

## **Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Career Decision-Making of Management Undergraduates**

**U.H.P.U. Uduwaka<sup>1</sup> & V.M. Gunasekara<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya  
SRI LANKA  
uthkarsha97@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, madhavig@kln.ac.lk<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

Management undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities have been facing huge challenges in making decisions related to their career. Hence, this article examines the impact of five dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) on Career Decision-making. Data were collected from 280 management undergraduates of state universities in Sri Lanka. Simple regression analysis and Pearson correlation were used to test the study hypotheses. Analyzed results showed a positive impact of emotional intelligence on career decision-making. Further, the five dimensions of emotional intelligence had a strong positive relationship with career decision-making. The study results underlined that undergraduates could improve their career decision-making through their emotional intelligence. The present study would provide direction to HR managers, HR policy makers, career counselors, undergraduates and future researchers. The implications of the results and limitations of the study are also noted.

**Keywords:** Career Decision-making, Emotional Intelligence, Management Undergraduates

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Individuals pay more attention to the development of their careers which will lead to a fulfilling life. Indeed, many people build careers based on their views and the meaning of life (Hamzah et al., 2021). Emerging adults such as undergraduates have faced a lot of significant career-related decisions. As an example, they have to decide on post-secondary plans, career choices and securing employment (Prescod et al., 2019). Emotional intelligence is the capacity for a person to notice, comprehend, produce and control

emotions that foster both emotional and intellectual development (Kim et al., 2012). As stated by Kim, et al., (2012). Individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better able to recognize and control their own emotions as well as those of others by developing their personal and social skills. Therefore, emotional intelligence is directly addressed to the individual's professional success (Mayer et al., 2000).

As stated by Goleman (1998), Emotional intelligence is the

capacity to recognize our feelings and the feelings of others. And they were motivating and managing emotions in ourselves and our relationships.

Emotional intelligence is recognized as to people's self-perceptions of their expressive abilities and skills, characteristics of personality and behavioral dispositions that influence their ability to manage successfully environmental demands and pressures (Platsidou and Salman, 2012). According to Platsidou & Salman (2012), emotional intelligence is related to better adjustment of success in an academic setting and career setting.

It has been identified in previous studies that most employees and undergraduates failed to make proper decisions about their careers (Caruso & Wolfe, 2001; Kariyawasam & Welmilla, 2020; Makuloluwa, 2015; Saranapala & Devadas, 2020; Suleman et al., 2019). Many young generations seeking employment could be avoided or postpone job searches or make the wrong decision (Mittal, 2020). Sri Lanka's education system provides less attention to emotional intelligence. Due to that reason, some undergraduates or even employees failed to manage their emotions and understand themselves. When they enter the workplace, they fail to manage their emotions and do their relative work properly. Therefore, the researcher can see a high unemployment rate in the graduates.

Emotional intelligence has mainly three models named performance model by Daniel Goleman, competencies model by Bar-on, and ability model by Mayer & Salovey. The model introduced by Goleman (1995) emphasizes emotional intelligence, a good set of skills and abilities that promote leadership performance. He presented five components which are the main competencies of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. The ability-based model created by Mayer & Salovey has been the subject of most past studies among these three models. Researchers found this as a lack of theoretical knowledge gap. Past studies primarily have focused on self-efficacy (Hamzah et al., 2021; Ruschoff et al., 2018), Career commitment (Brown et al., 2003), Career planning courses (Freeman et al., 2017; Prescod et al., 2019), but ignored the impact of emotional intelligence on the career decision-making. There is a research gap in the Sri Lanka context in management faculty undergraduates, but there is some research on medicine undergraduates regarding Emotional Intelligence (Wijekoon et al., 2017). Most previous research was conducted based on other emotional intelligence models like ability and competencies models. Therefore, through this research, the researcher can contribute knowledge about the impact of emotional intelligence on career decision-making using

Goleman's model. Furthermore, the government can test candidates' EI scores in the government exams and then people with high emotional intelligence improve their work capacity and potential. And also, they can understand others easily. Because of that reason, it helps to reduce the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of government sector organizations. Most private sector organizations recruit new candidates by interview. In the interview, testing IQ is the most famous method. But having a high IQ score isn't enough for working in the competitive world. Candidates should have emotional intelligence also. Without emotional intelligence, they cannot adapt to the career environment and can impact anxiety and indecisiveness in facets of career development. Therefore, every organization has to test Emotional Intelligence. Due to the results of the EI test, employers can quickly identify a candidate's personality suits the relevant job or not. It is of huge importance for both organization and its employees.

The current study initiated by, 'What is the impact of Emotional Intelligence on career decision-making of management undergraduates. Past studies have focused on the impact of the emotional intelligence of undergraduates in different contexts. The researcher investigates how emotional intelligence impacts career decision-making in this current study. More specially, the objective of this study is to assess the impact of emotional intelligence

on the career decision-making of management undergraduates.

## **1. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.1. Career**

A career can be defined in a variety of ways, and the phrase is used in a variety of contexts. According to Supper, as cited in Saranapala & Devadas (2020) a person's career is a collection of roles that they play during their lifetime of an individual. He characterized this role as a kid, student, citizen, worker, homemaker, husband, parent, pensioner and others. Baruch and Rosenstein (1992) developed the modern definition of a career as 'a development process along a path of work experience and employment in one or more organizations. According to their definition career should include experience in a relevant field and also want experience in different organizations. Therefore, in the modern era, many people as well as many organizations are concerned about the career path of themselves and their employees.

### **1.2. Career Decision Making (CDM)**

Young adults' career choices have a substantial impact on their lifestyles and levels of personal and occupational fulfillment (Amir & Gati, 2006). Selecting a career among various careers is one of the most difficult decisions in one's life. Every person has different alternatives for careers. Although getting a decision about a career is a complex task, some people make

their decisions fairly easily, with no apparent difficulties. However, the majority of people encounter a variety of challenges before or during the decision-making process (Amir & Gati, 2006; Gati et al., 1996; J. D. Hess & Bacigalupo, 2011). Career choices have a long-term effect on an individual's career satisfaction (Gati, Gadassi, & Shemesh, 2006), well-being (Creed, Prideaux, & Patton, 2005), and level of living, (Sabates, Gutman, & Schoon, 2017).

The researchers named Gati, Krausz and Osipow (1996), designed a framework of individual experience when they make career decisions. That framework is named Career Decision-Making Difficulties (CDM). Concurring to this CDM system, there are three common sorts of troubles that happen to an individual when he/she makes career choices which begin from a lack of readiness, lack of information and inconsistent information. According to Gati, Amir, and Landman (2010), difficulties caused by external cognitive causes are typically more tangible and can benefit from a well-defined treatment (e.g., providing relevant information), whereas difficulties caused by internal emotional causes are more difficult to depict and thus require a different approach. Valach, Young, and Lynam (1996) suggest that emotional awareness is critical when choosing career choices for three reasons: (a) emotions motivate actions, (b) emotions modify actions and (c) emotions aid in the creation

of career narratives. Emotions are therefore critical to the career decision-making process, and as a result, the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has developed as a critical variable within the literature on career decision-making. (Brown, George-Curran, and Smith, 2003; puffer, 2011; Di Fabio & Kenny, 2011; Di Fabio, 2012; Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bar-On, 2012).

### **1.3. Models of Career Decision Making**

According to Gati (2013); Gati & Tal (2008); Jepsen & Dilley (1974); Mitchell & Krumboltz, (1984) get an understanding of how the decision-making process prepares data and making a choice, models for understanding the method of career decision-making have been created. Normative, descriptive/behavioral, and prescriptive career decision-making strategies have been identified.

The normative model of decision-making is aimed at establishing procedures for making alternative decisions. According to Gati & Tal (2008), an individual should decide their career options based on maximum returns. As they predicated on the assumption that when it comes to making decisions, individuals are fully reasonable. Thus, these kinds of models presume that people have all the information they need to make a decision, that they can consider all potential consequences of the decision, can assess the value of each alternative and that they can merge these values into a combined

variable. Normative models work by comparing each potential arrangement to a set of two criteria. The primary is the arbitrary use of the results associated with each elective. The second variable is the estimated likelihood that a particular course of action will produce a particular outcome (Brown, 1990).

Descriptive decision-making model, a second type of decision theory-based model is investigates the ways people actually make decisions, and the gaps between the ideal, normative decision-making procedure and actual decision-making processes in real-life situations. According to Gati & Tal (2008) descriptive models are also commonly referred to as behavioral models. These models are frequently built on good-enough principles rather than ideal ones. Instead, than focusing on how individuals should make judgments, these models were built to describe how people make decisions. Individuals can use a variety of ways to make good judgments using descriptive decision-making models. Satisficing, quasi-satisficing, and incrementalism are examples of these tactics.

The purpose of the prescriptive decision-making model is to provide a framework for a methodical approach to making better decisions while acknowledging human rationality's limitations (Gati & Tal, 2008; Janis & Mann, 1977). Prescriptive models combine the benefits of normative and descriptive models while

minimizing the limitations of each. The Sequential Elimination Model (SEM) and the Prescreening In-depth Exploration of Choice (PIC) Model are two popular prescriptive decision-making frameworks. This model was proposed to show the practical value of making decision-making easier (Gati & Asher, 2001; Gati & Tal, 2008)

Although normative decision-making models explain techniques for optimal decision-making, they have been found to be inapplicable due to incomplete knowledge and limited cognitive resources of humans dealing with decision circumstances, as discussed above. Descriptive models, on the other hand, focus on understanding how people actually make decisions, revealing biases, inconsistencies, and limited rationality, resulting in less-than-optimal decisions. Prescriptive decision models combine the benefits of normative and descriptive decision models while avoiding or eliminating their drawbacks. They are intended to lay out a framework for making better decisions while taking into account human limitations and conforming to how people make decisions intuitively.

#### **1.4. Career Decision-Making Process**

Making a career decision is a complicated process, and some young teenagers may face challenges that prevent them from making a decision or cause them to choose a less-than-optimal selection (Saka et al., 2008). Hence, there are

six tasks taken in the career decision-making process; orientation to choose, Self-exploratory behavior, Broad exploratory behavior of the environment, In-depth exploratory behavior of the environment, decisional status and commitment (Gati & Asher, 2001). These decision-making tasks are not always considered to be sequential stages in a sequential decision-making process. Making a career decision is viewed as a dynamic and exciting process. Each of these decisional duties is expected to have an impact on the choice's implementation (Gati & Asher, 2001).

### **1.5. Emotional Intelligence**

One's life is significantly impacted by emotions. The ability to motivate oneself, identify one's own feelings and those of others, and effectively manage one's own and other people's emotions is known as emotional intelligence. It is the capacity to keep track of one's own and other people's feelings and emotions, to distinguish between them, and to utilize this knowledge to inform one's decisions and behavior (Cherniss et al., 1998).

Emotion is linked to one's purpose, goals, plans, and wants, according to the author. As a result, they provided three explanations for the significance of emotion in describing and comprehending career development: a) Emotion energizes and inspires action. Given that some career acts are viewed as bothersome, challenging, or boring,

one needs to be motivated by emotion to start and keep up those efforts. b) Emotion directs and regulates behavior. That is, people make decisions regarding their activities based on their internal processes. c) Emotions have the ability to access, orient, and build career narratives. Emotion is used in the construction and development of career narratives since career is created from topics of concern in one's life (Brown et al., 2003).

### **1.6. Models of Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence, according to Bar-On (2006), is a crucial factor in people's ability to be successful in life and is linked to spiritual well-being. According to Goleman, emotional intelligence is a type of intelligence that entails an awareness of one's emotions and applying that knowledge to appropriate decision-making in life. There is a link between emotional intelligence and career success (Akhtar et al., 2014) and emotional intelligence is a crucial criterion for success in personal relationships and family life (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). According to the Côté & Miners, (2006) in the corporate world, a high level of EI is linked to better connections.

There are 03 main models for emotional intelligence developed by Salovey and Mayer, Bar-On & Goleman.

The concept of emotional intelligence by Mayer and Salovey is based on an intelligence model

and makes an effort to define emotional intelligence within the confines of traditional specifications for a new intelligence. It asserts that emotional intelligence may be broken down into two types: experiential (the capacity to notice, react to, and control emotional information without necessarily understanding it) and strategic (the ability to understand and manage emotions without necessarily experiencing them fully). Each of these areas is further subdivided into two branches, ranging from basic psychological processes to more complicated processes involving emotion and cognition. The ability to be self-aware of emotions and to appropriately express feelings and emotional needs to others is the first branch, emotional perception. The ability to discriminate between honest and dishonest emotional displays is also part of emotional perception. The ability to discern between the various emotions one is experiencing and identify those that are impacting one's mental processes is the second branch, emotional absorption.

Bar-On's model of emotional intelligence is process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented, and it focuses on the potential for performance and success rather than the performance or success itself (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). It focuses on a variety of emotional and social abilities, such as the ability to recognize, understand, and express oneself, the ability to recognize, understand, and relate to others, the ability to cope with strong emotions,

and the ability to adapt to change and solve social or personal problems. Bar-On's approach divides emotional intelligence into five categories: intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood.

Daniel Goleman, a psychologist and scientific journalist who previously covered brain and behavior research for the New York Times, discovered Salovey and Mayer's work in the 1990s. Inspired by their discoveries, he conducted his own research in the field, eventually writing *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), a seminal work that introduced the concept of emotional intelligence to both the public and private sectors. Five basic emotional intelligence constructs are outlined in Goleman's concept. The first, self-awareness is the ability to detect, trace, label an emotion as it occurs. Self-regulation, the second construct, involves the ability to keep emotions under check and manage disturbing emotions effectively. The third construct, self-motivation is the ability to remain hopeful and optimistic despite setbacks and failures. The fourth construct is empathy which is the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people and get the true feel of their thought processes. And the fifth construct is social skills, which is proficiency in managing the relationship and building rapport and networks (Goleman, 1995).

Within each construct of emotional intelligence, Goleman includes a set of emotional competencies.

Emotional skills are learned capabilities that must be worked on and developed in order to reach exceptional performance. Individuals are born with general emotional intelligence, according to Goleman, which determines their ability to gain emotional competencies. The competencies under the various constructs are not randomly organized; they emerge in synergistic clusters or groups that assist and help one another (Boyatzis et al., 1999).

Figure 1: Illustrates Goleman's Conceptual Model of Emotional Intelligence

### **1.7. Variables of The Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model**

Understanding one's feelings, abilities, constraints, wants, and motives in great detail is self-awareness (also known as emotional awareness). High self-awareness individuals are neither extremely pessimistic nor overly pessimistic. Rather, they are straightforward with themselves and others. People with a high level of self-awareness are aware of how their emotions affect them, others, and their work performance (Goleman, 1995). According to Goleman (2000), under self-awareness following aspects also has been highlighted: Emotional self-awareness, Accurate self-awareness & Self-confidence.

Biological impulses are in charge of controlling our emotions. Although we won't be able to entirely get rid of them, there are many things we

can handle. Self-Regulation is the element of emotional intelligence that releases us from being prisoners of our emotions (self-regulation), which is similar to a continual inner conversation (Goleman, 2000). Further, Goleman highlighted the following related to Self-Regulation: Self-control, Trustworthiness, Conscientiousness, Adaptability, Achievement orientation & Initiative.

Self-motivation is the capacity to carry out tasks without being influenced by other people or external factors. Self-motivated people may find a reason and the strength to complete a goal, even in the face of adversity, without giving up or relying on others for encouragement (Mehta & Singh, 2013).

Empathy is the ability to sense, interpret, and respond to others' emotions while also feeling at ease in social situations. It entails understanding others' sentiments, thought patterns, perspectives, accomplishments, facial expressions, and other nonverbal signals. Individuals' interpersonal connections benefit greatly from a social understanding of emotions (Mehta & Singh, 2013).

Social skills are the ability to speak, persuade, and interact with other members of society without causing undue friction or discord. It refers to one's ability to convey both positive and negative emotions in a social setting. Social skills include the capacity to persuade others and the



ability to create a welcoming atmosphere in the workplace. It also emphasizes dealing tactfully with tough people and distressing situations (Mehta & Singh, 2013).

### **1.8. Relationship with Career Decision-Making and Emotional Intelligence**

While a large portion of the literature on emotional intelligence has focused on its theoretical underpinnings, there is a significant gap in how these abilities can actually be used in career decision-making. If emotional intelligence is believed to bring value to the individual and/or group career decision-making process, the question then becomes how can it be actually implemented to reach the desired result. Problems that are challenging to solve and, in some cases, have unfavorable effects on some constituencies even after they have been determined to be solved commonly present themselves to those who make career decisions. As a result, thinking about how decisions affect others should be a key part of the decision-making process. While understanding "who" will be impacted by decisions may be a more pragmatic function requiring logic, determining "how" the decision will be interpreted and its impact on others requires emotional intelligence skills (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2013). According to Goleman (2001) and Boyatzis et al. (2000), emotional intelligence skills in career decision-making can be divided into two categories: those that are more about the individual,

such as self-awareness, self-regulation & self-motivation and those that are more about the individual's relationship and interaction with others, such as empathy & social skills.

Lerner & Tiedens (2006), stated the effects of residual anger on decision-making were studied, and it was discovered that decision-makers who were held accountable for their decisions were better at regulating their anger. Controlling the need to make each decision on its own can sometimes conflict with the need to demonstrate initiative and accomplishment. Additionally, in order to have moral authority over a matter, decision-makers must first earn the respect of those who will be impacted by their decision. Through a process of transparency and honesty in both communications and relationships, trust is earned over time. If decision-makers see persons affected by decisions as customers who may be retained or lost, they are more inclined to think about the outcomes and ramifications of those actions (Miller, 2009). As a result, decisions that are based on service results, such as customer happiness and retention, are more likely to be understood and justified inside the business. Finally, understanding the culture of the organization will assist decision-makers to make more rational decisions, as well as the methods by which they are made.

While most people would like to assume that the decision to make a change is made through a logical, rational process, this is not always

the case. Regardless of the original aim of the change, the execution of many desired improvements is laden with potential conflict. The ability to manage disagreement is critical to both the process and the outcome of decisions, requiring decision-makers to use emotional intelligence while seeking to guide essential changes.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This research is designed to investigate the impact of emotional intelligence on the career decision-making of management undergraduates. Therefore, emotional intelligence can be identified as the independent variable. The independent variable affects the dependent variable negatively or positively (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). For this research study, career decision-making can be identified as the dependent variable. The researcher's main objective is to understand and describe the dependent variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Previous scholars have recognized five dimensions that include emotional intelligence. It includes self-awareness, Self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Figure 2 shows the current model, which explains the determinants identified from the literature as independent variables. According to the model, identified determinants are taken as the dependent variables while career decision-making is taken as the problem variable of the study. Figure 2 depicts the variables and

the associations between such variables identified in the current study.

As given in the conceptual framework, career decision-making is considered the dependent variable whereas emotional intelligence; self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are considered the independent variable.

Several scholars such as Shiri et al. (2013), Fabio et al. (2011) emphasized that there is a significant correlation between emotional intelligence and career decision-making. According to the theoretical and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses advanced in order to realize the research objectives and to draw conclusions of the study. H1 : There is a significant impact between emotional intelligence and career decision making H2 : There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and career decision making H3 : There is a significant relationship between self-regulation and career decision-making H4 : There is a significant relationship between motivation and career decision making H5 : There is a significant relationship between empathy and career decision making H6 : There is a significant relationship between social skills and career decision making.

### 2.1. Measures

#### 2.1.1. Measurement scale for career decision making

The career decision difficulties questionnaire (CDDQ) scale developed by Fabio et al. (2011) used to measure career decision-making among Italian high school students. The items of the scale represent three dimensions – lack of readiness. Lack of information and inconsistent information. CDDQ scale is composed of 09 items with responses on a 5-point Likert-type scale that consists as, 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree and 5- strongly agree. Sample items for each of the dimensions are “I know that I have to choose a career, but I don’t have the motivation to make the decision now”, “ I find it difficult to make a career decision because I don’t know how to combine the information I have about myself & about the different careers” and “I find it difficult to make a career decision because people who are important to me (such as family or friends) do not agree with the career options I am considering”(di Fabio & Kenny, 2011).

### **3.1.2. Measurement scales for emotional intelligence**

Literature provides sample of instruments to measure the concept and impact of emotional intelligence by self-assessment emotional intelligence questionnaire by Daniel Goleman (1995), the scale consists of 25 items and uses a five-point Likert scale that consists of 1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4- often and 5-always.

## **2.2. Participants and Procedures**

The population of the current study includes all the undergraduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Management studies of state universities in Sri Lanka. As of 2020, the total number of Management undergraduates affiliated to the above-mentioned 15 faculties was 23,276 (University Statistics-UGC,2020). As the total number of elements in the population is known to the current researcher, the most appropriate method is to refer to the Mogan table to determine the sample size of the current study. According to the Mogan table, the sample size would be 377, under the confidence interval of 95%. The researcher calculated the random number by dividing the population total by the sample total ( $23276 \div 377$ ) and received it as 62. Accordingly, adopting the simple random sampling technique, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to every 62nd respondent (undergraduate) as listed in the attendance sheets collected from each university. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire survey with close-ended questions. Data was collected by occupying a self-administered, pre-tested, standard questionnaire that has met the accepted standard of validity and reliability. The used questionnaire was distributed among the sample as a google sheet, in the English language. The reliability and validity of the data were tested, and the descriptive statistic test was conducted to analyze sample composition. Furthermore,

regression analysis was conducted to analyze emotional intelligence's impact on career decision making and one-way ANOVA was used to analyze emotional intelligence impact on career decision-making.

### **3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Out of the 377 questionnaires distributed, 280 respondents returned the filled questionnaires. Therefore 280 fully completed responses (74.27%) were entered into SPSS and checked for missing values and outliers. The effective rate of response after discarding ineligible responses from the sample (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2011) was 74.27%. Hence, the final sample of the current study consisted of 280 observations. The composition of the study sample is depicted in table 01.

#### **3.1. Reliability Statistics**

To ensure the reliability of the measurement scales of the present study, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used. As per table 2, Cronbach's Alpha values of all variable's dimensions are greater than 0.5 which is the threshold value and including that the multi-item scales are reliable. The Cronbach's Alpha value of Career Decision Making is 0.828 and Emotional Intelligence is 0.905.

#### **3.2. Validity Statistics**

Saunders et al. (2009) defined content validity as the degree to which the measurement device of the research study provides adequate

coverage of the investigative questions. As per the validity statistics given in table 4.6, the cumulative percentage of the Extraction Sums of Squared Loading (ESS cum%) of two constructs are greater than 50%, and the item Factor Loading (FL) values are above the threshold limit of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Hence, statistically, construct validity is ensured.

#### **3.3. Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics are presented in the form of means, median, standard deviations and variance. Further, it measured the skewness and the kurtosis of the data distribution. Descriptive statistics calculated for Career Decision Making and Emotional Intelligence and its variables. Table 4 has exhibited the distribution statistics.

#### **3.4. Regression analysis**

This section presents the hypothesis testing using simple regression analysis to test the hypothesis separately. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), in the current study simple regression was used to test the research model and develop the regression equation.

H1: There is a significant impact between emotional intelligence and career decision making

Table 5 depicted the R and R Square values of the computed research model. According to the model summary, R square is 0.863. It means 86.3% of the variation in career decision-making is explained

by the fitted regression model. Accordingly, it can conclude that emotional intelligence has 86.3% impact on career decision-making. According to the coefficient table (Table 6) the standardized coefficient beta value indicates 0.929 and it shows the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and career decision-making is accepted because the value of 0.929, which is greater than 0.7. However, since the sig value is 0.000 which is less than the level of significance, the impact is significant and there is enough evidence to accept hypothesis H1.

### 3.5. Correlation analysis.

Correlation refers extent to which two variables are related to each other (Saunders et al., 2009). To determine the strength and direction of that linear relationship between two variables, the correlation coefficient can range in value from -1 to +1. Therefore, to determine whether the correlation coefficient between variables is significant or not, compare the p-value with the significant value. Typical significance levels in business research are 5% (<0.05) and 1% (<0.01) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016, p. 301). Therefore, if the significant value is less than 0.01 then only that relationship is statistically accepted. Table 7, 8,9,10,11 depicts the correlation analysis of the present study.

H2: There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and career decision making

H3: There is a significant relationship between self-regulation and career decision making

H4: There is a significant relationship between motivation and career decision making

H5: There is a significant relationship between empathy and career decision making

H6: There is a significant relationship between social skills and career decision making

As the significant value 0.000 (2-tailed) is smaller the desired level of significance (0.05) at 95% confidential level, the found correlation coefficient for self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy & social skills 0.684, 0.923, 0.858, 0.861 & 0.691 was statistically accepted. Therefore, Results indicated that there is a positive relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills and career decision-making.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of emotional intelligence in the career decision-making of management undergraduates. This empirical study provides a contribution to Sri Lankan literature context by emphasizing on Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence toward career decision-making. In reviewing the empirical literature of emotional intelligence: Goleman's five dimension model, researcher

found that there very few past studies on emotional intelligence in Sri Lanka and other domains. Most of studies done by ability-based model(di Fabio & Blustein, 2010; di Fabio & Kenny, 2012; di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014; Emmerling & Cherniss, 2003; Hamzah et al., 2021; Puffer, 2011). However, there were few studies, that have emphatically investigated emotional intelligence in Goleman's five dimension model in a different context such as undergraduates in UK, USA and China. Italy Thus, the current research reviewed the concept of emotional intelligence on career decision-making in Management undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka. By drawing from a rich scholarly history on career decision-making, the current study examined some determinants which affected to career decision-making: lack of readiness, lack of information and inconsistency information.

According to Santos et al. (2018) individuals who are emotionally intelligence have a better understanding of their emotions and are more capable of making decisions regarding their future careers. Expression & experience of emotions can be used advantageously to accomplish career-related tasks(Brown et al., 2003) And many researchers found there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and career decision making and strong emotional intelligence could well promote progress in career development(Ellis & Ryan, 2005).

Furthermore, as previous research finds higher levels of career decision led to lower levels of difficulty, implying that university undergraduates who are confident in their ability to successfully complete certain tasks involved in making career decisions are less likely to face difficulties in doing so, such as gathering relevant information (Amir & Gati, 2006; Creed et al., 2004; Gati et al., 1996; Nota et al., 2007; Santos et al., 2018). According to Caruso & Wolfe (2001) The way a person controls his or her emotions, as well as the emotions of others, can have a big impact on job satisfaction and performance. In the literature on career development, the importance of emotional awareness and abilities in managing emotions is becoming more widely recognized(Brown et al., 2003; di Fabio & Blustein, 2010; di Fabio & Kenny, 2011, 2012; Emmerling & Cherniss, 2003a; Fabio Di, 2012). Interestingly, the findings contradict the previous study, which found no significant link between EI and the career decision-making (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014).

Based on the result of Regression Analysis, it showed that there is a strong positive impact between emotional intelligence and career decision-making. Moreover, the researcher was able to find a strongly positive relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills with career decision-making based on the results of Pearson Correlation analysis.

Finally the findings can conclude as undergraduates can improve their career decision-making through improving their emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS

Apparently, the professionals are dealing with undergraduates in a range of settings, such as academic counseling and career counseling. The study's findings would be helpful for them in a wide spectrum. Professional counselors may be better equipped to address undergraduates' wants and concerns in career decision-making and provide more relevant job advice that may lead undergraduates to a more desirable career choice if they are motivated by self-awareness and emotional intelligence. The results of the present study offer a wide range of potential applications because emotional intelligence and professional decision-making are skills that can be taught and cultivated. Career counselors may be able to pinpoint weaknesses in undergraduates' emotional intelligence and ability to make career decisions through appropriate assessments and develop interventions that concentrate on both the knowledge and skills needed to develop these abilities as well as their confidence to act on these abilities with regard to career decision-making. Both emotional intelligence and career decision-making are necessary for professional advancement,

emotional intelligence and career decision-making are connected. The aspects that address both of these principles would need to be included in interventions. Some undergraduates, for example, may require assistance in developing their knowledge and skills in appraising and using their emotions, whereas others who already have adequate levels of emotional intelligence may require assistance in developing their self-confidence beliefs in order to use those emotional abilities. Self-regulation, expression of emotions, and the efficient use of emotions to motivate goal achievement and the creation of future professional goals and plans should be the focus of interventions to build emotional intelligence qualities that are fundamental to career decision-making. To develop career decision-making skills, one must concentrate on the foundations of self-appraisal, self-evaluation, goal selection, career planning, and problem-solving. When these efforts are combined, undergraduates will be able to make better career judgments.

Emotional intelligence could be the (long-awaited) missing link that connects traditional "can do" ability and "will do" dispositional predictors of job performance. Learning and development that is specifically classified as "emotional intelligence" or "emotional competence" training is available to organizations. Their leaders provide assistance by creating and managing a work environment that emphasizes flexibility, accountability,

standards, rewards, clarity, and dedication. Also, as an employer, he or she may convey to his /her employees that he cares about them and will provide them with additional opportunities to advance their careers. As a result, businesses can increase employee loyalty and trustworthiness. On the other side, as a company, employer can save money on hiring, selection, training, and growth, as well as resolving grievances. In today's competitive environment, businesses strive to hire the best person for the job. They spend money on recruitment, selection, hiring, induction, and training and development at the start. However, if an employee leaves the company after a short period of time due to cultural shock, stress, anxiety, or inability to communicate effectively with coworkers, the company will incur additional costs in hiring a replacement. As a result, no organization wants to hire employees who will leave the company shortly. As a company, they are continually looking for more adaptable, communicative, and enthusiastic problem solvers. As a result, organizations can use this research study to implement these findings and measure emotional intelligence in their employees and newly hired prospects. Then, as an organization, may look for people with higher emotional intelligence and take the required steps.

## **6. LIMITATION**

The researcher's main objective was to identify the impact of emotional

intelligence on career decision-making. Since this research study considered the Management undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka, the findings of this research could not be generalized to every state and private universities within the Sri Lankan context. Another limitation is in collecting data through google Forms with the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic situation. It resulted in fewer response rate compared to the sample size. responses were limited only to the 280 undergraduates. In many empirical studies, researchers use the ability model and competencies model for measure emotional intelligence. But in this current research study was focused on Goleman's five-dimension model for measuring emotional intelligence. Therefore, faced the difficulty of a lack of literature about Goleman's model. Questionnaire responses may be wrong due to the respondents could deliberately change their answers based on personal factors. This study was based on the personal views of respondents through the questionnaire. It may not be effective and become bias as the respondent's feelings will be affected for the answers. In addition, the researcher used the questionnaire as the only technique to collect data. Therefore, these data may be more quantitative, and questionnaires might be unable to gather the inner feelings of the respondents.

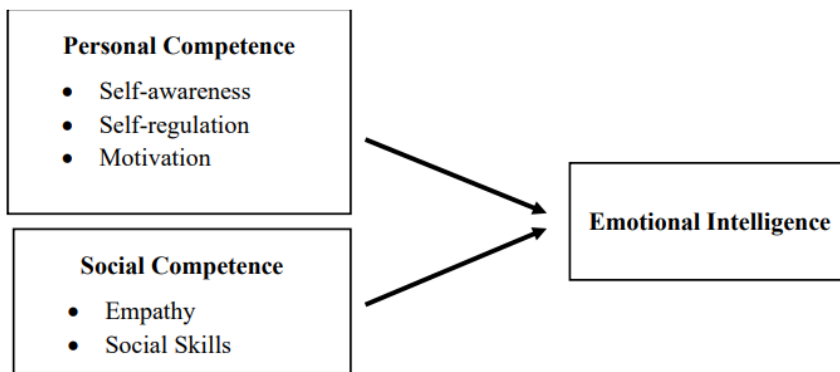


## 7. DIRECTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Having understood the limitations above, it is recommended for future researchers take these variables and conduct studies on other contexts, since this study is on Management undergraduates in state universities. Therefore, future researchers can be move towards a considerable population and wide area of all undergraduates in state and private universities in Sri Lanka or organizations by expanding the sampling frame. Furthermore, future

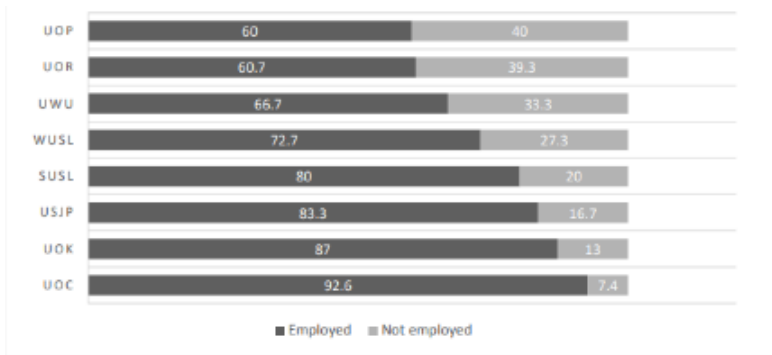
researchers can be investigating other factors affecting to career decision-making. Such as self-efficacy, career commitment, career planning causes, and family supportiveness. Future studies might consider the use of qualitative techniques to gather a broader understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and career decision-making. Hopefully, this study would raise the levels of interest among scholars to conduct more studies regarding the impact of emotional intelligence on career decision-making

## APPENDIX



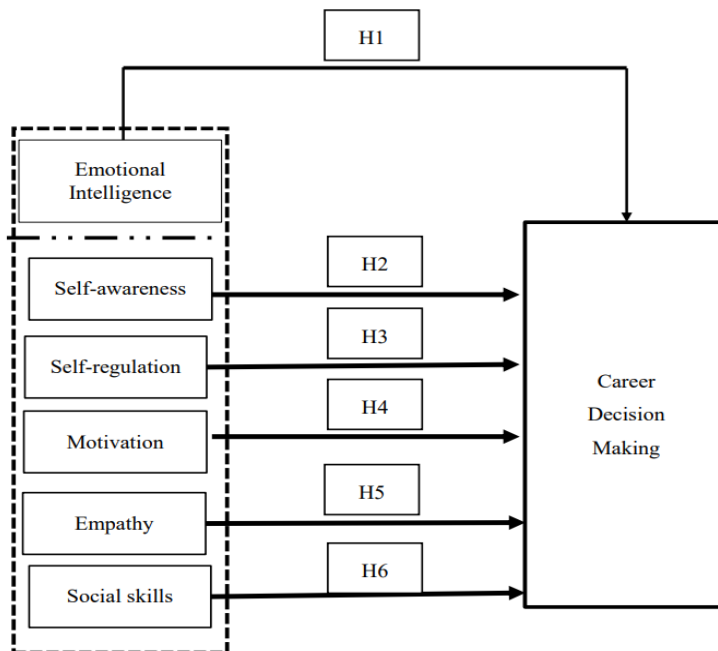
**Figure 1: Variables of the Goleman's emotional intelligence model**

Source: (Jamali et al., 2008)



**Figure 1.1: Employment Rate of Management Graduates**

Source: Tracker study of graduates'-university of Sri Lanka. University Grants Commission-2018



**Figure 2: Conceptual framework of the study**

**Table 1: Composition of the sample [N=280]**

<b>Gender</b>	Male	93	33.0%
	Female	187	67.0%
<b>Age Group</b>	20 – 22	7	3%
	23 – 25	202	72%
	26 – 28	71	25%
	Other	0	0%
<b>Occupation</b>	Not working, only studying	20	7%
	Working as an Intern or Trainee	202	72%
	Working as a permanent employee (assistant or executive level)	58	21%

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 2: Reliability statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Dimension/s</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Career Decision Making	Career Decision Making	09	0.828
Emotional Intelligence (Cronbach's alpha=0.905)	Self-Awareness	05	0.589
	Self-Regulation	05	0.759
	Motivation	05	0.635
	Empathy	05	0.589
	Social Skills	05	0.511

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 3: Validity statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Lowest FL</b>	<b>Highest FL</b>	<b>ESSL Cum%</b>
Career Decision Making	Career Decision Making	09	0.460	0.796	51.828%
Emotional Intelligence	Self- Awareness	05	0.360	0.768	43.581%
	Self- Regulation	05	0.306	0.830	52.581%
	Motivation	05	0.098	0.727	41.954%
	Empathy	05	0.220	0.920	42.142%
	Social Skills	05	0.400	0.564	56.844%

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 4: Descriptive statistics**

Dimension	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career Decision Making	280	2.7413	.70102	.325	-.992
Self- Awareness	280	3.1036	.64479	-.210	-.173
Self- Regulation	280	2.8136	.77596	.370	-.739
Motivation	280	3.0064	.65939	.274	-.479
Empathy	280	2.8486	.63126	.314	-.469
Social Skills	280	3.1664	.55586	-.338	-.113

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 5: Model summary – emotional intelligence impact on career decision making**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.929a	.863	.863	.25957

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 6: Coefficients– Emotional intelligence impact on career decision making**

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std.Error	Beta	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	-.670	.083		-8.087	.000
	Emotional Intelligence Mean	1.142	.027	.929	41.915	.000

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 7: Correlation analysis table for self-awareness and career decision making**

		Career Decision Making Mean	Self-Awareness Mean
<b>Career Decision Making Mean</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.684**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	280	280
<b>Self-Awareness Mean</b>	Pearson Correlation	.684**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	280	280

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 8: Correlation analysis table for self – regulation and career decision making**

		Career Decision Making Mean	Self-Regulation Mean
Career Decision Making Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.923**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	280	280
Self-Regulation Mean	Pearson Correlation	.923**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	280	280

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 9: Correlation analysis table for motivation and career decision making**

		Career Decision Making Mean	Motivation Mean
Career Decision Making Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.858**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	280	280
Motivation Mean	Pearson Correlation	.858**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	280	280

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 10: Correlation analysis table for empathy and career decision making**

		Career Decision Making Mean	Empathy Mean
Career Decision Making Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.861**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	280	280
Empathy Mean	Pearson Correlation	.861**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	280	280

Source: Survey data, 2022

**Table 11: Correlation analysis table for social skills and career decision making**

		Career Decision Making Mean	Mean
Career Decision Making Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	280	280
Mean	Pearson Correlation	.691**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	280	280

Source: Survey data, 2022

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