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Research Paper

# Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Positive Affectivity among College Teachers

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***ABSTRACT***

*The present study examined the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Positive Affectivity (PA)among college teachers. Participants were 413 degree college teachers who completed the Schutte's self report inventory (SSRI) of EI,and PANAS-X. The results yielded a significant relationship between EI and PA. Further analyses was conducted which revealed that there is a significant and positive correlation between EI and PA ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$). The results confirmed the expectation based on the different theories and literature on EI that high EI predicts positive mental health.*

The relationship between EI and PA is found because emotionally intelligent individuals are capable of experiencing more positive emotions and therefore remain cheerful. They have a high self esteem and skills to manage mood.Also they seem to enjoy and seek positive mood and manage the negative emotions like depression and frustration.Humor ,problem solving skills and mood management mechanisms allow them to sustain the positive mood.The implication of this study is that if teacher's effectiveness is dependent on their levels of positive affectivity and that it is linked to EI, then efforts need to be put in to enhance it.

**Introduction**

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been found to play an important role in the mental health of individuals. People with high level of emotional intelligence cope better with life challenges and control their emotions more effectively, both these contribute to good mental health.

EI has been defined as "the ability to adaptively perceive, understand, regulate and harness emotions in self and others, (e.g., Salovey & Mayer, 1990, Schutte et al., 1998). These have been several competing definitions of EI. Goleman (1998) has referred to EI as "a capacity to recognize own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in us and in our relationships".

Bar–On (1997) proposed a model of EI "as an array of non cognitive abilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures".

Mayer and Salovey (1997) revised their original definition by including the component of thinking about feeling.Accordingly the new definition stated that emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Salovey, Mayer and Caruso (2002) have stated that EI "refers to the ability to process emotion – laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive activities like problem solving and to focus energy in required behaviors".

Currently, there are two distinct types of EI theories and measurement tools. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) distinguished the ability model from the mixed models.

Ability models conceptualize EI as a set of mental skills that can be assessed with performance tests. The first comprehensive performance test of EI was the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999) followed by a shorter test, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCE IT Version 2.0, Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002a) (Cited in Brackett et al., 2006). The MSCE IT i.e. a performance test assessed the ability to manage emotions for example describing particular emotional problems, asking participants to rate a number of possible actions on a scale ranging from very ineffective to very effective. Responses are evaluated through a comparison of responses made by either experts or a normative sample.

The Mixed models in contrast, are based on the popular definition of EI (Goleman, 1995, 1998) and include three classes of constructs: perceived emotional (and other) abilities, competencies, and personality traits. Bar-On (1997) included the perceived ability to handle relationships and traits such as optimism in his model of EI.

Proponents of the mixed-model also call it the personality or trait approach, and generally use the self-report inventories to measure EI (Bar-On, 1997; Boyatzis, Goleman & Rheec, 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2003; Schutt et al., 1998). (Cited in Brackett et al., 2006).

Research has been conducted to examine the relationship between EI and positive affectivity. Yip & Martin (2006) examined association among sense of humor, emotional intelligence (EI), and social competence, by using measures of humor styles trait cheerfulness, social competence and an ability test of EI. Emotion management ability was positively correlated with self-enhancing humor and trait cheerfulness, and negatively correlated with trait bad mood. Further they found positive humor styles and trait cheerfulness were positively correlated with various domains of social competence.

Ciarrochi, Chan & Caputi (2000) stated that high EI people were more likely than others to retrieve positive memories in a positive mood (consistent with mood

maintenance) and to retrieve positive memories in a negative mood (consistent with mood repair). They also found support for the notion that high EI people try to maintain their positive mood.

Tugade & Fredrikson (2001) have further stated that it is likely that an emotionally intelligent person can fully appreciate the advantages of positive emotions. An important determinant of intelligent management of emotions is having access to one's own emotional life (Mayer & Salovey, 1993) (Cited in Tugade & Fredrikson, 2001). This involves the ability to draw on one's feelings as means of understanding and guiding one's behavior. However, their data also suggested that emotionally intelligent skills might be taught and interventions developed to promote them. It is also conceivable according to them that emotionally intelligent individuals proactively cultivate positive emotions as paths towards development and growth.

The Bar-On EI (EQi) measure has a subscale Impulse control which indexes the impulsiveness, explosive behaviour, irresponsible behaviour low frustration tolerance, abusiveness, unpredictable behaviour (Bar-On, 2000). This points out to the idea that individuals with high EI score low on impulse control i.e. are individuals who do not engage in explosive or irresponsible behaviour.

Evidence for the relationship between EI and positive affectivity further comes from the explanation that individuals can experience an enhanced positive affectivity through the enjoyment of the process for striving for a goal than the attainment of the goal per se (Watson, 2000a) (Cited in Watson 2002).

Hence research has indicated a positive relationship between positive affectivity and EI.

Research has highlighted the importance of positive emotions among teachers. It is found that positive emotions in teachers can increase teacher well-being and also the students' level of adjustment (Birch & Ladd, 1996). This positive affect may also produce a spiral effect which in turn facilitates a more suitable climate for learning (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

Recently the relationship between EI and the teacher's personal adjustment and well-being has come under analysis. In a study carried out with secondary teachers in England, it was observed that the teacher's EI predict level of burnout (Brackett, Palomera & Mojsa, under way), confirming a recent study where teacher's ability to regulate emotions was related to their perceived levels of depersonalization, self-realization, and emotional wear and tear (Mendes, 2003). At the same time, teachers with high EI use more positive, well-adapted coping strategies when dealing with different sources of stress at school, and they feel greater satisfaction with their work. This influence of EI on stress levels and work satisfaction seems to be mediated by a greater amount of positive effect which the teacher experiences, and by the support of school authorities (Brackett, Palomera & Mojsa, under way).

Burnout has been shown to have negative repercussions not only to the teacher's well-being but also on the teaching-learning processes in which he or she is immersed. Prior studies show that burnout negatively influences student performance and quality of teaching (Vanderberghe & Huberman, 1999) and negatively affects interpersonal relations between student and teacher (Yoon, 2002).

On the other hand, training in emotional competencies for new teachers has proven effective not only in increasing their own emotional competency, but also in predicting a well-adjusted transition from the role of student to that of professional life (Byron, 2001).

**Objective of the study:**

To explore the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Positive Affectivity.

**Hypothesis**

High EI predicts high positive affectivity.

**METHOD**

**Sample**

In the present study data were collected from a representative sample of 413 degree college teachers working in colleges located in different suburbs of the city of Mumbai.

**Tools**

1.Positive and negative affect schedule-Expanded form by Watson and Clark (1994) measures affectivity of individuals on two subscales.

- Basic Negative emotion scales
  - Fear
  - Hostility
  - Guilt
  - Sadness
- Basic Positive emotion scales.
  - Joviality
  - Self–Assurance
  - Attentiveness

The original scale has 60 items, however only 46 items out of those which were most relevant to the present study were selected and used.

The reliability of the shortened version for this study was computed and was found to be 0.93 using the Cronbach's alpha, 0.91 using the Spearman Brown formulae and 0.91 using the Guttman's split half reliability

**2.Emotional Intelligence scale.Schutte's Self Report Inventory (SSRI)** devised by Schutte et. al (1998). The scale contains 33 items and has the following 3 subscales, postulated in the early Salovey and Mayer (1990) model.

- Appraisal and expression.
- Regulation of emotion.
- Utilization of emotion.

Cronbach's alpha is 0.90 and test retest reliability over two week interval is 0.78. Thingujam and Ram (2000) found the Croanbach's alpha as 0.89 and the split half reliability of 0.89 on the Indian population. The reliability of the scale was computed for the present study and Cronbach's alpha is 0.91.

**Results-**

1.Correlation was computed between EI scores and the Positive Negative Affectivity scores

2.'t' test to see if there is a statistically significant difference between high EI group and low EI group on the scores obtained on positive affectivity .

**Comparison of scores on positive affectivity between the high EI and low EI groups**

**Hypo-2 :** States that there is an association between EI and positive affectivity. It is predicted that individuals with high EI will score high on positive affectivity.

Analysis was done to see the difference between the high EI group and low EI group on their scores on positive affectivity and are presented in table 1. The mean score on positive affectivity for the high EI group (N = 209) was 191.717 and for low EI group (N = 204) was 174.710. This indicated that the subject scores on positive affectivity are high for the high EI group and vice versa.

Table1 : Mean, SD, and STD error mean on positive affectivity in high EI group and low EI group

| | N | Mean | SD | Std. error mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High EI | 209 | 191.717 | 20.594 | 1.424 |
| Low EI | 204 | 174.710 | 22.086 | 1.546 |

A '*t*' test was computed to see whether the difference between both the groups is statistically significant.

Table 2 : '*t*' test for equality of means between high EI group and low EI group

| | t | df | Sig (2 tailed) | Sig (1 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive affectivity | -8.096 | 411 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

It was observed that the two groups differed statistically on their scores on positive affectivity ($t$ =- 8.096, $p$ <0.05).

In order to examine the nature of the relationship between EI and positive affectivity a Pearson correlation was computed. The correlation was found to be significant. The relationship between EI and positive affectivity is moderate positive (0.443)

Table 3: Correlation between EI and positive affectivity

| | | Positive affectivity |
|---|---|---|
| EI | Pearson correlation | 0.443 ** |
| | Sig (1 tailed) | 0.000 |
| | N | 413 |

*** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (1 tailed)*

The above findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between EI and positive affectivity. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

**Discussion**

The findings of the present research confirmed the hypothesis. The relationship between EI and positive affectivity was found to be significant and positive .The teachers with a high EI scored high on positive affectivity ,i.e. they experience positive emotions for most of the time and positive affect was like a trait in them. The teachers in the study who scored high on EI may have scored high on positive affectivity as they may be having a good sense of humour and may be also better at social competence

Research studies have found evidence for relationship between EI and positive affectivity. Yip & Martin (2006) examined association among sense of humour, emotional intelligence (EI), and social competence, by using measures of humour styles trait cheerfulness, social competence and an ability test of EI.

There are several explanations for this relationship.

The teachers in the present study with high EI may also be regulating their negative mood states by perceiving the negative situations in a more meaningful way leading them to experiencing positive emotions.

Ciarrochi, Chan & Caputi (2000) stated that high EI people retrieve positive memories in a positive mood (consistent with mood maintenance) and in a negative mood (consistent with mood repair)and also that high EI people are better than others at managing their moods.

Fredrickson & colleagues proposed the undoing hypothesis of positive emotions which referred to emotion regulation, which is one component of the EI framework. (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998; Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, Tugade, 2000).

Their findings indicated that positive emotions have the unique ability to physiologically down regulate lingering negative emotional arousal. The exact cognitive and physiological mechanisms of the undoing effect remain unknown. Phenomenologically people place the events in their lives in a broader context, lessening the resonance of any particular negative event.

The emotionally intelligent teachers may also be putting the positive emotions to their advantage i.e have a greater tendency to draw on positive emotions in times of stress, intuitively understanding and using positive emotions to their advantage,which contributed to their high score on positive affectivity. Tugade & Fredrickson (2001) proposed Psychologically resilient people who are described as "emotionally intelligent" (Salovey et al., 1999) appear to be such individuals.

The teachers with high EI would score high on impulse control and indulge less in high risk behaviour,and are conscientious as both these have been proved to be components of EI in earlier studies. The individuals high on positive affect are risk averse, hence it may be concluded that there is a relationship between the impulse control aspect of EI & positive affect. Also found by other researchers like Bar-On (2000), Isen (2000) .

The emotionally intelligent teachers may have been better at problem solving hence were able to cope with life situations better and experience a high positive affectivity.

This can be supported with the findings of earlier studies which state that an important component of EI is problem solving ability. The Bar On EQi measures this ability with subscale problem solving. The subscale is correlated positively with NEO C Factor (Dawda & Hart, 2000) (Cited in Bar-On, 2000). McCrae also stated that the PS in Bar-On model shares a common domain with this factor. This involves adapting a more organized and disciplined approach in another aspect of problem solving (as often observed in planning, organizing and carrying out prospective solutions).

The PS subscale was found to be negatively correlated to the SCL–90 Psychoticism scale (Bar-On, 1997b) (Cited in Bar–On 2000), which measures thought disturbances that interfere with reasoning decision making, and problem solving.

The teachers who scored low on positive affectivity would be experiencing sadness,anxiety anger etc…as these contribute to negative affectivity.This depression or anxiety may have interfered with their reasoning ability and problem solving skills making them further prone to negative affect due to frustration

There were negative correlations observed between PS subscale and the PAI anxiety and depression scale (Bar-On 1997b) (Cited in Baron – 2000) and also with DEP 4 scale on the MMPI – 2 (Dupertuis, 1996) (Cited in Bar–On, 2000) with Becks Depression inventory & Zung self rating Depression scale suggesting that the symptoms of depression such as impaired concentration interfere with problem solving.

This observation suggests that there is therefore an association between EI problem solving and positive affect.

Evidence for the relationship between EI and positive affectivity further comes from the explanation that individuals can experience an enhanced positive affectivity through the enjoyment of the process for striving for a goal than the attainment of the goal per se (Watson, 2000a) (Cited in Watson, 2002).

The teachers with high EI may be enjoying their work more than its outcome, contributing to high positive affectivity.

This finding in keeping with the 'Flow Concept' of Csikszentmihalyi, which proposed that a good life is one that is characterized by complete absorption in what one does. A flow activity not only provides a set of challenges or opportunities for action but it typically also provides a system of graded challenges, able to accommodate a person's continued and deepening enjoyment as skill growth

(Nakamura, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

Hence it means that the individuals in order to experience high positive affectivity be enjoying the pursuance of the task that the attainment of the same, i.e. be in the Flow.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) (Cited in Salovey et al., 2000) has asserted that analytical intelligence is insufficient to achieve flow, it requires commitment of emotions and will as well. It is suggested that it is not enough for individuals to understand that vague goals must be restructured into more manageable immediately rewarding steps. The individual also needs to (1) have an understanding of how it would feel to pursue activities that offer a greater sense of control and more immediate feedback (2) be able to generate the positive feelings associated with such activities anticipatively in order to bolster their motivation & (3) be able to manage, negative feelings such as anxiety, frustration, or impatience that accompany thoughts about accomplishing more distal goals.

These prerequisites are basically aspects of EI i.e. emotion regulation and with out this the flow experience in one's life is not possible.

Hence EI and positive affectivity seem to be associated on the grounds that EI abilities allow the individual to experience the Flow and which is the source of high positive affectivity. Thereby explaining that the teachers who experience positive affectivity are able to pursue activities that allow them to experience a sense of control ,are able to generate positive affect related to the activities and control the negative feelings of anxiety and frustration.

EI correlates with the teachers well being a, which is also experiencing more of positive mood and a high self esteem .The teachers who are Emotionally intelligent also experience a higher level of well being

Also as stated earlier higher EI leads to greater feelings of emotional well-being (Goleman, 1995; Saarni, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey & Palfai, 1995) (Cited in Schutte et al., 2002) and (Bansode,1999) . The authors have stated that the emotional well-being has two important components i.e. characteristic mood and self-esteem.

Mood is an important component of emotional well-being (e.g., Ekman & Davidson, 1994; Salovey et al; 1995; Thayer, 1996) (Cited in Schutte et al., 2002).

Watson and colleagues (Watson & Clark, 1994; Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988) (Cited in Schutte et al., 2002), suggested that mood has a state component, but it also has a lasting characteristic, similar to a personality trait.

The studies conducted by Schutte et al. (2002) showed that higher EI was associated with more characteristically positive mood and also that individuals with higher EI were better able to maintain positive mood.

The emotionally intelligent teachers also may be having a greater ability to perceive ,understand regulate and harness emotions enabling them to maintain a positive mood.

The explanation for the above finding can be that individuals with high EI have a greater ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and harness emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Schutte et al., 1998) (Cited in Schutte et al., 2002). This ability may enable them to maintain higher characteristic positive mood states explaining the associations between higher EI and higher characteristic positive mood found by them. This characteristic positive mood may be the result of many episodes of positive mood states.

Another explanation for this finding is that higher EI is related in more positive mood state and that a low negative mood state comprises feelings of sadness and lethargy which may be components of depression.

The teachers who are not emotionally intelligent experience negative moods or affect like depression ,frustration etc.therefore making them score low on the positive affectivity scale.They emotionally intelligent teachers on the other hand are able to able to manage the negative situations and improve their mood

Schutte et al. (1998) found that lower EI is related to lower positive mood Martinez–Pons (1997) (Cited in Schutte et al., 2002) found that lower EI was related to more depression, which is characterized by low positive mood.

Schutte et al. (2002) also found that individuals with high EI able to maintain higher positive mood states as their emotion regulation allows them to counter some of the influence of negative situations and maximize the influence of positive situations.

These findings according to Schutte et al. (2002) raise the issue of the extent to which EI is different from positive affect i.e. is there an overlap in the constructs. The researchers interpreted that there is some overlap between EI and characteristic mood that accounts for the mood maintenance and recovery.

Hence with the above evidence we can conclude that there is a significant association between EI & positive affectivity. This finding suggesting that the teachers who scored high on EI also score high on positive affectivity, implying that these teachers may be cheerful, enjoy what they are doing, and are able to maintain higher positive mood states as their emotion regulation allows them to counter some of the influence of negative situations and maximize the influence of positive situations.

This finding suggests that the individuals with high EI experience positive affectivity i.e.they are cheerful and adopt a positive approach in especially negative situations. Research has found that EI can be acquired through training .The implication of this research is ,the teachers who play an important role in grooming the next generation as future citizens ,need to be experiencing positive affectivity or well being .Well being and positive affectivity are linked to productivity.Hence to make our Nation Builders productive it is important to train them in acquiring EI skills.

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