



## AN INVESTIGATION OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT:

The present study has been designed to investigate the Emotional Competence and Mental Health as predictors of Academic Achievement the secondary school pupils of Karnataka for this purpose a sample of 530 students of Ballari and Vijayanagara districts of Karnataka State was selected on the basis of gender, type of management of school and locality. They were administered Scale of Emotional Competence, Mental Health Status Scale and Achievement Test in Physics. The results of the study revealed that both Emotional Competence and Mental Health have high correlation with Achievement. The results also revealed that among the variables studied, the best predictor of Academic Achievement is Emotional Competence.

### KEYWORDS:

### INTRODUCTION

In recent recent years there has been an increased interest in studying both the academic success of students and their emotional adjustment in schools. It is argued that the current demands of society require additional skills in the areas of emotional awareness, decision making, social interaction and conflict resolution in children. It is becoming evident that general success and well-being in adulthood can be contingent upon learning how to employ these social and emotional learning skills to negotiate life's many challenges productively, in order to reduce the risk of mental health problems. These ideas challenge the more traditional view that the purpose of education is to teach core curriculum subjects and that this knowledge will equip students to meet the challenges they face when they become adults.

Emotional Competence has been an emerging topic among social and organizational psychologists. Emotional Competence has its roots in the concept of social intelligence, first identified by Thorndike in 1920. Following Thorndike's ideas, Gardner (1993) included interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. However, Salovey and Mayer (1990) were among the earliest to suggest the name "Emotional Intelligence" to refer to the ability of a person to deal with his or her emotions. Further they defined Emotional Competence as a set of interrelated skills, which comprised the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotions, the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Further. the four dimensional definition of Emotional Competence was developed by Davies et al. (1998), which included:

i) Appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself.

ii) Appraisal and expression of emotion in others.

iii) Regulation of emotion in oneself.

iv) Use of emotion to facilitate performance.

### NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

According to Goleman (1995) Emotional Competence is a learned capability based on Emotional Intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work or in any other situation because of relational skills. An emotional competency needs to be learned so as to use it to manage one's own feeling and behavior and deal well with others.

Ciarrochi et. al identified Emotional Competence as the ability to understand, manage and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life. It includes Self-awareness, Emotional Regulation, Working Co-operatively and Caring about Oneself and Others.

### COMPONENTS OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

The four dimensions of Emotional Competence and its subcomponents are described below.

#### I. SELF-AWARENESS

- **Emotional self-awareness:** Recognizing one's emotions and their effects.
- **Accurate self-assessment:** Knowing one's strengths and limits.
- **Self-confidence:** Sureness about one's self-worth and capabilities.

#### II. SELF-MANAGEMENT

- **Emotional self-control:** Managing disruptive emotions and impulses.

- **Trustworthiness:** Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity.
- **Conscientiousness:** Taking responsibility for personal performance.
- **Adaptability:** Flexibility in handling change.
- **Optimism:** Persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks.
- **Achievement orientation:** Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence.
- **Initiative:** Readiness to act on opportunities.

### III. SOCIAL AWARENESS

- **Empathy:** Sensing others feelings and perspective, and taking an active interest in their concerns.
- **Organizational awareness:** Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships.
- **Service orientation:** Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs.

### IV. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- **Developing Others:** Sensing what others need in order to develop, and bolstering their abilities.
- **Inspirational leadership:** Inspiring and guiding groups and people.
- **Influence:** Wielding effective tactics for persuasion.
- **Communication:** Sending clear and convincing messages.
- **Change catalyst:** Initiating or managing change.
- **Conflict management:** Negotiating and resolving disagreements.
- **Building bonds:** Nurturing instrumental relationships.
- **Teamwork and collaboration:** Working with others toward shared goals and creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

a) A healthy personality is a developmental achievement. The healthy individual is confident and efficient in problem solving, constructively productive, realistic in self-appraisal and in goal setting, and able to accept and give esteem and love in interpersonal relations and happily committed to significant personal and social goals. Mental Health, generally implies optimal development of human abilities, optimal growth towards emotional maturity with freedom from neurotic tensions and inhibitions. It also indicates optimal ability to maintain relationships with individuals and groups in accordance with existing cultural patterns.

Academic performance is a very broad term, which indicates generally the learning outcome of pupils. Achievement of the learning outcomes requires a series of planned and organized experiences; hence learning is called a process. Learning affects major areas of I behavior

of pupils, such as, cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. It is difficult to say without proper evidence that pupils reach the same I level in all the three domains at a I time. As the areas of affective and psychomotor domains are not sufficiently exposed, it is generally a custom to restrict the term academic performance to the level of achievement of pupils in the cognitive area of various school subjects.

It is the major task of teachers to find out the root cause of such poor performance, whether it be in themselves, in the children or in the institutions and to find out suitable remedial measures. Secondary school pupils are usually teenagers and proper maintenance of Mental Health and Emotional Competence at this period helps them to lead a happy life.

All this reveals that more research is needed to determine the exact connection of Emotional Competence and Mental Health.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the emotional competence of secondary school students
- To study the mental health of secondary school students
- To study the academic achievement in Physics among secondary school students

### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- There will be significant difference in the Mean scores of Emotional Competence, Mental Health and Achievement in Physics for the groups formed on the basis of
  - i) Sex
  - ii) Locality
  - iii) Type of management of schools
- There will be significant relationship between Emotional Competence and Achievement in Physics for Total sample and sub-samples.
- There will be significant relationship between Mental Health and Achievement in Physics for Total sample and sub-samples.
- Achievement in Physics can be predicted significantly in terms of the independent variables selected such as Emotional Competence and Mental Health.

### METHOD

#### SAMPLE

The study was carried on a sample of 530 secondary school students from the schools of Ballari and Vijayanagara districts of Karnataka. The sample was selected using proportionate stratified sampling technique for ensuring the representation of the population.

#### TOOLS:

- Scale of Emotional Competence (2006) by Usha and Rekha was used to measure Emotional

Competence. This scale is a 3-point scale which measure self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. It consists of 60 items.

- Mental Health Status Scale (1999) by Usha, Anil and Remmya was used to measure the Mental Health of the secondary school pupils.
- Achievement Test in Physics (2004) by Usha and Suchitra was used to measure the Achievement of IX standard pupils in Physics.

**RESULTS:**

**TABLE-1: MEAN, SD AND T VALUES FOR EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, MENTAL HEALTH AND ACHIEVEMENT IN PHYSICS.**

| Samples               | Mean & Standard deviation | Emotional Competence | Mental Health | Achievement in Physics |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Boys<br>(N=285)       | M <sub>1</sub>            | 143.68               | 116.00        | 16.16                  |
|                       | SD <sub>1</sub>           | 13.13                | 10.19         | 4.68                   |
| Girls<br>(N=245)      | M <sub>2</sub>            | 144.51               | 117.02        | 16.78                  |
|                       | SD <sub>2</sub>           | 11.99                | 10.75         | 5.03                   |
| <b>t-value</b>        |                           | <b>0.76</b>          | <b>1.12</b>   | <b>1.46</b>            |
| Rural<br>(N=336)      | M <sub>1</sub>            | 143.94               | 116.11        | 16.73                  |
|                       | SD <sub>1</sub>           | 12.37                | 10.56         | 4.85                   |
| Urban<br>(N=194)      | M <sub>2</sub>            | 144.27               | 117.11        | 15.96                  |
|                       | SD <sub>2</sub>           | 13.05                | 10.26         | 4.83                   |
| <b>t-value</b>        |                           | <b>0.29</b>          | <b>1.06</b>   | <b>1.75</b>            |
| Government<br>(N=230) | M <sub>1</sub>            | 144.71               | 117.62        | 15.16                  |
|                       | SD <sub>1</sub>           | 12.46                | 10.22         | 4.53                   |
| Private<br>(N=300)    | M <sub>2</sub>            | 143.57               | 115.59        | 17.44                  |
|                       | SD <sub>2</sub>           | 12.73                | 10.56         | 4.86                   |
| <b>t-value</b>        |                           | <b>1.03</b>          | <b>2.22*</b>  | <b>5.51**</b>          |

\*P<0.05 \*\*P<0.01

**DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows that significant Gender difference doesn't exist in Emotional Competence, Mental Health and Achievement in Physics for the total sample. But high Means associated with girl's shows that they are superior in Emotional Competence, Mental Health and Achievement in Physics. The results revealed that there is no significant difference between rural and urban pupils in Emotional Competence, Mental Health and Achievement in Physics. But urban pupils are found superior in Emotional

Competence, Mental Health while rural pupils are superior in Achievement in Physics. It is also found that no significant difference exists between government school pupils and private school pupils in Emotional Competence. Significant difference was found between government school pupils and private school pupils in Mental Health and Achievement in Physics. Government school pupils are found superior in Emotional Competence and Mental Health while private school pupils are superior in Achievement in Physics.

**TABLE-2: CORRELATION OF THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE WITH EACH INDEPENDENT VARIABLE FOR THE TOTAL AND SUB-SAMPLES**

| Samples          |   | Emotional Competence | Mental Health |
|------------------|---|----------------------|---------------|
| Total<br>(N=530) | r | 0.29                 | 0.19          |
|                  | t | 6.83**               | 4.54**        |
| Boys             | r | 0.31                 | 0.20          |

|            |   |        |        |
|------------|---|--------|--------|
| (N=285)    | t | 5.40** | 3.47** |
| Girls      | r | 0.26   | 0.18   |
| (N=245)    | t | 4.18** | 2.87** |
| Rural      | r | 0.24   | 0.23   |
| (N=336)    | t | 4.56** | 4.34** |
| Urban      | r | 0.36   | 0.14   |
| (N=194)    | t | 5.36** | 1.97*  |
| Government | r | 0.30   | 0.29   |
| (N=230)    | t | 4.73** | 5.27** |
| Private    | r | 0.31   | 0.13   |
| (N=300)    | t | 5.65** | 1.92   |

\* P<0.05

\*\*P<0.01

Table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient between Emotional Competence and Achievement in Physics for the total Sample, boys, girls, rural, urban, government and private samples are 0.29, 0.31, 0.26, 0.24, 0.36, 0.30, 0.31 respectively. This means that there exists low but 'slight' positive correlation between Emotional Competence and Achievement in Physics for total sample and sub-samples. The correlation coefficients between Mental Health and Achievement in Physics for total sample, girls, urban and private samples are 0.19, 0.18, 0.14, 0.14 respectively. This

shows that there is only negligible relationship between Mental Health and Achievement in Physics for total sample, girls, urban and private samples. The correlation coefficient between Mental Health and Achievement in Physics for boys, rural and government samples are 0.20, 0.23, 0.29 respectively. This means that there exists 'low' but 'slight' positive correlation between Mental Health and Achievement in Physics for boys, rural and government samples.

**TABLE-3: MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN PHYSICS**

| Predictor            | r    | R    | R <sup>2</sup> x 100 | B    | B <sub>0</sub> | b    | F Value |
|----------------------|------|------|----------------------|------|----------------|------|---------|
| Emotional Competence | 0.29 | 0.29 | 81.23                | 0.11 | 0.29           | 0.29 | 46.60   |

From the above Table-3 reveals that Multiple regression analysis-stepwise was employed to find out the best predictor of Achievement in Physics of secondary school pupils. Table 3 reveals that the predictor variable Emotional Competence, having high 't' is entered and the value of multiple R is 0.29 and the value is significant beyond 0.01 level, since the F-value is 46.60 for 529 df. This level of significance indicated the existence of a linear relationship between Emotional Competence and Achievement in Physics. The table further shows that RI is 0.0812 which indicates that 81.2 percent of variance in Achievement in Physics of the sample is accounted for by the predictor variable Emotional Competence. Predictor variable Emotional Competence was found positively related to Achievement in Physics. The partial regression coefficient (B) is 0.11, which indicates that Achievement in Physics will change by 0.11 units for every unit change in the predictor variable X<sub>1</sub>. The standardized partial regression coefficient (b) 0.29, which is not above one, shows that the absence of multi collinearity i.e, the absence of extremely strong association between the causal factors of other predictor variables. Therefore Emotional Competence is found as best predictor variable of

'Achievement in Physics.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of the study imply that Emotional Competence is the best predictor of Achievement in Physics of secondary school pupils. Therefore more emphasis should be laid on infusing emotional literacy into the standard curriculum and to create proper school climate to enhance the development and application of emotional skills among pupils.

Mentally healthy children accept their responsibilities, make their own decisions, plan ahead, set realistic goals for themselves, and in problem solving fashion, do the best they can in the problem situations, they encounter or create. They learn how to learn and to solve problems and they take pride in enhanced intellectual efficiency. Therefore emphasis should be laid on creating proper school climate to enhance the development of Mental Health of pupils.

The findings of the study suggest the following.

- Emotional Competence can be inculcated in pupils through co-operative learning, Transformational learning, Self-Science curriculum and by

developing programs as Mastering Emotional Intelligence program, Emotional Training program and customized Leadership programs.

- For preventing school disabilities, instead of criticism and punishment, praise and encouragement should be used. Various psychological studies have found that dull students get benefited if they were praised for their low achievement.
- Students should not be compared unnecessarily. Children's marks should be compared with their previous marks, not with the marks of other students.
- School disabilities should be recognized as early as possible so that the development of non-adjustive attitude among students can be avoided.
- To pay individual attention, general instructions should follow individual drill, so that they can improve their Emotional Competencies.
- On group project, each student should be assigned work according to his ability. Engage students in some constructive activities, according to their abilities.
- There should be multipurpose courses in schools.
- There should be assistance of a child psychologist in every school who assesses personality or socio-emotional functioning that provides teachers and school staff with additional insight into the relationship between the child's behavior and emotional issues.
- Character building activities can be provided to pupils that will lead to more emotionally-balanced personalities.
- Examination should evaluate all aspects of personality of students. Therefore, there should be provision of evaluation of student activities outside the class.
- There should be provision of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities such as games, discussions, debates, scouting, dramas, educational exhibition etc. for proper mental and social development of students.
- There should be classes and lectures in human relations.
- Curriculum should be modified to improve the Mental Health of pupils.

Teachers and parents must show recognition, affection, protection and devotion in hearing the child. They should help the pupils to have regularity of habit. These aspects may help the child to develop a positive attitude towards self.

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