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Emotional intelligence related to stress: A study on college students

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Abstract

The present research intends to explore relationship between emotional intelligence and stress among college students. It was hypothesized that there would be significant difference between male and female students in terms of emotional intelligence and stress. In addition there would be a significant relationship found between emotional intelligence and stress among female and male students. The study was conducted on purposive sample of 100 undergraduate college students of Rewa district for data collection. An Emotional intelligence scale by Dr. Meena Jain and Dr. Madhu Jain and Singh Personal Stress Source Inventory by Arun Kumar Singh, Ashish kumar Singh and Arpana Singh were used to assess the relationship between stress and emotional intelligence on subjects and appropriate statistical analysis were computed. Further it was found that there was a significant relationship between emotional. Intelligence and stress in both male and female students.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, stress, undergraduate, college students

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in our-selves and in our relationship. EI reflects one's ability to deal with daily environmental challenges and helps predict one's success in life, including professional and personal pursuit.

Modern researches clear that success and achievement in profession depends on 20% of IQ and 80% of EI. As individual's achievement and the success of the profession today depends on the ability to read others people's signals and react appropriately to them.

Therefore, each of the individual must develop the mature emotional competency and maturity skills like required to better understand own emotions and other's emotions, handling our relationship and empathize with other people, particularly as the economy has become more global, otherwise will elude individual in their lives and career.

Mayer and Salovey had published their first model of emotional intelligence and it includes the ability to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions. Salovey and Mayer 1997^[17] propounded a term such as emotional intelligence which broadly refers to the ability or skills related to the emotional aspect of a person's life. In 1990 they described Emotional Intelligence as "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

In 2004^[20] (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso) They include four components of emotional intelligence: ^[1] Accurate perception and express of emotions ^[2] Ability to access and generate emotions ^[3] understanding emotions and emotional meanings ^[4] Emotional regulation.

Stress is an internal state which can be caused by physical demands of the body or by environmental or by social situation which are evaluated as potentially harmful uncontrollable or exceeding our resources for coping. Selye (1979)^[18] Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it, whether is caused by the result of pleasant (eustress) and unpleasant (distress).

Wood & Wood (1999)^[21] stress defines as the physiological and psychological response to a condition that threatens or challenges the individual and requires some form of adaptation or adjustment.

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Stress is many-faceted process that occurs in us in response to events that disrupt or threaten to disrupt our Physical or psychological functioning. Stress is a negative emotional experience associated with biochemical, physiological, psychological, cognitive, and behavioral changes that occur when a person tries to manage or deal with the stressor.

Stress has been defined in many ways, a stress is caused by a stimulus, the stimulus can be either physical or psychological and that individual experience changes and challenges, then body produces physical and mental responses that result in health problems. The word ' stress ' is defined by the W.H.O. "a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives".

Relation between Emotional Intelligence and Stress

Emotional Intelligence should help us to handle stress better, for several reasons. Important parts of Emotional Intelligence are,

- Self- management
- Empathy
- Social skill

Self-awareness can help you notice when you are becoming stressed, which in turn make you better able to calm down before your reactions builds to an unmanageable level. Empathy and Social skill should allow you to be more effective in how you express yourself – including knowing how and when to be candid. But these skills need to be learned. Emotional Intelligence incorporates the important aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, adaptability, moods and stress management skills which have a profound effect on the academic performance of students.

Today people are faced with complex and challenging work life. When we observe around in the work place, too many problems occur. That all problems can make all people down in stress. Small quantity of stress is good. It can motivate and help people more productive. However, too much stress or strong responses to stress are harmful.

Now a days, emotional intelligence is the one of the major missing part in the human life. People with high emotional intelligence are likely to be more successful person in real world. Even people with good Intelligence Quotient they not able to succeed. The concept of emotional intelligence captures an extension collection of individual personal skills, professional skills and disposition. Emotionally intelligent person is skilled in identifying emotions, how to use emotions, understanding own and others emotions and regulating emotions. Emotional intelligence is taken as a major factor for career effectiveness, success and satisfaction.

Literature review

Salovey and Mayer's (1990) cited in Azman Ismail (2010) ^[1] ability-based model of emotional intelligence explains that the level of emotional intelligence will increase individual's competencies and this can increase their ability to decrease stress situations and increase positive attitudes and behaviors.

Bar-On (1997) revealed that in terms of total emotional Intelligence there was no difference between men and women. Goleman's (1998) cited in Azman Ismail (2010) ^[1]

emotional intelligence stresses that the level of emotional intelligence will increase individual's competencies and this may help them to decrease environmental strain and increase leadership effectiveness in organization.

McCann Carolyn *et al.* (2011) ^[13] revealed that both emotional intelligence and coping style were significantly related to academic achievement.

Upadhyaya (2006) ^[22] revealed that student-teachers with low emotional intelligence are more uneasy and worried about future, unhappy feeling and failures; are less cautious, irregular and like to take more rest, restrain others and have lack of energy. Student -teachers with high emotional intelligence are more competent and have more self-confidence, hardworking, help others motivated, energetic and full of enthusiasm.

Kuruville (2008) ^[10] found that (i) there is a significant positive correlation between the gender and the academic stress; boys had higher level stress compared to the girls.

Lorenzo Fariselli, Joshua Freedman, (2008) ^[12] found that emotional intelligence is emerging as valuable competence for work and life performances. EQ helps to improve performance by mitigating the negative effect of stress.

Mishra and Ranjan (2008) ^[14] Result showed that adolescent boys have higher emotional intelligence than the girls. The higher scores of adolescent boys indicate that they are better on interpersonal, interpersonal adaptability and stress management skill.

Bartwal & Raju (2014) ^[2] result revealed that male and female student experienced same amount of academic stress. The high social intelligence level would have better degree of coping with academic stress.

Dubey (2009) ^[3] revealed that females are more emotionally intelligent than male students.

Kalyoncu *et al.* (2012) ^[7] identified a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress.

Bartwal and Raj (2014) ^[2] conducted a research on "Academic Stress among School going Adolescents in their Social Intelligence." Results of the study revealed that male and female students experienced same amount of academic stress. The high social intelligence level would have better degrees of coping with the academic stress. Social intelligence plays a vital role in reducing academic stress.

Hsieh *et al.* (2014) ^[5] found that: (1) The emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal relationships (irs) of college students were above average level. (2) College students' EI and irs showed significant differences by gender, romantic relationship, monthly allowance, family status. Female students have higher EI and irs than male students. (3) The perceived level of EI was positive correlated with irs. The higher the college students' emotional intelligence was, the higher interpersonal relationships was.

Khan *et al.* (2015) ^[9] showed boys having much more stress in comparison to girls. The study concluded that school boys are more stressful than school girls.

Deepak Sikand Kauts (2016) ^[8] found that emotional intelligence of student has got significant effect on their academic stress. The student with low emotional intelligence reported high academic stress as compared to the student with high emotional Intelligence.

Lee and Cho (2016) ^[11] revealed that Male nurses have experienced more job stress than female nurses and there were difference in the area of job stress between male and female nurses.

Mahmoud A. Shahin (2020) [19] examined the relationships between emotional intelligence and perceived stress among students in Saudi health colleges. The result of the study revealed an insignificant negative correlation between the participants emotional intelligence scores and their mean perceived stress scores, suggesting that the higher a student's emotional intelligence the lower his or her perceived level of stress.

Naman Jasal (2021) [6] conduct research on relationship between Academic stress and emotional intelligence in high school student. Result of the study revealed that an inverse relationship between EI and academic stress experienced by a high school student and there was no significant difference between male and female students, EI scores or academic stress.

Purpose

The present research project intended to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress, and to compare emotional intelligence and stress of male and female college students.

Hypotheses

Following Hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

1. There would be significant relationship found between emotional intelligence and Stress among female students.
2. There would be significant relationship found between emotional intelligence and Stress among male students.
3. There would be a significant difference between male and female students in terms of emotional intelligence,
4. There would be a significant difference between male and female students in terms of stress.

Methodology

Sample

The study was conducted on sample of 200 undergraduate college students of Rewa district in which 100 were female students and 100 were male students.

Tools and techniques

Following tests were used to collect the data,

1. **Personal Data-Sheet:** Along with personal data-sheet EI and personal stress source inventory administered on the subject one by one to find out some basic information about the sample, such as name, age, educational qualification, etc.
2. **Emotional Intelligence Scale:** The scale was developed by Dr. Meena Jain and Dr. Madhu Jain. The test consists of 18 scales; each scale has 5 items except general health scale. The general health scale has 3 subtests to physical, behavioral and emotional aspect of health. It consists of four types of responses – very simple, moderately well, a little and not at all. Scoring was done according to the manual of the scale.
3. **Singh Personal Stress Source Inventory:** This inventory was developed by Arun Kumar Singh, Ashish kumar Singh and Arpana Singh. The inventory consists of 35 items and three responses options were given which were – seldom, sometime and frequently. Scoring was done according to the manual of the scale.

Procedure

The test was administered in two sessions. First of all, Personal data sheet was given to the respondents and relevant information were taken. After that, Emotional Intelligence Scale and Singh Personal Stress Source Inventory was given to the respondents one by one with short interval. After 3-4 days, questionnaires were collected from the respondents.

Results

Table 1: Strength of association between emotional intelligence and stress among female students

Group	Level of EI	Low Stress	High Stress	Chi-square	Df	Level of Significance
Female students	High	38	18	4	1	0.05
	Low	12	32			

Table-1 shows that the obtained Chi-square is 4 and df is 1, with regard to emotional intelligence and stress is significant at 0.05 level of confidence suggesting that hypothesis No- 1 is accepted.

Table 2: Strength of association between emotional intelligence and stress among male students

Group	Level of EI	Low Stress	High Stress	Chi-square	df	Level of Significance
Male students	High	10	22	51.84	1	0.001
	Low	40	28			

Table No. 2 shows that the obtained Chi-square is 51.84 and df is 1, with regard to emotional intelligence and stress is significant at 0.01 level of confidence suggesting that Hypothesis No-2 is accepted.

Table 3: Mean, SD and t-value of emotional intelligence of male and female students

Group	N	M	SD	t (df-198)	p
Male	100	125.79	15.25	14.72	0.01
Female	100	162.30	19.45		

Table – 3 shows significant difference between male and female college students on the measure of emotional intelligence. The mean score of male students (125.79) is lower than the mean score of female students (162.30). Obtained t-value between these two scores (14.72) is highly significant at 0.01 level of confidence. So, hypothesis-No.3 is accepted and it can be said that female students have higher emotional intelligence in comparison to male students.

Table 4: Mean, SD and t-value of stress of male and female students

Groups	N	M	SD	t (df-198)	P
Male	100	85.66	21.22	3.27	0.01
Female	100	80.33	17.55		

Table - 4 indicates a significant difference between mean score of male and female students on the measure of stress. The mean score of male students (85.66), is higher than the scores of female students (80.33) and obtained t-ratio between two scores (3.27) is significant at 0.01 level of

confidence. So, hypothesis no. 4 is accepted and it may be concluded that male college students have more stress than female college students.

Discussion

In the present study found that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and Stress in both female students and male students. When Emotional Intelligence is high, Stress is low and when emotional intelligence is low, Stress is high. So it can be said that there is a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress which supports the findings of different previous studies by Salovey and Mayer's (1990) ^[1], Goleman's (1998), Upadhyaya (2006) ^[22], Mishra and Ranjan (2008) ^[14], Macann Carolyn *et al.* (2011) ^[13], Deepa Sikand Kauts (2016) ^[8], Joshua Freedman (2008) ^[12], Kalyoncu *et al.* (2012) ^[7], Bartwal and Raj (2014) ^[2], Mahmoud A. Shahin (2020) ^[19], Naman Jasal (2021) ^[6]

Significant difference is also found between male and female students on the measure of emotional intelligence. Mean score of emotional intelligence of female students is higher than the Mean score of male students. Previous studies by Dubey (2009) ^[3] and Hsieh *et al.* (2014) ^[5] also support this finding.

It is also found in this study that there is a significant difference of stress between male and female students. Mean score of male students is higher than the Mean score of female students. This finding is consistent with the studies of Kuruvilla (2008) ^[10], Khan *et al.* (2015) and Lee and Cho (2016) ^[11].

Conclusion

On the basis of above result and discussion, it may be concluded that:

1. There is a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress in both male and females college students.
2. Female college students have higher emotional intelligence than male college students.
3. Male college students are more stressful than female college students.

Suggestions

Students are the wealth and future of nation. It is essential that they must have good emotional intelligence so that they can have a balanced life. Teachers can play very important role in reducing stress among students. To make the students emotionally balanced, their academic stress should be lessening. For preparing students to cope with stress several stress management techniques are used. Therefore, every school should take some stress management classes for students and creating a healthy environment in classroom can minimize stress level to make learning easier, prepare them for exams. These sessions can help students to learn the cognitive, social and emotional competencies, but these competencies are developed through theory-based knowledge. Students should know some basic knowledge and skills. They must plan effective and engaging lessons that cater the needs of all students, assess and evaluate their progress. As the study revealed that the students with low emotional intelligence face more stress than the students belonging to high emotional intelligence. Therefore, colleges and teachers should launch such programs which help in developing the students' emotional intelligence so as

to reduce stress and their academic problems must be discussed by the teacher as well as parents.

Limitations

The limitation of this study was the sample size and lack of geographical coverage since this study only concentrated on six colleges of one city only. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized and as such the researchers suggest replication of this study using larger samples from other cities to validate its findings.

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