

The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Happiness and Mental Health in Students of Medical Sciences of Isfahan University

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Abstract

Introduction: Nowadays, many professionals consider necessary conditions for progress in developing emotional intelligence. A person who has a high emotional intelligence will experience less negative events in his/her life. The main purpose of this study is to answer this question: Is emotional intelligence related to happiness and mental health?

Method and material: Statistical community in this study is all the students of Medical sciences of Isfahan University in 2009, among whom 120 people were randomly selected and these three questionnaires were administered to them: 1) Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, 2) Goldberg and Williams's Mental Health Questionnaire (GHQ), and 3) Argyl and Lou's Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (1989). This study design is correlative that has been used to evaluate significance of the relationship of variables by using Pearson correlation coefficient and to compare the scores of male and female using T-test.

Result: The results show that there is a positive and meaningful relation between emotional intelligence, happiness and mental health. Besides, students with high emotional intelligence have more happiness and mental health. Therefore it is recommended that techniques of increasing emotional intelligence should be trained in school and universities.

Conclusion: The Overall EQ-I score was high indicating a group that has good Emotional Intelligence. There are fairly large differences in the scores for the 15 content scales indicating areas of relative strengths and areas of improvement and relation between mental healths in students. Emotional Intelligence will contribute to success in most endeavors.

Key words: emotional intelligence, happiness, mental health

Introduction

In recent years the term emotional intelligence increasingly has been expanding, especially in its application in education, personal life, work and business, where some research has been done.¹ Emotional intelligence (EI) is a concept increasingly recognized in the social psychology literature.² Emotional intelligence has become of widespread interest to psychological research in recent years. It has been claimed that emotional intelligence is one of the important factors that determine success in life and psychological wellbeing.³ everyone having certain level of emotional intelligence, will take a position when confronting with positive or negative life events and will compromise with them. A person who has emotional intelligence gives order and stability to his life in such a way that with high emotional intelligence, the person will experience less negative events in his/her life, based on the results of Richardson and collaborators' research as quoted by Ismaili.⁴ Mayer and Saluvy research shows that emotional intelligence is related to mental health components.⁵ In this regard, several studies have been conducted in Iran. For example Faraqdany⁶ in her research between components of emotional intelligence and social adjustment in students and Assadi⁷, also have found a meaningful positive relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health. Mansouri research also explained that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement.⁸ Most psychologists consider happiness as one of the six basic emotions; basic human emotions are: anger, fear, disgust, surprise, happiness and sadness.⁹ Happiness three essential components that are: positive emotions, life satisfaction, lack of negative emotions, and positive relations with others, having purposeful life, personal growth and love of others are components of the happiness.¹⁰ Research related to happiness has been started by work of Kantryl, Brad Berne¹¹ and Campbell and Kanrus and Rogers.¹² Since then a lot of literature and articles in different fields related to happiness has been published. Studies indicate that different factors such as education, social success, cognitive and behavioral and personality variables effect on happiness.¹³ According to The New Oxford Dictionary of English (1998:864) still provides us with a biomedical and mechanistic 'definition' of health. It sees 'health' pithily as 'the state of being free from illness or injury'. This 'definition' seems more concerned with the absence of certain conditions than the presence of others. It also does not mention the notions of well-being and wellness. Philosophically, this view resonates with psychological egocentrism: the world is comprehended only from a personal or subjective point of view, which implies a failure to differentiate subjective from objective acts of experience.¹⁴ Many physical illnesses have psychological roots, and by learning and cognition behaviors and proper coping skills, incidence of these diseases can be prevented and psychological status of individuals can be improved. Hence, many researchers have shown that higher emotional intelligence is related to some aspects of mental-social performance and better psychological health.^{3,15-17} According to the mentioned material, the main purpose of this study is to answer these questions: Are emotional intelligence related to happiness and mental health? Can a person's happiness and mental health be predicted by emotional intelligence? Whether gender makes a significant difference in level of emotional intelligence, mental health and happiness?

Method and material

Statistical community in this study is all the students of Medical sciences of Isfahan University in 2009 among them 120 people were randomly selected and these three questionnaires were administered to them. In this study, following data collection tools are used:

- Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: with 133 questions (include of five composed factors) interpersonal relationships composition - intrapersonal relationships composition- stress management composition- adaptability composition – general mood composition and a coordination index and subscales, and its Article have a score of one to five that some of articles are positive and some are negative.¹⁷
- Second questionnaire was Goldberg and William's Mental Health Questionnaire (GHQ), which includes 28 questions and has four scales. The questionnaire contains four subscales of physical symptoms, anxiety, social function, and depression. This tool has been used in different researches in Iran and there are many evidences for its reliability and validity.¹⁸
- Lastly, third questionnaire was Argyl and Lou's Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (1989), which included 29 questions in four scales is different levels of very high (5) high (4) Average (3) low (2) and very low (1), and scores will be between 0 and 125.¹⁹

This study design is correlative that has been used to evaluate significance of the relationship of variables by using Pearson correlation coefficient and to compare the scores of male and female T-test was used. All the statistical calculations were performed using computer software SPSS.

Results

The findings of the study showed that 120 participants students 61 (51.3%) men and 59 (49.7%) women mean scores emotional intelligence in men 38.75(SD=9.50) and in women 39.70(SD=10.04) representing various human service professions (students) was eligible for the study. The mean age of the participants was 38.75 years. Therefore can take result between men and women group about of variable sex T-test showed between both mean there is not significant ($p= 0.796$). [Table 1]

Initially we investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness. By considering the results contained in Table 2 and also by considering level of meaningfulness and correlation coefficient we can conclude that the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness is significant.

Considering the level of meaningfulness and obtained correlation coefficient this assumption is confirmed that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health. [Table 3]

According to Table 4, we find that this relationship is meaningful and there is a difference between emotional intelligence of men and women.

According to Table 5, we find that this relation is not meaningful and there is no difference between men and women mental health.

According to scores of Table 6 we find that there is no significant difference between men and women happiness.

Results analysis showed that a meaningful relationship is established between emotional intelligence, happiness and mental health of students. And also the emotional intelligence of men is more than women. There wasn't a difference between mental health and happiness in men and women.

Discussion

Purpose of this study was investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness and mental health in students of Medical sciences of Isfahan University. The results show that there is a positive and meaningful relation between emotional intelligence, happiness and mental health. These findings are consistent with results of Argyle²⁰, as well as Richardson et al, Mayer and Salvuy²¹. Other research findings indicate that emotional intelligence is able to predict the variables of happiness and mental health. Also, according to findings, there is a meaningful difference between men and women emotional intelligence that is coordinated with Bar-On and Yousefi, Abbasi et al research.^{4,7} Emotional intelligence of men is more than women and therefore under stress and in sensitive condition men are more able to control their emotions and women appear in social situations less because of avoiding competition.

Finally, there is no meaningful difference between males and females in terms of happiness and mental health variables, generally results of research indicate that students with high emotional intelligence have more happiness and mental health. Therefore it is recommended that techniques of increasing emotional intelligence should be trained in school and universities.

Conclusions

The Overall EQ-I score was high indicating a group that has good Emotional Intelligence. There are fairly large differences in the scores for the 15 content scales indicating areas of relative strengths and areas of improvement and relation between mental healths in students. Emotional Intelligence will contribute to success in most endeavors. If improving students' EI on Esfahan University of medical sciences can help them deal more ably with their emotional work and reduce the incidence of psychological stress and improved mental health.

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Conflicts of interest: None declared

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Table 1: Mean and standard deviation and minimum and maximum scores of emotional intelligence, mental health and happiness

Group	Index	Mean	SD	Min	Max
EI		448.62	44.61	340	599
Happiness		47.60	13.08	12	94
Mental health		66.14	12.38	22	102

Table 2: Correlation of emotional intelligence and happiness

Group	Mean	SD	R	P
EI	448/62	44/61	0/51	0/05
happiness	47/60	13/08		

Table 3: Correlation of emotional intelligence and mental health

Group	Mean	SD	R	P
EI	448/62	44/61	0/32	0/2
happines s	66/14	12/38		

Table 4: Comparison of emotional intelligence in both sexes

Sex	Mean	SD	T	df	P
M	451/84	44/9	-	118	0/49
F	441/09	42/15	1/97		

Table 5: Comparison of mental health in both sexes

Sex	Mean	SD	T	df	P
M	65/16	1/97	-	110	0/207
F	68	12/05	1/28		

Table 6: Comparison of the two sex's happiness

Group	Mean	SD	T	df	P
M	65/16	1/97	1/39	110	0/5
F	46	12/05			