

Emotional intelligence related to stress: a study on college students

Dr. Khurshid Jahan^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress on college students. An incidental cum purposive sample of 100 undergraduate college students of Patna town, was selected for data collection. 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 and appropriate statistical analysis was done. Results indicate that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress in both male and female students.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Stress, Undergraduate, College students*

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capability of individuals to recognize their own, and other people's emotions, to discern between feelings and label them appropriately, to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour, and to manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt environments or achieve one's goal.

For most people, Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is more important than one's Intelligence (IQ) in attaining success in their lives and career. As individual's success 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 intelligence skills required to better understand, empathize and negotiate with other people, particularly as the economy has become more global, otherwise will elude individual in their lives and career.

Emotional Intelligence was described formally by Salovey and Mayer (1990). They described it as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's by thinking and actions".

Stress is an internal state which can be caused by physical demands of the body or by environment or by social situation which are evaluated as potentially harmful uncontrollable or exceeding our resources for coping life events and pressures of everyday.

¹Assistant Professor (Part- time), Magadh Mahila College, Patna University, Patna, India

[*Responding Author](#)

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Although stress has been defined in many ways, a common ground of most definition is that stress is caused by a stimulus, that the stimulus can be either physical or psychological and that individual respond to the stimulus in some way. The word ' stress ' is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy.” It is condition or circumstance (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physical and mental health of an individual.

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 response 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) 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 behaviours.

Goleman's (1998) cited in Azman Ismail (2010) 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.

Upadhyaya (2006) 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.

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Kuruvilla (2008) 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) 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.

Reynolds and Odwyer (2008) examined the relationships among emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms for stress and leadership effectiveness for middle school principals.

Dubey (2009) revealed that females are more emotionally intelligent than male students.

Kalyoncu et al. (2012) identified a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress.

Bartwal and Raj (2014) 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) 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) showed boys having much more stress in comparison to girls. The study concluded that school boys are more stressful than school girls.

Lee and Cho(2016) 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.

Purpose

The purpose of the present research project was to study 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 between Emotional Intelligence and Stress among female students.
2. There would be significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Stress among male students.
3. There would be significant difference between male and female students in terms of emotional intelligence,
4. There would be significant difference between male and female students in terms of stress.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample was comprised of 200 undergraduate college students, 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** – A personal data-sheet was prepared by the investigator 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, behavioural 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 0.001 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 .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 .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

It is found in the present study 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) , Goleman's (1998), Upadhyaya (2006), Lorenzo Fariselli, Joshua Freedman, (2008), Kalyoncu et al. (2012), Bartwal and Raj (2014).

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) and Hsieh et al. (2014) 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), Khan et al.(2015) and Lee and Cho(2016) .

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. Females college students have higher emotional intelligence than male college students.
3. Male college students are more stressful than female college students.

Suggestions

Teachers can play very important role in reducing stress among students. They must plan effective and engaging lessons that cater the needs of all students, assess and evaluate their progress. Creating a conducive environment in the classroom can minimize stress levels to make learning easier, prepare them for exams. 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 programmes which help in developing the students' emotional intelligence so as to reduce stress.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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