

Relation Between Emotional Competence and Suicidal Ideation Among College Students

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Abstract- In the present scenario, we can see that so many severe issues in college students related with their behavioral problems. Especially these problems are connected with their emotional incompetence and poor adjustment. This condition can lead to self destructive thoughts. So, present study examined the relation between Emotional Competence and Suicidal Ideation of college students. For this purpose, the emotional competence was measured using Emotional Competence Scale (Bharadwaj& Sharma) and Suicidal Ideation using Suicidal Ideation Scale (Sisodia&Bhatnagar). The study was conducted on a sample of 180 college students belonging to age group 18-25, studying in various colleges in Kollam district. The relationship between suicidal ideation and emotional competence was analyzed using Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation. Suicidal ideation and emotional competence among the participants were also compared on the basis of their gender using independent samples t-test. Results indicated a significant relationship between suicidal ideation and emotional competence. The current study implicates the need for special caring on college students problems and remedial measures.

Index Terms- Suicidal Ideation, Emotional Competence, College students

I. INTRODUCTION

Suicidal ideation, also known as suicidal thoughts concerns thoughts or unusual pre- occupations with suicide. It can range from mere thoughts to extensively planned deliberate attempts which may or may not be successful. As per National Crime Records Bureau's records, the highest number of suicides in India was recorded in Kollam district in the year 2012. Kollam district has a suicide rate of 40.3% which is higher than the national suicide rates. Last year 447 people committed suicide in Kollam district whose total population is 11.1 lakh. Despite the alarming situation of this district, most studies involving suicidal ideation relate it to factors like anxiety, depression and stress alone. However, studying an all-encompassing factor like emotional competence and its possible relation with suicidal ideation would be a more efficient option for developing more effective preventive measures.

Emotional competence refers to one's ability to relate to or express feelings effectively. It is hence an essential social skill for constructively recognizing, responding and interpreting emotions of others as well as our own. It facilitates improved health by helping one avoid stress resulting from suppressed emotions. Various existing researches conducted on healthy clinical samples

predicted poor emotional competence to be associated with suicidal ideation

By analyzing and examining this relation between emotional competence and suicidal ideation, it is expected to further aid in predicting suicidal behavior and preventing it. Besides this, if perhaps an inverse relation is found between the two, it is reasonable to further study if one can decrease suicidal ideation by increasing an individual's emotional competence.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study by Nishad Nawaz(2015), on "An empirical study on employee competence in relation to emotional intelligence in Bahrain" studied over 50 employees from selected organizations in Bahrain, the impact of the six emotional intelligence elements identified as (1) self awareness, (2) self motivation, (3) self regulation of personal competence, (4) social awareness, (5) social skills and (6) emotional receptivity of social competence towards employee competence in the organizations. The results show a positive significance between emotional intelligence and employee competence.

Mark T. Greenberg, Carol A. Kusche, Elizabeth T. Cook and Julie P. Quamma(2009) carried out a study on 286 children from grades 2 and 3, titled "Promoting emotional competence in school-aged children-The effects of the PATHS curriculum". PATHS was a school-based preventive intervention model designed to improve children's ability to discuss and understand emotions and emotion concepts. Results indicated that the intervention was effective for both low and high-risk children in improving their range of vocabulary and fluency in discussing emotional experiences, their efficacy beliefs regarding the management of emotions, and their developmental understanding of some aspects of emotions.

Another study by Prabhjot Kaur Mahal(2015), on "Influence of emotional intelligence on employee satisfaction: An empirical study of banking industry" studied the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee satisfaction among 120 managers working in service sectors in Northern India including Delhi NCR. Results indicate that there exists a significant linear relationship between emotional intelligence and employee satisfaction.

Mandell, B. and Pherwani, S.(2003), in their study "Relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style: A gender comparison" examined the predictive relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership styles. The researcher

also wanted to determine gender differences in this relationship as well as the gender differences in the emotional intelligence scores and transformational leadership style of managers. A significant predictive relationship was found between transformational leadership style and emotional intelligence. No significant interaction was found between gender and emotional intelligence while predicting transformational leadership style. A significant difference was found in the emotional intelligence of scores of male and female managers. Lastly, no significant difference was found in the transformational leadership scores of male and female managers.

A study by Schotte, David E.; Clum, George A. (1982) on "Suicide ideation in college population: A test of a model" examined a model of suicide behavior with 65 undergraduate suicide ideators (as measured by a self-report adaptation of the scale for suicide ideators). The model focuses on the relationship between negative life stress, cognitive rigidity and/or poor problem-solving skills, hopelessness and suicide ideation and attempting. Results support a stress/problem-solving model of suicidal behavior in which poor problem-solvers under high life stress are considered to be at risk for depression, hopelessness and suicidal behavior.

Andrea P. Chioqueta and Tore C. Stiles (2007), in their study "The relationship between psychological buffers, hopelessness and suicidal ideation" studied over 314 university students, 71 males and 243 females, the role of psychological buffers (like satisfaction, self-esteem, perception of family cohesion, and perception of social support) in the development of hopelessness and suicidal ideation. The results suggest that life satisfaction and self-esteem are independent predictors of lower levels of hopelessness, while perception of social support seems to be the major predictor of lower levels of suicidal ideation independent of depression and hopelessness severity.

Another study by Theresa Wozencraft, William Wagner and Allicia Pellegrin (1991), on "Depression and suicidal ideation in sexually abused children" studied over 65 sexually abused children, the relationship of victims' depression and suicidal ideation with victims' age, post-investigation residence, nature of the abuse, and mothers' belief of victim and compliance with treatment recommendations. Results indicated that older victims were more likely to describe themselves as being depressed. In addition, older victims and those whose mothers were less compliant were more likely to have Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) scores above the 90th percentile.

K.M. Carpenter, D.S. Hasin, D.B. Allison and M.S. Faith, in their study "Relationships between obesity and DSM-IV major depressive disorder, suicide ideation and suicide attempts: results from a general population study" studied over 40,086 African American and White participants, the relationships between relative body weight and clinical depression, suicide ideation and suicide attempts in an adult US general population sample. Results indicated that relative body weight was associated with major depression, suicide attempts, and suicide ideation, although relationships were different for men and women. Among women, increased BMI was associated with both major depression and suicide ideation. Among men, lower BMI was associated with major depression, suicide attempts, and suicide ideation. There were no racial differences.

Kwok (2013), carried out a study on Chinese University students, titled "The moderating role of emotional competence in suicidal ideation among Chinese university students". It was a cross sectional survey using convenience sampling and the questionnaire was administered on 302 students. The means, standard deviations and Cronbach's alphas of the variables were computed. Pearson correlation analyses and hierarchical regression analyses were performed. The findings support the family ecological framework and provide evidence for emotional competence as a resilience factor that buffers low family functioning on suicidal ideation. Suggested measures to decrease suicidal ideation include enhancing parental concern, lessening parental control, developing students' awareness, regulation and management of their own emotions, fostering empathy towards others' emotional expression, enhancing social skills in sharing and influencing others' emotions and increasing the positive use of emotions for the evaluation and generation of new ideas.

A similar study was conducted by Cha and Nock in April 2009, under the title "Emotional Intelligence Is a Protective Factor for Suicidal Behavior". Adolescents aged from 12-19 recruited from local psychiatric clinics and the community participated in this cross-sectional laboratory-based study. It was examined whether the relations between childhood sexual abuse and suicidal ideation and attempts were moderated by adolescents' EI. These constructs were assessed using self-report, structured interviews, and performance-based tests, respectively. Results revealed that EI is a protective factor for both suicidal ideation and attempts. Specifically, childhood sexual abuse was strongly predictive of these outcomes among those with low EI, weakly predictive among those with medium EI, and completely unrelated among those with high EI.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

OBJECTIVES

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- To study the relation between emotional competence and suicidal ideation among college students.
- To assess the role of gender in suicidal ideation and emotional competence.

IV. HYPOTHESES

Three hypotheses are formulated to study the relation between suicidal ideation and emotional competence among college students.

1. There will be a significant relationship between suicidal ideation and emotional competence among college students.
2. At least any one of the group will show a significant difference on their suicidal ideation in relation to their gender.
3. At least any one of the group will show a significant difference on their emotional competence in relation to their gender.

V. SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 180 participants out of which 90 were males and 90 were females. For the study, college students of the age group 18 to 26 were considered as sample and it was collected on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria from various colleges in Kollam, Kerala by Random sampling method.

VI. TOOLS

The data were collected mainly using 2 psychological measures:

- Suicidal Ideation Scale devised by D.S. Sisodia and V. Bhatnagar

It is a general measure for suicidal ideation of general age group and uses Likert technique. It consisted of 25 items with five alternative options likewise “Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree”.

- Emotional Competence Scale devised by Dr. H. C. Sharma and Dr. R. L. Bhardwaj

This scale consisted of thirty (30) items , with five alternatives.

VII. PROCEDURE

Step 1: Collection of socio-demographic data

The socio demographic data like gender, age, type of college, family type and socio-economic status of participants by presenting them with socio demographic data sheet.

Step 2: Assessment of Suicidal Ideation

Suicidal ideation was assessed by using Suicidal Ideation Scale by D.S. Sisodia and V. Bhatnagar.

Step 3: Assessment of Emotional Competence

Emotional competence of the participants is assessed using Emotional Competence Scale by Dr. H. C. Sharma and Dr. R. L. Bhardwaj.

VIII. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The relation between suicidal ideation and emotional competence were examined using Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The comparison of suicidal ideation and emotional competence of participants based on their gender was analyzed through independent samples t-test.

IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to compare the suicidal ideation and emotional competence among college students. The study was conducted on a sample of 180 students (90 males and 90 females) studying in various types of colleges in Kollam district. The suicidal ideation and emotional competence of the students were assessed and compared on the basis of their gender to analyze if there is any possible relationship. Besides this, the study also examined whether there was any relationship between the suicidal ideation and emotional competence of the students.

The data were collected using sufficiently reliable and valid scales like Suicidal Ideation Scale and Emotional Competence scale. Demographic data were also collected from the participants to control extraneous variables up to an extent.

The relation between emotional competence and suicidal ideation was determined using Karl-Pearson’s coefficient of correlation. The comparison of suicidal ideation and emotional in participants based on their gender was analyzed through independent samples t-test.

The results obtained are presented and discussed as follows:

Table: Relationship between suicidal ideation and emotional competence: Result of Correlational analysis

Variables	Emotional Competence
Suicidal Ideation	-0.35*

*Significance level at 0.05

The relationship between emotional competence and suicidal ideation of the participants was analyzed by Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation. The correlational analysis revealed a correlation of -0.35. From the data, it is evident that there is significant inverse correlation between suicidal ideation and emotional competence when level of significance is 0.05. Since the coefficient of correlation is a negative value, it implies that emotional competence and suicidal ideation share an inverse correlation. This means if the emotional competence increases, suicidal ideation of a participant shall decrease and vice versa. This was supportive of our assumption that suicidal ideations could be reduced if we could develop emotional competence in individuals.

Table: Gender-wise comparison of participants with respect to suicidal ideation: Result of Independent samples t-test

Variable	Comparison	M	SD	t value
Suicidal ideation	Male	61.14	20.45	1.47
	Female	56.91	18.07	

The suicidal ideation of participants was compared on the basis of their gender through independent samples t-test. The t value obtained was 1.471 at significance level of 0.05. The result reveals no significant difference in suicidal ideation with respect to gender. This suggests that gender does not play a significant role in predicting one’s suicidal ideation and thus both genders may have equal tendencies for developing suicidal ideations. Studies on suicide rates based on gender often contradict one another (Radhakrishnan & Andrade, 2012) and perhaps such contradictions can be explained by this result.

Table: Gender-wise comparison of participants with respect to emotional competence: Result of Independent samples t-test

Variable	Comparison	M	SD	t value
Emotional Competence	Male	91.81	12.19	1.51
	Female	94.51	11.74	

The Independent samples t-test was employed to compare the emotional competence of participants with respect to their gender as well. The t-value obtained was 1.513 (level of significance was 0.05) and it revealed no significant difference among participants based on their gender. This suggests that no specific gender held a superior or inferior position regarding emotional competence and thus it could be further fostered in individuals, successfully for both genders.

X. CONCLUSION

- There is significant relation between suicidal ideation and emotional competence among college students.
- There is no statistically significant relationship between suicidal ideation and gender of college students.
- There is no statistically significant relationship between emotional competence and gender of college students.

XI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

For future studies, it is recommended to increase the sample size and collect data from a wide geographical region including other age groups like early adolescents and adulthood so that the power and generalization of study could be improved.

Different demographic variables like medical history, current emotional state etc. can be considered for the study.

The inverse correlation between suicidal ideation and emotional competence can be used in further studies to increase emotional competence as a measure to prevent suicidal ideation.

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