

A Systematic Review on Emotional Intelligence and General Anxiety among the Working Professionals

S.Madhu Bindu^{1*}, Dr Nirmala Singh Rathore², Dr Ritu Meena³

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, NIMS University, Jaipur (Rajasthan)-India

²Associate Professor Department of Psychology Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
NIMS UNIVERSITY RAJASTHAN, Jaipur

³Associate Professor Department of Psychiatry, NIMS Hospital, Jaipur, Rajasthan

*Corresponding Author: S. Madhu Bindu, Email ID: madhubindudondla@gmail.com

Cite this paper as: S.Madhu Bindu, Dr Nirmala Singh Rathore, Dr Ritu Meena (2024) A Systematic Review on Emotional Intelligence and General Anxiety among the Working Professionals.

Frontiers in Health Informatics, (6), 4700-4709

Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) is described as the capacity to recognize, articulate, comprehend, regulate, and utilize emotions. Emotional intelligence significantly influences anxiety levels, health, interpersonal connections, and job success. This article includes a systematic assessment of emotional intelligence and anxiety intervention trials in adult populations to evaluate their outcomes. These findings offer support for the effectiveness of emotional intelligence in reducing anxiety levels among working professionals. Nonetheless, significant limitations in the majority of the research constrain the generalizability of their findings. Thus, a significant information gap exists in the current literature concerning working professionals, and this study intends to rectify this shortcoming.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Anxiety, Professional Competency, Working Professionals

Introduction and Background of the Study

Emotional intelligence means the ability to understand and analyse our own emotions as well as the emotions of others which can be useful when working. Emotions help us to take good decisions in a situation and hence are derived from what we are feeling. This aspect enables us to make different choices in a given moment, it provides us an opportunity for taking greater control over ourselves and understanding others better.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) define emotional intelligence as the ability to understand and express emotions, integrate them with thought, engage with them rationally, and exert control over them. What is additionally present in the other. Other authors associate emotional intelligence with the understanding and expression of emotions, as our life experiences influence our thoughts and actions based on emotions elicited by current or past situations. Therefore, emotional intelligence necessitates a high level of emotional abilities, dedicated preparation, and the capacity for anticipating behaviors. With the expansion of intelligence competencies, relationship associations are enhanced and individual productivity significantly increases.

Components of Emotional Intelligence

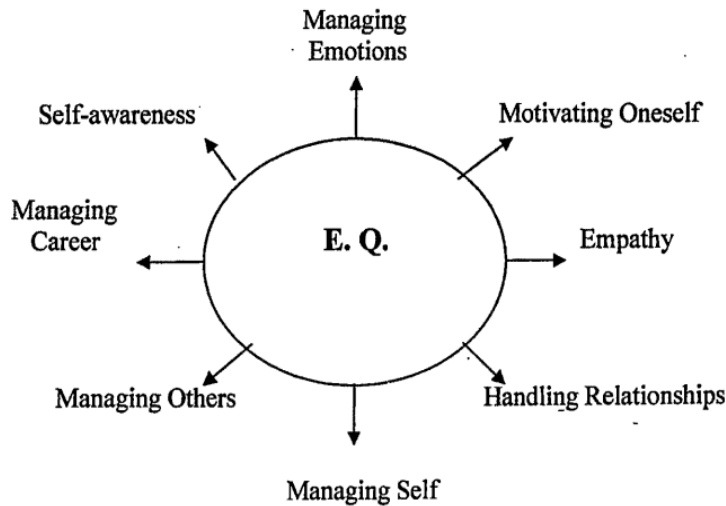


Figure 1: Key components of emotional intelligence

The term anxiety originates from the Latin word 'anxietas,' which typically signifies a combination of uncertainty, agitation, and fear (Eysenck, 1992). Anxiety is a distinct form of terror experienced in reaction to a perceived danger to self-esteem. It is the individual's subjective experience, signifying mental suffering and discomfort. Individuals experience anxiety to varying extents occasionally due to particular circumstances that warrant such a response. The existence of a certain level of dread or worry is not inherently an entirely negative element. This emotional condition becomes problematic when it endures for an extended duration or recurs with sufficient severity to incapacitate an individual in daily life.

Anxiety is a typical and adaptive human emotion that functions as a reaction to a perceived threat or danger. It is an instinctive response that equips the body to react to stressful circumstances, commonly known as the "fight or flight" response. In the presence of a genuine threat or challenge, anxiety can drive individuals to act and make decisions for their self-protection. Anxiety becomes problematic when it is excessive, prolonged, disproportionate to the real threat, or when it disrupts an individual's everyday life.

Professional Competency

Professional competency denotes the information, skills, abilities, and traits that persons possess and utilize in their occupation. It denotes the ability to execute activities, resolve issues, and make judgments proficiently within a particular profession or domain. Professional competency is crucial

for attaining success and excellence in one's career and for enhancing the overall success of a business or industry.

Professional competency is the capacity to execute tasks that enable the fulfillment of occupational obligations in a manner that is satisfactory and suitable to the individual's developmental stage, culture, and environment.

This paper encompasses a literature review concerning the prevalence and interrelations among the emotional intelligence, general anxiety, and professional competency among working professionals. Limited research has been undertaken regarding emotional intelligence, general anxiety, and professional competency among employed individuals.

Objectives of a Systematic Review

The objective of our comprehensive evaluation of emotional intelligence studies is to address the following inquiries:

- Do EI interventions systematically affect anxiety levels in working professionals?
- What are the constraints of these studies? What suggestions can be proposed?

Research Methods and Materials

Literature search

Relevant studies published until June 2024 were identified via the Scopus, PubMed, Springer, and ScienceDirect online databases using combinations of the following keywords: emotional intelligence, anxiety, professional competence, and working professionals. Research on other sources (e.g., Google Scholar) and the bibliography of the articles obtained revealed additional sources.

Sources for Data Information, Inclusion and elimination Criteria

Initially, a systematic literature review was selected for this study to minimize bias and errors in the research process by clearly delineating inclusion and exclusion criteria for article selection. The systematic literature review commenced with the selection of research databases. In alignment with the study's objectives and accessibility, the chosen databases include Scopus, PubMed, ScienceDirect, Springer, and Google Scholar, all of which offer high-quality peer-reviewed publications. The subsequent stage entailed establishing the analysis period. We selected an entire decade as it provided a comprehensive picture of the study's concept. The study also encompassed the four months of 2024. The analysis period extends from 2016 to May 2024 and encompasses papers exclusively in English. Furthermore, we limited the search to exclusively research and review publications, excluding novels, book chapters, technical reviews, conference papers, and editorials.

The initial step entailed the identification of 240 articles. Following an initial screening,

researchers eliminated 180 papers that did not clearly align with our review criteria (e.g., due to irrelevance to emotional intelligence or anxiety therapies). Out of the 60 studies, 37 were subsequently removed due to duplication and because (a) the intervention's rationale was founded on a construct distinct from that of emotional intelligence (EI). The researcher omitted numerous papers due to their failure to describe an intervention study or to utilize an EI measure as a dependent variable. Researchers omitted proceedings or conference articles.

Consequently, of the 240 papers identified, spanning from 2016 to 2024, 13 articles pertain to emotional intelligence, anxiety levels, and professional competency among working professionals, representing 5.42% of the total publications.

The specifics of these research are outlined in Table 1. For each study, we include essential details on the sample, study design (including the presence of a control group), utilized modules, intervention content, kind of emotional intelligence measure employed, follow-up status, additional relevant aspects (beyond emotional intelligence), and significant findings. The researcher utilized numerical references for these articles within the text. All articles and their corresponding numbers are located in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of Article Analysis and Research Gap

Study No	Study	Methodology	Results and Discussion	Findings	Research Gap
1	Binod Shah and Kiran Kumari (2024)	Quantitative methodology, collecting data from 150 individuals	The study reveals a strong positive correlation between high emotional intelligence and increased productivity, particularly in stress management and interpersonal skills.	The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between overall emotional intelligence and productivity	Although the study examined different components of EI, it did not explore in-depth how specific aspects of EI (e.g., empathy, emotional regulation) might differently impact various dimensions of productivity
2	U Gunu (2024)	Descriptive	The study demonstrated a substantial	The manager's emotional intelligence and	Research might focus on a methodical

			correlation among employees' emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, and their performance	organizational commitment were not significantly positively correlated.	sample selection and include a wider variety of respondents.
3	Neha Jha (2024)	Descriptive and Quantitative methodology	This study examined the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, particularly its correlation with anxiety and stress management	The correlation and regression analysis results demonstrated a substantial relationship between stress and anxiety and emotional intelligence, with stress and anxiety acting as predictors of emotional intelligence.	ere is a need for additional investigation on resiliency evaluation in the anxiety and stress management.
4	Sneha Singh and Shakti Chaturvedi (2023)	Quantitative methodology	A robust and statistically significant association exists between emotional intelligence and job happiness	The study's outcome was in the expected direction showing a negative correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and stress in the workplace	Study is specific for private hospitals of Bengaluru region of Karnataka, India.
5	Bianca Bacelar et al. (2022)	Descriptive and Quantitative	A cross-sectional quantitative study was performed on	Various demographic, physiological,	The study was confined to a single

		methodology	353 nursing personnel of a hospital	social, and occupational determinants have their significant impact on the stress, anxiety, and depression of nursing professionals.	geographical area
6	M. Deady et al. (2021)	Descriptive and Quantitative methodology	This study investigated the cross-sectional association of depression and anxiety, both individually and comorbidly, on job performance and absenteeism in their study	The functioning of the workplace was significantly affected by sadness and anxiety, both individually and in conjunction.	Workplace therapies should also focus on addressing anxiety disorders and their related presenteeism due to their great prevalence in the population.
7	Maria Rita Sergi et al. (2021)	Descriptive and Quantitative methodology	Their study examines the nomological relationships among emotional intelligence, anxiety, and depression.	No moderating effect of gender on the relationship between emotional intelligence, anxiety, and depression	Missing in-depth study
8	Ana Soto-Rubio et al. (2020)	Quantitative methodology	Sought to examine the impact of psychosocial risks and emotional intelligence on nurses' health, well-	This research indicates that emotional intelligence has a protective	Missing anxiety disorder

			being, burnout, and job satisfaction during the escalation and peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain	impact against the negative consequences of psychosocial risks, including burnout and psychosomatic problems.	
9	Francisco Manuel Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2019)	Descriptive, Quantitative methodology and employed a cross-sectional design	Comprehensive bivariate analysis demonstrated a significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and both state and trait anxiety	The analysis showed that trait anxiety, problem-solving, emotional expressiveness, social withdrawal, and emotional clarity were strongly connected to self-efficacy	Missing professional competency
10	Suzanne Nightingale et al. (2018)	Descriptive, Quantitative methodology	Examined the correlation between emotional intelligence in healthcare professionals and their caring behavior in their research	The findings demonstrated that nurses' emotional intelligence correlated with both physical and emotional caregiving; however, its significance may be	Missing variable of professional competency and anxiety level among the health care professionals

				diminished for nurse leaders and physicians.	
11	Kousha, Maryam, et al. (2018)	Descriptive and Quantitative methodology	Discovered a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress, anxiety, and depression among resident physicians in their study	In their study, people under 30 had considerably higher levels for anxiety, while scores for stress and sadness were not significantly elevated	Missing the variable of professional competency
12	Sadia Sadiq et al. (2018)	Quantitative methodology	Study was to ascertain the impact of emotional intelligence on the teaching competencies of university faculty	Findings indicate a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the professional competence of university-level educators.	Missing the variable of anxiety level of university educators.
13	Ranjan Pattnaik et al. (2016)	Descriptive and Quantitative methodology	Their study aimed to investigate the correlation between emotional intelligence and anxiety among security officers	The study indicated a statistically significant adverse connection between emotional	Missing the variable of professional competency

				intelligence and anxiety	
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Research Gap

The literature review presented in Table 1 indicates that most studies exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance show a positive correlation. Nevertheless, there exists a scarcity of research focusing on the interaction between emotional intelligence, general anxiety, and professional competency. The assessment revealed a lack of empirical research concerning the relationship between emotional intelligence, general anxiety, and performance in both Indian and global contexts. As a result, a significant gap in the available literature concerning working professionals is evident, and the current study seeks to rectify this shortcoming.

Key Findings and Conclusion

This review indicates that enhancing various elements of emotional intelligence competencies can typically lead to improved control of anxiety levels and professional competence. Nonetheless, further study is required to validate that emotional intelligence interventions enhance work performance. Further research is necessary to enhance comprehension of the potential mediators and moderators of these gains. We anticipate that the present review will provide researchers with a comprehensive and lucid understanding of the domain of emotional intelligence and the general anxiety levels among working professionals, as well as valuable insights for developing theoretically and methodologically robust interventions that will further this area of study. Our article delineates the potential benefits of emotional intelligence interventions in clinical environments, and we aspire that the findings will inspire researchers to explore this domain, so enhancing our comprehension of how emotional competences may alleviate suffering and promote well-being.

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