

Mental Health: An Evocator of Emotional Competence of Prospective Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Affective domain of behavior is of paramount importance for the well being of an individual. Emotions, an important construct of this domain play significant role in the over-all development of a person's personality, character and general well-being. To handle the emotions cautiously and making the balance in complicated situations depicts emotional competence of a person. This paper reports on mental health as an evocator of emotional competence. The purpose of the present investigation was to study the mental health as an evocator of emotional competence of prospective teachers with respect to social category, gender and their interactional effect. The sample comprised 200 students of educational colleges of district of Rohtak in the state of Haryana. Scale of Emotional Competence Scale (SEC) by Sharma and Bhardwaj (1998) and Mental Health Battery (MHB-ss) by Singh & Gupta (revised in 2008) were administered to ascertain the mental health as evocator of emotional competence of prospective teachers. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that prospective teachers belonging to general and reserved categories were found to be significantly different in their emotional competence where as total score obtained by general category was higher than their counterparts. Male and female prospective teachers were found significantly different at 0.05 level of significance in their emotional competence where as male prospective teachers were better than female prospective teachers in their emotional competence. A significant difference was also found in the level of mental health of prospective teachers. It was concluded that interaction effect of type of social category *gender, type of gender * level of mental health and type of social category * level of mental health of prospective teachers came out to be significant but the interaction among three variables was not found significant at any level of significance.

Keywords: Emotional Competence, Mental Health, Social Category, Gender

Emotion, generally speaking, is any relatively brief conscious experience characterized by intense mental activity and a high degree of pleasure or displeasure Michel (2002). Emotions are complex in nature as these involve different components, such as subjective experience, cognitive processes, expressive behavior, psycho-physiological changes, and instrumental behavior, but are of paramount importance in everybody's life. The concept of emotional competence is rooted in understanding emotions as normal, useful aspects of being human. Huy (1999) and Saarni (1999) stress that a person's capacity to experience, manage, and direct

emotions within social situations should have a sense of appropriateness and purpose. "Emotional competence" (Saarni, 1999) and "emotional capability" (Huy, 1999) are concepts that precisely capture the notion that individuals and groups manage their emotions purposively, in the sense that they express people's individuality and the capacity to cope with emotionally challenging situations, while at the same time behaving in accordance with organizational goals and norms. (Huy, 1999), it should be noted that one and the same person can be emotionally competent in one domain (e.g., in public relations) but not in another domain (e.g.,

managing relations with family members). Working selves can also be considered to reflect people's emotional character, in the sense that it refers to people's ability to integrate emotional skills into effective actions (Emmons, 1999). Each situation will call forth for particular skills, but not everyone will be equipped to deal with the situation to the same degree. So, it can be concluded that emotional competence is domain-specific construct as a person competent in one domain may not be competent in another. It expresses the purpose to manage, individuality and capacity to deal with emotionally challenging situations but keeping in view the goals and norms. In the words of Ellis (1987), emotional competence is the ability to understand, manage and express the emotional aspect of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems and adopting to the complex demands of growth and development. Hence, emotional competence lead forth to better health conditions by avoiding stress instead of suppressing the emotions.

Mental health lies at the heart of one's social, professional and personal development; yet formative years are particularly exposed to mental health problems. But it is the education which plays a paramount role in building the foundation of the mental health and well being of students. Mental health refers to full and harmonious functioning of our total personality as well as to our bio-social –psychological and spiritual well-being (Dandapani, 2000). The definition of mental health highlights emotional well-being, the capacity to live a full and creative life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges. Mental health is defined by WHO as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (WHO, 2010, p. 19). Mental health is perceived as a positive source contributing to asset development individually, socially, and economically (WHO, 2004). Bhatia (1982) considers mental health as the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living. It means the ability to face and accept the realities of life.

Review of Related Literature

The findings of various studies indicated that emotional competence or emotional intelligence could have an impact on several organisational and individual domains. Emotional competence has been found to predict performance (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004), contributes to organisational leadership and career success (Barling, Slater & Kelloway, 2000; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Shipper, Kincaid, Rotondo & Hoffman, 2003), is correlated with enhanced physical, mental, and psychosomatic health (Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar & Rooke, 2007), and it has a relationship with occupational stress (Gohm, Corser & Dalsky, 2005; Matthews, Emo, Funke, Zeidner, Roberts, Costa & Shulze, 2006), is helpful in coping with impulsiveness and aggression (Darolia and Darolia 2005), persons higher in emotional quiet suffered less subjective stress, experinced better health and well being and demonstrated better management performance (Slaski and Wright 2002), Shahu and Gole (2008) suggesed that higher stress level are related to lower performance, where as higher job satisfaction indicates higher performance.

Rationale

Emotional abilities are of particular relevance to psychological health and wellbeing. In addition, it has been found that emotional problems are related to the tendency to get involved in mental, social and behavioural health problems, which may interact so as to intensify their effects on well-being. But one must learn how to cope with psychological stress, handle peer pressure, deal with the emotions, resolve conflicts, build bridges with friends, family and school, develop self-confidence, safeguard from high pressure marketing strategies, particularly of the alcohol industry, as well as cope with other stresses like academic competition and a hankering for material gains and these all necessitate having good mental health (Malhotra & Gupta, 2014). Teachers comprise a unique work force; their occupational role is arguably amongst the most demanding (Kyriacou, (2001)). Friedman (2000) underscored that educators are now, more than ever, responsible not only for the academic progress of their students, but their personal progress as well. Teachers are confronted with parents' expectations regarding their students' performance and often

receive blame for any shortcomings of the students (Friedman, 2000). Teachers must then also develop and maintain an effective working relationship with their colleagues and supervisors for purposes of social support and assistance in administrative involvement. All these elements of the teaching profession are potential stressors that can have varying negative effects on the educator's personal well-being, and mental health

In academic setting, an accountable teacher can manage personal feelings, understand others' feelings and needs, and interact positively with others and it results from his inborn temperament, cultural influences, disabilities, behaviors modeled by seniors, the level of security felt in a the relationships with school staff and administration, and the opportunities provided for social interaction. But for young children, these competencies cannot be acquired without the help of teachers who are important to them. It starts with love, warmth and feeling of attachment.

Through warm and responsive attachment relationships, teachers can promote social and emotional competence, confidence, and resilience in their students (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001). Good working partnerships among staff, and between staff and parents also create an environment where challenges to social and emotional competence (among adults as well as among children) can be more effectively met (Daniel, 2009; Bruno, 2008). Multiple expectations from a teacher's role may affect negatively teachers' mental health and wellness (Mearns & Cain, 2003).

Poor mental health and instability in emotions adversely affect the teachers' role. This paper elucidates would be teachers' emotional and mental problems by studying prospective teachers' development of mental health and of different dimensions of emotional competence before entering in teaching profession. As, emotional competence and a good mental health both seem to associate with a teacher's professional life, but there is dearth of studies which try to study the mental health and emotional competence of prospective teachers before entering in the teaching profession. So, the present investigator visualized a need to study the mental health and emotional competence of prospective teachers.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study and compare emotional competence of prospective teachers with respect to: (a) Social Category (b) Gender and (c) Mental Health.
2. To study and compare the interaction effects of emotional competence of prospective teachers with respect to: (a) Social Category (b) Gender and (c) Mental Health.

Hypotheses

1. Emotional competence of prospective teachers does not differ with respect to: (a) Social Category (b) Gender and (c) Mental Health.
2. There is no significant interaction in the emotional competence of prospective teachers with respect to: (a) Social Category and Gender (b) Gender and Mental Health and (c) Mental Health and Social Category.

METHODOLOGY

Method

The study employed a descriptive survey method; the details are given as under:

Sample

The sample comprised of 200 prospective teachers (100 boys and 100 girls) from the district of Rohtak. Total ten colleges of Education were taken from the district Rohtak for collecting the required sample. Further, from each college 20 prospective teachers were identified based on the systematic random sampling. The researcher categorized the selected sample according to gender (male and female) and social category (general and reserved). The prospective teachers belonging to Scheduled class, Tribe and other Backward classes were selected under reserved category and others were taken as general.

Tools Used

Scale of Emotional Competence Scale (SEC) by Sharma and Bhardwaj (1998): The scale has 30 items to measure five emotional competencies where each

competency was measured by six items selected for the purpose. The reliability of emotional competence was 0.76 hat was determined by split-half method. The validity of the scale has been determined with factor A and C of 16-personality factor questionnaire and found to be 0.64 and 0.69 respectively. The description of five different competencies in the scale along with their item numbers are given below in Table 1.

Table 1: Item wise Description of the Scale of Emotional Competence

Sl. No.	Name of the Item	Item Numbers in SEC
1	Adequate Depth of Feeling (ADF)	1,6,11,16,21 and 26
2	Adequate Expression and Control of Emotions(AECE)	2,7,12,17,22 and 27
3	Ability to Function with Emotions (AFE)	3, 8, 13, 18, 23 and 28
4	Ability to Cope with Problem Emotions (ACPE)	4, 9, 14, 19, 24 and 29
5	Encouragement of Positive Emotions (EPE)	5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30

♦ *Mental Health Battery (MHB-ss) by Singh & Gupta (2008):* The MHB intends to assess the status of mental health of persons in the age range of 13 to 22 yrs. The battery has 130 items, divided into six parts viz.:

- Part I: Emotional Stability (ES) contains 15 items;
- Part II: Overall Adjustment (OA) contains 40 items;
- Part III: Autonomy (AY) contains 15 items;
- Part IV: Security-Insecurity (SI) contains 15 items;
- Part V: Self-Concept (SC) contains 15 items;
- Part VI: Intelligence (IG) contains 30 items.

The scoring of MHB comprise of two sections – Section A and Section B. For Section-A, item nos. I to IV of preliminary information is given weight to determine socio economic status of the examinee and for Section- B if the response is in accordance with scoring key, then a score of + 1 is given, and a score of zero if does not given accordingly.

Data Analysis

The data collected through Scale of Emotional Competence and Mental Health Battery were analysed through inferential statistics. To identify the emotional competency of prospective teachers, manual of SEC was used, whereas to find the mental health of prospective teachers, a manual of MHB was referred. The item wise scores were calculated and five items of SEC were added to obtain total emotional competence scores and six items of mental health were added to obtain mental health scores, which were used by the investigators for analysis. To compare the school environment and mental health of students of formal operational stage, *t*- test was used and to study the influence of school environment on mental health regression analysis was done.

RESULTS

The data was analysed in the light of hypothesis designed for the study and findings has been encapsulated in the following heads for better comprehensibility of the readers.

Table 2: Scores of Emotional Competence of Prospective Teachers with respect to Type of Social Category and Gender

Type of Gender	Type of Social Category		Total
	General	Reserved	
Male	2362	2300	4662
Female	2361	2250	4611
Total	4723	4550	9273

It is evident from the Table 2 that total emotional competence score of male prospective teachers belonging to general category is highest (Scores = 2362) whereas female prospective teachers of reserved category have the lowest emotional competencies score (2250). Female prospective teachers were found more emotionally competent (4662) than their counterpart (4611). It is found that general prospective teachers have more emotional competence score (4723) than prospective teachers of reserved category (4550).

Table 3: Scores of Overall Mental Health of Prospective Teachers with respect to Gender and Mental Health

Type of Mental Health	Type of Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
High	1917	2306	4223
Low	2694	2356	5050
Total	4611	4662	9273

The scores lying above mean ± S. D. were taken as high mental health and scores lying below ± ½ S. D. were taken as low mental health. From Table 3 it is apparent that total emotional competence score of male prospective teachers having low mental health is highest (Scores=2694) whereas female prospective teachers of low mental health scores have the lowest emotional competencies score (2356).

Table 4: Scores of Emotional Competence of Prospective Teachers with respect to Type of Social Category and Mental Health

Mental Health	Type of Social Category		Total
	General	Reserved	
High	2356	1867	4223
Low	2367	2683	5050
Total	4723	4550	9273

Results in Table 4 demonstrates that prospective teachers of general category having low mental health score exhibit highest emotional competence score (2367) whereas prospective teachers of reserved category pertaining high mental scores have lowest emotional competence score (1867).

In order to study the main effect of type of Social Category, Gender and Overall mental Health on the total emotional competence scores of sampled prospective teachers, statistical technique of 'Analysis of Variance' (2×2×2, factorial design involving two types of social categories i.e. General and Reserved, two levels of gender i.e. male and female and two levels of mental health i.e. high and low) was applied on the scores of emotional competence.

Table 5: Summary Table of Analysis of Variance on Total Emotional Competence Scores of Prospective Teachers

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social Category	916.155	1	916.15	14	.00
Gender	265.405	1	265.40	4.05	.04
Mental Health	2065.314	1	2065.31	31.56	.00
Social Category * Gender	311.412	1	311.41	4.75	.03
Gender * Mental Health	66.310	1	66.31	1.01	.31
Social Category * Mental Health	351.722	1	351.22	5.37	.02
Social Category * Gender * Mental Health	9.290	1	9.29	.142	.70
Error Variance	12563.538	192	65.435		
Total	16118.720	199			

It is apparent from the Table 5 that the calculated value of F ratio for the main effect of social category of prospective teachers on their emotional competence came out to be 14 for df 1 and 199, which is significantly higher than the 'F' value 6.84 at 0.01 level of significance. Further, Table-5 also reveals that 'F' ratio for main effect of gender came out to be 4.05 for df 1 and 199 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. Further, F' ratio for main effect of mental health came out to be 31.56 for df 1 and 199 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, hypothesis 1 that emotional competence of prospective teachers does not differ significantly with respect to; (a) Social Category (b) Gender and (c) Mental Health is rejected.

Further, Table 5 also reveals the calculated value of 'F' ratio for interaction effect of type of social category *gender, type of gender *level of mental health and type of social category *level of mental health of prospective teachers came out to be 4.75, 1.01 and 5.37 respectively for df 1 and 199 which were found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance except type of gender * level of mental health as it was not significant at any level of significance. Further, F' ratio for interaction effect of type of social category *gender * level of mental health came out to be .14 for df 1 and 199 which is not significant at any level of significance. Thus, the (2×2×2) interaction effect was found to be not significant.

The findings of the study reveal that prospective teachers belonging to general and reserved categories were found to be significantly different in their emotional competence. The total score obtained by general category was higher than their counterparts. This shows that general category teachers are better in the five components of emotional competence viz., Adequate Depth of Feeling (ADF), Adequate Expression and Control of Emotions (AECE), Ability to Function with Emotions (AFE), Ability to Cope with Problem Emotions (ACPE), Encouragement of Positive Emotions (EPE). Male and female prospective teachers are found significantly different at 0.05 level of significance in their emotional competence. Male prospective teachers were found significantly different from female prospective teachers. The results revealed that males were having better emotional competence than females. A significant difference was also found in the level of mental health of prospective teachers. It shows that mental health does affect the emotional competence of prospective teachers. High level of mental health of prospective teachers helps them to make adjustments during teaching-learning process. It was concluded that interaction effect of type of social category *gender, type of gender *level of mental health and type of social category *level of mental health of prospective teachers came out to be significant but all the interaction among three variables was not found significant at any level of significance.

DISCUSSION

An educational institute is a social institution, in which rich norms, customs and ways of thinking are embedded and of which the teacher is the conveyor. The schools are expected to create such environment where good mental health can cultivate. Teaching is an emotional practice, and teachers need support in strengthening their social and emotional skills to manage the stress that comes with teaching and stay in the profession for the long term. This study was aimed to explore the mental health as an evocator of emotional competence of prospective teachers with respect to social category, gender and their interactional effect. The analysis revealed that males were having better emotional competence than females. A significant difference was also found in the level of mental health of prospective

teachers. It was concluded that interaction effect of type of social category *gender, type of gender* level of mental health and type of social category *level of mental health of prospective teachers came out to be significant but all the interaction among three variables was not found significant at any level of significance. The results are of the present study are in cohesion with that variables with respect to the workplace setting, as well as those related to individual educators, all may play a role in either mitigating or exacerbating the negative effects associated with the occupational stressors, and include gender and personality characteristics (Kyriacou, 2001) and Brand *et al.* (2010) observed an association between satisfaction with life and lower frequencies of emotional exhaustion accompanied by reduced pessimism. In present scenario, there is high knowledge explosion and to remain update is the dire need of the hour on the part of a teacher. So, emotional programmes including interactive sessions, workshops, conference and motivational talks etc., should be enhanced for the well-being of prospective teachers.

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