

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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Abstract:

This article examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Based on scientific data, the author studied and analyzed the specific aspects of the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction based on existing literature.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, life satisfaction, reciprocity.

1. Introduction:

Daniel Goleman's book, "Emotional Intelligence," published in 1995, has played a significant role today in highlighting the concept of emotional intelligence. Reuven Bar-on, another author who contributed to the development of emotional intelligence, having carried out several studies on the subject, describes emotional intelligence as the totality of unconscious skills, including adaptability and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and general mood. However, in contrast to other authors, Bar-on asserts that emotional intelligence also involves stress management ability (Bar-on, 1997:3).

Much emphasis has been placed on the concept of emotional intelligence, which can be defined as self-awareness of emotions, ability to take control of feelings, selfmotivation following a defined target, understanding of other people's emotions, and possession of social skills, and the role it has in sustaining the life of individuals within the existing conditions and in managing their stress. Since emotional intelligence functions as a key factor that affects an individual's success in their personal and work life, the present study aims to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, life satisfaction, and stress management.

Ability to detect and evaluate stress and understand, assess and manage the events that give rise to it impact the rise or fall of stress. As a factor governing the effective management of self and the self's relationships with the environment, emotional intelligence has a significant role in coping with stressful situations. The proper use of general emotions to achieve intended aims in private and social life will positively affect an individual's life satisfaction and stress management. Individuals, who by nature are in constant interaction with their environment, experience problems that generate stress and directly affect their life satisfaction. However, individuals can effectively manage stress by positively using their emotional intelligence and thereby improving their life satisfaction.

2. Materials and method:

While emotional intelligence is a relatively new and expanding subject for behavioral research, it has nonetheless attracted the attention of the scientific community, academicians, business corporations, and the general public, as can be seen by the number of studies on the subject constituting the body of literature (Anand & Udayasuriyan, 2010:65). Broadly defined, emotional intelligence represents a set of competencies for identifying, processing, and managing emotions (Zeidner et al., 2004) and is understood as a combination of emotion-specific abilities (Frajo-Apor et al., 2017:35).

Goleman (1995:62) defined emotional intelligence as “self-activation, ability to continue despite negativities, ability to postpone satisfaction by taking control over impulses, ability to regulate mental states, rejection of disturbances that prevent healthy cognitive functions, ability to put self in the place of other people, and having a sense of hopefulness.” Besides, emotional intelligence is conceptualized as an individual’s self-awareness (Swarnalatha & Sureshkrishna, 2013:46). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has been referred to as the ability to identify, express, and understand emotions; to assimilate emotions into thought; and to regulate, in a healthy balance, both positive and negative emotions in oneself and to recognize this range of emotions in others (Matthews et al., 2004:3).

Goleman’s emotional intelligence model is a mixed model, like Bar-On’s, and includes five main components under the dimension of emotional intelligence, namely, “self-awareness; self-regulation; motivation; empathy; and social skills(Rahim et al., 2002:304-305). These components have been accepted as the main categories of emotional intelligence in the literature.

Emotional intelligence represents the needs, impulses, and real values that direct all the apparent behaviors of the person and determines the success in business life and relationships with people (Güllüce & İşcan, 2010:10). In his book, “Emotional Intelligence,” Goleman (1995: 62) argued that IQ only contributes to at best 20% of the total factors that determine life success. Other elements determine the remaining 80%”, which suggests the importance of emotional intelligence in private and working life. At the same time, individuals with well-developed emotional intelligence can adopt mental habits that serve to increase their productivity by maintaining their lives in a more satisfied and effective way; on the other hand, individuals who are unable to command control over their emotional life may clash with others, the results of which would undermine their ability to focus on work and think in a clear manner (Goleman, 1995:65). Looking at from a different perspective, it could be stated that emotional intelligence is especially useful under unfavorable circumstances, insofar as it helps individuals to fight through these circumstances and continue their life in a healthy emotional state by applying emotional skills such as empathy, determination, keeping pace with the environment, self-control, selfmotivation, and emotional control (Yelkikalan, 2006:40).

3.Results:

The concept of life satisfaction, which emerged into the enlightenment era of the 18th century, served as a measure of the good life and affected welfare development up to the 19th century. Throughout the end of the 20th century, intellectuals sought to find a suitable definition for life satisfaction, one that was capable of predicting the components and the measurement of a good life. The concept of life quality was introduced in the 1960s. However, in the mid-1980s, the social indicators revealed that money could not buy happiness, a finding that changed the criteria for traditional economic well-being and satisfaction. The early response to this idea served as confirmation that there was more to the human way of life than material gratification (Prasoon & Chaturvedi, 2016:25). Life satisfaction is the first of the essential elements needed by people to be happy and derive meaning from life. Emmons et al. (1985), who developed today's commonly used Satisfaction with Life scale, defined the concept of life satisfaction as the positive evaluation of all of life in a manner compatible with self-prescribed criteria. Life satisfaction is a conscious cognitive judgment of one's life, for which the criteria for judgment are determined by the individual (Diener, 1984:550). The concept of life satisfaction is an essential issue for all individuals, considering that, as individuals seek to derive meaning from life in their interactions with their environment, they continue to work towards getting the most satisfaction out of life.

Veenhoven (1996) defined life satisfaction as the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. Christopher (1999) explained life satisfaction as an overall assessment of the quality of life in terms of family, school, friends, etc., according to one's own criteria of the good life. Suppose life satisfaction is seen as a positive degree of development in each area of an individual's life. In that case, it can be argued that it also affects the individual's work-life, especially insofar as work is an indispensable part of an individual's life and affects their loyalty to the organization. In general, life satisfaction can be defined as an individual's emotional reaction to life, defined as work, leisure, and other non-work time (Sung-Mook & Giannakopoulos, 1994). Individuals' life satisfaction can be affected by many things, including daily life happiness, the meaningfulness of life, stress, consistency in reaching targets, a positive individual identity, physical well-being, economic security, and social relations. Accordingly, it is important to examine life satisfaction and emotional intelligence, and stress management.

4.Discussion:

In the application section of the study, a survey was used as the data collection tool. The survey consisted of four sections. The first section included questions related to the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second section, the "Satisfaction with Life" scale was used to measure the participants' life satisfaction levels. In the third section, the "Emotional Intelligence" scale was used to measure the participants' emotional intelligence levels. Finally,

in the fourth section, the “Coping with Stress” scale was used to measure the participants' stress management levels.

“The Satisfaction with Life Scale” was used to measure the participants' satisfaction with life level. This scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Laresen, and Griffin (1985) and adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991). The scale consists of five items on life satisfaction. However, as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis, one item's factor value was below 0.30 and excluded from the study scope (Hair et al., 2014: 102). Results from the reliability analysis showed that the alpha value of the scale was .722. The calculated Cronbach's alpha value indicated that the scale was reliable. The alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1 and may be used to describe the reliability of factors extracted from dichotomous (that is, questions with two possible answers) and/or multi-point formatted questionnaires or scales (i.e., rating scale: 1 = poor, 5 = excellent). The higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is. Nunnally (1978) has indicated a 0.7 to acceptable reliability coefficient, but lower thresholds are sometimes used in the literature.

The Emotional Intelligence Scale was used to measure the participants' emotional intelligence level. This commonly used scale was developed by Wong and Law and has four dimensions, namely, “perceiving emotions,” “managing emotions,” “understanding emotions,” and “using emotions to facilitate thought.” The scale is 5-point Likert type (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither agree nor Disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree) and consists of 16 items. However, as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis, one item's factor value was below 0.30 and excluded from the study scope (Hair et al., 2014: 102). Results from the reliability analysis showed that the alpha value of the scale was .848. The calculated Cronbach's alpha value indicated that the scale was highly reliable (Nunnally, 1978).

5.Conclusions:

According to the study results, (1) for the university students from Azerbaijan, there was a positive, strong relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, which supports the results reported in the studies conducted by Liu et al., 2013; Feng Kong et al., 2012; Bhullar et al., 2012; Ignat and Clipa, 2012; Extremera and Fernande-Berrocal, 2005; Palmer et al., 2002, while for the university students from Turkey, there was a weak relationship between these two variables. Considering that an individual's comparison of their own situation to other situations that they accept to be a suitable standard for themselves plays a role in the establishment of subjective life-satisfaction judgments (Diener et al., 1985), it is important to note the presence of external factors that affect life satisfaction. Also, it has been stated that perceived life satisfaction has a strong relationship with a compound index consisting of objective life quality indicators (economic status, health, culture, entertainment, freedom, etc.) (Diener & Suh, 1997). Furthermore, university students' life satisfaction levels differ in terms of the variables of academic success, perceived economic status, future

expectations, religious belief, and loneliness. The outcome of this research can be evaluated in the context of the economic freedom of university students. According to Tuzgöl Dost (2007), university students' life satisfaction increases when their perceived economic status increases. Considering all of these, it can be argued that the country's economic and social structure affects the power of the relationship between life satisfaction and emotional intelligence in university students.

This study sought to determine the effect of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction levels on university students' stress management from Azerbaijan and Turkey. Considering that the sample for this study involved only university students from one province in Turkey and one province in Azerbaijan, it is suggested that future studies be conducted in different provinces and that comparisons be made with other studies involving different provinces. Student success in life cannot be measured by the diplomas they have or the salaries they earn. Instead, their efforts to achieve success in each area of life can be supported by developing their emotional intelligence skills, sense of life satisfaction, and stress management skills. In this regard, to help students reach their objectives in all aspects of their lives and gain a greater sense of happiness, studies should be carried out at each level of education to develop an understanding of how to foster emotional awareness and empathy for other people's emotions in students and how to best help them manage their emotions, increase their life satisfaction, and manage their stress. If the students are strong emotionally, they will handle stressful situations better and make independent decisions in their professional and personal lives. In all, emotional intelligence will help students' overall growth so, and it is necessary to have people with strong emotional intelligence. In addition, to increase the students' life satisfaction, universities, non-governmental organizations, and the government should conduct more studies on easing students' economic troubles and mitigating their future concerns. Lastly, these institutions should also investigate what can be done to improve other factors that affect life satisfaction (health, culture, entertainment, freedom, etc.).

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