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**Chh. Shahu Institute of Business  
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## Editorial Note

*Humor has a unique place in literature, particularly in English literature. Mark Twain, a great Humorist, stated that humor is a great thing, the saving thing, the minutes it crops up, all our irritations and resentments slip away and a sunny spirit it takes their place. Humor is the tendency of particular cognitive experience to provoke laughter. Humor is a broad term that refers to anything that people say or do that is perceived as funny and tends to make others laugh, as well as the mental processes that go into both creating and perceiving such as an unusual stimulus and also the affective response involved in the enjoyment of it stated by Rob H. Martain in his book Psychology of Humor.*

*The etymology of humor began as a Latin word humors means fluids or liquids. It has a medical connotation. Bharata Muni's Natya Shatra contains humor as one of the nine Navarasa in which it is known as 'Hasya'.*

*Whether we can use humor effectively in day today activities of the Management? The business cartoon caricatured by Scot Adams appeared in the name of Dilbert induces laughter at worker place. Some of his quotations are worth remembering. They are I can only please one person per day. Today is not your day. Tomorrow is not looking either good. Change is good but you go first. Another business cartoon worth remembering is Mario Mirands business cartoons.*

*Defiantly, humor has a place in practicing management. Humor has become a recognized asset in the work place. It facilitates communication, builds relationship, reduce stress and induces creativity.*

*Humor at a workplace is often associated with stress. Stressful employee cannot perform effectively. Humor is greatest stress reliever. Godfrey in the Journal of Women's Health Stated that, "Humor is potentially effective means of coping with the anger. Further he stated that, "One must be careful with its use". Sarcastic or hostile humor can incite additional anger.*

*A sense of humor is apparent among creative people. Research reflects that creativity and humor is associated with each other. Creative people display interest in humor and also capacity in producing original humor thought. Getzeles and Jackson stated that when ranking a series of desirable traits creative students placed a sense of humor second, whereas of the same intelligence but less creativity ranked it lowest among all the desirable traits. When both groups drew pictures of various themes, over half of the creative students made drawings judged as humorous, and their essay showed the same tendency.*

**Dr. Babu Thomas**  
**Editor**

# Emotional Intelligence – An Effective Intervention for Enhancing Employee Well-Being

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## Abstract

In our day to day life, we express, experience, and interpret a variety of emotions. Every individual differs in his/her ability to express and understand emotions. This ability is called Emotional Intelligence (EI). This study aims to bring out the empirical relationship between Emotional Intelligence and well-being among the employees of the Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services sector of South India. The sample consisted of 158 employees of the sector. The findings confirmed that Emotional Intelligence is a significant predictor of well-being. The study also brings out the multifaceted benefits that are to be gained by organizations, if they focus on Emotional Intelligence training. A few techniques to improve emotional regulation skills are also outlined.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Enhancing, IT/ITES Employees, India, Well-Being

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## 1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI), the term conceived by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and popularized by Goleman (1996) has become a key issue in the discussions pertaining to individual and organizational performance and job satisfaction (Collins, 2000). It is a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). Today's workplace is dynamic in nature and is characterized by time deadlines, cross-cultural teams, work pressures, and work-family conflicts, which in turn result in a highly stressed work force. These factors have a negative impact on the WB of employees and the effectiveness of an organization (Krishnaveni and Deepa, 2008). It is in this context that this paper presents EI as a viable organizational development intervention, which can help the work force overcome its challenges and gain competitive advantage, resulting in a state of positive well-being (WB). It makes an attempt to bring out the significant relation between EI and WB and discusses the collective benefits that can be

gained by enhancing the EI levels of individuals.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Emotional Intelligence

In ancient Greece, emotions were perceived as unreliable and were controlled abruptly. In this millennium, social science experts argue that emotions of all sorts contribute potentially to cognition. This tremendous change in the way emotions are looked upon forms the basis for the evolution of EI (Krishnaveni and Deepa, 2010). The idea of EI grew out of the concept of social intelligence. The seeds of EI were sown in 1920, when Edward Thorndike started working on social intelligence. In 1943, David Wechsler argued that our intelligence model would not be complete unless we incorporate the non-intellective factors into that model. Thus, the attention of researchers was drawn towards this aspect and Howard Gardner talked about multiple intelligences (1983), which comprised of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. This broadening of the concept of intelligence, inspired the way EI was conceptualized and Mayor and Salovey developed the first model of EI (1990) in the field of psychology.



The efforts to conceptualize EI can be broadly classified into two approaches. One approach views EI as a traditional intelligence (Mayer and Salovey, 1999) made up of a set of specific interrelated abilities, that pertain to processing of emotion-related information and is called ability-based approach. Another approach posits that EI constitutes a set of self-perceived abilities, skills, and personality related traits like conscientiousness, Assertiveness, Motivation, Optimism etc and is called mixed-approach (Bar-On, 1997; Dulewicz and Higgs, 1999; Goleman, 1996).

EI is said to have a strong impact on all walks of human life namely at home, at school, and at work. Research has shown that we take our EI lessons in our cradle days (Goleman, 1996). The impact of EI has been proved in all walks of our life. However, most of the research efforts have been directed towards the organizational context. It has been empirically proven that EI impacts individual well-being (Lenaghan *et al.* 2007), stress tolerance (Chapman and Clarke, 2003), leadership qualities (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005), organizational commitment (Ioannis and Ioannis, 2002), performance (Shaffer *et al.* 2005), work-family balance (Lenaghan *et al.* 2007), team cohesiveness (Rapisarda, 2002), cultural adjustments (Gabel *et al.* 2005), change management (Chrusciel, 2006), Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Carson *et al.* 2005), Entrepreneurial Qualities (Cross and Travaglione, 2003), Conflict Management (Rahim, 2002), and organizational learning (Singh, 2003).

## 2.2. Well being

More than 50 years ago the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as more than freedom from illness, disease, and debilitating conditions. The suggestion by the World Health Organization that health has a positive component led to the use of the term wellness. (Corbin and Pangrazi, 2001).

WB has been defined in many ways by researchers thus far. It is a mind set, a predisposition to adopt a series of key principles in varied life areas that lead to high levels of life satisfaction. (Ardell, 2002). It is a multidimensional state of describing the

existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being. (Bouchard *et al.* 1990). Hettler (1979) defined six dimensions of WB: social, occupational, spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional. It is defined as the state of being or doing well in life; happy, healthy, or prosperous condition; moral or physical welfare (of a person or community) - (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007). It encompasses six health related quality domains namely anxiety, depressed mood, positive well-being, self-control, general health and vitality (Grossi *et al.* 2006)

The correlates of WB are classified into six broad groups namely (i) personality factors; (ii) contextual and situational factors; (iii) demographic factors; (iv) institutional factors; (v) environmental factors; and (vi) economic factors (Hoorn, 2007). The various sub factors within the above mentioned broad groups, that influence WB are neuroticism and extraversion (Hayes and Joseph, 2003); blood pressure and brain activity (Blanchflower and Oswald, 2007); health, marital status, age, and gender (Hoorn, 2007); work environment (Towers Perrin, 2000a); forms of democracy (Frey and Stutzer, 2000); political and private freedom (Veenhoven, 2000); climate changes and global warming (Rehdanz and Maddison, 2005); and unemployment and inflation (Becchetti *et al.* 2006; Clark and Oswald, 1994; Di Tella *et al.* 2001; Winkellmann and Winkellmann, 1998). Women report higher WB scores than men and WB is U-shaped with age (WB scores are higher at young age, decline in middle age and increases again at higher ages) (Hoorn, 2007)

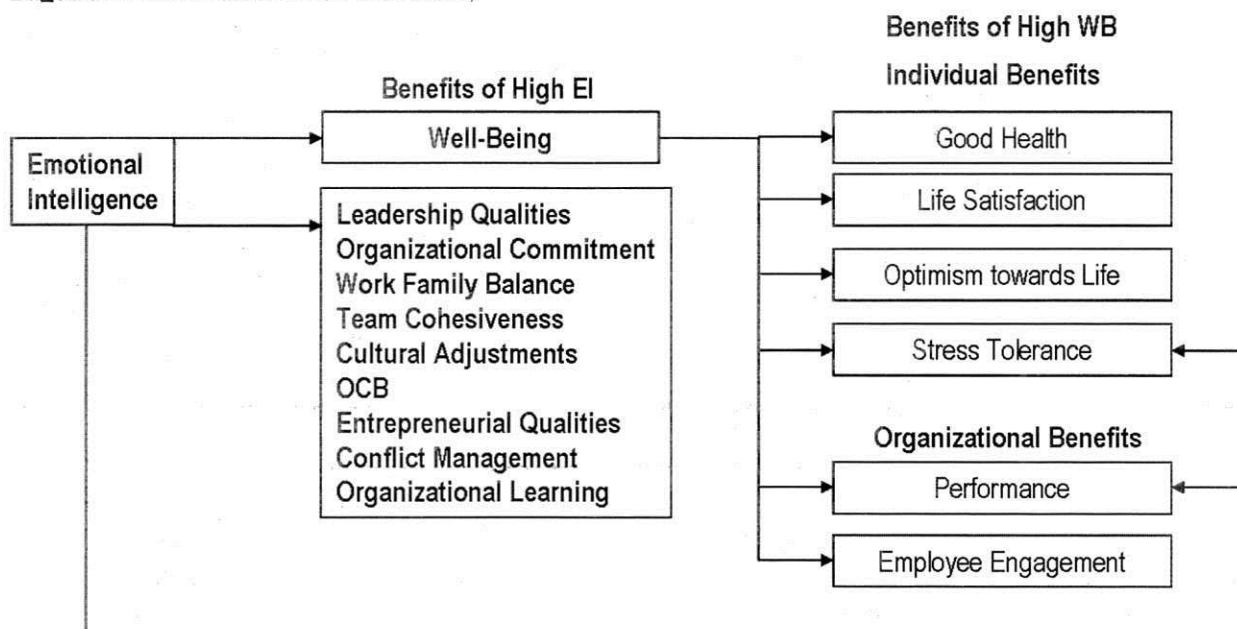
WB yields benefits to both the employer and the employee. For the employee, it results in overall good health, a feeling of satisfaction and an optimistic approach towards life. For the employer, it results in improved employee engagement and performance (Towers Perrin, 2000b). Employees who undertook a wellness program showed low stress levels and increased performance (Sommers-Krause, 2007). Studies have also produced the strongest link between WB and performance (Daniels and Harris, 2000).

### 2.3. EI and well being

Theory suggests that highly emotionally intelligent individuals are likely to experience psychological wellbeing at a higher level than individuals who are low in emotional intelligence (Carmeli *et al.* 2009). Those who are able to understand and regulate their emotions should be able to have better emotional health. Empirical evidence comes from research showing that there is a link between high EI and emotional well-being (Schutte *et al.* 2002). EI was found to have an

association with mental health, psychosomatic health, and physical health (Schutte *et al.* 2007). EI is associated with positive moods and high self esteem (Schutte *et al.* 2002), stress levels (Petrides and Furnham, 2006), and life satisfaction (Palmer *et al.* 2002). The review of literature shows that if an employee possesses high EI, he is supposed to enjoy a positive state of WB, which reflects in his overall good health and improved performance. The literature review yields a framework for the study, as shown in Fig 1.

**Figure 1: Framework for the study**



Based on the above framework, the study has a broad objective of bringing out the empirical relationship between EI and WB, which yields a few sub objectives as stated below.

- To assess the EI levels of the employees
- To assess the state of well-being of the employees.
- To study the impact of age, education, and gender on the EI and WB levels of the employees
- To examine the relationship between EI and WB.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Participants and Data collection

The IT/ITES sector of Tamilnadu was the sample frame for this study. Using convenience sampling, a sample of 200 was drawn from this sector. They belonged to various IT and ITES organizations of Tamilnadu, a state in South India. Their demographics are given in Table 1.

Out of the 200 respondents, 158 completed both the EI and WB measures, yielding a response rate of 79 per cent. Among the 158 respondents, 66 per cent were men and 34 per cent were women; their age group was between 20 and 45; 70 per cent of them were under graduates; 30 per cent were post graduates, and their average age was 26.

The Emotional Intelligence measure and well-being scale were made available as online tests for the respondents. Login credentials were created for the respondents and sent to them

through E-mail. They took up the test at their convenience, by logging into the test page. The participants took 3 weeks to complete the test. Periodic reminders were sent to the respondents,

**Table 1: Demographics of the sample**

Variable	Groups	N	%
Gender	Men	104	66
	Women	54	34
Education	UG	110	70
	PG	48	30

### 3.2. Measures

The research involved two measures, one for the independent variable EI and the other for the dependant variable well-being.

#### 3.2.1. Dependant variable

The General Well-Being Scale (GWB) developed in 1970 for the National Center for Health Statistics, was used to measure the well-being. The GWB is a structured instrument for assessing self-representations of well-being. It assesses psychological and general well-being of respondents in six Health Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) domains: anxiety, depressed mood, positive well-being, self-control, general health and vitality. Each domain is defined by a minimum of 2 or a maximum of 4 items. The scores for all domains can be summarized to provide a summary score, which reaches a maximum of 110 points, representing the best achievable "well being". If the respondents get a higher score in the domains 'anxiety' and 'depressed mood', it means they do not have anxiety and depressed mood. For the rest of the domains, namely positive well-being, self-control, general health, and vitality, a higher score means they possess the qualities referred to by the domain names. The measure has been validated and is said to have good psychometric properties. This has also been adapted in many languages and cross-culturally validated for use in several countries, under the coordination of the MAPI Research Institute (Hoorn, 2007). An example of an item from this scale is "Have you been under or felt you were under any strain, stress, or pressure during the past month?" The internal reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, for this study was .89, an acceptable level

based on Nunnally's (1978) criteria of .70 (Lenaghan *et al.* 2007). The overall score of WB is classified into 7 levels, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Levels of WB**

WB Score	Level
00-25	Severe
26-40	Serious
41-55	Distress
56-70	Stress Problem
71-75	Marginal Well-Being
76-80	Low-Positive Well-Being
81-110	Positive Well-Being

#### 3.2.2. Independent variable

For measuring emotional intelligence, an online test called Deepa Krishnaveni Emotional Intelligence Test (DKEIT) was used. This test is based on the conceptual definition that EI is the ability of an individual to perceive various emotional stimuli associated with his/her self and his/her environment, appraise and regulate them, in order to produce appropriate behavioral responses, resulting in improved intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. This definition yields three constituents of EI namely, perception, appraisal, and regulation. The DKEIT has three sections namely perception, appraisal and regulation. It contains 24 multiple choice questions to test the EI abilities of respondents. The structure of DKEIT, the sample items in each sub scale and the reliability of each sub scale are given in Appendix 1. The overall reliability of the scale is 0.8, which is acceptable as per Nunnally's (1978) criteria of 0.7. In tests that measure emotion related abilities, we cannot use expert scoring or target scoring methods because neither experts nor targets can arrive at a single correct answer. Consensus scoring method is an alternative to traditional methods of creating a scoring key for ability tests. In consensus scoring, a respondent's score on an item is based upon the responses of the norm group (which might simply be all those who responded to the item). When we use proportion consensus scoring, each respondent's score on an item is equal to the proportion of the norm group who match the respondent's answer. Research from a

The results from Table 5 show that gender has an influence on vitality only. Women have more vitality than men. The other components and the overall WB are not influenced by gender. The undergraduates have secured a higher score in general health and vitality. The postgraduates have more anxiety than the under

graduates and there is a significant difference between the WB scores of undergraduates and postgraduates, with undergraduates reporting a higher WB. The correlation between EI and WB is shown in Table 6. The constituents of both EI and WB are included in the table for a complete analysis.

**Table 6: Correlation between EI and WB**

	P	A	R	EI	GH	V	PWB	DM	AX	SC	WB
P	1.00	0.85**	0.68**	0.31**	0.12	0.11	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.03	0.14
A		1.00	0.71**	0.25**	0.04	0.1	0.06	0.13	0.13	0.1	0.16*
R			1.00	0.59**	0.02	0.23**	0.23**	0.16*	0.24**	0.11	0.28**
EI				1.00	0.11	0.34**	0.31**	0.33**	0.4**	0.19*	0.49**
GH					1.00	-0.07	-0.02	-0.09	0.18*	-0.08	0.35**
V						1.00	0.36**	0.42**	0.35**	0.18*	0.61**
PWB							1.00	0.23**	0.27**	0.31**	0.53**
DM								1.00	0.36**	0.21**	0.63**
AX									1.00	0.28**	0.78**
SC										1.00	0.49**
WB											1.00

**Note:** P = Perception; A = Appraisal; R = Regulation; EI = Emotional Intelligence; GH = General Health; V = Vitality; PWB = Positive Well-Being; DM = Depressed mood; AX = Anxiety; SC = Self-control; WB = Overall Well-being; \* = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*\* = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant correlation ( $r=0.49$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) between the overall EI score and the overall well-being score. Hence it is evident that individuals with high emotional intelligence are likely to experience a positive well-being state. A key finding from this study is that the emotional regulation component of EI is significantly correlated with vitality, positive well being, depressed mood, anxiety and overall well-being. The general well being scale score interpretation is such that if the respondents score high in depressed mood and anxiety components, then they do not have depression and anxiety. Hence, a correlation with depressed mood and anxiety means that people who have high emotional regulation capabilities will have less depression and anxiety. The perception component of EI is not correlated with any of the constituents of well-being. The appraisal component of EI correlates with overall WB ( $r = 0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The overall

EI score correlates with vitality, positive well-being, anxiety (stress), depressed mood, and overall WB. However, EI does not correlate with General Health. EI was also found to correlate significantly with age ( $r=0.18$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

As there was a significant and strong correlation between EI and WB, a regression analysis was done, between the two variables, to bring out the impact of EI on WB. The results are shown in Table 7.

It is evident from Table 7 that EI has a significant impact on WB because it explains 24 per cent of the variance in WB ( $r^2 = 0.240$ ). This is a significant number for a single predictor. WB is said to be influenced by (i) personality factors; (ii) contextual and situational factors; (iii) demographic factors; (iv) institutional factors; (v) environmental factors; and (vi) economic factors (Hoorn, 2007). Apart from these factors, this study has shown empirical



**Table 7: Impact of EI on Well-Being**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	45.542	3.966		11.482	.000
	Emotional Intelligence	1.894	.270	.490	7.012	.000
Dependent Variable: Well Being; Regression ANOVA F Value = 49.164, Significant at 0.000 level R Square = 0.240; Adjusted R Square = 0.235						

evidence that EI is a significant predictor of WB. Hence by enhancing EI skills, we can improve the state of well-being of the individuals.

#### 4. Discussion

The present study realized all its stated objectives and is a valuable addition to a growing body of literature seeking to determine the role of EI in explaining and individual's success and well-being. The study found that 40 per cent of the respondents had stress problems. This study adds strength to the previous findings on the same lines and exposes the threat to the WB of the work force. Earlier studies on the IT/ITES sector showed that about 30 to 40 per cent of the patients coming to psychiatrists are from the IT/ITES sector for problems of depression and stress disorders (Charan, 2007). In another survey (XLRI, 2009), 67 per cent of the IT/ITES employees reported headache, 53 per cent had physical symptoms of stress, 43 per cent had digestive upsets and restlessness, 27 per cent started to use drugs, alcohol and tobacco, 73 per cent experienced irritability, 67 per cent had mood swings, and 60 per cent had bad temper. Since IT professionals are more achievement oriented, they do not have much of a social life and the time spent with family is also less. There is also lack of recreation and opportunities to relax. This shows that the IT/ITES organizations should focus on the WB of their employees with utmost care.

With respect to the EI scores of the respondents, women have scored higher than men in perception and overall EI, which is in line with the findings of the literature review (Brackett *et al.* 2004; Brackett *et al.* 2005). There was no difference between men and

women in the WB scores, which is in contrast to findings from a previous study, which states that women report higher WB than men (Hoorn, 2007). Education level has an influence on WB level, which is a new finding brought out by this study.

EI had a significant impact on WB. This finding adds strength to the previous research findings (Carmeli *et al.* 2009). The overall EI score is not correlated with general health, which is in contrast to the findings by Schutte *et al.* (2007). However, EI has a significant correlation with vitality, positive well-being, anxiety(stress), depressed mood, and overall WB, as brought out by previous studies (Petrides and Furnham, 2006; Schutte *et al.* 2002; Schutte *et al.* 2007). This study has replicated the previous findings and has added strength to the linkage between high EI and positive well-being. It is to be noted that the regulation component of EI is significantly correlated with vitality, positive well being, depressed mood, anxiety and overall well-being. Hence it is evident that we should focus on our emotional regulation abilities, to gain a state of well-being.

Emotional regulation is the ability to enhance or reduce emotions as needed in order to get positive outcomes. For example, if we are upset in the middle of work, we respond to it in two distinct ways. One way is brooding upon it and spoiling the forthcoming day. This will not fetch any positive outcome. The other way of responding is distracting ourselves from that situation and setting ourselves a positive note for the rest of the day. The second response is said to be the emotional regulation ability, which in turn is the constituent of EI. The ability to regulate your emotions for positive outcomes

can be enhanced by reducing emotional instability, by practicing mindfulness skills and by learning to accept our emotions (Salters-Pedneault, 2009). EI was also found to correlate significantly with age ( $r = 0.18$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), which reinforces similar studies in the past (Law *et al.* 2004).

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study support a core proposition of the theory namely, the predictive role played by EI in experiencing a sense of well-being. The study showed that individuals who scored high in their Emotion regulation capabilities had high level of General Health and Vitality, experienced low levels of anxiety and depression and hence had a positive well being. Hence if we improve our EI ability, we can reach a higher well being state and also improve on many of our individual competencies, as shown in the framework of this study (Figure 1).

Although previous research works have examined the relationship between EI and a sense of well-being, they have focused on specific dimensions of well-being [(e.g. life satisfaction (Palmer *et al.* 2002); positive moods and self-esteem (Schutte *et al.* 2002); stress levels (Petrides and Furnham, 2006)] rather than on exploring the construct in its various dimensions. The current study has used

a complete conceptualization of well-being with all its constituents and has examined the impact of EI on the overall WB and also all of its constituents. Hence this is an important finding with respect to the well-being of the IT/ITES sector, which is a major contributor to the economic growth of the country.

The study has important implications for the IT/ITES organizations. If they plan and implement training programs to improve the EI level of their employees, this will yield dual benefits. The employer is benefited by sustained employee engagement and performance and the employee is benefited by an enhanced well-being state, which in turn leads to optimism towards life, good health and a feeling of satisfaction.

There is plenty of scope for future research in this avenue. The moderators of the relation between EI and WB like age, gender, culture, and the predictors of WB like personality factors and environmental factors can be exhaustively studied. Studies can focus on the complete framework outlined in this study, to bring out the intricate relation between EI, WB and the various beneficial outcomes. Cross cultural studies, examining the three aspects of culture namely national culture, professional culture and organizational culture will help in generalizing the constructive relation between EI and WB.

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## Appendix:

### Structure of DKEIT

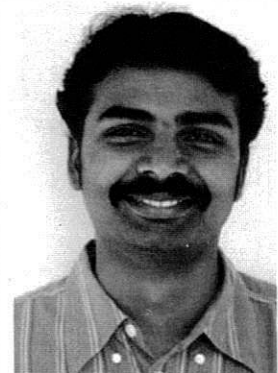
Sub Scale	Number of Items	Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)
Emotional Perception (P)	8	0.61
Emotional Appraisal (A)	4	0.63
Emotional Regulation (R)	12	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.8</b>

### Sample items in DKEIT.

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#### Section 1 – Emotional Perception

Please identify the emotions expressed by the following faces. Circle the appropriate emotion

	1. Happiness
	2. Sadness
	3. Fear
	4. Anger
	5. Surprise
	6. Other

#### Section 2 – Emotional Appraisal

Please read the following incidents and answer the questions given. Please select the appropriate emotional words from the choices given below each incident.

Your boss is a very reserved person and never appreciates a person quickly. He always critiques the work of his subordinates. He comes to your cabin and appreciates you for the recent project you have done. How will you feel? How will he feel?



<b>My feeling</b>	<b>My Boss's feeling</b>
a.Happy	a.Happy
b.Proud	b.Jealous
c.Surprised	c.Sad
d.Uneasy	d.Uncomfortable
e.No feeling	e.No feeling
f. Other	f.Other

### **Section 3 – Emotional Regulation**

Please read the following situations and circle the appropriate response to the situation.

Your subordinate comes late to the office for the third time this month. He is talented and is valuable for the team. But his tardiness (coming late) is increasing nowadays. As a manager, what will you do?

- i. I will seek more information on his late arrival and see if he has any personal issues due to which he is coming late. I will try to help him out of his issues.
- ii. I will shout at him and tell him that he is careless and does not care a damn about discipline at work
- iii. I will ignore this and decide to talk to him the next time he is late.
- iv. I will call him and tell him that I am disappointed by his tardiness and warn him of stern action the next time he repeats it.
- v. Other