Relationship Between Personal Variables and Emotional Intelligence Levels of Married Couples

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ABSTRACT

The present study was under taken to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence levels and personal variables. The total sample comprised 240 couples of Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. The results revealed that personal variables- age, type of marriage, marital age and age of children were negatively correlated with emotional intelligence levels whereas education, occupation, income, age at marriage, religion and caste were positively correlated with emotional intelligence levels of the respondents

Key words : Emotional Intelligence, Marriage, Personal Variables

Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in us and in our relationships. It describes abilities distinct from, but complementary to academic intelligence, the purely cognitive capacities measured by IQ. Emotional intelligence can be learnt. At the individual level, elements of emotional intelligence can be identified, assessed and upgraded. Thus it can be said that emotional intelligence can be influenced by different variables.

Emotional intelligence is a new origin in psychological studies, which is least, explored in Indian context especially in family life. Hence, to fill the gap in research area the study on the relationship between personal variables and emotional intelligence levels in the couple is being studied.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The sample for the study comprised couple- both husband and wife. From three municipalities- Thirupati, Chittoor, Madanapalli, as majority of population living is these areas are literate (as per population census 2000), eighty (80) couples from each municipality were selected randomly. Thus a total of 240 couples were selected randomly from three municipalities. Criteria for selection of sample were that the couple should be literate and should live under same roof.

Ex-post facto research design was used for the study as the variables chosen had already resulted in cause and effect relationships.

The tools used for investigation are emotional intelligence inventory by Uma Devi (2003). The scale is applicable on adults and consists of 148 items that are measured in 5 sub-scales which in turn are measured in 15 dimensions of emotional intelligence. They are, Intrapersonal dimension (Self awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization and independence), Interpersonal dimension (Empathy, interpersonal relationship and social responsibility), Adaptability dimension (Flexibility, reality testing and problem solving), Stress management (Stress tolerance and impulse control) and General Mood (Optimism and happiness). The scale is administered by asking the respondents to tick items by marking any one of the five response options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The scale consists of 109 positive statements and 39 negative statements. The scoring of the five alternatives of positive statements are to follow a system of 5,4,3,2 and 1, whereas scoring of the five alternatives of negative statement are to follow a system of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

To study the personal variable a standardized interview schedule was developed. The personal variable of the respondents includes age, education, occupation, income, type of marriage, marital age, age of children and religion.

Data collected were analyzed using class intervals, frequencies and Pearson's product movement correlation matrix.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of correlation test between personal variables and emotional intelligence levels are presented Table. It is evident that education, occupation, income, age at marriage, religion of the

Table. Correlation coefficients between personal variables and emotional intelligence levels of the married couples (N-240)

Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Age	Education	Occupation	Income	Type of marriage	Age at marriage	Marital age	1st child age	2nd child age	3rd child age	Religion
Intra-personal Dimension	-0.10*	0.17**	0.18**	0.18**	-0.10*	0.22**	-0.15**	-0.15**	-0.09*	-0.08*	0.01
Self awareness	0.12**	0.16**	0.18**	0.23**	-0.10*	0.20**	0.04	-0.04	0.03	-0.02	0.15**
Assertiveness	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.25**	0.00	0.19**	0.10*	-0.00	0.07	-0.05	0.02
Self actualization	-0.37**	0.11**	-0.11**	-0.20**	0.07	-0.08	-0.31**	-0.32**	-0.30**	0.03	0.02
Self regard	-0.12**	0.24**	0.14**	0.13**	-0.12**	0.20**	-0.21**	-0.21**	-0.16**	-0.18**	0.04
Independence	-0.06	0.13**	0.24**	0.15**	-0.14**	0.20**	-0.17**	-0.06	-0.10*	-0.05	-0.10*
Inter-personal Dimension	-0.38**	0.29**	0.27**	-0.07	-0.02	-0.02**	-0.43**	-0.31**	-0.26**	-0.07	0.01
Empathy	-0.35**	0.17**	0.13**	-0.27**	-0.02	0.06	-0.39**	-0.33**	-0.31**	0.01	-0.12**
Inter-personal	-0.42**	0.08	0.06	-0.12**	-0.00	-0.08	-0.35**	-0.28**	-0.20**	-0.09*	-0.05
Social responsibility	-0.21**	0.38**	0.42**	0.16**	-0.01	0.06	-0.33**	-0.20**	-0.19**	0.01	0.18**
Adaptability Dimension	-0.29**	0.18**	0.01	0.02	-0.13**	0.02	-0.30**	-0.37**	-0.35**	-0.14**	0.09*
Problem solving	-0.09*	0.33**	0.35**	0.29**	-0.14**	0.16**	-0.23**	-0.14**	-0.17**	0.01	-0.00
Flexibility	-0.27**	0.26**	0.10*	0.11**	-0.22**	-0.08	-0.25**	-0.25**	-0.28**	-0.02	0.22**
Reality testing	-0.27**	0.47**	0.25**	0.23**	-0.11*	0.18**	-0.38**	-0.26**	-0.34**	-0.30**	0.18**
Stress tolerance dimension	-0.11*	0.10*	0.16*	0.14**	0.16**	0.13**	-0.22**	-0.05	-0.04	-0.00	0.02
Stress tolerance	0.01	-0.03	0.12**	0.18**	-0.02	0.19**	-0.06	-0.07	0.07	0.01	0.01
Impulse control	-0.22**	0.22**	0.13**	0.02	0.31**	0.01	-0.30**	-0.19**	-0.18**	-0.03	0.02
General mood dimension	-0.05	-0.00	0.03	0.18**	-0.21**	-0.09*	0.03	-0.00	0.03	-0.15**	0.23**
Happiness	0.09*	-0.09*	0.02	0.13**	-0.25**	-0.05	0.17**	0.22**	0.18**	-0.01	0.02
Optimism	-0.17**	0.08	0.02	0.13**	-0.05	-0.07	-0.11**	-0.15**	-0.12**	0.21**	0.31**
EI	-0.26**	0.27**	0.27**	0.15**	0.08	0.04	-0.29**	-0.27**	-0.20**	-0.11*	0.13**

* = Significant at 0.05 level of probability   ** = Significant at 0.01 level of probability

respondents was positively related with emotional intelligence levels, whereas age, type of marriage and marital age were negatively related. This indicates that higher the education, occupation, income levels higher were the emotional intelligence levels. Respondent who participated in religious ritual had higher emotional intelligence levels. It also indicates that newly married couples and couples in second and third stages of family life cycle were having higher emotional intelligence levels than the couple in remaining stages of life. This is because the concept of emotional intelligence in Indian context is embedded in its highly valued social concerns, virtues, religious traditions and cultural practices. In Indian culture couples are interdependent. Indians develop a morality of caring which emphasizes broad and relatively non-contingent interpersonal obligations, a familial view of interpersonal relationships and contextual sensitivity. These moral values determine emotional responsibilities which are cultural specific (Salovey *et.al.,* 1995). This is implemented by the Indian couple at initial stages of life cycle itself. This does not mean that elder couples do not have emotional intelligence but because of emotional rifts that

eventually occur in a relationship might have lead to certain deficits in emotional intelligence.

Results also depict that age of the couples and self awareness was positively related whereas self actualization and self regard were negatively related. This implies that aged couples showed high levels of self awareness whereas younger couples were having higher levels of self regard and self actualization levels. From the Table it is evident that educational status showed positive relationship with self awareness, self actualization, self regard, independence, social responsibility, problem solving, flexibility, reality testing, empathy and impulse control and negative relationship with happiness levels. This indicates that respondents with higher educational status had higher self awareness, self actualization and self regard. They were independent and social responsible than other respondents. These samples were empathetic, flexible and had high levels of problem solving, reality testing, and impulse control. It is interesting to find that respondents with lower education status were happier than educated couples. This might be due to busy schedules of educated couples because of which they might not have sufficient time to spend with their family members. Even high stress levels might be another reason for lower happiness levels.

Respondent's occupational status and income levels showed positive relationship with self awareness, self regard, independence, social responsibility and problem solving capacities, reality testing, impulse control, empathy and negative relationship with self actualization and interpersonal relation, respectively. This implies that respondents with higher occupational status had higher levels of self awareness, self regard, were more independent and socially responsible. They had high levels of problem solving capacities and reality testing abilities, they are more empathetic and had high impulse control. This might be due to the couple's economical freedom. They might have more confidence levels and less stress levels.

Couples with lower occupational status had high self actualization levels than other respondents. They were more empathetic and had higher levels of interpersonal relations. As these couples have minimal economical resources they will definitely have the visualization of their need and their resources and this situation will lead to higher empathetic levels and inter-personal relations with other people in similar situations.

Type of marriage was positively related with impulse control and negatively related with self awareness, self regard, problem solving capacities, flexibility, reality testing, happiness levels and independence. This indicates that couples of love marriage had high levels of self understanding, self regard, problem solving capacities, reality testing and happiness levels and they were supple and independent. This might be due to their relationship before marriage and commitment towards their relationship. Results also depict that couple of arranged marriage had high levels of impulse control as these couples might be exhibiting more of cultural specific sensitivity in their behaviour.

Age at marriage was positively related with self awareness, assertiveness, self regard, problem solving levels, reality testing, stress tolerance levels and independent levels. This implies that couples who had late marriage were aware of themselves, had high self regard, were above to solve their problems and were more realistic, independent with high levels of stress tolerance. This might be due to the maturity levels that increase with the age levels and experiences they had in their lives.

Couples marital age had negative relationship with intra personal, inter-personal, adaptability and stress tolerance levels indicating higher the marital age lower are their self assessment in terms of expressing feelings with confidence, social adeptness, one's ability to understand others and stress tolerance levels. This might be due to increased responsibilities and stress in their life style.

Age of the children is also related with emotional intelligence levels of the respondents. It shows that couple with younger children had high levels of intra-personal relation, adaptability, general moods and low levels of inter-personal relations.

Religious practices showed positive relationship with adaptability, general mood, self regard, flexibility, reality testing, optimism and negative relationship with empathy and independent levels. This includes that couples who participated in religious rituals had high levels of adaptability, general mood, self regard, flexibility, reality testing, optimistic and were not empathetic but dependent on their spouse.

On the whole it is observed that education, occupation, income and religious life showed positive relationship with emotional intelligence whereas age, marital age and child's age were

negatively related. This implies that respondents with higher the educational status, occupation status, income and who participate in religious rituals had high levels of emotional intelligence. Whereas respondents who were aged and are being married for long time with grown up children showed lower emotional intelligence levels.

Hence, from the study it is clearly evident that an individual's emotional intelligence is influenced by their personal factors. The personal factors that showed positive relationship with emotional intelligence levels are education, occupation, income and religious life. Whereas age, marital age and child's age showed negative relationship.

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