelligence has been found to impact on mental health- specially occupational stress (Ciarrochi, Chan & Bajgar, 2001).

Ciarrochi, Chan and Caput (2000) posit that emotional intelligence may protect people from stress and other mental health problems, and lead to better adaptation. They said that an objective measure of emotion intelligence is related with a tendency to maintain an experimentally induced positive mood which has evident implication for preventing stress and other related mental health problems. Kakalvand (2009) has shown in his research that people who has ability to control their own emotions, understand their own and others' feelings, have better social support, and satisfaction from life may contribute to improve their mental health.

Bar-on (2003) has also defined that there was a moderate yet significant relationship emotional and social intelligence, and mental health. The aspects of emotional and social intelligence competencies that were found to impact on psychological health are: (a) ability to manage emotion and cope with stress, (b) drive to achieve personal goals in order to actualize one's inner abilities and have a meaningful life, (c) the skill to authenticate feelings and thinking. Thus, the present study examines the effect of emotional intelligence on mental health. Furthermore, research studies (Gilaninia et al., 2011) have been conducted on the work place and it has seen that today companies know the value of emotional intelligence and mental health. Schutte et al. (2007) concluded in their study that better mental health is associated with higher emotional intelligence. Studies (Agstolenda et al., 2006) have shown that there is distinct impact of emotional intelligence components in stress and mental health. Going to elaborate it, Johnson et al. (2009) concluded that people with high emotional intelligence features recognize better their feelings of stress and ability to better manage their emotions and have good mental health. Other studies have also shown that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with good mental health (Gujjar, 2010; Tannous & Matar, 2010; Faghripour, 2009; Hadadi, 2009). Moreover, the

components of emotional intelligence like self-regulation, self-awareness, social-consciousness and social skills are also correlated with mental health with different proportion (Faghirpour, 2009; Karimi, 2000; Maccann et al., 2010; Raena; 2010).

Thus, it can be said that emotional intelligence is related or associated with mental health of employees at workplace. So to gain the fullest from employees, employers have to take care of these two variables.

Objectives

To study the relationship of Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health.; To see the gender difference, if any, on a) emotional intelligence and b) mental health.

Hypotheses: It is expected that there would be positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health of employees; It is expected that there would be gender difference on emotional intelligence of employees; It is expected that there would be gender difference on Mental Health of employees.

Research Methodology

100 teachers were randomly selected from Senior Secondary School, Barnala. The age range of subjects was from 21 to 55 years. Prior consent was taken from subjects. Correlational method and t-test were used in this research for analysis. Emotional Intelligence Scale by Hyde, Pathe and Dhar (2001) was administered to assess the emotional intelligence of employees. There are 34 items in this questionnaire which are assessed on 10 dimensions namely, Self-awareness, Empathy, Self-motivation, Emotional stability, Managing relations, Integrity, Self-development, Value orientation, Commitment and Altruistic behaviour. The reliability of this questionnaire was 0.88 and validity was 0.93. Employee's Mental Health Inventory by Dr. Jagdish was administered to assess the mental health of employees. There are 24 items and one integrated score on all items. The reliability of this questionnaire was 0.89 and validity was 0.74. The aim of present research was to investigate the relationship of emotional intelligence with mental health of employees. The appropriate conditions were created to conduct the study, where participants could fill the questionnaires without any distraction. Rapport was built with subjects and they were instructed as follows: "There are some statements in these questionnaires. You have to tick the best option according to you. There is no right and wrong answer, so please try to tick all the statements carefully and honestly. There is no time limit for the completion but try to complete them as soon as possible. Your responses would be kept confidential." After the completion, all participants were thanked for their participation in the study.

Results

In order to analyze the association of emotional intelligence and mental health Pearson product moment correlation and t-test was applied to find out the gender differences. The obtained results are given as follows:

Table 1 depicted the correlation matrix of emotional intelligence and mental health. Results showed that there is a positive correlation ($r = 0.27$, $p < .01$) between emotional intelligence and mental health.

Table 2 shows the mean and SD of emotional intelligence and mental health for both males and females. Mean & SD score of emotional intelligence for males is 139.22 & 10.87 and for females is 134.94 & 14.47. So it shows that males have high mean score

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

than females on emotional intelligence. Then t-test was calculated, score is 1.67 and it was found that the difference between males and females on emotional intelligence is significant at .05 level.

Table 3 showed the mean & SD scores on mental health for males are 20.06 & 2.9 and for females is 20.4 & 2.53, which is approximately similar. It depicted that there is not much differences between the mental health of males and females and t-test value is 0.62 which is not significant at any level.

Table 1: Pearson's Correlation coefficient of emotional intelligence with mental health

	<i>EI</i>	<i>MH</i>
<i>EI</i>	1	
<i>MH</i>	0.27**	1

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, *EI*= emotional intelligence, *MH*= mental health

Table 2: Mean, SD and t-value on emotional intelligence

	Mean	SD	t-value
Males	139.22	10.87	1.67*
Females	134.94	14.46	

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$

Table 3: Mean, SD and t-value on mental health

	Mean	SD	t-value
Males	20.06	2.9	0.62
Females	20.4	2.53	

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$

Discussion: The first hypothesis was that there would be positive correlation between emotional intelligence (*EI*) and mental health (*MH*) and results came significant (0.27, $p < 0.01$). Studies (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995) also go in line with the findings of the present study.

Research revealed that high scores on trait of emotional intelligence could control and regulate their behavior in a way that could promote well-being, mental health, quality work of life and retention time (Siddiqui & Hassan, 2013). A study by Salovey et al. (1995) has conducted to examine the association between emotional intelligence (*EI*), anxiety, depression, and mental, social, and physical health in university students. It has been seen that high Emotional intelligence was negatively and significantly related to high anxiety, depression, and to low levels of Role Emotional, Social Functioning, and Mental Health. Though, increased levels of emotional Clarity and Mood Repair were significantly related to low levels of anxiety and depression, Social Functioning, high Role Physical, Vitality, Mental Health and General Health in university students (Berrocal & Pacheco, 2006).

A meta-analysis study of 44 effect sizes based on the responses of 7898 participants was conducted by Schutte et al. (2007) and it was found that higher emotional intelligence was associated with better health. Emotional intelligence had a weighted average association with mental health, psychosomatic health and with physical health. However, emotional intelligence is known as a trait which was more strongly associated with mental health than emotional intelligence measured. Results indicated that the EQ-i had a significantly stronger association with mental health than the other measures. The findings provide a basis for research aimed at determining the causal relationship between trait emotional intelligence and mental health.

Other studies have also shown the same results that Emotional intelligence (*EI*) has been reliably linked to better mental health (Davis & Humphrey, 2012). Results

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

showed that emotional intelligence made a significant and incremental contribution to the prediction of disorder in youth. However, of the two, trait emotional intelligence seems the stronger predictor.

Another study conducted by Batool (2011) has highlighted that low emotional intelligence is linked with physical illness, depression, low self esteem, suicidal ideation, poor impulse control, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and increased alcohol and drug use in people. Furthermore, another study (Faghirpour, 2009) was conducted on school students to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health and findings showed that there is significant relationship between components of emotional intelligence of students with mental health.

Emotional Intelligence and Gender: Another hypothesis was that there is gender differences on emotional intelligence, hence the hypothesis proved that there is a difference of males and females on emotional intelligence. There are some studies also which support the findings of the present study. van Dusseldorp et al. (2011) has conducted a study and the results have concluded that nurses (female) score significantly higher than men on the subscales Empathy, Interpersonal Relationship, Emotional Self-awareness, Social Responsibility, Self-Actualisation and Assertiveness, but overall scores do not show any significant difference and no correlations were found between years of experience and age on the one hand and emotional intelligence on the other hand.

Saini (2014) conducted a study and found a significant difference between the obtained scores of male and female, although the overall results of the study have revealed that female sportspersons ratings on the emotional intelligence test is higher than male sportspersons.

Previous studies have shown that females score higher than males on empathy, interpersonal relationships (Arteche et al., 2008; Craig et al., 2009), and social responsibility, whereas males scored higher on self-regard, stress tolerance, and optimism (Bar-On, 2000). A remarkable discovery in present study is contrary to the findings of Bar-On, in which, males scored higher than the females. Results can be defined in the scenario that males are also going through a change, they become more sensitive than before. Males are adjusting to the new changes where females are also working and males are helping them in personal as well as in professional life. That is why the results are contrary to the other findings.

Thus, males had higher scores on emotional intelligence than females. The results are in contrary with previous studies but due to changing life style males are now more understandable to their female partners, their emotional understanding is increasing. That is why this difference can be validated with new explanation. Many other factors like education, social media, etc. encourage them to take the lead in their life in full partnership, which brought changes in scores of emotional intelligence among males and females.

*Mental Health and Gender:*As it was hypothesized that there would be gender differences on MH which did not come significant at any level ($t= 0.62$). It indicated that males and females have equal level of mental health. There are many studies which go in line with results. Research studies (Leibenluft, 1997; Blehar et al, 1998) have shown that

there is not any sex differences in the overall prevalence of mental disorders and mental health, there are significant differences in the patterns and symptoms of the disorders. These differences vary across age groups. Most studies have report a higher prevalence of conduct disorders in childhood, for instance with antisocial and aggressive behaviors among boys than girls. Girls have a much higher prevalence of depression, stress and eating disorders during adolescence, and the also engage more in suicidal ideations and suicide attempts than boys. Boys generally experience problems with anger, involve in high risk behaviours and commit suicide more frequently than girls. In general, adolescent girls are more prone to symptoms that are directed inwardly, while adolescent boys are more prone to act out. In the case of severe mental disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar depression, there are no consistent sex differences in prevalence (Halbreich & Lumley, 2002; Blehar& Oren, 2001), but males have an earlier onset of schizophrenia, on the other hand, women are more likely to display serious forms of bipolar depression.

Moreover, several studies have now shown that men as well as women can experience depression following the birth of a child and a significant correlation exists between parents regarding depressive symptoms (Ballard, 1994; Areias, 1996; Barnett & Morgan, 1996; Leathers, Kelley & Richman, 1997; Soliday, McCluskey-Fawcett & O'Brien, 1999; Condon, 1993; Beil, 1992; Handley, 1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health. Emotional intelligence and mental health are influencing each other. That is, emotional intelligence affects and promotes mental health of employees, vice a versa, good mental health enhances emotional intelligence as an individual learns to understand, express, regulate and monitor his/her relationships. Thus, it can be said that emotional intelligence and mental health are bi-directional in nature, one influences other.

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