Emotional Intelligence and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

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Abstract

Relationships exist in all aspects of life whether work, family or friendship related. With the use of The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF) comprised of four factors (well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability) and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RRS) the association between trait emotional intelligence (TEI) and romantic relationship satisfaction (RRS) was evaluated across Young-Adults (18 - 28) and Middle-Age adults (29 - 40) that completed the study ($n = 124$). To understand how accumulated life experiences could influence TEI levels, the impact of age on trait emotional intelligence was also investigated. Quantitative analyses revealed a weak, positive relationship between trait emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction. No significant difference in scores were found between age and TEI. Limitations of the study present within the age representations between the two age groups. Ideas for future research is provided in order to improve interpersonal relationship satisfaction.

Keywords: romantic relationship satisfaction; trait emotional intelligence; age; crystallised; intelligence; life quality

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Introduction

The following literature review intends to provide an objective, comprehensive and critical appraisal of previous research pertaining to the evaluation of emotional intelligence and its impact on romantic relationship satisfaction across two differing age groups being young adults and middle age adults (18 - 28 and 29 - 40). The review will also offer an in-depth examination concerning the current state of the topic, with regards to areas that have been covered and gaps that are yet to be filled by the current research and research yet to arise in the future.

While the exact nature of intelligence has been considerably debated over an extensively long period of time, a definitive conceptualisation has yet to emerge presently. As the debate is still ongoing, when discussing intelligence, it is often that various theoretical viewpoint be expressed. Spearman (1904) used a technique commonly known as factor analysis to examine various mental aptitude tests to describe a concept he referred to as the *g factor* or general intelligence. Following his realisations that those who scored well on one cognitive test scored well on the other and those who scored bad on one test scored similar on other, he concluded that intelligence is a general cognitive ability that can be objectively determined and measured. Colom R, Karama S, Jung RE, Haier RJ. (2010) furthered the work carried out by Spearman (1904) by exploring the relationship between the brain and human intelligence and determined that intelligence can be defined as a "general mental ability for reasoning, problem solving and learning" (Colom R, Karama S, Jung RE, Haier RJ., 2010, p. 489). The researchers explained that as the concept of intelligence is so general, it incorporates cognitive abilities such as planning, memory, perception, attention and language and that by using standardised tests can be reliably measured to predict several broad social outcomes.

It is suggested by Mayer, Salovey, Caruso and Sitarenios (2003) that emotional intelligence is also a cognitive ability, although it is separate but also combined with general intelligence (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018; Føllesdal & Hagtvet, 2009). Thorndike, E.L. (1920) introduced the idea that social intelligence can be subdivided into motivational and emotional intelligence. Furthering from Thorndike's proposition, recent definitions of emotional intelligence refer to it as a type of social intelligence that entails one's capacity, skill or self-perceived ability to distinguish, evaluate and manage the emotions of one's self, others' and of groups, and to also use the gathered information to assist one's own reasoning and behaving (Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Serrat, 2010). Casey, Garrett, Brackett, and Rivers (2008) highlight that emotional intelligence is vital for relationship satisfaction and argues that the use of emotional intelligence enables a more straight forward navigation through the emotionally concentrated circumstances that typify romantic relationships (Brackett, Warner & Bosco, 2005). There are several skills related to emotional intelligence that are crucial in generating positive feelings and mutual affection within relationships, of which include emotional awareness, management of feelings and empathy (Walton, 2012). Rick, Falconier and Wittenborn (2017) give example to the importance of emotional awareness within relationships by highlighting that if discrepancies arise among the partners in their levels of awareness, attempts to communicate their feelings to one another could possibly be misunderstood by the other partner, further influencing general dissatisfaction within the relationship (Croyle & Waltz, 2002) however, individuals with an enhanced awareness of their own emotions in combination with an understanding of others' feelings and emotions, may choose partners and relationships that are more compatible to their own emotional needs, and in turn these emotional competencies become apparent to their partner in cases that require adequate problem solving skills during interpersonal

conflicts, leading to additional rises in relationship satisfaction (Barnes, Brown, Krusemark, Campbell & Rogge, 2007; Malouff, Schutte & Thorsteinsson, 2013).

Zeidner and Kaluda (2008) propose the assumptions that those who have higher emotional intelligence capabilities are far better equipped to resolve and communicate conflicts with flexibility, forgive their partner and resolve disagreements practically, which shows a more profound love for their partner within their relationship. Several studies offer support to the notion that emotional intelligence is impactful upon romantic relationship satisfaction. The term abandonment schema refers to the fear of being abandoned or left by those closest to the individual due to childhood loss of a parent either related to divorce, death or neglect (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). O'Connor, Izadikhah, Abedini and Jackson (2018) observed whether the harmful effects of abandonment schema on marital quality can be attributed to low trait emotional intelligence (TEI), by collecting a sample of 123 married couples from Iran and concluded that negative relationships between abandonment schema and spousal scoring of marital satisfaction, conflict resolution and communication satisfaction can be accounted for by TEI.

Zarch, Marashi and Raji (2014) investigated the 10-year outcome of 159 randomly selected partners (N = 318) from three differing economic levels, regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction, using Pearson correlation test and stepwise regression in relation to the Bar-on Emotional Intelligence (1997) and Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (1989). The research revealed that on average, emotional intelligence accounted for 40.8% of marital satisfaction with the most significant factor changing marital satisfaction in the under-rich area being stress management. The study was highly comprehensive and informative as the authors explained the possibilities behind any consistencies and inconsistencies thoroughly, with related works carried out so far and presented insightful ideas concerning the obtained results.

The authors also gave a remarkable explanation as to why each analysis was performed, for example it is explained that the stepwise regression was used to provide information about the highest prediction power of the components of emotional intelligence. The authors also identified inconsistencies and addressed them for future research however on the downside of the study, the methods of evaluation (being the Bar-on Emotional Intelligence [1997] and Enrich Marital Satisfaction [1989]) are old and outdated considering the knowledge that the research was carried out in 2014.

The current study is interested in reviewing the impact age may have on trait emotional intelligence, which could potentially be explained by crystallised cognition. Cattell (1963) proposed that crystallised cognition is a type of intelligence that encompasses knowledge gathered from previous experience and prior learning. It has been argued that despite the cognitive declines that occur in relation to progressive aging, older adults respond more effectively to emotionally significant and interpersonal issues than young adults. This is due to them choosing proactive and passive emotion regulation strategies, as life experiences may improve strategy preferences based upon past successes and failures (Blanchard-Fields, 2007; Blanchard-Fields, Mienaltowski & Seay, 2007). Horn and Cattell (1967) investigated the variations in intellectual functioning related with aging in adulthood. The research evaluated several broad factors including crystallised cognition on a sample of 297 participants between the age groups of: 14 – 17, 18 – 20, 21 – 28, 29 – 39 and 40 – 61 by means of analysis of variance and covariance performed on the age groupings along with the factors, with use of education and sex and the factors themselves as covariates. Results indicated that the mean level concerning crystallised cognition, was systematically higher for older adults in relation to younger adults, providing support to the notion that older adults have an increased advantage than their younger counter parts to practice emotional intelligence through their lives (Chen, Peng & Fang, 2016).

Though the research carried out by Horn and Catell (1967) established great findings in relation to intellectual functioning's related to aging adults, the study lacked detail concerning the area of research in the present day as the findings date back over 50 years ago.

Stawski, Mogle and Sliwinski, (2013) provide an updated analysis examining crystallised cognition and day-to-day stress processes in 107 older adults, revealing that higher crystallised cognitive processes were strongly linked to an increased likelihood of reported exposure to everyday stressors among older adults. While the study was analysed in great depth using appropriate forms of measurement such as the Woodcock-Johnson Analysis Synthesis test and Mill Hill Vocabulary Test, the participants were considerably educated with an average of 15.01 years of education among the participants, which could potentially have a significant effect on the executive functioning of the individuals in their older years, offering them a higher advantage than individuals who were not offered the same opportunity throughout their life time (Banks & Mazzonna, 2012). Despite the implications regarding the educational statues of the participants the findings of the study further exemplify the notion that older adults are more likely to report significant levels of romantic relationship satisfaction, as through life experiences and practice daily, older adults gain more of an ability to exercise their emotional intelligence and make better judgments and decisions when responding to interpersonal conflict within all social relationships that which includes the romantic kind (Kafetsios, 2004).

In order to analyse the link between relationship satisfaction and stress (both internal and external), Randall & Bodenmann (2017) used several search engines such as the Web of Science, Google Scholar, PsychInfo, EBSCOhost and PsycARTICLES to gather 26 overall empirical articles related to the area of focus. In the case of this particular study, external stressors were stressors that derived from outside of the relationship (e.g. work or school) and internal stressors, were stressors that originated from within the relationship

(e.g. differentiations on desired relationship outcome). Randall and Bodenmann (2017) concluded that empirical corroboration advocates that there is a negative association between stress and relationship satisfaction, more specifically external, minor and chronic stressors (Simpson & Rholes, 2017). The study extended current knowledge regarding family stress theories by building upon the ABC-X model which is primarily employed in the evaluation stress and coping within families (Rosino, 2016).

Relative to the association between emotional intelligence and stress, Sarrionandia, Ramos-Díaz and Fernández-Lasarte (2018) explored the relationship between emotional intelligence, resilience and perceived stress in two differing countries (i.e. America and Basque Country) using the Self-Rated Emotional Intelligence Scale, the 10-item Connor Davidson Resilience scale and Perceived Stress Scale 4 to measure each of the studies variables, and proposed emotional intelligence affects perceived stress while also analysing possible mediating influences of resilience among 698 undergraduate students. The researchers discovered a congruence among both hypotheses and successfully offered outstanding strengths among the study, including its consistencies with several other prior studies, large and varied sample population from two distinct and diverse university campuses. This discovery is consistent to the aims of the current study as it suggests that higher rates of emotional intelligence further encourage psychological resilience which has the potential to dampen the negative effects stress may potentially have on relationship satisfaction, further boosting the likelihood of a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and romantic relationship satisfaction, reflecting the notion that emotional intelligence has a significant impact on romantic relationship satisfaction (Moradi, Pishva, Ehsan, Hadadi & pouladi, 2011; Schneider, Lyons & Khazon, 2013).

The fundamental purpose of the current study is to investigate trait emotional intelligence using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form and its association with self-report romantic relationship satisfaction measured using the Relationship Assessment Scale along with the potential differences between two varying age groups being 18 – 28 and 29 – 40 with 158 participants, recruited using convenience and snowball sampling over a period of 3 months. The study also intends to draw attention to the importance of emotional intelligence in everyday life and how it can be used as a beneficial tool to improve all social relationships individuals may engage in whether romantic or otherwise.

To the knowledge of the current researcher there is a gap in present and past literature regarding the possible influences age may contribute to emotional intelligence and romantic relationship satisfaction. It is assumed that there will be variations among the differing age groups due to previous research reports highlighting the steady enhancement of emotional intelligence as a result of knowledge and skills acquired over a lifetime of experiences. It is hypothesised that a direct relationship will be present between trait emotional intelligence scores and romantic relationship satisfaction scores. It is also hypothesised that a positive correlation will be present between age and levels of trait emotional intelligence.

Method Section

Participants

Participants in the current study were 159 individuals including (37.3%, $n = 59$) males and (62.7%, $n = 99$) females who volunteered to partake in the study. As the eligibility of the study was restricted to individuals that were previously or currently in a relationship, the sample was narrowed down to 124 individuals with (38.7%, $n = 48$) males and (61.3%, $n = 76$) females. Participants that qualified for the study were previously (48.4%, $n = 60$) or currently (51.6%, $n = 64$) in a relationship for over 3 months. Ages ranged between 18 and 37 (mean = 21, SD = 4), 91.1% were between the ages of 18 and 28 years ($n = 113$) and 8.9% were between the ages of 29 and 40 years ($n = 11$). Two individuals were excluded from the study as they did not meet the age requirement of over 18 years of age and one individual was excluded due to missing values.

Participants were recruited by means of nonprobability sampling methods. Nonprobability sampling was the chosen technique as it was cost and time effective in comparison to probability sampling and resources to conduct the study in this manner were readily available. Methods used included convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Participants were invited to take part through social media platforms, being Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter and referrals from the initial respondents to generate additional responses was the primary method of response generation. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and there were no incentives to participate used in the study. It was not required that the current or previous partners of the participants were present during the study.

Design

The study was a cross-sectional quantitative design. There was no manipulation of the variables involved however two scales were used (Relationship Assessment Scale and Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire [TEIQue]) in order to explore and observe the relationship between the uncontrolled variables. The criterion variable was romantic relationship satisfaction and the predictor variable was trait emotional intelligence.

Materials

Trait Emotional Intelligence: The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short – Form (TEIQue-SF*)* developed by (Petrides, 2009) was used to measure the trait emotional intelligence level of the participants of the current study. The questionnaire is based on the full form of the TEIQue which is comprised of 153 items that measure global trait emotional intelligence, 15 distinct facets included in 4 factors. A modified version of the full form, the TEIQue-SF is a self-report comprised of 30-items rated by the participant on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree), designed to measure global trait emotional intelligence; Well-Being (self-esteem, happiness and trait optimism); Self-Control (low impulsiveness, emotion regulation and stress management); Emotionality (emotion perception, emotion expression trait empathy and relationships); Sociability (assertiveness, social awareness and emotion management), while the remaining two contribute directly to the global trait emotional intelligence score (self-motivation and adaptability) (Andrei, Smith, Surcinelli, Baldaro & Saklofske, 2016). Depending primarily on their correlations with the corresponding total facet score, two items from each of the 15 facets of the TEIQue were selected for inclusion on the 4 factors for the modified version of the full form, known as the short form containing 30-items, which was used in the present study. Internal consistency and test-retest both indicated scale reliabilities of 0.71 and 0.76.

Romantic Relationship Satisfaction: The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) developed by Hendrick (1988) was used to measure romantic relationship satisfaction levels concerning the participants of the current study.   Hendrick, Dicke and Hendrick, (1998) claim that while instruments are available for assessing relationships, many are long and time consuming and some are only suitable for use with married couples. Hendrick (1988) describes the RAS as being distinctive to the previous instruments, in that items are worded so that they are not specific to marriages and are general enough to relate to all types of romantic relationships such as married couples, cohabiting couples, engaged couples or dating couples and discriminates between dating couples that stay together and those that break up. The RAS is a 7-item questionnaire designed to measure general relationship satisfaction. Participants answer each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (low satisfaction) to 5 (high satisfaction). Scoring was continuous, higher values indicated higher relationship satisfaction.

Age: The participants were asked to provide their age and age groups were later categorised into young adults (18 – 28) and middle age adults (29 – 40).

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for both of the questionnaires (Global Trait Emotional Intelligence = .490) including the factors of the TEIQue; Well-Being = .273; Self-Control = -.080; Emotionality = .332; Sociability = .159, and The Relationship Assessment Scale = .843.

Windows IBM SPSS was the software used to calculate all statistics for the study. The TEIQue scoring key (which can be found in the appendix) was used to reverse code the item listed under RECODE, calculate factor totals and the global trait emotional intelligence total for each participant.

Procedure

The current study was first ethically approved to take place by the Ethical Review board of the National College of Ireland. The research tool used in the study (TEIQue and RAS) was first comprised into the form of a survey with the use of google forms. The sample were then recruited by posting the survey online to various social media accounts of the researcher, inviting individuals to respond to the survey. The requirements of the study were first clearly defined and all participants were given written instruction informing them of the nature of the study and their right to withdraw at any point in time during the study without penalty (example in appendix). All participants were required to provide consent to the study before it began. Once consent was provided the survey began and participants' demographics were first collected (age, gender, current relationship or past relationship) if participants reported that they were currently or previously in a relationship over 3 months they were then presented with the RAS and TEIQue-SF, the whole survey lasted approximately 7 minutes. When the survey was finished the participant was debriefed and thanked for their participation. Information provided by the participant was in full anonymity and carefully handled by only the researcher. Ethical implications were present when two underage individuals carried out the survey even though it was strictly for individuals above the age of 18, however any information given by the individuals was excluded from the study and the supervisor was notified.

Results

. Table 1. Descriptive statistics of all continuous variables associated with trait emotional

intelligence.

	Mean (95% Confidence Intervals)	Std. Error Mean	Median	SD	Range
Well-Being	4.88 (4.76-5.00)	.062	5.00	.686	3-7
Self-Control	4.33 (4.22-4.45)	.059	4.33	.653	3-6
Emotionality	4.48 (4.35-4.62)	.067	4.50	.750	3-7
Sociability	4.34 (4.22-4.46)	.062	4.33	.686	3-6

Descriptive statistics include Confidence Intervals (95% CI), Standard Error Mean

(M), Median, Standard Deviation (SD) and range for well-being, self-control, emotionality

and sociability which are all presented in Table 1. Tests of normality were also performed to

in this test which show the variables are not normally distributed
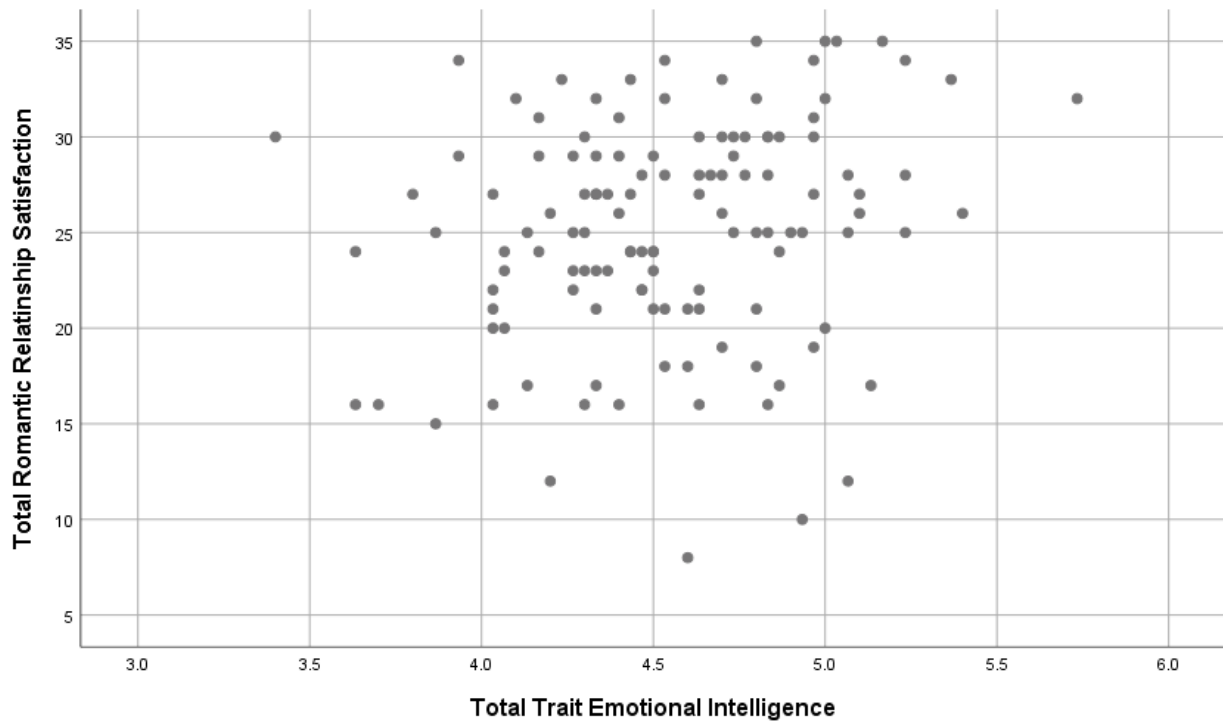
Figure 1. Scatter plot displaying the relationship between TTEI and TRRS

The relationship between trait emotional intelligence (TTEI) and total romantic relationship satisfaction (TRRS) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a small, positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .20$, $n = 124$, $p = .024$). This indicates that the two variables share approximately 4% of variance in common. Results indicate that higher levels of trait emotional intelligence are associated with higher levels of romantic relationship satisfaction.

Table 2. Trait Emotional Intelligence T-Test

Group differences between young adults and middle age adults for trait emotional

intelligence.

Variable	Group	N	M	SD	t	d
TTEI	Young Adults	113	4.54	.410	-.277*	.09
	Middle Age Adults	11	4.58	.399		

Note. TTEI = Total Trait Emotional Intelligence; d = Cohen's d; Statistical significance: *$p <$ .001

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare levels of trait emotional

intelligence between young adults and adults. There was no significant difference in scores (t

(122) = -.272, p = .786) with young adults (M = 4.54, SD = .410) scoring relatively equal to

middle age adults (M = 4.58, SD = .399). The magnitude of the differences in the means

(mean difference = -.035, 95% CI: -.291 – .310) was small (Cohen's d = .09).

Table 3. T TEST Correlations between all continuous variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Total RRS	1			
2. Well-Being	.124	1		
3. Self-Control	.038	.238	1	
4. Emotionality	.215	.300	.029	1
5. Sociability	.043	.162	-.043	.105

Note. Statistical significance: *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$ *RRS = Romantic
Relationship Satisfaction

Table 4. Multiple regression model predicting romantic relationship satisfaction scores

	R^2	β	B	SE	CI 95% (B)
Model	.058*				
Well-Being		.049	.410	.824	-1.23 / 2.04
Self-Control		.021	.191	.829	-1.45 / 1.83
Emotionality		.201	1.552	.727	.112 / 2.99
Sociability		.014	.115	.776	-1.42 / 1.65

Note. R^2 = R-squared; Ajd R^2 = Adjusted R-squared; β = standardized beta value; B = unstandardized beta value; SE = Standard errors of B; CI 95% (B) = 95% confidence interval for B; N = 398; Statistical significance: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine how well romantic relationship satisfaction levels could be explained by four variables including well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The correlations between the predictor variables and the criterion variable included in the study were examined (see table c). All four of the predictor variables were significantly correlated with the criterion variable, and these significant effects ranged from r = .038 (self-control) to r = .727 (emotionality). The correlations between the predictor variables were also assessed with r values ranging from -.043 to .300 These results indicate that there was no violation of the assumption of multicollinearity and that the data was suitable for examination through multiple linear regression analysis.

Since no *a priori* hypotheses had been made to determine the order of entry of the predictor variables, a direct method was used for the analysis. The four predictor variables explained

5.8% of variance in romantic relationship satisfaction levels (F (5, 118) = 1.450, p = .212).

One of the variables were found to uniquely predict romantic relationship satisfaction levels

to a statistically significantly level: Emotionality (β = .201, p = .035), (see table D for

results).

Discussion

The initial objective of the current study was to evaluate romantic relationship satisfaction and its association with trait emotional intelligence across two varying age groups (18 - 28) and (29 - 40) measured using the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF). The research aimed to highlight the importance of being aware of one's own emotions and that of others, while practicing and continuously developing the ability to express one's own emotions in a healthy and proactive way, in order to create better climates concerning not only romantic relationships but all round relationships including family or work related relationships, and friendships. It is important to note that any present findings throughout the study do not infer causation. Correlational analysis between TTEI and TRRS were carried out and results revealed a weak positive correlation (r=.20, n=124, p=.024) between the variables (as seen in Figure 1) and due to the p value of .024 (p < .05) it is indicated that as trait emotional intelligence levels increases, as does romantic relationship satisfaction levels, supporting the hypothesis that a direct relationship will be present between trait emotional intelligence and romantic relationship. The result of the correlational analysis support the findings of the research conducted by Malouff, Schutte and Thorsteinsson (2013), which used meta-analysis to estimate the overall degree of association between relationship satisfaction and trait emotional intelligence, with a total of 603 participants in six various studies. The outcome of the meta-analysis revealed significant, medium meta-analytic association between trait emotional intelligence and romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = .32$). Malouff, Schutte & Thorsteinsson (2013) highlight that despite the limitations the meta-analysis in the low number of studies included (6), the amount of studies proved adequacy in showing a consistent pattern across diverse studies completed by various research teams with

independent samples from a total of four different countries, which included India, Germany, USA and Australia.

In current study also hypothesised that a positive relationship would exist between age and trait emotional intelligence (TTEI) levels. It was important investigate this hypothesis as accumulated life experience plays a vital role in growth and learning, which could have potentially influenced increased levels within older participants. To compare TTEI levels between young adults and middle age adults, and independent samples t-test was conducted. Results showed no significant difference in scores (t (122) = -.272, p = .786) between young adults (M = 4.54, SD = .410) and middle age adults (M = 4.58, SD = .399) contrary to the findings of Sharma (2017), who investigated the pattern of change in emotional intelligence and its components with 186 participants with age groups clustered as Young Adults (17-23 years), Middle-age (24-34 years) and Mature-age (35-60 years). The components of emotional intelligence investigated by Sharma (2017) were maturity, sensitivity and competency and their effect on the participants' total emotional intelligence was also measured using a self-report questionnaire by Singh and Chadha (2006). Findings showed that the total emotional intelligence scores increased with age, however the pattern off emotional competency decreased from young adulthood to middle-age and then increased again from middle-age to adulthood, supporting the idea that there are certain competencies that are not governed by age by must be developed by training, thus explaining a possibility of the result obtained within the current study as there were no participants over the age of 40 to allow for the investigation of an increase of certain traits of emotional intelligence in mature adulthoo To measure how well romantic relationship satisfaction levels (RRS) could be explained by the four trait emotional intelligence factors (well-being, self, control, emotionality, sociability) a multiple regression analysis was conducted. All four of the factor variables were significantly correlated with RRS (ranging from r = .038 to r = .727).

To further explain the four factors and their individual impact on relationship satisfaction, Gross and John (2003) reported that subjective well-being as a result of reappraisal was positively correlated to all indicators of positive functioning and emotion (life-satisfaction, optimism, personal growth positive relations with others) and individuals who displayed increased levels of well-being on the Ryff's (1989) domains of well-being, also displayed increased levels of environmental mastery, meaning they took charge of their environment had a greater sense of self-sufficiency and scored higher in their relations to others (Diener, 1984).

Finkel and Campbell (2001) explain that due to the unpredictability that accompanies relationships one way or another all relationships are bound to engage in troubles at some point and one or the other partner will inevitably engage in potentially destructive behaviours (e.g. inadequate effort, insufficient time put into relationship, selfishness). Finkel and Campbell (2001) outline that an underlying factor to the success or failure of a relationship stems from one's ability to respond in a constructive manner rather than in a destructive manner to potentially destructive partner behaviours, otherwise known as engaging in accommodative behaviour and that these behaviours require individuals to move beyond their own impulses and self-interested desires and given that these separations from one's own self-interest requires effort and can be challenging some degree of self-control is necessary to the satisfaction the relationship.

Ganiban (2009) looked into how personality characteristics effected behaviours within a relationships and discussed how sociability - which is a personality characteristic - is thought to reflect social reward within an individual, and the motivation that lies behind social reward acts as incentive to foster and maintain relationships   and in relation to emotionality, Laurent and Powers (2007) outlined that emotional regulation plays a significant role in temperament and attachment, stating that partners who have developed a

secure attachment early on in life are better able to provide support within anxiety invoking situations and are better equipped to deal with and conflict constructively, which ties into the finding proposed earlier on in the current study highlighting how abandonment schema is negatively correlated to marital satisfaction.

Few limitations should be considered within the current study in relation to the demographics. The age groups within the study showed bias to the individuals in the young adult's category considering the frequency differences between Young Adults ($n = 113$) and Middle-Age Adults ($n = 11$) and also no individuals over the age of 40 took part in the survey excluding a wide variation of demographic information. There is a possibility that this limitation could have been the potential reason no relationship was found between age and trait emotional intelligence considering the fact that previous investigations that have been carried out in the past encountered some form of association between age and trait emotional intelligence. Participation in the study was also restricted to an online population, excluding access to the survey from those not on any form of social media platform. It would be important to consider whether the findings may generalise to the population taking into consideration the mentioned implications.

Some ideas for further research that may arise in the future surround incorporating the differences in gender to evaluate potential differences in how men and women use emotional intelligence to increase romantic relationship satisfaction. Also, the differences in emotional intelligence levels among couples with or without children and the differences before and after becoming parents for the first time could be investigated to better understand not only the nature vs nurture aspect of emotional intelligence, but also how being responsible for a new-born that only communicates using emotions could influence one's own ability to understand and interpret the emotions of others. Future research can also investigate aspects of emotional intelligence that can be learned, practiced and developed.

In conclusion, the research supported the notion that a positive relationship exists between trait emotional intelligence and romantic relationship satisfaction among the age group of 18 – 40. The current study demonstrates the importance of emotional intelligence in interpersonal relationships and positive interpersonal relationships can be the source of better work performance, life satisfaction, self-efficacy, overall happiness and quality of life (Segrin & Taylor, 2007). Emotional intelligence has proven to be a very useful tool in everyday life that is accessible for all to use and incorporate daily to better ourselves and help others. It is important that individuals learn to utilise skills that can help the world improve just on day at a time.

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Appendix

Emotional Intelligence & Romantic Relationship

Satisfaction, Across Three Differing Age Groups

INFORMATION SHEET

* Required

INVITATION

You are being asked to take part in a research study (approx. 7 mins) , with the aim to evaluate the potential differences between three differing age groups in relation to emotional intelligence and romantic relationship satisfaction.

REQUIREMENTS

It is required that you are 18 years of age or older and fully capable of understanding, consenting and carrying out the study yourself.

It is required that you have been or currently are, in a romantic relationship exceeding three months.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

In this study, you will be asked to partake in two questionnaires regarding emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction.

1. The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF)

2. The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

You may decide to stop taking part in the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome).

If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should email the researcher or supervisor before the study begins.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

There are little to no risks involved in the partaking of the study however if participation in the study results in distress please contact the helplines listed on the debriefing sheet.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

Questionnaires are in full anonymity and no parties or persons will link the data you provided to the information you supplied (e.g., age or gender). However once anonymised you may not be able to withdraw data from the study as it will be in full confidence and indistinguishable to the rest of the data.

The data may be made available to researchers via accessible data repositories and possibly used for novel purposes.

1 By checking the box below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) you are over 18 years of age, (3) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion), and (5) anonymised data only may be shared in public research repositories. * Check all that apply.

 Yes

2. By checking the box below, you are agreeing that you are over 18 years of age. * Check all that apply.

 Yes

Demographics

3.   Please Insert Your Age *

4.   Please Provide Your Gender * Mark only one oval.

 Female

 Male

5.   Are you currently in a romantic relationship? (Exceeding 3 months) * Mark only one oval.

          I am currently in romantic relationship for 3 months or over   Skip to question 6.

          I am not currently in a romantic relationship for 3 months or over   Skip to question 9.

Current Relationship

You will now be presented with a Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Scale. Please answer these questions in reference to your current relationship.

How Long Have You Been In Your Current Relationship For? (Optional)

Please Insert Your Answer In Years and Months

6 Year(s)

 1 2 3 4

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7 Months

3

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8. By checking the "Yes" option below you agree that you have read and understand the above statement. * Mark only one oval.

       Yes   Skip to question 13.

Previous Relationship

9. Have you (in the past) been in a romantic relationship? (Exceeding 3 months) * Mark only one oval.

       I have previously been in a romantic relationship for over 3 months   Skip to question

I have never been in a romantic relationship for over 3 months Skip to "Debrief Sheet

."

Previous Relationship

You will now be presented with a Romantic Relationship Satisfaction Scale. Please answer these questions in reference to your MOST RECENT relationship lasting more than 3 months.

How Long Was Your Most Recent Relationship? (Optional)

Please Insert Your Answer In Years and Months

10 Year(s)

 1 2 3 4

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11 Months

3

4

5

6

7

8

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10

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12

12. By checking the "Yes" option below you agree that you have read and understand the above statement. * Mark only one oval.

Yes   Skip to question 13.

Relationship Assessment Scale

The Relationship Assessment Scale was designed to assess an individual's satisfaction with their relationship.

13.   1. How well does/did your partner meet your needs? * Mark only one oval.

         1   2   3   4   5

14.   2. In general, how satisfied are/were you with your relationship? * Mark only one oval.

         1   2   3   4   5

15.   3. How good is/was your relationship compared to most? * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5

16.   4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in your current/past relationship? * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5

17 5. To what extent does/did your relationship meet your original expectations: * Mark only one oval.

         1   2   3   4   5

18.   6. How much do/did you love your partner? * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5

19.   7. How many problems are/were there in your relationship? * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5

Skip to question 20.

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

Instructions: Please answer each statement below by selecting a circle below the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from 'Completely Disagree' (number 1) to 'Completely Agree' (number 7).

20.   1. Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

21.   2. I often find it difficult to see things from another person's viewpoint. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

22.   3. On the whole, I'm a highly motivated person. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

23 4. I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions. * Mark only one oval.

         1   2   3   4   5   6   7

24.   5. I generally don't find life enjoyable. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

25.   6. I can deal effectively with people. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

26.   7. I tend to change my mind frequently. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

27.   8. Many times, I can't figure out what emotion I'm feeling. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

28.   9. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

29.   10. I often find it difficult to stand up for my rights. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Trait Emotional Questionnaire (Continued)

Instructions: Please answer each statement below by putting a circle around the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from 'Completely Disagree' (number 1) to 'Completely Agree' (number 7).

30.   11. I'm usually able to influence the way other people feel. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

31.   12. On the whole, I have a gloomy perspective on most things. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

32.   13. Those close to me often complain that I don't treat them right. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

33.   14. I often find it difficult to adjust my life according to the circumstances. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

34.   15. On the whole, I'm able to deal with stress. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

35.   16. I often find it difficult to show my affection to those close to me. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

36 17. I'm normally able to "get into someone's shoes" and experience their emotions. * Mark only one oval.

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7

37.   18. I normally find it difficult to keep myself motivated. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

38.   19. I'm usually able to find ways to control my emotions when I want to. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

39.   20. On the whole, I'm pleased with my life. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Trait Emotional Questionnaire (Continued)

Instructions: Please answer each statement below by putting a circle around the number that best reflects your degree of agreement or disagreement with that statement. Do not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements. Work quickly and try to answer as accurately as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. There are seven possible responses to each statement ranging from 'Completely Disagree' (number 1) to 'Completely Agree' (number 7).

40.   21. I would describe myself as a good negotiator. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

41.   22. I tend to get involved in things I later wish I could get out of. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

42 23. I often pause and think about my feelings. * Mark only one oval.

           1   2   3   4   5   6   7

43.   24. I believe I'm full of personal strengths. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

44.   25. I tend to "back down" even if I know I'm right. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

45.   26. I don't seem to have any power at all over other people's feelings. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

46.   27. I generally believe that things will work out fine in my life. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

47.   28. I find it difficult to bond well even with those close to me. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

48.   29. Generally, I'm able to adapt to new environments. * Mark only one oval.

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

49 30. Others admire me for being relaxed. * Mark only one oval.

           1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Skip to "Debrief Sheet ."

Debrief Sheet

I would like to thank you for taking the time to partake in this study.

I the researcher Mary Fakorede will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact me at x16738375@student.ncirl.ie or my supervisor at fearghal.obrien@ncirl.ie.

If you want to find out about the results of this study, you should email me at the above email address. Please note that anonymised data only may be shared in public research repositories.

If you have felt any form of distress during your participation of this study or have questions about your rights in this research, or you have any other questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints that you do not feel can be addressed by the researcher or supervisor, please contact:

AWARE.IE

Freephone 1800 80 48 48

Available Monday - Sunday

10am to 10pm

Thank You Very Much For Your Time! You Are Greatly Appreciated! The End.

Stop filling out this form.

Debrief Sheet

I would like to thank you for your interest in partaking in the study, however as you have selected the "I have never been in a romantic relationship exceeding 3 months" the study will no longer proceed.

I the researcher Mary Fakorede will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact me at x16738375@student.ncirl.ie or my supervisor at fearghal.obrien@ncirl.ie.

If you want to find out about the results of this study, you should email me at the above email address. Please note that anonymised data only may be shared in public research repositories.

If you have felt any form of distress during your participation of this study or have questions about your rights in this research, or you have any other questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints that you do not feel can be addressed by the researcher or supervisor, please contact:

AWARE.IE

Freephone 1800 80 48 48

Available Monday - Sunday

10am to 10pm

Thank You Very Much For Your Time! You Are Greatly Appreciated! The End.

Relationship Assesment Scale

	Low				High
1. How well does your partner meet your needs?	1	2	3	4	5
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How good is your relationship compared to most?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?	1	2	3	4	5
5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How much do you love your partner?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How many problems are there in your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5