THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO TRAITS OF ANXIETY

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Abstract

The present study examines the role of Emotional intelligence, as measured by Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), in relation to Traits of anxiety (Emotional instability, Suspiciousness, Guilt proneness, Low integration and Tension), as measured by Anxiety Scale (IPAT). A total of 599 adults, between the ages of 20 to 50 were asked to complete the questionnaires. The mean score on total anxiety verified that the highest level of EI tolerated the lowest anxiety, which was followed by subjects with medium and low levels of EI. The results of the Low self control (Q3) and Emotional Instability(C) traits, displayed that the highest level of EI yielded the lowest scores on those traits. The findings reported that the trait of Suspicion was tolerated same among the groups. On the other hand both the Apprehension and Tension traits pushed up on the high level of EI. In the case of medium level of EI, people were engaged with all of the traits on an average but the Apprehension was increased in this group in comparison to the other traits.

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Introduction

The concept of emotional intelligence has received an increasing amount of attention in a variety of literature over the past several decades. According to Salovey et al. (1999) emotional intelligence proposes a new perspective in the study of emotions. They proposed EI is a vital phenomenon of human being which provides helpful information for solving daily problems. In fact while considering this approach, we would essentially make use of emotions to aid our physical and psychological adaptation. General life stresses are found to deepen generalized anxiety. The individual who does well at work and receives a sense of achievement from it, all of a sudden begins to find that work has become drudgery. If for instance the work (or any other situation in daily life) is perceived as a negative environment, with the person no longer feeling fulfilled, then worry would take over in this situation. This could lead to the strengthening of anxiety in the workplace. The study by Gohm et al. (2004) described that emotional intelligence is potentially helpful in reducing stress for some individuals but unnecessary for others. Another study by Extremera & Berrocal (2006) reported that high emotional attention is positively and significantly related to high anxiety. However they found that the high levels of emotional clarity and mood repair were related to low levels of anxiety. Petrides & Furnham (2004) showed that the trait of emotional intelligence plays an important role in personality, clinical, and social psychology, often with increasing effects over the basic dimensions of personality and mood. Furthermore they emphasized that emotional intelligence and self-efficiency are effective in determining occupational stress. Although each of the variables contributed significantly to the prediction of occupational stress with self-efficacy making higher contribution to the prediction of occupational stress (Adeyemo & Bolaogunyemi, 2003). The relationship between a measure of EQ, subjective stress, distress, general health, morale, quality of working life and management performance was examined by Slaski & Cartwright (2002). They realized a significant correlation in the expected direction indicating that managers who scored higher in EQ suffered lower stress and experienced better health and well-being; They also demonstrated a better management performance. The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of emotional intelligence in relation to the traits of anxiety. The traits of anxiety are emotional instability, suspiciousness, guilt proneness, low integration and tension.

Objectives

1) To determine the level of EI of adults.
2) To find out the role of Emotional intelligence on traits of anxiety.

Hypothesis

Emotional intelligence plays a significant role on traits of anxiety.

Measures

The following assessment instruments were employed in this study:

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Anukool Hyde and Sanjyot Pathe in 2001 was used to measure EI. This instrument is made of 34 items and provides an indicator of the levels of perceived EI. Respondents are asked to rate their degree of agreement of the items on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The other instrument was an Anxiety Scale (IPAT) developed by Cattel, Krug and Scleier in 1976. IPAT is a 40 items Questionnaire and provide a convenient and practical measure of anxiety traits. Traits of anxiety namely: Emotional instability, Suspiciousness, Guilt proneness, Low integration and Tension.

Statistical Analyses

The means and standard deviations were calculated to classify the levels of EI among the adults. To find out the differences between the levels of EI and traits of anxiety ANOVA technique was employed.

Procedure

A sample of 599 adults (male and female), between the ages of 20 to 50, were selected from Mysore City (Table 1). The EI test and anxiety scale were administered to them together. Care was taken to see that no item was omitted and respondents were assured that their individual results would be kept confidential.

Table 1

EI LEVEL	SEX		Total
	F	M	
High	110	97	207
Medium	114	118	232
Low	74	85	159
Total	299	300	599

Results

In order to verify the stated hypothesis, analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique was employed. Tables 2 & 3 present the descriptive statistics as well as results of ANOVA and post HOC tests for the studied variables in the present sample of subjects. The analyses of variance (ANOVA) revealed that EI levels yielded significant role across total anxiety (F=167.30, p<.05). The post HOC tests (Table 3) brought out that the mean difference between high and medium (-5.72), high and low (-8.99) and medium and low (-3.27) on anxiety were significant. The mean values (Table 2) indicate that subjects with high EI had lower scores on total anxiety, which was followed by subjects with medium and high levels of EI respectively. The analyses of variance (ANOVA) on traits of anxiety revealed that EI levels yielded significant role across Low self control (Q3) (F=400.27, p<.05). The post HOC tests (Table 3) brought out the mean difference between high and medium (-3.05), high and low (-6.46) and medium and low (-3.49) on Low self control, these were significant. The mean values (Table 2) indicate that subjects with high EI had lower scores on Q3, which was followed by subjects with medium and low levels of EI respectively. Significant Emotional instability (C) displayed that EI levels yielded significant role across C (F=269.43, P<.05). The post HOC tests (Table 3) brought out the mean difference between high and medium (-2.05), high and low (-5.03) and medium and low (-2.99), on Emotional instability, these were significant. The mean values (Table 2) indicate that subjects with high EI had lower scores on C, which was followed by subjects with medium and low levels of EI respectively. Significant Suspicion (L) displayed that EI levels yielded non significant role across L (F=.13, P<.05). The post HOC tests (Table 3) brought out that the mean difference between high and medium (-.08), high and low (-.07) and medium and low (.01) on L were non significant. The mean values (Table 2) indicate that subjects with 3 levels of EI scored approximately same on Suspicion trait. Significant Apprehension (O) showed that EI levels yielded significant role across O (F=14.93, P<.05). The post HOC tests (Table 3) brought out the mean difference between high and medium (-.79), high and low (.92) and medium and low (1.72) on Apprehension and these were significant. The mean values (Table 2) indicate that subjects with medium EI had higher scores on L, which was followed by subjects with high and low levels of EI respectively. Significant Tension (Q4) displayed that EI levels yielded significant role across Q4 (F=18.62, p<.05). The post HOC tests (Table 3) brought out that the mean difference between high and medium (.03) and medium and low (1.63) were non significant but on the high and low (1.66) was significant. The mean values (Table 2) indicate that subjects with high EI had higher scores on Q4, which was followed by subjects with medium and low levels of EI respectively. In the case of the medium level of EI it appears that people were engaged with all of the traits on an average but the Apprehension was increased in this group in comparison to the other traits.

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Table 2. Summary of results showing the difference among EI levels on Total anxiety & Traits of anxiety

Anxiety	EI Level	Mean	SD	F	p.value	Result
Low Self Control (Q3)	High	3.20	1.76	400.3	.000	Significant
	Medium	6.25	1.89			
	Low	9.67	2.91			
Emotional Instability (C)	High	3.54	1.97	269.43	.000	Significant
	Medium	5.59	1.78			
	Low	8.58	2.51			
Suspicion (L)	High	5.57	1.82	.13	.877	Non significant
	Medium	5.65	1.74			
	Low	5.64	1.78			
Apprehension (O)	High	8.34	2.89	14.93	.000	Significant
	Medium	9.13	2.99			
	Low	7.41	3.36			
Tension (Q4)	High	8.50	2.92	18.62	.000	Significant
	Medium	8.47	2.94			
	Low	6.84	2.90			
Total Anxiety	High	5.72	.96	167.30	.000	Significant
	Medium	6.82	.89			
	Low	7.41	.86			

Note. N=599

Table 3. Results of post HOC tests (Tukey)

Dependent Variable	(I) EI level	(J)EI level	Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.	Result
Low Self Control (Q3)	High	Medium	-3.05	.20777	.000	Significant
	High	Low	-6.46	.22875	.000	Significant
	Medium	Low	-3.42	.22331	.000	Significant
Emotional Instability (C)	High	Medium	-2.05	.19715	.000	Significant
	High	Low	-5.03	.21706	.000	Significant
	Medium	Low	-2.99	.21190	.000	Significant

Suspicion (L)	High	Medium	-.08	.17000	.883	Nonsignificant
	High	Low	-.07	.18716	.918	Nonsignificant
	High	Low	.00	.18271	.999	Nonsignificant
Apprehension (O)	High	Medium	-.79	.29284	.019	Significant
	High	Low	.92	.32242	.012	Significant
	Medium	Low	1.72	31475	.000	Significant
Tension (Q4)	High	Medium	.031	.27961	.993	Nonsignificant
	High	Low	.661	.30785	.000	Nonsignificant
	Medium	Low	.63	.30053	.993	Nonsignificant
Total Anxiety	High	Medium	-5.72	.45939	.000	Significant
	High	Low	-8.99	.50579	.000	Significant
	Medium	Low	-3.27	.49376	.000	Significant

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

It would be recalled that the present work sought to examine the role of Emotional intelligence on traits of anxiety. The results revealed that there is a significant difference on EI levels across anxiety. Studies by Extremera & Berrocal (2006) supported these findings. Kloosterman et al. (2005) also indicated that EI is highly related to social interaction anxiety. The mean values revealed that subjects with higher EI scored lower, on anxiety. On the other hand people with lower EI suffered more from anxiety. The study by Mikolajczak et al. (2006) also supported these findings. In the traits of anxiety, the higher EI yielded lower score on "Low self control" and "Emotional instability". The reason might be that according to Mayer & Salovey (1993), people with high level of EI have high Self control and Emotional stability and lack of Self control and Emotional stability could be seen in lower EI individuals. Studies by Zee & Wabeke (2004) also supported these findings. They examined the usefulness of trait-Emotional Intelligence (TEI). Trait-EI was found to be substantially related to Extroversion, Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, and Autonomy. The other division "Suspicious" was non significant among EI levels. The reason might be that there isn't any relationship between EI and Suspicion. The mean scores of "Apprehension" and "Tension" displayed that the people who scored higher on EI suffered more from Apprehension and Tension in comparison to the other traits. Of course this type of anxiety was general anxiety. From the results it clearly appears that the highest EI suffered less from total anxiety. Therefore this amount of Apprehension and tension could be general and related to the EI possessed. While anxiety could affect our lives on the other ways, our relative lack of knowledge about the principles

of emotional intelligence and how stress affected it led to a disjunction. Stress also could change our interpersonal interactions in the workplace. Therefore we can learn or improve our emotional skills at any time in our life, even in the presence of stress. If individuals control and interpret their emotions and the emotions of others, then use that knowledge to cope better with stressful situations, they would have a better chance of experiencing daily life and workplace success.

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