



## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG STUDENTS

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among college students. The study had a sample size of 103 students, and data was collected using the Emotional Intelligence Test by Ekta and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being. Two hypotheses were formulated: (1) college students with high emotional intelligence would have higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those with low emotional intelligence, and (2) college students with low emotional intelligence are more likely to experience psychological distress compared to those with high emotional intelligence. Two objectives were also set out: (3) to assess a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among college students, and (4) to assess the correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among college students. The results showed that the mean score for emotional intelligence was 202.85 with a standard deviation of 14.04, while the mean score for psychological well-being was 154.01 with a standard deviation of 24.95. The Pearson correlation coefficient showed a non-significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being ( $r = 0.021$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Therefore, the hypotheses were not supported. The findings suggest that while emotional intelligence and psychological well-being are important constructs, they may not necessarily be strongly associated with each other among college students. Further research is needed to explore the complex interplay between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

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## Introduction

In the present article, we are going to discuss the correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among college students. In order to understand the concept we first need to discuss and understand its core terms.

## Emotional intelligence

The phrase originally appeared in print in 1964 (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), and it acquired recognition after science journalist Daniel Goleman's best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence* was published in 1995. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify emotions and their interactions to reason and solve problems (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999). It illustrates a person's capacity for self-control over their own emotions and impulses as well as their capacity for empathy. We must foster emotional intelligence in both ourselves and those around us (Lane, 2019). Empathy, motivation, self-regulation, and self-awareness are the five constructs that make up emotional intelligence (Porche, 2016). There are a lot of known examples of people who have excelled in academics but lacked success in the workplace due to a lack of social and practical skills. As a result, scholars have developed constructs of cognitive abilities that describe intelligence in more straightforward ways. The cognitive skills categorized in these constructs are often required to deal with a variety of problems faced throughout the lifetime. These problem-solving cognitive skills are helpful in situations ranging from conflict resolution and adjustment issues at work to solving well-defined academic difficulties (Neisser, 1976; Sternberg, 1985, 1997; Wagner & Sternberg, 1986).

The four-branch model of emotional intelligence provides four categories of capacity or skill, that is, the ability to perceive emotion, use emotion to evoke thought, comprehend emotion, and regulation of emotions and related feelings. When these categories are combined they indeed describe many aspects of emotional intelligence (Mayer, 2004). The first category has to do with how emotion is perceived and expressed non-verbally. For a deeper knowledge of emotions, it is essential to be able to recognize emotions like happiness, sadness, rage, etc. in the faces or voices of others (Mayer, 2004). For example, a person who is sad might have raised the inner corner of their eyebrows and could be speaking in a low tone. The second category is the ability of emotions to influence and direct the cognitive system and encourage thought. Emotional response to a situation or a thing evokes creative thinking (Mayer, 2004). For example, a person who is

feeling anxious might overthink various 'what if?' scenarios. In the third category, we understand that every emotion has a unique pattern of potential messages or information it might convey, as well as actions that go along with those signals (Mayer, 2004). For example, the message of sadness could mean that the person is hurt, and the associated actions could be that the person might get quiet and get teary eyes. At last, the fourth category lets us know that emotions could be manageable and under voluntary control if a person allows himself to remain open to emotional signals for as long as they are pleasant and blocks the emotional signals they start becoming unpleasant (Mayer, 2004). For example, a person might long for a second slice of delicious cake or might cover his nose as soon as a foul smell hits his nose.

Furthermore, we can say that emotional intelligence is a cognitive skill where reason and feelings collide (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

## Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman (1995) introduced the term "mixed model," which refers to the combination of the core concept of emotional intelligence with various other personality traits. The mixed model of emotional intelligence proposes that emotional intelligence involves personal and social competencies, including perception, expression, understanding, and regulation of emotions, as well as using emotions to aid in thinking and problem-solving. Furthermore, the model highlights the significance of personality traits such as optimism, adaptability, and resilience in contributing to emotional intelligence. The mixed model provides a comprehensive understanding of the concept and its components (Goleman, 1998).

According to various sources (e.g., Davies, Stankov, & Roberts, 1998; Locke, 2005; Murphy, 2006), emotional intelligence has been controversial since its inception as a new form of intelligence. To address these critiques, researchers have differentiated between trait and ability emotional intelligence, using distinct measurement approaches and terminology. Trait emotional intelligence assesses typical behavior through self-report questionnaires (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000), while ability emotional intelligence evaluates maximal effort through cognitive tasks (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). While trait EI overlaps with the Big Five personality traits, ability EI is a unique construct that is not related to other personality traits and is positively associated with other cognitive abilities (Davies et al., 1998). The most widely accepted model of ability EI is the mixed model of

emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer et al., 2016; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Although there has been a significant increase in research on emotional intelligence (EI), there is limited knowledge of the intricate biological processes that may explain this construct (Tarasuik, Ciorciari, & Stough, 2009). Our brains are hard-wired to give priority to emotions. To understand this on a biological level, we can say that everything you perceive with your senses is transmitted through your body in the form of electric signals that eventually reach your brain. These signals enter the brain at the base but must travel to the frontal lobe where rational thinking occurs. However, they pass through the limbic system, where emotions are produced, on the way. This means that you experience emotions before your reason has a chance to process the information. Your primary senses must first pass through this area of the brain and reach the front, but before that, they pass through the limbic system. While the rational area of your brain cannot stop the emotions produced by your limbic system, the two areas are in constant communication and can influence each other. This communication is what creates emotional intelligence (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

While some academicians argue that emotional intelligence is an inborn trait, others contend that it can be learned and increased (Jovanovski & Antonio, 2020).

### **Psychological well-being**

Psychological well-being refers to a state of optimal functioning and satisfaction with one's life. It is a multifaceted construct that encompasses various dimensions, including positive emotions, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relationships, and self-acceptance (Ryff & Singer, 2008). The importance of psychological well-being for overall health and happiness has been extensively researched. Several studies have shown that psychological well-being is positively associated with physical health and longevity (Ryff et al., 2016).

A study by Fisher (2010) found that psychological well-being was linked to greater job satisfaction and performance. Additionally, research has shown that psychological well-being is positively associated with overall life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Kern et al., 2015). Factors that contribute to psychological well-being include positive emotions, social support, personal growth, and a sense of purpose in life. Cohn et al. (2009) found that positive emotions, such as joy and gratitude, are associated with greater psychological well-being. Siedlecki et al. (2014) found that social

support, including positive relationships with family and friends, is also linked to higher levels of psychological well-being. Personal growth, such as learning new skills and pursuing new interests, can also promote psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Finally, having a sense of purpose in life, or feeling that one's life has meaning and direction, is associated with higher levels of psychological well-being (Steger et al., 2006).

On the other hand, factors that can undermine psychological well-being include stress, negative emotions, and social isolation. Kroenke et al. (2010) found that stressful life events, such as financial difficulties and relationship problems, can take a toll on psychological well-being. Diener and Chan (2011) found that negative emotions, such as anger and sadness, can also detract from psychological well-being. Finally, social isolation and loneliness are associated with lower levels of psychological well-being (Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2010).

In conclusion, psychological well-being is an essential aspect of individual and societal health. It is associated with numerous positive outcomes and is influenced by a range of factors, including positive emotions, social support, personal growth, and a sense of purpose in life. By understanding these factors and taking steps to promote psychological well-being, individuals and organizations can improve the quality of life and well-being of themselves and others.

### **Review of literature**

#### **Emotional intelligence in relation to psychological well being**

Certainly! There is a growing body of research that has examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and psychological well-being. Here are a few key findings from the literature:

Higher levels of EI are associated with greater psychological well-being. A meta-analysis of 38 studies found that individuals with higher EI had greater subjective well-being, lower levels of depression and anxiety, and greater life satisfaction (Mikolajczak, Petrides, & Hury, 2009).

EI may be a protective factor against the negative effects of stress on psychological well-being. A study of healthcare professionals found that those with higher levels of EI were better able to cope with work-related stress and had greater psychological well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Chauhan, Chaturvedi, & Das, 2016).

EI may help individuals better regulate their emotions, leading to greater psychological well-being. A study of college students found that those with higher EI had greater emotional regulation

abilities and were less likely to experience negative emotions (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995; Extremera, Durán, & Rey, 2007).

EI may play a role in resilience and adaptation to life stressors, leading to greater psychological well-being. A study of individuals who had experienced childhood maltreatment found that those with higher EI had greater resilience and better psychological well-being (Mikolajczak, Raes, Avalosse, & Roskam, 2010).

Overall, the literature suggests that emotional intelligence may be an important factor in promoting psychological well-being.

### Emotional Intelligence and psychological well-being among Students

Intelligence (EI) is a construct that has received increasing attention in the field of emotional psychology in recent years. EI is the ability to perceive, regulate, and express emotions in oneself and others effectively. There is growing evidence to suggest that EI is an important factor in psychological well-being, particularly among students.

One study found that higher levels of EI were positively associated with better psychological well-being among undergraduate students (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2012). Similarly, another study found that higher levels of EI were associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression in a sample of graduate students (Chew & Ong, 2018).

In addition, a study conducted by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2005) found that higher levels of EI were associated with lower levels of perceived stress among university students. The study also found that individuals with higher levels of EI reported greater life satisfaction and positive affect, and lower levels of negative affect.

Moreover, EI has been found to have a protective effect on mental health. A study conducted by Karimi, Kojuri, and Taherian (2016) found that

higher levels of EI were associated with lower levels of perceived stress and burnout among medical students. Similarly, another study found that higher levels of EI were associated with better-coping strategies and resilience in a sample of college students (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010).

Overall, these findings suggest that EI is an important factor in psychological well-being among students. Higher levels of EI are associated with lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, and greater life satisfaction and positive affect. It is important for educators and mental health professionals to recognize the importance of EI in promoting student well-being and to provide interventions aimed at developing and enhancing EI skills among students.

### Hypothesis

1. College students with high emotional intelligence will have higher psychological well-being levels than those with low emotional intelligence.
2. College students with low emotional intelligence are more likely to experience psychological distress compared to those with high emotional intelligence.

### Objectives

3. To assess a significant positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and psychological well-being among college students
4. To assess the correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among college students.

### Methodology

A sample size of (N=103) college-going students above 18 years of age from different parts of the country has been chosen by purposive sampling from university campuses.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Any college student above 18 years of age	Anyone who is not a college student and under 18 years of age.

### Procedure

The study adopted a correlational design, utilizing both simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Scales Emotional Intelligence Test by Ekta and the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being were utilized to measure and evaluate the two sets of data obtained. Further, consideration and appropriate statistical methods were applied to validate the results obtained. To collect the required data, an online survey was administered after obtaining prior informed consent from

participants, who were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the exclusive use of the data for research purposes. The survey was administered individually, and participants were given the opportunity to seek clarification on any aspect of the questionnaire through email. Data was documented, and entry was done using Excel worksheets for further analysis, employing suitable statistical techniques such as raw scores, percentiles, and category designation for each variable. The final outcomes were compared to the



suggested hypotheses and relevant literature to determine their validity.

### Psychometric Tools used

In order to ensure that the tools used in this study were appropriate for the variables and objectives, a meticulous selection process was carried out. As a result, the Emotional Intelligence Test (EIT), created by Ekta Sharma, was chosen. The EIT consists of 60 Likert-type items on a five-point scale that range from "always" to "never." The scoring system assigns a numerical value of 5 to the response "never," and there are seven negative items (items 4, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 22) where a reverse score is required. This test assesses five dimensions: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and handling relationships. The internal consistency between the different domains of the EIT, as well as between the two administrations with a one-month gap, was deemed satisfactory based on a highly significant correlation coefficient. As a result, the test was considered to be highly reliable. To determine construct validity, the interrelationship between all five dimensions was examined. The interrelationship coefficients between total emotional intelligence and each of the five dimensions (self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and handling relationships) were 0.66, 0.64, 0.83, 0.64, and 0.83, respectively.

The Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) Scale, consisting of 42 items, was created by Carol D. Ryff, a psychologist, to assess six dimensions of happiness and wellbeing: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

Participants are asked to rate how each item applies to themselves using a 7-point Likert rating scale. Items that are positively worded are flipped so that higher ratings on all individual items indicate greater well-being. The total score is the mean of the ratings, with a higher score relating to greater well-being.

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to participate in the study, potential subjects were informed about the questionnaire and their consent was obtained before inclusion. The purpose and goals of the study were clearly explained to the participants and a positive relationship was established. The confidentiality and privacy of the participants' responses were maintained throughout the process. Only those participants who voluntarily consented were included in the study. The participants were

provided with the questionnaires and it took them an average of 15 minutes each to complete.

### Data Analysis

#### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EI	202.8544	14.03805	103
PWB	154.0097	24.95466	103

#### Correlations

		EI	PWB
EI	Pearson Correlation	1	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.831
	N	103	103
PWB	Pearson Correlation	.021	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.831	
	N	103	103

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The two correlation sets i.e. Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being were examined.

The descriptive statistics show that the mean Emotional Intelligence (EI) score for the sample of 103 college students was 202.85 with a standard deviation of 14.04. The mean Psychological Well-being (PWB) score was 154.01 with a standard deviation of 24.95. These results indicate that, on average, the students scored higher on EI than on PWB.

The correlation analysis showed that there was a very weak and statistically non-significant positive correlation ( $r = .021$ ) between EI and PWB ( $r = .021$ ,  $p = .831$ ). This suggests that there is no significant association between EI and PWB in this sample of college students.

These findings suggest that there may not be a direct relationship between EI and PWB among college students, at least not in this particular sample. However, it is important to note that this study only included a relatively small sample size of 103 students, which may limit the generalizability of these findings. Further research with larger sample sizes is needed to confirm these results.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, there is no significant correlation found between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among college students. The mean scores for emotional intelligence and psychological well-being were 202.8544 and 154.0097, respectively, with standard deviations of 14.03805 and 24.95466. These findings do not support our first hypothesis that college students with high emotional intelligence will have higher psychological well-being levels than those with low emotional

intelligence. Similarly, our second hypothesis that college students with low emotional intelligence are more likely to experience psychological distress compared to those with high emotional intelligence is not supported.

Despite the lack of significant correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, this study adds to the existing literature on the topic. Further research could explore other factors that may contribute to psychological well-being among college students. Further research with larger sample sizes is needed to confirm these results. Additionally, interventions could be developed to improve emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, both of which are important for personal and professional success.

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