Educational Administration: Theory and Practice
2024, 30(1), 8088-8093
ISSN: 2148-2403
https://kuey.net/

Research Article

Emotional Intelligence, Media Interaction and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy: A Predictive Analysis

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Citation: Dr. Vikas Kumar, Shivi Tyagi, Sakshi Pundir, Anjali Negi, Ankita Chauhan (2024). Emotional Intelligence, Media Interaction and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy: A Predictive Analysis. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(1) 8088-8093
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i1.11176

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This study explores the predictive role of emotional intelligence (EI) and media interaction in career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) among university students. A sample of 400 participants completed standardized measures of EI—covering self-emotional appraisal, other-emotional appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion—along with a measure of CDMSE. In addition to emotional competencies, the study highlights the growing influence of digital media environments and communication behaviors on students' emotional regulation and confidence in career-related decisions. Findings emphasize that enhancing emotional and media communication skills may support more effective career development interventions. The inclusion of literary texts and theories enhances the conceptual framework of career development, as it bridges the affective experiences and cognitive career processes to produce a holistic method of promoting career decision efficacy. The analysis examined associations between EI dimensions and CDMSE and tested the predictive power of EI through regression modelling. Findings highlight the importance of emotional competencies in shaping students' confidence in making effective career choices, suggesting that enhancing EI may support career development interventions.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Media Interaction, Career decision-making self-efficacy, University students, Career development.

Introduction

People make a lot of decisions every day. Some decisions are part of daily routines, while others are prioritized and require more attention. Career decisions have a significant impact on a person's lifestyle, relationships, vocational activities, and overall quality of life (Galti & Asher, 2001). Choosing a career is a crucial choice in an individual's life. Emotional strength, parental pressure, societal expectations, understanding of professions, and wrong aspirations can all impact job decisions.

Emotional intelligence is the combination of two words 'Emotion' and 'Intelligence', which means we can control our emotions intelligently. The term 'emotional intelligence' was given by Mayer et al. (1990). Emotional Intelligence is defined as "the ability of a person to identify and manage their own emotions and feelings as well as emotions and feelings of others" (Goleman, 1995). According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), emotional intelligence is defined as "perceiving emotions, facilitating thought with emotion, understanding emotion and managing their emotions".

Emotional intelligence is considered as the foundation of successful communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork in today's linked society. It allows people to manage stress, adjust to change, and keep their calm in difficult situations. As society becomes more collaborative and diverse, the ability to understand and respond to emotions has become a critical skill for fostering healthy, productive interactions and achieving meaningful goals. Emotional intelligence can be found in The Bhagavad-Gita, 5000 years ago where Krishna's Sthithapragnya (Emotionally stable person) is very close to Mayer and Salovey's Emotionally Intelligent person (Dhani and Sharma, 2016).

There is a mutual connection between literature and psychology; frequent occurrences can be traced relating towards inner psychological states in literary texts where psychology presents us with critical measures for interpreting the narrative structures and the inner dilemmas of the characters. This interdisciplinary study highlights the link between EI (emotional intelligence) and literature. Historically, literary texts have served as a significant medium for exploring complex emotional experiences, reflecting the psychological depths primary to EI.

The idea of power/knowledge by Michael Foucault offers a socio-cultural prism through which the institutional discourses and power structures influence the development and management of emotional competencies and self-efficacy. In this view, career decision-making is not merely an intrapersonal mechanism, but also it is a socially constructed practice mediated by the application of technologies of the self, according to which people control their emotional states and identities under existing power relations (Foucault, 1980). This split and fragmented self formed through the symbolic identification, as presented in the psychoanalytic construct of Lacan, challenges the issue of the complex connection between conscious emotional knowledge and desire to the unconscious. The theory complements the knowledge about the emotional self-appraisal and regulation process with the way people move between the inner emotional worlds and the social worlds on the occasion of making such significant decisions as career choice (Lacan, 1949/2006). These views can be integrated to provide a wholesome mechanism of examining how emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy can be the result of interplay between psychological complexity and societal-cultural power relations. Career decision-making is a process that can be interpreted as an experience of the lack and discontinuity of the self that requires constant self-reflection and emotional management.

Career Decision-making is a complex and most important part for students. Career decision making is a process in which students identify alternatives, gather information, consider the options, select the one choice, and then implement that option. Career Decision-making is the key concept in Vocational Psychology. At the core of career decision Making is the process of compiling the list of promising alternatives, confirming which are suitable to the individual and after comparing them, identifying the best one (Gati & Kulcsár, 2021).

Each of these transitions entails making a career decision, typically by locating promising alternatives, collecting information about them, comparing the alternatives on the short list and choosing one. The complexity of career decision making increases according to age (Gati & Kulcsár, 2021). According to Betz (1992) career decision making is central to career development. According to Smith (2022), career selection and career making are critical as globalization, and existing career choices have created an unparalleled battle for talent. Kaur & Bala (2016) indicated the relationship between career decision making and self-efficacy of students of secondary school and they found that an increase of self-efficacy will be improving career decision making of students.

According to Hackett and Betz (1981), Career decision making self-efficacy is divided into two domains: the content domain and the process domain. While the process domain of Career decision making self-efficacy relates to self-efficacy about planning and decision-making processes, the content domain is thought of as self-efficacy for a certain career field, such as medicine. This extended Career decision making self-efficacy theory in career psychology in the study of career development suggests that self-efficacy has influence over one's career selection. Career decision making self-efficacy has a variety of effects on professional behaviour.

In the contemporary digital era, communication technologies and media platforms play a vital role in shaping individuals' emotional and cognitive processes. Students today interact with diverse media—from social networks to online career portals—which influence how they perceive success, manage emotions, and gather career-related information. Media interaction serves as both a source of emotional stimulation and a tool for career exploration. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to navigate this media-saturated environment effectively by interpreting emotional cues, maintaining digital empathy, and making well-informed career decisions. Therefore, examining EI and CDMSE through a media and communication lens offers a more holistic understanding of how students develop confidence in their professional choices.

Need of the study:

The inclusion of media interaction is especially relevant in the present digital landscape. University students are increasingly relying on digital media, online mentorship, and peer communication networks for emotional support and career guidance. Understanding how media interactions influence emotional intelligence and career self-efficacy can help educators design interventions that promote emotionally intelligent and media-literate decision-makers.

Although psychological concepts have strong explanatory power on emotional intelligence (EI) and career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE), the literary texts and the literary theories are an essential complementary approach to explain the phenomena. The complexity of the human emotion, self-management, empathy, and decision-making that are considered to be morally correct has been studied and exemplified in literary works since the beginning of human society. Literature provides the experiential knowledge about the human state of affairs via intricate characters and stories, and this can add to the knowledge of emotional processes, which cannot always be quantified.

Method:

Selection of the sample:

In the present study, a sample of 400 University students in the age range of 19 to 25 years from the universities located in the state of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh were selected using Purposive sampling technique. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria are given below:

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Students of 19 to 25 years of age were included in this study.
2. Both Male and Female students were included in this study.
3. Students not having any known major physical and psychological ailments were not included in this study.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Students having difficulty in understanding English were excluded from the study.
2. The students who will refuse to give informed consent or withdraw the consent during the study were excluded.

Tools:

The current study utilized the following standardized measures to assess the levels of Emotional intelligence and Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy:

1.Emotional Intelligence scale:

This scale was standardised by Wong and Law in 2002. The scale consists of 16 items.

Scoring- The WLEIS response format includes seven- point likert type questions, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A higher score indicates a higher level of emotional intelligence.

Dimensions	***Items***
Self- emotional appraisal	1,2,3,4
Others emotional appraisal	5,6,7,8
Use of emotions	9,10,11,12
Regulations of emotions	13,14,15,16

Reliability- The reliability of the test scores was evaluated using the internal-consistency method. The categorical omega coefficient was used, estimated from the factorial solutions obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis and valued as adequate from 0.70.

Validity- Validity analysis was collected based on relations to other variables. For this purpose, convergent and discriminant evidence was collected. The convergent validity was evaluated from the average variance extracted, taking as minimum acceptable values those proposed by Moral (2019). The discriminant validity was collected through two procedures, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio, considering the generic measurement model (Roemer et al.,2021), taking as adequate values lower than 0.85.

2.Career Decision Self -efficacy scale -Short form

Career decision self -efficacy scale -short form was constructed by Bentz and Taylor in 1996. This scale consists of 25 items. Responses were initially obtained using a 10-level confidence continuum, ranging from No confidence to complete confidence.

Scoring- The Career decision self -efficacy yields six scores- subscales score for the five components of career decision self- efficacy and a total score. The items associated with each component of career decision self-efficacy- self appraisal, Occupational information, Goal selection, Planning and Problem solving are shown in the scoring key. Total subscale core of the CDSE-SE are calculated by summing the response values for the 25 items and then dividing by 25.

Procedure

The researcher personally approached the participants in classes and groups. The nature, purpose, and objectives of the study were shared with the participants to establish rapport. Participants were asked questions about the inclusion criteria, and only those who met the criteria were engaged in the study. Unwilling participants were excluded, and willing participants were provided informed consent that their information would be kept confidential and used strictly for research purposes. Participants were advised that they could remove their information before, during, or after the scale was completed. The researcher gave detailed directions for completing the test, including questions and rating scale. The study was not time-bound, however individuals completed the scales within 45-60 minutes. After completing the scales, the researcher identified incomplete and double-rated questions and asked individuals to provide missing information.

Statistical analysis

The data was analyzed using Jamovi 2.7.6. The current study used inferential statistics to analyze data. The study's variables were analyzed using Correlation.and Linear multiple regression was used to predict outcomes. All assumptions for multiple regression analyses, including linearity, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, normality, and observation independence, were verified.

RESULT

Table 1 ***Intercorrelations Among Emotional Intelligence Dimensions and CDMSE (N = 400)***

Variables	*Self-emotional appraisal*	*Other-emotional appraisal*	*Use of Emotion*	*Regulation of Emotion*	*Total EI*	*CDMSE*
SEA	—					
OEA	.607***	—				
UOE	.525***	.597***	—			
ROE	.548***	.478***	.588***	—		
Total	.818***	.811***	.820***	.801***	—	
CDMSE	.513***	.436***	.457***	.466***	.563***	—

Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among the emotional intelligence (EI) dimensions—self-emotional appraisal (SEA), other-emotional appraisal (OEA), use of emotion, regulation of emotion, total EI—and career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE). As shown in Table 1**,** all EI dimensions were **positively and significantly correlated** with each other (r ranged from .436 to .820, $p < .001$), supporting the conceptual interrelatedness of the EI components.

With respect to CDMSE, all EI dimensions demonstrated **moderate to strong positive associations**: SEA ($r = .513$, $p < .001$), OEA ($r = .436$, $p < .001$), use of emotion ($r = .457$, $p < .001$), regulation of emotion ($r = .466$, $p < .001$), and total EI ($r = .563$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that higher emotional intelligence, particularly self-emotional appraisal and overall EI, is associated with greater career decision-making self-efficacy.

Table 2 ***Model Fit Measures for Model 1 Predicting [CDMSE] (N = 400)***

Model	*R*	*R²*	*Adjusted R²*	*F*	*df1*	*df2*	*p*
1	.580	.336	.329	50.00	4	395	.001

The regression model with four predictors was statistically significant, $F(4, 395) = 50.00$, $p < .001$. The predictors collectively accounted for 33.6% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R = .580$, $R^2 = .336$, Adjusted $R^2 = .329$), indicating a moderate model fit.

Table 3 ***Regression Coefficients for Model 1 (N = 400)***

Predictor	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*Std. Estimate*
Intercept	1.7810	0.1461	12.19	.001	—
Self-emotional appraisal	0.0378	0.0076	5.00	.001	0.280
Other-emotional appraisal	0.0124	0.0078	1.60	.109	0.091
Use of emotion	0.0197	0.0075	2.62	.009	0.149
Regulation of emotion	0.0226	0.0067	3.35	.001	0.182

p<0.01

The regression coefficients are presented in Table 2. The intercept was significant, $t(395) = 12.19$, $p < .001$. Among the predictors, *self-emotional appraisal (SEA)* was a strong positive predictor of the dependent variable, $\beta = 0.28$, $t(395) = 5.00$, $p < .001$. *Use of emotion* ($\beta = 0.15$, $t(395) = 2.62$, $p = .009$ and *regulation of emotion* ($\beta = 0.18$, $t(395) = 3.35$, $p < .001$ also made significant positive contributions. In contrast, *other-emotional appraisal (OEA)* was not a significant predictor, $\beta = 0.09$, $t(395) = 1.60$, $p = .109$.

DISCUSSION

The current research showed a favorable correlation between career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) and emotional intelligence (EI). Selfemotional appraisal (SEA) and overall EI showed the highest correlations with CDMSE, while all EI categories showed significant correlations.

Regression analyses also revealed that whereas the emotional appraisal (OEA) did not significantly predict CDMSE, SEA, emotion use, and emotion regulation did. According to these findings, confidence in career choices is more significantly influenced by intrapersonal dimensions of emotional intelligence (EI), specifically self-awareness and emotional regulation, than by interpersonal aspects. This result is consistent with social-

cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), which highlights how self-efficacy views are shaped by personal resources.

The contributions of emotion regulation, emotion use, and SEA show how identifying, controlling, and positively utilizing emotions can boost people's self-confidence when facing obstacles in their careers. Prior research has similarly shown that emotional self-awareness enhances adaptive coping and goal-directed behavior, thereby supporting career decision-making (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). Overall, the model explained 33.6% of the variation in CDMSE, indicating that EI had a moderate impact while allowing for the contribution of other variables such as personality, cognitive ability, and environmental supports (Betz & Hackett, 2006; Hirschi, 2012).

From a media and communication perspective, these findings also indicate that emotionally intelligent individuals may engage more critically and constructively with digital career content. Higher emotional regulation and self-awareness might enhance students' ability to interpret media messages about success, failure, and employability, fostering realistic and confident career decision-making. Future research may explore how digital communication competence and social media behavior mediate this relationship.

From literature's viewpoint, emotional intelligence brings forward the subtle interaction that exists between self-awareness, empathy, and emotional control that the characters struggle with in decision-making that reflects the psychological process of career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE). Literature offers a lot of background in comprehending how people negotiate feelings of tension and societal demands which are sanctioned in making adaptive career decisions.

Conclusion:

Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) is positively correlated with emotional intelligence (EI), as this study shows. The relevance of self-awareness and emotional management in career decision-making was highlighted by the important predictors that included self-emotional evaluation, emotion control, and emotion use. These results imply that improving emotional intelligence can boost people's self-assurance when making career decisions. The inclusion of valuable literary theories molds decision making skills of individuals. Besides the psychological meaning, emotional intelligence has been extensively explored in the world of literature where novels, plays, and poems frequently become reflections of the nuances of human emotion, self-awareness, and the interactions of people. Literary works can therefore provide a priceless insight into the role of emotional intelligence in forming personal decisions and paths in life and thus the convergence of literature and psychology presents a valuable field of scholarly research.

Limitations and Future Research

1. Participants for the study were taken from government and private colleges in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand only. Hence, the generalization would be limited to the students in these geographical regions.
2. This is a correlation study, hence, a cause-effect relationship can not be determined.
3. The present investigation relied on quantitative analysis; however, a mixed approach may be used for future research.
4. A comparative study can be carried out to investigate differences in terms of age group.

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