

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Romantic Interpersonal Relationships and Wellbeing among Early Adults

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explore the relationships among emotional intelligence, relationship satisfaction and well-being. We know that emotional intelligence is how much important for interpersonal relationships. It helps us to grasp both our own and others' emotions. In interpersonal relationships, it is required to understand one other's emotions to sustain the relationship. In lack of emotional intelligence there could be frequent conflicts between partners. Researches have shown that emotional intelligence also affects a person's overall well-being. It is because if a person understands other's emotions, he can behave accordingly and adjust himself according to the situation. Today, we are seeing a surge in conflicts and separations in relationships. Researches have also shown that somewhere lack of emotional intelligence and understanding between partners is responsible for those conflicts and separations in relationships. We tried to examine the same in this study that how emotional intelligence affects the interpersonal relationships and overall well-being. The major goal of this research was to find the links between 1. Emotional intelligence and relationship quality 2. Emotional intelligence and overall well-being. The sample of this study was comprised of both married and unmarried couples having age between 18-30 years and having a relationship older than 6 months. There are 3 measurement tools used in this study. To assess emotional intelligence, Rakesh Pandey and Tulika Anand's Multidimensional Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale - Revised (MSREIS-R) is utilised. To measure relationship quality the Relationship Assessment Scale developed by Susan S. Hendrick is employed and to measure well-being the P.G.I. General Well-being measure developed by S.K. Verma & Anita Verma is used. It is a correlational study and correlation between emotional intelligence and relationship quality, and emotional intelligence and well-being, and other necessary analysis is computed based on the obtained data. The findings suggest that there is a positive correlation of .370 between emotional intelligence and relationship quality that is highly significant and there is also a mild positive correlation of .281 between emotional intelligence and well-being with good significance. This study concludes that emotional intelligence has an important role in relationship satisfaction and it is a good predictor of relationship quality. Whereas, it also has importance in well-being but not in a straight manner because emotional intelligence can sometimes disrupt the person's well-being. It is a concern that can be taken for further studies focused on well-being.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, romantic interpersonal relationship, wellbeing

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence can be as generally known as understanding; that understanding of regulating one's own emotions and appraisal of other's emotions. It provides us the way to react and express emotions in a specific situation or social context. What emotions to express, how to act in a emotional situation and to what extent can only be identified by understanding the demands of the social situation that is expressed in form of emotions by the peoples and not directly. It requires the awareness, management and regulation of emotions that is emotional intelligence. According to Mayer & Salovey (1990), "Emotional Intelligence is a subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own emotions as well as of other's, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's own thinking and actions." It means that emotional intelligence is something that is necessary to enhance our social relationships and communication. It is a social skill that enables a person to have healthy relationships through the understanding of other person's non explicit demands expressed through emotions.

Goleman (1998) defined emotional intelligence as it is the ability to identify our own emotions as well as those of others for guiding us and for effective

emotional management in our relationships and within ourselves. Goleman also emphasized that emotional intelligence is something that is used to sustain our relationships and build a healthy interpersonal relationship. According to Goleman, there are four competencies of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness is the ability to understand one's own emotions. Self-management is the ability to control one's own emotions and impulses according to the situation. Social awareness involves the ability to understand the emotions of others in a social situation and react accordingly. Relationship management is the ability to influence, communicate and connect with others and resolve conflicts in an effortless manner. To build a healthy relationship and sustain it with ease, emotional intelligence, specifically the ability of relationship management, plays an important role.

Relationship Quality

Relationship quality is someone's positive or negative feelings and perceived satisfaction about their relationship. It depends upon the understanding of both partners in the relationship and the efforts and compromises they make to sustain their relationship. It can be measured through the perceived satisfaction of both partners. Trust, security, understanding,

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intimacy, and satisfaction are all important aspects of relationship quality. Relationship quality refers to how positively or negatively individuals feel about their relationship (Morry, Reich & Keito, 2010). Relationships contribute to individual's overall well-being. High relationship quality positively affects our well-being and nurtures the relationship, whereas, low relationship quality leads to conflicts and misunderstandings between partners. Brackett & Warner (2005), in a study, found that couples with high EI tend to have better relationship quality than couples with low EI. The diversity of interpersonal relationships in today's society necessitates a reliable measure of relationship satisfaction so that we can examine and explore relationship satisfaction among couples and develop intervention strategies. Numerous terminologies, including relationship quality, relationship adjustment, spousal satisfaction, and relationship happiness, have been used interchangeably to refer to relationship satisfaction. Relationship quality or satisfaction declines as the understanding between partners decreases and the conflict arises. Researchers have observed that there are certain problems in emotional and communicational pattern among dissatisfied couples. Emotional intelligence is a much-needed quality for a well-satisfied relationship because it allows a person to understand and communicate according to the scenario. Researchers also found that it is communication style between partners which predicts enduring satisfaction in relationships. Carolyn P. Cowan & Philip A. Cowan (2000), in a study, found that satisfaction is highest in premarital and early years of marriage and then declines later. It is very common in teenagers' relationships in contemporary society and resulting in relationship separation and it is further leading to marital separation also in married couples. Avoidant attachment style defined by being uncomfortable with closeness, and dependency on other people predicts lower level of self and partner satisfaction. Securely attached couples who believe in their self-worth and trust the availability of their partner for love and safety are more satisfied in relationships. Researchers should investigate and try to find out the underlying causes of decreasing satisfaction in relationships and should also try to design intervention strategies to increase relationship satisfaction.

Well-being

A state of good health, contentment, and general stability is known as well-being. It entails being able to handle stress and other bodily and mental instability, having a strong sense of purpose in life, and having good mental health and high life satisfaction. More generally we can say that well-being is just feeling well, both mentally and physically. But well-being does not mean that there is no stress or zero negative feelings. There can also be a low level of distress and negative feelings but overall good physical and mental health and good quality of

life. Well-being is something which is desired by everyone because it is totally positive thing. Today, well-being is rapidly declining due to many more social, physical and mental factors. Stress and relationship issues are the most influencing factors of well-being. A few key categories of well-being are mental, emotional, social, physical, and economic well-being. Martin Seligman (1998) asserts that the core idea of positive psychology is well-being. Positive psychology emphasises eudaimonia, an Ancient Greek word for "the good life" and the concept for reflection on the factors that contribute most likely to lead to a happy and fulfilling experience. Positive psychologists often use the terms subjective well-being and happiness interchangeably. Carol Ryff, in her multidimensional model of psychological well-being, provided six factors that affect well-being that are - Self-acceptance, Personal growth, Purpose in life, Environmental mastery, Autonomy and Positive relationship with others.

This model emphasizes that relationship quality is a huge factor contributing to well-being. Better relationships help achieve the greater level of well-being. We can achieve a better level of well-being by developing and maintaining strong relationships with family and friends, making regular time available for social interactions, finding work that are enjoying and rewarding, taking proper nutrition, setting achievable and realistic goals and involving ourselves in interesting activities.

Nicola S. Schutte and colleagues, in 2001, conducted a series of seven studies to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and various aspects of interpersonal functioning. In the third study, individuals with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated stronger social skills. The fourth study found that participants with elevated emotional intelligence levels were more cooperative with their partners. In the fifth study, higher emotional intelligence was associated with greater experiences of closeness and affectionate relationships. Study six revealed that individuals who rated their spouses as more emotionally intelligent reported higher levels of marital satisfaction. Finally, in the seventh study, participants anticipated greater satisfaction in relationships with partners described as emotionally intelligent (Schutte et al., 2001).

A study by Paulo N. Lopes and colleagues in 2003, involving 103 college students, aimed to understand the links between emotional intelligence (measured as abilities) and personality characteristics, as well as how both contribute to the perceived quality of one's personal relationships. The researchers discovered that students with high scores on the managing emotions subscale of the Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) tended to report more favourable interactions with others, along with a greater sense of parental support. They also reported fewer difficult encounters with close friends. These connections were robust, remaining statistically

significant even after controlling for key Big Five personality traits and verbal intelligence. The study ultimately showed that emotional intelligence correlated significantly with various markers of a good quality of life (Lopes et al., 2003).

Paulo N. Lopes et al. (2004) conducted two studies using the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) to examine how the ability to manage emotions impacts social interaction quality. Study 1, with 108 American college students, found that better emotional management skills correlated positively with the quality of friendships. Study 2, involving 103 German college students, showed that effective emotion management was linked to both higher perceived quality of interactions with the opposite sex and greater perceived success in managing impressions during these interactions (Lopes et al., 2004).

Marc A. Brackett and colleagues (2005) conducted a study to determine if emotional intelligence (EI) correlates with self-assessed relationship quality. Their research, involving 86 heterosexual university couples, revealed that female partners generally had significantly higher EI scores than male partners, and interestingly, EI scores within couples showed no correlation. They observed that couples where both partners had low EI tended to report the lowest levels of relationship depth, support, and overall positive quality, while experiencing the highest levels of conflict and negative relationship quality. However, contrary to their initial hypotheses, couples with both high-EI partners didn't consistently show better positive outcomes or fewer negative outcomes when compared to couples where only one partner possessed high EI (Brackett et al., 2005).

Ioannis Tsaousis and Ioannis Nikolaou (2005) explored the connection between emotional intelligence (EI) characteristics—including the perception, control, use, and understanding of emotions—and both physical and psychological health. In their first study, 365 participants completed assessments of EI and general health. The researchers hypothesized a negative correlation between EI and poor general health, which their findings confirmed. For their second study, 212 working adults filled out the same EI measure along with an additional health questionnaire. This second measure collected standard physical and psychological health data, plus information on health-related behaviours like smoking, drinking, and exercising. They hypothesized that EI would negatively correlate with smoking and drinking, and positively correlate with exercising. Both these hypotheses were also confirmed by the results, providing further evidence for the relationship between EI and overall health functioning (Tsaousis and Nikolaou, 2005).

In 2008, Emma N. Gallagher and Dianne A. Vella-Brodrick conducted a study to assess the predictive power of social support and emotional intelligence (EI) on subjective well-being. Their research involved

267 adults (196 women and 71 men) who anonymously completed surveys measuring life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, social support, emotional intelligence, personality, and social desirability. Through exploratory hierarchical multiple regression analyses, the study found that both social support and emotional intelligence were significant predictors of subjective well-being. This research highlights the predictive value of social support, emotional intelligence, and their combined effect on well-being, offering initial insight into a conditional relationship where social support's impact on subjective well-being is influenced by emotional intelligence (Gallagher and Vella-Brodrick, 2008).

A study by Abraham Carmeli and colleagues in 2009 aimed to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and four facets of psychological well-being: self-acceptance, life satisfaction, somatic complaints, and self-esteem. The results largely supported a positive association between emotional intelligence and three of these components: self-esteem, life satisfaction, and self-acceptance. While a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and somatic complaints received only moderate statistical backing, the study ultimately reinforced the notion of a positive link between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being (Carmeli et al., 2009).

In 2011, Jitna Por and colleagues conducted a study to explore the emotional intelligence (EI) of 130 adult nursing students (52.0% of the total sample) pursuing diploma or degree programs at a UK Higher Education Institution. Using a prospective correlation survey design, they investigated EI's relationship with perceived stress, coping strategies, subjective well-being, perceived nursing competency, and academic performance. The findings indicated that emotional intelligence was positively related to well-being ($p < 0.05$), problem-focused coping ($p < 0.05$), and perceived nursing competency ($p < 0.05$), while being negatively related to perceived stress ($p < 0.05$). These results suggest that a greater sense of emotional competence helps nursing students employ active and effective coping strategies when facing stress, which in turn improves their subjective well-being. The study emphasizes that fostering emotional intelligence in nursing and other healthcare students can lead to enhanced subjective well-being (Por et al., 2011).

In 2014, Ahmadi Seyed Ali Akbar and colleagues defined psychological well-being as the capacity to actively engage in work, cultivate meaningful relationships with others, and foster positive emotions. They concluded that emotional intelligence (EI) acts as a contributing factor to positive attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes in individuals. To explore this, they conducted a study on the psychological well-being of 800 employees across 70 branches of Mehr Eqtesad Bank in Tehran, Iran. Using random sampling, 300 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The study's findings demonstrate that

emotional intelligence significantly enhances employees' psychological well-being, leading the researchers to propose numerous recommendations and managerial implications based on their results (Akbar et al., 2014).

A meta-analysis conducted by J.M. Malouff and colleagues in 2014, encompassing six studies and 603 participants, revealed a notable correlation ($r = .32$) between an individual's trait emotional intelligence and their satisfaction in romantic relationships. The researchers observed significant links between an individual's emotional intelligence and both their own reported relationship enjoyment and their partner's perceived happiness within the relationship. These findings suggest that the connection between trait emotional intelligence and romantic relationship contentment could be a valuable area for future research, including interventions designed to enhance emotional intelligence in couples to cultivate greater relationship satisfaction (Malouff et al., 2014).

A 2022 study by Hanieh S. Rad and Mahmood Hashemian explored how trait emotional intelligence and emotional control in second language (L2) learners relate to manifestations of well-being. They recruited 312 students at random from five English language schools in a central Iranian city. The study's outcomes revealed positive correlations between trait emotional intelligence, emotional regulation, and L2 hedonic orientation. Furthermore, a positive, albeit non-significant, link was found between trait emotional intelligence and L2 eudaimonic orientation. Significantly, the findings indicated that trait emotional intelligence and emotional regulation serve as predictors for L2 hedonic orientation. This research highlights the critical role of well-being orientations in cultivating both trait emotional intelligence and emotional regulation (Rad & Hashemian, 2022).

The present study

The present study is based on the gaps found in previous texts and literatures, that relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship quality can be better assessed through applying the measures on both partners. There is also a need to measure well-being that, found in literatures, is related with emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction. Well-being is majorly affected by relationship satisfaction. Better relationship leads a couple to a greater well-being. So, this should be also included in researches regarding relationships and emotional intelligence. This study tried to know the interrelatedness of these three variables together.

Objectives

The major objectives of this study are: -

1. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived relationship quality among couples.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and overall well-being of couples.

3. To examine the relationship between relationship quality and well-being of couples.

Hypotheses

There are following hypotheses formed in this study based on the literature review: -

1. There would be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived relationship quality of couples.
2. Emotional intelligence would be positively related to the participant's overall well-being.
3. Relationship satisfaction would have positive correlation with overall well-being.

Method

Research Design

It was a non-experimental ex- post facto type of research. There is utilized correlations and predictions based on regression. Additionally, inferential statistics is used for the comparison of means.

Sample

The sample of this study was comprised of 60 heterosexual couples, total 120 participants (married or unmarried) having a relationship of more than six months. The age group of participants was 18 to 30 years. This study is based on heterosexual couples so that there was same number of both male and female participants. The participants were chosen from the different localities and areas of Gorakhpur. There was used purposive sampling method to choose samples. The ones who fulfil the age and relationship criteria were chosen as participants of the study.

Measuring Tools

There are 3 tools used to measure the variables of the study, that are as following: -

1. To measure emotional intelligence, the Multidimensional Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale – Revised (MSREIS-R) developed by Pandey and Anand (2008) is used. This scale can be used individually or in small groups. It is a six-point scale with the scoring of 1-6. This scale has total 51 items divided into 4 dimensions. The scores for full scale was calculated. Score above 287 is interpreted as extremely high EI and score below 172 is interpreted as extremely low EI. The internal consistency of the scale is estimated through Cronbach's alpha that is found to be 0.91 that demonstrates its internal consistency and reliability.
2. To measure well-being, the P.G.I. General Well-being measure developed by Verma & Verma (1983) is used. This scale is in English but its Hindi version is adopted by Moudgil et al. (1986). The correlation between there 2 versions is .97. The Hindi version has the mean of 14.6 and S.D. of 4.73. It has total 20 items with the tick mark option. The scoring was done by counting the ticks that the participants marked as applicable and each tick is scored 1. Internal consistency of this scale ranges from .2 to .9. The reliability of this

scale was measured by K.R. 20 formula and found to be .98.

3. To measure perceived relationship quality the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) developed by Susan S. Hendrick (1988) is utilized. It is a seven-item generic relationship satisfaction measure with the scoring of 1 to 5. The scale has good correlations with measures of marital satisfaction and has a good test-retest reliability. The internal consistency of this scale is measured by Cronbach’s alpha which is found to be 0.82.

Data Analysis

This study is non-experimental research so the correlations among variables, i.e., emotional intelligence, relationship quality and well-being are computed. And regression is also computed for both the criterions i.e., Relationship Quality and Well-being to know the shared variance with the predictor i.e., Emotional Intelligence and how strongly emotional intelligence is predicting the relationship quality and well-being.

Procedure

In this study the sample is taken from different localities of Gorakhpur, so the researcher visited different areas of Gorakhpur as well as the university campus and different colleges to collect data from participants. The data was collected both individually as well as in small groups as per the availability of participants. After meeting the participants, firstly they were greeted and welcomed and the rapport was established. Then they were informed about the study and following instruction was given- “This study is regarding emotional intelligence, relationship quality and well-being. You just have to fill a few questionnaires that will be provided to you. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purpose. Your privacy and confidentiality will be our topmost priority.” After getting the consent of participant, the responses were recorded. Lastly the participants were thanked and bid farewell. Data was further subjected to various

statistical analyses.

Results

After analysing the obtained data and running the statistical analysis, we reached at several findings. Firstly, we conducted a mean comparison for both genders on emotional intelligence, relationship quality and well-being. There was no any significant difference on the scores of these three variables based on gender. Then we computed correlation among these three variables. The correlational coefficients are mentioned below in table-1.

A statistically significant positive relationship was found between emotional intelligence and the quality of relationships, indicated by a correlation coefficient of $r = .370$, significant at the .01 level. Similarly, emotional intelligence also showed a positive association with well-being, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .283$, which was significant at the .05 level. There was also a mild positive correlation between relationship quality and well-being, with a correlational coefficient of .281 and significance at .05 level.

Furthermore, we conducted regression analysis to know how well emotional intelligence is predicting the relationship quality and well-being. Regression coefficients for both the criterions i.e., Relationship Quality and Well-being are mentioned below in table-2 and table-3.

Emotional intelligence emerged as a relatively strong predictor of relationship quality, accounting for 12.2% of the variance. This relationship was statistically significant, with an F-value of 9.189 and a p-value of .004. Emotional intelligence shared a variance of 6.4% with well-being, having a F value of 5.041 at 0.029 significance level. It states that emotional intelligence contributes a little but a major part in a person’s well-being.

The findings of the study revealed a significant positive association between emotional intelligence and relationship quality. Participants with higher levels of emotional intelligence tended to report higher levels of relationship satisfaction, effective

Table-1. Correlations among Emotional Intelligence, Relationship Quality and Well-being:

	Emotional Intelligence	Relationship Quality	Well-being
Emotional Intelligence	1	.370**	.283*
Relationship Quality		1	.281*
Well-being			1

Significance: - ** .01 level
* .05 level

communication, and emotional connection in their relationships. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in fostering

associated with emotional intelligence, the study contributes to the understanding of effective interventions and practices that can facilitate healthier

Table-2. Regression coefficients (Criterion- relationship quality, Predictor- emotional intelligence)

Predictor	R	R Square	R Square Change	F	Significance	Beta	t	Significance
Emotional Intelligence	.370	.137	.122	9.189	.004	.370	3.031	.004

Table-3. Regression coefficients (Criterion- well-being, Predictor- emotional intelligence)

Predictor	R	R Square	R Square Change	F	Significance	Beta	t	Significance
Emotional Intelligence	.283	.080	.064	5.041	.029	.283	2.245	.029

emotional intimacy, trust, overall relationship quality and well-being.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research on emotional intelligence and its implications for relationship outcomes in psychology. The results underscore the significance of emotional intelligence as a predictor of relationship quality, emphasizing its potential for enhancing interpersonal dynamics and promoting healthier, more fulfilling relationships. The results of this study comply with previous researches of Brackett & Warner and Mayer & Salovey on emotional intelligence. It also supports the models of psychological well-being given by Martin Seligman and Carol Ryff that positive relationships are the major component of a person’s well-being. The study’s findings can inform interventions and therapies aimed at improving relationship functioning by targeting emotional intelligence skills development.

Based on the research findings, practical implications and recommendations can be made for individuals, couples, and therapists seeking to enhance relationship quality. Strategies to cultivate emotional intelligence, such as mindfulness training, emotion-focused therapy, and interpersonal skills development, can be implemented to improve communication, emotional understanding, and overall relationship satisfaction.

Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the role of emotional intelligence in relationship quality within the field of psychology. By shedding light on the underlying processes and outcomes

and more fulfilling relationships.

Implications

The present research explored the influence of emotional intelligence on interpersonal relationships and overall well-being. Unlike the majority of earlier studies, which have primarily been conducted in Western contexts such as Europe and the United States, this investigation was centred on Indian participants within the cultural framework of India. Previously conducted researches have not included well-being as a variable while this study includes well-being as a variable. We found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction, so we know that emotional intelligence majorly influences the relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, we can plan interventions and activities to increase emotional intelligence in order to improve relationship quality in couples. We can plan various practices to help the couples suffering from poor relationship quality. we can also design an intervention to improve well-being of couples by increasing emotional intelligence, social support and suggesting them to have greater relationship satisfaction with the help of different psychological means.

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