

Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health of Employed and Unemployed Adults

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This study investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health of employed and unemployed adults in Windhoek, Namibia. The study was guided by a quantitative, exploratory cross-sectional research design. Convenience sampling and simple random sampling methods were used to select the participants of the study correspondingly. A total sample of 400 adults participated, aged between 20 and 35. The Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21) were used to collect data. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to determine if there was any significant relationship between emotional intelligence, mental health, gender, age, marital status, and employment status. A significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and depression, as well as emotional intelligence and stress. Furthermore, a significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and employment status. Overall, the employed participants experienced a higher prevalence of moderate to high emotional intelligence. Moreover, a significant relationship was determined between depression and employment status. The prevalence of mental health problems was higher amongst the unemployed participants. The study recommends the implementation of platforms where issues of emotional intelligence and mental health can be discussed, and emotional intelligence skills and healthy coping strategies can be introduced, which could promote a more prosperous and thriving Namibia.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Mental Health, Depression, Stress, Anxiety, Employed, Unemployed.

We are living in a rapidly changing and ever-modernizing world (Prince, 2017). These developments pose disruptions to the economies of developed and developing nations (Adekoya-Sanni, 2015) such as Namibia. Vision 2030 stipulates that Namibia plans to be a prosperous and industrialized nation, developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony, and political stability by the year 2030 (Emnamibia, 2017). However, Namibians struggle to find a balance between their work and private lives. A balance is needed to combat stress, promote efficiency, and improve the overall well-being of individuals (Al Hazemi & Ali, 2016). Data from a recent report by the Happiness Research Institute showed the

correlation between 16 different health conditions and life satisfaction, whereby depression and anxiety were, on average, associated with the largest per-person reductions in self-reported life satisfaction – greater than stroke, arthritis, or lung disease (Happiness Research Institute, 2020). In fact, the reduction of life satisfaction associated with depression and stress was about twice that of being unemployed (Walker, Donaldson & Plant, 2021). Depression, anxiety, and stress are among the worst, if not the worst, of life's common misfortunes. The World Happiness Report (2017) found that mental health is more important than unemployment or years of education for predicting life satisfaction and life success.

Emotional intelligence and mental health have become discussions of paramount importance during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Emotional Intelligence and Intellectual Health have emerged as crucial elements for personal growth and professional growth (Bryant, 2023). Moreover, a lack of emotional stability can greatly affect an individual's life satisfaction, and ability to live a fulfilling life (Arthaud-Day et al., 2017). Emotional intelligence forms the juncture at which cognition and emotion meet, it facilitates our capacity for resilience, motivation, empathy, reasoning, stress management, communication, and our ability to read and navigate a plethora of social situations and conflicts (Houston, 2019). Emotional intelligence is of great importance because if cultivated affords one the opportunity to realize a more fulfilled and happy life, which would curb mental health crises. Emotional intelligence, mental health, and life satisfaction are all linked and influence each other (Haider et al., 2019). Bryant (2023) reported that enhanced emotional intelligence is linked with stress reduction and resilience, as well as enhanced interpersonal relationships.

Camilleri (2021) found that you are most likely to make big life decisions between the ages of 16 and 35. Thus to facilitate change, one must focus on the most relevant variables. The variables of this study were chosen concerning the leaders of tomorrow. Amstrong (2019) argued that early adulthood is between the ages of 20 and 35, which is the stage of life when we need to go out into the world and make our mark. Lata and Yadav (2019) have found a relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, which in turn would improve overall well-being. Emotional intelligence is advantageous in the pursuit of a successful and productive nation, as it equips individuals to improve the overall productivity and economy of the nation (Bosco et al., 2018).

Furthermore, awareness of mental health eliminates stigma for people with mental problems ("Mental Health News," 2015 as cited in Swhepeler 2015).

Method

Research Design

A quantitative approach was employed; more specifically, an exploratory cross-sectional research design, by comparing the relationship between two or more variables for this study. Quantitative inquiries provide a statistical representation of phenomena and their characteristics, from which researchers can verify or refute theoretical perspectives, explore documented experiences of phenomena, and make predictions (McLeod, 2019). Furthermore, it provides descriptions of the occurrences of phenomena. Quantitative research is regarded as being more scientific and it focuses on specific definitions and the operationalization of concepts and variables. Since the objectives of this study are aimed at casting light on the emotional intelligence and mental health status of employed and unemployed adults, an exploratory cross-sectional research design was deemed appropriate.

Sample

The sample size of this study was set at 400 participants selected through two sampling methods, namely convenience sampling for the employed participants and simple random sampling for the unemployed participants. For both groups, participants were qualified to participate by meeting the following criteria:

- a. Between the ages of 20 to 35 years
- b. Officially employed or unemployed according to the provided definitions and,
- c. Currently residing in Windhoek, Namibia at the time of data collection.

Two hundred participants who are employed were selected from various organizations in Windhoek, through convenience sampling. Participants from this sample were selected by organizations most convenient to the researcher.

The two hundred participants who are unemployed adults were drawn through simple random sampling from the unemployed registry at the Ministry of Labor, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation. This method allows for an equal chance of participation among the sample.

Research Instruments

Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) by Singh and Bhargava (1993): The EMS contains a 48-item tool, composed of five sub-scales: emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration, and lack of independence, developed in adolescents and adults. In completing the EMS, the participant is required to indicate a response to various statements they have experienced over the past week. Respondents are asked to use 5-point severity/frequency scales to rate their response to the given statement. Each item's response ranges from N (never) to VM (very much). The responses are made on a 5-point scale, ranging from Never (1) to Very Much (5). The higher the score, the less emotionally mature the respondent is, the lower the total, the greater emotional maturity.

A study that investigated the validity and reliability of EMS conducted by Ishfaq and Kamal (2019), found the test-retest reliability coefficient scores to be 0.75 and the internal consistency ranged from 0.42 – 0.86. Therefore, the results of this study, demonstrate that the EMS is a valid and reliable instrument to study the variables of this study.

Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21): Which is a shortened version of

DASS-41 by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). This self-report measure is used to assess the severity of a range of symptoms common to depression, anxiety, and stress. The DASS 21 is a 21-item self-report questionnaire. In completing the DASS, the participant is required to indicate the presence of symptoms over the previous week. Respondents are asked to use 4-point severity/frequency scales to rate the extent to which they have experienced each state over the past week. Each item is scored from 0 (did not apply to me at all over the last week) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time over the past week). The essential function of the DASS is to assess the severity of the core symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress.

The scale to which each item belongs is indicated by the letters D (Depression), A (Anxiety), and S (Stress). A study that investigated the validity and reliability of DASS-21 found the convergent validity coefficient was high (-0.47 and -0.66), and the internal consistency coefficient scores were 0.76 and 0.90 respectively (Le, et.al., 2017). Therefore, the results of this study, demonstrate that the DASS-21 is a valid and reliable instrument to study the variables of this study.

Procedure

After receiving ethical clearance from the University of Namibia's Research and Ethics Committee and from the Ministry of Labor, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation the researcher divided the research population into two procedure categories. In both cases, the administrator was present to lead and guide the process.

Employed participants

The researcher conveniently selected several organizations, which were contacted telephonically to enquire about their interest in participating in the study and to schedule

an appointment. Once an appointment was scheduled, the organizations were approached during lunch hours, during which the purpose of the study was then explained, and the interested individuals were provided with the questionnaires. The interested participants were also given a consent form containing their rights as participants and further details regarding the study and the researcher. Once the consent forms were signed, the researcher then provided further information regarding the questionnaires and answered any of the uncertainties from the participants. The researcher then requested the interested participants to complete the questionnaires at their convenience. The researcher scheduled an appointment for the next day for the collection of the questionnaires. The completion of the questionnaires took approximately 10 to 15 minutes. The researcher used the same procedure with different organizations.

Unemployed participants

The researcher sought permission from the Executive Director of the Ministry of Labor, Industrial Relations, and Employment Creation by presenting them with a letter of request to receive access to their registry of unemployed persons. Upon approval, access was granted by an employment officer, who provided the researcher with a list of currently registered unemployed individuals meeting the basic criteria of the study (between the ages of 20 to 35 years, unemployed, and residing in Windhoek). The researcher was then able to randomly select a sample from that list and make contact.

The selected individuals were contacted telephonically, and the researcher explained the study and its purpose as well as answering any questions from these individuals. Once they showed interest, an appointment was scheduled at the interested individuals' convenience, either individually or as a group in which the participants had

to complete the consent form containing all their rights. The participants received the questionnaires to complete, which took approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Some of the participants were unable to meet in person, thus a link to an online questionnaire was sent to them either through email or SMS. The online link contained a consent form containing all their rights and further information regarding the research and the researcher. Once consent was given, the link then proceeded to the questionnaires they could complete. The online questionnaire completion took approximately 10 minutes.

Results

Demographic Variables

Before conducting an in-depth data analysis, preliminary assessments were carried out to examine the fundamental distributions based on the study's participants' biographical profiles. A descriptive methodology was employed to portray the characteristics of the study's demographic variables (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Personal Biographical Profile of Participants N=400

| Variable | Levels | F | Valid % |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----|---------|
| Age | 20–24 | 105 | 26.3 |
| | 25–29 | 143 | 35.8 |
| | 30–35 | 152 | 38 |
| Gender | Male | 191 | 47.8 |
| | Female | 209 | 52.3 |
| Marital Status | Single | 207 | 51.7 |
| | In a Relationship | 130 | 32.5 |
| | Married | 51 | 12.8 |
| | Divorced | 12 | 3 |
| Employment Status | Employed | 201 | 50.2 |
| | Unemployed | 199 | 49.8 |

Table 1 depicts the personal biographical profile of the study participants. Most of the participants (38%, n = 152) were aged

between 30 and 35, while participants aged between 25 and 29 comprised 35.8% of the sample (n = 143) and lastly participants aged between 20 and 24 comprised 26.3% of the sample (n = 105). Most participants (52.3%, n = 209) were female participants, while male participants comprised 47.8% of the sample (n = 191). The percentage distribution by marital status indicates that a bulk of the participants (51.7%, n = 207) are single, while 32.5% (n = 130) are in a relationship. Fifty-one participants (12.8%) are married and 12 (3.0%) are divorced. Lastly, Table 3.3 shows the distribution of participants in relation to the participant's employment status. Most of the participants (50.2%, n = 201) were employed, while 199 (48.9%) were unemployed.

Internal Consistency

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the research instruments, namely the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21). Cronbach's alpha measures how closely related a set of items are as a group. As stated by Howard (n.d.), a frequently acceptable range of Cronbach's alpha is a value of 0.70 or above. A general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above is good, 0.80 and above is better, and 0.90 and above is best.

Table 2 Emotional Maturity Scale Reliability Coefficients

| Main Theoretical Variables | Valid N | Items Used | Cronbach's alpha |
|-------------------------------|---------|------------|------------------|
| Emotional Maturity | 400 | 48 | 0.856 |
| 1. Emotional Instability | 400 | 10 | 0.700 |
| 2. Emotional Regression | 400 | 10 | 0.773 |
| 3. Social Maladjustment | 400 | 10 | 0.536 |
| 4. Personality Disintegration | 400 | 10 | 0.647 |
| 5. Lack of Independence | 400 | 8 | 0.423 |

Table 2 shows the internal consistency of the data collection instrument, EMS.

Cronbach's alpha shows acceptable reliability coefficients for all the research variables and constructs. A Cronbach's alpha score of 0.86, indicates very good reliability.

Table 3 shows the internal consistency of the data collection instruments, DASS-21. Cronbach's alpha shows acceptable reliability coefficients for all the research variables and constructs. A Cronbach's alpha score of 0.91, indicates excellent reliability.

Table 3 Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 Reliability Coefficients

| Main Theoretical Variables | Valid N | Items Used | Cronbach's alpha |
|----------------------------|---------|------------|------------------|
| DASS-21 | 400 | 21 | 0.908 |
| 1. Depression | 400 | 7 | 0.845 |
| 2. Anxiety | 400 | 7 | 0.763 |
| 3. Stress | 400 | 7 | 0.777 |

One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in this study to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the means of three or more independent groups. The aim was to investigate if different levels of age, gender, marital status, and employment status have a measurable effect on the dependent variables of the study, namely emotional intelligence as well as depression, anxiety, and stress.

ANOVA for Emotional Intelligence and Variables

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the impact of age and gender on emotional intelligence, however the results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence for both age and gender. The findings indicated that there was no statistical difference among at least two age groups ($F(2, 397) = [0.583], p = 0.56$). The results of

the one-way ANOVA also indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence and gender ($F(1, 398) = [1.394], p = 0.24$).

SPSS produces the following descriptive statistics in Table 4, which shows the mean and standard deviation of emotional intelligence in each of the four marital groups.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence and Marital Status

| Marital Status | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min | Max |
|-------------------|-----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Single | 207 | 1.96 | 0.28 | 0.02 | 1.92 | 2.00 | 1 | 3 |
| In a relationship | 130 | 2.00 | 0.25 | 0.02 | 1.96 | 2.04 | 1 | 3 |
| Married | 51 | 2.00 | 0.35 | 0.05 | 1.90 | 2.10 | | |
| Divorced | 12 | 2.25 | 0.45 | 0.13 | 1.96 | 2.54 | | |
| Total | 400 | 1.99 | 0.29 | 0.01 | 1.96 | 2.02 | 1 | 3 |

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine the impact of marital status on emotional intelligence as illustrated in Table 1.5.

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence and marital status ($F(3, 396) = [4.119], p = 0.01$). However, these findings were not considered significant due to the number difference among the four marital groups. See Table 4.

Table 5 ANOVA for Emotional Intelligence and Marital Status

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 0.99 | 3 | 0.33 | 4.12 | 0.01 |
| Within Groups | 31.94 | 396 | 0.08 | | |
| Total | 32.94 | 399 | | | |

Table 6 depicts the descriptive statistics, produced by SPSS, which shows the mean and standard deviation of emotional intelligence in each of the two employment groups.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence and Employment Status

| Employment Status | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min | Max |
|-------------------|-----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Employed | 201 | 1.96 | 0.22 | 0.02 | 1.93 | 1.99 | 1 | 3 |
| Unemployed | 199 | 2.02 | 0.34 | 0.02 | 1.97 | 2.06 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 400 | 1.99 | 0.29 | 0.01 | 1.96 | 2.02 | 1 | 3 |

Table 7 depicts the one-way ANOVA that was performed to compare the effect of employment status on emotional intelligence.

groups ($F(1, 398) = [3.672], p = 0.05$). These results reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between employment status and emotional intelligence ($p = [0.05]$).

The one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence between at least two

Table 7 ANOVA for Emotional Intelligence and Employment Status

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 0.30 | 1 | 0.30 | 3.67 | 0.05 |
| Within Groups | 32.64 | 398 | 0.08 | | |
| Total | 32.94 | 399 | | | |

ANOVA for Depression, Anxiety, and Stress on Variables

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess the influence of age, gender, and marital status on depression, anxiety, and stress. The results from the one-way ANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in depression, anxiety, and stress among age,

gender, and marital status. The findings suggest that there is no significant association between age and depression ($p = [0.67]$), age and anxiety ($p = [0.97]$), and age and stress ($p = [0.87]$). Similarly, the one-way ANOVA did not reveal any statistically significant differences in gender and depression ($p = [0.44]$), gender and anxiety ($p = [0.22]$), and gender and stress ($p = [0.45]$). Lastly, the findings suggest that there is no significant association between marital status and depression ($p = [0.81]$), marital status and anxiety ($p = [0.10]$), and similarly marital status and stress ($p = [0.29]$).

Table 8 depicts the descriptive statistics, produced by SPSS, which shows the mean and standard deviation of depression, anxiety, and stress in employment status.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics for Depression, Anxiety, and Stress on Employment Status

| Employment status | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Min | Max |
|-------------------|------------|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|------|-----|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Depression | Employed | 201 | 1.61 | 0.78 | 0.06 | 1.50 | 1.72 | 11 |
| | Unemployed | 199 | 1.79 | 0.80 | 0.06 | 1.68 | 1.91 | 33 |
| | Total | 400 | 1.70 | 0.79 | 0.04 | 1.62 | 1.78 | 13 |
| Anxiety | Employed | 201 | 2.05 | 0.88 | 0.06 | 1.93 | 2.17 | 11 |
| | Unemployed | 199 | 2.10 | 0.89 | 0.06 | 1.97 | 2.22 | 33 |
| | Total | 400 | 2.07 | 0.88 | 0.04 | 1.99 | 2.16 | 13 |
| Stress | Employed | 201 | 1.60 | 0.78 | 0.06 | 1.49 | 1.71 | 11 |
| | Unemployed | 199 | 1.69 | 0.77 | 0.05 | 1.58 | 1.80 | 33 |
| | Total | 400 | 1.65 | 0.77 | 0.04 | 1.57 | 1.72 | 13 |

Lastly, Table 9 illustrates the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to assess the influence of employment status on depression, anxiety, and stress.

The results from the one-way ANOVA indicated that there were statistically significant differences in depression among at least two age groups ($F(1, 398) = [5.311]$, $p = 0.02$). Therefore, these findings suggest that there is a significant association between employment status and depression ($p =$

$[0.02]$). However, the one-way ANOVA did not reveal any statistically significant differences in anxiety between at least two groups ($F(1, 398) = [0.268]$, $p = 0.61$), indicating no significant relationship between employment status and anxiety. Additionally, the one-way ANOVA showed that there were also no statistically significant differences in stress between at least two groups ($F(1, 398) = [1.256]$, $p = 0.26$), indicating no significant link between employment status and stress.

Table 9 ANOVA for Depression, Anxiety, and Stress on Employment Status

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Depression | Between Groups | 3.31 | 1 | 3.31 | 5.31 | 0.02 |
| | Within Groups | 248.28 | 398 | 0.63 | | |
| | Total | 251.60 | 399 | | | |
| Anxiety | Between Groups | 0.213 | 1 | 0.21 | 0.27 | 0.61 |
| | Within Groups | 10.69 | 398 | 0.79 | | |
| | Total | 310.90 | 399 | | | |
| Stress | Between Groups | 0.75 | 1 | 0.75 | 1.26 | 0.26 |
| | Within Groups | 236.84 | 398 | 0.60 | | |
| | Total | 237.60 | 399 | | | |

Inferential analysis: Correlation analysis

Additionally, it was imperative to investigate whether a linear connection existed in the data, which would assist in assessing the extent of the relationship between two variables. To accomplish this, a

parametric Pearson's correlation coefficient (one-tailed test) was employed. The Pearson's correlation coefficient is employed to quantify the statistical association between two continuous variables, specifically, emotional intelligence and depression, anxiety, and stress.

Table 10 shows the correlation that applies to emotional intelligence and depression.

Table 10 Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (r) and Significance Probabilities (p) for Relations of Emotional Intelligence and Depression.

| | | Emotional Intelligence | Depression |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Emotional Intelligence | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.16* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.02 |
| | N | 400 | |
| Depression | Pearson Correlation | 0.16* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.02 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings reveal that for the linear relationship between emotional intelligence and depression, there is a weak and positive linear relationship with overall depression ($r = 0.12$). Based on the findings there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and depression ($p = 0.02$).

The findings reveal that for the linear relationship between emotional intelligence

and anxiety, there is a strong, positive linear relationship with overall anxiety ($r = 0.08$), however there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and anxiety ($p = 0.09$).

Table 11 shows the correlation that applies to emotional intelligence and anxiety.

Table 11. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (r) and Significance Probabilities (p) for Relations of Emotional Intelligence and Anxiety.

| | | Emotional Intelligence | Anxiety |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Emotional Intelligence | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.08 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.09 |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Anxiety | Pearson Correlation | 0.08 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.09 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |

Table 12 shows the correlation that applies to emotional intelligence and stress.

Table 12. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients (r) and Significance Probabilities (p) for Relations of Emotional Intelligence and Stress

| | | Emotional Intelligence | Stress |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Emotional Intelligence | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.14** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.01 |
| | N | 400 | 400 |
| Stress | Pearson Correlation | 0.14** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.01 | |
| | N | 400 | 400 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings reveal that for the linear relationship between emotional intelligence and stress, there is a weak and positive linear relationship with overall depression ($r = 0.14$). Based on the findings there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress ($p = 0.01$).

Discussion

The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health. Some studies exploring the relationship of emotional intelligence with mental health among young adults found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and scores on mental health scales (Shabani, Hassan, Ahmad & Baba, 2010). The current study provides similar results in that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and depression ($p = 0.02$), as

well as emotional intelligence and stress ($p = 0.01$). A p-value of 0.02 indicates that there is a 2% chance that the observed effect between emotional intelligence and depression occurred by chance alone. A p-value of 0.01 indicates that there is a 1% chance that the observed effect between emotional intelligence and stress occurred by chance alone. However, the findings revealed that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and anxiety, ($p = 0.09$). A p-value of 0.09 is not considered statistically significant, as there is a 9% chance that the observed effect occurred by chance. Therefore, it may be deduced that mental health could be predicted by emotional intelligence and vice versa, however, the nature in which they are reported may vary across different populations in the world.

Emotional Intelligence of Employed and Unemployed Adults

The current study focused on the differences between employed and unemployed adults regarding emotional intelligence and mental health because they represent the labour force of the country. This population is most relied upon economically, specifically focusing on early adulthood as they are the leaders of tomorrow. It was uncovered that employed participants experience a lower prevalence of high emotional intelligence than unemployed participants at 3.5% and unemployed participants at 5.5%. However, it was also uncovered that unemployed participants experience a higher prevalence of low emotional intelligence than employed participants at 7.5% and employed participants at 0.5%. Based on the findings of the current study, there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and employment status, ($p = 0.05$). A p-value of 0.05 indicates that there is a 5% chance that the observed effect between emotional intelligence and employment status occurred by chance alone. The current study deduced that employed participants have a higher prevalence of moderate to high emotional intelligence than unemployed participants.

Mental Health of Employed and Unemployed Adults

Previous studies have found that the health system is poorly adapted to handle mental health problems in Namibia, because there is a stigma attached to mental illness, and people often do not seek the help they need. The current study found that 17.5% of employed participants experience severe depression, while 25.5% of unemployed participants experience severe depression. Also, 42% of employed participants experience severe anxiety, while 44% of unemployed participants experience anxiety. Lastly, 17% of employed participants

experience severe stress, while 20% of unemployed participants experience severe stress. Based on these findings, the prevalence of a low mental health status is higher for unemployed adults, than employed adults. However, a significant relationship was found between depression and employment status ($p = 0.02$). Whereby, a p-value of 0.02 indicates that there is a 2% chance that the observed effect between depression and employment status occurred by chance alone. Furthermore, no significant relationship was found between stress, anxiety, and employment status. The current study deduced that employed participants have a lower prevalence of moderate to severe mental health status than unemployed participants.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health with a specific focus on the differences between employed and unemployed adults in Windhoek, Namibia. The Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) and Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21) were used to collect data on the effects of emotional intelligence and mental health on the employment status of the participants.

It was observed that mental health problems were generally common across early adulthood, more so reported by the unemployed group than the employed group. This could be mainly attributed to the effects of not finding employment, thus experiencing immense pressure to function during day-to-day activities, as well as the stigma attached to mental health in the Namibian context. Additionally, it was found that most unemployed participants experienced moderate to low emotional intelligence, as compared to employed participants. This could be accredited to the proposition that people with mental health problems have a significantly lower level of emotional

intelligence than the general population, as well as a lack of awareness regarding the importance of emotional intelligence and what it is about. Furthermore, although there is limited literature on the significance of emotional intelligence and mental health on employment status, it is clear from the results and other research that this phenomenon is real and carries a significant impact on individuals and at a community level.

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