

Emotional Intelligence and Happiness among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

The current study was conducted to understand the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness among Young Adults and is there any significant gender difference between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness. To understand this relationship, total participants (N=106) were selected with females (N=53) and males (N=53). For the current study, two tools were used, namely, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) and the The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). The findings of the study show that Emotional Intelligence and Happiness are positively correlated and no statistically significant gender difference was found with respect to emotional intelligence and happiness.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, happiness, young adults.*

By the early 1990s, emotional intelligence studies appeared in the academics' articles (John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey, and David Caruso, 2000). Emotional intelligence (EI) is everywhere. Most people like educators, life gurus and executives have also believed that heightened sensitivity and emotional awareness are the most important things that people need in a contemporary life (Moshe Zeidner, Gerald Matthews and Richard D. Roberts, 2009). Emotional intelligence (EI), for example, has the ability of utilizing emotions for intensifying thoughts and the ability of validly reasoning with emotions. Feeling of happiness, for example, is a state of emotion that carry information about how our relationship is with other people and conveys that we want to accompany with others but the feeling of fear is also an emotional state which often conveys the urge of fleeing from others (John D. Mayer, 2004).

Emotional Intelligence

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997) "Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth." Four components make up emotional intelligence, these are identifying the emotions; understanding those emotions; making use of these emotions; and managing these emotions (Dr. Haybat Abdul Samad, 2014).

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Emotional Intelligence (EI) has five basic domains that together covers the personal and the social competences. The personal competence includes self-awareness, which is our awareness of our own moods and emotions and the awareness of how these emotions affect others; **Self-management**, which is the capacity of oneself to control their emotions and reactions; Self-motivation which is our capacity to be optimistic; Social awareness which is an ability to show empathy (Namrata Punia, Dr. Jayanti Dutta and Dr. Yukti Sharma, 2015); Social skill which is our skills to influence or use effective tactics to persuade others; to communicate properly, to develop leadership, to negotiate properly, to build bonds and to cooperate and collaborate with others. Emotional Intelligence (EI) consists of three major models according to the *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology* (2004) (Ruchi Jain and Rakesh Kumar, 2014).

Ability based model of Emotional Intelligence was proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) (Ruchi Jain and Rakesh Kumar, 2014). From the ability model it can be understood that while interacting in social environments, emotions act as important means of information. Four branches of emotional intelligence are described by the Ability model, these are perceiving emotions, facilitating emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions (Deisha Sethi, Preksha Kansal and Pooja V. Anand, 2019); **The Competency Model by Goleman (1995)**: according to Daniel Goleman, different personal and social competencies defining emotional intelligence include self-awareness, self-motivation, self-regulation, social skills and empathy (Deisha Sethi, Preksha Kansal and Pooja V. Anand, 2019). Later, in the revised model, four constructs of emotional intelligence are outlined in Goleman's model, these are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Sandhya Mehta and Namrata Singh, 2013); **The Trait model of Emotional Intelligence**, given by Petrides and colleagues in 2009, individuals have various emotional self-perceptions and emotional traits as a part of our personality which are measured with the help of respondent's self-report instead of any scientific sense (Ruchi Jain and Rakesh Kumar, 2014); **according to Bar-On's Emotional Social Intelligence model**, emotional intelligence is surrounded by many areas like assertiveness, independence, interpersonal relationship, problem solving, flexibility, social responsibility, empathy, emotional self-awareness, self-actualization, stress tolerance, self-regard, optimism, happiness and impulse control. Thus, Bar-On (2002) considered that an individual's general intelligence is contributed by both cognitive intelligence and emotional intelligence (Deisha Sethi, Preksha Kansal and Pooja V. Anand, 2019).

Happiness

Happiness has been defined as "a lasting, complete, and justified satisfaction with life as a whole". Ramana Maharshi provides that "Happiness in within and can be known only through discovering one's true self." (Jooli Sonker and Dr. Pankaj Singh, 2019). According to Aristotle, experiencing the right emotions is happiness. For some people as well as for certain situations, right emotions can be pleasure, fear, anger etc. Thus, depending on situations, cultures and individuals, desirable emotions differ (Maya Tamir, Shalom H. Schwartz, Shige Oishi and Min Y. Kim, 2017).

Three realms of happiness exist- good life or positive emotion, engaged life and meaningful life. A good life is having a life surrounded by good stuff like love, joy, pleasure etc.; an engaged life is a state of flow, "Flow, a major part of the engaged life, consists in a loss of self-consciousness, time stopping for you, being 'one with music' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)." And a meaningful life is the ability to understand an individual's highest strengths

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and the ability to use these strengths to serve something that is larger than the self (Jooli Sonker and Dr. Pankaj Singh, 2019).

'*Hedonic level of affect*' and '*contentment*' are referred to be as the components of happiness. The affects that people experience like emotions, feelings, moods etc. often differ and these can be active - inactive and pleasant – unpleasant. Thus, the degree to which these affects are pleasant in character for the individual are known as the hedonic level of affect. The degree to which people perceive that their aspirations are met is called contentment (Ruut Veenhoven, 2012).

The elements of happiness are- *emotion*, where the positive emotions that range from joy to affection and gratitude are included in Subjective Well-Being; *life-satisfaction*, which is perceiving how people are doing in their life; and *flourishing*, which is a situation where people develop positive evaluations on essential aspects of life like work, relationship, health etc. (Yusfida Ayu Abdullah and Farrah Lyana Zulkifli, 2018).

The *hedonism theory* psychologically means seeking for pleasure (Yusfida Ayu Abdullah and Farrah Lyana Zulkifli, 2018) and maximizing the feelings of pleasure and minimizing pain is a happy life (Martin E. P. Seligman and Ed Royzman, 2003). The *Theory of Desire* demonstrates a normal behaviour that is experienced by most people and shows the desire to want something and also shows that the desire might end with either satisfaction or frustration (Yusfida Ayu Abdullah and Farrah Lyana Zulkifli, 2018). The *Objective Theory*, states that happiness is attaining certain things from a list like friendship, beauty, knowledge, education, freedom from pain, love, material comfort, good conscience etc. (Martin E. P. Seligman and Ed Royzman, 2003). Now the theory that embraces and satisfies all the above mentioned three traditional theories is the *Theory of Authentic Happiness*. Authentic happiness is known as the 'Full Life' (Yusfida Ayu Abdullah and Farrah Lyana Zulkifli, 2018).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies have shown that differences in happiness in individuals is determined by individual's self-perceptions and dispositions related to emotions like relationship skills, emotion regulation and social competence. The strongest predictor of happiness is by far the emotional intelligence. It is also seen that when the trait emotional intelligence is present, the Big Five factors are not reliably related to happiness (Adrian Furnham and K. V. Petrides, 2003).

According to a study conducted by Sasanpour M., Khodabakhshi M. and Nooryan Kh, 2012, results have shown that a difference exists in emotional intelligence of women and men, but in relation to happiness, there is no significant difference between men and women. However, the difference between emotional intelligence of men and women is not meaningful as no such difference is found in relation to mental health in men and women. Thus Sasanpour M., Khodabakhshi M. and Nooryan Kh (2012) revealed that students who have high emotional intelligence experience more happiness.

It was also found that a significant mean difference exists between male and female in relation to happiness and also in relation to emotional intelligence, thus concluding that female students have higher mean score on happiness as well as on emotional intelligence as compared to male (Jooli Sonker and Dr. Pankaj Singh, 2019).

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Happiness and higher level of life satisfaction are evaluated by people who are emotionally intelligent. Results have also revealed that emotional intelligence and happiness are significantly correlated. The study also found that more the individuals are happy, better they are able to regulate their emotions as well as control their impulses. The study also revealed that levels of self-regulation, social awareness, self-awareness, motivation and social skills are increased by happiness. Also, higher emotional intelligence has been found in female (Dr. Ara Malik Roshan, 2013).

Results of studies have shown that with respect to happiness among adolescents and adults, no significant difference has been indicated but with respect to emotional intelligence, there is a difference in the scores between adolescents and adults. Thus, irrespective of age differences, the level of happiness remains the same (Veni. R. K, Roseline Florence Gomes and Ayesha Pereira Aurora, 2019).

Results of another study suggest that if people focus on the development of the basic dimensions of emotional intelligence, it will lead to the enhancement of happiness (Maria Platsidou, 2013). Also no significant gender difference between male and female is found with respect to relatedness, happiness and emotional intelligence (Antonino Callea, Dalila De Rosa, Giovanni Ferri , Francesca Lipari and Marco Costanzi, 2019).

In a study conducted by Christopher A. Hafen, Kamlesh Singh and Brett Laursen, (2010), on the happy personality in India: the role of emotional intelligence, it was revealed that emotional intelligence is associated with various personality factors and happiness of females but it is not associated with the happiness of males.

In a study aiming to understand the relationship between hope, emotional intelligence, happiness and life satisfaction among college students, it was found that emotional intelligence and happiness are positively correlated to each other (Deisha Sethi, Preksha Kansal and Pooja V. Anand, 2019).

In another study conducted to find the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness in medical students showed that in both introverts and extroverts the mean of the two variables is significantly different. Thus, in assessing the correlation between emotional intelligence and happiness, the researchers found that both these variables are positively and significantly correlated, stating that a probable increase in happiness will be seen due to an increase in emotional intelligence (Sulmaz Ghahramani, AliReza Torabi Jahromi, Danial Khoshroor, Reza Seifooripour and Mino Sepehrpoor, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

The current study is a correlational study which is done for understanding the relationship between two variables, Emotional Intelligence and happiness. The approach which is undertaken for conducting the study is a quantitative approach and it is carried out on young adults. The aim is also to find out the differences in Emotional Intelligence and happiness among the sample based on gender.

Aim

To study Emotional Intelligence and Happiness among young adults.

Hypotheses

- There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness.
- There is no significant gender difference in Emotional Intelligence and Happiness.

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Sample

The universe of the study includes all the young adults of different parts of India. The age range of the population was from 18 to 28. Thus, a total of 106 samples were selected with 53 males and 53 females. The data was collected through online mode using google form. A convenient sampling technique was used for conducting the study.

Measures

For assessing happiness, **The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ)** was used. Originally published in the Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, 2002, the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire was developed by psychologists Peter Hills and Michael Argyle of Oxford Brookes University. It is a 29-items questionnaire used for assessing personal happiness. Here the items are responded on the basis of a 7-point rating scale. The OHQ has a reliability of 0.78 ($P < 0.001$) and the Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire's test-retest stages were 0.84 and 0.87 respectively.

For assessing Emotional Intelligence, **The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)** developed by Schutte et al. (1998) was used. The SSEIT is a 33-item self-report inventory that focuses on typical emotional intelligence. The range of the scores can be from 33 to 165 indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence. The reliability and validity of the test was found to be 0.90 and 0.47 respectively.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The study is to understand the Emotional Intelligence and Happiness of the young adults of different parts of India. In this study, the total number of participants were 106, out of which 50% were men ($N=53$) and 50% were women ($N=53$). All the participants were within the age range of 18 to 28.

Table 1 Socio-Demographic details (N=106)

| Variable | | N | Mean (SD)/% |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----|-------------|
| Gender | Male | 53 | 50% |
| | Female | 53 | 50% |
| Relationship status | In a relation | 27 | 25.5% |
| | Single | 78 | 73.6% |
| | Married | 1 | 0.9% |
| Educational qualification | High Secondary | 10 | 9.43% |
| | Under Graduate | 78 | 73.59% |
| | Post Graduate | 18 | 16.98% |

The above table shows that the age range of the sample is between 18 to 28 years. There are 53 males and 53 females with a mean of 50% and 50% respectively. With respect to relationship status, 27 are in relationship, 78 are single and 1 is married with a mean of 25.5%, 73.6% and 0.9% respectively. And with respect to educational qualification, 10 belonged to high secondary, 78 to under graduate and 18 to post graduate with a mean of 9.43%, 73.59% and 16.98% respectively.

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Table 2 Descriptive table of Emotional Intelligence and Happiness

| | N | M | SD |
|------------------|-----|--------|--------|
| EI | 106 | 122.24 | 14.608 |
| Happiness | 106 | 4.1103 | .71215 |

Note: EI= Emotional Intelligence, N= sample size, M= mean, SD= standard deviation

The mean and standard deviation of emotional intelligence and happiness is derived from table 1. The mean and standard deviation was obtained to be (M= 122.24, SD= 14.60, N=106) in emotional intelligence and (M= 4.11, SD= .712, N= 106) in happiness. Thus, emotional intelligence possesses relatively higher Mean and Standard Deviation.

Table 3 Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness

| | Emotional intelligence | Happiness |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Emotional intelligence | ----- | .590** |

Table 3 indicates the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness. The Mean of Emotional intelligence was found to be (M=4.1103) and happiness was (M=122.24). With the help of Pearson correlation test, ($r=.590$) and ($p=.000$) was found. It indicates that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness.

Table 4 Significant difference of male and female on Happiness.

| | N | M | | SD | | df | t | p |
|------------------|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----|------|------|
| | | Female | Male | Female | Male | | | |
| Happiness | 106 | 4.1113 | 4.1093 | .73739 | .69305 | 104 | .014 | .989 |

Note: N= sample size, M= mean, SD= standard deviation, EI= emotional intelligence, df= degree of freedom, t= t-value, p= sig. value.

From table 2, the mean and standard deviation of female (N=53, M=4.11, SD=.737) and male (N=53, M=4.10, SD=.693) in happiness was found and t (104) =.014 and p= .989 was derived indicating that there is no significant gender difference of happiness among young adults.

Table 5 Gender difference in Emotional Intelligence among young adults

| | N | M | | SD | | df | t | p |
|-------------------------------|-----|---------|--------|--------|--------|-----|------|------|
| | | Female | Male | Female | Male | | | |
| Emotional Intelligence | 106 | 123.000 | 121.47 | 11.869 | 16.995 | 104 | .537 | .593 |

Note: N= sample size, M= mean, SD= standard deviation, df= degree of freedom, t= t-value, p= sig.

Also, the mean and standard deviation of female (N=53, M=123.00, SD=11.86) and male (N=53, M=121.47, SD=16.99) in emotional intelligence was found and the t (104) = .537 and p= .593 was derived indicating that no statistically significant difference exists in male and female on emotional intelligence. Therefore, the Null Hypotheses (H_0) is accepted at 0.05 level of significance.

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The present study shows that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness, similarly, a study conducted by Abbas Abdollahi, Mansor Abu Talib & Seyedeh Ameneh Motalebi (2015) also showed that a similar relationship exists even among adolescents, i.e., a positive relationship exists between emotional intelligence and happiness and also lower emotional intelligence is associated with unhappiness. It is also supported by similar study carried out by Adrian Furnham & K. V. Petrides (2003) on the trait emotional intelligence and happiness which found that trait emotional intelligence has the strongest correlation to happiness, also that the strongest predictor of happiness is the trait emotional intelligence. Also, with respect to emotional intelligence and happiness among males and females, my results have shown that no statistically significant difference exists between male and female in emotional intelligence and happiness. But compared to a study conducted by Dr. Ara Malik Roshan (2013) found females to possess more emotional intelligence than males. Higher emotional intelligence in females compared to males can be due to some personality characteristics like interpersonal relationships, empathy, social responsibilities etc.

CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role by helping individuals to manage their emotions as well as the emotions of others and also to relate themselves with others around. The aim of this study was to understand the relationship of emotional intelligence and happiness among young adults. By conducting the study and reviewing different related papers, it has been found that a statistically significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and happiness among young adults. During the study, the objectives of the study were fulfilled and the hypotheses were tested. Along with the result that a positive relationship exists between emotional intelligence and happiness, it was also found that no significant difference exists between males and females in relation to emotional intelligence and happiness.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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