



Original Article

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Well-Being of Students from Public Sector Medical College; Mediating Role of Perceived Stress

Saima Latif^{1*}, Kamal Dickson², and Sameen Hanif³

¹Jinnah Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan

²Punjab Institute of Mental Health Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan

³Allied Health Sciences, University of Lahore, Lahore, Pakistan

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***Corresponding Author:**

Saima Latif
 Jinnah Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan
 Sam_656308@hotmail.com
 ali.90waqas@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare sector play key role for the wellbeing of overall society. This tiring job of providing efficient and effective healthcare services has severe consequences on the health and personal life of healthcare workers. Previously, studies have emphasized on the wellbeing of the healthcare workers, however, students of medical profession were ignored even they go through the burden while learning the theoretical courses and practical exposure in hospitals. The pressure of theoretical classes and rotational trainings in the hospitals causes stress and ultimately influence their wellbeing. **Objective:** To investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being (Life satisfaction and Happiness) of the medical students through mediation of perceived stress. **Methods:** Self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 350 MBBS and BSN students of Allama Iqbal Medical College through convenient sampling. Consent of the respondents, privacy and other ethical requirements were fulfilled. Finally, 201 (MBBS: 103, BSN: 98) medical students from Allama Iqbal Medical College responded the questionnaire. SPSS version 21.0 was used to analyze the data. **Results:** The results revealed that there exists positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and medical student's well-being (Life satisfaction and Happiness). Further, perceived stress significantly mediates the relationship of emotional intelligence and wellbeing. **Conclusions:** This study results found that emotional intelligence and medical student's well-being (Life satisfaction and Happiness) have positive and significant association.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, researchers have caught the attention towards the wellbeing of the health care workers [1, 2]. Previously, concerns of wellbeing regarding healthcare workers were addressed but the wellbeing of students from the medical profession were ignored. Students of the medical profession acquire the knowledge from the coursework in classes and learn the skills from practical exposure through the rotations in the hospitals. Further, these students are compelled to observe both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills which becomes the reason of stress and ultimately influences their well-being. Therefore, excessive tasks from classes and hospital rotation causes the stress and influences their academic

grades and happiness [3]. Similarly, previous studies have noted that the students who are unable to manage the requirements of theoretical learning and hospital rotation experiences the negative consequences to their academic success and wellbeing [4]. To overcome the burden both academic and skill learning in the hospitals require the ability to control over the emotions which can be achieved through emotional intelligence (EI) [3]. Salovey and Mayer noted that emotional intelligence is the potential to recognize and screen the personal and other's feelings [5]. Emotional intelligence explains the ability of the individuals to control over uncertain situations [6]. Another study defines that emotional intelligence in the individual's

capacity to realize the situation and deal accordingly [7]. The emotional capabilities cover five meta-motives, interpersonal emotional quotient, intra-personal emotional quotient, pressure management emotional quotient, emotional adaptability quotient and preferred temper emotional quotient [7]. Thus, students who are better at dealing with their negative emotions are more able to cope with stressful situations. It is also noted that emotional intelligence leads the good psychological adjustment and mitigate the depression, stress and increases their wellbeing [8]. Additionally, Hedonic and eudemonic traditions are key elements of well-being and have positive association with emotional intelligence [1]. The findings of the previous study noted that EI positively predicts happiness (Hap), life satisfaction (LS), and psychological well-being (WB) [9]. Further, EI plays 80% role in an individual's success in life [10]. In the same manner, students having a higher level of emotional intelligence are prepared to cope with the new environment, life challenges and can handle their responsibilities, depressions, and pressures of being out of control situations [11]. Previous findings have also determined that EI enables individuals to control their emotions and grow their decision-making power [12-14]. More specifically, emotional intelligence is associated with a lower level of anxiety, stress, depression, pressure, and a higher level of pride in life and happiness. Therefore, Galan (2014) emphasizes that students' awareness of their emotions and technical skills is necessary for their academic success and further development. Furthermore, students must be aware that the stress cannot be avoided, but it can be perceived as positive or negative. Students need to manage their emotions to avoid the negative impact of depressing situations [14, 15]. Students' well-being is essential for enjoyment of pleasurable feelings. Subjective well-being is the idea that individuals evaluate their lives favorably and that happiness and life satisfaction coexist and balance or control the positive and negative effect of emotions [16]. Similarly, it is revealed that adaptive emotional functions have an association with happiness [17]. On the contrary, students who are more prone to stress and cannot handle their emotions under pressure experiences more negative effect on their wellbeing. This is one of the major reasons that medical students are more prone to anxiety and depression. It is also noted that students who perceive higher stress compromises their well-being [1]. Previous literature shows that a low level of stress causes minor influence on the wellbeing [8]. As a result, those with greater emotional intelligence levels are better able to handle stressful events or situations [1]. When a person feels helpless to control the stressors or to cope with the emotional responses, they perceive the higher stress and

ultimately influences their wellbeing [18]. Previously, studies have established the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee's well-being, however, students of the medical profession experience more stress and their wellbeing is at greater risk which requires the focus of research. Furthermore, family and supervisor support has also been analyzed as the key elements towards student's wellbeing, however, student's tendency of perceived stress can also influence their wellbeing. Further, no educational institution in Pakistan has taught the psychological skills, including their ability to use diverse emotions to promote the growth of emotional intelligence that leads well-being.

Therefore, this study analyzes the relationship between emotional intelligence and wellbeing through the mediating role of perceived stress (PS) among the student of the medical profession. The present study is an important addition to the growing body of literature on the emotional intelligence and well-being of health care students. This study will provide insight to the administration of healthcare educational institutions and health care students to overcome the challenges they experience regarding their psychological health.

METHODS

This study aims to investigate the relationship of emotional intelligence with health care student's well-being through the mediating role of perceived stress. The quantitative and correlational research design has been used to collect the data from the health care students of medical institutes of Lahore, Pakistan. The data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire while following convenient sampling from (male and female) students of MBBS and BSN from Allama Iqbal medical college, Lahore during June 2023 to October 2023. The sample size was 107 which calculated through G-power calculator [19]. Similarly, total students of the targeted institution were around 400 and according to Krejcie and Morgan [20] the sample size should be 196. However, in the current study data was gathered from 201 students from MBBS and BSN. The students of MBBS who were enrolled in 2nd to 5th year were included in this study and BSN respondents were from the 2nd year to 4th year. The participants from 2nd year to the final year were included as they take both classes and also observe the clinical rotations at the hospitals. However, the students from first year and those who were observing house job were excluded in the current study. The consent of this study participants was taken and a free hand was given to take part in this. The participants belonged to different socioeconomic levels. The questionnaire consists of two sections, Section A composed of demographic data, and Section B composed questionnaire of this study's constructs. The

questionnaires of this study were based on a 5-point Likert scale. The 14-items instrument of perceived stress was adopted from Cohen et al., [21], 30-items scale of EI from Goleman and Intelligence [22]. Further, a 5-items instrument of life satisfaction from Diener et al., [23] and a 5-items scale of happiness from Lyubomirsky and Lepper [24]. Descriptive, correlational and regression analysis was done through SPSS version 21.0 and finally mediation analysis to analyze the mediation of perceived stress was also done through process technique while using SPSS 21[25]. The theoretical framework shown in figure 1.

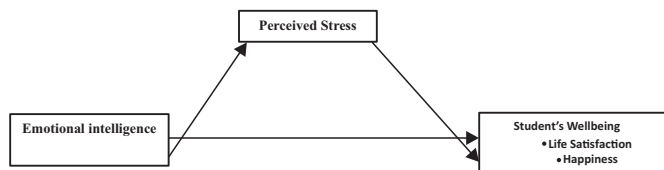


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that 11.9% of the respondents were male students and 88.1% of responses were female students. Further, 5.5% of students were married while 94.5% of students were unmarried. As the age is concerned, 29.9% of the students were between 15-20 years, 60.2% of students were between 20-25years, 9.5% were between 25-30 years and 0.5% were above 30 years. On the other hand, Table 1 shows that 48.8% of the students were doing BSN and 51.2% of the students were from MBBS.

Table 1: Demographic analysis of participants

Variables		Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	24 (11.9)
	Female	177 (88.1)
Marital status	Married	11 (5.5)
	Unmarried	190 (94.5)
Age group	15-20	60 (29.9)
	20-25	121 (60.2)
	25-30	19 (9.5)
	above30	1 (.5)
Qualification	BSN	98 (48.8)
	MBBS	103 (51.2)

Table 2 shows that the value of Cronbach's alpha for all this study constructs was higher than 0.70. So, these study's instruments are reliable. Further, KMO value of all this study variables are greater than 0.50 and Bartlett's test of Sphericity is significant ($p < .05$). Thus, the scales of this study instruments are valid.

Table 2: Reliability and validity of the instrument's scales

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity
PS	0.788	.717	0.788
EI	0.763	.847	0.763
WB	0.889	.790	0.889

Table 3 shows that emotional intelligence has a significant and positive correlation relationship with life satisfaction ($r=.589, p<0.05$) and happiness ($r=.428, p<0.05$). Further, emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with perceived stress ($r=.439$) and perceived stress has a significant and positive relationship with life satisfaction ($r=.237, p<0.05$) and happiness ($r=.316, p<0.05$).

Table 3: Correlation between study variables

Constructs		PS	EI	LS	Hap
PS	Pearson Correlation	1	-	-	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	-	-	-
EI	Pearson Correlation	.439**	1	-	-
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-	-	-
LS	Pearson Correlation	.237**	.589**	1	.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	-	.000
Hap	Pearson Correlation	.316**	.428**	.513**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	-

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

Table 4 shows that EI has significant and positive relationship ($P<0.05$) with life satisfaction and happiness. However, Perceived stress does not mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction (LLCI: -.1035, ULCI: 0.634). Further, perceived stress significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness (LLCI: 0.0148, ULCI: 0.171).

Table 4: Regression analysis of variables

Regression analysis				
Constructs	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
EI and LS	.912	10.273	.000	Significant
EI and Happiness	10	6.679	.000	Significant
Mediation analysis				
Constructs	Beta	LLCI	ULCI	Decision
EI, PS and LS	-.0179	-.1035	.0634	Significant
EI, PS and Happiness	.0858	.0148	.171	Significant

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to aware health care students regarding positive psychology, emotional intelligence so that students become capable to manage their stress and diverse emotions to succeed in their lives, work, and academia. This study has analyzed the meditation of perceived stress between the relationship of emotional intelligence and student's wellbeing (Life satisfaction and happiness). The results of this study suggest that emotional intelligence is a very logical predictor of wellbeing for health care students and shows greater life satisfaction and happiness. Previous findings have also noted the positive and significant association between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction [16, 26]. Similarly, the study noted that emotional intelligence significantly and positively influences the student's

happiness. These findings are also according to the previous studies [27, 28]. In the same manner, the findings of the previous study also emphasizes that student's emotional intelligence enable them to overcome the pressure of the study and other academic requirements and ultimately ensure their wellbeing [29]. On the contrary, the current study results show that perceived stress does not mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. However, previous finding has noted the significant mediation of affectivity between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction [30]. The reason behind this insignificant association may be the data collection from single public hospital and data collection from other public and private hospitals may provide better insights. However, perceived stress significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness which is parallel to the previous findings of Malinauskas and Malinauskiene [31] and Ruiz-Jiménez et al., [2]. Similarly, the study has found that stress significantly emotional the relationship between emotional intelligence and wellbeing.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to analyze the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being (Life satisfaction and Happiness) of the medical students through mediation of perceived stress. This study results found that emotional intelligence and medical student's well-being (Life satisfaction and Happiness) have positive and significant association. Further, perceived stress significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and wellbeing.

Authors Contribution

Conceptualization: SL

Methodology: SL

Formal analysis: SH

Writing-review and editing: SL, KD

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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