

Bridging Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-being: The Interpersonal Connection among Young Adults.

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In the present study, the effect of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being was assessed using interpersonal relationship as a mediator among young adults. For the present study, 210 young adults of Kolkata city were selected through purposive sampling. The level of Emotional Intelligence was measured through The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT); Interpersonal relationship and psychological wellbeing were measured through Interpersonal Relationship Scale and Psychological Well-being Scale respectively. The results of the investigation established that there is significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing and interpersonal relationship and psychological wellbeing. The findings of this study suggests that interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in explaining the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among young adults. The results demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a significant direct association with psychological well-being. The mediation analysis revealed that emotional intelligence indirectly influences psychological well-being through its positive impact on interpersonal relationship. This study contributes to our understanding of the multifaceted nature of emotional intelligence and its impact on psychological well-being, emphasizing the importance of fostering emotional intelligence and nurturing healthy interpersonal relationships for promoting overall mental well-being among young adults. The results of the present study can be used for designing more effective intervention strategies and applying them in multiple settings including colleges, universities and workplaces to improve the psychological wellbeing of young adults. The future implications of the investigation were also discussed accordingly

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal relationship, Psychological well-being.

There are some distinct mental health challenges which youths frequently face when they progress to higher education and early adulthood. Universities and workplaces must and do make an effort to address this issue in order to encourage positive functioning because this stage of life can be stressful for people and can lead to several mental health issues. The most frequent

manifestations of these in young adults around the world over the past few decades have been sadness, anxiety, and/or stress. It implies that there is an impending risk of increased mortality and diminished psychological wellbeing (Yıldırım, M., & Arslan, G).

Well-being is a holistic approach integrating physical and mental health. The

dimensions of well-being include psychological, social, and emotional. Psychological well-being is not merely the absence of psychological ill-health. It incorporates a broader spectrum of what was traditionally known as happiness. Psychological well-being comprises of a wide range of positive emotional experiences or moods (e.g. Happiness, pleasure, interest, enthusiasm and inspiration) collectively termed as positive affect (Diener, 2000). Ryff (1989) developed a model of psychological well-being comprising of the six components-Self-acceptance, Personal growth, Purpose in life, Environmental mastery, Autonomy, Positive relations with others. Self-acceptance refers to the positive attitude towards the self, acknowledgement of multiple aspects of self and a feeling of positivity towards past life. Personal growth refers to the feelings of continued development of potential, openness to experiences and a feeling of increasing knowledge and effectiveness. Purpose in life refers to the goals or sense of direction in one's life, considering past life to be meaningful and holding beliefs that give purpose in life. Environmental mastery refers to the competency of managing a complex environment and choosing or creating a personally suitable community. Autonomy refers to self-determining, independent and internally regulated behaviour. Autonomous individuals resist social pressures to think or act in certain ways and evaluate themselves by personally set standards. Positive relation with others refers to having warm, satisfying and trusting relationships. They are capable of strong empathy, affection and intimacy and are concerned about others' welfare.

It is imperative to pay attention to one's psychological wellbeing since it affects how one behaves at work, his/her capacity to make decisions, and one's ability to form and maintain connections with others. (Bandyopadhyay, 2018). Many researchers

have suggested different determinants of psychological wellbeing like agreeableness, conscientiousness, optimism, resilience (Bandyopadhyay, 2018). Psychological well-being is correlated with happiness, satisfaction, subjective well-being, or quality of life as experienced on an individual level [Tous-Pallarés et al., 2022, Muñoz-Campos et al, 2018, Sánchez-Vidal et al, 2017, Lucas-Mangas, et al., 2022], as well as emotional intelligence [Sánchez-Teruel & Robles-Bello 2018, Aparisi et al., 2019, Lucas-Mangas, et al., 2022, Sora et al., 2019]. It is dependent on interpersonal relationships, job satisfaction, and professional success [Lima, & Lerrechea 2013, Luhmann et al. 2013, Lucas-Mangas, et al., 2022].

As can be witnessed the importance of human character traits for fostering wellbeing and mental health has recently received growing recognition (Yildrm, 2019). Therefore, more work has to be done to uncover and enhance psychological resources for high-quality wellbeing and mental health in addition to inventing successful treatment strategies. (Yýldýrým, M., & Arslan, G). Two such assets that is crucial for young adults' healthy and adaptive psychological functioning is emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship.

The positive psychological ability of having an accurate understanding of one's own and others' emotions in a variety of settings, as well as the ability to manage and make use of those emotions is known as emotional intelligence. The current and most accepted definition of emotional intelligence as given by Salovey, Mayer and Caruso (2000) suggests emotional intelligence to be the ability to perceive, understand, use and regulate emotions. According to Goleman (1995), emotionally competent students are better able to handle peer politics' pressure, academic demands' increased standards, and the allure of drugs, alcohol, and sex (Adeyemo & Adeleye, 2008). Higher levels

of EI are linked to favourable outcomes like increased well-being, life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, relationship quality, social functioning, quality of life, and academic success, according to a recent systematic study by Kotsou et al. (2019). On the other hand, lower levels of EI result in undesirable effects such mental diseases like anxiety, sadness, stress, and burnout (Kotsou et al., 2019) ((Yýldýrým, M., & Arslan, G).

An interpersonal relationship is a strong connection between people who share interests and objectives. It alludes to a shared social and emotional bond between two or more people in a setting. Parent-child relationships, sibling bonds, teacher-student relationships, and peer relationships are all examples of interpersonal relationships. The goal of interpersonal relationships is to expedite a person's personal growth and development (Ganguli et al. 2023). A positive interpersonal relationship helps people feel better about themselves, find more fulfilment in life, and live longer, healthier lives. On the other hand, unhealthy interpersonal relationships cause the development of psychosomatic symptoms such as subjective physical complaints like body aches and lightheadedness as well as psychological complaints like feeling down, irritable, getting agitated easily, or insomnia or hypersomnia (Natving & Albreksten, 1999). They also cause psychological conflicts and poor mental health.

Numerous studies have time and again established the positive effect of Emotional intelligence on Psychological wellbeing (Ahmadi, (2019). Mehmood, & Gulzar, (2014). Shaheen, & Shaheen, (2016). Malinauskas, & Malinauskiene, (2020)). Similar beneficial impact of interpersonal relationships on psychological wellbeing has also been repeatedly demonstrated in several studies (Burns, R. A., & Machin, M.

A. (2013). Gómez-López, M., Viejo, C., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2019)).

But the question which arises here is that are these relationships so direct? Well this is probably not the case. As suggested by the Ecological System Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) every person is a product of a network of interdependent effects that is nested within an environmental system. Based on the principles of ECT, it is essential to investigate the variables influencing young adults' wellbeing not only at the individual level but also taking into account the interaction processes at work with the ecological environment (Zhou et al., 2020).

Bar-On's emotional social intelligence model (Xu and Zhang, 2002; Bar-On, 2010) too holds that emotional intelligence is a combination of having a successful understanding of oneself and others, getting along with others, and successfully adapting to and responding to one's environment. This leads to a sense of wellbeing over time (Shuo, Z. et al. 2022). Not surprisingly, it has been noted that positive interpersonal relationships are influenced by higher emotional intelligence (Wang, 2014). It has been proposed that one who possesses strong emotional intelligence is able to accept the emotions of others with empathy and feel comfortable in social situations (Shen, 2005; Hsu, 2013). In yet another study it was suggested by the researchers that Postgraduates' happiness is predicted by emotional intelligence. The indirect impacts of social support and psychological resiliency are part of the process causing this effect (Shuo, Z. et al. 2022).

Aims and Objectives

The current study tries to capture the pattern of emotional intelligence that have an impact on youths' wellbeing, taking into account micro system level structures which

includes guardians, friends, colleges, universities, workplaces etc more specifically interpersonal relationships as a whole has been considered in this study. The model which is being subjected to test in this study considers interpersonal relationship to be a mediating factor between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing. Although as mentioned above many studies have examined the impact of emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships on psychological wellbeing separately but there is a dearth of studies which could capture the indirect role of emotional intelligence on psychological wellbeing through interpersonal relationship. The influence of emotional intelligence on maintaining a good interpersonal relationship has been documented earlier. Also the importance of positive relationships in wellbeing has not only been documented in studies but also in theoretical models like PERMA model of wellbeing (Seligman). Therefore an attempt was made in this study to take all these variables and understand the complex mechanism that is at work in predicting psychological wellbeing. Moreover, not much study was witnessed in the literature review process which studies these variables exclusively on the population of young adults. As people undergo a major transition during this phase of life both personally and professionally it's important to know how psychological wellbeing can be enhanced in this group. Therefore, this study was conducted on young adults.

Objectives

1. To assess whether emotional intelligence will be positively related to psychological well-being of young adults.
2. To assess whether interpersonal relationship will be positively related to psychological well-being of young adults.

3. To assess whether emotional intelligence will be positively related to interpersonal relationship of young adults.
4. To assess whether Interpersonal Relationship will mediate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being of young adults.

Hypotheses

1. Emotional Intelligence will be positively related to psychological well-being of young adults.
2. Interpersonal Relationship will be positively related to psychological well-being of young adults.
3. Emotional Intelligence will be positively related to interpersonal relationship of young adults.
4. Interpersonal Relationship will mediate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being of young adults.

Method

Sample

Data was collected from 210 young adults through purposive sampling, with age of the participants ranging from 18 – 30 years. The mean and SD of the age of the present sample was found to be 21.53 years and 2.4 years respectively. The sample consisted of 36 (17.1%) males, 172 (81.9%) females and 2 people (1%) considered themselves as others. The participants did not have any diagnosed physical or psychological illness. Among 210 people 40 (19%) were high school pass outs, 120 were undergraduates (57.1%), 48 were Post graduates (22.9%) and 2 (1%) had a diploma in architecture. The sample was selected equally from four zones of Kolkata city (i.e., North, South, East and West).

Tools used

1. *The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)* - The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) developed by Schutte et al, (1998) is a measure of emotional intelligence. It is a 33 item self-report questionnaire based on the model of Emotional intelligence developed by Salvoy and Mayer (1990). Cronbach's alpha reliability of the test is found to be from 0.70 to 0.85. High concurrent validity of the test is also observed.

Scoring: The scoring was done as per the Likert method of scoring as 1,2,3,4,5 which indicated strongly disagree, mildly disagree, undecided, mildly agree and strongly agree respectively. The score ranges from 10-60. The reverse scored items are 5, 28 and 33. Higher scores reflect higher emotional intelligence. High scores are associated with greater optimism, low level of depression, and low level of impulsivity. It is positively associated with "Openness to experience" of Big Five Personality but is not associated with Cognitive ability.

2. *Interpersonal relationship scale (IRS)* - IRS developed by Schlein et al., (1971) is an original likert type scale of 52 items. The scale is used to assess the quality of relationship with other people. The test retest reliability is 0.92 and Cronbach's alpha is 0.95. The concurrent validity of the test ranges from 0.62 to 0.77.

Scoring - The scoring was done as per the Likert method of scoring as 1,2,3,4,5 which indicated strongly disagree, mildly disagree, undecided, mildly agree and strongly agree respectively. The reverse scoring was done for positive items. As the scores increased it indicated increase in the level of interpersonal relationship.

3. *Psychological Well-being*: The scale was developed by Carol Ryff (1995) based on the theoretical model of psychological

well-being that encompasses 6 distinct dimensions of wellness (Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal growth, Positive Relations with others, Purpose in Life, Self-acceptance). It is an 18 item questionnaire measuring the psychological wellbeing of individuals. The test-retest reliability of the whole scale is found to be 0.82 whereas, the test-retest reliability of the self-acceptance subscale is found to be 0.71, positive relations with others subscale is 0.77, autonomy subscale is 0.78, environmental Mastery is 0.77, purpose in life is 0.70 and personal growth is 0.78. High predictive validity with a multi-dimensional measure of psychological distress is observed.

Scoring: The scoring was done as per the Likert method of scoring as 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 which indicated strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, little disagree, neither agree nor disagree, little agree, somewhat agree and strongly agree respectively. The reverse scored items are 1,2,3,8,9,11,12,13,17 and 18. As the scores increased it indicated increase in the level of psychological well-being.

Results and Interpretation

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Showing Mean and Standard deviations of EI, IR, PWB.

Variables	Sample size	Mean	Standard Deviation
EI	210	123.51	16.693
IR	210	183.62	32.677
PWB	210	85.21	12.868

EI - *Emotional Intelligence*; IR- *Interpersonal Relationships*; PWB- *Psychological Wellbeing*

This table reveals the Mean and Standard deviation for Emotional Intelligence, Interpersonal Relationship and Psychological Wellbeing of the young adults. The Mean and SD of Emotional Intelligence was found to be 123.51 & 16.693 respectively. The Mean and SD for Interpersonal Relationship was found

to be 183.62 and 32.677 respectively. The obtained Mean and SD for Psychological Well-being was 85.21 and 12.868 respectively.

Table 2: Pearson's product moment r between PWB and EI, IR

Variables	1	2	3
1. EI	-		
2. IR	0.446**	-	
3. PWB	0.555**	0.608**	-

EI - Emotional Intelligence; IR- Interpersonal Relationships; PWB- Psychological Wellbeing

**Significant at 0.01 level of significance.

This table reveals Pearson's product moment correlation between all the variables of the study namely emotional intelligence,

interpersonal relationship, and psychological wellbeing. The obtained correlation between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship was 0.446 which was found to be significant at 0.01 level. This showed significant and moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship. The obtained correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing was 0.555 which was found to be significant at 0.01 level. This depicted significant and modest positive correlation between these two variables. The obtained correlation between interpersonal relationship and psychological wellbeing was 0.608, and was found to be significant at 0.01 level. This revealed quite high and significant positive correlation between interpersonal relationship and psychological wellbeing.

Table 3: Mediation Analysis Results

Antecedents	Outcome Variables							
	M(IR)			Y(PWB)				
	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p		
X (EI)	-	-	-	C	0.55	0.04	0.000	
X (EI)	a	0.45	0.12	0.000	C'	0.35	0.04	0.000
M (IR)	-	-	-	b	0.45	0.02	0.000	
X (EI)	-	-	-	ab	0.20	0.04	0.13	LLCI ULCI 0.28
	F(1,208)=51.59 R ² =0.20			F(2,207)=92.58 R ² =0.47				

c = total effect of X on Y; a = direct effect of X on M; c' = direct effect of X on Y, controlling for M; b = direct effect of M on Y, controlling for X, a × b = indirect effect; c = c × ab.

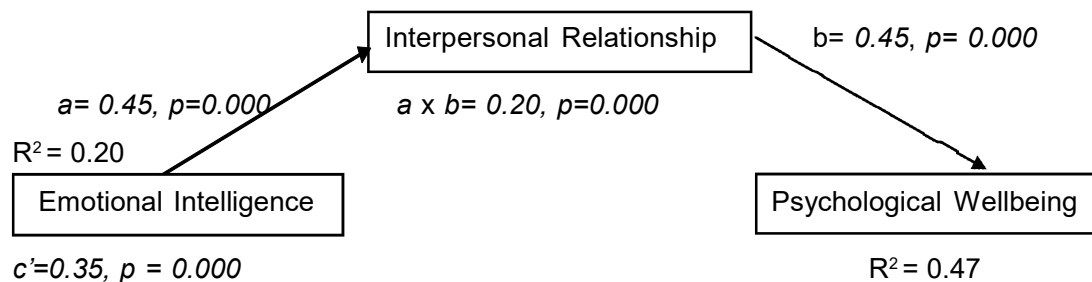


Fig: Shows direct and indirect (when mediated by interpersonal relationship) relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing.

Fig: Shows direct and indirect (when mediated by interpersonal relationship) relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing. Mediation analysis requires certain requisites. First, the independent variable must correlate with the dependent variable. Second, the mediator must correlate with the dependent variable. Third, in multiple regression, both independent and mediator must have significant relationship with dependent variable. So, in our mediation model, which includes, emotional intelligence as predictor, interpersonal relationship as mediator and psychological well-being as outcome variable. The results show a link between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing ($c = 0.55$, $p = .000$) before the addition of the mediator. The simple mediation analysis revealed that emotional intelligence indirectly influences the psychological well-being through its impact on interpersonal relationship. As it can be seen in Table 3 and Fig, participants who had higher level of emotional intelligence tended to have higher level of interpersonal relationships ($a = 0.45$, $p < .001$), and participants who had higher level of interpersonal relationship tended to report higher level of psychological well-being ($b = 0.45$, $p < .001$). The bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect ($ab = 0.20$) based on 5000 bootstrap samples was entirely above zero (0.13–0.28). The significance of the indirect effect (ab) is the primitive requirement for mediation (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen 2010). We can account for a significant indirect effect when the bias-corrected confidence intervals does not include zero. In finality, once the mediator (interpersonal relationship) is introduced, there is still evidence that Emotional Intelligence influenced psychological wellbeing independent of its effect on Interpersonal relationship ($c' = 0.35$) but the strength of the relationship had dropped

which is another essential requirement for mediation analysis. The R^2 value 0.47 indicated the model explains 47% of the variance in Psychological wellbeing. Thus, all hypotheses are supported.

Discussion

Psychological well-being comprises of a wide range of positive emotional experiences or moods (e.g. Happiness, pleasure, interest, enthusiasm and inspiration) collectively termed as positive affect. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, use and regulate emotions. An interpersonal relationship is a strong connection between people who share interests and objectives. It alludes to a shared social and emotional bond between two or more people in a setting.

The aim of the present investigation was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationship and psychological well-being and how interpersonal relationship mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of young adults.

The first objective of the study was to assess whether emotional intelligence would be positively related to psychological well-being of young adults and it was hypothesized accordingly. Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation showed significant positive relationship (0.555**) between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the findings indicate that higher level of emotional intelligence is associated with better psychological well-being of young adults. According to a recent systematic study by Kotsou et al. (2019), higher levels of EI are linked to favourable outcomes like increased well-being, life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, relationship quality, social functioning, quality of life, and academic success. A study conducted by Shaheen et.al. (2016) revealed significant

positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of students, both males and females.

The second objective of the study was to assess whether interpersonal relationship would be positively related to psychological well-being of young adults and it was hypothesized accordingly. Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation showed significant positive relationship (0.608**) between interpersonal relationship and psychological wellbeing at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, it can be said that positive interpersonal relationship is associated with better psychological well-being of young adults. A recent study conducted by Lopez et.al. (2019) revealed that positive interpersonal relationship is a strong predictor of psychological well-being of adolescents engaged in romantic relationship considering the romantic relationship as a developmental asset. Loneliness is a risk factor for psychological ill-health was pointed by Corsano et.al (2006) in a study conducted on Italian adolescents. The study tried to point out the fact that fulfilling interpersonal relationship is an essential factor for better psychological well-being of adolescents.

The third objective of the study was to assess whether emotional intelligence would be positively related to interpersonal relationship of young adults and it was hypothesized accordingly. Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation showed significant positive relationship (0.446**) between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, it can be said that higher level of emotional intelligence is associated with better interpersonal relationship of young adults. Wang et.al. (2014) conducted a study which revealed that higher level of emotional intelligence is associated with better interpersonal relationship among Taiwanese college students and empathy,

self-regulation and relationship management are found to be the significant predictors of interpersonal relationship. High level of emotional intelligence results in satisfying interpersonal relationship with partners was depicted in a series of studies conducted by Schutte et.al. (2001). It was found out that a high level of emotional intelligence is associated with greater empathy, self-monitoring in social situations, social skills enhancement and cooperative response towards partners.

The fourth objective of the study was to assess whether Interpersonal Relationship would mediate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-Being of young adults and it was hypothesized accordingly. The results of the study provided considerable support for the mediational model which was being hypothesized in the present research. Emotional intelligence along with its direct effect on psychological well-being as is well established in multiple studies in the past (Bandyopadhyay, 2018; Adeyemo & Adeleye, 2008) was found to have indirect effects as well on psychological wellbeing through its contribution in the quality of interpersonal relationships. It can be inferred from the present findings that emotional intelligence does contribute to quality of the interpersonal relationships of young adults which in turn affects their psychological wellbeing (Natving & Albreksten, 1999). The intricacy of these relationships is shown by the considerable direct effect of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being that persists even after controlling for the mediator, suggesting that emotional intelligence may influence well-being both directly as well as indirectly.

Limitations

The major limitation of this investigation was the limited sample size. Only a pool of 210 participants is included in the study and it is non representative of the rural

population. As the sample was selected equally only from four zones of Kolkata city (i.e., North, South, East and West), so the results probably cannot be generalized to people living in other states of India or other countries. As purposive sampling was used, so every individual of the population did not get equal opportunity to be selected in the sample pool. The major variables of the study were assessed using only self-report measures whereas some other techniques like short interviews, focused group discussion, surveys would have yielded better insights into the nature of the variables. A longitudinal approach might also be used to yield better results that may give a better understanding of the variables taken. Also, the study does not consider the other variables apart from emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationship and psychological well-being that might also influence each one of those or the above variables separately.

Future implications

The results of the present study can be used for designing more effective intervention strategies to improve psychological well-being of the young adults. The results may be applied in multiple settings including colleges, universities and workplaces. Awareness about the concept of emotional intelligence and being competent to understand one's own and other's emotions can lead to better interpersonal relationships and improved psychological well being. More emphasis can be given to adapt novel ways to improve interpersonal relationships so that individuals can function smoothly in one's personal environment and ultimately achieve a good psychological well-being. Moreover, future studies can address the limitations of the present study to get more accurate results which will contribute to a holistic understanding and would provide more insights to the complex set of relationships these variables share among themselves.

Conclusion

Overall, this study advances our knowledge of the complex nature of emotional intelligence and how it affects psychological wellbeing. It does highlight the significance of not only fostering emotional intelligence but also developing healthy interpersonal relationships in order to support young adults' mental wellbeing in general.

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