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Research Paper

Psychometric evaluation of Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) in Indian college students

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ABSTRACT

Over the years researches on Emotional intelligence (EI) has shown it to be very useful for mental health and adjustment to life in general across various age groups and professions. Hence, there is a need to have an instrument to measure EI that is valid across multiple cultural settings. Therefore, this study aims to establish the psychometric properties of WLEIS in the Indian context w.r.t college students. Data was collected from 279 (Males = 102, Females = 177) undergraduate and postgraduate students in the age range of 18 to 24 years. The factor structure was analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis, also reliability and validity of this scale were assessed. The result indicated a good fit along with high reliability and validity. Therefore, it can be derived from this study that WLEIS is an appropriate measure of emotional intelligence in the Indian context.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Validation Study, Student Population, University Students*

The term Emotional Intelligence (EI) first appeared in the doctoral dissertation of Wayne Leon Payne (1985) titled 'A study of emotion: Developing emotional intelligence'. Since then, EI came to be noticed outside the academic circle with the publication of Daniel Goleman's (1995) seminal book: Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ, although this work has been criticized over the years for presenting hyperbolic claims not grounded in empirical research (Lindebaum, 2009). Afterwards, empirical researches on how to measure EI has been divided in to two categories, ability based model of EI (Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer et al., 2002; Rathore & Chadha, 2015) and trait based model of EI (Bar-On, 1997; Boyatzis et al., 2000; Petrides & Furnham, 2003; Schutte et al., 1998; Wong & Law, 2002), the consensus regarding which of the two approaches is the most suitable is yet to be arrived at, the level of disagreement is to such an extent that ability EI and trait EI are regarded as two different constructs (Petrides, 2011).

Controversy aside, since the operationalization of emotional intelligence as "*the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action*" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 185),

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its scope has been widening at a rapid pace, from predicting job satisfaction (Lee, 2018; Thiruchelvi & Supriya, 2009), job performance (Gong et al., 2019; Nafukho, 2009), team effectiveness (Rathore et al., 2017), burnout (Szczygiel & Mikolajczak, 2018), conflict resolution (Jordan & Troth, 2002), problem solving (Jordan & Troth, 2004) and differentiating between effective and ineffective leadership (Kotzé & Venter, 2011) at workplace, to academic performance (Suleman et al., 2019; Wijekoon et al., 2017), school adjustment (Punia, & Sangwan, 2011), bullying and cyberbullying behavior (Estévez et al., 2019) at schools and colleges, to avoiding use of illicit drugs and substance dependence (Ghee & Johnson, 2008; Riley & Schutte, 2003), ability to cope with stress (Por et al., 2011), maintaining healthy lifestyle and lower stress levels (Keefer et al., 2009) as part of overall health of an individual, to name a few researches done in the past.

Despite these promising findings, researches have also shown that there are cultural differences in expression and experience of emotions (Parker et al., 2005; Scollon et al., 2004), emotional display rules guided by social rules (Matsumoto et al., 2008) and its opposite side, the social decoding rules (Hess et al., 2016), perception and use of emotions (Hareli et al., 2015), higher levels of acquiescent responding in Far Eastern countries as compared to West European countries (Harzing, 2006), and preference of arousal levels in individualistic versus collectivistic cultures (Lim, 2016).

Therefore, there is a need to have a scale which exhibits structural invariance across cultures, for this purpose it is important to investigate the factor structure and validity of the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale WLEIS (Wong & Law, 2002) which was originally developed on population based in Hong Kong. This study therefore aims to accomplish this using Indian undergraduate university students.

Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WEIS; Wong & Law, 2002) conceptualized their test on the basis of the definition of EI proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth". Taking this as the foundation for their test, they defined EI as consisting of four-dimension, appraisal and expression of emotions in the self (self-emotional appraisal), appraisal and recognition of emotions in others (others' emotional appraisal), regulation of the emotions in the self (regulation of emotions), and use of emotions to facilitate performance (use of emotions).

Emotional intelligence and academic performance

Academic performance of university students is the key concern that they have and there are a variety of factors that influence it, such as performance expectation, test-anxiety, social adjustment issues, peer pressure, time management etc. EI is something that plays a vital role in academic success of a student. Various studies conducted over the past decades or so have highlighted the positive influence of EI.

In a study conducted on first-year students in a university in Hong Kong by Zhoc et al. (2020), it was observed that students with high EI not only had better academic performance in terms of GPA and learning outcomes but also higher satisfaction levels with their university experience. A similar study conducted in Iran by Fallahzadeh (2011) on medical

students found a significant association between EI and academic performance. Anand et al. (2016) also found the same results for Indian engineering undergraduate students.

Hanafi and Noor (2016) conducted a systematic review of studies conducted from 2007 onwards, where they have highlighted studies that have used trait-based measures of EI and studies based on ability model of EI, the results clearly bring out positive association as well as in some studies prediction of academic achievement on the basis of EI.

A recent meta-analysis done by MacCann et al. (2020) makes a clearer distinction between the predictive power of EI w.r.t academic performance and concluding that the ability-based model of EI is much better as compared to the self-report or mixed model of EI in terms of predicting academic performance. Overall, all the models predicted additional variance in performance after controlling for intelligence and big five personality.

Other such previous studies conducted also point out the similar findings vis-à-vis EI and its influence on academic performance and related key indicators for the university as well as school students. Parker et al. (2004) conducted a study on the transition from high school to university and found out that high EI was associated with better academic achievement of university students.

Therefore, there is a need to have a valid measure of EI to study the student population across different cultural contexts and this study attempts to provide evidence regarding validity of WLEIS in the Indian context.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The data was collected from Indian college students across various disciplines with the help of offline questionnaires, while collecting data informed consent was taken from the participants and other essential ethical principals were also adhered to, the total sample size (n = 279) was divided into 36.55% males (n = 102) and 63.44% females (n = 177), both males and females were within the age range of 18 to 24 years. After collection of data, data analysis was done on IBM SPSS V.23 and IBM AMOS V.21.

Measures

Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Wong and Law, 2002) is a self-report measure consisting of 16 items designed to measure emotional intelligence. The items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1= *strongly disagree* to 5 *strongly agree*. The scale has four dimensions, appraisal of emotions in self, appraisal of emotions in others, and use of emotions, and regulation of emotions. The reliability coefficient as measured by Cronbach's alpha is in the range of .79 to .86.

Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is a self-report measure consisting of 10 items designed to measure self-esteem. The scale measures both positive and negative evaluation about self. Five items are positively worded and five items are negatively worded. The responses are scored on a 4-point Likert type scale, 1= *strongly disagree* and 4= *strongly agree*. The scores obtained on the scale can range from 10 to 40, with higher score signifying higher self-esteem. The reliability coefficient as measured by Cronbach's alpha is in the range of .72 to .87

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) is a 5 item self-report instrument designed to measure one's satisfaction with life. The responses are scored on a 7-point Likert type scale with 1= *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. The score can range from 5 to 35. With cut-offs ranging from 31-35 score representing extremely satisfied to 5 to 9 representing extremely dissatisfied. The reliability coefficient as measured by Cronbach's alpha is reported to be .87.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics for both males and females across the three variables is depicted in table 1, the average score on emotional intelligence of males (M = 59.64, SD = 9.47) and females (M = 59.14, SD = 8.05) are approximately equal, same is true for self-esteem as far as average score of males (M = 27.69, SD = 4.45) and females (M = 27.74, SD = 4.05) are concerned, while average score on life satisfaction is slightly higher for females (M = 21.08, SD = 6.11) as compared to males (M = 20.40, SD = 6.30).

Table 1 Demographic information of the participants along with descriptive statistics

Gender	Age range	Sample size	Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence		Self Esteem		Satisfaction with life	
			M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Males	18 to 24	102	59.64	9.47	27.69	4.45	20.40	6.30
Females	18 to 24	177	59.14	8.05	27.74	4.05	21.08	6.11

Correlations

Intercorrelations between the three variables of the study is depicted in table 2, as can be seen, the correlation coefficients of EI with self-esteem ($r = .27$, $p<.01$) and life satisfaction ($r = .37$, $p<.01$) as well as correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction ($r = .27$, $p<.01$) are significant in the positive direction.

Table 2 Correlation coefficients, Means and Standard Deviations

	Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence	Self Esteem	Satisfaction with life	M	SD
Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence	1			59.32	8.05
Self Esteem	.274**	1		27.72	4.19
Satisfaction with life	.371**	.266**	1	20.83	6.18

Table 3 depicts the intercorrelations between the four dimensions of WLEIS, the correlation coefficient ranges between r = .315 to r = .462, all of which are significant at .01 significance level. Mean values across the four factors ranged between 13.81 to 15.52, standard deviation between 2.71 to 3.65. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of reliability ranged between .82 to .86 across four dimensions.

Table 3 Intercorrelations between factors

	Self emotion appraisal	Others emotion appraisal	Use of emotion	Regulation of emotion	M	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Self emotion appraisal	1				15.12	3.13	.83
Others emotion appraisal	.328**.	1			15.52	2.71	.86
Use of emotion	415**	.401**	1		14.87	3.07	.86
Regulation of emotion	.412**	.462**	.315**	1	13.81	3.65	.82

**p<.01

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 4 shows the output of exploratory factor analysis, the values in the table indicates factor loadings obtained after data was analyzed using principal component analysis and rotation was done using varimax method with Kaiser normalization, the obtained rotated component matrix with four factors explaining 61.78% of the total variance. Item 1 to 4 represents self-emotional expression (SEA), items 5 to 8 represent others' emotional appraisal (OEA), items 9 to 12 represent use of emotions (UOE) and item 13 to 16 represents regulation of emotions (ROE). No significant cross loadings were observed for the items, loadings below .30 were removed from analysis.

Table 4 Exploratory factor analysis output showing factor loadings of a total of 16 items across four factors

Item no.	Factors			
	ROE	**SEA**	**OEA**	**UOE**
Item_14	.821			
Item_15	.785			
Item_13	.758			
Item_16	.749			
Item_3		.824		
Item_2		.787		
Item_1		.783		
Item_4		.512		
Item_8			.804	
Item_6			.792	
Item_5			.772	
Item_7			.642	
Item_10				.769
Item_11				.738
Item_12				.715
Item_9				.715

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Table 5 depicts the result of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), as can be seen the $\chi 2/df$ value is 1.87, the values of various fit indices was, comparative fit index (CFI) = .942, goodness of fit index (GFI) =.926, Tucker Lewis index (TLI) = .929, and root mean error approximation (RMSEA) = .057. after analyzing this data by the criteria given by Hu and Bentler (1998), it can be seen that there is a good fit between the data and the four-factor model obtained.

Table 5 Goodness of fit indices related to confirmatory factor analysis of WLEIS

Model	$\chi 2$	df	$\chi^2/_{df}$	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
Four factors	183.79	98	1.87	.942	.926	.929	.057

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to evaluate the psychometric properties of the Wong and Law emotional intelligence scale (WLEIS) in Indian college students, the results obtained gives evidence regarding the factorial validity of WLEIS.

Looking at the reliability coefficients as indicated by Cronbach's alpha, the reliability coefficient for the overall test was .83 and split half reliability coefficient was .89, which indicates high reliability of the test. The Cronbach's alpha for the subscales was in the range of .82 to .86. The reliability is in the range similar to what Wong and Law (2002) proposed. As far as validity is concerned, correlation between EI and life satisfaction was significant ($r = .371$, $p<.01$). Similar result was obtained for correlation with self-esteem ($r = .274$, $p<.01$). These correlations between EI and life satisfaction (Rey et al., 2011; Wong & Law, 2002) and EI and self-esteem (Calero et al., 2018; Lee & Hwang, 2016) gives support to the construct validity of WLEIS. Intercorrelations w.r.t the four dimensions, ROE, SEA, OEA, and UOE is in the range $r = .315$, $p<.01$ to $r = .462$, $p<.01$, indicating the four factors are measuring the same underlying construct yet at the same time measuring different aspects of it.

Exploratory factor analysis yielded a four-factor rotated component matrix indicating clearly the items and the factors that they belong to, these four factors were responsible for approximately 62% of the overall variation explained by the scores. Confirmatory factor analysis output was analyzed in terms of goodness of fit index criteria proposed by Hu and Bentler (1998), comparative fit index (CFI) = .942, goodness of fit index (GFI) =.926, tucker lewis index (TLI) = .929, for these indices values close to one represents good fit with 1 representing perfect fit and for root mean error approximation (RMSEA) = .057 values close to zero indicates good fit. So, it can be seen from the obtained results of both EFA and CFA that the data fits well into the four-factor model of emotional intelligence (Ng et al., 2008; Wong & Law, 2002).

Future research should focus on studying factor invariance across different contexts as well as for different population segments for instance, different cultural regions, age, and working professionals etc.

CONCLUSION

The results have shown the factorial invariance of WLEIS. The four-factor model of EI is applicable on Indian undergraduate student population. The reliability and validity of WLEIS have also been found to be satisfactory.

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Conflict of Interest

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