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Research Paper

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Predicting Prosocial Behaviour and Subjective Well-Being in University Students

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) is key to influencing the prosocial behavior and subjective well-being (SWB) of students. The present study examines how EI shapes the propensities of university students to adopt prosocial behaviors—empathy, cooperation, and altruism—and affects their life satisfaction and happiness. Greater EI ensures improved emotion regulation, social insight, and social relationships, creating behaviors that are beneficial for a healthy academic setting. Furthermore, high EI students also have more SWB, as they manage stress and establish good social relationships. The research identifies the predictive potential of EI to boost students' emotional and social competence, emphasizing its value in both academic and personal growth. The research indicates that including EI training in university programs could encourage both prosocial orientation and psychological well-being, contributing to a more peaceful student population.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Prosocial Behavior, Subjective Well-Being, Empathy*

The area of psychological study, emotional intelligence (EI) has been one of the central factors that contribute to many human behavior aspects such as interpersonal relationship, mental wellbeing, and wellbeing. Salovey and Mayer (1990) first conceived EI as being capable of recognizing, understanding, controlling, and applying emotions to oneself and other people. In the last few decades, researchers have widely studied the effects of EI across various areas of life, especially in educational environments. Among university students, who tend to face intricate social and emotional issues, EI significantly influences their interactions, coping strategies, and general psychological health. Two highly applicable consequences linked with EI are prosocial behavior and subjective well-being (SWB). Prosocial behavior, defined as voluntary behavior aimed at helping others (e.g., sharing, helping, and empathy), is also dependent on one's ability to recognize and regulate emotions. Likewise, SWB, or people's subjective happiness and satisfaction with life, is directly related to positive social interactions and emotional regulation. Considering the rising mental health issues and social problems experienced by university students, examining the role of EI in forecasting both prosocial behavior and SWB is crucial to the development of positive and flourishing academic atmospheres.

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Emotional intelligence is considered to be an underlying predictor of prosocial behavior, since higher EI individuals will have higher levels of empathy, social awareness, and emotional control—essence components that foster altruistic behaviors. Studies indicate that emotionally intelligent people are likely to perceive others' emotional needs and respond with the necessary prosocial behaviors. In addition, they are more likely to be involved in constructive social interactions that allow them to form meaningful relationships. University students, for example, use their emotional and social abilities to form support networks, work with peers, and positively impact their academic communities. Therefore, knowing how EI leads to prosocial inclinations can provide important insights into creating a more cooperative and inclusive university community.

Aside from social relationships, EI is also a good predictor of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being has both cognitive (life satisfaction) and affective (positive and negative affects) elements. Studies show that high EI is more capable of dealing with stress, emotional regulation of negative affects, and the promotion of positive affect, all of which contribute to well-being. University students, who are likely to experience academic pressure social transitions, and professional uncertainties, are likely to gain from emotional intelligence as a factor of resilience. Through the ability to better manage emotions and foster healthy relationships, EI can be a buffer against stress, anxiety, and depression. Thus, an understanding of how EI can impact SWB among university students can guide interventions to enhance mental health and wellbeing in academic contexts.

This study aims to investigate the predictive function of EI in predicting prosocial behavior and subjective well-being in university students. Through the investigation of the relationships between these constructs, the research hopes to advance the emerging literature on emotional intelligence and its effects on the psychological and social wellbeing of students. The results could have practical applications for schools in informing the design of EI-based interventions aimed at improving student wellbeing and prosocial campus climate.

Objective

To investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), prosocial behavior, and subjective well-being among university students.

Rationale

Prosocial behavior—behaviors aimed at benefiting others, including empathy, cooperation, and altruism—is important in creating a supportive and cooperative university culture. Studies indicate that people with higher EI are likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors because of their increased capacity to perceive emotional signals and react with empathy (Mikolajczak et al., 2015). This study aims to explore how EI impacts prosocial orientations among university students, adding to the understanding of social cohesion among students.

In addition, subjective well-being (SWB), including life satisfaction and emotional balance, is a primary measure of mental health among students. Research suggests that those with greater EI are likely to have more SWB since they can manage emotions and get along with others effectively (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Nevertheless, how EI inherently forecasts SWB in university students remains understudied.

Through examining the predictive function of EI in SWB and prosocial behavior, this research seeks to contribute findings that can inform interventions, including EI training

interventions, to promote student well-being and social interaction. The results could have applied value for universities in promoting mental health and building positive peer relationships, ultimately contributing to a more supportive learning environment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been a topic of great interest in psychological studies because of its influence on numerous facets of human behavior, such as social interactions and psychological health. EI is typically defined as the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and manage one's own and other people's emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Various studies have also examined the potential of EI in the prediction of prosocial behavior and subjective well-being, especially in university students since this age group experiences massive emotional and social growth.

Prosocial behavior is defined as voluntary behaviors that aim to help others, for example, helping, sharing, and cooperation (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Across all studies, it has been evident that higher emotional intelligence levels tend to facilitate higher levels of prosocial behaviors. As Mestre et al. (2006) point out, students at universities with more EI are likely to be more empathetic and hence more inclined to help other people in trouble. Emotional intelligence makes prosocial behavior possible through enhanced emotional control, allowing the person to act sympathetically rather than act hastily in social scenarios (Lopes et al., 2005).

Further research indicates that EI has a major contribution to conflict resolution and acts of altruism. People with high EI are better able to identify emotions in others and respond accordingly, leading to cooperative and prosocial relationships (Schutte et al., 2001). Likewise, Carlo et al. (2012) discovered in their study that students with higher emotional regulation skills were more inclined to perform acts of kindness and show social responsibility, highlighting the predictive function of EI in prosocial behavior.

Subjective well-being (SWB) is a self-report measure of life satisfaction, happiness, and lack of unpleasant affect (Diener, 1984). Emotional intelligence has been shown by various studies to have a strong correlation with subjective well-being, citing the fact that individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to have higher psychological resilience and satisfaction with life.

Studies by **Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2005)** revealed that more emotionally intelligent students had less stress, anxiety, and depression, resulting in increased subjective well-being. This is mainly because emotionally intelligent people are capable of controlling negative feelings and using healthy coping mechanisms. In addition, research conducted by Petrides and Furnham (2003) suggested that trait EI is positively linked with happiness and global life satisfaction, supporting the notion that those who are capable of successfully controlling their emotions tend to have higher subjective well-being.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence promotes social relationships, which subsequently promote well-being (Brackett et al., 2011). University students who possess effective EI skills form healthier interpersonal relationships, gain greater social support, and feel a sense of belonging, all of which have a positive effect on their mental well-being.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

- Population: University students enrolled in any programs.
- Sample Size: 70 students, selected through a stratified random sampling method to ensure representation across different faculties.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Students aged 18–30 years.
- Currently enrolled in a university.
- Willing to participate in the study voluntarily.

Procedure

Data Collection:

- A Google Form questionnaire was distributed to participants, including demographic details and standardized psychological scales.
- The survey will take approximately 20–30 minutes to complete.

Tools Used

Three standardized psychological scales will be used to measure the key variables:

- **Emotional Intelligence Self-Evaluation Scale**

This scale measures an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions. It includes items assessing self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Responses are recorded on a Likert scale (e.g., 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

- **Prosocial Ness Scale for Adults (Caprara et al., 2005)**

This scale assesses helping behavior, empathy, sharing, and concern for others.
It consists of 16 items, rated on a Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always).
Higher scores indicate greater prosocial behavior.

- **Subjective Well-Being Inventory (Nagpal & Sell, 1985)**

This inventory measures happiness, life satisfaction, and positive emotions.

RESULT

Pearson Correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Procrastination and Stress. The correlation coefficients and significant levels are presented below:

		Emotional Intelligence	**Prosocial Behavior**	**Subjective Well-Being**
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson's r	-		
	df	-		
	p-value	-		
Prosocial Behavior	Pearson's r	0.534***	-	
	df	68	-	
	p-value	<0.001	-	
Subjective Well-Being	Pearson' r	-0.035	-0.453***	-
	df	68	68	-
	p-value	0.775	<0.001	-

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

The correlation matrix presents the relationships between **Emotional Intelligence (EI), Prosocial Behaviour (Pro Soc), and Subjective Well-Being (SWB)** using Pearson's correlation coefficient (**r**), degrees of freedom (**df**), and significance levels (**p-value**).

1. **EI and Prosocial Behaviour**
   - A **moderate positive correlation** (**r = 0.534, p < .001**) indicates that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit more prosocial behaviors.
   - The correlation is statistically significant at the **p < .001** level.
2. **EI and Subjective Well-Being**
   - The correlation between **EI and SWB is very weak and negative** (**r = -0.035, p = 0.775**).
   - Since the **p-value is not significant**, this suggests that emotional intelligence does not have a meaningful linear relationship with subjective well-being in this dataset.
3. **Prosocial Behaviour and Subjective Well-Being**
   - A **moderate negative correlation** (**r = -0.453, p < .001**) suggests that higher prosocial behaviour is associated with lower subjective well-being.
   - This relationship is statistically significant at the **p < .001** level.

Conclusion

- Higher emotional intelligence is linked to greater prosocial behaviour.
- Emotional intelligence does not show a significant relationship with subjective well-being.
- Surprisingly, prosocial behaviour is negatively correlated with subjective well-being, indicating that individuals who engage more in prosocial behaviors may experience lower well-being in this sample.

DISCUSSION

The current research sought to investigate the contribution of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the prediction of Prosocial Behavior (Pro Soc) and Subjective Well-Being (SWB) in university students. The results provide important insights into these associations and add to the overall understanding of EI's impact on social and psychological outcomes.

Emotional Intelligence and Prosocial Behavior

The results show a large positive correlation between EI and Prosocial Behavior ($r = 0.534$, $p < .001$), indicating that those with more emotional intelligence are more inclined to be prosocial. This agrees with existing studies, which hold that emotionally intelligent people have better empathy, social competence, and emotional control, all of which promote prosocial dispositions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Eisenberg et al., 2006). High EI allows people to effectively handle their own emotions and understand and respond to the emotional needs of others. This capacity develops helpful and selfless behavior, which is crucial in social interactions, especially in a university where cooperation and support among peers are vital.

Emotional Intelligence and Subjective Well-Being

As opposed to predictions, the correlation between EI and SWB was not significant and weak ($r = -0.035$, $p = 0.775$). This indicates that, in this sample, emotional intelligence does not play a significant role in subjective well-being. Existing literature tends to endorse a

positive relationship between EI and well-being, with a focus on the emotional regulation and interpersonal competence as key drivers of psychological health (Extremer & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005). But the lack of strong correlation in this study can be explained by situational factors like study pressure, personal differences in coping style, or cultural differences in how well-being is perceived. It is even possible that other intervening variables, like resilience or social support, might be the key to influencing well-being independently of EI.

Prosocial behavior and Subjective Well-Being

A significant and somewhat surprising result was the strong negative correlation between Prosocial Behavior and Subjective Well-Being ($r = -0.453$, $p < .001$). This indicates that students who report more prosocial behavior also report lower subjective well-being. This result contradicts traditional views assuming prosocial behavior as a well-being booster (Aknin et al., 2013; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). One such explanation is that over-involvement in prosocial activities can cause emotional exhaustion, particularly if people feel compelled to assist others at the cost of their own well-being. This "compassion fatigue" or "helper burnout" has been reported in a number of studies where people who constantly assist others can develop stress and lower personal well-being (Figley, 2002). Furthermore, there could be environmental or cultural variables that affect students' perception and participation in prosocial behavior. If prosocial behavior is induced by external constraints instead of inherent motivation, they will not deliver the same psychological advantages commonly associated with altruistic behavior.

Future Implications

In the coming times, emotional intelligence (EI) will become more and more important in terms of forecasting prosocial behavior as well as subjective well-being. While artificial intelligence and automation revolutionize social interactions, high EI individuals will be at an advantage to promote empathy, cooperation, and social harmony. In workplaces, EI-based leadership will improve team performance as well as mental health, resulting in higher job satisfaction. Additionally, EI will be at the core of mental health interventions, assisting in coping with stress and resilience-building. Progress in neuroscience might even facilitate personalized EI training, amplifying its effectiveness in promoting well-being and peace within society even more. Ultimately, EI will be a driving determinant of individual and collective achievement.

CONCLUSION

The present study explored the relationships between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Prosocial Behaviour, and Subjective Well-Being (SWB). The findings indicate that while EI is significantly associated with increased prosocial behaviour, it does not have a meaningful relationship with subjective well-being in this sample. The lack of correlation between EI and SWB challenges prior research and suggests that other factors may play a more substantial role in influencing well-being. In contrast, the positive relationship between EI and prosocial behaviour reinforces the idea that emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to engage in socially beneficial actions.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Future research should examine potential mediators and contextual influences that might clarify the inconsistent link between EI and SWB. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies could further explore the dynamics of these relationships over time. From an applied perspective, interventions aimed

at developing emotional intelligence may be particularly valuable for fostering prosocial behaviour, thereby contributing to more positive social interactions and community well-being. However, strategies to enhance SWB should consider additional psychological and environmental factors beyond EI.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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