

## **Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Career Decision Making Self Efficacy among Students of Pakistani Universities**

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### ***Abstract***

*The relationship between emotional intelligence and career decision making self-efficacy has been measured in this study. Study revealed a significant and positive relation of intrapersonal abilities, interpersonal abilities and adaptability on career decision making self-efficacy. Business students of Islamabad campuses of NUML, & COMSATS, Pakistan were taken as population. Among all emotional intelligence factors; intrapersonal abilities placed most significant impact on career decision making career self-efficacy. Pearson correlation and linear regression was used to examine the relationship among study's variables.*

**Key words:** *Emotional Intelligence, Career decision making self-efficacy, Pakistani Universities, Intrapersonal abilities, Interpersonal abilities, Adaptability, General mood, Stress management*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The role of emotional intelligence has received attention in the career development literature recently. Kidd (1998) argued that affect, besides cognition, is a crucial element in career choice and behavior. Likewise, Caruso and Wolfe (2001) emphasized that emotion assumes

a critical role in career development, and choice. Hence, the emotional aspects of career development and the importance of assessing emotional processes in career counseling research and practice are of interest.

Grounded on the historic studies toward contextualizing concepts of emotions and intelligence, Young, et al. (1996) proposed a contextual action theory of career development, declaring emotions as a central to career decision making. They proposed that emotions exist within the framework of the whole and the whole encompasses many intertwined and interconnected parts, all of which are deduced within the contexts of current events and dynamics of the person. Action theory approach to career development makes the role of emotion in building career implicit while asserting that career is built through everyday action. Young, et al. (1996) further proposed that emotion is linked with one's mission, goals, plans, and needs.

Young et al. (1997) further highlighted that the role of emotion, in galvanizing and motivating action, is involved in career exploration and decision-making activities describing how "career possibilities" and "career undesirables" are evaluated emotionally by parents and their children. They asserted that career is intensely related to emotions; hence, awareness of emotions in understanding career is vital.

Kidd (1998) studied for greater consideration to the role of emotion in career development, she emphasized that "emotional experience, expression, and communication be considered when discussing career decision making skills, career management skills, and career resilience". Cooper (1997) conveyed that those who trust and manage their feelings effectively could succeed a more successful career.

Agreed the arguments developed for the crucial role of emotional intelligence in the development of career and the limited previous research on the role of emotion in the career development process, an examination of the role of emotional intelligence related with career behaviors is necessitated. Moreover, in the context of relationship between emotions and career choice no significant and substantial studies have been conducted in Pakistani scenario. This study will examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and career decision making self-efficacy in the context of Pakistani students as well as the extent to which factors describing emotional intelligence are related to career decision-making self-efficacy of university students.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The idea of emotional intelligence has been receiving great attention by the researchers since the last two decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, Gardner, 1983, Goleman, 1995, Bar-On 1997). The essences of emotional intelligence can be drawn from the concept of ‘social intelligence,’ coined by E.L. Thorndike (1920), refers to “the ability to understand and manage people and to act sensibly in human relations”. Emotional Intelligence expanded acceptance with the work of Gardner (1983) who reported the concepts of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence.

Although Gardner (1983) did not use the term “emotional intelligence”; his notions of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences provided groundwork for future models of emotional intelligence. The crux of intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to know one’s own emotions and feelings, while the crux of interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand others’ emotions and feelings.

Goleman (1995, 1998) later on advanced the construct into the limelight.

In order to understand the role of emotions in career-related decisions and actions, researchers have originated emotional intelligence as a critical variable to career success (Goleman, 1995) and have explored that role of affective intelligence is may be even more influential than that of cognitive intelligence. The construct of emotional intelligence was introduced in the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; both to academia (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and to the lay public (Goleman, 1995).

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence incorporates Gardner's (1983) interpersonal intelligence (i.e. ability to understand other people) and intrapersonal intelligence (i.e. ability to understand oneself). Salovey and Mayer, consequently, defined emotional intelligence as a sub piece of social intelligence that requires the ability to (a) efficiently manage psychological and social problems, (b) accurately explicit emotions and correctly assess the emotions of others, (c) self-regulate one's own feelings and sentiments, and (d) use one's emotions to achieve one's goals.

The ability to control and manage one's own scenario is believed to lead to greater insight and self-knowledge. Those who are expressed as emotionally intelligent are thought to possess a more fine-tuned potency in emotional self-awareness (Goleman, 1998). Accordingly, advocates of this construct argue that those who indicate higher emotional intelligence are more able to incorporate emotional experience into thoughts and actions. It seems sensible then that the ability to guide and control one's thinking and actions, through the management of emotions, would be associated with how effective one

is likely to feel when deliberating career related actions and tasks. In other words, proponents of emotional intelligence would likely argue that emotional experience could be used to contribute in the career exploration and decision making process.

Bar-On, (1997) described the view of emotional and social competencies that impact behavior and can be measured by the combination of self – report. Bar-On has continuously been working on the theory and measure of emotional intelligence since 1980. He systematically reviewed numerous theories and studies that focused on variables thought to be related to normal, optimal and diagnostic emotional and social functioning. Bar-On (2006) describes five composite scales-comprising 15 sub-scales; Intrapersonal (Self-awareness and self-expression), Interpersonal (social awareness and interpersonal relationship) Stress Management (Emotional management and regulation) Adaptability (Change management) General Mood (self-motivation), to measure emotional intelligence

### **Career Decision Making**

Career exploration is interpreted as purposive behavior and understandings that provide access to information in one's external environment and thus assist in career decision making and vocational adjustments (Blustein, 1989). Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory to career decision making is indicated as one's confidence in his or her ability to effectively perform career-related tasks (Hackett & Betz, 1981). Individuals with low self-efficacy for career decision making as compared to those with high self-efficacy may experience greater anxiety for decision-making tasks as well as more avoidance of such tasks. Empirical evidence regarding career choices and decision making have noticed that persons who continue without considering

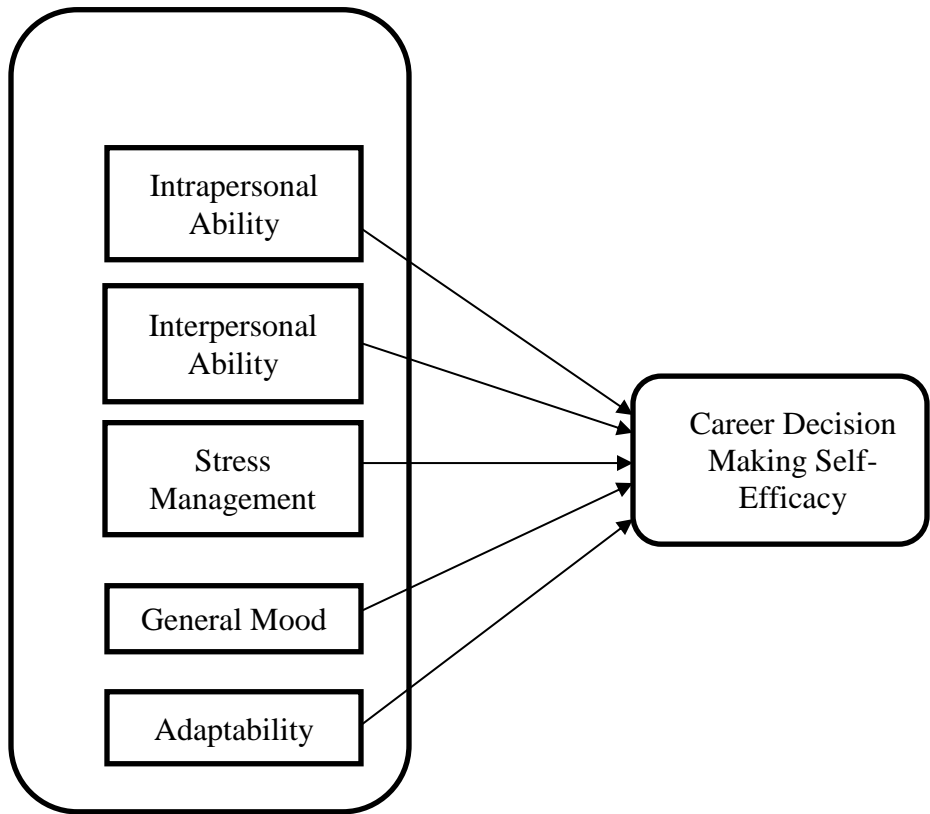
the benefits of career exploration are less likely to experience effective decision-making and employment outcomes than those who have participated in exploratory behavior (Greenhaus & Sklarew, 1981; Grotevant, et al. 1986). Likewise, career commitment has been concerned as yet another critical construct in the career development literature. In the wider context, commitment is expressed as a display of affirmation and confidence in ideas that are coherent with other beliefs and behavioral exhibitions (Marcia, 1980).

Certainly, there has been much investigation carried out on the career exploration, commitment, and decision-making processes, related to many variables that are thought to influence these behaviors. But only recently emotional intelligence has been suggested as another explanation of career development outcomes and/or career choice (e.g., Carson & Carson, 1998; Menhart, 1999).

Emotional Intelligence has gained significant importance in determining the career choice. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate the relations between career decision-making self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. Based on above discussion on emotional intelligence and career decision making self-efficacy; research questions were devised that all five factors of emotional intelligence are significantly related with career decision making self-efficacy, which led to develop following conceptual model.

### **Conceptual Framework**

## Emotional Intelligence



Source: Self Construct

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The participants in the study were 99 (43 female, 56 male) university students currently enrolled in National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad and COMSATS, Islamabad. Data was particularly collected from business students at Bachelors and Masters Levels. Most students lie between the age group of 21-23 years.

Table 1: Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid male	56	56.6	56.6	56.6
Valid female	43	43.4	43.4	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2: Age**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-20	15	15.2	15.2	15.2
Valid 21-23	40	40.4	40.4	55.6
Valid 24-26	27	27.3	27.3	82.8
Valid 26-28	17	17.2	17.2	100.0
Total	99	100.0	100.0	

### **Instruments**

The instruments used in the study were based on The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i),(Bar-On, 1997), to assess Emotional Intelligence and The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale–Short Form (CDSES-SF) (Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996), to measure self-efficacy expectations for career decision-making tasks. Sample has been chosen using convenient sampling from students of Islamabad campuses of NUML, COMSATS.



## RESULTS

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis**

		intra	inter	strmgt	Adap	genmd	Cdmse
Intrapersonal	Pearson Correlation		-.003	.150	.436**	.140	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.978	.139	.000	.166	.001
	N		99	99	99	99	99
Interpersonal	Pearson Correlation			-.017	.219*	.071	.198*
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.868	.030	.485	.049
	N			99	99	99	99
Stress mgt	Pearson Correlation				.239*	-.011	.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.017	.912	.477
	N				99	99	99
Adaptability	Pearson Correlation					.158*	.207*
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.098	.040
	N					99	99
General mood	Pearson Correlation						-.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.408
	N						99

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Using Pearson product–moment correlation analyses the relationships between the five Emotional Intelligence factors, and career decision-making self-efficacy were examined. Findings of these analyses

revealed that there exist significant and positive relation exist between career decision making self-efficacy and three of the emotional intelligence factors that are; intrapersonal abilities, interpersonal abilities and adaptability. Table further depicts that only intrapersonal abilities have medium relation with career decision making self-efficacy whereas, interpersonal abilities and adaptability have weak correlation with emotional intelligence.

Another thing revealed in this correlation analysis is significant correlation between adaptability and remaining four factors of emotional intelligence.

**Table 4: Hierarchical regression CDMSE (dependent variable)**

Variables	OLS1	OLS2	OLS3	OLS4	OLS5	OLS6
Intrapersonal Abilities	.401***	-	.373***	.402***	.416***	.384***
Interpersonal Abilities	.198**	.163*	-	.197*	.205**	.191**
Stress Management	.013	.027	.001	-	.018	.020
Adaptability	.021	.121*	.059	.023	-	.009
General Mood	-.117	-.096	-.110	-.118	-.115	-
R	.424	.289	.375	.423	.423	.396
R square	.179***	.084*	.141***	.179***	.179***	.157***
R square change	-	.096	.038	.000	.000	.022
F change	4.065***	2.144*	3.846***	5.129***	5.112***	4.379***

\* Significant at level 90%

\*\* Significant at level 95%

\*\*\* Significant at level 99%

Linear Regression analysis shows that 18% of total variance of the model is due to explained variables, which is also significant at 99% (0.01). It also shows that intrapersonal abilities have the largest impact on career decision making self-efficacy with unit increase in intrapersonal abilities self-efficacy increases 40.1%, which is also significant at 99%. Interpersonal abilities also effects career decision making self-efficacy which is significant at 95% and causes 20% increase in CDMSE with a unit increase in it. Regression analysis revealed no significant relation of stress management and general mood with career decision making self-efficacy.

Hierarchical regression also shows that intrapersonal abilities are the most significant variable as omitting it cause the greatest change in R squared (i.e. 0.096).

## **DISCUSSION**

Career decision-making self-efficacy is significantly related to intrapersonal abilities of Emotional Intelligence. In other words, students who expressed higher ability to perceive, access, and generate emotions of their own to assist thought and to understand and regulate emotion reflectively were more likely to report greater confidence in their career decision-making tasks. In fact, the positive and significant correlation between three out of five variables of emotional intelligence and career decision making self-efficacy suggests that greater emotional intelligence is related with increased efficacy for career decision-making tasks.

In considering Goleman's (1995, 1998) declarations, it is supported that emotional experience can be used to assist in the career decision-

making process. Goleman argued that processing emotional experiences is different from processing cognitive information and two different parts of brain process experiences and information. The construct of emotional intelligence hypothesizes that both the cognitive and emotional centers of the brain are working together, forming communication between the rational and the emotional (Goleman, 1998). How the brain processes information relative to our emotions shows a significant relation to emotional self-awareness and efficacy when tackled with any decision-making task.

Brown, et al., 2011, argued that persons who are able to describe their emotions effectively and to understand and manage complex feelings, and those who are able to stay open to feelings (both pleasant and unpleasant) in self as well as in others, signal a highly clarified, explained and confident level of commitment to career choice and account high confidence in their abilities to successfully perform career-related tasks. Possibly the findings of present study can be taken to suggest that the role of interpersonal abilities and intrapersonal abilities are worthy of consideration when endeavoring to understand one's self-efficacy for career decision-making tasks.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Overall results of this study further support the previous literature (Young et al., 1996 and Kidd, 1998) that emotion aids to explain career development outcomes and behaviors. To some extent, results of this study suggest that emotional understanding and manifestation can be used valuably to accomplish career-related tasks. In other words, the combination of interactive aspects and affective tendencies and

capabilities warrants attention when considering career outcomes. Seemingly, recognition and understanding of both behavioral and emotional elements are analytical to enhancing career decision-making tasks.

Researchers have argued that emotional intelligence can be taught and learned (Caruso & Wolfe, 2001; Elias, et al., 2001; Goleman, 1995). Provided with this belief, effective regulation of emotion in self and others and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve one's career goals are worthy of consideration when attempting to strengthen one's efficacy for career planning and choice behaviors.

Eventually, the associations found between factors of emotional intelligence and career behaviors in the present study appeal attention to the practical importance of emotional intelligence in career counseling and assessment. Menhart (1999) studied the importance of emotional intelligence assessment in career counseling and found emotional inclinations and capabilities to be positively linked with interview outcomes.

Further arguments in favor of emotional intelligence assessment in career development, selection, and training are provided by Caruso and Wolfe (2001), who stated that how a person manages her or his emotions and the emotions of others in the workplace can significantly affect job satisfaction and performance. Though Caruso and Wolfe emphasized the important role of emotional intelligence in career assessment, it is vital to mention that they debated on an ability measure of emotional intelligence as compared to self-report measures of emotional intelligence. Recent debate regarding the validity of the emotional intelligence construct has raised question as to whether

emotional proficiency is just a repacked version of traditional personality traits. They mentioned that ability measures of emotional intelligence assess persons' actual performances rather than their self-reported skills.

Given the arguments that emotional intelligence can be taught and learned and the research that supports the important role emotion plays in career development, planning, and selection, career counseling practitioners may want to consider the role of emotional abilities, as measured by performance tests, in assisting clients with the career planning and in addressing clients' work adjustment and job satisfaction concerns.

There are several limitations of this study. First, sample contained students of only two universities of Islamabad. In the interest of diversity, future research should include students from diverse backgrounds and multiple geographic regions. Second, focus of this study remained on a student population and all other young adults comparable in age that have chosen alternatives to educational pursuit (e.g., vocational training, workforce) were excluded, which limit the generaliseability of this study's results to undergraduate college students largely. Future research could improve on the generaliseability of the findings by including non-college student groups. Third, the use of self-report measures may limit the accuracy of responses. More accurately, as noted above, self-report measures of EI assess perceived EI, whereas performance assessments describe persons' actual abilities, problems, and potential. Hence, future research might focus on both perceived and actual EI, as both may be

important contributors of adaptation ability. That is, what one perceives to be true may be as important as that which is actually true.

Despite the above mentioned study limitations, the most obvious strengths of this study recommends that emotional experience and expression may play an important role in the career process and that career decision making may be more than just a cognitive exercise. Therefore, attention to the emotionality of career decision making is important given the complex interplay between judgments, feelings, and actions that has been noted in the emotion literature.

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