

Emotional Intelligence Predicts Eudaimonic Well Being

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Abstract : *The aim of this research was to extend and replicate the previous researches exploring links between Emotional intelligence (EI) and wellbeing. We studied Eudaimonic wellbeing and its indices in particular.*

Method : *The Emotional intelligence test and the Psychological Wellbeing were completed by 163 professionals.*

Results : *Multiple regression analysis reveal that EI predicted overall and each index of eudaimonic wellbeing.*

Conclusions : *Although EI has been linked to wellbeing in the past, its relationship with eudaimonic wellbeing demands more research especially in Indian context. We discuss methodological advances for future research.*

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, eudaimonic wellbeing, positive psychology*

I. Introduction

Wellbeing research has proliferated in the last decade especially in the wake of positive psychology movement. The importance of developing new understanding of this concept is catching pace. Psychiatric and psychology research to date has majorly focused on understanding mental illness given that upto 20% of the population is inflicted. Could we say that rest 80% of the population is healthy? Keyes (2005) in her research reports that only 16% of the population could be defined as “flourishing”, the rest are only of moderate to poor health.

Centuries of debate in psychology and philosophy has surrounded the explication of wellbeing. In the past decade, research has also attempted to develop comprehensive definitions of wellbeing. Wellbeing, as understood today, follows two broad paradigms: Hedonic Wellbeing and Eudaimonic Wellbeing. In psychology research, the two conceptions of wellbeing were for long considered as an overlapping construct. It was through Ryff's work that we now have them as two distinct constructs. Hedonic wellbeing is traditionally associated with the concept of Subjective Wellbeing (Diener, 1984). Subjective wellbeing encompasses cognitive and affective components which mostly include a general sense of satisfaction with life, presence of positive affect and absence of negative affect. Thus, hedonic wellbeing is the feeling of wellbeing that is generated from experiencing more pleasurable and pleasant emotions than the unpleasant ones.

Conversely, eudaimonic wellbeing is more than experiencing pleasure or satisfaction with life. It involves a sense of fulfillment and meaning in life (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989). It involves the struggle to achieve one's true and optimum potential. This approach is in line with the positive psychology movement that asserts that wellbeing goes beyond the simplistic views such as lack of ill-health and satisfaction with life. Eudaimonic wellbeing has been variously operationalized: as in Self Determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) as a combination of autonomy, competence and relatedness; vitality (Ryan & Frederick, 1997) and personal expressiveness (Waterman, 1993). Perhaps, the most popular and prominent of the approaches of eudaimonic wellbeing is the Psychological Wellbeing. This approach explains eudaimonic wellbeing as having six aspects of functioning: self acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life and personal growth.

The last two decades saw an exponential rise in the research pertaining to Emotional Intelligence (EI). This was not only propelled by Goleman's bestseller “Emotional Intelligence” but also because of appreciation of the fact that EI related to life outcomes in many ways. For example, EI consistently predicts social and academic outcomes (MacCann, Fogarty, Zeidner & Roberts, 2011; Schultz, Izard & Bear, 2004); scholastic outcomes (Mestre, Guil, Lopes, Salovey, Gil-Olarte, 2006) and perceived parental warmth (Ciarrochi, Chan & Caputi, 2000) in children and adolescents. At work EI predicts effectiveness (Elfenbein, Foo, White, Tan & Aik, 2007), higher teamwork effectiveness in job contexts characterized by high managerial work demands (Farh, Seo & Tesluk, 2012), organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Anari, 2012).

Besides accounting for academic, social and organizational outcomes, EI is also a potential predictor of wellbeing and wellbeing related outcomes. Emotionally intelligent people experience better mental health (Martins, Ramalho & Morin, 2010); better general health and wellbeing (Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar & Rooke, 2007). Tsaousis & Nikolaou (2005) found that EI correlates with general health and also predicts health related behavior. The study also reports that EI negatively correlates with smoking and drinking and positively with exercising. Much research points this fact in terms of various other indicators of wellbeing. For example, EI enhances feelings of self-esteem, life satisfaction and self-acceptance (Carmeli, Halevy & Weisberg, 2009); happiness (Furnham & Petrides, 2003); morale, and reduces subjective stress and distress (Slaski & Cartwright, 2002); positive mood (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, Mc Kenley & Hollander, 2002). EI also moderates in the stress-illness process (Mikolajczak, Roy, Luminet, Fillee & di Timary, 2007; Slaski & Cartwright, 2003) and its trainings improved health and wellbeing.

The links between EI and wellbeing explored so far also include links with eudaimonic wellbeing. EI and eudaimonic wellbeing correlated strongly (Burrus, Betancourt, Holtzman, Minsky, MacCann & Robersts, 2012; Dar, Alam & Lone, 2011); EI correlates moderately with psychological wellbeing (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Brackett, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner & Salovey, 2006; Bastian, Burns & Nettelbeck, 2005) and EI significantly predicts eudaimonic wellbeing and accounted for more variance as compared to hedonic wellbeing (Extremera, Ruiz-Aranda, Pineda-Galan & Salguero, 2011). Burrus et.al (2012) pointed that most studies that explicate EI-Eudaimonic wellbeing relationships mainly utilize one measure, that of Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002). The study emphasizes that we need to evaluate this relationship using different assessment measures of EI. Further, it is more relevant to replicate the results using a tool constructed within the country. The current study attempts to meet both these goals. We propose the following hypothesis:

II. Hypotheses

- H 1) Emotional Intelligence will have positive correlation with eudaimonic wellbeing.
- H 2) Emotional Intelligence will predict eudaimonic wellbeing.
- H 3) Emotional Intelligence will have positive correlation with each of the index of eudaimonic wellbeing (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self acceptance).
- H 4) Emotional Intelligence will significantly predict each index of eudaimonic wellbeing (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life and self acceptance).

III. Method

Participants

The sample comprised 163 professionals (56.4% males) including college professors (49.7%), doctors (38%) and administrators (12.3%) working in various Government organizations. All the participants had a minimum 2 years of experience. Out of 163 participants, 68.1% professionals had work experience of between 2-10 years, 25.2% had work experience between 10-20 years and 6.8% of the sample had work experience more than 20 years. The college professors were recruited from 5 different colleges; doctors and administrators were recruited from 3 different hospitals and offices respectively.

IV. Measures

Emotional Intelligence Scale: The Emotional Intelligence Scale (Hyde, Dhar and Pethe, 2002), designed especially for Indian population was used to measure emotional intelligence. It consists of 34 items and the responses are measured on a five point scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1).

The Eudaimonic Wellbeing Scale: A short version of Ryff and Keyes' (1995) wellbeing scale developed by Drendonck (2005) was used to measure eudaimonic wellbeing. Participants responded to 39 items using a six point scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (6). The scale comprises 6 subscales with the following indices of eudaimonic wellbeing: autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose of life, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations with others.

Procedure

Testing took place after taking due permissions from the authorities of the organizations from where sample was recruited. Each participant was supplied a written note about the purpose of the

study and assurance of confidentiality together with the set of questionnaires. The same information was provided verbally as well and that helped in striking a rapport with the participant as well. Further questions pertaining to the study were addressed as and when demanded by the participants. Paper-pencil method was employed and the data was collected individually from each participant in most of the cases. For some participants who could not respond immediately, the set of questionnaire was collected at a later date in their working hours. Usually, 2-3 visits were made to each organization. A total of 200 questionnaire sets were distributed out of which 173 were returned. Out of 173, 10 were discarded due to incomplete information supplied by the participants.

V. Results

Reliability And Descriptive Statistics

We examined cronbach values for each item and in the Psychological Wellbeing questionnaire three items were deleted so as to improve the overall scale reliability. Both Emotional Intelligence Scale (□□□□□□□□□□□□ and the Psychological Wellbeing Scale (□□□□□□□□□□□□ demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability. Cronbach values and descriptive statistics appear in Table 1.

Correlations

EI correlated significantly with eudaimonic wellbeing ($r = .38, p < .01$). Emotional intelligence also showed significant positive correlations with each index of eudaimonic wellbeing. Stronger correlations were observed for females with an exception of Positive Relations ($r = .19, p > .05$). Thus, our hypothesis H 1 and H 3 were supported. Correlations between all the variables appear in Table 2.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to find out if emotional intelligence predicted eudaimonic wellbeing and each of its index. In the Step 1, demographic variables - gender and years of work experience were introduced and in the Step 2 Emotional intelligence was introduced. Several multiple regressions were run and each time the dependent variable was changed to include each index of eudaimonic wellbeing. In the regression analysis, it was revealed that Emotional intelligence explained 12 % of variance in the model ($R^2 = .02$ for Step 1 and $R^2 = .12$, $F(3,162) = 8.92, p < .01$) and it significantly predicted eudaimonic wellbeing ($\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square p < .01$). Hypothesis H 2 was accepted. Emotional intelligence also significantly predicted each index of eudaimonic wellbeing – Autonomy ($\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square p < .01$); Environmental mastery ($\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square p < .01$); Personal growth ($\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square p < .01$); Positive Relations ($\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square$ Purpose) in Life ($\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square p < .01$); Self Acceptance ($\square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square \square p < .01$). Thus, our hypothesis H4 garnered support as well. Summary of regression analysis appears in Table 3.

VI. Discussion

The study was conducted to replicate previous findings explicating relationship between EI and Eudaimonic wellbeing. The fact that there have been few studies that mostly used MSCEIT for measurement of EI was addressed as well. We used a measure that was designed especially for Indian population. The study adds to the existing body of knowledge that provides scanty and inconsistent results as far as EI-wellbeing are concerned. For example, using MSCEIT, total EI correlates $r = .16$ to $.28$ with psychological wellbeing (Brackett & Katulak, 2006; Brackett & Mayer, 2003). Using Situational Test of Emotional Intelligence, EI strongly correlated ($r = .54$) with scales of psychological wellbeing (Burrus et. al. 2012). In this study we found that EI-eudaimonic wellbeing correlated moderately ($r = .38$) and slightly higher in case of females ($r = .47$).

Evidently, our study is not without limitations. The fact that all these studies are cross-sectional in nature might have led to common method variance. Use of longitudinal designs would give more convincing results. Further, we present the relationship of eudaimonic wellbeing with a global score of EI. Future studies could delve into examining this relationship with other theorized dimensions of EI as well.

Also, although the scale was developed in Indian context it utilizes western theories of Emotional Intelligence (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997). Especially regarding EI in the Indian context, some researchers have attempted to explain emotions and EI (e.g, Gayathri & Meenakshi, 2012; Gopiraj & Sharma, 2011; Sibia & Misra, 2011) from various Vedic Indian texts. But such theoretical attempts are limited as yet and hence future research on EI in India could focus on integrating these concepts into a cohesive theory. This would augment our understanding into what Indian wisdom explains about emotions and its management, providing a fresh insights into this very elusive concept.

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Table 1

Reliability and descriptive statistics

Scales	Cronbach's Alpha	Total (N=163)		Males (n=92)		Females (n= 71)	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
EI	0.907	134.21	12.10	135.75	12.51	132.16	11.29
EW	0.928	168.67	28.66	171.13	30.26	165.41	26.26
Aut	0.596	28.76	5.91	29.88	6.02	27.27	5.45
EM	0.675	27.31	5.32	27.74	5.52	26.74	5.03
PG	0.699	32.32	6.63	32.82	6.78	31.66	6.42
PR	0.783	25.85	6.82	26.17	7.06	25.41	6.51
PL	0.823	29.93	5.94	29.91	6.35	29.96	5.38
SA	0.644	24.50	4.98	24.60	5.10	24.37	4.85

Note : EI = Total Emotional Intelligence , Aut = Autonomy, EM = Environmental Mastery, PG = Personal Growth, PR = Positive relations, PL = Purpose in Life, SA = Self Acceptance , EW = Total Eudaimonic wellbeing

Table 2

Correlations of emotional intelligence with eudaimonic wellbeing

Eudaimonic wellbeing	Total	Males	Females
EW	.38**	.31**	.47**
Aut	.33**	.31**	.32**
EM	.36**	.30**	.43**
PG	.24**	.17	.33**
PR	.21**	.21**	.19
PL	.33**	.25*	.46**
SA	.38**	.29**	.53**

Note : ** p < .01 ; EI = Total Emotional Intelligence , Aut = Autonomy, EM = Environmental Mastery, PG = Personal Growth, PR = Positive relations, PL = Purpose in Life, SA = Self Acceptance , EW = Total Eudaimonic wellbeing

Table 3

Regression Analysis

IV	DV	R ² / □ R ²	F	B	SE B	□
Step 1						
Gender		R ² =.02	1.79	-6.60	4.51	□ □ □ □
Work Ex		(Step 1)		3.67	3.15	□ □ □
Step 2 □ W						
		□ R ² =.13**				
Gender		(Step 2)		-3.15	4.29	□ □ □ □
Work Ex			8.92**	1.20	3.00	□ □ □
EI				.85	.18	□ □ □ □ □
Step 1						
Gender		R ² = .07**	5.98**	-2.93	.91	□ □ □ □
Work Ex		□ Step 1)		.75	.63	□ □ □
Step 2 □ ut						
		□ R ² = .08**				
Gender		(Step 2)		-2.35	.88	□ □ □ □
Work Ex			9.37**	.33	.62	□ □ □
EI				.14	.04	□ □ □ □ □
Step 1						
Gender		R ² = .03	2.22	-1.03	.84	□ □ □ □ □ □
Work Ex		(Step 1)		.99	.58	□ □ □

Step 2		□ □	□ R ² =.11**				
Gender			(Step 2)		-.43	.81	□ □ □
Work Ex				8.32**	.55	.56	□ □ □
EI					.15	.03	□ □ □ □ □
Step 1							
Gender			R ² =.01	.88	-1.33	1.05	□ □ □ □
Work Ex			(Step 1)		.26	.73	□ □ □
Step 2		PG	□ R ² =.05**				
Gender			(Step 2)		-.81	1.04	□ □ □ □
Work Ex				3.56**	-.12	.73	□ □ □ □
EI					.13	.04	□ □ □
Step 1							
Gender			R ² =.01	.41	-.98	1.08	□ □ □ □
Work Ex	PR		(Step 1)		-.07	.76	□ □ □ □
Gender					-.50	1.08	□ □ □ □
Work Ex			□ R ² =.04**		-.42	.75	□ □ □ □
PR			□ Step 2)	2.62**	.12	.05	□ □ □ □ □ □
Step 1							
Gender			R ² =.01	.94	-.03	.94	□ □ □ □ □
Work Ex	PL		(Step 1)		.90	.66	□ □ □ □ □ □
Step 2			□ R ² =.10**				
Gender			(Step 2)		.61	.91	□ □ □
Work Ex	PL			6.60**	.44	.63	□ □ □
PL					.16	.04	□ □ □ □ □
Step 1							
Gender			R ² =.02		-.30	.79	□ □ □ □
Work Ex			(Step 1)	1.29	.85	.55	□ □ □
Step 2		SA	□ R ² =.13**				
Gender					.33	.74	□ □ □
Work Ex				9.26**	.41	.52	□ □ □
SA					.15	.03	□ □ □ □ □

Note : EI = ** p < .01 , * p < .05; EI = Total Emotional Intelligence ,
 Aut = Autonomy, EM = Environmental Mastery, PG = Personal Growth,
 PR = Positive relations, PL = Purpose in Life, SA = Self Acceptance ,
 EW = Total Eudaimonic wellbeing