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Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Well-being

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) as an ability and psychological well-being. We hypothesized that EI as an ability positively correlates with psychological well-being. EI was measured using the Russian-language Emotional Intelligence Test (EIT), conceptually based on the MSCEIT method. Psychological well-being was measured using the Psychological Well-being Scale. The sample consisted of 243 working adults from Russia (61 men, 182 women, average age = 36.1, aged 18 to 67 years). The results showed that higher levels of emotional intelligence were statistically significantly correlated with higher levels of psychological well-being. The experiential domain of EI was the key factor of emotional intelligence associated with psychological well-being. These findings indicate the importance of the impact of EI on the psychological well-being of a person.

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) as an ability is defined and conceptualized as consisting of 4 distinct abilities or branches: identifying, using, understanding, and managing emotions in oneself and others [1]. Ability emotional intelligence is thus measured with testing methods [2].

In recent years, the number of studies in the field of emotional intelligence within the framework of the ability model has dramatically increased. The geography of these studies has significantly expanded as well. Many of these studies focus on the impact of EI on business [3], health, and subjective well-being [4, 5].

For example, Fernandez-Ozcorta E.J. *et al.* conducted a study on Spanish students [6]. The results showed that the level of emotional intelligence predicted the level of life satisfaction. The higher the level of emotional intelligence the students had, the higher was their level of life satisfaction.

Romanian researcher Colomeischi A.A. studied the emotional factors of subjective well-being and expected success [7]. The results showed positive correlations of emotional intelligence, subjective well-being, and generalized expectations for success. These results suggest that higher

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emotional intelligence is associated with a high level of well-being as well as a high level of expectation for success. Moreover, people with higher levels of emotional intelligence and expectations of success had higher levels of subjective well-being.

Zhang P. *et al*. conducted a study of the role of emotional intelligence in adverse life events and mental disorders [8]. Negative life events positively correlated with mental disorders. Emotional intelligence, as measured by the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) [9], was negatively correlated with mental disorders and adverse life events. Therefore, emotional intelligence mediated the relationship between negative life events and psychological disorders.

Overall, these findings provide evidence that emotional intelligence is a factor that may neutralize the consequences of adverse life events on psychological well-being, as most studies based on the model of EI as a cognitive ability show a positive relationship between the level of development of emotional intelligence and the level of social and psychological well-being.

The purpose of our work is to expand the geography of scientific research on emotional intelligence as an ability, as well as to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and the construct of psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being can be defined as the subjective self-awareness of the integrity and meaningfulness of the individual's self and being. According to C. Ryff, psychological well-being is the presence in a person of specific, stable psychological traits that allow her to function significantly more successfully than in their absence [10]. Therefore, this concept characterizes the area of experiences and states inherent in a healthy person. It is thus no coincidence that the World Health Organization (WHO) takes the concept of subjective well-being as one of the main definitions of health [11]. According to WHO, health is not only the absence of disease or physical defects, but also the subjective state of physical, mental, and social well-being.

Therefore, the scientific relevance of the study of emotional intelligence and its relationship with psychological well-being lies with their importance as resources for a productive life and their effect on the ability of people to cope with adverse external events.

2. Methods

The study was conducted online during the summer of 2020. The sample consisted of 243 Russian adults (61 men and 182 women, all employed) aged 18 to 67 years (mean age = 36.1 years), who were randomly invited to participate in the study via social media.

2.1. Measuring emotional intelligence

As a method for measuring emotional intelligence, we used the EIT (Emotional Intelligence Test) [12], a Russian methodology based on the MSCEIT model [13] with several reasonable changes for the Russian sample. The EIT methodology allows determining the general level of development of EI, as well as the level of development of its four branches: identification of emotions, use of emotions, understanding of emotions, and management of emotions. EIT has a high degree of reliability (Alpha Cronbach of the general level of EI = 0.93), structural and factorial validity ($\chi 2$ = 39.87, RMSEA = 0.027 (0.001; 0.044), CFI = 0.99), and the theoretical validity of the method is confirmed by high correlations of indicators of the EIT methodology and the MSCEIT methodology (at the level of generalizing indicators rs = 0.51).

2.2. Measuring psychological well-being

To measure psychological well-being, Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS) by C. Ryff [14], in the Russian-language modification by T. D. Shevelenkova and P. P. Fesenko [15], was used. The methodology consists of a questionnaire with 84 statements, that are assessed by the respondent on

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a 6-point scale: 1 - absolutely disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - somewhat disagree; 4 - somewhat agree; 5 - agree; 6 - absolutely agree. The results are processed using a key and correlate with the following subscales:

- Positive relations with others - reflects the degree of satisfaction with relationships in society;
- Autonomy - reflects the degree of independence of a person from social pressure;
- Environmental mastery - reflects the degree of one's own strength/powerlessness in meeting needs, achieving the desired;
- Personal growth - reflects the degree of realization of one's potential and the level of satisfaction in the field of self-realization;
- Purpose in life - reflects the presence of goals in life and the degree of meaningfulness;
- Self-acceptance - reflects the attitude towards oneself, one's qualities, and experiences.

3. Results

Descriptive statistics and test results for normality of the EIT by branch, domain, and total EI score are presented in Table 1. These data show that the distribution has negative skewness for almost all scales. There is a small number of respondents who received a very low score, while symmetrically high scores are not found in the sample. This may be because the scale is more sensitive at the low end and not sufficiently sensitive at the high end. Checking for normality shows a significant difference from the normal distribution on all scales.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and test results for normality for the EIT methodology.

Scale	Average (st. dev)	95% confidence interval of the mean	Asymmetry	Shapiro-Wilks test significance (test for normality)
Branch 1 Identifying emotions	0.321 (0.024)	[0.318 0.324]	-0.768	$p < 0.001$
Branch 2 Using emotions	0.417 (0.051)	[0.411 0.424]	-0.975	$p < 0.001$
Branch 3 Understanding emotions	0.401 (0.044)	[0.396 0.407]	-0.330	$p = 0.015$
Branch 4 Managing emotions	0.383 (0.045)	[0.378 0.389]	-1.074	$p < 0.001$
Experiential domain	0.355 (0.028)	[0.352 0.359]	-0.938	$p < 0.001$
Strategic domain	0.393 (0.035)	[0.388 0.397]	-0.731	$p < 0.001$
Overall EI	0.365 (0.025)	[0.361 0.368]	-1.053	$p < 0.001$

Descriptive statistics and the results of testing for normality on the scales of the PWS method are presented in Table 2. In this case, noticeable (significant at the level of $p < 0.05$) differences from the normal distribution were obtained only on the scale of Positive relations with others (due to negative asymmetry). On the rest of the scales, the distribution does not differ from the normality.

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Table 2: Descriptive statistics and test results for normality for the PWS methodology.

Scale	Average (st. dev)	95% confidence interval of the mean	Asymmetry	Shapiro-Wilks test significance (test for normality)
Positive relations with others	61.070 (7.644)	[60.104 62.036]	-0.443	p = 0.003
Autonomy	58.305 (7.983)	[57.296 59.313]	-0.228	p = 0.086
Environmental mastery	61.667 (7.634)	[60.702 62.631]	-0.053	p = 0.068
Personal growth	67.523 (7.353)	[66.593 68.452]	-0.161	p = 0.069
Purpose in life	65.951 (7.532)	[64.999 66.902]	-0.083	p = 0.485
Self-acceptance	61.708 (8.165)	[60.676 62.740]	-0.211	p = 0.187

The correlations between the EIT results and the PWS scales are shown in Table 3. As can be seen from the table, there are quite a few significant positive correlations between the results of the two methods, but all of them are relatively weak (from 0.126 to 0.375). Branches 1 and 2 statistically significantly correlate with all of the PWS scales. Branch 3 significantly correlates with all of the PWS scales, except for Positive relations with others and Autonomy, Branch 4 - with all of the PWS scales, except for Positive relations with others, Autonomy, and Purpose in life. The experiential domain positively correlates with all of the PWS scales. The strategic domain positively correlates with all of the scales, except for the Positive relations with others and Autonomy. Finally, the overall EI level is significantly and positively correlated with all of the PWS scales, most strongly with the overall level of psychological well-being.

Table 3: Correlations of the EIT and PWS scales.

Scale	Positive relations with others	Auton.	Envir. mastery	Personal growth	Purpose in life	Self-accept.	Overall psych. well-being
Branch 1 Identifying emotions	r = 0.142, p = 0.026	r = 0.200, p = 0.002	r = 0.185, p = 0.004	r = 0.211, p = 0.001	r = 0.167, p = 0.009	r = 0.207, p = 0.001	r = 0.253, p < 0.001
Branch 2 Using emotions	r = 0.179, p = 0.005	r = 0.152, p = 0.018	r = 0.222, p < 0.001	r = 0.221, p = 0.001	r = 0.306, p < 0.001	r = 0.230, p < 0.001	r = 0.285, p < 0.001
Branch 3 Understanding emotions	r = 0.094, p = 0.144	r = 0.111, p = 0.083	r = 0.165, p = 0.010	r = 0.159, p = 0.013	r = 0.186, p = 0.004	r = 0.176, p = 0.006	r = 0.194, p = 0.002
Branch 4 Managing emotions	r = 0.061, p = 0.340	r = 0.016, p = 0.800	r = 0.151, p = 0.019	r = 0.176, p = 0.006	r = 0.112, p = 0.083	r = 0.147, p = 0.022	r = 0.148, p = 0.021
Experiential domain	r = 0.206, p = 0.001	r = 0.235, p < 0.001	r = 0.257, p < 0.001	r = 0.255, p < 0.001	r = 0.302, p < 0.001	r = 0.281, p < 0.001	r = 0.342, p < 0.001

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Strategic domain	r = 0.095, p = 0.141	r = 0.097, p = 0.133	r = 0.213, p = 0.001	r = 0.231, p < 0.001	r = 0.199, p = 0.002	r = 0.218, p = 0.001	r = 0.235, p < 0.001
Overall EI	r = 0.212, p = 0.001	r = 0.221, p = 0.001	r = 0.284, p < 0.001	r = 0.307, p < 0.001	r = 0.326, p < 0.001	r = 0.319, p < 0.001	r = 0.375, p < 0.001

4. Discussion and conclusion

Statistical analysis showed that EI and psychological well-being positively correlated on many scales. In particular, Environmental mastery, Personal growth, Purpose in life, Self-acceptance, and overall level of psychological well-being had a large number of positive correlations with EI abilities.

Specifically, people with higher levels of the experiential domain of emotional intelligence had higher levels of psychological well-being across all subscales. Overall emotional intelligence was also statistically significantly associated with all measures of psychological well-being. However, the strategic domain of EI was related only to Environmental mastery, Personal growth, Purpose in life, Self-acceptance, and overall psychological well-being. The experiential EI domain is, therefore, a key factor in emotional intelligence associated with psychological well-being, as shown in our findings. Hence, everyday ability to recognize and use emotions in problem-solving is closely associated with subjective feelings of well-being.

This finding is consistent with previous research on the relationship between EI and other types of well-being (see Introduction). Since psychological well-being comprises the area of experiences and states that determine Environmental mastery, Self-acceptance, and Positive relations with others, emotional intelligence may become a psychological resource in achieving life satisfaction, despite the stresses and challenges of external events. As we can see from the results of our study, the experiential domain of EI is a key factor of emotional intelligence associated with psychological well-being. Since the data for this study were collected during the summer of 2020, when there was a temporary weakening in the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, it can be assumed that it was the experiential domain of EI that played a more significant role in maintaining life satisfaction, since it relies heavily on subjective everyday experience.

The scientific significance of the results obtained lies in expanding the understanding of the role of EI as an internal resource in achieving psychological well-being. In the future, researchers should continue the study of EI as an essential predictor of various aspects of human well-being.

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