

WCPCG-2011

Emotional intelligence and self-concept in people with and without failure in love

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Abstract

Failure in love is part of life that many people may experience it. But, why can some people easily cope with it and come back to normal life but some people cannot? The aim of this research was to investigate emotional intelligence and self-concept in people with and without failure in love. For this reason, 41 participants with failure in love (26 women and 15 men) and 43 without failure in love participants (26 women and 17 men) were selected by Non-probability sampling methods and answered Baron's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and Roger's Self-Concept questionnaire. Using MANOVA, and in dependent T test, the data revealed that people with failure in love have lower level of emotional intelligence ($p < 0/001$) and lower level of self-concept ($p < 0/05$) than people without failure in love and there was significant difference in self-actualization, reality testing, impulse control, problem solving, stress tolerance, happiness and flexibility ,component of emotional intelligence, between two groups. These results can be applied in diagnostic and therapeutic services for people with failure in love by psychologist and consultants.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of the 2nd World Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Guidance.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, self-concept, love, failure;

1. Introduction

Today, we rarely have encountered with people who has not experienced love affair, failure in love or has witnessed it in the life of their kin. Yearly statistics show rise in divorce rate and it is only the tip of the iceberg of the failures of this sort that is announced formally, while this rate is very much higher for emotional and love failures of men and women who have merely friendship relations. Failure in love is a mood of frustration and humiliation afflicting the person after devotion to the beloved person and being rejected by him or her. Consequently, the individual experiences states of gloom, sadness and seclusion (Yaghubi, 2008). Nearly in all studies love and emotional failures or the sense of the loss of the beloved person has been the major reason for melancholia. According to the famous Helms – Riahi table, divorce and love failure put the individual under the

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pressure at the same extent as death of the family member does, though one-sided love and care is also deemed as a sort of failure in love (Baumister, 1990). Among the factors by which to predict the success of individuals is emotional intelligence, defined by Bar-On (1999) as “an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures.” Research has demonstrated that about 80 percent of the individual’s success depends on the emotional intelligence and in the best condition, an emotional quotient of 20 percent contribute to this prediction (Goleman, 1995). Men with high emotional intelligence are lively, happy and level-headed and resist against worrying thoughts. Women with high emotional intelligence think positively about themselves, and like men of high emotional intelligence are social and extrovert. They are happy and relaxed, rarely do they feel qualms and life for them is full of meaning (Haji Aghazadeh Nouri, 2006). Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) believe that individuals with high emotional intelligence are more successful in dealing with stressful situations and communicating to the external world. The importance of emotional stress is evident, since one can enhance it through education and help improve individuals’ life. Many skills that are parts of emotional intelligence could be learned (Goleman, 1995). This way of increasing the emotional intelligence could be a great help in treating individuals with failure in love. Rogers (1902) defines self-concept as the organized consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of 'I' or 'me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions (Schultz, 1998). He emphasizes the congruence of ideal self and real self (Pervin, 1996). Incongruent beliefs about the self leads to several emotional problems (Kuper and Parvin, 1998). Individuals with a clear, well-defined, stable and congruent self-concept, have more psychological health. These individuals have a clear image of themselves and daily events and their evaluation influence them less (Campbell et al, 1996). Consistency between these two is indicative of emotional health. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, one can change self-concept during consulting, and create a consistency between real self-concept and ideal self-concept, thereby, help increase individual’s psychological health (Schultz, 1998). An individual with positive self-concept, who knows his abilities and weaknesses, chooses his objectives reasonably and not anything can prevent him or her from attaining their goals (Campbell, 1976). This is possible that negative events of lives of individuals with low self-esteem, are the main source of melancholia (Coopersmith, 1967). One of these problems is the sense of failure. It is so while some individuals easily come to terms with failure in love and after sometime, the things are in their natural way and they commence another relation, but why some individuals are not able to come to terms with this failure for even years? Should we cast doubts on the psychological health of the individuals with failure in love and this overshadows their lives? Is there any difference between these individuals and those who have not experienced failure in love or those who easily accept the fate?

2. method

2.1. Sample

The present study is descriptive-comparative study. 41 participants with failure in love (26 women and 15 men) and 43 normal participants (26 women and 17 men) were selected by Non-probability sampling methods. Frequency, mean, and standard deviation of the age of the groups have given for each sex in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency, mean and standard deviation of the age of the groups given for each sex

	Group with failure in love			Group without failure in love			total
	N	Age average	Age standard deviation	N	age average	Age standard deviation	
Man	15	25	5/34	17	25/26	4/34	32
Woman	26	26/61	5/65	26	24/37	4/91	52
Sum	41	25/49	5/51	43	24/20	4/65	84

Sample population of individuals with failure in love: included all men and women in Guisha neighbourhood of Tehran, with at least a high school diploma, single or married, aged 18-35, with at least 6 months after failure in their love affair and without any legal bounds with their beloved.

Sample population of the individuals without failure in love: included all men and women in Guisha neighbourhood of Tehran, with at least a high school diploma, aged 18-35, without any failure in love affair, or if failed, easily came to terms with that and not affected by that. To find individuals with failure in love, a cooperation with some consulting centre took place in which (e.g., consulting centre for the Faculty of Psychology, University of Tehran) to find individuals having this problem and call them to participate in the study. On the other hand, to increase the number of sample population, the advertisement to participate in the study was printed and distributed in random in different parts of Guisha neighbourhood in Tehran (Guisha was chosen for its closeness to Faculty of Psychology and for the ease with which the participants would be interviewed and or would fill the questionnaire). Also, a number of these advertisements was put between sheets of newspaper and delivered to people when they bought newspaper. They were asked to participate in the study and go to University of Tehran to fill in questionnaire. Also, they had been asked not to provide any personal identity item like name and age. To encourage individuals' participation in the study, they were said that they would receive a copy of the results of the analysis of the experiments. The participants would have access to questionnaire via internet. In addition to advertisements described above, to find individuals without failure in love, they were called for participation in the study. They were asked if they knew individuals like themselves in Guisha who had not ever experienced failure in love, or even if they had, they had come to terms with their failure easily, or so far, they had not fallen in love at all. If the answer was yes, they were asked to pursue them to participate in the study as subjects for individuals without failure in love. Individuals without failure in love filled in questionnaire after short interview. Among them 158 people were ready to participate in the study, among whom 75 individuals were excluded for not being eligible (such as in age, time of the divorce, legal marriage) from the study and the final 83 filled questionnaires were used in analysis.

2.2. Measures

Emotional intelligence was measured via Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (1997). The questionnaire includes 133 questions that measures 15 parameters of emotional intelligence including emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, empathy, interpersonal relationship, social responsibility, flexibility, problem solving, reality testing, stress tolerance, impulse control, happiness and optimism in addition to the overall score of emotional intelligence. The validity of the test in even-odd method was 0.88 and in Kronbacher's alpha was 0.93. Also the average of the internal likelihood coefficient of the micro-measures in four countries Israel, Germany, Argentina and USA has been equal to 0.76 (Dehshiri, 2003). Rogers' self-concept questionnaire (1961) included 25 questions. In Iran, the validity of this questionnaire has been calculated in the study of Nourbakhsh and Ghobad (2004) (n=100) as $r=0.83$ in test-retest after 3 weeks and in Kronbacher's alpha and bisection calculated as 0.74 and 0.65, respectively. All reliability coefficients were significant in the level of $p<0.005$. Correlation coefficients of the self-concept scores were significant with the scores from Rogers' self-concept scores was 0.93 and significant in the level of 0.001.

2.3. Statistical analysis

To answer to the questions of the study, after filling questionnaire, SPSS 18 has been used to analyse data in descriptive and inferential levels. To describe data, statistical descriptive and inferential characteristics of the frequency, per cent, mean and standard deviation have been used. To examine the differences between two groups of individuals with failure in love and those without failure in love emotional intelligence of MANOVA (bivariate variance analysis) has been used and to examine difference in total emotional intelligence between two groups independent t test has been used.

3. Findings

To investigate the first question in the study, namely, are the two groups of men and women with failure in love are different in terms of emotional intelligence compared to men and women without failure in love, MANOVA (multivariate variance analysis) has been used. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the number of the sample population, mutual effects have been excluded from the examination and the gender of two groups has been considered separately. Also, to overcome to the problem of multi co- linearity of the total emotional intelligence with its subscales t test was used to examine difference between groups and genders in emotional intelligence.

The results indicate that components of self-prosperity ($p < 0.05$, $F = 6.71$), reality testing ($p < 0.05$, $F = 4.69$), shock control ($p < 0.05$, $F = 4.97$), problem solving ($p < 0.01$, $F = 8.74$), stress tolerance ($p < 0.01$, $F = 6.04$), satisfaction ($p < 0.01$, $F = 9.33$) and flexibility ($p < 0.001$, $F = 13.27$) were significantly different in two groups. More examinations about the means of two groups indicate that in all above components group with individuals with failure in love have lower means compared to group with individuals without failure in love. This implies that the emotional intelligence of individuals with failure in love is less than that of individuals without failure in love. To study the differences between the total emotional intelligence of men and women, independent t test was used. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. T test to investigate difference between the emotional intelligence of individuals with and without failure in love

results for t test			results for Levine test	
t	Degree of freedom	Significance level	F	Significance level
-3/605	81	0/001	1/611	0/211

Table 3. T test results to investigate differences in the self-concept of individuals with and without failure in love

results for t test			results for Levine test	
t	Degree of freedom	Significance level	F	Significance level
2/25	81	0/02	0/09	0/76

According to Table 2, the results of Levine test indicated that the variances of groups for total emotional intelligence are homogenous. Results of t test shows that there is a significance difference between two groups ($p < 0.001$, $t = -3.605$). Examination of the means of two groups indicated that the group of individuals with failure in love, have lower emotional intelligence than that of individuals without failure in love. According to the result of Levine test has shown that the variance of the men and women is homogenous in emotional intelligence variable. The results of t test indicated that there is no difference between men and women in terms of total emotional intelligence. The variances of total emotional intelligence are homogenous.

To examine the second question of the study, which was do individuals with failure in love, has different self-concept compared to individuals without failure in love? The Levine test results for the homogeneity of two groups ($p < 0.07$, $F = 0.09$) indicated that two groups have the same variance. According to table 3, it could be said that there was a significant difference between the self-concept of individuals with and without failure in love ($p < 0.05$, $F = 2.25$). Comparison of the means of two groups indicated that individuals with failure in love have weaker self-concept than individuals without failure in love do. The results of t test indicated that there is no difference between men and women in terms of self-concept. The variances of self-concept are homogenous.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The results of the present study indicated that individuals with an experience of failure in love possess lower degrees of emotional intelligence compared to those without any such experience and that the difference between these two groups is significant. According to findings of the study, individuals with an experience of failure in love

possess lower values, especially in the following emotional intelligence components: flexibility, problem solving, stress tolerance, reality testing, impulse control and happiness. However, the difference between men and women for these components was not significant. Also the results demonstrated that individuals with an experience of failure in love possess lower rates of self-concept compared to that in individuals without any such experience, again differences between men and women was not significant. Because lower self-concept and emotional intelligence is a product of the individuals' social milieu, the lack or the absence of favourite family environment and also living skills training (such as emotional intelligence) contribute to the problem of coming to terms with this failure and it can be said that it is not the nature of the relationship that afflicts the individual with the psychological disorders, but the rate of emotional intelligence, self-concept or other possible variables determine the way in which individual responds to the failure, and it is possible that one may assume that individuals have not been able to behave in the right track and manage the relationship in better way as the result of lower rates of emotional intelligence and self-concept. This has led them to failure. Individuals with higher rates of emotional intelligence and self—concept usually behave rationally in their choices and in the case of failure, come to terms with that easily and so, pay less for the failure. In other words, these individuals due to their superior abilities manage not to be degenerated to failure and even it happens, manage to control it, but individuals with lower rates of emotional intelligence are not able to come to good terms with the problem. Therefore, emotional intelligence components could be a good starting point to tackle the problem in these individuals. Especially problem solving, flexibility, impulse and stress control are crucial in treatment of these individuals. Some of the individuals with failure in love possess good abilities in some components of emotional intelligence, but in the lack of power for problem solving and flexibility cause them to stop short of stepping forward in the face of the failure. Like an automobile with powerful engine and good casing but without steering wheel that in the face of an obstacle cannot turn to other directions. So, training courses to improve emotional intelligence skills would be helpful to these individuals. According to findings of the study, the implications of the emotional divorce and failure in individuals with lower rates of emotional intelligence and self-concept are predictable and consider when consulting. Due to the vulnerability of the individuals with failure in love, this should be taken into account in any attempt in consulting.

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