

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the level of emotional intelligence and stress among adolescents. It utilized the descriptive correlational research design. The respondents were twenty-one (21) Bachelor of Secondary Education students from the College of Education and Human Development. They were selected through convenience sampling technique. The research study utilized the adopted survey instruments by Schutte Nicola (2020) and Cohen Sheldon (2016), namely; Schutte Self-report Emotional Intelligence (SSEIT) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress. Findings revealed that respondents showed moderate emotional intelligence and high level of stress. Moreover, the relationships between the two variables showed moderate negative correlation. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that in order to improve the emotional intelligence of the students and become emotionally healthy, teachers, parents and counselors should respond instead of reacting to conflict during instances of conflict, emotional outbursts and feelings of anger. Furthermore, to reduce stress, students must establish a good time management and work scheduling when planning school activities or accomplishing school related works.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, stress, college students

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in dealing with a stress and improving the performance of each individual. These can be described in terms of each response, tactics, different strategies, cognition or behaviors of each individual. It can lead to a lack of physiological comfort, some kind of sadness in every emotion and even strained relationships with others. Some studies have also shown that emotional intelligence is more significantly associated with depression, anxiety, and stress. However, some studies have found no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and stress levels. Various organizations currently use management programs that focus on the theory of stress, the symptoms of stress and the stress response, rather than trying to pre-empt the stress it encourages.

People with higher emotional intelligence are better able to accurately understand and assess their emotional states and know how and when to express their feelings. Improving one's emotional intelligence can assist in managing stress, building strong relationships, empathizing with others, and achieving goals (Salovey, 2016). Stress is also a factor in the life of almost every person that it can also cause people to experience and show positive and negative emotions. According to G Fink (2017), stress is one of the very vague conditions that has been studying by various scholars and has different categories to help and sort out what kind of stress is being experienced. For students, stress is a negative and unpleasant feeling that too much of it can impact their overall well-being. Factors such as homework, social life, perceived parental pressure, and too much workload all generate stress. However, for other students, a moderate amount of stress can be beneficial and act as a motivator for them to do well.

Emotional intelligence is not determined by genetics, and as people grow, they become smarter emotionally and

socially. It also maintains that as age and experiences increase, so do emotional intellectuals. Adolescent students were particularly chosen for the study since they are more prone to stress. (Hogan, 2020).

The purpose of the research study is to better understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress. It aimed to investigate the relationships between emotional intelligence and the degree of stress among students in the performance of their tasks and in their effectiveness when working with others.

Review of Related Literature

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to control negative emotions such as anger, stress and anxiety, and it should focus on positive emotions and patience, as well as confidence and empathy. Emotional Intelligence has a different effect on work related outcomes as employees are stressed, but uncertain in their work environment. Different coping styles refer to what a person thinks or does to manage it and an emotional encounter. These can be described in terms of each response, tactics, different strategies, cognition or behaviors of each individual. Emotional intelligence should help us handle stress for the better and for several reasons. Emotional intelligence (EI) and various psychological aspects, such as aggressive behaviors and abuse of each substance. It is defines according to different theoretical models.

According to Kotsou (2018), an emotional intelligence (EI) can be defined as one of the abilities to recognize, express, to understand, manage, and use emotions. EI has been shown to have a significant impact on health, relationships, and job or academic performance. In this article, we present systematic reviews of 46 EI intervention studies on adult populations to further assess their outcomes. Overall, these findings provide some of the support for the spirit of EI programs. However, the important limitations in most have studies and restrict the generality of their results.

We discuss each contribution and limitations of these studies making recommendations for the development and implementation of each intervention in the future.

Emotional intelligence is defined as one of the potentials to identify, evaluate and better control emotions. Some researchers have suggested that every intellectual can be educated and improved, while others are already arguing about one nature. They describe emotional intelligence as a subset of social intelligence that expresses the abilities to control each individual's feelings and emotions and those of others, to better recognize them and also apply that information to direct the mind of a person and his actions.

According to Boyle (2019), emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize and understand emotions in oneself and others. This also affects the process of interaction and relation with other people, including self-management and/or leadership. To differentiate high emotional intelligent with those of with low emotional intelligent, high EI can be grouped as (1) usually open for expression of emotion, (2) not filled with negative emotions, (3) decides based on feelings and logic, (4) appears to be assertive, ambitious, decisive, detailed, careful, meticulous, warm, enthusiastic, and charming. On the other hand, low emotionally intelligent individuals (1) cannot share feelings verbally, (2) negative feelings dominate, (3) acts without reasoning or logic, (4) and are demanding, egotistical, critical, picky, hard to please, distractible, and selfish. Series of steps were also offered by Boyle (2019) to improve emotional intelligence including self-awareness; self-regulation; social skills and empathy; and motivation.

Selye (2017) was the first to use the word stress in a biomedicine context, and it was defined by a concept and phenomenon of stress in a common and indefinite manner. Stress has different meanings for different people under different types of conditions. The first and most general definition of stress is what Selye (2017) suggested: stress is

not necessarily a body response to any definitions. It is a part of our daily human experiences, but it is also one of those associated with many variations of important and dissimilar problems, such as surgical trauma, burns, arousal, emotional or physical exertion, various stress, pain, fear, the need for their concentration, the embarrassment of failure, loss of blood, intoxication with various drugs or pollutants environment, or even the kind of unexpected success that an individual need to change his or her lifestyle.

Stress is a natural defense of our body against predators and dangerous situations. It is a cause of the flooding of hormones in our body that prepares its systems to be more resilient or to better cope with a risk. People usually refer to it as one of the mechanisms of battles or in a flight. When a person is faced with a challenge or threat, they have little physical response. Our body enables resources to help people stay fit and brave in the face of challenges or to survive as quickly as possible. Their environmental factors are the ones that trigger this reaction are called stressors. These examples include noises, aggressive behaviors, possibly a fast car, and scary moments in a movie. These feelings of stress are more likely to increase to keep up with the number of stressors. Some of the common feature things can make us feel stressed especially if this experience is accompanied by something new or unexpected, something that threatens every feeling in ourselves, or feeling that it does not exist.

According to Newton (2016), there are many studies connected between EI and stress. Stress is a flexible response governed by the differences of each individual that have a natural consequence in every action they take, whether it be a situation or circumstance that expresses the special needs of each person found a significant negative correlation between EI and stress in their jobs. Stress in a job and performances are negatively correlated and meaningful, an individual's emotional intelligence is performance and having a positive meaningful relationship, whereas each work stress

and emotional capacity that intellectual is a negative and insignificant. There are many factors that can affect a person's different performance so that ultimately one can realize the performance achieved in each organization. The problem with stress is in every job, it can be emotional intelligence, and performance becomes important to pay attention to. Stress is one of the facts that life is inevitable in a competitive world. From each individual's point of view, stress is a physical, chemical and reaction of our bodies to events that frighten, confuse, threaten or irritate each other. It can lead to a lack or physiological comfort, some kind of sadness in every emotion, and even strained relationships with others.

EI is linked to various stress coping strategies and it has specific rationale or coping problems focused on coping. The relationship between EI and stress has also been established in academic literature. Stress Coping techniques refer to the efforts, both behavioral and psychological ones that people engage in to master, tolerate and minimize stressful events. There are three main styles of coping with stress these are the problems focused on coping style that emphasize each pressure reduction or increase of stress management skills; the avoidance-oriented coping style focused on dealing with a stress factor; and emotionally focused coping that includes strategies that censor and postpone solving or removing stress factors by giving one its new name and meaning.

Yasien (2016) stated that there is a significant correlation between each emotional intelligence and stress. It was found that individuals with high emotional feelings had a higher ability to adapt to dealing with stressors. Every individual with higher emotional clarity and adjustment feels less negative responses to their emotional and intrusive thoughts after the intense stress felt; and easily adapted to different experiences. On the other hand, Lea et.al. (2019), discussed how people with higher level of emotional intelligence typically are more likely to attain more positive

life outcomes as characterized by psychological well-being, educational attainment as well as profession-related success for adults. It was revealed that emotional intelligence may work as a 'stress buffer'. In fact, in times of stressful situations, emotionally intelligent individuals appear to create and manifest adaptive response in comparison with those who possess low emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent individuals usually portray reduced reactivity exhibiting less mood deterioration and less physiological arousal, also, they have faster recovery in times of threat or risk.

Consistently, a study made by Fteiha and Awwad (2020), indicated positive correlation between emotional intelligence and active and passive problem coping. Albeshier and Alsaeed (2015) suggested the same result considering increase in emotional intelligence increases the use of positive coping methods and therefore minimize and alleviate the possibility or development of stress.

According to Fteiha and Awwad (2020), being able to understand emotional intelligence and methods of coping with emotional stress is highly relevant and important since these two greatly influence and affects the success growth and development of every individual. Back in the past, year 1997 when Salovey and Sluyter initiated the identification of emotional intelligence as a factor that helps to understand a person's feelings and emotions creating and affecting his or her decisions.

In 2016, Sharma and Kumar revealed in their study the strong association between stress and emotional intelligence. In addition to this, Kovacheviu et al. (2018) reiterated that effective response to stress usually include the usage of coping strategies aided by relevant behavioral patterns applicable in each situation. Recent researches showed how emotional intelligence has been an exemplary exercises highly considerable impact on individual's capability for positive social interactions. Such ability

depends on different factors including emotional competence, empathy self-monitoring, as well as intensity and duration of distress in each persona. Furthermore, according to Morales-Rodríguez and Pérez-Mármol (2019), emotional intelligence and stress-coping strategies significantly affect individual's self-efficacy.

Fundamental studies traced back in 1998 led by Epstein stated that emotionally intelligent children seem to be healthier, happier and are more adaptable which also provide greater opportunity and possibility of desired academic achievement. On the other hand, Goleman (1995) already noted how low emotional intelligence often result to increased rate of violent crime and teenage suicide together with abrupt episodes of anxiety, depression, high aggression ration, social problems, school dropouts and loss of interest in religion.

According to Sarrionandia (2018), existing literature have openly provided evidence with the connection between emotional intelligence and resilience which both are defined to be adversely related to perceived stress. Yet, little evidence has been gathered in accordance to relationship between these psychological variables considering cross-cultural and/or cross-country studies. Generally, studies from different areas and culture resulted to varying and deviating perspectives in regards with emotion regulation strategies. Nozaki (2018) found differences between European-American and Eastern Asian groups concerning the previously stated variable. Particularly, emotional intelligence found to be negatively related to suppression or emotional regulation in European-American groups, while the opposite is depicted in the Japanese population. Usually, EI in relation to stress have been examined separately in cross-country and cultural studies yet insufficient or lack of study is noticed when it comes to considering these variables across countries or cultures. With this being stated, it is a

must to further identify and clarify the variables indicated and concretely decide and conclude the relationship between the two.

Psychological well-being is not only influenced by stressful events but also by individual characteristics that determine how adolescents evaluate events and how they deal with these stressors (Cejudo, 2018). Adolescence is a period of heightened emotionally. If the adolescents cannot perceive, understand, regulate and function with their emotions it will leave indelible marks on their behavior and personality. This is a major stage in development where the child has to learn the roles he will occupy as an adult. Young people may also face other challenges, including changing relationships with peers, new demands at school, family tensions, or safety issues in their communities (Spear, 2018). The role of emotional intelligence is a cushion or a buffer that protects the adolescents from stress. Stress is something which irritates adolescents and reduces his or her productivity on continuous basis until and unless it is not managed.

Theoretical Framework

The James-Lange theory is one of the best-known as an examples of a physiological theory of emotion. Independently proposed by psychologist William James and physiologist Carl Lange, the James-Lange theory of emotion suggests that emotions occur as a result of physiological reactions to events. According to the James-Lange theory, people experience emotions such as fear, sadness, and happiness only after physiological arousal such as the fight-or-flight response has occurred. If they encounter some threat in their environment the sympathetic nervous system would initiate significant physiological arousal, which would make the heart race and increase also the respiration rate.

Conceptual Framework

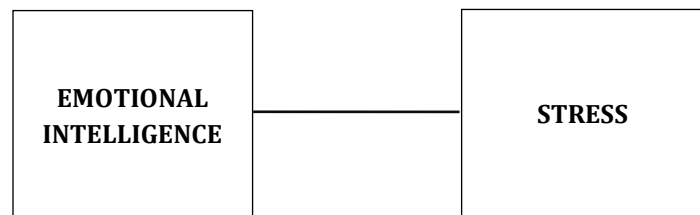


Figure 1. Research Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 shows the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the relationship of emotional intelligence and stress among adolescents.

Specifically, the researcher sought answers to the following:

1. How may the level of the emotional intelligence of the respondents be described?
2. How may the stress level of the respondents be described?
3. What is the relationship observed between emotional intelligence and stress?

Method

Research Design and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized a descriptive correlational research design. The respondents of the study were twenty-one (21) Bachelor of Secondary Education students from College of Education and Human Development. The researcher used a convenience sampling technique in selecting the respondents.

Instrument

The relationship between emotional intelligence and stress were investigated using Schutte Self- report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) adopted from the studies of Schutte Nicola (2020) which measures the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) instrument adopted from the studies of Cohen Sheldon (2016) was also utilized in the study that measures on how different situations affect one's feelings and perceived stress. Permission from the original authors of the survey questions were sought in this study.

Schutte Self- report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) is composed of 33 items. It has been designed to map onto the Salovey and Mayer (1990) model of Emotional Intelligence. The items of the test were classified into three aspects of emotional intelligence, namely: appraisal and expression emotion, regulation of emotions, utilization of emotions.

Data Collection and Analysis

To describe the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents, the following points and verbal interpretations were used:

Point	Scale	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	High
3	2.61-3.40	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Very Low

Computed higher scores indicate a higher level of emotional intelligence. The returned questionnaires accounted for a response rate of 88% prior to the data of acceptable value .081.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is composed of 10 items that is used to measure the perceive level of stress of the respondents. They were asked to indicate how often they felt stress or thought a certain way.

To describe the perceive level of stress of the respondents, the following points and verbal interpretations were used:

Point	Scale	Interpretation
4	3.50-4.00	Very High
3	2.70-3.49	High
2	1.51-2.69	Low
1	0-1.50	Very Low

Higher scores demonstrated a higher level of stress, while lower scores indicate a lower level of stress. The design of this questionnaire provides the flexibility that allows the instrument to be utilized in various contexts.

Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and Perceive Stress Scale (PSS) questionnaires were combined and converted into an online survey. Responses were tallied and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Means and Standard Deviation were calculated to determine the level of stress. The data was analyzed and interpreted using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to explain the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the data gathered, the results of statistical analysis and interpretation of findings. These are presented in tables followed by their analyses and interpretations.

Table 1
Respondents' Level of Emotional Intelligence

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	4	19.0	0.95	Very High
3.41 - 4.20	9	42.9	1.71	High
2.61 - 3.40	1	4.8	0.14	Moderate
1.81 - 2.60	5	23.8	0.47	Low
1.81 - 2.60	2	9.5	0.09	Very Low
Total	21	100.0	3.36	Moderate

Table 1 shows the respondents' level of emotional intelligence. The results indicate that nine point five percent (9.5%) have a very low level of emotional intelligence, twenty three point eight percent (23.8%) have a low emotional intelligence, four point eight percent (4.8%) have a moderate level of emotional intelligence, forty two point nine percent (42.9%) have a moderate level of emotional intelligence and nineteen (19.0%) have a moderate level of emotional intelligence. High level of emotional intelligence indicates that individuals may know what they are feeling, what their emotions mean, and how these emotions can affect other people. The general level is three point thirty-six (3.36) which indicate that the respondents have a moderate level of emotional intelligence. Individuals who have a moderate level of emotional intelligence can clearly express their feelings or emotions and also they are not filled with negative

emotions. This generally increases self-confidence, life fulfillment and wellness. Attributes exhibited by people who can regulate their behaviors and demonstrate self-restraint. (Franklin, 2018). Low level of emotional intelligence refers to the inability to accurately perceive emotions in both themselves and others and decides without reasoning and logic.

Table 2
Respondents' Level of Stress

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
3.50 - 4.00	7	31.8	1.33	Very High
2.70 - 3.49	5	22.7	0.71	High
1.51 - 2.69	8	36.4	0.76	Low
0 - 1.50	1	4.5	0.04	Very Low
Total	21	100.0	2.85	High

Table 2 shows the respondents' level of stress. The results indicate that four point five percent (4.5%) of the respondents have a very low level of stress, thirty-six point four percent (36.4%) have a low level of stress, twenty two point seven percent (22.7%) have a high level of stress, and thirty one point eight (31.8%) of them have a very high level of stress. The general mean is two point eighty-five (2.85) which indicate that the respondents have a high level of stress. When an individual feels threatened, the nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline, which prepares the body for emergency action. Having high levels of stress can cause many serious health problems, including mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, and personality disorders. Cardiovascular disease, including heart disease, high blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythms, heart attacks, and stroke. (Landa, 2018).

Table 3
Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for Emotional Intelligence and Stress

Statistical Treatment	Values
Pearson Correlation	-.406
Sig	.068
N	21

Table 3 shows the Pearson product - moment correlation coefficient that was computed to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress. The findings show negative point four hundred six (-.406) which indicates that there is a correlation but no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress. This result indicates that when emotional intelligence is low, the stress will increase or vice versa. This study also showed that stress is not based on the level of emotional intelligence but how a person handles it even if he has a low or high emotional intelligence. (Sharma, 2016).

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents' level of emotional intelligence is moderate.
2. The respondents' level of stress is high.
3. There is a moderate negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress.

Recommendations

Based from the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. In order to improve emotional intelligence of the students and become emotionally healthy, teachers, parents and counselors should respond instead of reacting to conflict during instances of conflict, emotional outbursts and feelings of anger.
2. To reduce stress, students must establish a good time management and work scheduling when planning school activities or accomplishing school related works.
3. Other variables that may be associated with stress, such as academic stress and stress management, can be more explored in future studies to compare with emotional intelligence.

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