

# The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health in Employed Couples in Gorgan-Iran

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## ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at determining whether there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health in working couples in Gorgan - Iran in 2010. 50 working couples in Gorgan were selected as the subjects of this study via cluster sampling technique. Bar-On questionnaire was selected to measure emotional intelligence due to comprehensiveness, simplicity, and conformity to Iranian culture. Also, Ssl-90 test was adopted for measuring mental health. The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) in SPSS Software. Then, the data were analyzed through inferential statistics (t-test and linear regression). The results obtained about the study hypothesis showed that there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health in the subjects.

**KEYWORDS:** emotional intelligence – mental health – working couples –Gorgan

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## 1- INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence has recently been a topic of interest among many psychologists. Psychologists believe that emotional intelligence is one of important factors for success in educational and occupational atmospheres as well as social relations. It can be defined as how well one knows his and others' emotions, recognizes such emotions, controls them, and empathizes with others [9]. It is of great importance for managers and authorities in organizations that professional successes are majorly affected by emotional intelligence components [10].

Organizations and institutions take advantage from emotional intelligence as a whole. The higher skills gained in a company, the higher experience will be gained. Emotional intelligence skills result in better leadership, group work, and customer services. Organizations such as Loreal and American Air Force have saved millions of dollars via performing emotional intelligence programs [11]. If a company is able to provide comprehensive energy for a concept or educational object, the energy will be transferred to all employees; this would lead to success in the company. When people provoke emotional intelligence in themselves, they have better performance, they interact more efficiently and they will enjoy more advantages [3].

Since introduction of emotional intelligence in psychology literature, this structure has been determined in various areas such as labor and workplace [15]. In fact, different authors have always strived to obtain the relationship of the structure with effective factors on occupational success and consequently, job satisfaction.

Due to unavailability of valid data on relation of personality traits or emotional powers with different jobs, job selection is performed according to people's personal experiences or the resulted orientations. Sadly, personality experiences or specific orientations results in misperception about jobs and a summary of personality necessities with minimal relation with professional performance is provided. Dimensions of emotional intelligence in workplace can be adopted in order to overcome the barriers so that people are selected more efficiently with more developed professional capabilities.

Authors studying emotional intelligence believe that emotional intelligence may exert important effects on different activities of human being such as leadership and directing, professional development, professional life, family and marital life, education, health, mental wellbeing, and etc. emotional intelligence should not be considered as an alternative for "ability", "knowledge", and "occupational skills" [17]. It is considered capable of improving and rectifying professional activities, job situations, and acquiring necessary and optimal skills.

Studies about emotional intelligence have just been started. It cannot be considered enough for leading a happy and comfortable life. On the other hand, authors have shown that happy and fortunate couples are those who are accurately engaged in understanding, recognizing, adjusting, and expressing your and others' emotions; the higher the abilities they have, the more fortunate they will be. The findings are consistent with the literature about emotional intelligence. In this hypothesis, it is claimed that people have different abilities to organize their

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emotions [18]. That's why it is presumably thought that studies around marital life acknowledge that those with higher emotional intelligence may make use of them in their marital life as well as their occupational activities. In addition, various abilities to understand emotions may have significant relationship with optimal estimations in marital life. Emotional intelligence structure is a new and influential structure; the more accurate this structure is defined, the more influential it will be [19].

Therefore, the present study aimed at determining whether there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health in working couples in Gorgan City in 2010.

## 2- TERMINOLOGY

### 2-1- Emotional intelligence

2-1-1- Theoretical definition: Ability to understand surroundings properly, self-motivation, self-awareness in order to facilitate thinking and relationship [14].

2-1-2- Operational definition: Emotional intelligence in the present study is the score one gets in Bar-On test. According to this test, the subjects are tested in terms of 117 questions and 15 scales.

### 2-2- Mental health

2-2-1- Theoretical definition: The feeling one has toward himself, surroundings, accommodation, and people around him/her, especially in terms of the responsibility he/she has toward others. It also involves the one's adaptation with his/her income and knowledge about his/her temporal and spatial situation of self.

2-2-2- Operational definition: Mental health in the present study means the score one gets in scl test. There are three criteria for the subjects, i.e. GSI, PSDI, and PST.

## 3- METHODOLOGY

### 3-1- Population

Study population was composed of all working males and females in governmental organizations and offices in Gorgan City in 2010. Samples were selected via cluster sampling method after deriving the statistical facts about working males and females in Gorgan City and finally, 100 people (50 couples) were selected.

### 3-2- Data collection

#### 3-2-1- Emotional intelligence questionnaire

Bar-On questionnaire was selected to measure emotional intelligence due to comprehensiveness, simplicity, and conformity to Iranian culture. It reports non-cognitive intelligence (emotional, personal, and social) and is applicable in educational, industrial, clinical, and medicinal atmospheres. The test is composed of 117 questions and 15 scales. The answers were based on Likert scale with five options (i.e. absolutely agree, agree, moderately agree, disagree, absolutely disagree). The scales are emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship, reality testing, flexibility, problem solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, optimism, and happiness [2]. Validity (0.9) and reliability of the tool were confirmed by help of experts.

#### 3-2-2- Mental health questionnaire

Scl-90 test was adopted for measuring mental health. This tool is composed of 90 questions. The answers were on the basis of a 5-degree sadness scale from (no sadness) to (seriously sad). The 90 questions include 9 different dimensions, i.e. physical complaints, obsession and compulsion, sensitivity I mutual relationships, depression, stress, aggression, phobia, paranoid thoughts, and psychosis. Scoring and interpretation were performed on the basis of three indices, i.e. total coefficients of symptoms, sadness coefficient, and aggregated symptoms. The time needed for to complete the test is 12-15 min; however, some serious ones may need 30 min or more. The test determines one's status from a week ago until the present. There also 7 questions which are not categorized under the 9 criteria. The questions are not scored as one of the criteria but they are added to the total score. Validity (0.81) and reliability of the tool were confirmed by help of experts.

### 3-3- Statistical analysis

The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) in SPSS Software. Then, the data were analyzed through inferential statistics (t-test and linear regression).

## 4- RESULT

### 4-1- Descriptive results

Table 1 shows the subjects in terms of gender. As it can be seen, from 100 persons, 50 were males and 50 were females.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of gender in the population

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Frequency percent	Cumulative percent
Male	50	50.0	50.0	50.0
Female	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	100	100.5	100.0	

Table 2 shows the subjects in terms of age of population. As it can be seen from this table, from 100 persons, 9 were 18-25 years old, 12 were 26-30 years old, 32 were 31-35 years old, 42 were 36-40 years old, and 5 were 41-45 years old.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of age in the population

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency percentage	Cumulative percentage
18-25	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
26-30	12.0	12.0	12.0	21.0
31-35	32.0	32.0	32.0	53.0
36-40	42.0	42.5	42.5	95.0
41-45	5.0	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the subjects in terms of their education degree. It can be seen that from 100 persons, 12 had high school diploma, 16 had associate degree, 66 had bachelor degree, and 6 had master degree.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of education degree in the population

Education degree	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency percentage	Cumulative percentage
High school diploma	12	12.0	12.0	12.0
Associate degree	16	16.0	16.0	28.0
Bachelor	66	66.0	66.0	94.0
Master	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Furthermore, table 4 shows the subjects in terms of their professional experience. As it can be seen from the total 100 subjects, 21 had <10 years professional experience, 56 had between 10 and 20 years professional experience, and 23 had between 21 and 30 years professional experience.

Table 4: Frequency distribution of professional experience in the population

Professional experience	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency percentage	Cumulative percentage
<10 years	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
10-20 years	56	56.0	56.0	77.0
21-30 years	23	23.0	23.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4-2- Inferential analysis

In order to determine the hypothesis proposed (there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health in working couples of Gorgan), linear regression was adopted.

Table 5: Regression correlation coefficients between emotional intelligence and mental health

Regression coefficient	correlation	Defining coefficient	Defining coefficient growth	Estimation error
0.959		0.919	0.918	0.11953

As it can be seen from the above table, regression correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and mental health is 9.5 which is an indicative of high correlation between the variables. Also, defining coefficient was found to be 0.919 which indicates that 919% of mental health variables of the subjects are defined by emotional intelligence.

Table 6: Estimation of regression model between emotional intelligence and mental health

Variance source	Sum of squares	Freedom degree	Mean squares	Fischer statistic	significance level
Regression	15.892	1	15.892	1.112E3	0.000
Error	1.400	98	0.014		
Total	17.292	99			

According to the above table, significance level of Fischer test is 0.000, so, effect of prediction of emotional intelligence on mental health of the subjects is considered significant.

Table 7: estimation of regression coefficients

B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Significance level
1.134	0.034	0.959	33.351	0.000

The t-value for estimation coefficient of emotional intelligence is significant ( $t=33.351$ ;  $sig=0.000$ ). This indicates that with one unit increase in emotional intelligence, mental health in the subjects will increase for 0.133. Therefore, it can be claimed that H1 is affirmed and H0 is denied with 95% confidence level. Moreover, it can be said that there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health of working couples in Gorgan in 2010.

## 5- DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results obtained about the study hypothesis showed that there is a correlation between emotional intelligence and mental health in the subjects. This is in agreement with the results of Esmaeeli (2003) [8]. In his study, Esmaeeli (2003) stated that education of emotional intelligence attributes, such as intrapersonal awareness, interpersonal awareness, and interactive skills, results in higher level of mental health [8]. Our results are also consistent with those of Busso (2003), Carmeli (2003), Day et al. (2002), Love & Murdock (2004), Hollahan & Moos (1991), Nichols & Tsousis (2003), and Austin et al. (2004) [4,5,7,13,12,16,1]. Moreover, Davis and Humphrey (2012) found that higher emotional intelligence factors resulted in higher mental health performance in terms of stress [6].

Nowadays, people's life is along with several complicated stressors. Therefore, the ability to overcome such stressors provides a basis for high physical, mental and emotional health. As a consequence, the methods for boosting emotional intelligence are considered as important factors for high physical and mental well-being in people. As a general rule, emotional intelligence is related to life events helping people to perceive and predict different aspects of everyday life. Furthermore, high emotional intelligence is regarded as a supportive factor for physical and mental health [11].

Spatial limitations to choose geographical zone, temporal limitations to present questionnaires and collection of ideas, limitations in choosing education degrees and majors, length of questionnaires and lack of enthusiasm to complete them, lack of accurate control over variables in investigation situations, and difficulty to describe emotional intelligence to some respondents are a few example of the limitations in the present study. After considering the results obtained in the present study, it is recommended to provide educational and informing sessions in order to elevate emotional intelligence skills. Furthermore, it is proposed to make people aware of their emotional intelligence skills and their effect on their mental health by holding educational workshops and classes.

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