



Emotional Competency and Happiness among Teacher Trainees

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Abstract

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The present study investigated emotional competency and happiness among physical education and teacher education students. Emotional competency Scale and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were administered to collect relevant data for the study. The collected data were analysed using 't' test and Pearson correlation coefficient. The results indicated that there is no significant difference between physical education students and teacher education students either in emotional competency or in happiness. There was significant relationship between emotional competency and happiness among these students.

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Emotional competency refers to one's ability to express or release inner feelings. It implies an ease around others and determines one's ability to effectively and successfully lead and express. Foundations of social and emotional competencies are often laid down early in life and become synonymous with our self-image and thus need focused attention over time to bring about change (Cherniss, Goleman, Emmerling, Cowan & Adler, 1998). Emotional competency is the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. In operational terms it can be defined as the power to control the emotions more easily and successfully (Paliwal, Kishore & Badoha, 2011). A sense of humour and the ability to both give and receive love are related to the sphere of emotions that are not provided as gifts but are to be developed by the individuals as their own characteristic pattern of emotional reactivity (Sharma, 1997). There are similarities between emotional competency and emotional intelligence. In a way both are the ability of an individual to control and manage their own emotions and others'. Emotional intelligence is the ability to regulate one's own emotions and to be empathic for others' emotions (Duffy, Krish & Atwater, 2011).

Happiness is an indicator of the satisfaction level of an individual. A happy person effectively deals with emotions. Philosophers considered happiness to be the highest good and ultimate motivation for human action (Diener, 1984). Everyone needs to be happy, but many are dissatisfied with their life. Most people are even confused about what can make them happy. People want to understand ways to be happy and peaceful regardless of their external circumstances (Cloninger, 2004). Most people prefer happiness rather than extrinsic achievements such as fame, wealth, or social status (Diener & Lucas, 2002). Happy people are less self-focused, less hostile, and less vulnerable to disease. They are more loving, forgiving, trusting, energetic, decisive, creative, helpful, and sociable than unhappy people (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005).

The present study focuses on the emotional competencies and happiness of teacher education students. Teacher education programme is considered as professional course. After the completion of this course the professionals could enter into various educational institutions as teachers. Teacher education course can be divided into two: Bachelor of Physical Education (B P Ed.) and Bachelor of Education (B Ed.). The former focuses mainly on physical training



and later on academic activities. The curriculum of B Ed and B P Ed are entirely different. B Ed programme deals with various methods of teaching and its principles. They have comparatively low rate of physical exercises. The curriculum of physical education is enriched with physical exercises and games. Physical education aims at developing a healthy outlet for self-expression, creative energy, release of tension and emotional drives (Seatson, Cash, Clayton, Howard, Leibe & Messersmith, 1983). The teachers' emotional competencies and state of mind may influence their teaching and training. Talented teachers only could mould a healthy generation. Though both these courses have similarities, their emphasis mode of training is totally different. Hence there may be differences among the two groups of students with respect to their emotional competencies and feelings of happiness.

Objectives

1. To find out whether there is significant difference in emotional competency and happiness between B Ed and B P Ed students.
2. To examine whether there is sex difference in emotional competency and happiness among the B Ed and B P Ed students.
3. To find out whether there exist significant relationship between emotional competency and happiness in the B Ed and B P Ed Students.

Hypotheses

1. There will be significant differences between B P Ed students and B Ed students in emotional competency and happiness.
2. There will be significant sex difference in emotional competency and happiness among the B P Ed and B Ed Students.
3. There will be significant relationship between emotional competency and happiness of B P Ed and B Ed students.

Method

Participants

The study was conducted on a sample of 40 B P Ed (Male=15 & Female = 25) and B Ed (Male=15 & Female=25) students randomly selected from the different colleges under Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala. The age of the participants ranged from 22 to 24 years.

Instruments

1. The Emotional Competencies Scale (Revised): This scale was developed by Sharma and Bharadwaj (2007) to measure the emotional competencies of individuals in different sectors. The inventory consists of 30 items measuring the following five competencies adequate depth of feeling, adequate expression and control of emotions, ability to function with emotions, ability to cope with problem emotions and enhancement of positive emotions. All these items are incomplete statements and each one carrying 5 options, A, B, C, D and E and corresponding values are 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. A high score indicating more emotional competency. The test-retest reliability of the scale is .74 and split half reliability is .76. The validity of this scale has been determined with factor A and C of 16 personality factor questionnaire and was found to be .64 and .69 respectively.
2. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) at Oxford University, was designed to help one see how happy one is. This is one of the best proactive mental health tools available. The questionnaire consists of 29 items provided with a six-point response category from strongly agree to strongly disagree, a high score indicating more happiness. This questionnaire demonstrated high reliabilities, and the inter-item correlations ranged from .03 to .58.



Procedure

After obtaining permission from the concerned authorities, the respondents were met individually and administered the instruments. Doubts, if any, were clarified at the time of administering. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques like 't' test and Pearson correlation coefficient.

Results and Discussion

The differences in the mean scores obtained by the two groups of students in the five competency dimensions as well as in total emotional competency and happiness were tested for significance using the 't' test and the results are presented in table 1. The obtained results show that there is no significant difference between the two groups except in the dimension of adequate expression and control of emotions.

Table 1

Means, S Ds and 't' values of Emotional competency and Happiness by B P Ed and B Ed students

Variables	B P Ed students (N=40)		B Ed students (N=40)		't'
	Mean	S D	Mean	S D	
Adequate depth of feeling	15.78	4.30	17.20	3.22	1.68
Adequate expression and control of emotions	15.88	4.12	17.93	2.92	2.56*
Ability to function with emotions	16.95	4.13	17.70	3.48	0.87
Ability to cope with problem emotions	18.05	4.90	18.08	3.97	0.02
Enhancement of Positive Emotions	19.85	5.08	19.23	5.55	0.52
Total Emotional Competencies	86.38	16.64	90.23	13.99	1.12
Happiness	114.85	17.30	110.23	21.04	1.07

*p< .05

There is significant difference in adequate expression and control of emotions between the B P Ed and B Ed students, the B Ed students having high mean score in adequate expression and control of emotions than the B P Ed students. It may be due to the continuous learning and practice of various teaching principles and methods. They also learn how to manage different types of problematic children and their emotional responses in the class room. The physical education students may not be getting proper opportunities to learn such kinds of management techniques; instead, they concentrate more on physical training. However, the overall results point toward lack of differences between the two groups in emotional competency. The results also show that there is no significant difference in happiness among B. P. Ed and B.Ed students. Their level of happiness is almost the same. The high similarities in age, education and general life circumstances of the two groups of students may be the reason for the lack of difference in their experienced level of happiness.

The differences between the male and the female students in emotional competency and happiness were tested for significance. The mean and the standard deviation of the scores obtained by the male and the female students in the different competencies as well as in total emotional competency and the corresponding 't' values are presented in Table 3. From the



table, it can be seen that the differences between the two gender groups are significant in the competency dimensions of ability to cope with problem emotions, enhancement of positive emotions and in total emotional competency, while the differences between the two groups are not significant in the case of the other three dimensions. In the case of all the competency dimensions, the female students are having higher levels of competency than the male students. According to Canli (2002) brains of men and women may be wired in different ways that have a bearing on both the felt experience of emotions and the expression of emotions.

Table 2

Mean, SDs and 't' values of Emotional competency and Happiness by Sex

Variables	Males (N=30)		Females (N=50)		't'
	Mean	S D	Mean	S D	
Adequate Depth of Feeling	16.61	4.84	16.42	3.23	0.20
Adequate expression and Control of Emotions	16.14	4.40	17.31	3.22	1.35
Ability to Function with Emotions	16.43	3.92	17.81	3.71	1.55
Ability to Cope with Problem Emotions	16.57	4.29	18.87	4.33	2.26**
Enhancement of Positive Emotions	17.89	4.61	20.42	5.47	2.07**
Total Emotional Competencies	83.50	16.98	90.88	13.97	2.08**
Happiness	109.39	16.65	114.23	20.51	1.071

** $p < .01$

The females have a good sensitivity and effects of emotions. They can effectively resist the harmful effects of emotions. Females have higher rates of positive emotions like love, affection and joy. The healthy growth of personality as well as adjustment with environment requires the presence of these qualities. The high rates of enhancement of positive emotions in females are good for the next generations' training both as a teacher and a mother. The feminine qualities like patience and lovable approach helps to manage the adversities in life. Today, women are emerging as leaders in a growing range of fields, be it aeronautics, medicine, space engineering, politics and education. Especially in the educational field, the women have a tremendous role to play (Bhatia, 2007). Results also show that there is no significant sex difference on happiness. This lack of sex difference indicates that both these groups of students are having more or less same psychological environment. In other words our social, cultural, and educational environments promote happiness and well-being among male and female students more or less equally. Happiness does not discriminate between genders; cross-cultural researches also have shown that both men and women have equal opportunities to find happiness (e.g., Michalos, 1991).



Table 3

Correlation of Emotional competencies and Happiness

Emotional competencies	Happiness
Adequate depth of feeling	.124**
Adequate expression and control of emotions	.214**
Ability to function with emotions	.134**
Ability to cope with problem emotions	.266**
Enhancement of positive emotions	.358**
Total Emotional competency	.147**

**p < .01

The coefficient of correlation between the different emotional competency dimensions and happiness for the total sample were computed and the results are presented in table 3. The obtained correlations indicate low but significant relationships between all the dimensions of emotional competency and happiness. When emotional competencies become high happiness also increases and vice versa. Correlational studies in the area of happiness are comparatively few. Varma and Dhawan (2006) examined the role of competency in determining the subjective well-being of contemporary Indian women. The results revealed that psycho-social competency was significantly related to general well-being, positive effect, confidence in coping and family group support. Studies show that happy people have high self-esteem, a sense of personal control, optimism and extroversion (Cohn, Fredrickson, Brown, Mikels & Conway, 2009).

Conclusion

Both the B P Ed and the B Ed students have comparable levels of emotional competency. This may supplement the emotional and psychological well-being of next generation. The female students are found to be more competent in emotional aspects than the males. As far as happiness is concerned, the whole groups of students are found to be good levels of happiness irrespective of gender or course differences. The finding that emotional competency and happiness are positively correlated has important practical implications. Emotionally competent and happy teachers only can effectively guide students. Teachers should be good leaders and they have to certain qualities like integrity. Leaders high in emotional intelligence are self-aware, have exceptionally good interpersonal skills, evince self control and social awareness and know how to manage interpersonal relationships (Dearborn, 2002). Though the limited sample size of the present study delimits wider generalizations, further studies in the area may help in developing strategies for enhancing emotional competency and happiness.

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