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## The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Psychological Well- being of Public and Private Sector Executives: Perspective of Postgraduate Students

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### Abstract

*Employees in any kind of an organization have to deal with a range of tasks, duties and responsibilities. In order to accomplish their individual objectives and organizational objectives successfully, employees are required to possess a set of competencies and a required level of intelligence. With the evolution of the concept of intelligence, emotional intelligence has become one of the more influential concepts. It demonstrates the ability to monitor ones' own and others' feelings and emotions to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide ones' thinking and action. Researches in this field have uncovered many relationships between emotional intelligence and different human behavior. The objective of this study was to investigate the nature of the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of public and private sector executives who are following masters' degrees from recognized national universities. A sample consisting of 200 participants has taken into consideration and the analysis is conducted by using 182 questionnaires. A structured questionnaire has used to collect primary data for the study. The univariate and bivariate analysis were used to analyze primary data and the major finding of the study was that there is a moderate positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of executives in the sample. Also there is a significant positive impact of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being. Emotionally intelligent employees will possess a higher level of psychological well-being and it will positively impact on their success of their work as well as non-work life.*

**Key words:** Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Well- being

### Introduction

Emotional intelligence is significant for building and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Basically people have to deal with different types of people in different contexts. Among them, organizational context can be identified as vital and influential for people who are performing their jobs. In organizational context, employees have to interact with their superiors, subordinates, customers, peers as well as other external and internal stakeholders while performing their jobs. According to the generic purpose of Human Resource Management, it is important to attract and retain the most appropriate, motivated and contended employees within the organization in order to achieve the organizational goals and objectives (Opatha, 2009). It will ensure the maximum contribution of employees for the organization. Opatha (2009) has mentioned that, employee job related attitudes will directly influence the success of the organization. Since; the nature of the labour force is one of the major determinants of the success of any organization; it is indispensable to concern the quality and the quantity of the work force. As mentioned by Dessler (2002), Human Resource Management role is expanding day by day and its' involvement in developing the implementing organizational strategy is also enhancing. In order to exert the expected contribution from the employees, it is indispensable to ensure the employee well-being in

their work and non-work life. World Health Organization (1948) defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. Well-being can be defined as 'the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy' (Oxford Dictionary, Online). According to these definitions, well-being can be divided into three parts as physical, social and psychological well-being. All these spheres are equally important for each and every employee for their development as well as the organizational success. As mentioned earlier, employees have to deal with different groups of people and the nature of their relationship may directly influence on the level of their psychological well-being. Emotional intelligence is one of the major determinants of the quality of their interpersonal relationships. Salovey and Mayer (1990) have identified that higher levels of emotional intelligence result in better psychological and physical well-being. Emotional intelligence is about the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions and discriminates among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayer and Salovey, 1990). This kind of intelligence will be influential to maintain a proper level of psychological well-being. The main focus of this study is to investigate the nature of relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of public and private sector executives who are following a masters degree from national universities in Sri Lanka. The selected sample is very important since; they are the people who have higher potentiality to become future top level managers in public and private sector organizations.

### **Research Problem and Objective**

Previous research findings amplify that; Emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with psychological well-being. However, there is no literature of these two phenomenons in the Sri Lankan context. This study is aimed to discuss the empirical findings of whether there is a positive relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of executives who are following a masters degree from national universities in Sri Lanka.

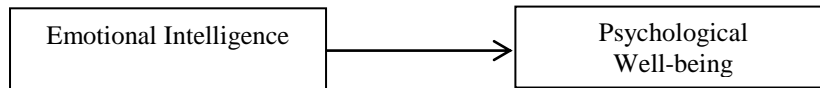
### **Literature Review**

Emotional intelligence of adult students has become a topic of interest (Bhattacharyya et al., 2008). It increasingly has been expanding in education, personal life, work and business (Pellitteri, 2002). According to Landa et al (2010), Diener and Suh (2001) have identified emotions as good predictors of psychological wellbeing. Argyle (1987), Landa et al, (2010) further emphasize that satisfaction and psychological well-being can be characterized as indicators of good mental functioning. Carmeli et al., (2009) have also identified a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. Additionally, Brackett and Mayer (2003) also found positive relationships between the Emotional Intelligence, the Big Five, and Ryff's psychological well-being scale (Diener and Suh, 2001). In line with these findings, Palmer et al., (2002) have identified a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among Spanish undergraduates. Furthermore, Landa et al (2010) mention that, Augusto *et al.* (2008) Extremera & Fernandez-Berrocal (2006) and Gohm and Clore, (2002) have identified positive relationships between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being in their studies. Several theoretical and empirical studies have identified that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. It means that, people who have a higher level of emotional intelligence experience higher level of psychological well-being. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being.

## Conceptual Model

Each variable of the study should be clearly identified with dimensions, facets or properties denoted by the variable. These are then translated in to observable and measurable elements so as to develop an index of measurement of the concept (Sekaran, 2010).

Figure 01: Conceptual Model of the study



In this research study, the independent variable is the level of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being is concerned as the dependent variable. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), dimensions of emotional intelligence are as follows.

1. Appraisal and expression of emotions (The ability to appraise and express one's own emotions as well as others)
2. Regulation of emotions (Willingness and ability to monitor, evaluate and regulate emotions)
3. Utilizing emotional Intelligence (Emotions and moods may be used to motivate and assist performance at complex intellectual tasks)

On the other hand, dimensions which are identified by Ryff (1989) are concerned as dimensions of psychological well-being.

1. Self-acceptance (the positive evaluation of oneself and one's past life),
2. Positive relations with others (The possession of quality relations with others),
3. Autonomy (a sense of self-determination),
4. Environmental mastery (the capacity to manage effectively one's life and surrounding world),
5. Purpose in life (the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful) and
6. Personal growth (a sense of continued growth and development as a person) (Ryff, 1989).

## Method

This research is of deductive nature and the hypothesis is developed after a thorough study in the problem area in the light of previous literature and tested them to derive conclusions on the same. Study setting can be identified as non-contrived as the research study is done in the natural work environment. In this study, unit of analysis can be identified as individual since data is collected individually. Time horizon of the study is cross sectional as data were gathered just once. The population of this study is the public and private sector executives who are following a postgraduate study in Sri Lanka. The sample was limited to 200. Primary data for the study is gathered by using questionnaires. The sample was consisted with 104 female and 78 male participants. 66% of the sample was in 20-30 years range, 31% was in 31-40 years range and 2.2% were in the 41-50 years range. Collected data is analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## Measures

Different scholars have developed different types of instruments in order to measure the level of emotional intelligence. EQi developed by Bar- On (1996), the 33 item emotional intelligence scale developed by Schutte et al (1998) can be identified as the instrument which

is mostly used by the researchers. Since; Mayer and Saloveys’ (1990) approach is selected, the 33 item emotional intelligence scale is the most appropriate instrument to measure the level of emotional intelligence. As measured by Schutte et al, (1998), the scale showed a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.87 which ensures the internal consistency of the scale.

Ryff (1989) scale was used to measure the psychological well-being. Ryff (1989) has developed a six dimensions based 20-item scale, summarized 9-scale and 3-scale to measure psychological well-being. Most of the researchers have used this scale in order to measure the level of psychological well-being in their studies (Landa, 2010; Bhullar et al, 2012). Due to the time constraint, the researcher has used the 3- item scale in order to measure the level of psychological well-being. The questionnaire consists of 18 questions with 6 scales. (1- “Strongly Disagree”, 2- “Disagree Somewhat”, 3- “Disagree Slightly”, 4- “Agree Slightly”, 5- “Agree Somewhat”, 6- “Strongly Agree”). Furthermore, the instrument consists of both positive and negative rated statements.

Table 01: Definitions of theory – guided dimensions of wellbeing

Self-Acceptance	High Scorer: Possesses a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life.
	Low Scorer: Feels dissatisfied with self; is disappointed with what has occurred in past life; is troubled about certain personal qualities; wishes to be different than what he or she is.
Autonomy	High Scorer: Is self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behavior from within; evaluates self by personal standards.
	Low Scorer: Is concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.
Environmental Mastery	High Scorer: Has a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values
	Low Scorer: Has difficulty managing everyday affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding context; is unaware of surrounding opportunities; lacks sense of control over external world
Personal Growth	High Scorer: Has a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behavior over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness.
	Low Scorer: Has a sense of personal stagnation; lacks sense of improvement or expansion over time; feels bored and uninterested with life; feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviors.
Positive relations with others	High Scorer: Has warm satisfying, trusting relationships with others; Is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships.
	Low Scorer: Has few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others.

Purpose of life	High Scorer: Has goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living.
	Low Scorer: Lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose of past life; has no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning.

Source: Ryff, Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Exploration on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being, 1989

### Reliability and Validity of the Measures

Sekaran (2010) has mentioned Cronbach’s alpha as a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. The Cronbach’s Alpha test was used in order to measure the inter-item consistency reliability. The relevant results are given in Table 02. According to the results of the test, there was an adequate degree of internal reliability with regard to the constructs.

Table 02: Cronbach’s alpha values

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Well-being	.774
Emotional Intelligence	.779

### Findings

According to Table 03, it can be identified that, the mean value of the level of emotional intelligence is 3.9822 which is a relatively higher value with 0.2831 of standard deviation.

Table 03: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-being

	Emotional Intelligence		Psychological Well-Being	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Mean	3.9822	.02098	4.0409	.02922
95% Confidence Interval for Mean Lower Bound	3.9408		4.1563	
95% Confidence Interval for Mean Upper Bound	4.0236		4.1074	
5% Trimmed Mean	3.9867		4.1111	
Median	4.0231		.155	
Variance	.080		.39426	
Std. Deviation	.28310		3.17	
Minimum	3.32		4.94	
Maximum	4.51		1.78	
Range	1.19		.50	
Interquartile Range	.34		-.269	.180
Skewness	-.442	.180	-.139	.358
Kurtosis	-.267	.358	4.0986	.02922

Referring to Table 03, the mean value of psychological well-being is also relatively high with 4.0986 and standard deviation is 0.39426 which means, the level of psychological well-being of the executives who are following a postgraduate study in the universities is relatively high.

Table 04: Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Emotional Intelligence with Psychological Well-being

		AVGEI	AVGPW
AVGEI	Pearson Correlation	1	.330**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	182	182
AVGPW	Pearson Correlation	.330**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	182	182

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The null hypothesis developed by the researcher was;

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being

According to Table 04, sig value is 0.000. Since sig value is smaller than the significant level (0.05), H<sub>0</sub> should be rejected. Based on these computed statistical values, it can be claimed that, there is a moderate positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being (r= 0.330).

Table 05: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.330a	.109	.104	.37323

a. Predictors: (Constant), AVGEI

By referring the Table 05, correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being can be identified as 0.330. On the other hand, R square value is only 10.9% which means that the independent variable (emotional intelligence) explains 10.9% of the total variance of the independent variable (psychological well-being).

Table 06: Beta Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.269	.391		5.801	.000
	AVGEI	.459	.098	.330	4.687	.000

a. Dependent Variable: AVGPW

Beta coefficient shows the significance of the independent variable as a predictor of dependent variable. By referring Table 06, it can be identified that there is a positive impact of emotional intelligence on psychological well-being. It can be concluded that, emotional intelligence can be identified as a significant predictor of psychological well-being since; the beta coefficient value becomes 0.459 and sig value is smaller than 0.05 (0.000).

## Discussion

Usually, people like to think of themselves as rational beings while satisfying their motives in an intelligent way. Most of the human affairs of everyday life are filled with feelings, moods and emotions like joy, sorrow, love, happiness and sadness. Both cognitive and affective components are contended in whatever people do. People have to deal with feelings and emotions when they are involved in making decisions. In order to survive, he/ she needed to

identify potentially risky situations quickly and correctly by analyzing humans' and animals' nonverbal behaviors (Chiva and Alegre, 2008). An individual's emotional intelligence is an indicator of how he or she perceives, understands and regulates his/ her emotions. Chaudhry and Saif (2011) mention that, the intelligent person is able to cope with new situations effectively based on their past experiences. In addition to that, they possess well developed social skills and able to use this emotional awareness for their acts and behaviours.

Researches reveal a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and life success as well. Additionally, employees with high emotional intelligence may better and more carefully handle the work-family conflicts than those with low emotional intelligence (Carmeli, 2003). The employees who are emotionally intelligent may think rationally and make decisions in the most appropriate way and at the most appropriate time. These reasons may directly affect to the results of the study on the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of employees.

The population of the study was the public and private sector executives who were following a postgraduate degree in the national universities in Sri Lanka. The objective of these sample respondents is to achieve success and the progress of success in their lives. In order to achieve this kind of a target, they must possess different kinds of special skills as well as attitudes. Even though they possess theoretical knowledge, there are special skills and intelligence which are needed for their success and the progress of success. In order to achieve their career and non-work life expectations, mental and physical well-being are prerequisites. When it comes to psychological well-being, it is utmost important for their success. Psychological well-being will be determined by the ability to identify and manage their own and others' emotions. Since they have to work with others, it is very important to correctly identify and control the emotions. In this research study, it has identified that, there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being. On the other hand, emotional intelligence has a significant impact on psychological well-being as well ( $\beta_1 = 0.459$ ). Accordingly, the findings of the study are in line with the previous studies on this field since emotional intelligence has become a good predictor of psychological well-being (Diener and Suh, 2001; Carmeli et al., 2009).

### **Conclusion**

Psychological well-being is one of the most important psychological aspects which determine the success of individuals in their work and non-work life. Since psychological well-being is equally important as physiological well-being, it is indispensable to concern with psychological well-being to ensure the success of people. Emotional intelligence is a branch of social intelligence which is emphasized on the ability to identify and manage ones' own and others' emotions. The main objective of this study was to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being and the nature of the impact. The level of psychological well-being will be affected by several factors. This study provides an empirical evidence to identify emotional intelligence as a significant predictor of psychological well-being.

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