Mediating Role of Social Support on the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health among the University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to analyze the social support among university students in Multan District as a mediator between emotional intelligence and mental health. The aim of this study was to find the relationship between emotional intelligence, social support and mental health among the university students in the Multan District. The researchers was adopted correlational research design to conduct this study and total 315 both male and female students were selected by using the simple random sampling technique. Further, three study instruments were used in this study; emotional intelligence scale developed by Schutte (1998), multi-dimensional perceived social support scale developed by Zimet and Gordon (1998), and mental health scale developed by Veit and Ware (1983). By using the SPSS for the analysis of collected data, the study results showed that emotional intelligence, social support and mental health are significantly correlated in a positive way. In addition, this study revealed that the emotional intelligence has significant effect on student's mental health and social support has also a significant effect on the student's mental health. Moreover, social support has a higher effect on women than men and the mental health of male pupils in comparison to female pupils is higher.

Introduction

Social support in a broad sense is defined as the gathering of human and material resources to help a person resolve a certain crisis and deal with stress. Those support can be real or understood and focus on two forms of social support; structural social support in conjunction with the most important quantitative resource (i.e. family and friends). Social support has long had an important impact on well-being (Gallagher & Vella-Brodrick, 2008). Social support is hypothesized to protect well-being, both directly and indirectly, as a buffer against stressful situations. The direct approach indicates that positive perceptions of social reinforcement directly affect health and welfare regardless of stress (Gündüz, Ahmet, & Atar, 2019).

Therefore, just because family and friends form part of a supportive social network, general health and well-being can be improved, contributing to life satisfaction, in particular support from family and friends (Gariepy, Honkaniemi, & Quesnel-Vallee, 2016).

Gu et al. (2016) stated that social support seems to be the amount of support that person perceives from their network's common or specific supportive behaviors, such as buddies or peer groups, that strengthen ability to function or can buffer him and her for undesirable outcomes. There are different social support sources including friendship groups, casual faculty exchanges, social networks, personal tutorials, student assistance services, and close relationships with close friends and family. They offer stress coping resources. For example, activities such as listening and showing warmth and empathy

promote the affective well-being of an person and aid adaptations for the student. Support sources assist to reduce stress and aid students adapt to their psychological needs, enhance self-esteem and improve academic achievement. Ultimately, without acknowledging their stressors, students may acquire physiological, emotional and psychological health problems that would negatively affect their learning, involvement, confidence, academic and social competence and self-concept (Gündüz et al. 2019).

Emotional intelligence, according to Fakhri, Mirzaian, and Banihashemian (2012) is to understand the personal emotions and use them to make the right choices in life, to regulate mood, mental wellbeing, and to suppress impulses. In addition, emotional intelligence is an essential element that can give people inspiration and hope at the moment of failure to achieve personal goals, and helps people to understand themselves and others and to interact properly with the public and adapt to the environment believed that emotional intelligence involves the ability to correctly recognize and respond to the feelings of others, to stimulate, comprehend, and monitor individuals; emotional responses (Ghorbanshiroudi et al. 2011). Further, emotional intelligence is related to knowing oneself and others, adapting and adapting to the world to succeed in meeting social demands, and a tactical and realistic capacity is such a form of intelligence (Sánchez-Álvarez, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016).

Emotional intelligence is consistent in relationship with subjective wellbeing, but lacks understanding of the mechanisms by which these relationships are formed (Balluerka et al. 2013). Emotional intelligence as a variable which interacts with understanding environmental elements to explain health levels is a constant in research. In work contexts, for example, it demonstrated a vigorous function that makes it possible to understand and understand social keys and to respond more constructively and adaptively. In fields other than work, an overall survey of adults revealed that emotional intelligence is linked to the level of social support achieved by increasing subjective well-being (Ghorbanshiroudi et al. 2011).

Many societal and intellectual causes have expressed the firm and extensive discrimination of the word of emotional intelligence in practical grounds (Kotsou et al. 2019). Experts credited these effects as concerned and the worth and relatedness of expressions and moods of practical consequences (Resurrección, Salguero, & Ruiz-Aranda, 2014). Expressive aptitude or emotional intelligence is developed as acceptable and suitable theoretic framework in areas of administration and academics, it is to manage their appraisal and constructive chores (Banihashemian, 2010). Though, the firm and extensive discrimination of the word of expressive or emotional intelligence for the untrained, and particularly, in practical areas for example as academic and administrative, has specified the ideas and created anticipation of consequences are away from systematic figures obtainable to time as a charge.

Broadly defined, emotionality is a collection of core skills which organize emotions in one's own way as well as in others to recognize, process and control them (Balluerka et al. 2013). According to Banihashemian (2010), emotional intelligence also predicts a variety of affective results, but for the mediating variables in the emotional intelligence suitable results nexus, clarity is required. Prior studies on emotional intelligence have indicated that greater social support is in part due to the benefits of being emotionally intelligent (Garousi & Shabestari, 2012). Social support is a promising candidate for a mediator as a variable. This is called the individual's level of social integration involving different types of functional support, involving the emotional support and instrumental support (Kong, Zhao, & You, 2012).

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes mental health as a state of well-being in which the person recognizes their abilities and uses them efficiently and productively, which will be useful for their respective societies. In a culture, people are rooted, and

social support influences many facets of individuals, including wellbeing (Whiteford et al. 2012). Good individual health is a valuable feature of life and social growth, and there is increased academic attention to the relationship between social support and individual health (Gu et al. 2016). While social support can affect both the physical and mental health of individuals (Jacobson, Lord, & Newman, 2017). Prior researches revealed that social support is linked to the mental health of the people and the anxiety symptoms of individuals may be relieved or buffered by social support (Guntzviller, Williamson, & Ratcliff, 2020).

The WHO also expresses the wellbeing as the lack of mental illness or debilities. Escaping dynamic situations is not only high well-being. It is also related with soundness and contentment of people s life. By discussing the global civilizations and public groups, it is to force that on stabilizing and repairing of wellbeing, it is critical on the level of any one (Guntzviller et al. 2020). There are many points which affects people s mental health for example, societal and economic conditions, genetic and patterns of life. If we talk about the percentage, a big number of population is having the issue of wellbeing. It is necessary for the best wellbeing that it hangs on the stability of all the points or aspects which affects people s life. There can be some other features of life which can contribute to the mental health of the people (Jacobson et al. 2017).

Thoits (2011) concluded that the levels of social support are strongly connected to depression and anxiety; that low levels of social support are more likely than not to contribute towards symptoms of depression and anxiety if stress is suffered. In general, psychologists agreed that mental health is generated if you have correct and acceptable action in your society and you can say that, not only does dosage mental health mean that you are away from problems and mental illness, but also that you are well adapted to your environment and interact with people and culture and therefore have an interest and passion for life (Fakhri et al. 2012). Esmaeili and Jamkhaneh, 2013)

stated that the emotional intelligence has a distinct stress and health impact. In this regard, the prior studies showed that health and general emotional intelligence are linked to one another (Banihashmiyan et al. 2010; Fakhri et al. 2002; Schutte et al. 2007).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This research has followed a correlation research design and the sample was taken through random sampling technique.

Population and Sampling

This study has investigated the Social Support, Emotional Intelligence, and Mental Health scales among the university students. In this regard, the researchers have selected students from the public and private institutions located in the Multan district. The study was carried out using the scales of above mentioned variables. The researchers took participants from all selected institutes located in Multan district randomly and the sample was 315 (male and female) students from the public and private institutes of Multan district. Through random sampling technique; gender, family system, residential area, marital status, and accommodation information of respondent was gathered as demographic variables. The institutions of the present study were Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan (BZU), Institute of Southern Punjab University Multan (ISP), Education University Lahore (Multan Campus), National College of Business Administration and Economics Lahore (Multan Campus) (NCBA&E), National University of Modern Languages Islamabad (Multan Campus) (NUML), and Air University Islamabad (Multan Campus).

Instruments

Multi-dimensional Perceived Social Support Scale

This scale was developed by Gregory Zimet and Gordon Farley (1998). This scale measures the individual source of perceived social support. This scale divided into three parts, (a) family, (b) friends, (c) others. Each parts of scale consists of four items and this scale is based on

the 7-Point Likert Scale rating from "Very Strongly Disagree to Very Strongly Agree".

Emotional Intelligence

This scale was developed by Schutte (1998) to estimating the emotional intelligence level among the individuals. This scale measures the perception of emotions, emotions utilization, self-emotions management, and towards other emotions management. This scale consists of 33 items based on 5-Point Likert Scale ranting 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree and 5 = Strongly Disagree. Item numbers 5, 28, and 33 of this scale were reversed calculated.

Mental Health

This scale was developed by Veit and Ware (1983) to measures the individual mental health. This scale is divided into four parts, (a) anxiety, (b) depression, (c) behavioral control, and (d) positive affect. This scale based on 18 items and each item is based on 6-Point Likert Scale rating none of the time to all of the time.

The maximum score (0-100) demonstrate the good emotional health.

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section focuses on the measurable assessment of exploration information by utilizing SPSS for the analysis of the collected data. Significant level 0.05 utilized for the assessment and the descriptive measurements were utilized to measure mean and standard deviation of all variables of the present study. Pearson Coefficient relationship was ascertained to analyze the relationship between the emotional intelligence, social support and mental health. Further, regression analysis was used to measure the impact of emotional intelligence, social support and mental health and the "Sobel Test" was done for the mediator between emotional intelligence, social support and mental health.

Table 1: Mean, SD, & Correlations Matrix

Variables	M	SD	EI	SS	MH
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	113.46	16.777	1	.428**	.273**
Social Support (SS)	4.919	1.193		1	.200**
Mental Health (MH)	57.37	11.836			1

Table 1 shows the positive significant correlation among emotional intelligence, social support and mental health (**, p = .001, *p ≤ .01).

Table 2: Standard Regression Model showing Impact of Emotional intelligence on Mental Health

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
(Constant)	91.294	4.516		20.218	0.000
Mental Health	.386	.077	.273	5.012	.000***

The result of the table 2 shows the positive significant effect on mental health (R^2 = .074, Adjusted, R^2 = .071, F = 25.121, p < = 0.000) *p < = 0.001).

Table 3: Standard Regression Model showing Impact of Social Support on Mental Health

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
(Constant)	3.761	.327		11.497	.000
Mental Health	.020	.006	.200	3.615	.000***

In the result of the table 3, social support shows the positive significant effect on mental health (R^2 = .040, Adjusted R^2 = .037, F = 13.069, p < = 0.000) *p < = 0.001).

Table 4: Standard Regression Model showing Impact of Emotional intelligence on Social Support

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
(Constant)	83.873	3.635		23.075	.000

Social Support	6.014	.718	.428	8.375	.000***

The results of the table 4 shows the positive significant effect on social support (R^2 = 0.183, Adjusted R^2 = 0.180, F = 70.146, p < = 0.000) *p < = 0.001).

Table 5: Standard Regression Model showing Impact of Social support on Emotional Intelligence

Predictors	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	P
(Constant)	1.466	.417		3.516	.000
Emotional Intelligence	.030	.004	.428	8.375	.000***

The result of the table 5 shows the positive significant effect on emotional intelligence (R^2 = .183, Adjusted R^2 = 0.180, F = 70.146, p < = 0.000) *p < = 0.001).

Table 6: Sobel Test for Mediation Social support on the relationship of Emotional Intelligence on Mental Health, and the relationship of Emotional Intelligence on Social Support and the relationship of Social Support on Mental Health.

Path	B	Std. Error	Sobel Test	P
EI - MH	.386	.077	3.046	
EI - SS	.030	.004		0.002**
SS - MH	.020	.006		0.001**

(EI = Emotional Intelligence, MH = Mental Health, SS = Social Support)
Sobel Test values (p < 0.01) indicates that there is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health; significant relationship between emotional intelligence and social support, and also a relationship between social support to mental health have significant values (*p > 0.01, **p < 0.001).

Table 7: Differences between Males and Females score on Emotional Intelligence, Social Support and Mental Health

Scales	Female		Male		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	114.46	16.091	112.16	17.603	1.207	.228
Social support (SS)	5.042	1.139	4.759	1.246	2.092	.037*
Mental Health (MH)	55.57	12.036	59.72	11.184	-3.132	.002**

Result of the table 7 shows that the social support showed a positive and significant results and mental health also showed a positive and significant but emotional intelligence showed insignificant (df. = 313, p = n.s, * p < 0.05, **p = < 0.001).
The first hypothesis states that gender differences exist between university students in terms of emotional intelligence, social support and mental health. The result of this study shows that there is non-significant difference between emotional intelligence and social support while there is mental health value is near to significant. The difference of this study in term of emotional intelligence, social support and mental health was high level in female as compared to male. Second hypothesis states that there is an impact of emotional intelligence on mental health among university students and the results of emotional intelligence shows a positive significant effect on mental health. Further, third hypothesis states that there is an impact of emotional intelligence on social support among university students and the emotional intelligence shows the positive significant effect on social support. In last, the fourth hypothesis states that there is an impact of

social support on mental health among university students and the result of social support was positive significant effect on mental health.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the mediating role of social support between emotional intelligence and mental health at university level students of public and private institutes of Multan district. The sample of this study was the students of public and private institutions located in the Multan district. This study has used the correlation, regression analysis, and t-test on emotional intelligence, social support, and mental health variables. The results of that study showed that a correlation analysis showed a significant relationship among university students that was positive between emotional intelligence, social support and mental health. This found that emotional intelligence and social support are significant predictor of mental health at students ($R^2 = 0.040$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.074$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, social support is significant predictor of emotional intelligence and mental health at students ($R^2 = 0.183$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.184$, $p < 0.01$). From the findings of the study, researchers have concluded that the social support received by the students is playing significant positive role to enhance the emotional intelligence and significant predictor of mental health.

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