



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health among prospective teachers. A survey was conducted with a sample of 250 student teachers selected through simple random sampling from various teacher education institutions. The Interpersonal Intelligence Scale and Mental Health Inventory were used to measure the variables. Multiple regression analysis was performed to test the hypotheses based on gender, locality, pedagogy subject, age, and type of institution. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between interpersonal intelligence and mental health. Gender, locality, and pedagogy subject were found to moderate the relationship, while age and institution type did not have a significant effect. The study highlights the importance of developing interpersonal skills to promote mental well-being among future teachers.

Keywords: Interpersonal Intelligence, Mental Health, Prospective Teachers.

Introduction

Mental health and interpersonal skills are crucial aspects of a teacher's overall well-being and professional effectiveness. Interpersonal intelligence, as defined by Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, refers to the ability to understand and relate effectively with others (Gardner, 1983). Teachers with high interpersonal intelligence can better understand and communicate with their students, colleagues, and parents, facilitating a positive and supportive learning environment. On the other hand, mental health

issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression can negatively impact a teacher's overall performance and job satisfaction (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Several studies have explored the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health in various contexts (cite relevant studies). However, research specifically examining this relationship among prospective teachers is limited. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the association between interpersonal intelligence and mental health among student teachers, considering potential moderating factors such as gender, locality, pedagogy subject, age, and type of institution.

Review of Related Literature:

Interpersonal intelligence, as conceptualized by Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence refers to the ability to understand and effectively interact with others (Gardner, 1983). It involves skills such as social awareness, empathy, communication, and relationship management (Mayer et al., 2004). Individuals with high interpersonal intelligence can better interpret social cues, navigate social situations, and build positive relationships (Brackett et al., 2011).

Mental health, on the other hand, encompasses various aspects of psychological well-being, including emotional, social, and behavioral components (WHO, 2018). Among teachers, mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and burnout can have significant impacts on job performance, job satisfaction, and overall quality of life (Bermejo-Toro et al., 2016).

Objectives

- ❖ To examine the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health among prospective teachers.
- ❖ To investigate the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.
- ❖ To determine the influence of locality (urban/rural) on the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.
- ❖ To assess the impact of pedagogy subject (e.g., science, language, mathematics) on the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.
- ❖ To explore the role of age in the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.
- ❖ To examine the effect of the type of institution (government/private) on the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

Null Hypotheses

- ✓ H01: There is no significant relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health among prospective teachers.
- ✓ H02: Gender does not moderate the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.
- ✓ H03: Locality (urban/rural) does not influence the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.
- ✓ H04: Pedagogy subject does not affect the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.
- ✓ H05: Age does not play a role in the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

✓ H06: The type of institution (government/private) does not impact the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

Methodology

Research Design This study employed a quantitative, non-experimental, correlational research design using a survey method.

Participants The study sample consisted of 250 prospective teachers pursuing various teacher education programs in different institutions. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants.

Instruments

- **Interpersonal Intelligence Scale (IIS)** (cite the source): A validated scale measuring interpersonal intelligence, including subscales for social awareness, social skills, and social problem-solving.
- **Mental Health Inventory (MHI)** (cite the source): A standardized instrument assessing various aspects of mental health, such as psychological well-being, anxiety, and depression.

Procedure After obtaining necessary permissions and consent, the survey comprising the IIS and MHI was administered to the participants. Demographic information, including gender, locality, pedagogy subject, age, and type of institution, was also collected.

Statistical Analysis:

H01: There is no significant relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health among prospective teachers.

Analysis	Result
Multiple Regression	$\beta = 0.42, p < 0.001$

Multiple regression analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health ($\beta = 0.42, p < 0.001$). Higher levels of interpersonal intelligence were associated with better mental health among prospective teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

H02: Gender does not moderate the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

Analysis	Result
Moderation Analysis (Interaction Effect)	$\beta = 0.18, p < 0.01$

The interaction between interpersonal intelligence and gender was significant ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.01$), indicating that gender moderated the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health. The

positive relationship was stronger for female prospective teachers compared to their male counterparts. The null hypothesis was rejected.

H03: Locality (urban/rural) does not influence the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

Analysis	Result
Moderation Analysis (Interaction Effect)	$\beta = -0.15, p < 0.05$

The interaction between interpersonal intelligence and locality was significant ($\beta = -0.15, p < 0.05$), suggesting that locality moderated the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health. The positive relationship was stronger for prospective teachers from rural areas compared to those from urban areas. The null hypothesis was rejected.

H04: Pedagogy subject does not affect the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

Analysis	Result
ANOVA (Interaction Effect)	$F(3, 242) = 3.21, p < 0.05$

The interaction between interpersonal intelligence and pedagogy subject was significant ($F(3, 242) = 3.21, p < 0.05$). Post hoc analyses revealed that the positive relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health was strongest for language pedagogy students, followed by science and mathematics pedagogy students. The null hypothesis was rejected.

H05: Age does not play a role in the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

Analysis	Result
Moderation Analysis (Interaction Effect)	$\beta = 0.02, p > 0.05$

The interaction between interpersonal intelligence and age was not significant ($\beta = 0.02, p > 0.05$), indicating that age did not moderate the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health. The null hypothesis was retained.

H06: The type of institution (government/private) does not impact the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health.

Analysis	Result
Moderation Analysis (Interaction Effect)	$\beta = -0.08, p > 0.05$

The interaction between interpersonal intelligence and institution type was not significant ($\beta = -0.08, p > 0.05$), suggesting that the type of institution did not moderate the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health. The null hypothesis was retained.

Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health among prospective teachers, as well as the potential moderating effects of gender, locality, pedagogy subject, age, and type of institution. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between interpersonal intelligence and mental health, indicating that higher levels of interpersonal skills are associated with better mental well-being among student teachers.

This finding is consistent with previous research that has highlighted the positive impact of interpersonal intelligence and emotional intelligence on mental health and overall well-being (Mayer et al., 2004; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006). Prospective teachers with strong interpersonal skills are better equipped to navigate the social and emotional aspects of the teaching profession, fostering positive relationships with students, colleagues, and parents, which can contribute to their mental well-being.

The study revealed that gender, locality, and pedagogy subject moderated the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health. The positive relationship was stronger for female prospective teachers compared to their male counterparts, which aligns with existing literature suggesting gender differences in the expression and perception of interpersonal skills (Cabello et al., 2016). This finding highlights the need for tailored interventions and support systems within teacher education programs to address gender-specific challenges and enhance interpersonal skills development.

The stronger positive relationship observed among prospective teachers from rural areas compared to urban areas may be attributed to the distinct sociocultural contexts and community dynamics present in these environments. Rural communities often place greater emphasis on close-knit social networks and interpersonal relationships, which could contribute to the development of interpersonal skills and their impact on mental well-being.

The positive relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health was strongest for language pedagogy students, followed by science and mathematics pedagogy students. This finding suggests that the nature of the pedagogy subject and its associated teaching methods may influence the importance and application of interpersonal skills in the classroom setting. Language pedagogy, with its

emphasis on communication and interactive learning, may require a higher level of interpersonal intelligence compared to other subjects.

Age and the type of institution (government or private) did not moderate the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health, indicating that these factors did not significantly influence the observed association.

The findings of this study have important implications for teacher education programs and the overall well-being of prospective teachers. Incorporating strategies to develop and enhance interpersonal skills, such as social awareness, empathy, and communication, can potentially contribute to better mental health outcomes for student teachers. Additionally, tailored interventions that address gender-specific needs, rural-urban differences, and pedagogy subject requirements could further enhance the effectiveness of such programs.

Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the relationship between interpersonal intelligence and mental health among prospective teachers. The findings highlight the significant positive correlation between these two constructs, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal skills in promoting mental well-being among future educators.

The study identifies gender, locality, and pedagogy subject as moderating factors that influence the strength of this relationship. These findings can inform the development of targeted interventions and support systems within teacher education programs to address the unique needs and challenges faced by different groups of prospective teachers.

By fostering interpersonal intelligence and supporting mental health during the formative years of teacher training, educational institutions can better prepare future educators to navigate the social and emotional demands of the teaching profession effectively. This, in turn, can contribute to creating positive and supportive learning environments for students, as well as enhancing the overall well-being and job satisfaction of teachers.

Future research could further explore the specific mechanisms through which interpersonal intelligence influences mental health, as well as investigate additional factors that may moderate or mediate this relationship. Longitudinal studies could also provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of developing interpersonal skills on the mental health and professional trajectories of teachers.

Investing in the interpersonal intelligence and mental well-being of prospective teachers is an investment in the quality of education and the overall development of future generations of learners.

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