



## EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AS EVOCATORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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### Abstract

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*The present study has been designed to investigate the Emotional Competence and Mental Health as predictors of Academic Achievement among the Secondary School students of Rohtak. For this purpose, a sample of 252 students of Rohtak district was taken on the basis of gender, locality and type of management of school. Scale of Emotional Competence Scale (SEC) by Sharma and Bhardwaj (1998) and Mental Health Battery (MHB-ss) by Singh & Gupta (revised in 2008) and Achievement in Mathematics were administered to ascertain the emotional competence and mental health as predictors of academic achievement in Mathematics of Secondary school student. The findings of the study revealed that Emotional Competence and Mental Health have high correlation with Academic Achievement. The findings also revealed that among the variables studied, the best evocator of Academic Achievement is Mental Health.*

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Educational achievements are most crucial for adolescents as the whole career of a student depends upon the marks obtained in classrooms. As our society is changing at very rapid speed and to keep oneself updated and informed, emotional and mental balance of body is always needed. As there is explosion of knowledge intensively and to live a peaceful and balanced life emotional competence and sound mental health are of utmost importance. Michel (2002) explained emotion, “as any relatively brief conscious experience characterized by intense mental activity attached with high degree of pleasure or displeasure.” Emotions fall under the affective domain of human behavior but basically are made up of multivariate components, such as personal experiences, mental reflections, psycho-physiological processes, and active behavior, influencing every sphere of one’s life. Balanced emotional behavior helps a person to be proficient, knowledgeable, capable, skillful and competent. Basically, emotions are natural and instrumental aspect of human behavior and are the basic foundation of anyone’s emotional competence. In the words of Beaumont (2009), “Emotional competence refers to the essential **social skills** to recognize, interpret, and respond constructively to emotions in yourself and others.” So, in a specific stressed social situation,

how appropriately a person deals and manages his/her emotions reflect the emotional competence. In the words of Ellis (1987), “emotional competence is the ability to understand, manage and express the emotional aspect of one’s life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems and adopting to the complex demands of growth and development.” Further, Buck (1985) states, "Competence is the new growth of the subject of activity formed in the process of this activity, expressing knowledge, abilities, and personal qualities allowing solving successfully the problems making essence of this activity". Further, Buck defined emotional competence as ,”an ability to work with the internal environment of the feelings and desires.” So, emotional competence can be perceived as capability to actualize “ideal emotional selves that guide emotional self-regulation”, Bonanno, (2001). Hence, emotional competence lead forth to better health conditions by avoiding stress instead of suppressing the emotions.

Physical, mental, and social health are imperative and interwoven threads to lead a normal life. As we grow up, it turns out to be increasingly obvious that mental health is imperative to the general prosperity of people, communities and nations. Basically, the concept of mental health include one’s personal level of contentedness, anticipated productiveness, self-determination, proficiencies, capabilities, and realization of one’s own scholastic and affective domain. “Mental health lies at the heart of one’s social, professional and personal development; yet formative years are particularly exposed to mental health problems. But it is the education which plays a paramount role in building the foundation of the mental health and well being of students”, Malhotra & Malhotra, (2017). Bhatia (1982) considers, “mental health as the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living. It means the ability to face and accept the realities of life.” In the words of Dandapani, (2000), “Mental health refers to full and harmonious functioning of our total personality as well as to our bio-social-psychological and spiritual well-being.” According to WHO (2004), Mental health is perceived as a positive source contributing to asset development individually, socially, and economically. Mental health is defined by WHO. (2010) as,” a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” So it can be said that In fact, mental health is directly concerned with well-being of an individual life by enabling him/her to recognize the potentials, managing stresses of life, work efficaciously and productively.

Academic Achievement, also, termed as scholastic achievement can be said as attainment at particular class level by enhancing or adding up the knowledge by learning prescribed and pre defined syllabus. In short, it can be said that academic achievement means knowledge derived from, or achieving the success or good performance as per pre-defined points. Academic performance refers to the “level of performance in school, accomplishment or success in school”. By exhaling in academic achievements from their counterparts, students get admission in better professional courses. In this knowledge explosive society, academic achievement has become a chief exponent of child’s success to get in to any field in their future. Society as well as parents lay strong emphasis on educational accomplishment. “Learning outcomes have become a phenomenon of interest to all and this account for the reason why scholars have been working hard to untangle factors that militate against good academic performance”, Aremu & Sokan, (2002). Adeyemo (2001) opined, “the major goal of the school is to work towards attainment of academic excellence by students.” According to him, “the school may have other peripheral objectives but emphasis is lways placed on the achievement of sound scholarship.” Osiki, (2001) states, “besides, virtually everybody concerned with education places premium on academic achievement; excellent academic achievement of children is often the expectation of parents.”

**Rationale:**

Due to manifold changes in the present society, things are changing at very fast speed. Knowledge and information loaded society has changed the way of thinking and dealing. Students of present era have so many options to update them from different sources that their all the three domains of behavior, i. e. conative, cognitive and affective, are being influenced. These alterations affect the emotional capabilities, psychological well being or mental health and educational performance of the learners as they are very cautious for their future at this stage. It has been found that emotional problems are related to the tendency to get involved in problems associated with mental, social and behavioural health issues, which may hang out so as to strengthen their consequences on well-being and academic achievements. “But one must learn how to cope with psychological stress, handle peer pressure, deal with the emotions, resolve conflicts, build bridges with friends, family and school, develop self-confidence, safeguard from high pressure marketing strategies, particularly of the alcohol industry, as well as cope with other stresses like academic competition and a hankering for

material gains and these all necessitate having good mental health, “(Malhotra & Gupta, (2014).

Poor mental health and instability in emotions adversely affect the academic achievements of students. This paper elucidates that how emotional competence and mental health can be associated with academic achievement of secondary students. As, emotional competence and a good mental health both seem to associate with a student’s life, but there is paucity of researches which undertake to study the mental health and emotional competence of secondary school students in connection with academic achievement. So, the present investigator visualized a need to study the emotional competence and mental health as evocators of academic achievement.

### **Hypotheses**

- There would be significant difference in the Mean scores of Emotional Competence, Mental Health and Achievement in Mathematics for the groups formed on the basis of i) Sex ii) Locality iii) Type of schools.
- There would be significant relationship between Emotional Competence and Achievement in Mathematics for Total sample and sub-samples.
- There would be significant relationship between Mental Health and Achievement in Mathematics for Total sample and sub-samples.
- Achievement in Mathematics can be predicted significantly in terms of the independent variables selected such as Emotional Competence and Mental Health.

### **Method**

#### ***Sample***

The sample comprised of 252 Secondary School students from the Secondary school of district of Rohtak. Proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample using for assuring the illustration of population.

#### ***Tools Used***

- ***“Scale of Emotional Competence Scale (SEC)”*** by Sharma and Bhardwaj (1998): The scale contains 30 items for measuring five emotional competencies and each one was measured by six items selected for the purpose. The reliability of emotional competence was 0.76 hat was determined by split-half method. The validity of the scale has been determined with factor A and C of 16-personality factor questionnaire and found to be 0.64 and 0.69 respectively.

- **“Mental Health Battery (MHB-ss)”** by Singh & Gupta (2008): The MHB is meant to review the level of mental health of persons in the age range of 13 to 22 yrs. The battery has 130 items, divided into six parts viz.:

- Part I: Emotional Stability (ES) contains 15 items;
- Part II: Overall Adjustment (OA) contains 40 items;
- Part III: Autonomy (AY) contains 15 items;
- Part IV: Security-Insecurity (SI) contains 15 items;
- Part V: Self-Concept (SC) contains 15 items;
- Part VI: Intelligence (IG) contains 30 items.

The scoring of MHB comprise of two sections – Section A and Section B. For Section-A, item nos. I to IV of preliminary information is given weight to determine socio economic status of the examinee and for Section- B if the response is in accordance with scoring key, then a score of + 1 is given, and a score of zero if does not given accordingly.

- Scores in matriculation in Mathematics was used as Achievement in Mathematics.

**Table-1: Mean, SD and t-values for Emotional Competence, Mental Health and Achievement in Mathematics**

Samples	Mean & Standard Deviation	Emotional Competence	Mental Health	Achievement in Mathematics
<b>Boys (N=128)</b>	M <sub>1</sub>	48.48	34.74	64.06
	SD <sub>1</sub>	8.23	8.10	7.17
<b>Girls (N=124)</b>	M <sub>1</sub>	50.69	37.30	63.50
	SD <sub>1</sub>	10.23	8.29	9.85
<b>t-value</b>		1.88	2.47	.59
<b>Urban (N=128)</b>	M <sub>1</sub>	50.34	33.53	64.25
	SD <sub>1</sub>	9.43	7.55	8.61
<b>Rural (N=124)</b>	M <sub>1</sub>	48.84	38.63	63.29
	SD <sub>1</sub>	9.24	8.34	8.65
<b>t-value</b>		5.12*	1.27	.88
<b>Govt. (N=128)</b>	M <sub>1</sub>	50.58	38.28	62.81
	SD <sub>1</sub>	9.60	7.93	8.19
<b>Private (N=124)</b>	M <sub>1</sub>	48.60	33.73	64.77
	SD <sub>1</sub>	9.01	8.02	8.98
<b>t-value</b>		4.53	.1.68	1.81

\*P<0.05      \*\*P<0.01

**Table-2: Correlation of the Dependent Variable with Independent Variable for the Total and Sub-samples**

Samples		Emotional Competence	Mental Health
<b>Total</b> (N=252)	<b>R</b>	0.13	0.14
	<b>T</b>	17.69**	36.62**
<b>Boys</b> (N=128)	<b>R</b>	0.12	0.19
	<b>T</b>	15.90**	30.18**
<b>Girls</b> (N=124)	<b>R</b>	0.11	0.10
	<b>T</b>	10.20**	23.02**
<b>Urban</b> (N=128)	<b>R</b>	0.12	0.09
	<b>T</b>	11.99**	30.35**
<b>Rural</b> (N=124)	<b>R</b>	0.09	0.17
	<b>T</b>	13.09**	22.99**
<b>Govt.</b> (N=128)	<b>R</b>	0.28	0.25
	<b>T</b>	10.96**	24.34**
<b>Private</b> (N=124)	<b>R</b>	0.03	0.04
	<b>T</b>	14.07**	28.70**

### Discussion

Table 1 reveals that no significant Gender difference exist in Emotional Competence, Mental health and Academic Achievement in Mathematics for the total sample. But high means on the part of girls demonstrate that they are better than boys in Emotional Competence, Mental health and Academic Achievement in Mathematics. The results show that there is no significant difference between urban and rural school students regarding Emotional Competence, Mental health and Academic Achievement in Mathematics. But urban students are having better emotional competence and achievement in Mathematics where as rural students are found to have better mental health. Further, it is found that no significant difference on the basis of types of school, i.e. Govt. and rural exist in Emotional Competence, Mental health and Academic Achievement in Mathematics. But Govt. school students are having better emotional competence and mental health where as students of Private schools are having better achievement in mathematics.

Table 2 reveals that the correlation coefficient between Emotional Competence and Academic Achievement in Mathematics for the total sample and on the basis of gender (boys and girls), locality (urban and rural) and types of schools (Govt. and Private) are 0.13, 0.12, 0.11, 0.12, 0.09, 0.28 and 0.03 respectively, this indicates that there exists negligible correlation but slight positive correlation between Emotional Competence and Academic Achievement in Mathematics for total samples and sub samples. Further, the correlation

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coefficient between Mental health and Academic Achievement in Mathematics for the total sample and on the basis of gender (boys and girls), locality (urban and rural) and types of schools (Govt. and Private) are 0.14, 0.19, 0.10, 0.09, 0.17, 0.25 and 0.04 respectively, this indicates that there exists negligible correlation except sample of Govt. School between Mental health and Academic Achievement in Mathematics for total samples and sub samples except Govt. School students as there exist low but slight positive correlation for Govt. School sample..

**Table-3: Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis**

Variable	a constant	$\beta$	$R^2$	$R^2 \Delta$	F-value
<b>Mental Health</b>	<b>69.23</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.21</b>	--	<b>5.41*</b>

Multiple analysis regression-stepwise was implemented to find out the best predictor of Achievement in Mathematics of secondary school students. Table 3 demonstrates that the predictor variable Mental Health, having high r is entered and the value of  $\beta$  is 0.14 and the value is significant at 0.05 levels, since the F-value is 5.41 for 251 df. This level of significance showed the existence of a linear relationship between mental health and Achievement in Mathematics. The table further depicts that  $R^2$  is 0.21 which indicates that 21 percent of variance in Achievement in Mathematics of the sample is accounted for by the predictor variable Mental Health was found positively related to Achievement in Mathematics. However, a cumulative of 21% of the variance has been observed significant predictor towards Achievement in Mathematics.

### **Implications**

The results of the study suggest that mental health is the good evocater of achievement in Mathematics of Secondary school students. Therefore, ample amount of attention should be given on the development of righteous mental health. Legitimate mental health is the basic of one's well balanced personality. It is the foundation stone of our intellectual, scholastic, social and professional relationships as well as boost our efficiency of work and achievements. Mentally healthy students accept the challenges, responsibilities and perform their duties with dedication and sincerity. "Mental health is the successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with other people, and providing the ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity," NAML, (2011). For better mental health emotional literacy should also be enhanced in education system by the

provision of extracurricular activities like games, debates, music, art, theater, scouting, educational exhibition etc.

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