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The Role of Self-Efficacy in Emotional Intelligence and Career Adaptability Challenges among PhD Scholars

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine if PhD scholars' sense of general self-efficacy (GSE) influences the relationships between career adaptability challenges and emotional intelligence (EI). For this study, 240 Pakistani PhD candidates between the ages of 26 and 40 were selected at random using a cross-sectional design and simple random sampling. The emotional intelligence, general self-efficacy, and career adaptability challenges were evaluated using instruments. The strongest correlation was between GSE and the careers adaptability (r =.59, p<.01). In addition to GSE, emotional intelligence is the most significant predictor of career adaptability challenges (r =.58, p<.01) GSE was found to significantly mediate the effects of emotional intelligence on career adaptation issues. These results indicate that the emotional intelligence of PhD students is strongly associated with their career flexibility, a crucial factor in determining how productive workers are and how easily scholars can find employment. The study will assist PhD candidates in employing their emotional intelligence in their academic and professional endeavors. In the future, we must conduct more qualitative research to determine what factors make it difficult for people to choose a career path.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, Ph.D. scholars, Emotional Intelligence, Career Adaptability Challenges, Pakistani Universities

1. Introduction

University is where many students explore future careers. When choosing a career, consider your emotions and self-confidence. Students worry about the future as they choose a career. Emotionally intelligent and self-confident students are better equipped to handle challenges in the classroom and later life and to make well-informed career decisions. The study aimed to determine whether Ph.D. applicants' emotional intelligence (EI) affected their sense of competence and career goals.

The extent of career management is increasingly emphasizing the importance of emotional intelligence. 'Effect,' combined with 'cognition,' is a crucial aspect in both career choice and action, as stated by Barsky (2011). Ciarrochi et al. (2013) placed a similar focus on the function of emotion in the creation and selection of employment. As a result, researchers and practitioners of career guidance are interested in figuring out how to quantify the impact of counseling on clients' feelings.

In a contextual action theory of career development based on earlier efforts to place feelings and thoughts in their proper historical contexts, Young et al. (1996) argued that one's feelings are more important than one's head when making important career decisions. They reasoned that there are numerous interconnected aspects to a person's emotional makeup and that these musts all be taken into account in order to get insight into that person's emotional state. The action theory approach emphasizes the importance of daily activities in the development of a profession while leaving the role of emotion in career development up to interpretation.

In addition, Holt et al. (2013) stated that a person's emotions are linked to their motivations, targets, strategies, and needs. Holt et al. (2013) provided an explanation of the emotional evaluation of "career prospects" and "career undesirables," highlighting the role of emotion in energizing and inspiring action during the job-searching and decision-making processes. They argued that it is essential to understand careers via an emotional lens because of the close emotional ties that form inside them.

The incorporation of "emotional experience, articulation, and engagement" in conversations about career selecting choices, job satisfaction, and professional adaptability. According to Badri-Harun et al. (2016), self-confident people who are also good at controlling their feelings tend to do better in their careers. Rego et al (2010) research reveals that self-confidence and emotional stability are important for career success.

Due to the main reason why emotional intelligence is essential for career advancement and the fact that not enough research has been done on the role of emotions in career planning, it is essential to look into the link between emotional intelligence and perceived behavioral control. Moreover, no major and extensive studies have been conducted in the Pakistani setting on the relationship between emotions and occupational choice.

The study's goal is to ascertain whether or not PhD students' self-reported levels of emotional intelligence are correlated with their assurance in their own capacity to make sound professional judgments in the workplace. There has been little study of the part played by emotion in the career development process, but recent arguments

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have emphasized its importance, it is therefore critical to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and professional actions.

Not even just that, but still no significant research on the relationship between self-efficacy and career choices has been conducted in Pakistan. We hope to learn from this study whether and how students' emotional intelligence relates to their confidence in their personal and professional judgment.

1.1. Research Question

i. How can emotional intelligence influence career adaptability challenges?
ii. What function does general self-efficacy play as a mediator between emotional intelligence and career adaptability challenges?
iii. How do PhD scholars handle general self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in the context of career adaptability?

1.2. Aim

This research aimed to identify if PhD students' sense of general self-efficacy (GSE) could change the relationship between career adaptability challenges and emotional intelligence (EI).

1.3. Objectives

i. To examine the mediating role of self-efficacy between EI, and career adaptability challenges among PhD students.
ii. To examine the interplay between EI, cognitive abilities, and general social competence among Ph.D. students.
iii. To know how EI influences Ph.D. students' sense of competence in general and how it influences their choice of field of study.

1.4. Hypotheses

i. There would be a strong correlation between a person's EI and their struggles choosing professional choices, especially among those pursuing a doctorate.
ii. There would be a strong correlation between EI and GSE among Ph.D. students.
iii. Ph.D. students will have a harder time making career decisions if they have a low level of generalized self-efficacy.
iv. A Ph.D. student's career adaptability struggles would be significantly impacted by their emotional intelligence and generalized self-efficacy.

2. Literature Review

"Emotional intelligence," or EI, is defined as the "ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discern among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Lyusin & Mohammed, 2018). Scientists have discovered that EI is context-dependent, which means that persons who are highly recognized as EI-competent in one culture may not be so viewed in another.

An EI model developed by Lyusin and Mohammed (2018) describes EI as "a complex construct that incorporates three kinds of abilities:" I. emotional identification and expression; II. emotional regulation; and III. emotional information usage in thought and conduct. These three talents include being aware of one's individual and other people's emotional experiences and utilizing that expertise to plan strategically, devise innovative solutions to issues, pay attention intensely, and motivate oneself.

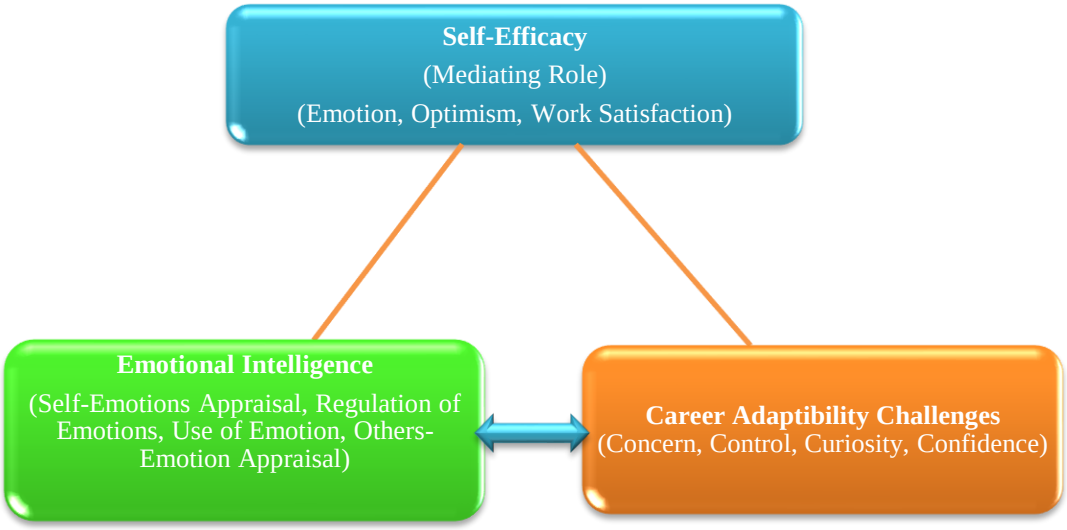
After the publication of Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman in 1995, the potential value of EI in the workplace became widely recognized. Emotional competencies are viewed as learnable skills that aid in the processing and management of emotion, and research has shown that these skills predictably predict high levels of professional success. After controlling for intelligence and personality (Adilogullari & Senel, 2014).

Self-confidence and professional choice are two areas where EI factors significantly. Those findings are from (Lindebaum, 2013). Increased productivity, better relationships, and contentment are also attributed to EI. EI is the trait that makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful people. It is also the most critical factor in a person's ability, job success, leadership, and happiness.

Studies in the field of career development have found a connection between high levels of positive (strong) EI and fewer instances of burnout, stress at work, and mental and physical health problems. EI is helpful for one's own sense of fulfillment in one's chosen profession (Austin, 2010).

EI correlates with 'career adaptability' (Coetzee & Harry, 2014), which is key to long-term professional advancement. To succeed in today's workplace, people must be ready to roll with changes and difficulties. Professional adaptability measures individuals' ability to adapt to career changes and adverse work environments. Its four aspects contribute to healthy career problem-solving and coping: care, command, exploration, and assurance (Merino-Tejedor et al., 2018). Hong Kong's rapid economic growth has forced kindergarten instructors to adapt to new employment expectations.

3. Conceptual Framework



4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design

This study used a correlational cross-sectional design. In this correlational study, we investigated the function of self-efficacy as a mediator between emotional intelligence and career adaptability challenges among Ph.D. candidates.

4.2. Subjects

Nuclear/Joint family System PhD scholars between 26 and 40 (male/female) who responded to online surveys participated in the current study. In addition, their credentials about their gender, marital status, semester number, and university were collected. Participants included 240 (134 females, 106 males) doctoral students from different universities in Lahore & Islamabad.

4.3. Sampling

The data collecting process used a method of convenient sampling. The study was undertaken with Pakistani MS, MPhil, and PhD students. The study's sample comprised of 240 PhD candidates.

4.4. Inclusion Criteria

Both male and female students who were enrolled in MS, MPhil and PhD programs participated in this research.

4.5. Exclusion Criteria

The students who did not enroll in MS, MPhil and PhD programs have not yet to participate in this research.

4.6. Instruments

Population Proportions the demographic data sheet contains age, gender, family structure (joint and nuclear), residence, marital status, degree of education, and university.

4.7. Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

It determines the EI level. The scale has 16 questions and four subscales. There are four items for self-emotion appraisal, four for emotional regulation, four for using emotions, and another for emotion evaluation. WLEIS employs a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, seven = strongly agree). The total score is the combination of all sixteen scores. The scale's reliability is 0.88 (Law et al., 2004).

4.8. Career Adaptability Index (CAAS)

The Career Adapt-Ability Scale (CAAS) has six items in each subscale. Each CAAS subscale is comprised of six items. The psychological aptitude and resources required to handle professional advancement and workplace constraints are referred to as "career adaptability." Savickas and Porfeli (2012) say that the dimensions of this variable are a set of activities that help academics move up in their careers. These activities include thinking about the future (concern), making decisions about their careers (control), learning about new opportunities (curiosity), and having a goal to achieve while dealing with obstacles (confidence). CAAS responses are scored on a five-point Likert scale (5 = strongest, 1 = not strong).

4.9. General Self-Efficacy Scale

In terms of self-report, this scale assesses self-efficacy. There are ten factors, and the overall score is calculated by adding them all together. The total score on the GSE can be between 10 and 40, and a higher score means that

the person has more self-efficacy. GSE's internal reliability is represented by Cronbach's alpha, which ranges from 0.76 to 0.90. The General Self-Efficacy Scale correlates with mood, positivism, and employee engagement. Despair, strain, health challenges, stress, and worry all had negative coefficients (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995).

4.10. Procedure

Initially, the respondents were apprised of the research's aims and assured of the anonymity of their responses and adherence to the ethical requirements of confidentiality in data processing. The data gathering questionnaires were built on a Google doc, allowing them to be filled out online. To prevent random or inconsistent responses, control questions were included to identify any abnormalities or biases in the responses. In addition to these instances, questionnaires that were incomplete were also eliminated. The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) measured participants' EI, the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) measured their confidence in making smart professional decisions, and the General Self-Efficacy Scale measured self-efficacy. The sample consisted only of PhD students from Lahore and Islamabad. Participants were informed that they might terminate their participation at any moment.

5. Data Analysis

To begin, the Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to provide a basis for understanding the interrelationships among the aforementioned variables (self-efficacy, career adaptability, and emotional intelligence). After that, a mediation linear regression analysis was carried out on the entire sample as well as on each group of students classified according to their educational extent to evaluate the outcome-predictor relationship (General self-efficacy, Career Adaptability, and Emotional Intelligence). In this study, SPSS was utilized to do the statistical analysis on the data (version 25). Pearson In order to explore the hypothesis, a bivariate correlation analysis and a mediation regression analysis were carried out.

6. Results

Table 1: Frequency Distribution Table for Gender, Age Category, Family System, Marital Status, Residents, Education Level, University Type (N = 240)

Variables	*f*	%
Gender		
Male	106	44
Female	134	56
Age Category		
26-30	72	30
31-35	102	42
36-40	66	28
Family System		
Nuclear	167	60
Joint	73	30
Marital Status		
Single	34	14
Married	206	86
Residence		
Rural	105	44
Urban	135	56
Education Level		
PhD Scholars	53	22
MS Scholars	129	54
MPhil Scholars	58	24
University Type		
Government	93	39
Private	147	61

Note: f = Frequency, % = Percentage

Using the table which can be identified above, the most of the testers are female (56%), and the most of them fall into the age range of 31 to 35 years, which accounts for 42% of the total. In comparison, the age range of 26-30 years makes up for 30% of the total, whereas the age range of 36-40 years represents for 28% of the total. Nuclear families make up 60% of all households, while joint families account for the remaining 40%. 61% of the participants are students from private universities, while 39% are from public universities. MS scholars make up 54% of the total, while MPhil scholars and PhD scholars each account for 24% and 22% of the total. The percentage of scholars who live in urban regions is 56%, while the percentage who lives in rural areas is 44%. 86% of students are married, whereas 14% of students are not married.

Table 2: **Psychometric Properties for Scales**

Scale	*M*	*SD*	Range	Cronbach'sα
WLEIS	102.33	7.03	54-110	.88
CAAS	91.02	4.97	62-102	.72
GSE	37.05	3.67	17-40	.89

Note: WLEIS = Wong and Low Emotional Intelligence Scale, CAAS = Career Adapt-Abilities Scale, GSE = General Self-Efficacy Scale, M = Mean, S.D = standard deviation

Table 2 illustrates the psychometric characteristics of the measures employed in this study. The table shown above exhibits the psychometric features of scales. The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale has a Cronbach's α rating of 0.88 (<.70), indicating strong internal consistency. Cronbach's α for the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale is 0.72 (<.70), showing adequate internal consistency. The Cronbach's α rating of 0.89 (<.70) for the General Self-Efficacy Scale suggests strong internal consistency.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation between Emotional Intelligence, and Career Adaptability, Generalized Self-Efficacy Using the Pearson Product Moment Method (N=240)

Variables	*N*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3
1. WLEIS	200	102.33	7.03	-		
2. CAAS	200	91.02	4.97	.58**	-	
3. GSE	200	37.05	3.67	.59**	.35**	-

*P<.05, **P<.01, ***P<.00, WLEIS = Wong and Low Emotional Intelligence Scale, CAAS = Career Adapt-Abilities Scale, GSE = General Self-Efficacy Scale, M = Mean, S.D = standard deviation.

Table 3 revealed that Wong and Low emotional Intelligence has significant positive correlation with Career Adaptability Challenges (r = .58, p<.01) and General Self-Efficacy (r = .59, p<.01). Career Adaptability Challenges has significant positive correlation with General Self-Efficacy (r = .35, p<.01).

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Mediation of Self-Efficacy between Emotional intelligence and Career Adaptability Challenges among Ph.D. Scholars (N=240).

Variables	*B*	*95%Cl*	*SEB*	B	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1					.33	.33***
1. Constant	49.43***	[41.87, 57]	3.84			
2. EI	0.41***	[.33, 48]	0.04	.58***		
Step 2					.37	.16***
1. Constant	45.36***	[41.72, 57]	3.88			
2. EI	0.40***	[.31, .48]	0.05	.51***		
3. GSE	0.36***	[.28, .44]	0.09	.36***		

Note. Cl= confident interval, ***p<.001.

Table 4 shows the impact of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence on PhD students' job adaptation challenges. With F (1, 238) = 117.86 and p<.001, the $R2$ value of 0.33 shows that emotional intelligence predicted 33% of the variation in the job adaptation concerns in Step 1. Emotional intelligence predicted professional adaptation problems significantly (B =.58, p<.001). F (2,237) = 46.70, p<. 001, demonstrated that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence contributed to 37% of the variance in professional adaptation challenges in Step 2. Based on the findings, emotional intelligence (B =.51, p<.001) and self-efficacy (B =.36, p<.001) both predicted career adaptability issues. With ΔF (1,238) = 26.73, p<.001, the ΔR^2 value of 0.16 revealed a 16% decrease in the variance of model 1 and model 2. From Model 1 to Model 2, the emotional intelligence regression weights went from.58 to.51, but they were still significant, showing that there was some mediation. In particular, emotional intelligence had direct and indirect impacts on work adaptation problems.

7. Discussion

University life is a vital time of entrepreneurship for young adults, and they understandably worry about making the appropriate decisions for themselves and their prospects. Having a clear idea of where you want to go in life is crucial to creating a career you love. This research was essential since it attempted to investigate how EI and GSE influence the hurdles that Ph.D. applicants confront while choosing a professional route.

The study's goal was to investigate how emotional intelligence (EI) relates to the difficulties encountered by doctoral students. Candidates when making career decisions and general social competence. Ph.D. students' professional decision-making obstacles, their generalized self-efficacy, and their emotional intelligence were measured during their undergraduate years before they made their final job choice.

We were primarily concerned with testing three hypotheses. The major hypothesis is to understand the association between EI and the inability of Ph.D. students to make informed career choices. Results from a study analyzing

connections between EI and career adaptability issues indicated a high inverse association between the three elements of unpreparedness, insufficient data, and conflicting data. In accordance with past study employing the same concept of EI. People who score higher on the self-emotion appraisal scale know themselves and their strengths and shortcomings better, which allow them to reduce their search parameters. It's a domino effect that leads to fewer career adaptability-related difficulties.

Since self-efficacy is a malleable construct, they also discovered that interventions aimed at boosting self-efficacy in the context of career decision-making can reduce indecision. Contradictory evidence, internal struggles (such as competing private career standards), and external conflicts (such as divergent personal interests and the preferences of others) all have an effect on a person's ability to choose a career path. Due to the fact that a lack of preparation may sometimes hinder the professional adaptation process, it is essential to remember that readiness is still recognized as a factor influencing career adaptability. Insufficient motivation to engage in career adaptability, general indecision on all forms of career adaptability, and dysfunctional viewpoints on career adaptability all define persons who are not prepared.

Second hypothesis: whether Ph.D. aspirants have EI and GSE features. Emotional intelligence and social skills are strongly correlated. It means that emotionally intelligent people have stronger self-efficacy. Positive correlations between emotional intelligence subscales and the generalized self-efficacy scale validate (Pekaar et al., 2018) results indicating high EI persons are happy with their social networks and more willing to make changes to attain their goals. They have a defined professional purpose, know what they want, and work for it. Research suggests that those with high EI are more emotionally in tune and better able to make long-term professional judgments. Third hypothesis: GSE and career adaptability among PhD scholars. Correlations demonstrated a negative association between GSE and career adaptability data insufficiency. (Mutlu, 2018) discovered that job-related SE predicts professional hesitation. In their meta-analysis (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019; Ismail & Ali, 2021), the authors assessed whether career adaptability-related SE was associated with race, self-esteem, gender, career hurdles, career indecision, occupational identity, expectations of vocational outcomes, and social support.

Career-related difficulty and hesitation are linked to SE. The negative link between career adaptability and GSE is more evidence that self-efficacy affects career choice. It shows that having a low opinion of one's skills can hinder one's ability to make sensible professional choices. People with low professional decision-making SE limit their work possibilities and objectives since they know their odds of success. I can see how this relates to college students' skepticism. Strong emotional intelligence predicts career adaptability among Ph.D. academics, according to studies. This study confirmed previous studies linking EI to career decision issues. In one study, researchers examined how emotional management techniques affected student stress. Students who were socially accepted and had better emotional management abilities felt less stress from their diseases and academic environments. EI affects experts' SE when making decisions, according to study.

8. Conclusion

According to the findings of this study (Ciarrochi, et al., 2013); emotions play a role in explaining career development decisions and outcomes. This research shows that being able to recognize and articulate your emotions might be a career asset. Successful outcomes in the workplace require a blend of interpersonal and emotional skills. Workplace decision-making could benefit from increased awareness and comprehension of behavioral and emotional elements. Those who study the topic of emotional intelligence agree that it may be taught to others. In this quest, it's important to be able to regulate one's own and others' emotions and apply them to defining and accomplishing professional goals. The study's findings underline emotional intelligence's importance in career assessment and coaching. Emotional proclivities and abilities affect interview performance positively. Research (Brown et al., 2003) suggests examining emotional intelligence in career development, selection, and training because of its impact on job satisfaction and performance. Brown et al. (2003) highlighted the significance of EI in career assessment; however, they argued that an ability measure is preferable to self-report measures. The legitimacy of emotional intelligence has recently been questioned.

Emotional acuity is just repackaging personality traits. They claimed that EI exams are more indicative of true performance than merely perceived abilities. There are issues with this study. Future study should recruit from diverse demographics and regions. Second, the study's conclusions only apply to undergraduate college students, not young people who selected alternatives to schooling (such as vocational training or the workforce). Include non-college graduates in future study. Self-reporting instruments may reduce answer dependability. Actual EI is tested through performance tests that indicate abilities, problems, and potential.

Future research may evaluate both actual and perceived EI's impact on adaptability. Sometimes perception matters more than reality. The study's strengths outweigh its limitations, demonstrating emotional expressiveness may alter professional decision making. The link between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors makes emotional decision making in the workplace vital.

8.1. Suggestions

In terms of incorporating emotional intelligence into their academic and professional endeavors, aspirants for the doctoral degree will reveal the outcomes of this research extremely beneficial. In the future, we will need to

conduct additional qualitative research in order to gain an understanding of the factors that contribute to the challenges that people face when deciding which career path to pursue.

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