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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND THE CHOSEN PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS IN NORMAL SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The present study aimed at unraveling the relationship between the trait emotional competence of teachers in normal schools and in special schools and their psychological characteristics mental health, sociability, and emotional wellbeing. The researcher adopted descriptive survey method which enabled her to design her own data collecting instrument for studying emotional competence of teachers and also to make use of suitable sampling technique for identifying the relationship between the dependent and independent variables in a scientific manner. The study has shown that mental health and sociability are the significant correlates of emotional competence of both the categories of teachers. The further analysis revealed that both the psychological correlates have emerged as the significant predictors of the trait emotional competence. The researcher has discussed the implications of the findings at length.

Keywords: Trait Emotional Competence; Schools; Mental Health; Sociability; Wellbeing.

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1. Introduction

Daniel Goleman’s early work is attributed to the academic contribution of Howard Gardner, which has opened the flood gates of fresh thinking about individual competence changing the entire scenario of education after the publication of *frames of mind* (1993). The basic conception of Gardner about cognition is that human beings possess multiple human

'intelligences'. The former theoretical confirmation of such a contribution broadened the thinking, and application of human competence beyond the existing level of analytic reasoning. Another noteworthy feature of emotional intelligence is that apart from revolutionizing the concept of I.Q, it has extended the possibility of introducing concepts as that of emotional competence to explain and interpret the success of human beings in different walks of life. Though I.Q is universally accepted as a basic competence which is fixed in childhood itself, the possibility of developing related competencies in the form of emotional intelligence is found to be an accepted mode of thinking with the visible manifestations of emotional awareness and emotional self management. As such the concept *emotional competence* has come into existence by the unique works of John Mayer and Peter Salovey, and Daniel Goleman.

2. Background

Several studies have brought out findings to show that *emotional competence* can be developed at a younger stage as well as in adults by subjecting the population to standard intervention programmes (Kotsou, Ilios et al, 2011; Ohl, Madeline et al, 2013; Zinsser Katherine, M et al, 2015; Denham Susanne, et al, 2016). However, often it is said that developing one's *emotional competence* is a lifelong journey. Moreover, this kind of school of thought is of the opinion that *emotional competence* cannot be accomplished in one training programme or a few coaching sessions. According to them, the concerned individual will have the willingness to stay avoiding all waverings to keep up himself to watch his emotion and guard its changes according to the accepted norms of the society. It depends on one's commitment to deep and honest self assessment. If such continuous efforts are possible, a new kind of wisdom is likely to emerge in that concerned individual. He will be able to observe his own changes in his behaviour and also the change in the outlook of others being associated with him. The expected relationships become easier and life will soon become more rewarding (¹Retrieved).

A good number of researches have been reported on *emotional competence* as it has attracted both the educationists and the researchers to bring in the possibility of enhancing human abilities, thereby the values and the virtues. Many of the psychological characteristics which have long been established with different characteristics of human beings serve them in very many ways – intellectually, socially and emotionally. In the context of cognition, emotion, and social, the Researchers of the present study have assumed the impact of *emotional competence* on mental health, sociability, and emotional wellbeing respectively.

Nielsen Line et al (2015) have undertaken a study within the framework of health promoting schools, an intervention using a whole school approach aimed at promoting mental health by strengthening social and *emotional competence* among school children. They have shown at the end that the whole school approach intervention has the potential to promote social *emotional competence* as well as *mental health* leading to the reduction of the impact of socioeconomic differences among school children. Kotsou Ilios, (2011) have reported a study completed with the aim of investigating the possibility to increase *emotional competence* in adulthood and also testing whether the improvement in *emotional competence* results in better mental, physical, and social health. The study came out with the conclusion confirming the possibility of enhancing *emotional competence* in adulthood, thereby flourishing the *mental health* of the participants.

Sociability traits enable the individuals to practice the skills of oral communication, listening, decision making and problem solving skills to make themselves competent in social interactions. Brackett Marc et al (2012) have reported an experimental study undertaken to verify the effect of the programme called 'RULER' on the academic and social emotional competence of students. At the end of the study they have found that the students in classrooms integrating 'RULER' had higher academic grades with enhancing leadership, social skills, and study skills. Similarly Sette Stefania (2014) has published a study on 'shyness' in terms of child – teacher relationships. She has reported at the end of the intervention that the children showed improvement in facing people and the situations, shedding off their shyness. Moreover, shyness was found to be negatively associated with teacher – reported social competence and positively related to teacher reported peer rejection.

Kingston Emma (2008) has brought out from the experimental study that the participants of the typical HDR (High Dropout Rate) course has developed high self esteem and a good level of interpersonal skills, capable of controlling their emotions. They were stated to be enjoying higher **emotional wellbeing**. Ciarrochi Joseph and Scott Greg (2006) have reported from the longitudinal study that *emotional competence* has the capacity to protect people from stress, anxiety, and depression and help them promote positive affect leading to **emotional wellbeing**. It has been confirmed with the 163 university students who are involved in the intervention programme lasting for one year.

From these studies the researchers were able to fix the focus of their study to fulfill the present requirement of establishing the relationship between *emotional competence* and the associating psychological characteristics – **Mental health, Sociability, and Emotional wellbeing** of teachers serving in normal schools and special schools.

3. Objectives

To find the significance of correlation between *Emotional Competence* and its dimensions, and psycho-socio variables *Mental health, Sociability, and Emotional wellbeing* of teachers of Normal schools and Special schools.

To find the significance of psycho-socio variables in predicting *Emotional Competence* and its dimensions of teachers of Normal schools and Special schools.

4. Hypotheses

There is no significant correlation between *Emotional Competence* and its dimensions, and psycho-socio variables *Mental health, Sociability, and Emotional wellbeing* of teachers of Normal schools and Special schools.

Mental health, Sociability, and Emotional Wellbeing are not significant predictors of *Emotional Competence* and its dimensions of teachers of Normal schools and Special schools.

4.1. Population and Sample

The following TWO *categories* of school teachers form the population of the present study.

Teachers in upper primary and high schools in North - West region of Tamilnadu, teaching *normal* children form a *category* of population.

Teachers in *special* schools in North - West region of Tamilnadu, teaching Visually Challenged, Hearing Impaired, and Mentally Challenged children, and those special education teachers employed in *normal schools* under the *SSA* scheme jointly form another *category* of population. The sample of the study is formed of 264 teachers of normal children and 247 teachers of special children.

4.2. Method

The stated problem demands quantitative data by adopting Survey method of research, suitable for correlative, and predictive analyses.

4.3. Research Tools

- *Emotional Competence Scale (ECS)*–Prepared and Validated by the Researcher.
- *Mental Health Scale (MHS)* – Prepared and standardized by P.S.Chandrakumar and S. Parthiban (2013).
- *Teachers’ Sociability Scale (TSS)* - Prepared and standardized by C. Sherine Vinoca Snehathatha (2014).
- *Emotional Wellbeing Scale (EWS)* – Prepared and standardized by R. Portia (2015).

4.4. Analysis of Data

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant correlation between Emotional Competence and its dimensions, and psycho-socio variables Mental health, Sociability, and Emotional wellbeing of teachers of Normal schools and Special schools.

Table 1: Correlation between emotional competence and its dimensions, and psycho-socio variables mental health, sociability, and emotional wellbeing of teachers of normal schools and special schools

Category	Dimension	Variables	N	Calculated 'r' Value	'p' Value
Normal	Emotional Awareness	MH	264	0.12	0.04*
		SO	264	0.21	0.00**
		EW	264	0.01	0.94
	Emotional Knowledge	MH	264	0.02	0.75
		SO	264	0.14	0.02*
		EW	264	0.01	0.88
	Emotional Expressiveness	MH	264	0.16	0.01*
		SO	264	0.10	0.10
		EW	264	0.09	0.15

	<i>Emotional Regulation</i>	MH	264	0.25	0.00**
		SO	264	0.29	0.00**
		EW	264	0.03	0.62
	<i>Emotional Autonomy</i>	MH	264	0.17	0.00**
		SO	264	0.14	0.02*
		EW	264	0.01	0.91
	<i>Life Competency</i>	MH	264	0.31	0.00**
		SO	264	0.35	0.00**
		EW	264	0.01	0.72
	<i>Social Competency</i>	MH	264	0.29	0.00**
		SO	264	0.11	0.06
		EW	264	0.07	0.21
	<i>Overall Emotional Competence</i>	MH	264	0.35	0.00**
		SO	264	0.35	0.00**
		EW	264	0.05	0.49
<i>Special</i>	<i>Emotional Awareness</i>	MH	247	0.14	0.04*
		SO	247	0.25	0.00**
		EW	247	0.07	0.47
	<i>Emotional Knowledge</i>	MH	247	0.20	0.00**
		SO	247	0.31	0.00**
		EW	247	0.04	0.52
	<i>Emotional Expressiveness</i>	MH	247	0.12	0.06
		SO	247	0.44	0.00**
		EW	247	0.03	0.59
	<i>Emotional Regulation</i>	MH	247	0.21	0.00**
		SO	247	0.32	0.00**
		EW	247	0.03	0.60
	<i>Emotional Autonomy</i>	MH	247	0.21	0.00**
		SO	247	0.31	0.00**
		EW	247	0.11	0.09
	<i>Life Competency</i>	MH	247	0.25	0.00**
		SO	247	0.42	0.00**
		EW	247	0.09	0.15
	<i>Social Competency</i>	MH	247	0.05	0.40
		SO	247	0.07	0.29
		EW	247	0.01	0.95
	<i>Overall Emotional Competence</i>	MH	247	0.30	0.00**
		SO	247	0.49	0.00**
		EW	247	0.03	0.69

** Significant at 0.01 level

*significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis 2

Mental health, Sociability, and Emotional Wellbeing are not significant predictors of Emotional Competence and its dimensions of teachers of Normal schools and Special schools.

Table 2: Predictability of mental health, sociability and emotional wellbeing on emotional competence and its dimensions of teachers of normal schools and special schools

	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Equation</i>	<i>R² Value</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>'p' Value</i>
Normal	<i>Emotional Awareness</i>	14.01+ (0.01*MH) + (0.02*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.047	MH	0.07	0.29
				SO	0.18	0.00*
				EW	0.01	0.93
	<i>Emotional Knowledge</i>	12.87+ (0.01*MH) + (0.02*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.020	MH	0.02	0.70
				SO	0.15	0.02
				EW	0.01	0.81
	<i>Expressiveness</i>	14.88+ (0.03*MH) + (0.01*SO) + (0.02*EW)	0.037	MH	0.15	0.02
				SO	0.06	0.38
				EW	0.09	0.13
	<i>Emotional Regulation</i>	13.75+ (0.03*MH) + (0.03*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.112	MH	0.18	0.00*
				SO	0.23	0.00*
				EW	0.03	0.61
	<i>Emotional Autonomy</i>	14.79+ (0.03*MH) + (0.02*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.038	MH	0.14	0.03
				SO	0.09	0.12
				EW	0.01	0.09
<i>Life Competency</i>	13.94+ (0.05*MH) + (0.04*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.169	MH	0.22	0.00*	
			SO	0.28	0.00*	
			EW	0.02	0.69	
<i>Social Competency</i>	14.15+ (0.06*MH) + (0.02*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.092	MH	0.28	0.00*	
			SO	0.02	0.65	
			EW	0.09	0.19	
<i>Overall Emotional Competence</i>	98.41+ (0.21*MH) + (0.02*SO) + (0.02*EW)	0.190	MH	0.27	0.00*	
			SO	0.26	0.00*	
			EW	0.04	0.42	
Special	<i>Emotional Awareness</i>	13.04+ (0.01*MH) + (0.04*SO) + (0.02*EW)	0.082	MH	0.05	0.42
				SO	0.26	0.00*
				EW	0.08	0.21
	<i>Emotional Knowledge</i>	12.52+ (0.03*MH) + (0.04*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.118	MH	0.12	0.05
				SO	0.08	0.00*
				EW	0.07	0.21
	<i>Expressiveness</i>	8.40+ (0.13*MH) + (0.07*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.194	MH	0.01	0.99
				SO	0.44	0.00*
				EW	0.01	0.94
	<i>Emotional Regulation</i>	13.29+ (0.02*MH) + (0.04*SO) + (0.01*EW)	0.126	MH	0.17	0.00*
				SO	0.30	0.00*
				EW	0.07	0.25
	<i>Emotional Autonomy</i>	13.41+ (0.03*MH) + (0.03*SO)	0.119	MH	0.19	0.00*
				SO	0.26	0.00*

		+(0.01*EW)		EW	0.07	0.22
<i>Life Competency</i>	0.196	13.31+ (0.03*MH) + (0.05*SO) +(0.01*EW)		MH	0.16	0.00*
				SO	0.37	0.00*
				EW	0.05	0.42
<i>Social Competency</i>	0.010	15.78+ (0.02*MH) + (0.01*SO) +(0.02*EW)		MH	0.07	0.24
				SO	0.08	0.18
				EW	0.01	0.91
<i>Overall Emotional Competence</i>	0.272	88.92+ (0.16*MH) + (0.27*SO) +(0.02*EW)		MH	0.18	0.00*
				SO	0.45	0.00*
				EW	0.03	0.59

* *significant*

5. Findings

On testing the significance of correlation between the dependent variable *Emotional competence* and the chosen psychological variables – *Mental health*, *Sociability*, and *Emotional wellbeing*, of teachers in **normal** schools, it is found that there is **significant correlation** between overall *Emotional competence* and the independent variables *Mental health*, and *Sociability*. Similarly, both these independent variables – *Mental health* and *Sociability* are reported to be **significantly correlated** with the dimensions of *Emotional competence* - *emotional awareness*, *emotional regulation*, *emotional autonomy*, and *life competency*. However, only *Mental health* is found to be the **significant correlate** of the dimensions *emotional expressiveness*, and *social competency*. Likewise, only *Sociability* is reported to be the **significant correlate** of the dimension *emotional knowledge*.

In the case of teachers in **special** schools, the correlative analysis has reported that there is **significant correlation** between overall *Emotional competence* and the independent variables – *Mental health*, and *Sociability*. In the same way, both these independent variables are found to be the **significant correlates** of the dimensions of the *Emotional competence* – *emotional awareness*, *emotional knowledge*, *emotional regulation*, *emotional autonomy*, and *life competency*. However, for the dimension *emotional expressiveness* only the *Sociability* is found to be **the significant correlate** for the teachers in **special** schools.

On testing the significance of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable, it is found that in the case of teachers in **normal** schools that the independent variables *Mental health* and *Sociability* have emerged as the **significant predictors** of their overall *Emotional competence* and the dimensions *emotional regulation*, and *life competency*. However, *Sociability* has emerged as the **significant predictor** of the dimension *emotional awareness*, while the independent variable *Mental health* has turned out to be the **significant predictor** of the dimension *social competency* of **normal** school teachers.

In the case of the teachers in **special** schools, it is found that the *Mental health* and the *Sociability* are the **significant predictors** of their overall *Emotional competence* and its dimensions *emotional regulation*, *emotional autonomy*, and *life competency*. However, only

Sociability has emerged as the **significant predictor** of the dimensions *emotional awareness*, *emotional knowledge*, and *emotional expressiveness* of **special** school teachers.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study has brought out the fact that the teachers in **normal** schools are assisted by their *emotional competence* to put up a good mental health, and sociability as these variables are stated to be significantly correlated. Moreover, both these variables mental health and sociability are noted to be significant correlates of the dimensions of *emotional competence* – emotional awareness emotional regulation, emotional autonomy, and life competency. As a good number of dimensions of *emotional competence* to a maximum of 4 are found to be correlates of mental health and sociability, the impact of these psychological characteristics over *emotional competence* is confirmed. In addition to this, mental health is stated to be the significant correlate of *emotional expressiveness* and *social competency*. It suggests that mental health is capable of wielding additional influence over *emotional competence* by means of *emotional expressiveness* and *social competency*. However, sociability is found to influence *emotional competence* additionally with the help of another dimension of *emotional competence* – *emotional knowledge*. In spite of such influences wielded by mental health and sociability over *emotional competence*, the interactive effect of emotional wellbeing over *emotional competence* and vice versa is not established quantitatively in this research. As assumed mental health and sociability have come out as significant predictors of overall *emotional competence* and the dimensions *emotional regulation* and *life competency*, with sociability as the single predictor of *emotional awareness*, and mental health as the significant predictor of *social competency*. The theoretically established role of emotional wellbeing in the context of teachers in normal schools is not supported by the findings of the study.

The teachers of **special** schools are found to be more or less similar to those of teachers in normal schools with regard to the interactive effects of *emotional competence* and that of mental health and sociability. Both these independent variables behave almost the same in except in the case of *emotional regulation*. The correlative effects of the variables has been confirmed with the predictability of *emotional competence* and its dimensions – *emotional regulation*, *emotional autonomy* and *life competency* of special school teachers by their mental health and sociability. However, the variable sociability has been confirmed as a prominent predictor of *emotional competence* along with its dimensions *emotional awareness*, *emotional knowledge*, and *emotional expressiveness* unlike in the case of their counterpart in normal schools. Thus, the superiority of sociability has been well established in the study over mental health and emotional wellbeing in influencing the trait *emotional competence* of teachers of both the categories. Therefore, the Researchers suggest that follow up programmes may be undertaken for normal school teachers to boost up their personality by enhancing the trait sociability for being more serviceable to the children entrusted to their care.

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