To Explore the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Career Decision Making at University Level

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Abstract

Undergraduates' emotional intelligence and its impact on their job choices were the subjects of this informal comparison research. College freshmen in Lahore's public sector undergraduate programs made up the study's population. To choose the sample, proportionate stratified random sampling was employed. Gender was a determining factor in the stratification process used to choose the sample. A grand total of 12,744 students were enrolled in four-year undergraduate programs at four different institutions. The research sample consisted of 382 people, or 30% of the whole population. A questionnaire developed by Betz et al. (1996) was used to evaluate college students' professional decision-making abilities, while the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (2002) was used to test emotional intelligence. The data was analyzed using multiple regression and independent sample t-tests. Emotional intelligence significantly impacted undergraduates' choice of major and subsequent employment. It was suggested that classes be organized to teach pupils how to handle difficult emotions and think critically.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, career decision-making, university students

Introduction

Students are very self-aware of their academic and professional choices throughout their time at university, which is a pivotal entrepreneurial era (Tehseen & Haider, 2021). According to Di Fabio and Kenny (2011), college students make big decisions about their futures in terms of their schooling and employment plans, and they often have lofty goals for themselves at this period. According to Bez et al. (1996) and Di Fabio et al. (2013), CDMSE is the degree to which an individual feels confident in their capacity to carry out particular

activities and exhibit particular behaviours while making decisions about their careers. According to Di Fabio et al. (2013), people who score higher on the CDMSE may have an easier time deciding on a professional path. What follows is an explanation of the steps one takes in deciding on a professional path. There are physical, psychological, and philosophical ramifications to this complex topic (Kaur & Karamjeet, 2017). Many students put off making a decision on their future careers because they are afraid of the unknown, which is understandable given the magnitude of the task at hand. Delays like this are frequently caused by the unique challenges that come along with negative emotional states including stress, despair, worry, and frustration (Cascio MI et al., 2017).

Our feelings encourage us to speak clearly and teach us new skills in this area (Gifford, 2002). Emotional intelligence (EI) is a set of non-cognitive skills, knowledge, and abilities that affects a person's ability to control their emotions when faced with challenges. In their 2017 study, Cascio MI et al. said it. Emotional intelligence (EI) is defined as the ability to recognise, label, label, use, and understand one's own and other people's emotional states (Spicer & Sadler-Smith, 2005). If we want to make decisions that don't depend on erroneous gut impulses and involve large sums of money, we need to do some reasonable analysis.

A person's professional decision-making is affected by several factors, as stated by Watson et al. (2010). According to De Fabio Kenny (2011) and De Fabio et al. (2012), EI has been an important factor in analyzing professional decision-making and success in the past 10 years. Considering how emotionally intense decision-making may be (Beattie & Barlas, 2001; Luce et al., 2001), it's clear that emotions play a significant role in this decision-making process.

Problem statement

The likelihood that a college student will make a prudent career decision increase for those who score higher on measures of emotional intelligence. Consistent and persistent patterns regarding the importance of EI in professional psychology are necessary for career counsellors and researchers to make theoretical and practical conclusions (Puffer, 2011). Research on the effects of EI on CDM is still in its infancy. Extensive studies have sought to identify EI's role in CDM (Afzal et al., 2013; Jiang, 2014; Emmerling & Cherniss, 2003). According to Fatin and Salim (2020), other from EI's beneficial impact on CDM, no consistent pattern has emerged about the elements most likely to influence career decision-making. Therefore, in order to evaluate the consistent trend, more research is required. The purpose of this research is to learn how emotional intelligence (EI) factors into college students' profession choices.

Significance of the Study

The study's findings would help everyone involved: students, parents, and educators. Students would learn how to better manage their emotions and increase their emotional intelligence; adults, such as career counsellors and school administrators, would gain insight into the importance of EI in making good career decisions that lead to lasting personal fulfilment and positive social impact.

Objectives

The goals of the research were to:

1. Find out the perceptions of undergraduate students about emotional intelligence.
2. Investigate among undergraduate students the effect of emotional intelligence on career decision-making.
3. Explore the difference of perceptions of undergraduate students about emotional intelligence across gender.

Research Question

1. What are the perceptions of undergraduate students about emotional intelligence?

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant effect of emotional intelligence on the career decision-making of undergraduate students.

Ho: There is no difference between the perceptions of male and female undergraduate students about emotional intelligence.

Literature review

The topic of one's chosen profession has been around since Plato's time, according to career literature. People back then used a variety of strategies to figure out what career path would be the most "wise choice" for them. Career decision-making is considered a highly creative and complicated process because, in the previous five decades, people had fewer career choices. Still, nowadays, the career environment offers many challenging opportunities and choices. When faced with such a dilemma, it's important to approach career exploration with confidence, knowing that you can make the right decisions by combining different possibilities (Arnold, 2001). The concept of career decision-making was introduced by Hodkinson (2009). He discussed that the career choices should be based on the following three comprehensive aspects:

(1) A comprehensive understanding of oneself, expertise, goals, motivation, capital, shortcomings, and awareness of their causes

(2) Recognition of the criteria, standards of performance, positives and negatives, rewards, incentives, and opportunities in various fields of work

(3) A valid logic of the relationship between two categories of facts (Hodkinson, 2009).

The action theory of career development, put out by Young (1996), maintains that people build their professions via their everyday activities, such as the language they use in discussions. This idea posits that people's feelings are intrinsic to their thought processes and have connections to things like wants, aspirations, objectives, and plans. In addition, Young (1996) provided three arguments that show how important emotions are while building a career: Emotions not only help one maintain control over their actions, but they also facilitate the retrieval and creation of narratives pertaining to their professional lives. Brown et al. (2003) and Carson & Carson (1998) are only two examples of studies that have used the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) to investigate workplace issues and learn more about the role of emotions in professional decision-making. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990),

emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and control one's own and other people's emotions, and to use this knowledge to influence one's actions and decisions.
While the literature does provide a number of EI models,
Two basic schools of thought on EI exist, distinguished by the metrics employed to calculate them (Petrides & Furnham, 2000, 2003).
The capacity When it comes to performance-based assessments like IQ, emotional intelligence (EI) is seen as a subset of cognitive-emotional abilities. Emotional intelligence traits "concerns dispositions and self-perceptions measured via self-report" (Petrides et al., 2007).
"Petrides & Furnham, 2009) states that trait EI theory "posits that individuals differ in the extent to which they attend to, process, and utilize affect-laden information of an intrapersonal (e.g., managing one's own emotions) or interpersonal (e.g., managing others' emotions) nature." This theory was put forth by Petrides and Furnham (2001).

The EI ability-based Model
Salovey and Mayer's scholarly study on emotional intelligence was initially published in 1990. According to their original theory, there are three parts to emotional intelligence: (i) being aware of and able to cope with one's own and other people's emotions; (ii) being able to control one's own and other people's emotions; and (iii) knowing when and how to utilize one's emotions appropriately. Mayer and Salovey made some changes to this model in 1997, limiting it to a cognitive ability. Their new model included four skills: (i) seeing emotions, (ii) utilizing emotions to help with thinking, (iii) comprehending emotions, and (iv) managing emotions.

Bar-On's emotional-social intelligence model
Based on an extensive evaluation of identifying personality components of success beyond cognitive intelligence, Bar-On's (1997) model is more detailed than Mayer and Salovey's. It was made up of five parts: (a) Abilities to reflect on one's own behaviour and thoughts, (b) Capacity to connect with others, (c) Ability to handle stress, and (e) Mood as a whole (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006).

Goleman's Competency Model of Emotional Intelligence
There are five basic points to Goleman's (1995) approach to emotional intelligence: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) self-inspiration, (d) social emotion recognition, and (e) relationship management. When it came to EI, Goleman's approach diverged significantly from what Salovey and Mayer had in mind. He boldly asserted that EI was more predictive of future success than IQ was, saying that EI was responsible for 80% of the variance in academic, professional, and personal achievement (Goleman, 1995).
According to studies conducted by Brown et al. (2003), Di Fabio & Blustein (2010), Afzal et al. (2013), Jiang (2013), and Emmerling & Cherniss (2003), among others, the significance of emotions in making professional decisions is significant.

Research Methodology

To investigate the impact after the event, researchers utilized a quantitative methodology. When it is not possible to influence the features of the participants, ex post facto research is the way to go. If precise experimental study measuring cause and effect is not possible, this method can be used as a substitute.

Population

All the undergraduate students of public sector universities offering 4-year undergraduate programs in the education department were the population of the study. There were four such HEC-recognized universities in Lahore, according to the website (Chartered by Government of Punjab). A total of 1274 students were enrolled in 4-year undergraduate programs in these four universities.

Institution	Number of students
Lahore College for Women's University	489
University of the Punjab	371
University of Education	250
Kinnaird College for Women University	164

Sample

We used proportional stratified random sampling to collect this sample. Male and female undergraduates from public institutions were the primary determinants in the stratification process. Then, 382 pupils, or 30% of each stratum, were chosen at random.

Detail of Sample

No. of Undergraduate students in Public universities	Population (N)	%age of the population	Sample (n) 30%
Male	198	15.5	60
Female	1076	84.5	322
Total	1274		382

Data Gathering Process: To gather information, researchers spoke with undergraduates at the chosen schools. The respondents were provided with instructions and information on demographic characteristics, as well as both surveys. They were given the opportunity to enquire whenever necessary.

Instruments

We used a demographic information sheet to gather data on two demographic variables: the name of the institution and the gender of the participants.

The 16-item Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was used to assess students' emotional intelligence. This instrument was developed in 2002 and is grounded in the ability model of emotional intelligence. You may evaluate your own emotions with things 1-4, learn to control your feelings with items 5-8, and put your emotions to use with items 9-

12. There are four categories into which the claims are classified. Within the Others-Emotion Appraisal, students are requested to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each item using a seven-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly (13-16). Having a higher score indicates that your EI is elevated.

The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSES-SF) developed by Betz, Klein, and Taylor (1996) was employed to assess students' CDMSF. It consists of 25 items and 5 subscales that measure goal selection, plan formulation, self-evaluation, profession research, and problem-solving abilities. The scale ranged from "very confident" on the one end to "not confident at all" on the other.

Factors	**Items**	**No. of items**
goal selection	2.6.11.16.20	5
Planning	3.7.12.21.24	5
self-appraisal	5.9.14.18.22	5
gathering occupational information	1,10.15.19.23	5
lastly problem solving	4.8.13.17.25	5

Reliability

Use of Cronbach's alpha allowed us to compare the two scales' reliability. The vocational decision-making questionnaire had a reliability of 0.925 and the emotional intelligence questionnaire had a reliability of 0.870.

Data Analysis

What are the perceptions of undergraduate students about emotional intelligence?

Table: Average Score of Variables

Variables	N	Mean	S.D
Overall emotional intelligence	382	85.13	14.39
Self-emotions appraisal	382	21.48	5.14
Regulation of emotions	382	21.73	4.00
Use of emotions	382	21.63	4.80
Other’s emotional appraisal	382	20.28	4.92

The table below displays the typical ratings that undergraduates gave several aspects of emotional intelligence. Students had a favourable impression of emotional intelligence, since the mean score of 85.13 (standard deviation 14.39) was near to the aggregate maximum score of 112.

The components of self-emotions evaluation, emotion management, emotion usage, and other emotions assessment all reached maximum values of 28. A high positive perception of undergraduate students was demonstrated along the dimensions of emotional intelligence as follows: self-emotions appraisal, regulation of emotions, use of emotions, and other's emotions appraisal had average scores of 21.48 (S.D. 5.14), 21.73 (S.D. 4.00), 21.63 (S.D. 4.80), and 20.28 (S.D. 4.92) respectively.

Ho: There is no significant effect of emotional intelligence on the career decision-making of undergraduate students.

Table: Multiple Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.751[a]	.632	.631	7.27960

Undergraduates' emotional intelligence and their ability to make sound professional decisions are the dependent variables in the multiple regression analysis shown in the table. With an R-squared value of 0.632*100=63.2%, emotional intelligence explains 63.2% of the variation in the dependent variable, undergraduates' job decisions. In multiple regression, the R squared value represents the extent to which each independent variable explains the overall variation. With an R-squared value of 0.632, we can see that college students' job decisions vary by 63.2%.

Table 6: Result of Multiple Regression Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29723.805	4	7430.951	45.500	.000[b]
	Residual	61570.973	377	163.318		
	Total	91294.777	381			

a. Dependent Variable: CDM

The table represents a good fit of the model. The p-value of this model is .000< .05, which shows that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to the variation in the career decision-making of university students.

Table: Coefficient for Multiple Regression Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	42.179	4.367		9.660	.000
1	Self-emotion appraisal (SEA)	.545	.199	.181	2.744	.006
	Regulation of emotions (RoE)	.225	.207	.058	1.089	.277
	use of emotions (UoE)	.794	.173	.247	4.590	.000
	Others' emotion appraisal (OEA)	.774	.150	.246	5.155	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CDM

The beta weights and statistical significance are displayed in the table. All four independent variables had significant positive effects on students' professional decision-making, as shown by their beta weights: SEA = 0.181 (p =.000), RoE = 0.058 (p =.006), UoE= 0.247 (p =.000), and OEA = 0.246 (p = 0.000). Three aspects of emotional intelligence—SEA, UoE, and OEA—have a substantial impact on professional choice, according to the importance value. Alternatively, when it comes to making decisions about one's professional future, the fourth element, regulation of emotions (RoE), plays a negligible role.

Ho: There is no difference between the perceptions of male and female undergraduate students about emotional intelligence.

Table 8: Difference of the perceptions of Teachers about School Culture across gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Male	60	83.2333	16.85569	0.976	74.655	.332
Female	322	85.4876	13.88947			

An independent sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis, and the results are explained in the table. Even while female students had a slightly higher mean emotional intelligence score than male professors, the difference between the sexes is not statistically significant (T-value 0.976< 1.96 and p-value.332 >.05).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and major selection among undergraduates. This study aimed to evaluate the current level of understanding on the influence of EI on career decision-making. This information is vital for career psychology and the assessment of consistent patterns in career counselling. The results show that students' emotional intelligence greatly affects the decisions they make in their careers. Each of the four factors—self-emotions evaluation, management of emotions, use of emotions, and others' emotions appraisal—had a favourable effect on the professional decision-making of university students. There was no statistically significant difference in the emotional intelligence of male and female learners.

Discussion

There is a literature-supported relationship between emotional intelligence and career choice. The study's findings support the authors Murad and Khan's (2022) assertion that emotional intelligence positively influences university students' employment decisions. Strong personalities and emotional competence are common traits among students who make good and stable career choices. Jiang (2013) and Fatin and Salim (2020) both discovered a favourable correlation between career decision self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. The ability to comprehend and process emotional events via cognition and behaviour will improve (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). Accordingly, they exhibit greater self-assurance in their capacity to choose an appropriate professional path (Santos et al., 2018).

According to research done at the university level in Pakistan by Afzal et al. (2013), there is a positive and statistically significant association between more emotional intelligence and better efficacy for career decision-making tasks.

According to the study, women generally had considerably higher mean scores than men in emotional intelligence, even if there is no statistically significant difference between the sexes. This is consistent with earlier studies by Baggett et al. (1996), which also discovered that women's mean EI scores were greater than men's. Gender-related research on EI has produced inconsistent findings. For instance, Petrides and Furnham (2000) found that men self-reported greater EI scores than women. Nevertheless, a large body of later research supports similar conclusions (e.g., Mandell & Pherwani, 2003; Schutte et al., 1998; Tapia,

1999). Other investigations (e.g., Bar-On, 1997) reported no differences in the total EI score between the sexes.

Recommendations

The study provides a deep understanding of how emotional intelligence affects the career choice of individuals so that we can make the following recommendations for teachers, parents, and administrators. Hence, our students get emotionally intense and make wise decisions regarding their careers.

1. Institution stakeholders should arrange seminars to get students to know how to control and use their emotions positively in their career choices.
2. Some psychiatric activities should be arranged by teachers so that they practice how accurately they perceive the emotions of their fellow beings. It will enhance the emotional intelligence of students and consequently will affect their career choices.
3. Students in the last semesters of their degrees must be ready for their career choices by gathering information on different job descriptions, their scope, and requirements so that by the end of their degree, they have straightforward and wise choices for their careers and do not be emotionally distracted from being unemployed.

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