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**R.Priyadharsini**

Assistant Professor, Pg &  
Research Department of Social  
Work, Hindusthan College of  
Arts and Science, Coimbatore,  
India

**P.Jayakumar**

Associate Professor, Sree  
Narayana Guru Institute of  
Management Studies  
Coimbatore, India

## Emotional Intelligence among Social Work Professionals

**R.Priyadharsini, P.Jayakumar**

### Abstract

Emotional Intelligence is defined as being able to recognize emotions in self and others, understanding how emotions work and being able to manage emotions. Knowing the crucial role of emotions and relationships in the social work chore, the rapid growth of literature reveals the relevance of EI to social work is behind the schedule and it's time to re-evaluate and work on it. In this study, the relationship between emotional intelligence, measured by the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence were examined with a sample of social work professionals in different fields (N=100). Demographic profile such as age group gender, the order of birth, marital status, type of family, education, occupational grade, income, working experience in the current job and prior working experience have selected The findings proved that the level of emotional intelligence among social work professionals is moderate.

**Keywords:** Social Work, Emotional Intelligence, Wong & Law Emotional Intelligence Scale

### Introduction

Social work as a profession has the tendency to influence individuals, families, groups, and communities to improve their well-being. It directs people to acquire knowledge to identify and use the resources. Social work studies individual problems as well as social issues which create hindrance to people in their walks of life. Social workers employ an adequate skills, techniques, strategies, principles, and activities at various system levels, for maintaining a system or for system change efforts. Social work practice makes us understand various forms of therapy and counseling, group work, and community work; policy formulation and analysis; and advocacy and political interventions. Social work practice is aimed at increasing people's hope, self-esteem and creative potential to confront and challenge oppressive power dynamics and structural sources of injustices, thus merging consistently the micro-macro, personal-political dimension of intervention. The whole system focus of social work is universal, but the priorities of social work practice will differ from one country to the next, and from time to time depending on historical, cultural, political and socio-economic conditions. It is the responsibility of social workers across the world to defend, enrich and realize the values and principles reflected in this definition. A social work definition can be meaningful when social workers committed to its values and vision. Thus social work is amazingly a meaningful career. Its theories and knowledge mark a substantial development for human development and its best range of practices help human beings to overcome trauma, addiction, and mental illness.

### Social Work and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been defined, as the ability to motivate oneself to control desire and hold up pleasure; to normalize temper; to understand and to trust (Goleman, 1996). Knowing the crucial role of emotions and relationships in the social work chore, the rapid growth of literature about EI suggests the relevance of EI to social work is behind the schedule and it's time to re-evaluate and work on it.

Emotional intelligence components like empathy and emotional regulation can be built in into a form to perform the critical role in the quest of opinion and evaluation by social work

**Correspondence:**

**R.Priyadharsini**

Assistant Professor, Pg &  
Research Department of Social  
Work, Hindusthan College of  
Arts and Science, Coimbatore,  
India

practitioners by considering the use of EI more broadly while practicing.

Five Core aspects of Social Work practice (Tony Morrison) in which Emotional Intelligence plays an essential role in the effectiveness of the engagement and intervention and are noted below:-

- Engagement with service users
- Assessment & observation
- Decision-making
- Collaboration & co-operation
- Dealing with stress

### **Emotional Intelligence Reduces Stress among Social Workers**

Palmer, Donaldson, and Stough (2002) studied higher EI as the sign of life satisfaction. Pellitteri (2002) found that people with higher in EI able to adjust in a different situation which transit healthier psychological adaptation. According to Brackett, Mayer, & Warner performance measures of emotional intelligence have explained that higher levels of E.I. are associated with an increased likelihood of health and appearance, positive interactions with friends and family, and owning memories/things of their loved ones. Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) also find the fact that significant correlation between higher EI and higher parental warmth and parental attachment. Related researches (Rice, 1999; Rubin, 1999) found that emotional intelligence increases positive interpersonal relationships among children, adolescents, and adults.

### **Review of Literature**

Abraham Carmeli, Meyrav Yitzhak-Halevy, Jacob Weisberg (2009). The study aims to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing aspects i.e, self-acceptance, life satisfaction, somatic complaints, and self-esteem. Data were collected from employees through two different structured surveys administered at two points in time. The finding was that four hierarchical regression models show the positive association between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing components – self-esteem, life satisfaction, and self-acceptance.

A study conducted by Singh (2006) found that social workers at a non-governmental organization had an above average ability to manage their own emotions and the emotions of clients whom they interacted with on a daily basis. It was further stipulated by Singh (2006) that the social workers who possess medium to high levels of emotional intelligence are able to function more effectively than those who have lower levels of emotional intelligence. Lindsay and Orton (2011) were of the view that emotions are central to the social work profession and clients are prone to emotional outbursts, thus it is of utmost importance that social workers know how to deal with these outbursts. The authors argued that social workers, who are able to undertake to work with their own emotions and to value and understand their emotional expressions, will lead to good practice.

Ingram(2012) posited the role emotions play within the social work profession is a two-way process in that social workers need to engage with the emotional context of their clients while also identifying the emotional influence this may have on themselves and in turn, their social work practice.

### **Objectives**

- To identify the overall level of emotional intelligence of the Social Workers
- To study the influence demographic profiles groups such as gender, age group, academic qualification, occupational level, working experience and previous working experience, income, jobs opted so for on levels of emotional intelligence.

### **Materials & methods**

#### **Research Design**

Descriptive research design was adopted.

#### **Sampling Procedure**

The sample consisted of 100 social work professionals working in various fields like Industry, Teaching, Hospitals, and NGOs in Coimbatore. The sample included professionals working in full – time. Non-probability, non-proportional quota sampling principles were used to ensure that fields of different types and sizes would be represented.

#### **Tools of Data Collection**

Questionnaire was used to collect the data from the respondents. It is divided into two parts. Part one consists of questions related to demographic variables and part two consist of a scale to measure the level of Emotional Intelligence. It was developed by Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale WLEIS; Law et al., 2004; Wong and Law, 2002.

### **Findings**

#### **Demographic Profile**

From the analysis of the data, it is found that 68 percent of the respondents were male and 32 percent were female. The mean age of the respondents is 29. Majority of the respondents i.e., 81 percent were MSW degree holders and the 7 percent of respondents holds an M.Phil degree and 12 percent of them holds Ph.D. Seventy one percent of the respondents were the first child in the family and 56 percent of the respondents were unmarried. Majority of the respondents i.e., 64 percent were from nuclear family, and 65 percent of the respondents have opted one job profile so far. Among the total respondents, 37 percent of the respondents were from the industrial sector, 25 percent of the respondents were from educational sector, and 19 percent of the respondents were working in hospitals and nongovernmental organizations equally. It is found that 43 percent of the respondents' monthly income is between 10,000-20,000 rupees respectively.

#### **Level of Emotional Intelligence**

The overall level of emotional intelligence is, 46 percent of the respondents were having a moderate level of EI, 28 percent were having a high level of EI and the remaining was having a low level of EI.

The EI has four dimensions. The dimensional analysis shows that 61 percent has low level of self-emotion and 39 percent has high level of self-emotion, 63 percent have low level of others emotions and 37 percent have high level of others emotions, 58 percent were in low level in use of emotions and 42 percent have high level of use of emotions, 66 percent have low of regulation of emotion and 34 percent have high level of regulation of emotion.

### **Influence of Demographic variables on the level of Emotional Intelligence**

The ANOVA analysis between the Demographic variables and the level of emotional intelligence shows that the variables such as Gender, Age, Order of birth, Educational qualification, marital status, No of children have no significant difference in the mean score of Emotional Intelligence. This coincides with the study of Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, (2017) relationship between EI and job satisfaction does not differ across gender, age, and tenure, meaning that regardless of whether an employee is male or female, young or old, or having short or long tenure, they equally benefited from EI.

It is also found that Income and No. of job opted to have a significant difference in the mean scores of the respondents. This coincides with the study of Momm et al (2015), stated that better people are at recognizing emotions, the better they handle the politics in organizations and the interpersonal aspects of work life, and thus the more they earn in their jobs. In our study, it is evident that Emotional Intelligence is significantly related to the monthly income of the respondents. The study has found a new dimension that number of jobs opted by social workers in their career have significant relationship with EI

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that there were statistically no significant differences between the subgroups of age, grade and working experience with the level of EI. So the finding implies that emotional abilities enable people to be more successful at work and thus the more they earn in their jobs. Along with this, it does also recommend that number of jobs opted by social workers in their career shows a significant relationship with their EI.

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