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Relationship of Emotional Intelligence with Interpersonal Reactivity and Satisfaction with Life Among College Students

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ABSTRACT: This study attempts to explore the intricate relationship between Emotional Intelligence, various dimensions of Empathy as laid down by Davis's Interpersonal Reactivity Index, and Life Satisfaction in college students. Study reveal that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is positively correlated with Life Satisfaction (LS), Perspective taking (PT) and Empathetic Concern (EC) subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index while negatively correlated with Personal Distress (PD), and Fantasy Scale (FS) subscales of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. Although, LS, PT and EC are positively correlated but the correlation is only strong in case of EC and is significantly weak in case of LS and PT. However, this study also unravels several nuanced factors which are in play which warrant deeper examination. These include the influence of cultural and environmental factors and contextual learnings such as making sense of the information which is being received from the environment. By attempting to shed light on these dilemmas, the researcher attempts to delve deeper into the understanding of Human Psyche while at the same time, enhancing the horizons of this field so we can evolve collectively.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, Interpersonal Reactivity Index, Satisfaction with Life, College students.

I. INTRODUCTION

While intelligence appears to have existed forever, for reasons known and unknown, the psychological definition of intelligence is far too limited, maybe because of its close association with psychology. The idea of intelligence that is given in the domains of psychology is very new, having emerged just at the turn of the century as stated by Bornstein in [1] Is there a possibility of intelligence quotient being predetermined? Maybe not nearly as much as people believe. This essay makes the case that our conception of human intellect is far too limited and ignores a vital spectrum of skills that have a significant impact on our success in life and possibly various other aspects of life as suggested by Goleman in [2] He demonstrated these processes at play when those with high IQs struggle and others with comparatively low IQs perform unexpectedly well, drawing on behavioural and neurological research. Goleman refers to this combination of elements as "emotional intelligence" and it is indeed a very distinct approach to success in life. Self-awareness and impulse control, perseverance, enthusiasm and self-motivation, empathy, and social dexterity are all the many components of emotional intelligence [2] One of the four basic elements of mental operations is thought to be emotions. They consist of consciousness, emotion, cognition, and motivation. [2]

"Positive psychology" research has become a significant area of study in the fields of psychology. [3] Many in this field such as Freud have previously focused on the negative layers of the human psyche but today, a growing number of psychologists have started concentrating their research on the positive end of the emotional spectrum, in stark contrast to psychology's traditional focus on negative emotions like despair and anxiety. [2] Psychology is a relatively new field of science. Many still disregard it as something dealing with "pseudoscience". I think we are yet to explore the full potential of this field as the human mind is a mysterious labyrinth with boundless capabilities. Parapsychology has branched out from this field of science as well which at this point, according to me is in its toddler phase and is gradually evolving.

The objective of this study is also something similar. Can a different form of intelligence which Goleman described as Emotional Intelligence in any way linked with the satisfaction which one feels in their life? If yes, then which element acts as a bridge between them? The Researcher suspects that Empathy could be that element. But according to Davis's

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Interpersonal Reactivity Index, Empathy further consists of 4 different components. Can Empathy and Emotional Intelligence based Interventions enhance our tendencies to feel satisfaction by evaluating our circumstances in a different manner?

The researcher was curious to discover the potential of emotional intelligence. Can Emotional Intelligence directly impact the tendency of an individual to feel empathetic towards others, irrespective of their relationship with that individual and if, this is indeed a valid possibility, can it, in any way impact the satisfaction they feel in their life? And as he ventured to find the answer to these questions, more questions popped up and presented a complex dilemma which needed to be addressed and that is what this study attempts to do. One of those questions were, can age be a predictor of a heightened emotional intelligence as the consensus suggests that an individual acquires more perspective as he/she ages, which can impact their emotional intelligence.

Considering the earlier possibility which I presented, which if valid, can raise a notion that college students, who are older than children from primary school, are more satisfied in their life. But that doesn't seem to be the case when you see kids playing around, greeting everyone with cheerful faces and teens from secondary school brooding. But then again, individual experiences can be a significant predictor for such a possibility. Depending upon the perspective acquired from these experiences can shape a life devoid of any satisfaction. So, with that in mind, can we suggest that perspective taking is a predictor of satisfaction in life?

II. RELATED WORK

One sort of social intelligence which is described as emotional intelligence is the capacity of an individual to recognize and analyse one's own feelings as well as those of others, and to utilize this knowledge to inform one's decisions and behaviour [4]. The information which we receive from our environment are of several kinds. The information which are of affective nature cannot be processed with intellect. It needs some other tool. The body of research on individual differences regarding the ability to process and adjust to affective information is arranged according to the emotional intelligence framework as Intelligent Quotient isn't enough to deal with such information and Emotional information is often included with intellectual problems and needs to be handled in a different way than those whose nature is non-emotional [4].

Scarr in [5] states that many human traits, such as kindness in interpersonal interactions and artistic abilities such as dancing, poetry, and musical ability, go unappreciated in our society. Both the theories of intelligence that are laid out by the researchers and the unique abilities and personality qualities that fall outside the consensus definition of intelligence have not been well represented by the term "intelligent." Furthermore, the aim of such theories, in his opinion, is not to recalibrate societal rewards by labelling all human virtues as intelligence.

Scarr in [5] using social competency as an example, had pointed out that social perceptiveness, low anxiety, extraversion, and self-confidence are necessary for getting along with people. He even went on to say that while all of them are very much correlated with intelligence, intelligence itself is not what they are. The following could be considered as a rough line that can be made to represent the relationship between IQ and general personality. Extraverted personality qualities are characterized by behavioural tendencies which have a motion from internally existing elements and are reflected outside in interactions, whereas intellect is characterized by organismic behavioural capacities which has a different motion, starting from outside in the environment and processing it due to internal faculties. A trait in that sense, is a behavioural preference as opposed to an ability, even though a trait like extraversion may depend on or result in social skill. On the other hand, understanding how someone else feels is a mental capacity. Such information may come from g. or exist in part outside from it. The definition of emotional intelligence as involving a series of mental abilities, qualifies it as a form of intelligence using that logic [4].

The ability to process emotional or affective information in context to the perception, absorption, expression, regulation, and management of emotion is referred to as emotional intelligence as defined by the authors in [6] People that possess emotional intelligence are frequently characterized as well-mannered, kind, sincere, tenacious, and upbeat [7] possibly because they understand the difference, accept from where the other person is coming from, and can receive the perspective which the other is presenting before them.

When the word Empathy was first used, it described the inclination of all the spectators to "project" themselves "into" what they are seeing, usually a beautiful physical thing. The word was appropriated by Lipps (1903, 1905) as

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mentioned in [8] for usage in broader and different psychological situations. Initially, it was applied to the study of optical illusions, and then it was extended to the process of getting to know others. Lipps and Titchener both thought that an inner imitation of the seen person or object—a process that is now known as motor mimicry—was the mechanism by which empathy transpired. According to Lipps (1926), when one observes another's emotional condition, they are prompted to mimic those indications subtly and internally (such as tensing up when they see someone stressed out). The observer experiences similar, but lesser, reactions because of this process. It was also suggested that this exchange of emotions between the target and the observer helped the target comprehend the actor better.

The definition of empathy according to Stotland (1969) in [9] is "an observer's reacting emotionally because he perceives that another is experiencing or is about to experience an emotion." As such, Stotland made a clear distinction between affective empathy and accuracy-related cognitive processes, even if he also talked about potential connections between the two distinct concepts. As a result, Stotland's concept of empathy closely resembles the earlier stated historical definitions of compassion. This definition, like theirs, focuses solely on the affective reactions that an individual feels to the experiences of another.

Diener (2000) in [10] identified the following as the primary components of subjective wellbeing: It is established on three different principles: (1) the evaluation of all the individual experiences; (2) the inclusion of all the positive assessments of those experiences rather than just the absence of negative ones; and (3) the inclusion of a thorough appraisal of an individual's life. According to her, this subjective wellbeing construct is made up of the cognitive and emotional components, or positive and negative impacts, on which life satisfaction is based upon. According to this, an individual's subjective assessment of both good and negative aspects of their life results in a general assessment of their level of personal satisfaction.

III. METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

- Emotional Intelligence is positively correlated with Perspective Taking and Empathetic Concern
- Emotional Intelligence is negatively correlated with Personal Distress and Fantasy scale.
- Empathy is positively correlated with satisfaction with life.

Sample

The sample population which I chose for this study was College students, preferably between the ages of 18 and 25 years of age and the type of sampling method which I used for this study is Purposive Sampling.

Inclusion Criteria

- College students between the ages of 18 to 25 years.
- Students who are enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program.
- Who are willing to participate in the study voluntarily.
- Who can comprehend and complete the questionnaire accurately.

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals who are unwilling to provide informed consent.
- Students who are unable to comprehend the questionnaire.
- Non-English speakers.

Tools

- **The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT):** This self-assessment tool is a method for measuring General Emotional Intelligence which was created in 1998 by Dr. Nikola Schutte along with her colleagues which is widely used even to this day. Dr Nikola Schutte devised it keeping in mind the teachers who had to be responsible for training the students and their growth and development. The SSEIT is a self-report which consists of 33 items which uses a 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree) scale for responses. Four components make up the SSEIT's general emotional intelligence test (EQ): emotion perception, emotion use, emotion management for oneself, and emotion management for others (Schutte et al. 1998).

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- **Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI):** In psychology, the Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) is a commonly used instrument for measuring empathy. It was created by Mark Davis in 1980 and evaluates four aspects of empathy: personal sorrow, fantasy, perspective taking, and empathetic care. There are seven things in each of the IRI's 28 dimensions. On a scale of 1 (does not describe me well) to 5 (describes me very well), respondents score each item. An overall assessment of empathy can be obtained by adding the results from each dimension.
- **The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS):** A popular psychological tool used to gauge a person's subjective well-being and general life satisfaction is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The SWLS, which was created in 1985 by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen, and Sharon Griffin, is a quick and easy method for determining life satisfaction in a variety of settings and demographics. The five components that make up the SWLS each reflect a distinct facet of life satisfaction. From 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), respondents use a 7-point Likert scale to indicate how much they agree with each statement. Higher scores on the SWLS indicate higher levels of life satisfaction. Scores on the SWLS can vary from 5 to 35. While scores below 20 may indicate varied degrees of discontent, scores of 20 or above are typically thought to signify great life satisfaction.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Intelligence, Satisfaction with Life, Perspective taking, Personal Distress, Empathetic Concern and Fantasy Scale among college students.

	Mean	Std Deviation
EI	122.2200	16.63487
LS	20.2600	6.86319
PT	19.6700	4.57277
PD	15.4400	4.76375
EC	19.8800	4.793326
FS	16.2000	5.74192

- The mean of Emotional Intelligence is 122.2200 with a standard deviation of 16.63487.
- The mean of Satisfaction with Life is 20.2600 with a standard deviation of 6.86319.
- The mean of Perspective Taking is 19.6700 with a standard deviation of 4.57277.
- The mean of Personal Distress is 15.4400 with a standard deviation of 4.76375.
- The mean of Empathetic Concern is 19.8800 with a standard deviation of 4.793326.
- The mean of Fantasy Scale is 16.2000 with a standard deviation of 5.74192.

Table 2. Correlation Table

	LS	PT	PD	EC	FS
EI	.243*	.296**	-.165	.586**	-.017

- Emotional Intelligence is positively correlated with Life Satisfaction (LS) (r = .243) (P> .05) but it has demonstrated very low levels of correlation, this suggests that higher degrees of Emotional Intelligence will cause very low degrees of Life Satisfaction, meaning the individual with high degrees of Emotional Intelligence will experience low degrees of satisfaction in their life.
- Emotional Intelligence is positively correlated with Perspective Taking (PT) (r = .243)(P> .01) subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), but it has shown very low levels of correlation, this suggests that higher degrees of Emotional Intelligence will cause very low degrees of Perspective Taking, meaning the individual with high degrees of Emotional Intelligence will have slight tendencies to receive the perspective of others.
- Emotional Intelligence is negatively correlated with Personal Distress (PD) subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), which suggests that higher degrees of Emotional Intelligence will result in low degrees of Personal Distress, meaning the person with high degrees of emotional intelligence will experience less personal distress.
- Emotional Intelligence is significantly correlated with Empathetic Concern (EC) (r = .243)(P> .01) subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), which suggests that higher degrees of Emotional Intelligence will result in high degrees of Empathetic Concern, meaning that the individuals with higher degrees of Emotional Intelligence will experience higher degrees of compassion and sympathy for those who are unfortunate.

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- Emotional Intelligence is negatively correlated with Fantasy (FS) subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), which suggest that higher degrees of Emotional Intelligence will result in lower degrees of Fantasy.

V. CONCLUSION

The researcher has attempted to provide valuable insights while delving into the complex relationship between emotional intelligence, dimensions of empathy and the satisfaction an individual feels, along with highlighting the presence of other factors which could impact these dimensions. While emotional intelligence demonstrated significant correlations with empathetic concern, life satisfaction, perspective taking, its influence on all of them except empathetic concern was relatively modest. No Correlation was observed between Emotional Intelligence and Personal distress and fantasy scale.

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