

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Empowerment of Police Staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan Province

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. The present study was an applied research in terms of purpose and a descriptive correlational research in terms of method. The population of the study included Special Unit Command of NAJA in Isfahan province. The sample size was 336 people using Morgan's table. Data were collected through Spitzerz (1995)'s psychological empowerment questionnaire and Nobari's (2008) operational model of emotional intelligence. The validity of the questionnaires was confirmed by experts. The reliability of the questionnaires was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.91 and 0.80 for psychological empowerment and emotional intelligence questionnaires, respectively. The data were analyzed Pearson correlation test and regression analysis. The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between responsibility, flexibility, and decisiveness, and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Units in Isfahan province. According to regression analysis, responsibility, flexibility, and decisiveness had the highest impact on psychological empowerment, respectively.

Keywords: intelligence, emotional intelligence, psychological empowerment, Special Unit

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

Emotional intelligence is widely defined as the capacity to understand and control emotions (Kemp et al., 2005). In recent decades, attractive aspects of emotional intelligence and their impact have attracted not only psychologists and physicians' attention, but also public attention. The concept of social intelligence was first used in the 1940s. Then, Mayer and Salovey described emotional intelligence. Gardner's "Multiple Intelligences" theory played a major role in the formation of emotional intelligence theory. According to Gardner's "Multiple Intelligences" theory, there are two main types of intelligence: (1) Inner awareness and intelligence which helps to identify and differentiate people's complex emotions, and (2) knowledge and awareness of interpersonal relationships which helps to identify and distinguish the emotions and motivations of others. Finally, Daniel Goleman in his bestselling book "Emotional Intelligence" widely described this concept is and informed the public (Goleman, 1995).

Goleman (1995) explained that emotional intelligence involves the abilities, such as the ability to motivate you, stability in the event of failure; the ability to control impulses and desires, delaying and satisfy the desire; the ability to regulate mood and mental state temperament; and the ability to insist and hope.

There is the assumption that people have different skills in the comprehension, understanding, and using emotional information. In addition, emotional intelligence has a significant impact on health, and intellectual and emotional growth (Salovey et al., 2000).

Studies have shown that emotional intelligence predicts success in life more than intelligence quotient. People with high emotional competence have better social skills, more reliable long-term relationships, and a greater ability to resolve conflicts (Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

Although people are different in terms of expressing emotions for nature and genetic reasons, their learning ability and skills can be enhanced at all levels through training. Forasmuch as the first years of life provide a critical opportunity for the formation of emotional intelligence, this ability continues in the lifetime limitedly (Meyer et al., 1999).

Finally, the basis and cornerstone of human achievement include good intelligence quotient, training and development of cognitive skills, emotional control, the ability to empathize with the feelings of others, and in general, high emotional intelligence. Since this learning begins at birth and continues throughout life, it can always be improved through training. The theory of emotional intelligence provides a new perspective about the predicting factors affecting the success and primary prevention of mental disorders (Hosseini, 2004).

Daniel (1995, 1998) stated that cognitive intelligence causes 20% of success in the best conditions and 80% of success depends on other factors. Thus, many successes depend on the skills that make up emotional intelligence. If the relationship between emotional intelligence and other factors can be proved, it can be enhanced in terms of being acquired or learned. The concept of empowerment was first developed in the 1980s. Until the 1990s, the empowerment of human resources was considered as management practices such as delegation of authority to lower ranks of the organization called “mechanical approach”. From the 1990s onwards, theorists proposed a new concept and stated that power is not given to employees, but they should gain it through proving the competence. Empowerment includes mental states in the working environment based on five feelings, including confidence, significance, competence, effectiveness, and independence (Goudarzi & Chegini, 2013).

The quality and capabilities of human resources are considered as the most important factor for survival of organizations and capable human resources empower organizations. An empowered organization is an environment where employees in different groups work together to carry out activities. The role of efficient, competent and knowledgeable human resources in achieving organizational goals is undeniable (Shirazi et al., 2013).

Empowerment begins with a change in beliefs, thoughts and attitudes of employees. They need to realize they have the necessary ability and competence to perform tasks, the freedom and independence in carrying out their activities. Furthermore, employees should believe that they have the ability to influence and control over their job results, pursue meaningful and valuable career goals, and are behaved honestly and fairly. Emotional intelligence is one of the features that can help managers and leaders in response to these changes. Emotional intelligence is an issue that tries to explain and interpret the emotions in human capabilities. Managers who have the emotional intelligence are effective leaders aiming at realizing goals with maximum productivity, satisfaction, and commitment of employees. Emotional intelligence assesses a person emotionally, in other words, it assesses the extent to which a person is aware of his/her emotions and can control them. Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment in an organization. Employees with higher emotional intelligence have more abilities than other employees. This difference is obvious at all dimensions of emotional intelligence other than self-awareness (Abedi et al., 2011).

Many studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and other factors have been conducted in different regions of the world and most of them support of this relationship. Some of them are presented below.

Ballot (2007) conducted a study entitled “career success the effect of human capital, person environment fit and organization support the network structure of social capital”. The results showed that individual’s career success depends on individual variables, and a person’s career success is associated with emotional, organizational, and human factors (Ballot, 2007).

The results of several studies in Australia show high levels of the performance of intelligent people are associated with cognitive, cultural, biological (nervous system), social, emotional, and mental aspects (McCann, 2005).

Oqinska (2005) conducted a study entitled “emotional intelligence in the workplace”. This study was conducted on 230 nurses, teachers and managers and the results showed that emotional intelligence is an essential factor in determining success in life and mental health. Emotional intelligence has necessary effects on job stress and prevents negative impacts on mental health (Oqinska, 2005).

Weisinger (2000) defend emotional intelligence as the use of intelligence in guiding behavior and thoughts, effective communication with colleagues, supervisors, and customers, and the way of improving results (Weisinger, 2000).

According to Goleman, the importance of emotional intelligence increases in comparison with rational intelligence when the level of the organization increases. Emotional intelligence is of great importance to people, including a leader (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2001).

According to obvious importance of emotional intelligence in the success of various aspects of people's life, such as job, and with respect to the acquisition and learning of its concepts, this study seeks to answer the below question:

“Is there a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province?”

This study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. Thus, the results of this study can indicate the necessity of teaching the concept of emotional intelligence through experts to employees in organizations.

1.2 Explore Importance of the Problem

Many authors have stated about the potential capability of emotional intelligence and its impact on the ordinary lives of people. Thus, they have challenged an old belief that the human nature is related to the conflict between the heart and the brain. In addition, people believe that emotional intelligence can improve people's health, public welfare, wealth, success, love, and happiness. Emotional intelligence is the key to success and effectiveness in many group and organizational matters, such as effective management, creating entrepreneurial spirit, and increasing incentives to work (Abedi et al., 2011).

According to newness of the issues related to emotional intelligence, it is necessary to perform accurate and scientific assessments for the authenticity of the claims. Human resources as the most valuable asset of any organization are faced with some problems. Thus, management and organizational psychology experts can increase positive factors and decrease negative factors in human performance. Nurturing the innate human abilities is considered as an effective factor in maintaining mental and emotional balance and strengthening people's perception (Shirazi et al., 2013).

Thus, this question is raised: “is there a relationship between emotional intelligence as an innate human ability and psychological empowerment in a social system?” According to Islamic Republic of Iran Police as a knowledge-based organization to ensure discipline and security, it is necessary to gain functional and scientific acceptability at the community level. Forasmuch as emotional intelligence can help organizations such as the police force, it is important to effectively use emotional intelligence for employees' psychological empowerment, especially in times of crisis. Thus, employees can improve crisis management and enhance empathy and communications with others. Given the lack of research in this field, the present study addresses the concept of emotional intelligence and its different dimensions as well as the concept of psychological empowerment and its components, including employees' attitudes and perceptions of their role, effectiveness, authority, usefulness, and competence in the organization.

1.3 Describe Relevant Scholarship

This section describes relevant scholarships.

Shirazi et al. (2013) investigated the effect of emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment on occupational performance, with mediator role of citizenship. For this purpose, 96 questionnaires were distributed among a sample of employees of private trading companies in Mashhad. Data were collected using structural equation model in SPSS and WarpPLS software. The results indicated that psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior directly affect job performance. In addition, psychological empowerment and emotional intelligence were effective in organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior also played a mediating role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional intelligence and job performance. Finally, some suggestions were offered for managers of the company to improve job performance.

Shamshirkar (2010) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EQ) and psychological empowerment of human sources in National Iranian Copper Industries Company. The relationship of factors, such as environmental conditions, management strategies, and sources of self-efficacy as factors affecting empowerment in the company, were investigated. In this study, some hypotheses were posed to investigate the relationship between four independent variables of emotional intelligence and dependent variables, including organizational conditions, managerial strategies, sources of self-efficacy, and psychological empowerment. 206 questionnaires were distributed among managers and experts selected using simple random sampling in National Iranian Copper Industries Company. Correlation analysis, regression analysis and Structural Equation Modeling

(SEM) were used to analyze the data. The results indicated that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence, management strategies, and psychological empowerment. There was a significant relationship between organizational conditions and sources of self-efficacy, and the independent variable. According to the results of path analysis, management strategies and emotional intelligence indirectly affected psychological empowerment. Finally, some suggestions were presented for each hypothesis.

Abedi et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between managers “emotional intelligence and empowerment of human resources” in Payam-e-Noor University in East Azerbaijan Province. In this study, a descriptive correlational method was used. The population of the study included all managers and human resources (administrative and academic employees other than managers) in Payam-e-Noor University in East Azerbaijan Province in 2009-2010. 20 managers and 80 human resources were selected using cluster sampling. The results of Pearson correlation indicated that there is a significant relationship between components of emotional intelligence (happiness, stress tolerance, assertiveness, realism, impulse control, flexibility, responsibility, and self-actualization) and empowerment of human resources. According to the results of multiple regression analysis, components of emotional intelligence predicted the significance of psychological empowerment of human resources and 75% of changes in the variability. The managers’ empowerment and emotional intelligence in Payam-e-Noor University in East Azerbaijan Province were more than the moderate limit.

Morais et al. (2015) investigated knowledge and empowerment in Northern Portugal. The statistical sample of the study included 384 employees of manufacturing companies. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. The results of the study showed that knowledge and knowledge management are effective in managers’ empowerment.

Benton et al. (2014) investigated the effect of commitment and empowerment on knowledge management in domestic and foreign affiliated firms in Japan. The population of the study included all employees of domestic and foreign affiliated firms in Japan. Data were analyzed using Amos Software. The results of the study showed that organizational commitment and empowerment are effective in knowledge management.

1.4 State Hypotheses and Their Correspondence to Research Design

According to the above-mentioned statements about the impact of emotional intelligence on psychological empowerment in different fields of life, such as job, this study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. For this purpose, the impact of the components of emotional intelligence, including responsibility, flexibility, and decisiveness, on psychological empowerment is investigated. As a result, the following three research hypotheses are formulated:

First hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between responsibility and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Second hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between flexibility and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Third hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between decisiveness and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

2. Method

2.1 Identify Subsections

The present study is an applied research in terms of purpose and a descriptive correlational research in terms of method. It is a descriptive research because it aims to objectively describe the real and regular events, and conditions or phenomena (Sharifi & Sharifi, 2004).

2.2 Participant (Subject) Characteristic

The population of the study included 2600 police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. All of them were male and had an academic degree.

2.3 Sampling Procedures

The sample size was 336 people, consisting of directors, commanders and employees of Special Unit Command of NAJA in Isfahan province, using Morgan’s table. All of them had an academic degree. The statistical sample was selected using stratified sampling. After selecting the statistical sample, the research steps were implemented.

2.4 Research Instruments

Spitzerz (1995)'s psychological empowerment questionnaire was used to collect data on psychological empowerment. Forasmuch as this questionnaire was standard, the experts had confirmed its validity. Abdollahi (2005) measured the reliability of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha test in SPSS software. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91. Nobari (2008)'s operational model of emotional intelligence was used to collect data on emotional intelligence. The experts confirmed its validity. The reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.80).

Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. In this study, variables were quantitatively measured and the sample was too large. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses and the independent samples t-test was used to compare the means of two independent groups.

3. Results

This section presents the results obtained from the data analysis. Thus, the above-mentioned hypotheses are examined as follows:

First hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between responsibility and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Table 1. First hypothesis test

		responsibility	psychological empowerment
Responsibility	Pearson correlation coefficient	1	0.468
	Sig	-	0.000
	N	384	384

As displayed in the above table, the sig-value (0.000) is below 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. At the 0.05 error level, there is a significant positive relationship between responsibility and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. In other words, responsibility increases psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Second hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between flexibility and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Table 2. Second hypothesis test

		flexibility	psychological empowerment
Flexibility	Pearson correlation coefficient	1	0.283
	Sig	-	0.000
	N	384	384

As displayed in the above table, the sig-value (0.000) is below 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. At the 0.05 error level, there is a significant positive relationship between flexibility and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. In other words, flexibility increases psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Third hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between decisiveness and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Table 3. Third hypothesis test

		decisiveness	psychological empowerment
Decisiveness	Pearson correlation coefficient	1	0.381
	Sig	-	0.000
	N	384	384

As displayed in the above table, the sig-value (0.000) is below 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. At the 0.05 error level, there is a significant positive relationship between decisiveness and psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. In other words, decisiveness increases psychological empowerment of police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Table 4. Regression analysis

Model	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	Significance level
regression			38.64		
Remaining		331	0.77	49.81	0.000
Total		334			

As displayed in the above table, the sig-value (0.000) is below 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be stated that there is a linear relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Table 5. Results of regression testing

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig
Constant	1.84	0.334		5.52	0.000
Responsibility	0.371	0.053	0.404	7.03	0.000
flexibility	0.189	0.037	0.231	5.17	0.000
decisiveness	0.141	0.054	0.171	2.38	0.008

According to Table 5 in column B, the values of the regression coefficients and constant are provided. The regression equation is presented below. It should be noted that those with the sig-value higher than 0.05 are removed from the equation because the equality of regression coefficients and constant value is accepted with a value of zero.

$$Y=1.84+0.371\times 1+0.189\times 2+0.141\times 3$$

According to Column B, it cannot be concluded that a variable with a higher coefficient has a greater impact on the dependent variable because units of measurement are different for variables. Therefore, standardized beta coefficients regardless of their sign (+ or -) are used to compare the effects of variables.

According to Table 5, the column "standardized coefficients (Beta)", responsibility has the greatest effect on psychological empowerment because for a one unit change in this variable, the independent variable changes about 40%. After responsibility, flexibility and decisiveness had the highest impact on psychological empowerment, respectively.

4. Discussion

In addition to presenting hypotheses and findings related to them in this section, the results of the hypotheses and conclusion are discussed.

First hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between responsibility and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

According to the results of data analysis, this hypothesis was confirmed. Thus, there is a significant positive relationship between responsibility and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in

Isfahan province. In other words, responsibility increases psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. Forasmuch as the sample group had an academic degree, people's responsibility as a job requirement can be intervened and increased in different ways, such as holding workshops or training people through books, training package, Internet, etc.

Second hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between flexibility and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

According to the results of data analysis, this hypothesis was confirmed. Thus, there is a significant positive relationship between flexibility and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. In other words, flexibility increases psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. The second hypothesis is important because the Special Unit has a nature to communicate with different people logically and properly and provide security in society. Thus, this organization should be familiar with the proper concept of flexibility and its advantages and disadvantages. In addition, police staffs should learn this skill in different ways in order to increase their psychological empowerment through this skill.

Third hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between decisiveness and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

According to the results of data analysis, this hypothesis was confirmed. Thus, at the 0.05 error level, there is a significant positive relationship between decisiveness and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. In other words, decisiveness increases psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province.

Forasmuch as the border of the relationship between aggression and decisiveness is unclear and decisiveness (the ability to consider the rights and respect for others' rights) is sometimes confused with aggression and according to specific conditions of police force and in particular the special unit, the concept of decisiveness should be trained properly so that police staffs can use it in the right place. Since most of them had an academic degree, this training can be efficient and increase their psychological empowerment in the workplace.

The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between responsibility, flexibility, and decisiveness (as components of emotional intelligence) and psychological empowerment of police staff of NAJA Special Units in Isfahan province.

According to the results of the regression testing, responsibility has the greatest effect on psychological empowerment because for a one unit change in this variable, the independent variable changes about 40%. After responsibility, flexibility and decisiveness had the highest impact on psychological empowerment, respectively.

The results of the present study were consistent with the results of studies conducted by Shirazi (2013) and Abedi (2011). Therefore, an increase in each factor will lead to increasing people's psychological empowerment.

The present study had limitations in terms of performance as well as scientifically, which include:

(1) The sample size was limited to 336 people consisting of male directors, commanders and employees with an academic degree in Special Unit Command of NAJA in Isfahan province. Thus, the findings of the study should carefully be generalized to other samples.

(2) The sample size was limited to police staffs of NAJA Special Unit in Isfahan province. Thus, cultural and social issues specific to Isfahan province should be considered for generalizing the findings of the study to other provinces.

4.1 Research Suggestions

(1) Researchers can investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment of individuals in different sample groups in other regions.

(2) Since educated people have higher emotional intelligence, this factor should be controlled to obtain more accurate results.

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