

Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health among Higher Secondary Teachers

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Abstract: The teaching profession, especially at the higher secondary level, demands not only academic proficiency but also emotionally intelligent. Recognizing the multifaceted challenges teachers face, including academic pressures, administrative responsibilities, and interpersonal dynamics, the research aims to determine how emotional intelligence influences a teacher's mental health. The present study aims to study the impact of emotional intelligence on mental health. On this base 240 secondary school teachers were selected with stratified random sampling from schools of eastern U.P. For data collection, the Teacher's Emotional Intelligence Inventory and Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory were used for measuring emotional intelligence and mental health. All data collected were assessed by using descriptive statistical techniques, three-way analysis of variance. Result revealed that there is a significant difference between mental health among higher secondary school teachers of aided and non-aided educational institutions. There is a significant difference between mental health among male and female secondary school teachers of aided and non-aided educational institutions. Teachers with above average emotional intelligence are more mentally healthy than teachers with low average emotional intelligence. Therefore, it may be concluded that a mentally healthy teacher must possess emotional intelligence

Keywords: emotional intelligence, mental health, higher secondary teachers

INTRODUCTION: Teachers are the foundation of the teaching profession since they are responsible for carrying out the majority of the programs and policies that govern the teaching – learning process and the overall education system. Kothari commission (1964) observed that “the teachers are the most important factors affecting the quality of education and the success of all educational endeavors depends on the personal qualities, character, educational qualifications and professional competence of teachers” (Balamohandas & Sharma, 2012). The strength of the

educational system is its committed teachers. They are essential for improving the system's efficacy, efficiency, and productivity. They sustain the educational system by driving themselves to support, encourage, and mold students' behavior and exerting extra effort in order to accomplish educational objectives. They possess an optimistic outlook, the will to work hard, the desire to be good instructors, the assurance to make a meaningful difference in the lives of their pupils, and the tenacity to successfully navigate a variety of difficult circumstances.

According to Goleman (1995 and 1998), emotional intelligence is an important factor in determining personal success as a student, teacher, parent, manager and leader. Goleman (1999) explains that emotional intelligence creates passion, confidence, friendliness, motivation, pride and energy in individuals. The ability to transmit these same emotions to others offers emotionally intelligent people advantages over others in interpersonal and organizational context. Emotional intelligence focuses more on emotional problem solving, rather than on the social, political or verbal aspects inherent in the social intelligence construct (Mayer et.al,2000).

Mental Health:

Scientists in the past defined health simply as an absence of disease or illness. However, in 1948, when the World Health Organization was founded the following definition of health was established; "a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Looking at this definition, a person realizes that individuals can at once be relatively healthy in some aspects of life (for e.g. normal b.p. of 120/80 mmHg) but unhealthy in others (for example suffering from depression). Thus, being healthy is not an "all- or nothing" principle. It is easy to assess physical health by taking health status and measurement of the body. However, mental and social components of health are much more challenging to assess. (Sharma, 2007)

Mental health is a level of psychological well-being or an absence of mental illness. It is the psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment. According to the World Health Organization, mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficiency, autonomy, competence, inter generations

dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others. Mental Health, as defined by the Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health, "refers to the successful performing of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and the ability to adapt to change and cope with diversity.

Emotional intelligence and Mental Health

Teachers are the most powerful agents who influence the behavior of the students and therefore teachers should possess emotional stability as well as a healthy attitude towards life. According to Smith and Segel (2011) "People who are emotionally and mentally healthy have the tools for coping with difficult situations and creative in bad times as well as good." The teacher's own mental health not only contributes to better adjustment in pupils but is essential for the teacher's own efficiency and happiness. An amiable teacher who understands the needs of his pupils and who is himself well-adjusted is an asset to any school. For the right person teaching can be a source of immense satisfaction and self-fulfillment but for the misfit the satisfaction are marginal and the drawbacks are correspondingly magnified. A maladjusted teacher not only makes his life miserable but spoils the mental health of innumerable pupils, during his teaching career. Mental health of teachers is not only a personal necessity but a professional responsibility as well. A teacher with sound mental health is likely to facilitate a classroom climate conducive to mental health of students.

Teacher's mental health is mainly dependent upon two factors, i.e. internal as well as external factors. The internal factors are personality, emotional maturity, attitude, character, value, belief, philosophy of life, physical health etc. Besides these internal factors, some external factors related to their working conditions are also considered as hazards of mental health of teachers.

People with high self-esteem are generally happier, far better in stressful situations, are less prone to depression and had healthier lives overall than people with low self-esteem (e.g. Antonucci and Jackson, 1983; Hosfoll and Lieberman, 1897; Myers, 1992; Crocker and Luthamen, 2003; Kernis, 2003, 2003; Crocker and Park, 2004 and Sinha and Jain (2004). Empathy is considered to play an

important role a individual's interpersonal functioning (Davis,1983;Cowman and Hoffman,1986 and Eisenberg and Fabes,1990).

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in how emotional reactions and experiences affect both physical as well as mental health. For example.it has been claimed that negative emotional states are associated with unhealthy patterns of physiological functioning, whereas positive emotional states are associated with health in patterns of responding in both cardiovascular activity and immune system (Herbert and Cohen,1993). Salovey et.al (2000) discussed extensively the importance of emotional states on physical and mental health. Furthermore, extended research in the field of health psychology has demonstrated the effect of negative mood or unpleasant emotional experiences on a number of habits or behavior that have been accused for unhealthy conditions.

Goleman (1995) and Martinez-Pons (1997) have found emotional intelligence as the strongest predictor of mental health. Goleman (1995) tells us that we really have two different ways of understanding intellectually and emotionally and our mental life results from the interaction of both functions. It means mental health directly depends on head and heart because intellectual development depends on head(brain) and emotional development depends on heart. Mental health is positively correlated to emotional intelligence and its all the dimensions viz, self-awareness, managing emotions, empathy, motivating oneself, handling relationship, and vice-versa. It means mental health is affected by emotional intelligence.

Singh, S (1992) states that for teachers mental health is a necessary professional requirement. They are professionally bound not only to be mentally healthy themselves but also to do their utmost for the betterment of mental health of their pupils. It is universally recognized that “only a well - adjusted teacher can efficiently discharge his responsibilities towards his students”. In fact, good mental health is essential for ever increasing professional growth of teachers. A teacher with bad mental health not only tends to incapacitate himself for the performance of his multifarious duties in the school but also creates difficulties and problems for his students. He generates unnecessary tensions in them and also weakens their achievement motivation. In order to prevent

maladjustment among his pupils, a teacher should himself be free from depression, attitude of suspicion and insecurity and such other overt and covert behavior traits.

This is important because it promotes mental health of the teachers as well as the students. The mental health of a teacher will be conditioned by his/her attitude towards the profession. It is important for teachers to take an optimistic view of their profession because the mental health of a teacher as an individual depends upon it, but even more, because it will be reflected in the effectiveness of his/her work done (Bernard, H.W, 1982).

Objectives of the Study

The present study is designed to study mental health in relation to emotional intelligence, type of institution and gender of teachers working in higher secondary schools.

Hypotheses of the study

The following hypotheses have been framed keeping in view the above said objective:

1. There is no significant difference in mental health of higher secondary school teachers in relation to their type of institution.
2. There is no significant difference in mental health of higher secondary school teachers in relation to their gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the mental health of higher secondary school teachers in relation to their emotional intelligence.
4. There is no interaction effect of type of institution and emotional intelligence, type of institution and gender, and emotional intelligence and gender on the scores of mental health of higher secondary school teachers.
5. There is no interaction effect of type of institution, gender and emotional intelligence on the scores of mental health of teachers working in higher secondary schools.

Methodology

Sample: In the present study, 240 higher secondary school teachers were selected with stratified random sampling from schools of eastern U.P.

Tools

The following tools were used for data collection:

1. Teacher's Emotional Intelligence by Shubhra Mangal, 2010
2. Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory by Kumar and Thakur, 1986.

Statistical Techniques

The following tools were used for data collection:

1. Means and standard deviation were employed to understand the nature of data on the scores of mental health
2. 3-way ANOVA was employed to find significant difference between various sub groups of above average and below average emotionally intelligent male and female secondary school teachers working in aided and non-aided institutions.

Research Design

In the present study emotional intelligence, gender and type of institutions are treated as independent variables. They are divided into two levels, hence 2x2x2 factorial design was employed to see the impact of emotional intelligence, gender and type of institution on mental health of higher secondary teachers. Mental health was studied as dependent variable.

Analysis and Interpretation

To study the mental health of above average and below average emotionally intelligent male and female secondary school teachers working in aided and non-aided institutions in eastern U.P., the data has been analyzed by using univariate analysis of variance. The mean and standard deviation were calculated for mental health score and are presented below in table 1.

Table 1: Showing Mean and S.D. values obtained on mental health scale by male and female respondents of aided and non-aided institutions as function of different levels of emotional intelligence.

Type of institutions	Gender	Emotional intelligence		Grand Mean & SD	
		Above Average	Below Average		
Aided	Male	N = 30 M= 118.6 SD= 7.166	N= 30 M= 144.2 SD= 5.333	M=131.40 SD=14.357	N= 120 M=130.32 SD=13.94
	Female	N= 30 M= 116.6 SD=3.856	N=30 M=141.9 SD= 5.371	M=129.25 SD=13.573	
Grand Mean		M= 117.6 SD=5.794	M=143.05 SD=5.432		
Non-aided	Male	N=30 M= 134.90 SD= 3.468	N=30 M= 156.80 SD=5.921	M= 145.85 SD=12.045	N=120 M= 141.85 SD=12.496
	Female	N=30 M=127.20 SD=4.342	N=30 M=148.50 SD= 5.084	M=137.85 SD=11.718	
Grand Mean		M=131.05 SD=5.500	M= 152.65 SD= 6.889		
Total		M= 124.33 SD= 8.789	M= 147.85 SD=7.835		

In order to analyze the variance of mental health of above average and below average emotionally intelligent male and female higher secondary school teachers working in aided and non-aided institutions, the obtained scores were subjected to ANOVA and the results have been presented in the table 2.

Table 2: Summary of anova for 2x2x2 design with respect to mental health in relation to gender, type of institution and emotional intelligence

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F value	Level of Sig.
A= EI level	33205.538	1	33205.538	1233.833	.01
B= Type of institutions	7969.538	1	7969.538	296.128	.01
C= Gender	1545.338	1	1545.338	57.421	.01
Interactions= AXB	222.338	1	222.338	8.261	.01
AXC	3.038	1	3.038	.113	NS
BXC	513.338	1	513.338	19.074	.01
AXBXC	.338	1	.338	.013	NS
Within (Error)	6243.700	232	26.913		
Total	4494457.000	240			

Main effects

Type of institutions

It has been observed from Table 2, that F- ratio for the differences in mental health score is found to be 296.128. Thus the value for differences between the means of mental health score of secondary school teachers is found to be significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that two groups of aided and non-aided secondary school teachers differ significantly on their scores of mental health. Thus, the results reject hypothesis (1), "There is no significant difference between mental health of teachers serving in aided and non-aided higher secondary schools". Meaning thereby, that the type of institution i.e. aided and non-aided influence or contribute to the mental health of teachers. This finding of the study is supported by the findings of Bappan (2018).

Emotional Intelligence

It has been observed from Table 2 that F- ratio for the differences in emotional intelligence for teacher effectiveness score is found to be 1233.833. Thus, the value for differences between the

means of mental health score of secondary school teachers is found to be significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that two groups of higher secondary school teachers with above average and below average emotional intelligence differ significantly on their scores of mental health. Thus, the results reject the hypothesis (2), “There is no significance difference between mental health of higher secondary school teachers with above average and below average emotional intelligence”. From reviewing the corresponding means in table 1, it is found that teachers with below average emotional intelligence had scored more on mental health than teacher with above average emotional intelligence. Meaning thereby, teachers with above average emotional intelligence are more mentally healthy than teachers with below average emotional intelligence. The results are in tune with the studies conducted by Pulido et.al. (2016) and Ravneet Kaur (2019).

Gender

It has been observed from Table 2, that F-ratio for the differences on the basis of gender for mental health score of male and female secondary school teachers is found to be 57.421. Thus, the value for differences between the means of mental health score of male and female secondary school teachers is found to be significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that male and female secondary school teachers differ significantly on their scores of mental health. Thus, the results reject the hypothesis (3), “There is no significance difference in mental health of male and female higher secondary school teachers”. The results are in tune with the findings of Prathima and Kulsum (2013) and V. L. Rinsangi (2019).

Two order interaction

It has been observed from Table-2 that F-ratio for the interaction between type of institutions and emotional intelligence, gender and emotional intelligence, gender and type of institutions for mental health is found to be 8.261, 0.113 and 19.074 respectively. Thus, the value for interaction between type of institutions and emotional intelligence and gender and type of institutions for mental health is found to be significant at 0.01. The value for interaction between emotional intelligence and gender is found to be insignificant. This indicates that perception of secondary school teachers on the scores of mental health as a result of interaction of type of institution and

emotional intelligence, gender and type of institutions for different subgroups differ significantly. Thus, the results partially reject Hypothesis (4), “There is no interaction effect of type of institution and emotional intelligence, gender and emotional intelligence, gender and type of institution on the scores of mental health of secondary school teachers”. This interpret to that together the variable of emotional intelligence and type of institution, gender and type of institution are able to influence mental health of teachers.

Three-order Interaction

It has been observed from Table-2 that F-ratio for the interaction between type of institution, gender and emotional intelligence for mental health is found to be 0.013. Thus, the value for the interaction between type of institution, gender and emotional intelligence for teacher effectiveness is found to be insignificant at 0.01. This indicates that the perception of secondary school teachers on the scores of mental health as a result of interaction of type of institution, emotional intelligence and gender for different sub-groups do not differ significantly. Thus, the results accept hypothesis (5), “There is no interaction effect of type of institution, gender and emotional intelligence on the scores of mental health of higher secondary school teachers.” This interprets to that together the variable of emotional intelligence, type of institution and gender are not able to influence mental health of teachers.

Discussions on Findings

The purpose of the present study is to find the differences existing between mental health of groups based on emotional intelligence, type of institution and gender and their interaction effect. However, the differences in mental health of groups of teacher’s based on type of institution i.e. aided and non-aided are significant. . It implies that aided institution teachers experienced less stress and anxiety due to job security and better working conditions, as the government provides funding for salaries, infrastructure and resources. However, teacher in non-aided institution experienced higher level of stress and burnout due to limited resources and inadequate support from the government. Additionally, the workload, administrative responsibilities, and classroom

management challenges faced by teachers in non-aided institution were more as compared to teachers in aided institution which also contribute to their mental health.

Second, important finding evolved through the study is that the secondary school teachers with above average and below average emotional intelligence differ significantly on their mental health. The above average emotional intelligent higher secondary teachers were found to be more mentally healthy than below average emotional intelligent teacher. Teachers' mental health plays an important role in teaching learning process. It results in good teaching and proper guidance to the students. Emotional intelligence is an important moderator of teachers' occupational stressors on mental health. It has been seen that high emotional intelligence was negatively and significantly related to high anxiety, depression, and to low levels of role emotional, social functioning and mental health.

Third finding evolved through the study that higher secondary teachers differ in their mental health with respect to gender i.e. male and female higher secondary school teachers differ significantly on their scores of mental health. Female teachers had better mental health as compared to male teachers. This may be due to number of factors, including greater levels of social support and more opportunities for professional development available to female teachers.

The teachers who are emotionally intelligent stayed calm in stressful situations. They controlled their emotions during mood swings and demanding situations as required. During their low phases, they showed a positive attitude and motivated themselves to reach their goals. They were open to the opinions in case of criticism and managed to convey their ideas to the students. They took initiatives in clearing any misunderstanding with their colleagues (Kavitha and Pravalika, 2014). Educational institutions should implement support mechanisms, such as counselling services, stress management programs and professional development opportunities to address the emotional and psychological needs of teachers. This support can positively impact their overall job satisfaction, reduce burnout and improve student-teacher interactions.

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