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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

University students need to be happy and do well in university. Emotional intelligence and happiness are very important for university students. These things can affect how well university students do in university and how well they get along with others. Researchers are trying to learn more about how emotional intelligence and happinessre related for university students. They want to know how being aware of your feelings being able to control your emotions being able to understand others and being able to get along with others can make you happier. Emotional intelligence helps people deal with stress control their emotions and make friends. All these things can make you happier and more satisfied with your life. Some researchers collected data from university students to see how emotional intelligence affects their happiness. They found out that university students with emotional intelligence are happier and do better in school. They also found out that emotional intelligence is very important for university students to be happy. This study is important because it shows that emotional intelligence can help university students be happier. It also shows that universities should teach intelligence to help university students do well in school and be happy. In the future researchers should try to find ways to help university students develop intelligence and be happy. They should also try to find ways to help university students deal with stress and be able to control their emotions. Emotional intelligence is very important for university students. It can help them do well in school and be happy. University students with emotional intelligence tend to have better lives and are more satisfied, with their lives.

Keywords. *Emotional intelligence, subjective happiness, university students*

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a major concept in psychological studies, especially in the context of its influence on the overall subjective happiness of a person. EI was described by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions. EI consists of a number of talents, including self-awareness, emotional intelligence, empathy, motivation, and social competence (Goleman, 1995). Since EI skills provide a person with the ability to manage different social and intellectual challenges, it has become a crucial aspect in the overall mental well-being of a person and their life satisfaction.

Students experience a number of emotional and intellectual challenges in their academic life,

especially in higher education, which may include anxiety related to their future jobs, social interactions, and academic pressures (Fernández & Extremera, 2006). Since the ability of a person to manage different stressors has a major influence on their subjective well-being, it has become a crucial aspect in the overall life satisfaction of a person. According to Lyubomirsky and Lepper (1999), subjective happiness refers to the overall judgment of a person concerning the extent to which they are "contented" or "satisfied" with life in general. Different studies have established a positive relationship between subjective happiness and EI, since a person with a high level of EI has the ability to manage different stressors, build positive interpersonal relationships, and promote personal growth (Diener, 2000).

The concept of EI has its roots in the early studies on social intelligence, which was described by Thorndike (1920) as the ability to understand and control others. Later, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence were also added to Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, which are consistent with the concept of EI.

As per Salovey and Mayer (1990), EI is "the ability to monitor one's own emotions and those of others, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's own and others' actions." Emotional intelligence has been further divided into four basic components by them, namely recognizing emotions, understanding emotions, controlling emotions, and utilizing emotions in reasoning. The ability-based concept of EI focuses on the cognitive processing of emotions to enhance decision-making and interpersonal interactions.

Goleman (1995), in his best-selling book on emotional intelligence, namely Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ, built upon this concept. In his model, he proposed five basic components of EI, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social competence. The focus on EI for professional and personal success by Goleman has helped in increasing awareness regarding EI as an essential life skill.

The concept of EI has its roots in early theories of intelligence and emotion. The concept of social intelligence was first proposed by Edward Thorndike (1920), which is defined as "the ability to manage channels of communication effectively." Later, Howard Gardner (1983) extended this concept in his theory of multiple intelligences, which includes interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. Both these concepts are very close to EI.

Problem Statement

The sense of stressors affecting the students studying in colleges or universities at various levels, academic demands, social needs and career-related worry which is common among all college students is a norm. Indeed studies including Schutte et al (2007) have identified emotional intelligence as a leading indicator or predictor for academic performance, mental health and social adaptability. However, even though the advantages of emotional intelligence are well-known, there is limited exploration and research on how emotional intelligence contributes to subjective happiness directly among university students.

Without understanding this relationship, universities may not carry out interventions that protect students' mental well-being. Thus, this study investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective happiness of university students to reduce this gap in research and also provide practical guidance for higher education institutions, psychologists and policymakers.

Significance of the Study

From both a theoretical and practical perspective, this study is significant. It theoretically contributes to positive psychology and emotional intelligence about empirical data on amount of subjective happiness related to emotional intelligence (Fredrickson, 2001). The findings align with Fredrickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory, which claims happy emotions broaden behavioral and cognitive repertoires; build psychological resiliency, and extend life satisfaction.

The results can help academic institutions, teachers and mental health professionals in developing training programs of emotional intelligence that propose to improve students' wellbeing (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005), which could have concrete implications for practice. Psychological

issues go beyond the individual, affecting have broader psychological repercussions, and programs are used to help students improve emotional intelligence for the individual's management of emotions, stress levels and social relatedness in a more meaningful way, which contributes to subjective well-being or happiness (Zeidner et al., 2012) as an umbrella concept that summarizes overall measures that leads them towards higher grades.

Research Hypothesis

Based on existing literature and theoretical frameworks, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this study, a quantitative correlation research model was used to examine the relationship between university students' subjective happiness and emotional intelligence. A correlational approach is appropriate here (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), as this allows for assessment of the strength and direction of the association between those two psychological constructs. The present study investigates naturally occurring variation in emotional intelligence and subjective happiness, as opposed to an experimental manipulation of the variables themselves, in order to clarify their association.

The study is cross-sectional which implies the data will be collected only once. The Design is suitable for investigating connections between variables within a population which does not necessitate longitudinal tracking (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, a standardized psychological scales facilitated survey method for data collection helped to obtain structured and quantifiable response from participants.

Population and Sampling

Target Population

The population selected for conducting this research are the undergraduate and graduate learners of all disciplines from Universities of Multan. Given that they are at a stage of their life where social relationships, academic pressures and self-development intersects (Extremera& Rey 2016), university students are a suitable population for this research as they experience varying levels of emotional intelligence and subjective happiness.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

In this study, a sample of 120 university students was selected. The sample size was determined according to previous studies, as correlational studies usually needed a minimum of 100–150 cases for reliable statistical tests and generalization purposes (Tabachnick&Fidell, 2019).

This study used a non-probability convenience sampling method. This approach is selected because it is possible to access university students who are already available and up for participating in this study. Example: Convenience sampling is often employed in psychological research to collect data cheaply and quickly with acceptable external validity.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Students of University's undergrad or post-graduate programs.
- Participants aged 18–30 years, because this age range includes university students on a developmental trajectory of emotional intelligence and subjective happiness (Salovey& Mayer, 1990).
- Ability to provide informed consent and voluntarily participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students who have a diagnosed psychological disorder since it could affect their emotional intelligence and subjective happiness scores (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).
- Those who decline to participate.
- Students that had previously been involved in similar studies recently to control for response bias.

Research Instruments

Emotional Intelligence Scale

Emotional intelligence will be measured via the 30-item Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF; Petrides & Furnham, 2003). The TEIQue-SF consists of 30 items rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with anchors of 1 ("strongly disagree") and 7 ("strongly agree"). This scale measures four components of emotional intelligence: sociability, emotionality, self-control and well-being. Earlier research demonstrated high

reliability for the TEIQue-SF (Cronbach's alpha = 0.80–0.85) and it was widely validated (Petrides, 2009).

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) by Lyubomirsky and Lepper [49] will be used to measure subjective happiness. It is a 4-item scale used to assess subjective happiness of an individual in the range of 7-point Likert scale, with higher values indicating greater subjectively defined happiness. The SHS has been well validated, with studies reporting Cronbach's alpha values greater than.80, indicating good internal consistency (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Procedure

This occurred over a one month data collection phase. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants. Respondents who consented, completed a survey demographics (e.g., age, gender, year of study and major) that included the questionnaire.

Results

Current study was aimed to find the relationship of emotional intelligence and subjective happiness. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 26. The data analytic approach began with reliability analysis. Pearson Product Moment correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective happiness.

Table 4.1: ***Descriptive Statistic and Psychometric Properties of Study Variables***

Variables	M	SD	Ranges	α
1. Emotional Intelligence	76.86	11.50	33-165	.71
2. Subjective Happiness	15.90	6.69	4-28	.81

Table 4.1 showed the descriptive statistic and psychometric properties of self-compassion and academic motivation. Reliability of all variables was above the bench mark i.e. .70.

Correlational Analysis

Pearson product moment correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship among study variables.

Table 4.2: ***Correlation among study variables***

Variables	M	SD	1	2
1. Self-compassion	43.86	11.50	-	.42***
2. Academic Motivation	62.90	10.69	-	-

N=120, ***P<.001

Table 4.2 showed the relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective happiness. Finding highlighted that emotional intelligence was significantly and positively correlated with subjective happiness.

Discussion

There are numerous counterarguments and limitations to the study that, although it presents a strong positive connection between EI and subjective happiness, can raise some doubts on its conclusions. Although the overall reliability of each variable was well above the minimum standard of 0.70, this does not assure the validity of how measures were created. One area of criticism regarding reliability is based on the common use of Cronbach's Alpha as a measure of uni dimensionality, which does not necessitate reliability by definition while also lacking measurement errors (Cho & Kim, 2015). If the measures of EI and happiness are wonky, then perhaps the correlation as it's reported is also wonky.

Another problem is the belief that EI has an immediate effect on subjective happiness. Having high EI does not automatically mean a person is happy, it just means that there may be some correlation between the two. Other variables (e.g., personality traits or life circumstances) could be confounding predictors of both EI and happiness (Petrides et al., 2016). For instance, extraversion is correlated with happiness positively (Steel et al., 2008), and high scorers on extraversion may also

score higher on EI which could create a spurious correlation.

In other words, the cross-cultural validity of the link between EI and happiness is debatable. Research has indicated that EI is understood differently in individualist and collectivist societies. Emotional suppression, rather than regulation, is linked to well-being in some cultures (Soto et al., 2011). These inconsistencies indicate that the results of a strong positive correlation between EI and subjective happiness are not consistent across different cultures.

Also, although EI is considered positive on the face of it and many sources indicate that it has proved to be beneficial, others suggest that this then can lead to reduced productivity. On the other hand, individuals with high EI may face emotional labor or manipulation that can lead to stress and a decrease in overall well-being (Davis & Nichols, 2016). For example, leaders with high EI typically need to suppress their own emotions when managing others as this is understood to be more effective; however, in doing so they are often burnout rather than being happy. This is contrary to the assertion that EI uniformly leads to increased malaise.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes significantly to the theoretical understanding of subjective happiness and emotional intelligence, particularly regarding college students. Indeed, this result is consistent with the Emotional Intelligence Theory proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990), which states that people who are more emotionally intelligent can better regulate their emotions to increase well-being or happiness. These findings further support Lyubomirsky (2001) Subjective Happiness Model, which asserts that one's awareness of own mental state and consequently regulates the emotions is a critical factor affecting level of happiness in an individual.

The model is a remarkable framework to help us understand an emotional intelligence as proposed by Goleman (1995), which emphasizes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. During the promotion of healthy interrelationship and flexible coping mechanisms, they all affect the subjective personal fulfillment directly (Extremera & Rey, 2016).

The results also show that those with high emotional intelligence experience more positive emotions, which contribute to resilience, cognitive flexibility, and overall life satisfaction (Fredrickson 2001). This is in line with the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions. The significant relationship between emotional intelligence and individual happiness demonstrated in this study supports contemporary psychological theories such as the notion of emotional intelligence being a major predictor, if not the most crucial marker of well-being among university students.

Practical Implications

Educational and Psychological measurement, 78(2), 293–307 About the Study:The results of this study have important practical implications for educators, mental health professionals, and university administrators interested in promoting well-being among students. As emotional intelligence positively correlates with subjective happiness, universities should establish and implement the emotional intelligence training programs for students to facilitate their understanding of emotional regulation, self-awareness and interpersonal skills (Zeidner et al., 2012).

In another vein, it is imperative that university counseling services incorporate strategies aimed at developing emotional intelligence into their interventions, as students with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to experience greater happiness and well-being (Extremera & Fernández, 2005). Students could learn to manage academic stress by having workshops and training sessions on emotional intelligence, which would help the students in a wide range of topics including maintaining good relations with peers and building a healthy atmosphere.

In addition, soft skills training in universities can include emotional intelligence education and guidance for students to improve upon their emotional and social skills. Incorporating a peer mentoring program designed specifically to improve the emotional intelligence skills amongst students, based on the findings of Schutte et al.

Limitations

Although this study offers valuable insights, some limitations must be noted.

Our first major limitation of the study is that the cross-sectional design restricts our ability to infer causation between subjective happiness and emotional intelligence (Creswell, & Creswell, 2018). Future longitudinal studies are required to examine how EQA could help in predicting future happiness levels.

Second, self-report measures were used to assess subjective happiness and emotional intelligence. Both scales (TEIQue-SF and SHS) are widely validated (Podsakoff et al., 2003), however, the self-reported nature of the data may also be subject to social desirability bias in that individuals may over- or underestimate their emotional intelligence and happiness levels. Multi-method evaluations, including peer ratings and behavioral observations, could enhance the accuracy of data used in future research.

Thirdly, the study makes use of convenience sampling and thus limits its findings on generalisability beyond a specific academic setting. To enhance external validity, future studies should aim to recruit a more representative and diverse sample from different cultural contexts and educational settings.

Finally, the study failed to adjust for potential confounding variables like certain personality characteristics, socio-economic status or mental disorders which may impact the association between emotional intelligence and subjective happiness (Diener et al., 2017). Future studies ought to include control variables in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of this relationship.

Recommendations

Drawing from the conclusions and limitations, recommendations for future studies and practical implementations are as follows:

- Longitudinal Studies: Future research should utilize longitudinal designs to track emotional intelligence with subjective happiness over time and determine its long-term effects.
- Conduct studies with a more diverse sample population such as students at universities, cultures, and economic backgrounds to improve generalizability.
- Psychosocial Experimental Interventions: Universities should fund experimental implementation and evaluation of intervention programs that develop emotional intelligence skills, with specific emphasis on their measurable impact on students' happiness level.
- Multi-methoding: In future studies, qualitative methods like interviews and focus groups can be used to gain a better understanding of how students conceptualize and experience the connection between emotional intelligence and subjective happiness.
- Embed Emotional Intelligence Training in Academics: I encourage academic policymakers to include emotional intelligence training as part of any personal and professional development course in the university curriculum.
- Mental Health Support: Create mental health initiatives based on emotional intelligence training at university counseling centers to enhance students becoming better individuals and successful learners.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between university students' subjective happiness and emotional intelligence. The results reveal that there is a strong positive association which suggests that pupils who are more emotionally intelligent tend to report greater levels of happiness. These findings support the need for emotional intelligence as a means to foster wellbeing, and are consistent with established psychological theories which include the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 1998) and Salovey and Mayer's Emotional Intelligence Theory (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

This study has important implications for the inclusion of emotional intelligence training in college curricula to enhance students' mental health. However, limitations including cross-sectional design, non-representative sampling and use of self-report measures suggest a need for more research.

Future studies should focus on interventions, more diverse samples and longitudinal analyses in order to better understand how emotional intelligence relates to subjective satisfaction. By examining

these factors, educational establishments and mental health specialists can better ensure that students are taught emotional intelligence skills that will add to their level of success and pleasure.

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