

Resilience and Burnout: Relation of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Stress Management Capabilities among Health Professional Students of Northern Border University - Arar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Emotions have a vital role in handling stress and anxiety. Various studies emphasize the necessity for scrutinizing of the association of emotional intelligence as an all-encompassing view of the stress and anxiety management.

Aim: To analyze the stress management capabilities and to evaluate the association between emotional intelligence and stress management capabilities among the health professional students of Northern Border University - Arar, KSA.

Methods: The main objective of this project is to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and the management of stress and anxiety among health professional students in Northern Border University – KSA. The primary data is collected by using the standardized and structured questionnaire of emotional intelligence and stress management. Two hundred health professional students have been enrolled for the present study. The data has been analyzed with the help of computer program (SPSS).

Result: Positively worded items from students indicated higher emotional intelligence and higher proficiency in managing stress and negatively worded items from students indicated low emotional intelligence and lower proficiency in managing stress.

Conclusions: Our study concludes that students who scored high in EI scale had high scores in stress management scale which highlights the fact that a strong relationship exists between the emotional intelligence and stress management capabilities among the health professional students of NBU-KSA.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Health professional students, Stress management.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence (EI) consists of a proficiency to observe and recognize our own emotions and feelings of other persons, to manage these emotions and feelings in a healthy manner. Emotional intelligence can be comprehended, refined and further developed. It has become progressively distinct that conventional intelligence (and IQ) is not adequate to determine success. To accomplish, narrate and thrive with others, a separate set of abilities are required which may influence capability of a person to manage and handle the social stress. EI has been allied to higher scholastic accomplishment. Institutions are taking necessary steps towards the provision of healthy academic stress free atmosphere to the students. Universities are adapting new teaching methods to reduce the academic stress and facilitate to improve the self-awareness among the students and also providing guidance for the management of stress.

The stress could also cause gastrointestinal abnormalities, lack of sleep, cardiac problems and depression. The stress can also promote non healthy behavior and habits among the students such as cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption which may further adversely affect the students' academic performance. The study published by Bibi F et al revealed a relationship between emotional intelligence and coping strategies¹. The result of another study indicated that there is an association of occupational stress with the gender and type of occupation². Another study has found a strong association

among the emotional intelligence, job stress and job satisfaction³.

In the light of findings of previous studies, it is important to analyze about emotional intelligence (EI) of students and their stress management capabilities. The first year health professional students who are in transition period from higher secondary school / home to the university / hostel in a different educational atmosphere and the final year health professional students, who are preparing for the forthcoming university examination, are in the period which is considered to be highly stressed time period. Therefore, the initial and the last year of health professional students in the university are more emotion demanding time period and hence the effect of emotional intelligence on academic performance and stress management capabilities can be more apparent in this group of students. The aims and objectives of the present study are to assess the level of emotional intelligence (EI), to analyze the stress management capabilities and to evaluate the association between emotional intelligence and stress management capabilities among the health professional students of Northern Border University - Arar, KSA.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a descriptive study which is comprised of two standardized questionnaires prepared by National Psychologist Corporation on i.e EI scale and stress management scale that have been taken as instruments for the research project. Emotional Intelligence Scale is

authored by Dr Sarbjit Kaur and Stress management scale is authored by Dr Vandana Kaushik and Dr Namrata Arora Charpe. The study included health professional students from the Northern Border University (Saudi Arabia) and participants were selected by using convenience sampling technique. Participation was entirely voluntary. Two hundred (200) students who are studying in different years at NBU have been included in the study. A pilot study has been conducted to identify any difficulty which may arise to achieve the stated objectives. Data was analyzed using SPSS package.

RESULTS

Data analysis of Emotional Intelligence Scale authored by Dr Sarbjit Kaur in our study showed that 79% of students feel much affected by the praise and blame of others while 69% of students said that they pay compliments to people when they deserve them. 67% of students agreed that they feel it is better to remain distant and neutral until we know a person. 67 % of the students feel bad if they hurt the feelings of others. A significant number (65%) of students stated that they get depressed easily and when someone shouts at them, they get very upset. The results are shown in table 1.

Data analysis of Stress management scale authored by Dr Vandana Kaushik And Dr Namrata Arora Charpe showed that 60% of students were able to find their stressor. 73% of students strongly agreed that they try to reduce the intensity of their emotional reaction to the stressor while 24% students stated that they do not control

physical reaction to the stressors. 27% of students agreed that they try to keep smiling in stressful situations. 60% of students agreed that they do not manage their time properly. 73% of students agreed that they try to clear out the obligations. 57% of students stated that they try to meet the deadlines. 77% of students agreed that they do not take measures to relieve stress and 65 % of students stated that they do not take proper sleep. The results are shown in table 4.

Positively worded items from students indicated higher emotional intelligence and negatively worded items from students indicated low emotional intelligence.

Reliability: Reliability of Sevenfold Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS) was established by Test-rest Method. A student sample was randomly selected and SEIS was administered on them. This sample was again administered after a gap of 3 weeks. The reliability coefficients between the two sets of scores were founded as +0.91 which is significant at .01 level of significance.

Positively worded items from students indicate higher proficiency in managing stress and negatively worded items from students indicated low proficiency in managing stress.

Our study showed that students who scored high in EI scale had high scores in Stress management scale which also highlights the fact that there is strong relationship between EI and stress management capabilities among the health professional students of Northern Border University, Arar, KSA.

Table 1. Showing percentage of student's responses to statements included in Emotional Intelligence scale authored by Dr Sarbjit kaur

S.No	Questionnaire statements	%age
1.	I can pinpoint exactly what aspect of the problem is troubling me	46
2.	I strive to overcome my shortcomings without being overwhelmed by them	36
3.	I am unhappy for reasons I cannot understand	33
4.	I take care not to undertake unrealistic tasks which can neither be done nor be dumped	46
5.	I spend lot of time thinking and getting upset over the past	64
6.	I cannot get over the guilt over the small mistakes I often make	43
7.	I withdraw myself from the situation where I cannot play a positive role	55
8.	I finish the work that I begin	57
9.	I tend to be fairly easily moved to laughter or tears	40
10.	I get depressed easily	65
11.	In an emergency situation I generally keep control of myself	37
12.	I do not blame others for problem I am facing	29
13.	I get nervous about small problems	56
14.	I find excuses for not doing my homework	59
15.	Where there is pressure of work I find it difficult to work	51
16.	I endeavor to improve myself	57
17.	I accept defeat gracefully in sportsmanship spirit in various competitions	39
18.	My whole class is going on strike, I will oppose them if necessary	12
19.	I work very hard to get top position in examination	27
20.	I feel no obstacle can stop me from achieving my final goals.	33
21.	Temporary setbacks do not deter me from putting in my best	31
22.	I am inspired by reading the biography of great achievers	44
23.	I do not get disheartened during difficult time,	22
24.	I get motivated when I picture the expected outcome and then do my best to achieve it.	57
25.	I am simulated by challenges	34
26.	I do not discriminate between importance of any assignment I undertake	37
27.	When someone shouts at me I get very upset	65
28.	I panic when I have to face someone who is very angry	57
29.	I feel much affected by the praise and blame of others.	79

30.	I feel sudden slump in my self esteem if my peer group ever turns down my invitation for party	43
31.	Even occasional criticism from my teachers is capable of shattering my confidence	46
32.	I work at rebuilding my self esteem after a failure at a task by excelling in some other field	29
33.	I am often troubled by my thoughts of revenge	23
34.	I feel superior to people around me	47
35.	When people do me unasked favor, I suspect their motives	35
36.	I cannot help getting involved into other people's problems	42
37.	I feel pain when I see helpless old people in agony	57
38.	Cruelty towards animals is very painful to me	31
39.	I am thoughtless about the feelings of others	23
40.	I feel sympathy even for those people whom I think are suffering due to their own wrong attitude	9
41.	I feel fulfilment in social services.	42
42.	I have difficulty in saying things, like I like you, even when I really like a person.	45
43.	I have frequent arguments with my friends or people around me.	34
44.	I get jealous of others even on their small achievements	27
45.	It does not bother me, while I am driving, to be overtaken by somebody	7
46.	If a friend betrays me, I can respond with forgiveness	11
47.	I feel bad if I hurt the feelings of others.	67
48.	While I am watching my favorite T.V. serial, if one of my siblings need help with homework, I refuse	33
49.	In my workplace, I know what is happening around me	64
50.	I have communication gap with people while conversing with them.	37
51.	I pay compliments to people when they deserve them	69
52.	I avoid people when they have different point of view.	36
53.	I find it difficult to reach a compromise	48
54.	I deal effectively with people around me	39
55.	I persists in my point of view even when I realize that I am wrong	42
56.	I feel shy in expressing myself in front of my teachers and seniors	34
57.	I feel it is better to remain distant and neutral until you know a person	67
58.	I prefer working with others	51
59.	When a group discussion is going on I start shouting to prove my point	26
60.	I remain passive in class discussions	58
61.	I stay away from participating in co-curricular activities	57
62.	I avoid criticizing people	40
63.	I find it difficult to make friends	23

Table 2: Scoring System: There were positive and negative types of items. The responses were marked on a five-point scale: always, mostly, sometimes, rarely and never.

Type of Item	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Positive	5	4	3	2	1
Negative	1	2	3	4	5

Table 3: Item Distribution was into Seven categories on Emotional Intelligence Scale as follows:

Dimensions	Nature of items
Self-awareness and Appraisal	Positive
	Negative
Self-regulation and Responsibility	Positive
	Negative
Self-motivation	Positive
	Negative
Self-esteem and Confidence	Positive
	Negative
Empathy and acceptance of others	Positive
	Negative
Interpersonal Relations	Positive
	Negative
Social Skills	Positive
	Negative

Table 4: Showing percentage of student's responses to important statements included in Stress management scale authored by Dr Vandana Kaushik

S.No	Questionnaire statements	Percentage
1.	I find my stressor	60%
2.	I recognize my reaction to the stressor	58%
3.	I do not try to identify reactions I like to change	38%
4.	I try to reduce the intensity of my emotional reaction to the stressor	73%
5.	I do not control physical reaction to the stressors.	24%
6.	I try to keep smiling	27%
7.	I take regular rest.	52%
8.	I do not manage my time properly.	60%
9.	I do my work so that I feel proud of it.	58%
10.	I do not take full control of my task performance.	26%
11.	I try to be friendly with others.	48%
12.	I do not try to create environment which would keep me calm.	24%
13.	I try meditation.	30%
14.	I do not analyze my deeds	66%
15.	I do not schedule time to relax.	42%
16.	I do not log my activities.	30%
17.	I try to clear out the obligations.	73%
18.	I try to meet the deadlines.	57%
19.	I do not try to organize my goals	39%
20.	I try to delegate work.	25%
21.	I do not try to identify my priorities.	48%
22.	I use checklists to check the pending work.	34 %
23.	I do not focus on one goal at a time.	35%
24.	I try to be realistic.	23 %
25.	I do not plan for the unpredictable	62%
26.	I try to motivate myself	40%
27.	I do not utilize my capabilities.	57%
28.	I use my biological rhythm's	73 %
29.	I do not plan my leisure time	58 %
30.	I understand my tasks and responsibilities to the fullest	49 %
31.	I Stay updated for changes in the work environment.	33 %
32.	I do not go for massages.	78 %
33.	I exercise my muscles regularly	23 %
34.	I do not indulge in hobbies.	53 %
35.	I do not take measures to relieve stress	77 %
36.	I do not take proper sleep	65 %

Table 5: showing the Scoring System of items: The responses were marked on a five-point scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

Type of Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Positive	0	1	2	4	5
Negative	5	4	3	1	0

Positively and negatively worded items

Type of Item	ITEM NO	Total
Positive	1,2,4,6,7,9,11,13,17,18,20,22,24,26,28,30,31,33	18
Negative	3,5,8,10,12,14,15,16,19,21,23,25,27,29,32	15
Total Number of Items		33

DISCUSSIONS

There is a significant importance of feelings and emotions in the life of human beings. The emotions and feeling may exert positive and negative impact on the psychology, cognition and behavior of a person. There is positive correlation between the performance based ability emotional intelligence and efficiency in the hot cognitive tasks⁴. A published study mentions that there is a significant positive association of eustress with the flow which has impact on the students' academic performance⁵.

Stress has been identified as being high for students undertaking health professional courses⁶. A study in the

UAE university identified 65% of health professional students as being highly stressed⁷. The competitive educational atmosphere, heavy academic workload and exposure to human health miseries are important causative factors of stress among the students⁸.

In our study, the results showed that among the medical college students of first year, prevalence of stress is high and this higher level of perceived stress has negatively affected their well-being.

The enhancement of health care providers' resilience with the help of curriculum reforms may be helpful in relieving the stress and anxiety among the health professionals⁹.

In our study, the students who scored more score in emotional intelligence scale were shown to have better self-control skills, empathetic skills and self-awareness and in turn revealed reduced levels of psychological distress. The emotional intelligence plays an important role in facilitating the stress resilience¹⁰. The ability to overcome stress and face adversity is termed as resilience. The relationship between the emotional intelligence and conflict management strategies has been described and there is also an association between conflict management strategies and stress management¹¹. The behaviors may also serve as lasting tools that prevent burnout later on in their careers.

Results of our study revealed that EI was related to academic and professionalism. Higher level of EI among the students is associated more healthy social interpersonal relationship and behavior of these persons has been considered as less conflicting by the peers¹². There is a relationship between the interpersonal relations with the emotional intelligence¹³. EI has also been associated to clinical accomplishment and greater academic attainment¹⁴. EI also has an important role in relationships, clinical performance and patient satisfaction¹⁵⁻¹⁶.

A study documented that inverse relationship exists between emotional intelligence and perceived stress¹⁷. In our study the results indicated that EI is an important predictor of perceived stress. The findings revealed that low EI was associated with the stress.

Our study highlighted the need for creating awareness among University students about the relationship of EI which is an important skill for the management of stress among the health professional students. The students who will be identified having problems in EI or struggling to manage their stresses should be directed to the Counselor to get to know more about EI and how to develop it and its importance to deal with the day today stress for their awareness and to help them to cope up. Learning about EI may help students to overcome with the stress and may be a great help to them in their student life and also later in the career and in achieving their goals and professional targets and make them able to face life adversities.

The causative factors of stress among the students are time constraints, examinations, pressure of better performance, class room conflicts, less effective teacher-student relationships and poor relationships with the peers. It is an essential task for the concerned authorities to prevent any disaster which as it may have effects on the University rankings in the competitive world.

CONCLUSIONS

At universities students constantly feel stressed and insecure. Our study concluded that students with higher EI are able to understand their peer needs and handle the stress better. Stress affects students' behaviors and their performance and their study efficiency is reduced. Students with high stress may have great fall in performance and it may directly affect their academic results. To cope up with

the stress the Universities are required to adapt the new strategies for the provision of better environment for the healthy growth in the behavior, thinking, interpersonal interaction and stress management among the students and the faculty.

Conflict of interest: Nil

Funding: This study has been funded by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Northern Border University – Arar , Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Acknowledgement: The authors are thankful to Laila Durhub Mohammed Alshammari for her assistance in this research project.

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