

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – AN IMPORTANT
DETERMINANT OF WELL-BEING AND EMPLOYEE
BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY ON YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

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Abstract

With increasing globalization and challenging work environment, an individual puts in a large part of his life and time to cope up with turbulent changes, emphasizing the role of emotional intelligence in well being and employee behavior critical to effective job performance. The present study proposes to investigate how emotional intelligence contributes to well being of individuals which in turn affects their behavior. 87 young professionals were administered a standardized emotional intelligence scale and general well being questionnaire. Data on employee behavior was collected from direct line managers to assess the job performance of the young professionals and the results were analyzed and interpreted with the help of appropriate statistical tools. The results showed a significant correlation between Emotional Intelligence and general wellbeing and both in turn contributed to employee behavior which is critical to job performance. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of these findings together with limitations of the study and avenues for future research.

Key words: emotional intelligence, well being, employee behavior, job performance

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Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Since 1990, Salovey and Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. They defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset 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 actions" (1990). Social intelligence has its origins in Thorndike's (1920) division of intelligence into three facets, pertaining to the ability to understand and manage ideas (abstract intelligence), concrete objects (mechanical intelligence), and people (social intelligence). In his classic formulation he wrote- "social intelligence is the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls to act wisely in human relations". Similarly, Moss and Hunt (1927) defined social intelligence as the "ability to get along with others". Vernon (1933), provided the most wide-ranging definition of social intelligence as the person's "ability to get along with people in general, social technique or ease in society, knowledge of social matters, susceptibility to stimuli from other members of a group, as well as insight into the temporary moods or underlying personality traits of strangers". The highest estimate of how much difference IQ (intellectual quotient) accounts for in how well people perform in their careers is no higher than 10% and perhaps as low as 4% (Sternberg, 1997). IQ is considered a threshold competence, a minimum capability that all must have. Once you're in a group of similar IQs, IQ will no longer distinguish you in the group.

Jayasuriya (2012) in 'A heart that feels and a mind that thinks' says the combination of heart and mind creates the ability to identify, use, understand and manage your emotions in positive and constructive ways. It's about recognizing your own emotional state and the emotional states of others. Recognizing and understanding comes from the mind whilst emotions/feelings come from the heart. This combination is what we call 'Emotional Intelligence'. Emotional Intelligence is also about engaging with others in ways that draw people to you. Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a different type of intelligence. It's about being "heart smart," not just "book smart." The evidence shows that emotional intelligence matters just as much as intellectual ability, if not more so, when it comes to happiness and success in life. Emotional intelligence helps you build strong relationships, succeed at work and achieve your goals.

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), EI refers to ‘the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in self and others’. The term ‘emotional intelligence’ has received a great deal of attention in the applied psychology and popular press (e.g. Goleman, 1998), and there are a variety of alternative models of this construct. Many of them do not conceptualize EI, as Salovey and Mayer (1990); Mayer & Salovey, (1997) do, as a cognitive ability that involves the processing of emotions. Instead, these alternative models define EI in terms of behaviors and skills, including stress management skills (e.g. stress tolerance and impulse control), self-management skills (e.g. self-control, conscientiousness and adaptability) as well as social skills (e.g. conflict management, leadership and communication). Bar-On, 2000; Bar-On et al.,2006; Boyatzis et al.,2009; Goleman, 1998; Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999). Salovey and Mayer (1990) proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence: the perception of emotion, the ability to reason emotions, the ability to understand emotion and the ability to manage emotions.

1. Perceiving emotions: The first step in understanding emotions is to accurately perceive them. In many cases, this might involve understanding nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions.

2. Reasoning with emotions: The next step involves using emotions to promote thinking and cognitive activity. Emotions help priorities what we pay attention and react to; we respond emotionally to things that garner our attention.

3. Understanding emotions: The emotions that we perceive can carry a wide variety of meanings. If someone is expressing anger, the observer must interpret the cause of their anger and what it might mean..

4. Managing emotions: The ability to manage emotions effectively is a key part of emotional intelligence. Regulating emotions, responding appropriately and responding to the emotions of others are all important aspect of emotional management

Importance of EI

Decades of research has now confirmed what many people have suspected all along: it is emotional quotient and not intelligence quotient that determines how well someone will perform on the job. While this does not mean that technical skills and general intelligence should be ignored, but studies have indicated that emotional intelligence is twice as important as any other factor could be, when it comes to leadership. Emotional Intelligence is incredibly important, making the difference between effective and mediocre leadership.

Generally words are not connected to technical skills or general intelligence. Instead, they are better associated with emotional intelligence, through which we understand better. Those who have these traits in abundance are referred to as being emotionally competent. If you want to become a better employee, the first thing you will need to do is assess yourself to find out if you are deficient in any of these areas, if you are, it means you can improve by enhancing Emotional Intelligence. Most skilled employees are intelligent, but not emotionally intelligent, they lack there. Many individuals, who are extraordinarily intelligent, have analytical skills and general intelligence but are low on emotional intelligence. While they are good with numbers and logic, they are bad when it comes to being sociable.

To succeed in this world, it pays to have both. Since you have to deal with people on a regular basis, it pays to be in tune to the behaviors of others. It also pays to be aware of their emotions as well as your own. Many studies do, however, provide evidence that EI is significantly related to performance, progression and leadership. More recently evidence has also been provided which demonstrates that EI is a significant factor in explaining individual emotional reactions to work contexts (e.g. job satisfaction, stress at work etc.). This has led to some authors proposing linkages between EI and the emerging field of positive psychology and, in particular, the concept of Well-Being. The study conducted by Higgs and Dulewicz (2007) reports that data on EI, Personality (using the 'Big 5' model) and Well-Being was obtained from a sample of 150 in-work managers. The Well-Being scale covered Subjective Well-Being and Psychological Well-Being (SWB and PWB) as well as a combined measure. Analyses of the data demonstrates significant relationships between EI and measures of Well-Being as well as a number of relationships between 'Big 5' personality factors and Well-Being measures.

Well-Being

Well-being is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the state of being or doing well in life; happy, healthy, or prosperous condition; moral or physical welfare (of a person or community) (OED, 2007). It usually relates to how well a person's life is going for him, what does he know about himself, how much does he know about himself and how happy he is with himself? A person's well-being is what is good for him. Health might be a constituent of his well-being, but it is not all that matters for his well-being. More important is his psychological well-being. Over the last few decades, ‘positive psychology’ has hugely increased the attention paid by psychologists and other scientists to the notion of ‘happiness’. Such happiness is usually understood in terms of contentment or satisfaction, and is measured by means such as self-reports or questionnaires.

Types of Well-Being

Physical Well-being

Physical well being encompasses both your body and your environment. When energy from environment begins to flow towards you, one becomes physically fit.

Psychological Well-being

Psychological well-being is the state of the mental health of the person. Shek (1992) defines psychological well-being as that “state of a mentally healthy person who possesses a number of positive mental health qualities such as active adjustment to the environment, and unit of personality” (p.187).

Spiritual Well-being

Spiritual well-being is closely associated with our connection to Nature and to cosmic energy

Peace and Well-being

Well-being comes ultimately from our inner sense of peace. Discovering your own, inherent, sense of peace and joy – is the way one will get the peace.

Achieving well-being has been the concern of philosophers since Aristotle, and is, in many respects the essence of human existence. In recent years, well-being has moved from the realm of philosophy to that of science. There has been a growing body of research into what contributes to the quality of people's experiences of their lives. This has enabled a new understanding of the factors that both influence and constitute well-being. Emotional Intelligence is an important factor in enhancing the well-being of an individual. It helps us to accept our current situation, and maintain the emotional state necessary to achieve our goals and achieve what's valuable to us. Slaski and Cartwright (2002) investigated the link between health, performance and EI. They hypothesized that EI is an important factor in determining psychological wellbeing and success. In their study, they found that individuals with higher levels of EI experienced less stress, had significantly better levels of health and well-being, and were better performers than their counterparts with lower levels of EI. Similarly, Dulewics et al (2003) reported strong correlation between EI and physical- and psychological health. Mikolajczak et al. (2007) found that EI is a significant predictor of somatic and psychological symptoms in the stress process. Samuel O. Salami (2010) in his research Article "Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy, Psychological well-being and students' attitudes: Implications for quality education" showed that emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, happiness and life satisfaction over and above depression predicted students' behaviors and attitudes.

Employee Behavior and Job Performance

Job performance is a commonly used, yet poorly defined concept in industrial and organizational psychology, the branch of psychology that deals with the workplace. It most commonly refers to whether a person performs his job well. Job performance is an outcome of many factors, employee behavior is one of them. Employee behavior can be defined by many parameters; some of them are as follows-

Competence:

Competence is the ability of an individual to perform a job properly.

Positive attitude:

Basically, your attitude toward something is how you judge it. It is the degree to which you have positive or negative thoughts about it. And the positive thought about something is positive attitude.

Team player:

A *team player* is an employee who is comfortable working with others and makes an effort to get along.

Stress Management:

Methods of controlling factors that require a response or change within a person by identifying the stressors, eliminating negative stressors, and developing effective coping mechanisms to counteract the response constructively.

Integrity and trust worthiness:

Trust is the act of believing or having faith in what another person says or does and integrity is a promise kept, sticking to what you say, you're going to do or how you profess you're going to act.

The emotional intelligence – performance link has been proposed in few previous studies .An analysis of job competencies in 286 behaviors worldwide indicated that 18 of the 21 competencies in their generic model for distinguishing better performers were based on emotional intelligence (Spencer and Spencer, 1993).In a study, data from more than 30 different behaviors from banking, mining, geology, sales and health care industries documented that a number of emotional intelligence competencies, qualities such as, achievement drive, developing others, adaptability, influence and self confidence distinguished top performers from average ones (McClelland, 1998). Shanker and Sayeed (2006) conducted a research on 139 managers working in various organizations in Western India.. The assumption that the emotionally intelligent managers would tend to attain greater professional development than those who are less emotionally intelligent was tentatively supported in the findings. Khokhar and Kush (2009) in their study explained the performance of executives on different levels of emotional intelligence and provided a link between emotional intelligence and effective work performance.

The findings of the study revealed that executives having higher emotional intelligence showed better quality of work performance as compared to their counterparts.

Emma J et al (2004) in “The relative importance of psychological acceptance and emotional intelligence to workplace well-being” described the importance of emotional intelligence and well being for the effectiveness of the work place. Cesar Piqueras (2006) in the article “Improving employee satisfaction and well being using Emotional Intelligence” described Emotions have been by far a term that was difficult to talk about in some companies when “classic” cognitive approaches were the used way to solve problems in dealing with people, difficulties and conflict. Nowadays we are being more aware that people take decisions, learn, make relationships through emotions and then recognize the use of them in the workplace as a facilitator to understand and deal with employees enhancing well-being. Emotional Intelligence Competencies enhance the understanding of oneself and others and then, with better understanding, we will get better awareness of where we are and if this is the place where we want to be. Subsequently managing our emotions and those of others we can build paths to go forward. All the Personal and Social competencies are ways that will lead to self awareness, self actualization and to the building of trustworthy social relationships, considering then that Emotional Intelligence improves well-being and employee satisfaction.

A meta-analysis conducted by Schutte et al. (2007), studied the relationship between EI and health and the study proved that higher levels of EI are undeniably associated with better overall health. Furthermore, EI has also been found to be linked with general life satisfaction (Bar-On, 2000;). Research by Mikolojczak et al. (2007) indicates that individuals with higher levels of EI experience lower levels of burnout and somatic problems when they are confronted with emotional labour. Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall and Salovey (2006) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace outcomes of 44 analysts and clerical employees from the finance department of a Fortune 400 insurance company. Results revealed that high emotionally intelligent employees received greater merit increases and held higher company rank than their counterparts. These employees also received better peer and / or supervisor ratings of interpersonal facilitation and stress tolerance. Kulshrestha et al (2006) in “Subjective Well Being in Relation to Emotional Intelligence and Locus of Control among Executives” revealed that emotional intelligence and locus of control have significant correlation with subjective well

being. Emotional intelligence is now considered by many as being essential for successful living. Goleman (1995)

Objectives of the Study

- To study the level of Emotional intelligence of young professionals.
- To study the general well-being of young professionals.
- To study the relationship between Emotional intelligence and general well-being of young professionals
- To study employee behavior as an important parameter of job performance
- To study the relationship amongst Emotional intelligence, general well-being and employee behavior of young professionals

Research Methodology

Research design

Descriptive and Exploratory

Sample size

87 young professionals

Sample design

Convenience sampling

Research instruments

- Emotional Intelligence questionnaire- The standardized questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence
- General Well-being questionnaire- A standardized general wellbeing scale is taken which contains questions related to different spheres of wellbeing.
- Employee Behavior questionnaire- An employee behavior questionnaire was prepared, keeping in mind the main 5 parameters critical to employee behavior which are stress management, positive attitude, competence, team player, integrity and trust worthiness. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of this questionnaire was found to be 0.645 which shows the questionnaire is reliable. (table-1)

Table-1

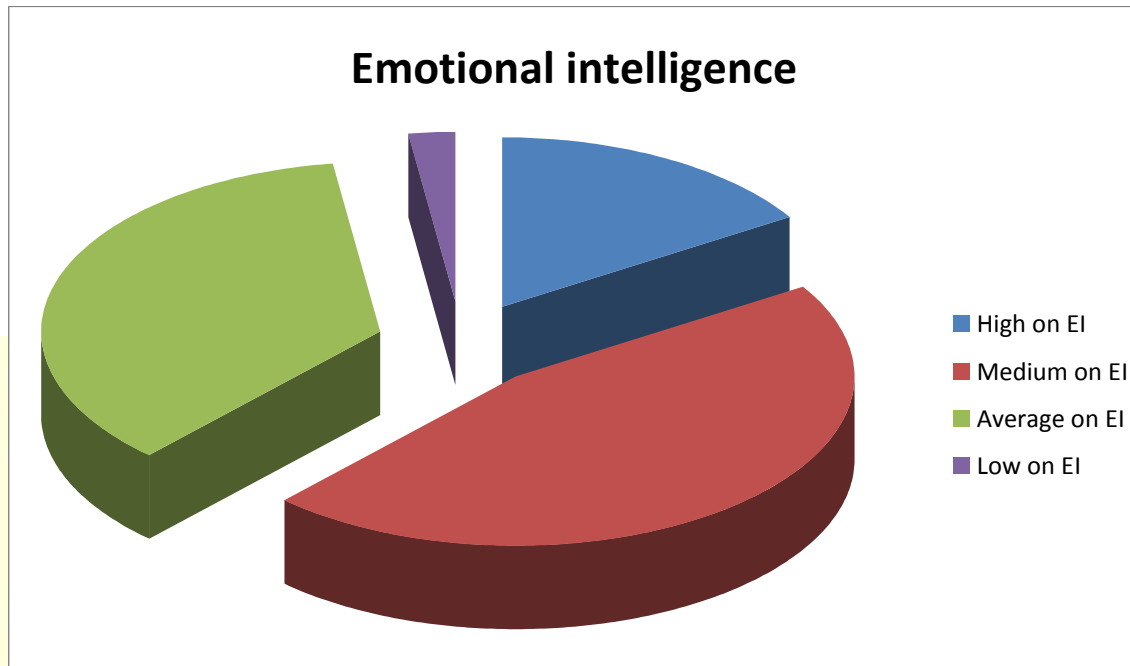
Case Processing Summary				Reliability Statistics	
		N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Cases	Valid	20	100.0	.646	5
	Excluded ^a	0	.0		
	Total	20	100.0		
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.					

Data analysis and interpretation

Table 2: Percentage of subjects lying in different categories of Emotional Intelligence

EI scores	N	Percentage
60-80 (High)	14	16%
40-59 (Medium)	40	46%
20-39 (Average)	31	35.63%
<20 (low)	2	2.29%

Figure 1 ; Diagrammatic representation of the data:

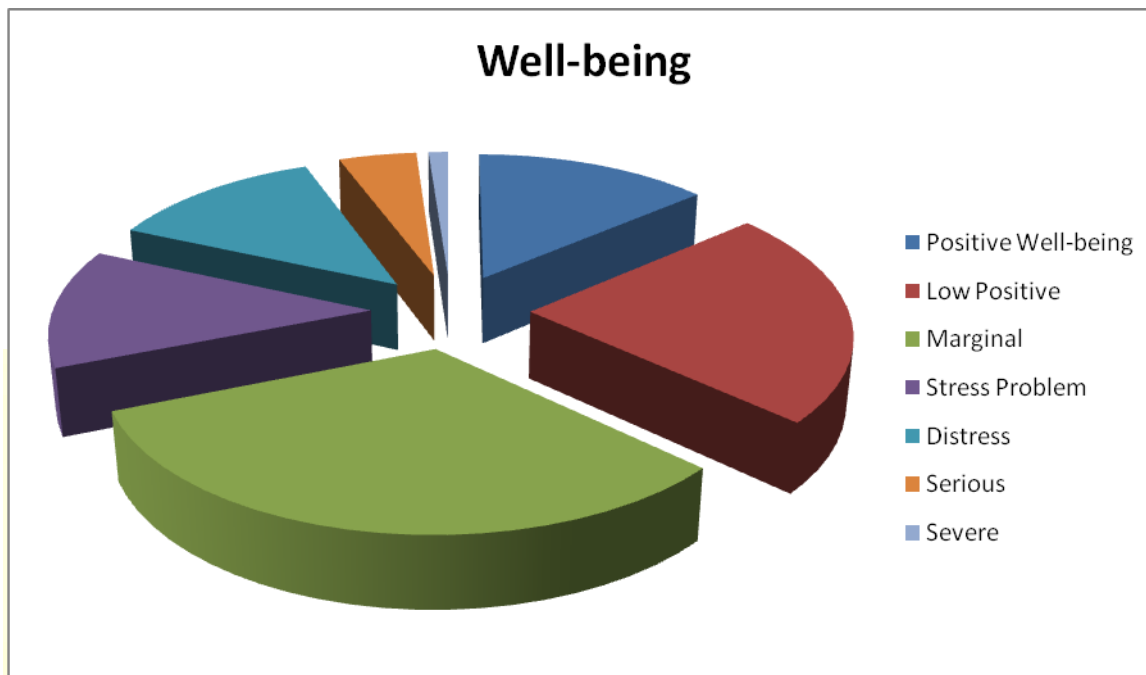


Out of 87 subjects, 16% (N= 14) had scored high on EI whereas 46% (N= 40) scored medium, 35.63% (N= 31) scored average, 2.29% scored low on emotional intelligence.

Table 3: Percentage of subjects in different categories of General well- being

-Well-Being	N	Percentage
81–110 (Positive well-being)	12	13.80%
76–80 (Low positive)	20	23%
71–75 (Marginal)	28	32.18%
56–70 (Stress problem)	11	12.64%
41–55 (Distress)	11	12.64%
26-40 (Serious)	4	4.59%
0-25 (Severe)	1	1.15%

Figure 2: Diagrammatic representation of data:



Out of 87 subjects, 13.8% (N= 12) had positive well-being score whereas 23% (N= 30) scored low positive, 32.18% (N=32) scored marginal, 12.64% showed stress and distress problems,4.59% showed serious and 1.15 scored severe on the scale of general wellbeing

Table 4: Correlation between EI and Well-being:

Correlations

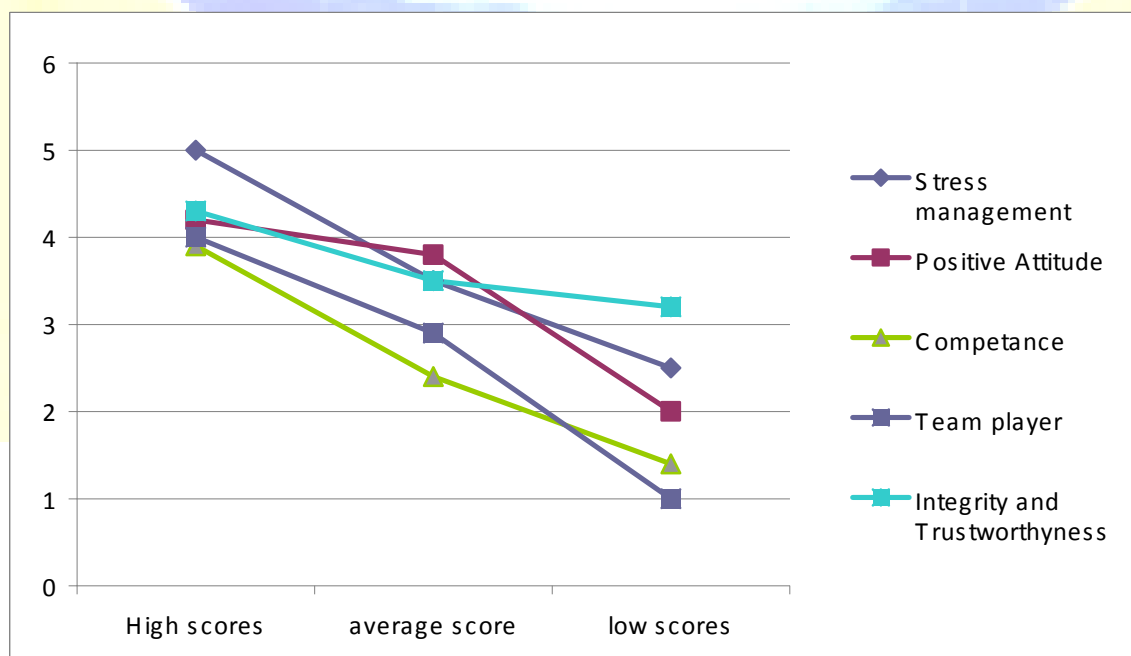
	Well being data	Well being data	EI data
Well being data	Pearson Correlation	1	.553**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
EI data	Pearson Correlation	.553**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

Correlation analysis Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the variable studied and the bivariate correlations between emotional intelligence and general wellbeing. The correlation matrix in Table 4 showed that emotional intelligence and general wellbeing are significantly correlated (correlations coefficient value is $r = 0.55$).

Table 5. Mean scores of professionals on EI and wellbeing in relation to employee behavior

Scores of EI & Well-being	Stress management	Positive attitude	Competence	Team player	Integrity and trust worthiness
Students having High scores	5	4.2	3.9	4	4.3
Average score	3.5	3.8	2.4	2.9	
Low scores	2.5	2	1.4	1	3.2

Figure 3. Graphical presentation of employee behavior based on different parameters for all three categories of young professionals- High, average and low on emotional intelligence and general wellbeing



The graph shows that young professionals who scored high on Emotional Intelligence and general wellbeing got high ratings on all the parameters of employee behavior which are stress management, positive attitude, competence, team player, integrity and trust worthiness. Thus professionals with high scores on EI and wellbeing are better in employee behavior and job performance as compared to the professionals who are low scorer on EI and well-being.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present research was conducted to study the level of Emotional intelligence and general well-being of young professionals as well as their behavior which was studied as a critical variable in determining their performance on job. Standardized questionnaire of Emotional intelligence was conducted to study the level of EI of young professionals .16% of employees belong to high category, 46% of employees fall in the medium category, 36% in average category and 2% belong to low category of EI which reflects that 62% of the young professionals fall in the above average category of EI which is an important determinant of success. The obtained data of the present research is supported by Goleman (1996) who says “Emotional intelligence is now considered by many as being essential for successful living”. The general wellbeing of the employees was studied with the help of a standardized General wellbeing questionnaire which was administered to the same sample. The data revealed that 13.8% professionals belonged to the highest ‘positive wellbeing’ category, 23% were in low positive category, and the maximum 32.18% of professional fall in marginal category which shows that in total around 68% professional are in above average category as far as their general well being is concerned. The analysis shows a similar trend both for Emotional intelligence (above average category-62%) and general well-being (above average category-68%). The present research also purports to study the relationship between Emotional intelligence and general well-being of young professionals. The correlation matrix shows that emotional intelligence and general wellbeing are significantly correlated (correlations coefficient value is $r = 0.55$). These results have been supported by Slaski and Cartwright (2002) who concluded that individuals with higher levels of EI experienced less stress, had significantly better levels of health and well-being, and were better performers than their counterparts with lower levels of EI. Similarly, Dulewics et al (2003) also reported strong correlation between EI and physical and psychological health.

Empirical evidence comes from research showing that there is a link between high EI and emotional well-being (Schutte, N. et al, 2002).

Another objective of the research was to study employee behavior as an important parameter of job performance. A questionnaire was prepared taking five factors as parameters of employee behavior. These were stress management, positive attitude, competence, team player, integrity and trust worthiness. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of this questionnaire was found to be 0.645 (Table-1) which confirms the reliability of the questionnaire. The data was collected from immediate bosses of the young professionals through feedback to assess their behavior, as behavior was taken as an important determinant of job performance in the present study. The mean scores of the young professionals who are high on EI and Well-being ranged from 3.9 to 5.0 for different parameters of employee behavior whereas the mean scores of young professionals who are low on EI and Well-being ranged from 1.0 to 3.2 (Table -5), which depicts that employee behavior is the outcome of Emotional intelligence and general well-being.

Further to conclude the relationship amongst emotional intelligence, general well-being and employee behavior of young professionals was studied. The mean scores of the young professionals on all the parameters of employee behavior for high, medium and low categories of emotional intelligence and well-being were compared. Young professionals who were in high category of EI and well-being were reported to be more competent, had positive attitude, better team players, more trustworthy and better in stress management as compared to their counterparts who were in low category of EI and wellbeing. These parameters of employee behavior were found to be critical to job performance. Figure-3 also shows that young professionals who scored high on Emotional Intelligence and general wellbeing, got high ratings on all the parameters of employee behavior. Thus young professionals with high scores on EI and wellbeing proved to be better in employee behavior leading to better job performance as compared to professionals who are low scorer on EI and well-being. These findings are supported by the studies of Emma et al (2004) who reported the importance of emotional intelligence and well being for the effectiveness of the work place and Khokhar and Kush (2009) who reported that executives having higher emotional intelligence showed better quality of work performance as compared to their counterparts .

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