

# The Relationship of Psychological Hardiness with Emotional Intelligence and Workaholism

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Present research intends to investigate relationship of psychological hardiness with emotional intelligence and workaholism among high school teachers.

**Methods:** The study population includes all male and female high school teachers in Ghorveh city in the academic year 2012-2013. Using simple random sampling method, 100 male and female teachers were selected. To collect data, Kobasa Psychological Hardiness Questionnaire, Bar-on measure and Aghabeigi Workaholics Questionnaire were employed. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics regression analysis were used.

**Results:** The findings indicated that there was negative significant relationship between the psychological hardiness and workaholism. The psychological hardiness and emotional intelligence had significant positive relationship. In addition, there was a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and workaholism.

**Conclusion:** The psychological hardiness, workaholism and emotional intelligence are inter-related variables without any significant difference between males and females.

## 1. Introduction

Psychological hardiness is one of the elements, which may play a basic role in man's quality of life. People with low hardiness will hurt more by harmful elements in long term while people with high hardiness apparently have natural or acquirable security against the stressful elements. Hardiness is the ability to understand the external conditions accurately and to make a desirable decision about oneself (Jomhari, 2002). Kobasa (1979) introduced the hardiness as a complicated personal characteristic that is formed by three constituents: challenge, control and commitment, which are supposed as a set of mediators that can modulate stress effects. Hardiness is mainly relates to the adjustment and positive agreement encountering problems (Issacson, 2002).

Researchers believe that hardiness and vulnerability are two opposite poles of a same continuum (Fergus & Zemmerman, 2005). Other researchers studied common features including higher self-ruling, independency, sympathy, job commitment, endeavor, and good problem solving skills and relationship with colleagues (Issacson, 2002). Kobasa & Maddi (1982) found that the persons who are resistant to the psychological pressure not only do not hurt mentally, but also they welcome stress and believe that such situations are necessary for their development.

Considering hardiness as an acquirable feature not mainly an inherent one (Lambert, 2007), researchers indicate that hardiness has a positive relationship with physical and mental disorder (Brooks, 2003, Maddi & Kobasa, 1994; Florian et al., 1995). Learning hardiness increases commitment, control and challenge

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rates, the effects of each separately or in combination can decrease the rate of recognized stress (Nasiri, 2010). Kobasa (1979) believed that it could enforce person ability to control situation, to commit duties and to encounter events. King et al. (1998) showed that people with hardiness have more commitment to themselves and their works and experience more sense of control in their lives.

Kobasa (1979) has described hardiness as a shield against diseases. This is one of the main aspects of the personal control i.e. "personal efficiency" which Bandura (1997) has already presented. In addition, people with hardiness undergo less physical erosion in stressful conditions (Majidian, 2004). The emotional intelligence is another topic that attempts to explain and interprets the man excitement, feeling and capability status (Hassanzadeh, 2007). The emotional intelligence has been defined as an ability to understand and comprehend the emotions in order for assessing thoughts, manners and to put them in a way that makes emotion and intelligent growth and elevation (Goleman, 1995).

The concept of emotional intelligence gives a new depth to the man's intelligence. It is more a tactical competency (personal performance), whilst the recognition intelligence is a strategic capability (long-term capability). The emotional intelligence makes it possible to predict the achievement because it demonstrates how a person applies the knowledge in an immediate situation. It is a form of social intelligence, which is a suitable predictor in special areas such as job and educational performances. In the other word, it has an ability to control feelings and excitements by one and others (Bar-on, 2000). In 2004, the emotional intelligence has been defined in more details: the ability to recognize and differentiate feelings, excitements, meanings and concepts, the relations between them, to reason and to solve problems.

The emotional intelligence includes the ability to receive emotions, coordinate them and to understand the information related to them (Khaledian, 2013). Intelligence Quotient (IQ) in its best form causes only 20 percent of life successes and all 80 percent remaining depends on another factor and the human's fate in the most cases depends on the skills that link to the emotional intelligence to provide person adaptability with the environment (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Workaholism forms a great deal of man's life as well as work engages people in it both physically and cog-

nitively. Today organizations are dwindling in size and rebuilding that increase expectations and working demands and it increase working hours (Schaufeli et al., 2009). The term workaholism has been presented first by Oates (1971). He described this term as "an uncontrollable need or obligation and driven to work continuously". This definition involves two constituents: extreme work, and extreme tendency to spend more time to work than what the organization expects them to achieve its goals. The later indicates that workaholics always and permanently think about work, even when they are not at work. In other word, workaholic's mind usually engage in affairs related to the work (Snir & Harpaz, 2008).

These two compartments as the behavioral and cognitive elements of workaholism point to the root of the workaholism that is just consistent with the alcoholism (Oates, 1971). It is believed that workaholics do work more than what is expected and do more efforts in a way that ignore their lives out of their job (Buelens & Poelmans, 2004). To differentiate overworking results from correct planning and enough energy, their discrepancies can be considered. People who overwork do work as an essential thing and sometimes interpret it as a satisfying duty but workaholics consider their work as a secure shelter by which they can avoid the unwanted commitments and feelings out of the work.

They often make commitments because of their work necessities, also people who over work can lose their enthusiasm to work but workaholics cannot (Ahmadi et al., 2010). Like other addicts these people underestimate their working hours and ignore the overall time that they engage themselves in problems relate to the work at home or weekends. Reality distortion, depression and reduced self-confidence are common (Snir & Harpaz, 2006). Scott et al. (1997), also identified three models of workaholism include radical drive (scrupulous), perfectionism and prosperous. In their opinion, workaholics have a high degree of scruple, stress and anxiety. Their work cause physical and mental problems, they have little satisfaction of their job and lives and their job performance are low. Perfectionist workaholics have high level of stress and physical or mental problems.

They have hostile and inefficient interrelationships, more arbitrary absence and lower job satisfaction. Finally, prosperous workaholics have lower life and job satisfaction, physical and mental health, job performance and high organizational citizenship behaviors and lower stress and arbitrary service absence. The

most common consequences are to create a high level of job stress and family-work contradiction, increase health threatening indications, job elimination, problems in-group working, communication problems, low life satisfaction, and lack of leisure time enjoyment (Piotrowski & Vodanovich, 2008).

Khaledian et al. (2013) showed that there is negative and significant relationship between the psychological hardiness and workaholism. Snir and Harpaz (2006) suggested that the probability of men workaholism is more than women. Kobasa et al. (1982) stated that people with hardiness had higher level of job satisfaction, low pressure at work environment and high quality of life compared to the people with low hardiness. In addition, the rate of hardiness in men is more than women. Mohammad Talebi (2008) showed the relationship between the organizational culture and workaholism. Jomhari (2002) has examined the relationship between hardiness and tendency to depression and anxiety among male and female students from Tehran University.

Results showed that there is a reverse relationship between hardiness and tendency to depression and anxiety. Izakian (2001) showed that hardiness has a negative relationship with mental stress at work and it has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Madi et al. (1996) showed that hardiness has a negative correlation with drug addiction, alcohol. Ahadi et al. (2008) studied the rate of hardiness in medical specialized assistants concluded that there is a positive correlation between hardiness and marriage.

The mean score of hardiness in married people was  $65.1 \pm 10.93$  and in unmarried ones were  $61.8 \pm 11.31$ . In the research he found that there is a significant difference between male and females such that the mean and the standard deviation from the male and female hardiness score was (11.15, 64.7), (10.86, 62.2) respectively. Results of Kaveh and Yazdi (2007) showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological hardiness. In this study, the men and women did not differ in terms of hardiness, psychological, and emotional intelligence. Hasanvand and Khaledian (2012) and Khaledian (2013) study showed that there is no difference between male and female the emotional intelligence.

The objective of this research was to investigate the relationship between psychological hardiness with emotional intelligence and workaholism in high school teachers in the academic year of 2012-2013.

The main assumption of the research was to examine the significant relationship between psychological hardiness with emotional intelligence and the rate of the workaholism.

## 2. Methods

Based on a cross-sectional study, 100 participants (50 male, 50 female) were selected randomly from 250 high school teachers of Ghorveh city, in the academic year of 2012-2013. Among male teachers 28 subjects or 56% were married and 22 ones or 44% were unmarried while in females 30% were unmarried and (70% were married),

### Measures

#### Kobasa (1988) hardiness questionnaire

It contains 50 questions includes 17 questions about challenge, 16 questions about commitment and 17 questions about control that have been formed based on the Likert scale (4 options). The scores of 39 acts of the test are scored reversely and to each three subscales, scores are presented separately and the non-weighted mean of these three subscales, are accounted for the total score of the hardiness. Kobasa hardiness test has been translated by Ghorbani (1995) with acceptable psychometric indexes. Hardiness constituents as control, commitment and challenge have a reliability coefficient of 7%, 78%, 72%, respectively and the reliability for total hardiness was 15% (Besharat, 2007).

#### Bar-on emotional intelligence questionnaire

It contained 133 questions to evaluate the emotional intelligence. In 1997, this questionnaire had been reviewed and its questions reduced to 177. Responses were studied by factorial analysis and finally a general scale (IQ), 5 combinational scales and 15 minor scales were determined. In 2003, this test has been implemented in Iran among Tehran university students by Dehshiri (2006), and its questions were declined to 90. The questionnaire's answering sheets are regulated based on a scale of 5 degree in Likert spectrum as "I am completely agree", "I'm agree to some extent", "I'm disagree", "I'm completely disagree". For the final measurement, two methods were used. Time stability coefficients were reported as 85% at one and 75% four month later. Test stability rate in odd-even method was 88% and in Cronbach alpha was 93% (Khaledian, 2013).

**Table 1.** Means, standard deviation of hardiness scores, emotional intelligence and workaholism.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Workaholism	68.175	4.01
Emotional intelligence	332.12	17.65
Commitment	59.24	4.18
Challenge	58.31	3.17
Control	61.22	4.11
Hardiness	58.08	4.19

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### Workaholism rate questionnaire

It had been presented by Agha Beigi (2007) and includes 30 questions. With Likert scale (1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=always). Cronbach alpha was 0.84, with a correlation of 0.61 to type A behavior.

### 3. Results

Table 1 shows the mean and the standard deviation of hardiness, emotional intelligence and workaholism scores in which the maximum mean relates to the control element by 61.22 (4.11) value.

Table 2 shows a significant and negative correlation among the hardiness constituents and emotional intelligence with workaholism in male and female teachers. It also concluded that there is a negative relationship between hardiness and workaholism. The results show that there is a positive and significant relationship between hardiness and emotional intelligence.

As it is shown in Table 3 there is a significant difference among male and female teachers' hardiness. The mean scores of hardiness among male teachers are higher than females. Also the obtained scores show a difference between male and female teacher's workaholism, which means that in workaholism, the male mean scores are higher than females.

As it is demonstrated in Table 4 there is a significant relationship among married and unmarried teachers in their hardiness score; i.e. the rate of hardiness and workaholism among married teachers were more than unmarried ones.

### 4. Discussion

Findings indicated that there was a negative relationship between hardiness and workaholism. These results showed that people with hardiness were resistant to the mental stress and they did not hurt mentally under the influence of the stressful situations (Kobasa & Maddi, 1982). The results are consistent with the report of Brooks (2003), and Florian et al. (1995) about the positive relationship between hardiness and physical or mental health. King et al. (1998) believed that people with hardiness evaluate the unsatisfying situations in a challenging manner not threateningly and they have more commitment about themselves and their work.

The results confirmed the previous studies performed by Spence and Robins (1992), Asgari (2002), and Pitrowski & Vodanovich (2008). Today, mental stress

**Table 2.** The hardiness scores correlation coefficients, its constituents and workaholism.

Variable	Workaholism	Commitment	Challenge	Control	Hardiness	Emotional intelligence
Workaholism	1	-0.549***	-0.380**	-0.618***	-0.515***	-0.324***
Commitment		1	0.953***	0.954***	0.954***	0.361
Challenge			1	0.895***	0.9***	0.324
Control				1	0.921***	0.311
Hardiness					1	0.332
Emotional intelligence						1

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**Table 3.** Group differences in hardiness, emotional intelligence and workaholism.

Variable	Male		Female		df	t
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
Hardiness	60.59	4.27	58.60	3.37	98	2.59
Emotional intelligence	333.66	18.11	330.58	17.19	98	1.2
Workaholism	67.14	3.16	69.21	4.86	98	-2.52

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is served as a revealing indicator in mental disorders. It also has a significant role in anxiety. It seems that people with high rate of hardiness encounter stressful situations more effectively, for example, by processing problems or converting situations to the positive ones. Moreover, these people are less involve in physical erosion in stressful conditions (Majidian, 2004).

At the same time, findings indicated that there was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and workaholism. The results confirmed the previous findings by researchers such as Kaveh and Yazdi (2007). In addition, findings indicated that there was a negative and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and hardiness.

In addition, the hardiness differs among males and females so that the rate of hardiness in males was more than females. This finding was consistent with the studies of Ahadi et al. (2008), and Kobasa et al. (1982). With respect to the fact that women have more prone to depression, hardiness is a resistant shield against it (Sheppard & Kashani, 1999). It can be pointed that men are more involve in the internal elements in life events, while women are more involve in external elements.

One of the results showed that there is no difference in the emotional intelligence between males and females, and between hardiness and marriage. It is in agreement with the results obtained by other researchers such as Samari & Tahmasbi (2007), Kaveh & Yazdi (2007), Tamanai et al. (2010), and Hasanvand

& Khaledian (2012). To confirm the findings it can be said that in contrast to the recognition intelligence that is affected by heredity, the emotional intelligence is more affected by the environmental elements. At present, women's active participation in cultural and environmental areas probably has caused them to have the cultural and environmental facilities as men and the possible differences between the two sexes will be minimized.

Meanwhile, there was a significant relationship between hardiness and marriage status, as the rate of hardiness was higher in married people. This is probably originated from the fact that married people have more responsibilities comparing with unmarried ones. Most of them believe that they are not mainly belonging to themselves, but their families also are involved in their decisions and behaviors. It seems that they try not to serve the life events as boring and threatening and they usually try to make a dynamic life based on the exalted goal for themselves and their families.

At the same time, there was a difference between male and female in the rate of workaholism. It was inconsistent with other studies (Snir & Harpaz, 2006). The leading theory concludes that the workaholics accept some effects that are always enforcing, like admiration or criticism, which causes to sustain behaviors, relate to the workaholism (Mc Milan et al., 2003).

One of the research limitations was the lack of a similar research in this area. The other limitation was the use of usual samples (as they did not consult to a consulting

**Table 4.** Group differences in hardiness, emotional intelligence and workaholism among married and unmarried teachers.

Variable	Unmarried		Married		df	t
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
Hardiness	58.08	4.19	61.11	3.45	98	-3.95
Emotional intelligence	331.27	18.06	332.97	17.24	98	0.49
Workaholism	67.33	4.11	69.02	3.91	98	2.10

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center and stated no complaint). In addition, it was assumed that the workaholics' performances on a continuum have many similarities in clinic and non-clinic populations. It is also suggested that future researchers examine the relationship between psychological hardness with emotional intelligence and workaholism in various ages (teenagers, middle-aged and old).

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