

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG ALCOHOLICS AND NON-ALCOHOLICS

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Abstract: Alcoholics are the individuals who cannot stop drinking alcohol. Overuse of alcohol creates addiction in individuals and this results in many psychosocial problems in individuals. This includes problems such as difficulty in dealing with his own feelings, emotions and his surroundings. The aim of the present study was to identify the emotional intelligence among alcoholics and non-alcoholics. The sample consists of 56 alcoholics and 56 non-alcoholics. The tool used for the present study was the Emotional Intelligence Inventory developed by Thomas and Sushama in 2003. The data was analyzed using SPSS. 't' test was used for comparing alcoholics and non-alcoholics. The result of the present study shows that emotional intelligence is higher in non-alcoholics when compared to alcoholics.

Key Terms – Emotional intelligence, alcoholics, non-alcoholics.

INTRODUCTION

Alcohol is a colorless liquid, produced by the fermentation of sugar or starch that is the intoxicating agent in fermented drinks. Alcohol is the oldest and most widely used drug of abuse in the world. In low to moderate doses, alcohol first acts to remove social inhibitions by slowing activity in the sympathetic nervous system. In higher doses, alcohol acts on the cerebellum to interfere with coordination and balance, producing the staggering gait of drunkenness. Alcohol use is highly costly to societies because so many people abuse alcohol and because judgment after drinking can be substantially impaired. It is estimated that almost half of road accidents are caused by alcohol use, and excessive alcohol consumption is involved in a majority of violent crimes, including rape and murder (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAuslan, 1996). Even people who are not normally aggressive may react with aggression when they are intoxicated. Alcohol increases aggression in part because it reduces the ability of the person who has consumed it to inhibit his or her aggression (Steele & Southwick, 1985). When people are intoxicated, they become more self-focused and less aware of the social situation. As a result, they become less likely to notice the social constraints that normally prevent them from engaging aggressively, and are less likely to use those social constraints to guide them.

Alcoholism is a chronic disease, progressive and often fatal; it is a primary disorder and not a symptom of other diseases or emotional problems. The chemistry of alcohol allows it to affect nearly every type of cell in the body, including those in the central nervous system. In the brain, alcohol interacts with centers responsible for pleasure and other desirable sensations. After prolonged exposure to alcohol, the brain adapts to the changes alcohol makes and becomes dependent on it. For people with alcoholism, drinking becomes the primary medium through which they can deal with people, work, and life. Alcohol dominates their thinking, emotions, and actions. The severity of this disease is influenced by factors such as genetics, psychology, culture, and response to physical pain.

The term "alcoholism" was first used in 1849 by the Swedish physician Magnus Huss to describe the systematic adverse effects of alcohol. Alcoholism can develop insidiously; often there is no clear line between problem drinking and alcoholism. The only early indications of alcoholism may be the unpleasant physical responses to withdrawal that occur during even brief periods of abstinence. Sometimes people experience long-term depression or anxiety, insomnia, chronic pain, or personal or work stress that lead to the use of alcohol for relief, but often no extraordinary events have occurred that account for the drinking problem. Alcohol consumption contributes to many social problems includes such as alcohol and educational problems, alcohol and youth crime, alcohol and sex, and young people face the same long-term health consequences as do older drinkers.

In 1992, Journal of the American Medical Association article, the Joint Committee of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence and the American Society of Addiction Medicine published a definition for alcoholism: "Alcoholism is a primary chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with the drug alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, mostly denial. Each of these symptoms may be continuous or periodic".

Alcoholics faces many problems in their life and many types of adjustment problems. As they are facing many problems in their life, they become emotionally unstable and become very weak in their life functioning.

Intelligence is the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment. Intelligence is considered as one of the most desirable personality qualities in today's society. Emotions are involved in everything people do: every action, decision and judgement. Emotionally intelligent people recognize this and use their thinking to manage their emotions rather than being managed by them. Emotional Intelligence (EI) concept has become a very important indicator of a person's knowledge, skills and abilities in workplace, school and personal life. The overall result of

researches suggests that Emotional Intelligence plays a significant role in the job performance, motivation, decision making, successful management and leadership.

According to Salovey and Mayer (1993) emotional intelligence is: “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. The advantages of emotional intelligence are., improves relationships with human beings, improves communication with people, makes better empathy skills, acting with integrity, helps to get respect from others, to improve career prospects, managing change more confidently, enjoy the work wholeheartedly, feeling confident and positive in attitude, to reduce stress levels, to increase creativity, and to learn from mistakes.

In the course of last two decades Emotional Intelligence researchers have developed three major models. They are ability, mixed, and trait Emotional Intelligence models. Ability models regard emotional intelligence as a pure form of mental ability and thus as a pure intelligence. In contrast, mixed models of emotional intelligence combine mental ability with personality characteristics such as optimism and wellbeing. While, trait models of emotional intelligence refer to an individual’s self-perceptions of their emotional abilities. The ability model of emotional intelligence is proposed by John Mayer and Peter Salovey. Two mixed models of emotional intelligence have been proposed by Reuven Bar-On and Daniel Goleman, but each has a different notion.

An Ability Model of Emotional intelligence (John Mayer and Peter Salovey, 2000) says that, emotional intelligence includes four types of abilities. They include the following:

Perceiving emotions: The ability to identify and interpret emotions in faces, pictures and voices including the ability to identify one’s own emotions.

Using emotions: The ability to use emotions to facilitate various cognitive activities, such as thinking and problem solving. The emotionally intelligent person can be benefited in his or her changing moods in any work.

Understanding emotions: The ability to comprehend emotion language and to appreciate complicated relationships among emotions. For example, understanding emotions include the ability to be sensitive to slight variations between emotions, and the ability to recognize and describe how emotions grow over time.

Managing emotions: The ability to regulate emotions in both ourselves and in others. Therefore, the emotionally intelligent person can tie together emotions, even negative ones, and manage them to achieve intended goals.

Bar-On’s Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence says that from Darwin to the present, most descriptions, definitions and conceptualizations of emotional-social intelligence have included one or more of the following key components, all of which are included in the Bar-On conceptual model. It includes the ability to understand emotions as well as express our feelings and ourselves, the ability to understand other’s feelings and relate with people, the ability to manage and control our emotions, the ability to manage change and solve problems of an intrapersonal and interpersonal nature, the ability to generate positive mood and be self-motivated. These meta-factors of the conceptual model of emotional-social intelligence are referred as follows in the Bar-On measures of this model. Each of these 5 meta-factors comprises a number of closely related competencies, skills and facilitators. They are.,

Intrapersonal (self-awareness and self-expression): It includes self-regard (being aware of, understanding and accepting ourselves), emotional self-awareness (being aware of and understanding our emotions), assertiveness (expressing our feelings and ourselves nondestructively), independence (being self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others), self-actualization (setting and achieving goals to actualize our potential). **Interpersonal (social awareness and interaction):** It includes empathy (being aware of and understanding how others feel), social responsibility (identifying with and feeling part of our social groups), interpersonal relationship (establishing mutually satisfying relationships).

Stress management (emotional management and control): It includes stress tolerance (effectively and constructively managing our emotions), impulse control (effectively and constructively controlling our emotions).

Adaptability (change management): It includes reality testing (validating our feelings and thinking with external reality), flexibility (coping with and adapting to change in our daily life), problem solving (generating effective solutions to problems of an intrapersonal and interpersonal nature).

General mood (self-motivation): It includes optimism (having a positive outlook and looking at the brighter side of life), happiness (feeling content with ourselves, others and life in general).

Goleman’s Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence says that emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. Goleman’s new model outlines four main emotional intelligence constructs and it includes.,

Self-awareness: The ability to read one’s emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.

Self-management: Involves controlling one’s emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances.

Social awareness: The ability to sense, understand, and react to other’s emotions while comprehending social networks, and

Relationship management: Includes the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

Petrides et al. (2004) proposed a conceptual distinction between the ability-based model and a trait-based model of emotional intelligence. Trait Emotional Intelligence model refers to an individual’s self-perceptions of his emotional abilities. This definition of emotional intelligence includes behavioral tendency and self-perceived abilities and is measured by self-report. Trait Emotional

Intelligence should be investigated within a personality framework. An alternative name for the same construct is trait emotional self-efficacy.

The term emotional intelligence was popularized as a result of Daniel Goleman's (1995) work. Although traditional understanding of intelligence is important for success in life, emotional intelligence is key to relating well to others and achieving goals, because the human world is all about relationships.

Emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. Alcoholism is the most serious form of problem drinking, and describes a strong, often uncontrollable, desire to drink. Sufferers of alcoholism will often place drinking above all other obligations, including work and family, and may build up a physical tolerance or experience withdrawal symptoms if they stop. The signs and symptoms of alcoholism includes drinking alone, drinking in secret, not being able to limit how much alcohol is consumed, blacking out, having rituals and being irritated/annoyed when these rituals are disturbed, dropping hobbies and activities the person used to enjoy; losing interest in them, feeling an urge to drink, feeling irritable when drinking times approach etc. Emotional intelligence has different levels. Emotional Intelligence has been found to be a predictor of life satisfaction, healthy psychological adaptation, positive interactions with peers and family, and higher parental warmth. Lower emotional intelligence has also been found to be associated with violent behavior, illegal use of drugs and alcohol, and participation in delinquent behavior. A person having an increased level of emotional intelligence, the person shows an increased capacity for recognizing his own feelings and those of others and have the ability to manage his own emotions in an appropriate way. A normal man except in stressful situations possess normal to high level of emotional intelligence, that is he is capable of regulating his own emotions. As the person's life style, environment, and social situations changes, it affects his or her life's functions including emotional regulation. As alcohol alters a person's life, the person will have to face many problems including inability to recognizing and regulating his own emotions. An alcoholic commonly possesses a decreased level of emotional intelligence and he might be incapable for recognizing his own feelings and emotions, and they might not manage their emotions appropriate to the situations.

Need and significance of the present study

Alcohol is a psychoactive drug, which negatively affects human's daily life functioning. Common use of alcohol leads to alcohol dependence and develops withdrawal symptoms. As compared to the people, who do not use alcohol the alcoholic peoples experience many problems in each and every functioning of their life. The alcoholics experiences physical problems like liver problems, cancer, high blood pressure, damages to nervous tissues etc., and psychological problems like anxiety, depression etc., sexual difficulties, adjustment problems etc.

Alcohol consumption is the world's largest risk factor for disease and disability. Kerala has the highest per capita consumption in the country. Alcoholism is the major cause of social problems in Kerala. Family courts in Kerala have witnessed an increase in number of divorces because of alcoholism. Majority of the clients seeking treatment from department of psychiatry has the diagnosis of alcohol dependence.

This study mainly focuses on the emotional intelligence among alcoholics. Emotional intelligence is a relevant variable in the functioning of alcoholic's life. A normal functioning person have control over his own emotions, he can understand his own emotions, and he have the ability to adjust with his environments. As the continuous use of alcohol affects a person's fully life functioning including cognitive, affective and behavioral functioning, the alcoholics may have the chances of having the inability to control his emotions and an inability to adjust with their environment. Compared to non-alcoholics, alcoholics have more chances to experience decreased ability to deal their emotions appropriately. The alcohol alters the full life functions of a person and results more problems to them and to others. So, the findings of the study are expected to be helpful for identifying the problems facing by the alcoholics and their family and it helps to give assistance to cope up with these problems.

Statement of the Problem

To study the emotional intelligence among alcoholics and non-alcoholics.

Definition of Key Terms

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman,1995).

In the present study Emotional Intelligence means the total scores obtained for all items in the Emotional Intelligence Inventory developed by Immanuel Thomas and Sushama S.R. (2003).

Alcoholics

Alcoholics are the individuals with tolerance, withdrawal symptoms, and either "loss of control" or "inability to abstain" from alcohol (Jellinek,1960).

In the present study, alcoholics were taken as the participants.

Non-Alcoholics

A non-alcoholic is a person who is not an alcoholic.

In the present study, non-alcoholics were taken as the participants.

Objective

The main objective of the present study is;

1. To find out whether there is any significant difference in emotional intelligence among alcoholics and non- alcoholics.

Hypothesis

The main hypothesis of the present study is;

1. There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence among alcoholics and non- alcoholics.

METHOD

Participants

The study was conducted on 56 alcoholics and 56 non-alcoholics, age ranges from 20- 65 years. A total of 112 subject (alcoholics and non-alcoholics) were selected for the study. The sample selection method used was convenient sampling method. Questionnaire was used for sample collection. The alcoholics were collected from Punarjani De-Addiction Center and Sanjo Sadan De-Addiction Center of Thrissur district of Kerala State. The non-alcoholics were collected from different areas of Thrissur district matching correspondingly to the socio demographic variables of alcoholics.

Instruments

1. Emotional Intelligence Inventory- Emotional Intelligence Inventory was developed by Dr. Immanuel Thomas and Sushama in 2003. The inventory consists of 50 items, measuring four dimensions of emotional intelligence with a “5-Point” response category of completely agree, agree, undetermined, disagree, and completely disagree. The direction of scoring is reversed for the negative items, so that a high score indicates high emotional intelligence. The test is found to have adequate reliability and validity.
2. Personal Data Sheet- The personal data sheet used for alcoholics consists of 20 items, which involves personal details such as name, age, sex, religion, educational qualification, income, marital status, number of children, birth order, number of siblings and place of residence, family details such as socio-economic status and family history of substance abuse and details about the consumption of alcohol. The details about drinking habits includes the items like the history of consumption of alcohol and history of taking medications, if they take medications for alcoholism. The personal data sheet for non-alcoholics includes the same details as that of alcoholics except the details regarding alcohol consumption.

Procedure

The data for the present study were collected from Punarjani De-Addiction Center, and Sanjo Sadan De-Addiction Centre of Thrissur district of Kerala State. First the investigator identified the De-Addiction Centers for data collection and took concern from the Head of the De-Addiction Centers and informed the value and importance of the present study. The non-alcoholics were individually selected from different areas of Thrissur district matching correspondingly to the socio demographic variables of alcoholics. The investigator assured that the gathering information should be kept confidential and only be used for research purpose. With their permission and after establishing a rapport, the investigator distributed the questionnaire of ‘emotional intelligence’ to the subjects and given necessary instructions regarding the questionnaire. The respondents also ensured the confidentiality of their responses and emphasized the truthful responses. After completion, the questionnaires were collected back.

Results and Discussion

The objective of the study was to find out the significant difference in the emotional intelligence of alcoholics and non-alcoholics. To find out the significant difference, descriptive statistics was calculated and the results are presented in the following table.

Table 1

Mean and standard deviation of the scores in emotional intelligence among alcoholics and non-alcoholics.

Variable	Alcoholics (N=56)		Non-alcoholics (N=56)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Emotional Intelligence	107.25	15.519	140.73	27.046	8.035**

** Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 represents mean and standard deviation of the scores in emotional intelligence among alcoholics and non-alcoholics. The result shows that there is high significant difference between alcoholics and non-alcoholics in emotional intelligence at 0.01 level. The mean value for non-alcoholics (M=140.73) are much higher than that of the mean value of alcoholics (M=107.25). The result indicates that non-alcoholics have good emotional intelligence than alcoholics. The finding of the present study was supported by a related literature which shows that emotional intelligence was found to be significantly lower in addicts as compared to non-addicts (Madhuri, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Alcohol can alter a person's life. The alcoholics may have to face many problems in their life including inability to recognizing and regulating their own emotions. Compared to a normal individual having a regular and common lifestyle, the alcoholics are more incapable for recognizing their own feelings and emotions, and they might not manage their emotions appropriate to the situations.

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