Original Article

Emotional Intelligence and Its Relationship with Job Performance in Health Care Providers and Health Workers at Larestan University of Medical Sciences in Southern Iran, 2018

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Abstract

Background & Objective: The present study aimed to determine the level of emotional intelligence and its relationship with job performance in health care providers and health workers of Larestan School of Medical Sciences in 2018.

Materials & Methods: This was a cross-sectional study. The Shring questionnaire was used to determine the level of emotional intelligence and its relationship with job performance in health care providers and health workers. Data were analyzed by using SPSS 22 and by Pearson correlation coefficient, one-way ANOVA, Independent Sample T-Test. The significance level was considered 0.05 in all tests.

Results: There was a significant relationship between all dimensions of emotional intelligence and performance. Only the self-awareness component directly explained the performance of managers.

Conclusions: It is recommended that specific educational programs be implemented in any institute and organization to increase the emotional intelligence of the staff.

Keywords: Emotional, Intelligence, Job performance, health worker, Self-motivation.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the concept of emotional intelligence has increasingly been introduced in the theoretical and research work of psychology as a structure related to multiple human behaviors in different environments(1). The concept of emotional intelligence was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Following that, emotional intelligence was increasingly taken into consideration by industrial and organizational psychologists as a psychological factor in predicting the staff's behavior (2). Salovey and Mayer defined emotional intelligence as a subset of social intelligence, including the ability to control the feelings and emotions of oneself and others, distinguish between them and use this information to guide the actions and thoughts of individuals. This may be the most accepted practical definition of emotional intelligence (3).

Emotional intelligence is a set of verbal and nonverbal abilities that enable an individual to identify, understand and evaluate the emotions oneself and those of others to cope with social demands and pressures, and use them to guide

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the thoughts and actions of others (4). Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability of individuals to understand and manage their emotions and also the ability of individuals to recognize what others are experiencing emotionally, to guide their thoughts and actions. Goleman divided the elements of emotional intelligence into two categories, including personal and social elements. The former include self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation, and the latter include empathy and social skills. Self-awareness means to be conscious of one's mental state and think about that state, and self-control means to regulate personal emotions (5). In many studies, emotional intelligence has also been known as one of the most important and powerful factors influencing educational adaptability.

Regarding the research carried out on the role and importance of emotional intelligence in various aspects of life such as education, social environment, and mental health (6), it has been suggested that individuals with emotional abilities can better face with the challenges of life, manage the emotions more effectively, and have better mental health and social relationships.

It has also been claimed in psychological texts that emotional intelligence helps individuals succeed in leadership, decision-making, sales, and even debt recovery (7). The most important goal of any organization is to achieve the highest possible level of productivity, i.e. optimal efficiency. Effective factors on productivity include capital, tools, working methods, and human resources. Undoubtedly, skilled and efficient human resources are one of the most important tools for achieving organizational goals, since human resources play an important role in increasing and decreasing productivity. It means that if an organization enjoys the highest amount of capital and the best technology and facilities, but lacks productive and motivated personnel, it will not achieve its goal (8).

Stress is a natural and inevitable reality in every person's life, which is caused by various factors such as occupation, family, or the external environment. One of the most important causes of stress in life is occupation. Ivancevich et al. described occupational stress as individuals' planned responses to a group of threats in the workplace, which are called stress factors (9). One of the variables that are related to occupational stress management factors is Emotional Intelligence which is also one way of coping with this type of stress. Emotional Intelligence is now considered by scholars more than ever.

Emotional intelligence is the most important factor for predicting individuals' performance in the workplace and the strongest force for leadership and success. The theory of emotional intelligence provides a new perspective on the prediction of the factors affecting success and the primary prevention of mental disorders. Cognitive intelligence or general intelligence causes 20% of successes, in the best conditions, and 80% of successes depend on other factors, and the fate of people in many situations depends on the skills that make emotional intelligence (10).

Personal performance refers to the success history of an individual or can be considered as the obtained results. But job performance includes the activities related to the organization's goals, which can be measured in any individual's specialized terminology. In other words, job performance means the knowledge and ability to perform certain tasks and requires experience in the application of specific techniques and tools, and practical competence in behavior and actions (11). Since the health system in any country plays an important role in the health of the community and, consequently, the development of that country (12), and as no care system can survive without efficient workforce (13), investment on the abilities of the employees might lead to a great cycle of better employee engagement, more appropriate medical and health care, and promotion of work norms (14).

In the study by Brundin et al., entitled Managers' Emotional Displays and Employees' Willingness to Act Entrepreneurially, it was found that managers with high emotional intelligence played an important role in employees' performance (15). In the study conducted by Salimi et al., entitled Explaining the Role of Emotional Intelligence through Organizational Learning Mediation for Prediction of Job Performance of School Principals, it was found that low emotional intelligence led to lack of efficiency, weakness in judgments, wrong decision making, inappropriate employee recruitment, loss of efficient staff, employees' lack of motivation, lack of teamwork, and lack of self-management. Instead, people with high emotional intelligence

would cause increased efficiency, correct judgments, smart decision making, recruitment and retention of worthy people, motivation in others, strong teamwork, and self-management (16). In their study, Moradi et al. examined "The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Work on Reducing job Burnout and Increasing Job Satisfaction" and noticed that paying attention to employees' emotions in the organization could have positive outcomes such as satisfaction and performance and prevent negative consequences such as job burnout. (17)

Although many studies had been done on emotional intelligence, the relationship between emotional intelligence and its dimensions and the job performance of health care providers and health workers had been less considered and studied. As an organization or unit has its unique characteristics, especially concerning health care providers and health workers who serve in the first level of care and the rural and suburb areas, the researcher decided to investigate the level of emotional intelligence and its relationship with job performance in health care providers and health workers of Larestan School of Medical Sciences in 2018, since it had been considered in few studies.

Materials & Methods

The present research was a descriptive cross-sectional study. The statistical population consisted of all 225 that; 83 health care providers and 142 health workers (including 161 women and 64 men) employed in comprehensive urban/rural health centers, health homes or urban or rural health bases of Larestan School of Medical Sciences who had at least one year of service record as full-time employees and also were residents of Larestan or Khonj cities within the past year. Due to the small size of the statistical population, the sample size was considered equal to the research population. To determine the level of emotional intelligence and its relationship with job performance in health care providers and health workers, a Shring questionnaire containing 33 questions was used. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first part consisted of demographic characteristics, and the second part consisted of 33 questions (8 items on self-awareness, 7 items on self-management, 7 items on self-motivation, 6 questions on social awareness, and 5 questions on communication management). The measurement criterion in this questionnaire was a Likert scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never). The reliability of the Shring questionnaire was calculated by Reisi et al., using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha for the dimensions of the questionnaire was reported to be 50% to 64%, and the internal consistency coefficient of the entire test was 84% (18).

Besides, to evaluate the personnel's performance, Paterson Job Performance Questionnaire containing 16 items was used. The measurement criterion in this questionnaire was the Likert scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely, and never). The questionnaires were completed by the staff and in the presence of the interviewers. In their study, Jahani et al. had used Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the reliability of this questionnaire. Its internal consistency was obtained 88.6 for the entire Cronbach's alpha.

The information did not include the first and last names of the participants; it was coded and completely confidential.

The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS 22 software. The quantitative data were reported as mean ± SD and the qualitative data were reported as frequency and percentage of frequency.

To measure the correlation between quantitative variables and emotional intelligence dimensions, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used. Furthermore, the one-way ANOVA and the Independent Sample T-Test were used to compare the mean scores of emotional intelligence and job performance in the classifications of a nominal qualitative variable, and the mean scores of emotional intelligence and job performance in the classifications of a binary qualitative variable, respectively. The significance level was considered 0.05 in all of the tests.

Results

According to the inclusion criteria, 223 health care providers and health workers of Larestan Medical School entered the study in 2018. The mean age of the participants was 33.22 ± 7.11 years. The age range of the participants varied from 21 to 50 years.

The frequency distribution based on demographic variables showed that among 223 health care providers and health workers, 184 (82.5%) were female and 39 (17.5%) were male,

37 (16.6%) were single, 180 (7 (80.7%) were married and the rest were divorced, the majority of the participants had university education with a frequency of 119 (53.4%), and 116 participants (52.0%) were residents of rural areas and the rest were living in the cities (Table 1).

Table 2 shows the correlation between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the performance of health care providers and health workers in Larestan School of Medical Sciences in 2018. According to the obtained results and as seen in Table 3, there is a direct and significant

Table 1. Frequency distribution of demographic variables among health care providers and health workers of Larestan School of Medical Sciences in 2018

Variable	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	39	17.5
Female	184	82.5
Marital status		
Single	37	16.6
Married	180	80.7
Divorced	6	2.7
place of employment		
city	107	48.0
village	116	52.0
Type of employment		
Permanent	103	46.2
temporary-to-permanent	7	3.1
contractual	23	10.3
probationary	24	10.8
other	66	29.6
Education		
Junior high school	22	9.9
High school diploma	82	36.8
Higher than diploma	119	53.4

Table 2. Pearson correlation between dimensions of emotional intelligence and performance of the health care providers and health workers of Larestan Medical School in 2018

Dimension	performance	Significance level p-value
Self-motivation	0.251	<0.001
Self-awareness	0.401	<0.001
Self-control	0.259	<0.001
Social-consciousness	0.210	0.002
Social skills	0.183	0.007

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

relationship between all dimensions of emotional intelligence and their performance. The Pearson correlation test used to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence dimensions and performance with the age of participants showed that there was a direct and significant correlation between self-motivation and age (P = 0.03). A direct and significant correlation was also found between the structure of social consciousness and age (P = 0.02). Besides, the correlation between social consciousness and age was statistically significant (P < 0.01). There was no correlation between other structures and the age of the participants (Table 3). In Table 4, a comparison of the mean scores of the studied structures and gender can be seen. The T-test findings show that only self-awareness had a significant relationship with gender (P < 0.05). In other words, the mean self-awareness in women was significantly higher than in men. In this study stepwise regression used to determine the extent to which managers' performance was predicted by the elements of emotional intelligence. In this regard, emotional intelligence elements and managers' performance were entered into the model as the predictor variable and criterion variable, respectively.

Table 3. Pearson correlation of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and performance with age of health care providers and health workers of Larestan Medical School in 2018

Dimension	correlation	Significance level p-value
Self-motivation	0.143	0.035
Self-awareness	0.032	0.638
Self-control	0.065	0.334
Social-consciousness	0.154	0.025
Social skills	0.160	0.019
Job performance	0.119	0.077

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Comparison of Mean Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Performance with Gender in Health Care Providers and Health Workers in Larestan School of Medical Sciences in 2018

Element	Mean ± SD	P- Value
Self-motivation Male Female	 3.23±23.64 3.09±24.34	0.202
Self-awareness Male Female	 3.33±29.48 3.57±30.83	0.036
Self-control Male Female	 3.94±24.35 4.33±24.29	0.942
Social-consciousness Male Female	 3.30±22.54 3.32±22.52	0.997
Social-skill Male Female	 3.43±17.80 3.44±18.16	0.570
Attitudinal performance Male Female	 8.43±22.41 5.77±20.67	0.119

Table 5 shows the coefficients of the variables in the regression model. According to the significance levels given in the table, only self-awareness directly explains the performance of health care providers and health workers.

Table 5. Coefficients of stepwise regression model predicting the dimensions of emotional intelligence with performance in health care providers and health workers of Larestan School of Medical Sciences in 2018- Adjusted for age, sex, educational level and place of work (urban/rural) Coefficients

Structures	Non-Standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T statistic	Significance level
	Standard error	B	Beta		
Self-motivation	-0.134	0.179	-0.65	-0.752	0.453
Self-awareness	-0.656	0.139	-0.364	4.712-	<0.001
Self-control	-0.182	0.127	-0.121	1.428-	0.155
Social consciousness	-0.059	0.176	0.030	0.334	0.739
Social skills	-0.010	0.159	0.005	0.062	0.951
Constant value	-47.742	4.210	-	11.278	<0.001

a. Dependent Variable: job performance

Discussion

The results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between all dimensions of emotional intelligence and their performance so that employees with higher emotional intelligence showed better job performance. This suggests that employees with higher emotional intelligence had more skills in using emotions to facilitate their job performance, and they seemed to be more aware of how emotions affected behavior and outcomes. They also had a higher ability to regulate their emotions in a way that was consistent with the rules and regulations related to their duties. In this regard, the results of the study by Mehrabian et al. in the health centers of Gilan province can be mentioned, indicating that there was a significant positive relationship between the elements of emotional intelligence and empowerment of the employees in the health centers of Gilan province, and increased emotional intelligence would improve the capabilities of the staff (19).

The research conducted in Queensland showed that 90% of the people with high job performance and ability had higher emotional intelligence (20). It seems that emotional intelligence increases motivation, endeavor, satisfaction, and ultimately improves individual productivity, followed by group and organizational productivity. On the other hand, if an individual is empowered with emotional intelligence, s/he can better cope with the challenges and ups and downs of the workplace and adjust the emotions more efficiently (19). In the work environment, emotional intelligence plays a more prominent role in having a desirable performance compared to other capabilities such as cognitive intelligence or technical skills; therefore, fostering and enhancing emotional intelligence and its capabilities would cause both the organization and the employees to benefit from its advantages (21). Researchers stated that employees' emotional intelligence could predict their performance and productivity. The ability to utilize or generate emotions to facilitate problem-solving plays an important role in the efficiency of group members.

In this research, a pre-test and a post-test of emotional intelligence, and then a test to evaluate the efficiency and the role of emotional intelligence in increasing the performance and social skills were carried out. It was seen that gender differences also affected emotional intelligence. The findings of the present study showed that among the dimensions of emotional intelligence, only the self-awareness structure had a significant relationship with gender. In other words, the average self-awareness was

significantly higher in women than in men. Regarding gender, research suggested that women's emotional intelligence generally obtained four points more than that of men, and the highest difference was found between their relationship management, i.e. women obtained 10 points more than men (22). A study conducted on emotional intelligence of 5,400 men and 2,300 women indicated that women earned more empathy and social responsibility than men, while men showed more tolerance to stress than women and had higher self-confidence. That is to say, in terms of emotional intelligence, women and men were the same, but each gender was stronger in some areas (16).

Simmons' research on gender and emotional intelligence showed that in terms of general emotional intelligence, it seemed that there was a significant difference between men and women. Given the fact that gender has no impact on efficiency, it is better to remove the discriminations and differences that exist in organizations due to gender. In terms of empathy, women are more powerful and try to make positive communications more than men do. This might provide a suitable work environment. Women are also more responsible and can be used in more sensitive positions (23).

The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the employees' age and their emotional intelligence. As age increases, a person can decide better based on his/her past experiences and increase the likelihood of success, because by gaining optimal satisfaction, one can potentially increase the likelihood of success in the long run and deal with barriers instead of being stagnant.

As age increases, emotional intelligence rises, too, and this is a remarkable point in organizations to have a look at experienced individuals as masters to educate low-experience staff. The term "retirement" that is sometimes along with disability and inability has been eliminated, so that steps can be taken to human excellence and dignity and, ultimately, to the excellence and continuous improvement of organizations (24).

One of the most important limitations of the present research was its cross-sectional nature since it was carried out in a relatively short interval and on a relatively small-size statistical community and cannot be generalized. Besides, factors such as personality, cultural patterns, attitudes and class dependencies affected the behavior and expectations of the individuals and also affected the way they responded to the questions, and this was out of the researcher's control.

Conclusions

Given the fact that emotional intelligence is a feature that can be learned, promoted and acquired, it is recommended that specific educational programs be implemented to increase the emotional intelligence of the staff in any institute and organization.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interest.

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مقاله پژوهشی

بررسی هوش هیجانی و رابطه آن با عملکرد شغلی در ارائه دهندگان مراقبت های بهداشتی و کارکنان بهداشتی در دانشگاه علوم پزشکی لارستان در جنوب ایران در سال ۱۳۹۷

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چکیده

زمینه و هدف: پژوهش حاضر با هدف تعیین سطح هوش هیجانی و ارتباط آن با عملکرد شغلی در ارائه دهندگان مراقبت های بهداشتی و کارکنان بهداشتی دانشکده علوم پزشکی لارستان در سال ۲۰۱۸ انجام شد.

مواد و روش ها: این پژوهش یک مطالعه مقطعی بود. برای تعیین سطح هوش هیجانی و ارتباط آن با عملکرد شغلی در ارائه دهندگان مراقبت های بهداشتی و کارکنان بهداشتی، از پرسشنامه شرینگ استفاده شد. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده ها از نرم افزار SPSS نسخه ۲۲ و آنالیز های آماری ضریب همبستگی پیرسون، آنووا، تی تست نیز استفاده شد. سطح معنی داری در کلیه آزمون ها ۰.۰۵ در نظر گرفته شد.

نتایج: نتایج این مطالعه نشان داد که بین کلیه ابعاد هوش هیجانی و عملکرد آنها رابطه معناداری وجود دارد. همچنین ، نتایج رگرسیون نشان داد که تنها مؤلفه خودآگاهی به طور مستقیم عملکرد مدیران را توضیح می دهد.

نتیجه گیری: از آنجا که بین همه ابعاد هوش هیجانی و عملکرد آنها رابطه معنی داری وجود دارد و با توجه به اینکه هوش هیجانی از ویژگی هایی است که می توان یاد گرفت، توصیه می شود در هر موسسه و سازمان برنامه های آموزشی ویژه ای جهت ارتقاء و یادگیری هوش هیجانی کارکنان اجرا شود.

کلمات کلیدی: احساسی، هوش، عملکرد شغلی، کارمند بهداشت، خود انگیزشی

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