THE LINK BETWEEN MARITAL SATISFACTION AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

by

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SUMMARY

This study set out to investigate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and marital satisfaction. In the past several years, marriages appear to have undergone much change, moving towards a more egalitarian relationship. Intimacy and conflict resolution appear to play an important role in maintaining marital satisfaction.

Skills involved in conflict resolution and intimacy also form part of a greater construct called Emotional Intelligence (EI). Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (1998), describe a four branch ability model of EI. This model describes EI as the ability to be perceptive of one's own and others' emotions, to manage and regulate one's emotions, to be able to effectively express one's emotions and lastly, the ability to use stored emotional information to deal with various situations.

To ascertain levels of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction the Schutte Self Report Inventory (SRI) and the Marital Satisfaction Inventory–Revised (MSI-R) was administered to a group of couples married for longer than one year (n = 61). MANCOVA’s and ANCOVA’s were administered to assess the relationship between EI and various sub-scales of marital satisfaction in the couples.

The results showed that there was significant relationship between EI and certain aspects of marital satisfaction. The level of male EI was found to have a significant effect on the couples affective and problem solving communication. It also affected the level of female sexual satisfaction and the ability to cope with family history of distress. The female EI
was found to be related to decreased levels of male aggression, a greater ability to deal with her family history of distress and role orientation. It was found that in most circumstances, the level of male EI was responsible for couple’s marital satisfaction. Further results indicate that the greater the gap between each partners level of EI, the greater their level of marital dissatisfaction.

For future research, it may be beneficial to do a longitudinal study of the same nature using a larger sample. Measuring instruments that do not rely on self-report may produce other results. Finally, future studies may benefit by using a culturally diverse sample, to assess whether the finding may be generalised to all communities in South Africa.
OPSOMMING

Die studie het ten doel gestel om die verhouding tussen Emosionele Intelligensie en huweliksatisfaksie te ondersoek. In die afgelope paar jaar, het die huwelijke ‘n verandering ondergaan, en ‘n meer egalitaanse verhouding is opmerklik. Intimiteit en konflik hantering blyk ‘n belangrike rol te speel in die handhawing van huweliksatisfaksie.

Vaardighede betrokke in konflik hantering en huweliksatisfaksie vorm ook ‘n integrale deel van die konstrukt van Emosionele Intelligensie (EI). Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (1998), beskryf ‘n model van EI. Die model beskryf EI as die vermoë om ‘n persepsie te vorm van persoonlike en ander se emosies, om persoonlike emosies te bestuur en te beheer, die vermoë om uiting te gee aan emosies en laastens die vermoë om gestoorde emosionele inligting te gebruik om ‘n verskeidenheid emosies te kan hanteer.

Om die vlakke van emosionele intelligensie en huweliksatisfaksie te evalueer is die Schutte Self Report Inventory (SRI) en die Marital Satisfaction Inventory–Revised (MSI-R) geadministreer binne ‘n groep getroude paartjies wat vir langer as ‘n jaar getroud is (n = 61). MANCOVA’ en ANCOVA’s is geadministreer om die verhouding tussen EI en die verskeie sub-skale van huweliksatisfaksie in getroudes te bepaal.

Die resultate van hierdie studie het getoon dat daar ‘n betekenisvolle verhouding tussen EI en huweliksatisfaksie is. Die vlakke van EI binne die manlike groep is gevind om ‘n
beduidende effek te hê op die paartjie se affektiewe en problemoplossing kommunikasie.
Dit blyk ook ‘n effek te hê op die wyse waarop vroue familie probleme hanteer asook seksuelesatisfaksie. Vroue se EI het gekorreleer met verlaagde vlakke van manlike aggressie, die hantering van distress en familie moeilikhede asook rol-oriëntasie. Daar is gevind dat in meeste omstandighede, die vlak van manlike EI verantwoordelik was vir die paartjie se huweliksatisfaksie. Verder is getoon dat hoe hoër die diskrepans tussen persone, hoe groter die risiko vir huwelikdissatisfaksie.

Toekomstige navorsing mag daarby baat om ‘n langtermyn studie met ‘n groter steekproef in hierdie verband te doen. Daarby ingesluit is dit ook nodig om te noem dat selfrapporteer metodes ander resultate tot gevolg sal hê. Laastens, toekomstige studies mag daarby baat om ‘n meer kulturele diverse groepe te gebruik, om sodoende vas te stel of die resultate veralgemeen kan word na die algemene Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIMS

1.1 Introduction and problem statement

The institution of marriage has historically been seen as life-long commitment, between two partners, for better or for worse. However, the last three decades have seen a steady increase in the failure of marriages, which seems to now be levelling-off within the last five years. Further, people’s view of marriage is also changing. There are an increased number of single parents and couples choosing to cohabit, rather than marry. This may indicate a sense of disillusion with the institution of marriage and more flexibility in how it is constructed. These changes have lead people to view marriage less as a commitment and more as a relationship. It has called into question the quality of existing marriages and the reasons for marital failure.

A longitudinal study on the quality of marriages between 1980 and 2000 found that various social, cultural, economic and gender changes had a significant influence in the outcome of marriage. The social factors included changes in gender roles, with a shift from traditional to more egalitarian relationships. This shift may be seen as a response to increasing number of women furthering their education, entering the workplace, and so increasing the number of dual income couples. As a result, husbands and wives attitudes and values have changed. In many marriages, couple’s have needed to reassess their
roles, with males no longer being responsible for income and women for child-rearing and household chores (Amato, Johnson, Booth, & Rogers, 2003). Researchers such as Huston (2000) have begun to incorporate the influence of the marital ecology into their research in order to understand the way in which these external factors affect marriage. Societal changes form only one aspect affecting marriage. The way in which couples have been able to negotiate these changes has also proved valuable in understanding marital outcomes.

Other studies (Gottman, Coan, Carrere & Swanson 1998; Gottman & Driver, 2004) have focused on the interaction between couples, to determine their marital outcome. These studies investigate the way partners communicate with one another. Of particular interest, is their conflict resolution and affective communication skills (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). The way in which couples argue has shown to be important, and the expression of affection they have for one another has also proved to be significant in determining marital outcomes. Other interpersonal factors include the couple’s behaviour towards one another. This behaviour includes the time they spend together and the affection displayed towards one another (Amato et al., 2003). The outcome of these studies has shown that there is a significant difference in the way men and women interact in a marriage. Men and women view conflict and intimacy differently. Various explanations for this difference in communication and behaviour have been suggested, including the different gender socialisation processes as children. As a result men and women arrive in a marriage with very different interpersonal skills. Further, family of origin was also found to be a determinant in the development of these skills. It is usually within the family of
origin that an individual forms their first attachment, usually with a primary caregiver. This determines the way in which they make further attachments in future relationships. It is also within the family of origin that people learn conflict resolution skills. These are often modelled from the observation and interaction with parents and siblings (Cramer, 2004; Huston, 2000).

The interpersonal skills needed to resolve conflict and foster intimacy between partners have shown to be important in determining successful marital outcomes. However, these skills form part of a greater construct, labelled Emotional Intelligence (EI). The relationship between thinking and feeling forms the basic premise on which EI developed. EI stems from Gardner’s (1985) theory of social intelligence, and the construct seeks to explain why some people are successful in marital, work and social relationships while others are not. EI looks to identify certain innate skills and abilities that account for such social competency. These skills may be inherited (from neurological foundations) or learnt (through socialisation processes and modelling). When these skills are applied to various situations, they are believed to produce successful outcomes. These skills include the ability to regulate one's own emotions, to be perceptive to others' emotions as well as the expression of emotion (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). These same skills were shown to be significant in understanding effective interpersonal behaviour in marriage.

EI is a relatively new construct. Certain criticisms of EI look to compare it to intellectual or practical intelligence. It should be noted that EI looks to understand emotions and
cognitions. As a result, it does not function in the same realm as that of non-verbal, practical intelligence. While criticism of the EI construct will be noted, it should be viewed as another form of intelligence completely. EI’s most notable presence is in interpersonal relationships, and relationship satisfaction. Particularly Schutte et al., (1998) found a significant relationship between marital satisfaction and EI. This research looks to build on those findings, further investigating the role of EI in marital satisfaction.

1.2 Motivation

With the rise in popularity of the EI construct, and its claim to create successful relationships, this study looked to investigate the role of EI in marital satisfaction. It specifically looked to investigate whether EI had a role in marital satisfaction. Proponents of EI claim that people have different levels of EI, some more skilled in conducting personal relationships than others. This directed the study towards investigating whether people chose partners with a similar EI to themselves. Finally, it remained to be investigated whether people with a higher EI, would choose a partner with an EI similar to them and as a result, enjoy a higher level of marital satisfaction.

1.3 Research question

The study asks whether there is a significant relationship between EI and marital satisfaction and whether partners have a similar level of EI.
1.4 Aims

In view of the aforementioned, the aims of this study are:

1. To explore and explicate relevant literature on a martial satisfaction, namely: the definition, developmental course, etiology and psychological theories.
2. To explore and explicate relevant literature on emotional intelligence, namely: the definition, developmental course, neurological foundations, application, measurement and models.
3. To evaluate the relationship between marital satisfaction and EI.
4. To investigate EI between couples.

1.5 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is whether there is a significant link between EI and marital satisfaction. The second hypothesis investigates whether there is a significant correlation between partners EI scores.

1.6 Overview and scope of the current study

It has been argued the marital satisfaction and EI are complex constructs with multi-determined aetiology. The current study investigates the nature of martial satisfaction and EI and whether or not there is a relationship between them. The aim and hypothesis of the study have been presented and its possible scientific contribution has been indicated. In chapter 2, marital satisfaction, conflict resolution, intimacy and role of family of origin
will be explored and explicated in detail. In chapter 3, the development, application and neurological foundation for EI, as well as critique of EI, will be explored and explicated. In chapter 4, the empirical study will be outlined. In chapter 5, the data will be presented and interpreted. Final conclusions will be given in chapter 6, against the background of existing literature.
CHAPTER 2

MARITAL SATISFACTION

2.1 Introduction

Ideally, close interpersonal relationships allow people to fulfil their need to be accepted, cared for, validated and loved and the opportunity to reciprocate such attitudes and behaviours. In short, people need to love and be loved (Fletcher, 2002). Very often these form the qualities of the ‘perfect’ marriage. However in reality, intimate relationships, are fascinatingly complex. Within a marriage, this intimate relationship becomes a complex, dynamic union, responding to social change and life circumstances (Timmer & Orbuch, 2001). A central question for relationship researchers has been: what makes some marriages successful and others miserable? (Gottman, 1998). Although it is still strongly debated today, marital satisfaction has proven itself a challenging variable in the search to understanding the anatomy of a lasting marriage (Gottman, 1998).

The term marital satisfaction has proven to be a rather elusive construct to define, often used interchangeably with the terms marital quality, and dyadic adjustment (Harper, Schaalje, & Sandberg, 2000). Marital quality has been defined in terms of a husband and wife’s ability to accommodate each other at any given time. It can also describe a single
Amato, Johnson, and Rogers (2003) describe marital quality as a multi-dimensional construct, rather than a spouse’s subjective rating of their level of satisfaction within a marriage. They divide marital quality into three dimensions, namely spouse’s reports of happiness within the marriage, frequency of shared time together, (which they call marital interaction), and thoughts or actions which may lead to divorce, (which they called divorce proneness) (Amato et al., 2003, p5). Others (Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999) describes marital satisfaction as including intrapersonal qualities such as love, commitment, and sexual satisfaction. Included are interpersonal qualities relating to dyadic interaction, such as, communication, self-disclosure, spousal support, gender roles, couple sharing and equity. Environmental factors relating to employment, finances, illness, and a couples support network, are also linked to marital satisfaction (Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999).

Throughout long-term marriages the level of marital satisfaction does not remain constant (Amato, Johnson, & Rogers, 2003). Rather, it is a process that fluctuates throughout the duration of the marriage (Bradbury & Karney 2004; O’Brien & Peyton, 2002) though tends to gradually deteriorate (Amato et al., 2003). Vaillant and Vaillant (1993) used retrospective and prospective forty year data in a study of 104 men and their wives. They found support for the U-shaped trend using retrospective data but no support using longitudinal data. Van Laningham, Johnson and Amato (2001) argue that the U-shape
curve was found using cross-sectional studies. When longitudinal studies are used, the data fails to consistently support the up-turn in marital satisfaction in later years of marriage. However, only a small number of longitudinal studies have been carried out measuring the U-shaped theory. In sum the data on direction of marital satisfaction is inconsistent. Where it was widely believed that marriage followed a U-shape curve, there may now be evidence showing marriage moving in a curve linear direction.

2.2 Marital stressors

Researchers adopt various theories to try and understand these fluctuations in marital satisfaction, focusing on interpersonal interactions and extenuating circumstances. The interpersonal interactions include conflict resolution, communication, and intimacy between partners. The extenuating circumstances include variables that the individual brings to the marriage from their own ecology, as well as societal and contextual pressure exerted on the marriage itself. These variables include family-of-origin, socio-economic status, level of education, attitudes and values and financial stress (Bradbury & Karney 2004; Smock, 2004). The stability and quality of a marriage, and the level of satisfaction experienced by each partner, is largely determined by their ability to successfully negotiate the changes in the relationship, between their marriage, and the environment in which it is embedded (Smock, 2004).
2.2.1 Gender differentiation

These changes in the environment are largely attributed to changes in society, particularly towards gender relations (Amato et al., 2003). In addition, attitudes and values and the age people decide to get married are also predictors of marital satisfaction (Amato et al., 2003; Smock, 2004). The most notable of these changes is the increasing number of women who are remaining committed to full time jobs. This has lead to an increase in men’s role in the participation of domestic work. It has also resulted in women having equal say in the decision making within marriages, leading to more egalitarian relationships. These relationships, based on equality, can be more satisfactory than traditional asymmetrical relationships (Amato et al., 2003). With an increase in women taking up full time work, there has been an increase in the divorce rate, which is explained through the Economic Opportunity Hypothesis. The hypothesis states that females now have an economically viable alternative to staying married (Schoen, Astone, Rothert, Standish & Kim, 2002).

The Economic Opportunity Hypothesis contains concepts which relate to a more comprehensive model, namely, the Investment Model (Rusbult & Martz, 1995). In this model, a rationale is provided for a women’s choice to stay or leave a committed relationship. The model postulates that the commitment level is the key to understanding a women’s decision to remain or leave a relationship. Commitment is defined as “the degree to which the individual intends to maintain a relationship, feel psychologically attached to it, and sustains a long-term orientation towards it,” (Rusbult & Martz, 1995, p.559).
The higher the commitment to the relationship, the more likely the women will choose to stay. It has been hypothesised that commitment is a determinant of the women’s stay versus leave decision. However, the commitment variable is influenced by three other important factors. These include the quality of alternative relationships that are perceived to be available, the investment size, (children, shared memories, possessions or time and energy invested) and the level of satisfaction within the relationship. The model predicts that an increase in investment size and relationship satisfaction with a decrease in available alternatives should increase commitment to the relationship. As commitment increases so does the cost of leaving the relationship. This can also explain why partners often remain committed to relationships in which they are experiencing high levels of dissatisfaction.

2.2.2 Traditional versus modern roles in the marriage

The change in gender norms within society has an effect on the marital dyad. It affects the traditional gender roles, as a result of gradual changes in the attitudes and values of men and women within a marriage. The adoption of less traditional values has created greater marital satisfaction for husbands on the one hand; however wives seem to be less satisfied. The reason is that husbands who adopt less traditional views receive greater support from their wives, while wives who adopt less traditional views often experience resistance from their husbands (Smock, 2004). A rise in individualistic values brings into question peoples commitment to the idea of life long marriage. People with a strong belief in life long marriage may be inclined to put more effort into solving conflict and
working through marital problems. While those who are more open to the idea of divorce, may rather choose to end a marriage (rather than invest the time and effort trying to correct it) and spend the effort looking for happiness with another partner (Amato et al., 2003). Although the traditional views within the marriage may have begun changing, there is still evidence supporting the view that marital status is still highly valued among couples (Smock, 2004).

Financial considerations do not only contribute to the formation of roles within marriage, but also in people’s decision to get married. A review of the literature by Smock (2004) highlights the role of socio-economic factors in people’s decisions to get and stay married. They found that couples who are “well-off” (Smock, 2004, p.969) are more likely to stay married. However, they refute the claims in their own findings, arguing that people from all socio-economic groups, particularly middle class, need to reach some form of “enhanced financial status” in order to get married and remain married (Smock, 2004, p.969).

2.2.3 Parenthood

External stressors, such as financial concerns and gender roles are exacerbated when the couple make the transition to parenthood. This transformation tends to signal a significant decline in marital satisfaction (Twenge, Campbell & Foster, 2003). The transition to parenthood has been found to be a significant contributing factor to the decline in marital satisfaction. Although a decline was found to occur irrespective of whether the couple
had children or not, parenting accelerated the rate of decline, with wives being particularly hard hit. (MacDermid, Huston & McHale, 1990; Shapiro, Gottman & Carrere, 2000). It was found that both partners report some impairment in closeness and sexuality after the birth of a child. It was mothers in particular, who experienced a greater level of dissatisfaction. The increase in dissatisfaction can be attributed to psycho-sexual factors. These include a decrease in sexual desire and physical discomfort for many months after childbirth (Ahlborg, Dahlof & Hallberg, 2005).

There are varying results, regarding gender differences, in the decline of marital satisfaction when it comes to parenting. Some results show a greater decline in the wife’s level of satisfaction, which may be due to the adoption of the childcare role. Other results show a greater decline in the husband’s level of marital satisfaction, due to reduced amount of intimate time spent together. Two factors should be taken into consideration. The first is that very often, one spouse, usually the husband, will show a greater level of satisfaction before the child is born, so essentially has a further way to drop. Secondly, to accurately understand the drop in levels of satisfaction, longitudinal studies are more useful than cross sectional studies, as levels of marital satisfaction fluctuate within marriage (O’ Brien & Peyton, 2002).

The birth of a child calls for a reorganisation of social roles. Initially, both partners can adopt traditional roles. The mother may take on the care-giving role and the father becomes the sole breadwinner, hence causing a temporary power shift. Conflict in this situation may arise, when either partner is unhappy with their new role in the marriage
(Twenge, Campbell & Foster, 2003). Failure to revert back to the original role may compound the dissatisfaction among partners.

This is especially so, if a partner placed concrete attitudes and values on role orientation and child rearing practices. The more rigid each partners attitudes were towards role orientation (particularly parenting roles), the greater the level of dissatisfaction. However, mutual agreement on child rearing practices was found to maintain a high level of marital satisfaction (O’Brien & Peyton, 2002). These findings are consistent with those of MacDermid, Huston and McHale, (1990), who found that many parents may embrace traditional domestic roles. However, it was those who held traditional views on parenting roles, but tried to change to more egalitarian roles, that were likely to incur the greatest dissatisfaction. In synopsis, neither traditional nor egalitarian (parenting or dual earner) roles determine marital satisfaction. Instead, it is each partner’s flexibility to adapt to their particular role that determines the level of satisfaction (Brennan, Barnett & Gareis, 2001).

2.2.4 Stress spill-over

The changing attitudes and values, gender roles, societal norms, and children, are simply contextual factors that effect levels of satisfaction within a marriage (Bradbury & Karney, 1995). Bradbury and Karney’s (1995) description of the external stressors stops short of explaining, how the stressors affect the partner’s relationship. It is Karney and Neff (2004) that describe the process by which these stressors affect level of satisfaction between partners. The explanation describes the way the couples think about, and process
their relationship (Karney & Neff, 2004). Relationship stress is mediated by individual intrapsychic functioning including temperament, cognition and emotional processing. Karney and Neff (2004) refer to a manner in which individuals manage environmental stress in the relationship as stress spill-over.

Stress spill-over can have varying effects on a relationship, and the couple would have to actively intervene to negate these effects. Moderate stress spill-over has a lesser negative effect on marital satisfaction, because the spouse experiencing the stress may still be able to recognise it, and so be aware of the stress on relationship judgements. However, a high level of stress may be overwhelming to the spouses’ psychological resources and so prevent them from separating the external stress from their relationship satisfaction. This results in higher spill-over as a result of higher stress (Karney & Neff, 2004).

While stress spill-over has various effects in couples’ daily interactions, it can also have long-term effects on marital satisfaction. The first effect is that the more negative interactions as a result of stress spill-over, the greater the change in the way each spouse evaluates the global satisfaction of their marriage. A greater amount of daily negative behaviours leads to changes in specific perceptions about the relationship. Further stress increases their negative perceptions about specific problems within the relationship (Karney & Neff, 2004).

The second effect of long-term stress spill-over is the way couples integrate specific perceptions within a marriage, to the global view of marital satisfaction. Essentially, the
way negative perceptions are processed and interpreted has an effect on marital satisfaction. A successful relationship requires that negative perceptions are contained and managed whilst circumventing negative opinion on the relationship itself.

The capacity to handle stress varies among couples, depending on the resources at their disposal. Should the stress overwhelm their resources (in either persistence or intensity) it may cause changes within the functioning of the dyad. With the increase in stress, so the specific negative perceptions are processed and integrated, in such a way, that the negative perceptions cannot be separated from overall positive global satisfaction. This results in the overall global representation of the marriage being perceived to be negative, ensuing greater marital dissatisfaction (Karney & Neff, 2004).

Karney and Neff (2004) have demonstrated one of the many ways stress can effect marital satisfaction. They have demonstrated that stressful events may have the ability to alter cognitive processes and content of marital interaction. This can then effect daily perception of marital satisfaction. The manner in which these perceptions are integrated into the overall representation, of the perception, of positive global marital satisfaction, must also be considered.

### 2.2.5 Family of origin

While marriages are affected by stressors from their environment, these stressors are only partially responsible for the fluctuating levels of marital satisfaction, and potential success or failure of the marriage itself. The way in which couples resolve conflict, and
the level of intimacy between them, have been identified as a fundamental interpersonal variables (Cramer, 2004; Huston, 2000). Together with the external variables, such as socio-economic factors, they are responsible for levels of satisfaction throughout the lifespan of a marriage. However, the individual develops the skills necessary to resolve conflict, and foster intimacy, long before they enter into the marriage (Amato & Booth, 2001). These skills develop within their family-of-origin. While family-of-origin is an external variable effecting marriage, its role is linked to the development of internal variables, namely, conflict resolution skills and skills necessary for maintaining intimacy.

Based *inter alia* on its importance, the role of family-of-origin within a marriage requires further description. The processes in which relationship skills are developed are based on modelling of parental behaviours, parental availability and parental attachment (Amato & Booth, 2001; Bradbury & Karney, 1995; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005).

Researchers have long hypothesised about the role of family-of-origin in couple’s marital quality, and to date, much of the evidence is inconclusive due to few longitudinal studies and too small samples in those longitudinal studies (Amato & Booth, 2001). The role of family-of-origin is better understood through the analysis of a mediation model (Amato & Booth, 2001, p. 628). The mediation model considers observational learning to be paramount, transmitting relationship patterns across generations. The model looks at observational learning, and says that children learn interpersonal behaviour from their parents. If the parent’s marriage is of a low quality, and their behaviour is dysfunctional, then this is learnt and continued in their children’s own marriages. This can also be extended to conflict resolution models and negative affect. These models show that
children adopt these poor conflict resolution strategies, and exhibit them within peer sibling relationships and eventually in marital relationships (Amato & Booth, 2001).

Bradbury and Karney (2004) support the idea that marital outcomes are influenced by family-of-origin. It is within the family, that children and adolescents learn maladaptive interpersonal behaviours. Through direct interaction with family members, the individual develops these emotional and behavioural propensities. These behaviours can then be generalised to non-familial relationships. Aggression and negative affect can be seen as intergenerational patterns of maladaptive interpersonal behaviour (Bradbury & Karney 2004). These findings are further supported by Sabatelli and Bartle-Haring (2003) who found that a spouse’s perception of family-of-origin has a significant effect on their marital adjustment. Their findings show that when individuals have a working model of effective patterns of interaction, from their family-of-origin, they are able to manage the demands of their interpersonal relationships more effectively. They found such individuals to be receptive to the expectations and emotional needs of their partners, “thereby fostering the experience of intimacy and connection” (Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003, p.167).

The parent-child relationship is also seen as important when determining the quality of future relationships. This is because the parent-child relationship is the primary relationship in which trust and acceptance is developed, as well as the internalisation of such “working models” (Amato & Booth, 2001, p.629). A distressed parent child relationship can lead to the development of traits such as insecurity, which could hamper
their marital relationships. Importantly, “close parent child relationships are critical in shaping children’s ability to regulate emotions, such as anxiety and anger, and children who have difficulty regulating emotions then too have more relationship problems (Amato & Booth, 2001, p.269).

2.2.6 Attachment theory

The Attachment Theory is based on work done by Bowlby (1969) on the relationship between infants and their primary caregivers. The nature of the first close relationship is internalised and becomes a model from which all other close relationships are based. The initial relationships therefore determine the shape of all future relationships. It does so through the mediation of these attachment models by mental representations called “attachment working models”. The interaction with attachment figures are stored in the memory as mental representations of attachment figures responses. These responses form working models of others and a representation of the value of the self called working models of self (Gomez, 1997). The working models of self and others form the link between the early attachment experiences and cognitions, feelings and behaviour in later relationships. Given a fairly consistent pattern of interaction with attachment figures during childhood, the most representative of these patterns is integrated, into a person’s implicit knowledge. This knowledge goes on to become part of a persons core functioning and is applied to relationships, affecting the functioning and course of short and long term intimate relationships (Bradbury & Karney, 1995, Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005).
Three major infant-caregiver bonds have been emphasised, namely, secure, anxious/ambivalent and anxious/avoidant. Secure is the model attachment style where the primary caregiver is available to the children and the children’s attachment allows them to explore new stimuli. Anxious/ambivalent attachment describes caregivers who are inconsistently there for the child and so the child both craves and resents the caregiver. Anxious/avoidant attachment is characterised by unresponsive parents and children who are not distressed by separation, and so avoid contact with the caregiver (Bradbury & Karney, 1995).

Based on these attachment styles, the attachment theory says, that each relationship will follow the course set out by the internalised primary infant caregiver relationships, which is primarily based on the fulfilment of needs. In an adult relationship these needs are “comfort, care and sexual gratification” (Hazan and Shaver, 1994 in Bradbury & Karney, 1995). The outcome of a relationship based on this theory is whether or not these needs can be fulfilled by the others partner (Bradbury & Karney, 1995). The working models which form the basis for attachment theories should not be seen as permanent. They are sensitive to contextual factors, by means of subjective appraisal between the person and their environment, particularly when the person perceives life events to disconfirm their working models (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005).

2.2.6.1 The Convoy Model Perspective

Bowlby’s (1969) theory is fundamental to understanding the way in which the infant/mother relationship affects future attachment styles. However, throughout a
lifetime, people form many attachments, for example, with siblings, peers and teachers. The study on attachment is notoriously fragmented. It focuses on these specific relationships, while in-fact, these relationships have a collective effect on human development. Each relationship type influences the way people function in their future interpersonal relationships, including marriage (Levitt, 2005).

Interactions with the primary caregiver are seen as central to the formulation of a working model on how to interact with others. Perceptions of new relationships are filtered through this prototype. Alternatively, social schemas may be formed from specific exemplars, without a central prototype. From this perspective, expectations about new relations would be based on the degree of similarity between the new relation and one or more of several relationships with whom the individual has interacted in the past in one or more specific contexts (Levitt, 2005). Levitt (2005, p.36) proposes that adults have ‘relational selves.’ These relational selves are cognitive-affective representations based on past relationships with significant others. Different relational selves are triggered depending on the extent to which new interpersonal encounters share similarities of person and context to existing exemplars. Given that working models can form from exemplars, the value of social networks on the development of social relations and psychosocial outcomes is apparent (Levitt, 2005).

Based on the importance of various relationships in forming attachments, the Convoy Model was developed. The Convoy Model is conceptualised as a hierarchy of three concentric circles surrounding the individual. The inner circle relations are those to
whom the individual feels so close that life cannot be imagined without them. These closest and most important persons are considered to be functionally equivalent to attachment figures. Persons who are less close but still important are found in the middle circle. The outer circle houses people of distant relationship, who have a slight effect on the individual. Inner circle relations provide high levels of affective, affirmative and direct support. Throughout the person’s life, various figures will move in and out of the inner and peripheral circles, however, the inner circle relationships are the most stable and consistent. The Convoy model expands the concept of attachment, indicating that the caregiver/infant is not the only attachment and various relationships from infancy to adulthood all affect the way in which people form attachments.

While the parent child attachment strongly influences future relationships, there are various other factors within the family that affect this relationship and foster healthy attachment. These include the state of the parent’s marriage and socio-economic factors (Amato & Booth, 2001).

Marital problems may cause psychological distress for children, who often believe they are to blame for their parent’s unhappiness. Conflict leads the parents to be less nurturing of their children, this, coupled with the child’s distress and often low self esteem and unhappiness may lead to emotional problems later on in life, and further unhappiness in adult relationships (Amato & Booth, 2001). The consequence of parent’s marital unhappiness can negatively affect the life trajectory of their children. The time and
sequence of transitional life events has a crucial effect on the quality of a person’s intimate relationships and well-being (Amato & Booth, 2001; Wolfinger, 2003).

The socio-economic status of a family can cause marital problems. The stress of which, has an impeding affect on the children’s ability to concentrate on their schoolwork. This coupled with the parents’ unavailability to help the children with their schoolwork, may decrease their educational attainment and negatively affect their occupational careers. In many cases, this perpetuates the cycle of poverty (Amato & Booth, 2001). Furthermore, parental divorce lowers the level of children’s educational attainment. The level of education is associated with an increase in marital happiness and stability. When compared with poorly educated people, well-educated people showed a greater sense of personal control, were less prone to depression, had better communications skills and earned higher salaries. As a result, couples that are better educated show a higher level of marital satisfaction (Amato et al., 2003).

Children were likely to delay their transition into marriage, if their parents were financially stable and well educated (South, 2001). Further, people who marry younger spend less time looking for a suitable partner, are not financially secure and are not as psychologically mature as people who marry later. It is for these reasons that people, who marry earlier, especially in their teens, are most at risk for separation in their marriage (Amato et al., 2003; Kurdek, 1991). This shows support for the role of an individual’s background as affecting their marital trajectory from the very beginning (Amato et al., 2003; South, 2001).
2.2.7 Summary of marital stressors

Marital satisfaction has an erratic journey, with most marriages tending to fluctuate on a general downward trajectory. Various explanations have been given for these fluctuations in marital satisfaction (Bradbury & Karney, 2004), but they seem to be a result of stressors in the environment. These stressors are called external variables and include socio-economic factors such as work, friends and children (Huston, 2000). These external stressors can decrease the global functioning of a marriage by affecting the partner’s cognitive appraisal of the problem. It does this by preventing the individual from distinguishing between the state of the relationship and the stressor itself (Karney & Neff, 2004). The way in which the marriage negotiates with its environmental stressors determines the level of satisfaction. Strong interpersonal skills are required to successfully buffer the relationship from these external stressors. These interpersonal skills are called internal variables and they develop long before the marriage begins, in each partner’s family of origin. Depending on various factors within the family of origin, such as parent-child relationships, the parent’s marriage and socio-economic circumstances, will determine the level at which these skills develop, within each partner (Amato & Booth, 2001). The most fundamental internal variables affecting marital satisfaction are conflict resolution skills, and developing and maintaining intimacy within the marriage. Both conflict resolution and intimacy skills need to be present within a relationship in order to maintain high levels of satisfaction (Huston, 2000).
2.3 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution skills have been identified as fundamental to maintaining high levels of marital satisfaction because the manner in which relationship problems are resolved is one of the most reliable and consistent signs of relationship satisfaction (Cramer, 2004). The study of conflict resolution looks to define conflict, identify positive and negative uses of conflict, and the different conflict styles that people adopt within their marriages. Models have been created to help understand the process that leads to conflict and its resolution. The models combine the behavioural interactions with affect and cognition, to understand the way in which conflict resolution promotes marital satisfaction.

Emotional support and conflict resolution are largely responsible for marital satisfaction, which contributes to overall global functioning (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). More than any other single factor, the well-being of a couple is determined by their ability to resolve conflict (Cramer, 2004). Conflict may be described as one spouse’s belief that the other one has frustrated some concerns of his or hers, or when an action of one interferes or obstructs an action of another. This can extend to the prevention of the fulfilment of one another’s goals and needs (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000).

There are many explanations of the processes involved in conflict resolution, many of which focus on interpersonal reactions in response to the external stressors, placed on the marital dyad (Cramer, 2004). The various forms of stress exerted on a marriage can lead to an increase in negative behaviours, resulting in problems within a relationship. These
problems arise, primarily, as a result of an inability to successfully resolve the conflict (Cramer, 2004, p.534). In Cramer’s view, conflict can be described in terms of six characteristics: acceptance, understanding, openness, unconditionality of acceptance, negativness and satisfaction with outcome. Unconditional acceptance can be broken down into two separate components. Firstly, level of acceptance, or the extent to which one feels accepted and secondly, the degree to which that level of acceptance is not conditioned by ones behaviour. Cramer (2004) has found these factors to be closely related to satisfaction within romantic relationships. His findings included support for negativeness of conflict and satisfaction with conflict outcome as being related to relationship satisfaction.

With reference to the constructive and destructive use of conflict, the manner in which people argue is a significant factor in conflict resolution (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). Taking this a step further, the future success of a marriage can depend on the creative use of conflict and whether it is used in a constructive or destructive manner. Constructive use of conflict will enhance the relationship and deepen it, while the destructive use of conflict will maintain low levels of marital satisfaction (Cramer, 2004). Conflict can enhance marital satisfaction (Cramer, 2004; Gottman, 1994).

One may recognise destructive patterns of conflict management by observing, “escalating spirals of manipulation, threat and coercion (overt expression of the conflict), and avoidance spirals (covert expression of the conflict), retaliation, inflexibility and rigidity, a competitive pattern of dominance and subordination and demeaning and degrading
verbal and non-verbal communication” (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000, p.322). Flexibility, interaction with intent to learn instead of intent to protect, increasing self esteem, and focus on the relationship and not on the individual, are all aspects of constructive conflict resolution (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000).

2.3.1 Styles of conflict resolution

One of the various determinants of the way people handle conflict is from their experiences within their family of origin (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). It is from within the family of origin and other significant relationships, for example peer relationships, that the maladaptive behaviours are learnt. These are learnt through modelling of the parent’s marital interactions or various interpersonal relationships with parents, siblings and other significant people (Amato & Booth, 2001; Bradbury & Karney, 2004; Levitt, 2005). Further use of these styles is determined by the situation and whether the particular style has worked in the past (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). These styles are a composite of personal characteristics, categories of behaviour and lastly communicative orientation that people use in dealing with conflict (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). The categories of behaviour refer to hostile, avoidant or collaborative behaviour. The behaviour orientation may be supported by the communication type. These include demands, complaints and criticism. These communication types may evoke defence, withdrawal or passive inaction from the other partner. This form of interaction during conflict has been labelled nag/withdraw or rejection/intrusion pattern (Christensen & Shenk, 1991).
Findings show that many conflict styles correlate negatively with marital satisfaction, with the exception of problem solving or collaborative style (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). In addition, there is an association between avoidant strategies and marital satisfaction. Positive relationships have been found between avoidance strategies and marital satisfaction. Openness and dealing with conflict, is not always associated with a high level of marital satisfaction, while aggressiveness is not necessarily indicative of a low level of marital satisfaction. Discrepancies in the way husbands and wives perceive conflict, does not seem to be predictive of marital satisfaction. Instead, increased marital satisfaction appears to be a function of spousal agreement on how to handle conflict, and can often include confrontational and even aggressive styles of handling conflict. Similarly avoiding conflict can heighten marital dissatisfaction (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). Avoiding conflict allows for the resurgence of various issues, increasing emotional distance in a relationship. By accommodating ones partner, one negotiates to fulfil common goals (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000). While hostile and avoidant styles have their place in conflict resolution, the accommodating style finds common-ground. It requires that partners negotiate so each may realise their goals. Neither style can be said to be predictive of marital satisfaction. However, hostile and avoidant conflict behaviours may have a buffering, rather than negative effect on marriage.

Overall the research suggests that the stereotype of the nagging hostile wife and the withdrawing husband is simplistic. Instead, the relationship between withdraw and hostility is largely dependent on the husbands reaction to the wife’s withdrawal and visa
versa (Roberts, 2000). In other words, the way a spouse reacts to their partners withdrawing is more crucial than the behaviour (withdrawal) itself.

The results on conflict style appear to be counter-intuitive. The actual style of conflict resolution appears to be less important than the fact that both partners must find agreement on the manner in which conflict should be resolved. This is irrespective of whether a hostile, avoidant or collaborative style is adopted by either partner. Essentially the resolution is in the process rather than the individual style (Greef & De Bruyne, 2000; Roberts, 2000).

2.2.2 Constructive and destructive models of conflict resolution

Individual styles of conflict resolution are just one part in understanding conflict. There are various models that look at the interpersonal process between partners, as well as the escalation and resolution of conflict. Investigating the marital happiness and stability in newlywed interactions, Gottman, Coan, Carrere and Swanson (1998) analyse various constructive and destructive models that aid in the prediction of marital satisfaction. These models include the Start Up Model, Specificity of Negative Hypothesis and the Negative Effect Reciprocity Model (Gottman et al., 1998). The core principle of these models is to differentiate various negative emotions experienced by each partner. They do so by observing the way in which emotions are projected and received by each partner, the resulting effect on the individual, and the final increase or decrease of marital satisfaction.
The Start Up Model is operationally defined as “the escalation of conflict from one partner’s neutral effect to the others partners negative effect” (Gottman et al., 1998, p.6). This model is based on observation techniques of couples and it was found that once the conversation begins, a negative or positive slope may be plotted, based on the observation of positive or negative behaviours which are then coded. Once the slope begins there is no observed reversal of slope direction. Simply put, once each partner starts displaying negative behaviours, they are rarely able to change direction towards positive behaviours (Gottman et al., 1998).

De-escalation models suggest the ability to “move from one partner’s negative affect (either high or low intensity) to another partner’s neutral affect” (Gottman et al, 1998, p.6). The manner in which this occurs is through positive effect. Behaviours that represent positive affect include agreement, laughing, smiling, approval and positive physical contact. Another technique includes the ability to physiologically self-sooth, i.e. calm oneself down. When these behaviours are used intermittently, during a conflict situation, partner’s affect can move from negative to neutral (Gottman et al., 1998). Husbands were largely responsible for de-escalating low intensity negative affect and wives most likely to de-escalate high intensity negative affect in successful marriages (Gottman et al., 1998).

Another set of processes addressed is the “Specificity of negativity hypothesis” (Gottman et al., 1998, p.5). This hypothesis asks whether all negative affect is equally destructive
within a relationship. Hendrix (1988) in Gottman et al., (1998, p.5) adopts the opposite perspective, describing anger (in any form) as being destructive within a relationship. The explanation goes on to describe the primitive brains inability to interpret anger as anything other than a form of brutalisation. Gottman et al., (1998) agree that anger is associated with a decrease in marital satisfaction (initially) but an increase in marital satisfaction over time. It was not anger that was found to decrease level of marital satisfaction or predict divorce. Rather, criticism, defensiveness, contempt, stonewalling and later belligerence was added. These were called “the four horsemen of the apocalypse” and were found to be predictive of marital failure (Gottman et al., 1998, p.5).

What makes the four horsemen so toxic to a marriage is that they sabotage attempts to resolve conflict or reduce anger, by negatively effecting communication between partners. These behaviours become entrenched in marital interaction and this leads to an increase in negativity and tension in the marriage. Each behaviour does this in its unique way. Criticism involves attacking the partner’s character or personality, rather then placing blame on the problem at hand. Contempt differs from criticism because a person intentionally tries to hurt their partner through insults and psychological abuse.

Defensiveness is the third horseman, and often develops as a result of contempt and criticism. The fundamental function of defensiveness is to protect oneself and ward off a perceived attack. Defensiveness can occur when one denies responsibility for the charges that their partner lays at them. It can occur when one makes excuses for what they have done i.e. claiming that things were beyond their control. Defensiveness behaviour also
includes the assumption that ones partner is thinking negative thoughts about them or their ideas as well as responding to a complaint with an immediate complaint of their own (Gottman, 1994).

The fourth horseman is stonewalling which occurs when one partner removes themselves from the conversation. Often, people who stonewall claim that they are doing so to remain neutral, and prevent the conflict escalating. The danger of this behaviour is that it promotes separation between the partners. One partner may become so overwhelmed that they stonewall and end up living separate lives (Gottman, 1994). Finally, belligerence was added to the four horsemen. Belligerence is a behaviour that primarily challenges the spouse’s authority. For example “What can you do if I go drinking with Dave? What are you going to do about it?” (Gottman et al., 1998).

The four horsemen of the apocalypse show that all negative affect is not equally destructive and it is not anger itself that leads to marital failure. Rather, it may be certain negative behaviours that are expressed communicatively and affectively, preventing the resolution of conflict or de-escalation of anger. Progressively, failure to effectively resolve conflict increases marital dissatisfaction pushing couples further apart. Other factors that contribute to conflict in a relationship include power and gender, which are discussed in the Negative Effect Reciprocity Model (Gottman et al., 1998).

The Negative Affect Reciprocity model is based on the emotion of one partner and the other partner’s reaction to those emotions. The model says if one spouse is angry, then
the other spouse is likely to be more negative than is normal for that person. High intensity reciprocity is often experienced in violent marriages. This occurs with the husband’s escalation of the low level negative affect as a result of the rejection of the wife’s influence. However, Gottman et al., (1998) interpret this model to be based less on emotion and more on power and gender differences within a marriage. In a functional marriage, men are able to accept the influence of women i.e. they can hold their wives anger. It is when men feel threatened by their wife’s negative effect, and cannot accept her influence in the relationship, that they try take away her power. This can be done through aggression, by escalating his negative affect. Ultimately, this model shows that power sharing is inherent in negative affect reciprocity (Gottman et al., 1998, p.5).

The literature on the predictive value of observing emotions is inconclusive. It sways between finding the expression of anger to be a positive influence in marital satisfaction, while other studies show anger to be detrimental to marital satisfaction. Essentially, it is the way anger is expressed that determines its effect on a marriage. The way emotions are conceptualised and operationalised in the various studies, influences the results on the effect of anger on marital satisfaction (Waldinger, Hauser, Crowell, & Shulz, 2004).

Many of these studies rely on observers to code the emotions expressed by the couple during conflict interactions. It becomes a complex task to determine which facial expressions, tone of voice or content expressed constitutes anger. Further, anger may be expressed with other negative communication, for example anger and criticism. Depending on the way in which the researcher codes for anger, will depend on the results
achieved. It is on these methodological complexities that Gottman et al., (1998) work has been criticised (Waldinger et al., 2004).

2.2.3 The role of positive affect in conflict resolution

There is a move away from the above models, which primarily focus on negative emotions and behaviours, namely, anger, criticism, belligerence and the like (Gottman, et al., 1998) and look at other factors that may contribute to resolving conflict. The shift is towards understanding positive affect, communication, listening and various intimate exchanges that may prevent and resolve conflict within a marriage (Bradbury & Karney, 2004; Gordon, Baucom, Epstein, Burnett, & Rankin, 1999).

Bradbury and Karney (2004) point out that hypotheses tend to focus on the role of positive and negative behaviours during conflict resolution, and the way in which couples talk and respond to each other, as being responsible for marital satisfaction. These hypotheses are, however, notoriously difficult to prove or refute and results remain inconsistent (Bradbury & Karney, 2004). Bradbury & Karney (2004) look at the essential role of positive affect as a mitigating factor over-riding various other communication skills and variables. Ultimately they believe that positive, intimate affect and behaviours play as large a role in conflict prevention and resolution, as the regulation of negative affect and behaviours.
“Couples marry not because they manage problems well, but because they find comfort and solace in one another’s presence. The ability to enact this support and sustain a nurturing environment may stave off declines in marital satisfaction, perhaps because conflicts are less consequential when they do occur” (Bradbury & Karney, 2004, p.856). Bradbury and Karney’s (2004) statement is significant. It shows that problem solving and intimacy skills do not work independently, rather, they work in conjunction with one another.

Bradbury and Karney (2004) showed that where positive affect is at a relatively high level and positive problem solving skills at a relatively low level, the same amount of marital satisfaction can be achieved in comparison to a marriage where positive problem solving skills are high. High levels of negative problem solving skills only affect the level of marital satisfaction when positive affect is low. Simply put, couples with poor problem solving skills will have the same level of marital satisfaction as those with strong problem solving skills as long as humour, affection and interest are present. It is only when these are not present, that poor problem solving skills negatively effect marital satisfaction. These findings are supported by Gordon, Baucom, Epstein, Burnett, and Rankin (1999) who found that the role of communication may be more significant for some couples than others. Treating those couples by trying to improve their communication techniques may be met with little success. Instead it may be necessary to address the couple’s cognitions about the present and future state of the marriage and focus on other behavioural variables that will enable the couple to address these cognitions. Variable such as affect,
physical affection, income and role type may play a greater part in marital satisfaction and adjustment then communication alone (Gordon et al., 1999).

Another influential process theory is one that is applied to the resolution of conflict and called the Active Listening Model. The Active Listening Model has come to be reflected in many therapies in to what is known as the “Listener-Speaker Exchange” (Gottman et al., 1998, p.6). An explanation of this would be the first spouse beginning as the speaker and the second as the listener. The first spouse will state their complaint directly to the second spouse. The second spouse is then asked to paraphrase the complaint without being defensive or judgmental, both the content and the feelings of the first spouse’s message and then check out this paraphrase. The second spouse is then asked to empathetically validate the first spouse’s feelings (Gottman et al., 1998, p.5). This form of intimate communication between partners is called ‘Intentional Dialogue’ (Gottman et al., 1998, p.5). They hypothesise that this model of process occurs naturally in satisfactory marriages during periods of conflict, while it is absent in less satisfactory marriages during conflict exchanges.

There are strong debates around the interplay between the role of communication and affect in the resolution and escalation of conflict (Bradbury & Karney, 2004; Gottman et al., 1998). These debates highlight the difficulty in measuring and coding subtle nuances of emotion that begin, escalate or prevent conflict. The search towards understanding conflict lies in the micro-behaviours (Gottman & Driver, 2004). Their results support the theory, that couples construct intimacy through hundreds of ordinary, mundane moments
in which they attempt to make emotional connections. It is the understanding of affection during times of conflict that may display the anatomy of conflict within a marriage (Gottman & Driver, 2004).

The theories put forward by Bradbury and Karney, (2004) and Gottman and Driver (2004), indicate that while the ability to resolve conflict remains an important skill in the determining of marital satisfaction, it cannot exist in isolation. The regulation of various negative emotions and behaviours requires the complementary presence of positive emotions and behaviours (micro behaviours) to maintain a high level of satisfaction. The emotional support in times of stress prevents emotional withdrawal, deters depression, decreases escalation of conflict and finally increases emotional intimacy within the relationship (Cramer, 2004). These positive emotions and behaviours form another fundamental internal variable of marriage, namely, intimacy.

### 2.3 Intimacy

Intimacy is considered one of the most significant indicators of positive interpersonal relationships. This is viewed as an essential element in marital satisfaction and predictive of marital quality, and satisfaction. (Greef & Malherbe, 2001; Harper, Schaalje & Sandberg, 2000). While there is agreement on the importance of intimacy in a relationship, there is no clear consensus on the conceptual definition of intimacy (Harper et al., 2000). Intimacy has been described as a “multifaceted interpersonal dimension which describes the quality of a marriage relationship at a point in time” (Harper et al., 2000, p.3). It has also been defined as “a relational event in which trusting self-disclosure
is responded to with communicated empathy” (Dandeneau & Johnson, 1994). Other definitions mention various characteristics, including behavioural interdependency, fulfilment of needs, and emotional attachment (Greef & Malherbe, 2001, p.248).

Intimacy is considered a process, which is never completed, or fully actualized, involving the acceptance and understanding of, the true self of the other person (Greef & Malherbe, 2001, p.248).

Intimacy is a component of need fulfilment. Prager and Buhrmester (1998) expand the definition to include the experience of positive feelings (about their partners and themselves), and perceive the interaction to have advanced the partners’ understanding of one another. The definition focuses more on interaction and less on understanding. They found that partners, who communicate openly, engage in regular affectionate and sexual contact, experience greater fulfilment in their sense of belonging, nurturance and companionship. Intimacy can be divided into fulfilling two needs, agentic needs and communal needs. Agentic needs include the need for identity and recognition while communal needs represent the need for affection and nurturance (Prager & Buhrmester, 1998, p.464). Their results also show that intimacy is strongly linked to positive tone. Self disclosure, and the reciprocal reflection that the partner is understood, is more effective and intimate when carried out in a positive rather than negative tone (Prager & Buhrmester, 1998). The above exchange has been called the Interpersonal Process Model of intimacy (Manne, et al., 2004, p.590). This model gives credit to the difficulty and vulnerability displayed by each partner in the process of self disclosure. It is this
vulnerability around self-disclosure that makes the role of affect and response, to the
disclosure, so important.

2.3.1 Self-Disclosure

Self-disclosure is defined as ‘the communication of personally relevant and revealing
information to another person.’ (Manne et al., 2004, p.590). An individual can choose to
self-disclose thoughts, feelings or non-verbal communication. In response, the listener
can choose to do the same, by revealing thoughts, or personal facts and feelings to the
speaker. The response to the speaker addresses the perceptions and appraisals of the
information revealed. To be deemed intimate, the exchange should leave the speaker
feeling that they have been understood, accepted and cared for. If this does occur, then
their will be a feeling of closeness and intimacy between the speaker and listener (Manne
et al. 2004, p.590). Self-disclosure can be further categorised as factual and emotional.
Self-disclosure is strongly related to intimacy (Manne et al., 2004).

A better understanding of the important aspects in the marital relationship such as
intimacy, may contribute to the development of marital programs and couples therapy
(Greef & Malherbe, 2001). Researchers emphasise various parts of intimacy including
involvement, intention, emotion, sexuality and gender (Greef & Malherbe, 2001, p.248).
This is supported by Harper et al., (2000) who lists eight factors as fundamental to the
make up of intimacy: affection, expressiveness, compatibility, cohesion, sexuality,
conflict resolution, autonomy and identity. Monsour (1992) describes intimacy as self
disclosure, emotional expressiveness, trust, shared activities, physical contact and sexual contact.

2.3.2 Intimacy applied

While external stressors pull at the dyadic relationship, intimacy appears to be the magic glue that holds the relationship together. Illusive by definition, intimacy can be found in verbal, affective and physical realms of the marriage. Specifically, self-disclosure, closeness, bonding and sexual interaction or other physical bonding has been found to predict marital satisfaction (Harper et al., 2000, p.4). Intimacy and specifically the component of positive affect, when combined with conflict resolution skills, tends to be a useful combination for marital satisfaction.

2.3.2.1 Sexual intimacy

There is also a relationship between intimacy and a couple’s sexual relationship. Satisfied spouses report greater congruence between their desire for, and experience of sexual activity (Greef & Malherbe, 2001). There is a difference in perception of intimacy between men and woman, as it fulfils different functions both of them. Women are more prepared to discuss intimate issues then men and use intimacy to create greater satisfaction and warmth in the relationship. Men are not as sexually intimate as women i.e. they may display less intimate behaviour during sexual intercourse. However, they attach greater importance to sexual intimacy. Men and women do not experience intimacy in the same way and generally sexual interaction heightens emotional intimacy
for men while women require emotional intimacy to be sexually intimate (Greef & Malherbe, 2001).

In long term marriage a decrease in sexual activity and frequency of sexual activity has been found. However, sex remains an important part of the relationship, reassuring each other of their commitment and enhancing the feeling of being needed and valued. It is important to note that in long term marriages, it was also found that sex was not important to all couples. Very often sexual intercourse is compensated with other activities that enhance intimacy (Hinchliff & Gott, 2004). This supports previous findings by Parks and Floyd (1996) who found intimacy to be defined as self disclosure, by 90% of participants, half of whom made the distinction between closeness and intimacy. This is in contrast to previous findings which included sexual contact in the definition of intimacy.

Intimacy often buffers a marriage, enabling couples to successfully make the transition to parenthood. Often, this is a time when sexual intimacy declines due to the demands of having children (Twenge, Campbell & Foster, 2003). Intimacy allows the couple to unite during this transition, softening the decline in marital satisfaction. The aspect of intimacy responsible for this is empathy. If the husband is able to satisfactorily empathise with his wife, it enables them to integrate into ‘us’ (Shapiro, Gottman & Carrere, 2000).
2.4 Conclusion

Marriage appears to be influenced by many predictable and unpredictable stressors from within its ecology. The literature shows that no particular stressor is responsible for the level of spousal satisfaction within a marriage. What does appear to affect the level of satisfaction is the ability for the partners to negotiate through these stressors, seeking an amicable, possibly positive outcome. To achieve this, each partner needs to utilise their personal and interpersonal skills. These skills seem to develop in various relationships from infancy and throughout adulthood. The most significant predictor of marital satisfaction is the ability to utilise these skills to foster intimacy and resolve conflict. Both intimacy and conflict resolution skills seem to be the fundamental factors that allow a couple to navigate through stress and transitional periods during the lifespan of their marriage. While there are many variables determining marital satisfaction, intimacy and conflict resolution form its inner core. Collectively, they appear to be responsible for maintaining levels of marital satisfaction.
CHAPTER 3

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

3.1 Introduction

‘At some point in their lives most people have met someone who seems as though they can read minds, such as the co-worker who can gauge the boss’s mood from across the office. Simultaneously, most people have met someone who just can’t get on with anybody, often rubbing others up the wrong way. But can emotional intelligence, the ability to perceive, understand and manage emotions, be learned? Can anyone be as socially agile as Oprah Winfrey?’

The above exert was adapted from an article in Psychology Today (December, 2004) titled Secrets of the socially savvy. The article asks whether Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be learnt, and proposes that Opera Winfrey, and Nelson Mandela, epitomise people who have a high level of EI. The article appears to tap into a debate that has been plaguing philosophers for thousands of years, that being the relationship between our heads and hearts.

Various historical influences have facilitated research into the relationship between thinking and feeling, creating a context in which the construct of emotional intelligence
(EI) developed. This began with the Greek stoic notion, that reason was superior to emotion, and followed by the European sentimentalist movement idea of innate, pure, emotional knowledge. This was supported by the Romantic movement’s emphasis on emotional expression in the arts (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004).

Modern psychology picked up the debate and during the 1960’s there was considerable interest on the balance between feeling and thought (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000). The debate continued through to 1980’s shifting to the normative interaction between emotion and thought (Mayer, et al., 2004). While some interactions between emotion and cognitions appeared to be relatively neutral, with regard to intelligence, other interactions seemed to show that emotions interact with thought in a productive way (Mayer, et al., 2004). Within the neuropsychological fraternity there has been a developing interest in the relationship between emotions and cognitive thought processes (Mayer, et al., 2004). To fully understand the relationship between intelligence and emotion, there needs to be an in-depth investigation into the anatomy of both these constructs, searching for common areas of functioning.

3.2 Intelligence

Early attempts at understanding intelligence were primarily conducted from a psychometric approach. This psychometric approach formed the basis for Binet’s (1903) work in the development of standardised intelligence tests, as well as many modern theories of emotional intelligence (Cavanaugh, 1998). The psychometric approach focuses on the interrelationship between various intellectual abilities (Cavanaugh, 1998).
The way in which these intellectual abilities are organised is termed the structure of intelligence (Cavanaugh, 1998). Investigating the way in which people conceptualise and solve problems has lead to other theorists using the Cognitive–process approach to intelligence, which looks at developmental changes in modes and styles of thinking (Cavanaugh, 1998). Sternberg & Detterman (1986) in Mayer et al. (2004, p.198) define intelligence as “representing, primarily, the capacity to carry out abstract thought, as well as general ability to learn and adapt to the environment.”

Theorists, realise the complexity of intelligence as a construct, and observe that intelligence is made up of various skills. The multidimensional theories on intelligence are varied in defining its exact dimensions. Consensus can be reached in the fact that no one dimension, or single generic type of intelligence, is responsible for all the different kinds of mental activities that people perform (Cavanaugh, 1998). Beginning as far back as 1920, there has always been interest in other forms of intelligence deemed as non-academic (Sternberg, 1997) or non-cognitive (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). These forms of intelligence refer to the emotional, social and practical intelligences (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000).

There has been continued interest in Social intelligence since 1920 through to the 1990’s, albeit at different levels and characterised by diverse approaches (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). Several authors agree that social intelligence is primarily a feature of the capacity to deal with other people (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000, p.137), utilise interpersonal knowledge (Strang, 1930 in Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000), affective social functioning

Neisser (1976) suggested that the distinction between academic and practical abilities lay in the types of tasks associated with school and real world settings (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). “Academic problems tend to be formulated by others, well defined, complete in the information they provide, characterised by having only one correct answer, having only one correct method of obtaining the answer, dis-embedded from ordinary experience and of little or no intrinsic interest” (Neisser, 1976, in Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000, p.137). These tasks are often found in school and IQ tests rather than the problems people would face on a day-to-day basis (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000).

Everyday problems are often “unformulated or in need of reformulation, of personal interest, lacking information necessary for solution, related to everyday experience, poorly defined, characterised by multiple correct solutions, each with liabilities as well as assets and characterised by multiple methods of picking a problem solution” (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000, p.138).

Sternberg’s (1997) theory of Successful Intelligence, defines successfully intelligent people as those who are able to recognise their strengths and weaknesses. They are also able to capitalise on their strengths while at the same time, compensate for their weaknesses. Sternberg identifies the strengths in analytic, creative and practical abilities (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). He has shown that practical intelligence, as a component
of successful intelligence, is distinct from academic intelligence, and can explain individual differences in performance beyond IQ (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000). Practical intelligence may be defined as “the ability to accomplish personally valued goals by adapting to the environment, shaping (or changing) the environment or selecting a new environment” (Hedlund & Sternberg, 2000, p.138).

Much of the research on social intelligence is based on a prominent theory by Gardner (1985) namely, the Theory of Multiple Intelligence. The Theory of Multiple Intelligence states that there is pervasive evidence for the existence of several relatively autonomous human intellectual competences which Gardner (1985) labelled human intelligences. Gardner listed a range of possible intelligences though this was neither definitive nor exhaustive. The various intelligences’ are not antagonistic and so work together in harmony (Gardner, 1985).

One of the several intelligences listed, is known as the personal intelligence. Personal intelligences were identified by two key characteristics. A person’s ability to be introspective, to understand and recognise their own emotions, to discriminate among these feelings and to label them (Gardner, 1985). The second characteristic looks outward from the self. It entails the ability to notice and make distinctions about other people, particularly with reference to their mood, temperaments motivations and intentions (Gardner, 1985). Gardner (1985) intimated that unlike other stated intelligences, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are not entirely autonomous, they are influenced from both the neurological and cultural spheres (Gardner, 1985). It is Gardner’s (1985)
theory of multiple intelligences that forms the basis on which EI is developed. Mayer et al (2004), broaden the study of emotional intelligences by focusing on “hot” intelligences that operate on social, practical, personal and emotional information.

In sum, intelligence might be thought of as a multi-dimensional construct, operationalised in both process and ability. It utilises various systems to enable an individual to cope with their surrounding environment. Intelligence is not an autonomous system and is influenced by various other neural systems, particularly emotional systems, the relationship of which will be investigated further (Gardner, 1985; Mayer et al 2004).

3.3 Emotions

Emotions play various roles within the realm of human functioning. On the most basic level, emotions enable a person to illicit an autonomic and endocrine response, enabling the survival fight or flight reaction (Rolls, 1999). Emotions allow for flexibility in behavioural responses to various environmental stimuli, either in the form of gaining a reward, or avoiding a punishment. It is this same flexibility that allows emotions to serve a motivational function in carrying out various actions to obtain such results (Rolls, 1999).

Survival of the human is partly attributed to emotions, which serve both an evolutionary and developmental function. The word emotion is used to conveniently describe a set of systems in the brain and body, and is not something that the brain itself specifically
creates. It is the awareness of these emotions that separates humans from animals, and the interplay, between one’s awareness of emotions that has been subject to a considerable amount of research. Much of an individual’s emotion falls outside their awareness often making up the unconscious, and although these emotions evoke a physical reaction, they rarely enter in to our awareness (Le Doux, 1998).

Central to their role in EI, emotions serve to promote communication. Communicating emotional states very often plays a role in conflict resolution or prevention. Social bonding is facilitated through emotions, particularly between spouses and children. Emotion also plays a role in the cognitive evaluation of events or memories, depending on the current mood state at the onset of such events. Emotions assist with the storing of events in memory, particularly episodic memory. This allows for the storage of a large amount of details and allows for the generation of the appropriate behaviour should a situation present itself again. The emotional state is also largely responsible for selecting which episodic memories get recalled and when they get recalled (Rolls, 1999).

3.3.1 Emotions in context

There have been several theories of emotions, which have formed the foundation of contemporary understanding in the field. These include the James-Lange, Cannon-Bard and Stanley Schachter’s Two–Factor theory on emotions, which have formed a platform on which modern day theories are formulated.
The development of emotional understanding begins with the James-Lange theory, which states that emotions are a result of our physical responses to various stimuli. This theory implies that felt emotions would be as a result of physical bodily changes (Banich, 1997). This theory asks the question, ‘why do some events make us run away (and then feel emotional)’ while others do not? (Rolls, 1999).

The Cannon – Bard theory, states that emotional experience, is a result of both physiological changes in the body and process in the mind (Banich, 1997). Elaborating on the Cannon-Bard Theory is Stanley Schachter’s two-factor theory of emotion. The theory states that emotional experience is not only the result of physiological arousal, but to which specific cause the person attribute’s that arousal (Banich, 1997). Schachter has added a cognitive component to Cannon-Bard’s predominantly physiological explanation. The above theories are useful as a basis for understanding the origins of emotional development. However, there is a movement away from these models towards understanding emotion in terms of motivational, behavioural and physiological origins (Le Doux, 1989; Rolls, 1999).

Rolls (1999) describe modern theory with reference to Fridja (1986) who says that the change in action readiness is the core of an emotion and the readiness to act on the prompting of plans. However it was found that one could perform an action in response to a request and not experience much emotion, so there is a questionable link between performing action and emotions (Rolls, 1999). The link would be the motivation construct, which may be seen as the catalyst between emotions and actions. Fridja (1986)
theory enters into the realm of both long and short-term motivational effects of emotion. Observing emotions purely on the basis of motivation, does not explain sudden or gradual shifts in emotional behaviour, when external circumstances appear to remain constant. It begs the question: ‘what occurs when the motivation goes awry?’ It also questions the contextual and internal mechanisms turning “friendship to envy and love to hate” (Le Doux, 1998. p. 20).

The fundamental criticism of the earlier theories such as the James Lange, Cannon Bard and Schachter’s two-factor theory is, that they occur after-the-fact. They describe an individual’s reaction to a symptom not the cause of that symptom (Le Doux, 1989). Feelings, experienced as a result of the sweating palms, increased heartbeat and other physiological reactions are only a response to a system. That system has been alerted long before the person is aware of the stimulus that set such an unconscious bodily reaction in motion. The body has recognised the danger long before the stimulus enters consciousness. It is in understanding the mechanisms before consciousness that truly explain emotional systems (Le Doux, 1998).

There is a distinction made between the cognitive and emotional pathways in the brain. The evolutionary perspective recognises that the emotional paths in the brain are far stronger and more dominant than the cognitive pathways in the brain. This means, that very often, emotions push aside cognitions in ones life, while it’s difficult to push aside emotions. This says that the link from emotional to cognitive is far stronger, than the link
from cognitive to emotion. This results in an individual having far less control over their emotions, often allowing them to flood into consciousness (Le Doux, 1998).

There is a defining role played by both the cortical and sub-cortical regions of the brain in emotional experience and behaviour. Emotions are not only a part of a physiological system, but they offer important information that serves as a guide to behaviour (Banich, 1997). Theories of emotion allow for a conceptualisation of emotional behaviour but leave little explanation for the source of emotion. The source remains unconscious to the individual but is generated physiologically through various systems in the brain.

3.3.2 Neuropsychological functioning of emotion

To understand the relationship between emotion and cognition, there needs to be an explanation of the relationship between these systems in the brain. Traditionally, normal emotional functioning is thought to be regulated by various systems within the brain. These include the limbic system, the posterior parietal cortex of the right hemisphere and the prefrontal cortex. Sub-cortical structures including the amygdala, anterior thalamus and hypothalamus participate in attributing affective significance to different stimuli. They also mediate the physiological responses related to emotional reactions. In contrast, the posterior region of the right hemisphere is significant in its ability to interpret emotional information, which is assessed to be a cognitive skill (Adolphs & Damasio, 2000).
The right hemisphere is important for emotional processing. It aids in arousal, imagery and the interpretation of non-verbal affect and general emotional experience. No one of these structures works independently and these regions are all highly synchronised. Therefore, the emotional experience is often a result of the various systems integrating information with physiological reactions (Adolphs & Damasio, 2000; Banich, 1997).

Emotions, in their purest form, serve a purpose of survival. This is particularly true regarding the fight or flight function. Because these emotions necessitate a quick reaction, to a perceived threat, it quickly leads to the idea that cognitive processes are separate to emotional experience (Banich, 1997). In evolutionary terms the older parts of the brain, particularly the sub-cortical region of the brain is deemed, to deal with emotions (Banich, 1997). These parts include hypothalamus, hippocampus, mamillary bodies, anterior thalamus and cingulated cortex. They form the limbic system, which is one of three primal brain layers that developed during the early stages of evolution (Banich, 1997).

Le Doux (1998) argues that on single system cannot be entirely responsible for emotional functioning in the brain. Although the physiological parts of the limbic system do play a role in emotion, they are not entirely responsible for all emotion. He believes that physiological components of emotion have evolved in layers. Therefore each emotion has a unique set of complex systems responsible for its functioning and not only one single system such as the limbic system.
There has been considerable debate around the function of various structures within the limbic system. It has been found that the amygdala plays a crucial role in the processing of emotions and the hippocampus plays a role in memory. The hippocampus is associated with long-term memory, which is used to put emotions in context. It does this using memory from past experience (Banich, 1997).

There has been a shift towards a greater emphasis placed on the role of the amygdala in emotional processing. The amygdala is a collection of nuclei that receive processed sensory information from all modalities. It has wide-spread reciprocal connections with other brain structures whose function can be associated with emotion (Adolphs & Damasio, 2000). The position of the amygdala allows it to transmit information about external stimuli conveyed by sensory cortices in one instance, with modulation of decision-making, memory, attention and somatic, visceral, and endocrine processes in the other instance (Adolphs & Damasio, 2000).

This says that emotions are not located within one system of the brain as previously thought. It appears that emotions are a result of various inter-connected neural systems within the brain that have evolved with human development, in response to an ever-changing environment. (Banich, 1997; Le Doux, 1998)

3.3.2.1 Emotional memory

This pathway projects straight from the anterior thalamus to the amygdala. The other pathway connects the sensory areas of the neo-cortex (processes visual, auditory, somatosensory, gustatory and olfactory information) to the amygdala. This pathway allows for a more comprehensive image of the same information, but is received slower due to an increased number of synapses involved (Banich, 1997).

Goleman (1996, p. 21) points out that while these circuits are necessary for survival they are “out of date”. Essentially because the signal is sent via the thalamus directly to the amygdala a reaction occurs before there is full confirmation. An example of this is given by Goleman (1996): A man hears a noise in the room of his house and goes to fetch his gun. Upon entering the room he sees a person moving and shots at him. Within seconds of shooting, he realises that the person is actually his daughter, but by then it is too late.

To further explain this Goleman (1996) states that the amygdala has an emotional memory, often storing emotions from early childhood. The amygdala then scans stored experience, to match the present experience, to a past experience. Elements of the present stimulus may be similar to the past experience, close enough to be considered a match eliciting a response that was learned in a past (potentially traumatic experience). This may not be deemed a socially appropriate response for a current situation. Further support of this theory comes from Bechara, Tranel & Damasio (2000), who found that the amygdala is crucial in the process of emotional conditioning.
An experience is remembered using two forms of memory. This is the internal emotional memory and the explicit conscious memory. Both these memories usually work at the same time, however, if one is damaged, they can work independently. The functioning of these memories is best explained through an example. An individual may be driving down a particular road and comes close to being involved in an accident. The physical attributes of that event such as the road, on-coming vehicles and other attributes are stored in the explicit conscious memory. The fear and other emotions experienced are stored in the implicit memory. Should that person drive down the same or similar road at a later stage, the stimulus may trigger either the explicit or implicit memory or both. This creates an emotional reactive experience. If the explicit memory is triggered, the potential accident will be remembered, but no emotion experienced. If the implicit memory is triggered the person will experience fear and panic but become confused as to why it is occurring (Le Doux, 1998) This theory assumes that the emotional memory is not as forgetful as the explicit memory which is known to be less reliable, with emotional memory known to become stronger and more pertinent over time (Le Doux, 1998).

While Goleman (1996) analyse Le Doux’s (1998) theory of describing two neural pathways, there is another theory that has become prominent in understanding emotion and that is Damasio’s (2000) Systems-level theory. This theory states that “the subject matter of emotion is a relation between organism and environment, namely, the effect that interaction between the two has on the organisms survival and well-being” (Adolphs & Damasio, 2000, p.194).
Therefore, it can be said that emotions are related to the value that the person assigns to the stimuli and situation. Ultimately the person strives to maintain homeostasis, bodily integrity and adaptive brain state. A stimulus of an event (actual or memory of that stimulus or event) causes a change in brain and body states. These changes in brain and body states then produce somatic changes including; motor behavioural, facial expression, changes in the autonomic nervous system and endocrine system. Changes in these systems then go on to change the processing mode of neural systems. Emotions then engage neural structures that represent body states and structure that links perception of external stimuli to body states. These would include somatosensory cortices, components of basal ganglia, ventral frontal cortex and the amygdala (Adolphs & Damasio, 2000).

Elaborating on the appraisal theory, whereas James Lange theory says because you are running so you must be experiencing fear, appraisal theory says that just the need to run, or ‘action tendency’ need occur to know the feeling of fear is present. Therefore, emotions differ from non-emotions, based on the way in which the stimulus is appraised, and different emotions are distinguished from one another based on different appraisals, which create different action tendencies, which create different feelings. Once the appraisal outcome is registered in the consciousness as a feeling, a person can reflect on that experience and describe what happened during the appraisal process.

This theory exists because people are able to access the inner workings of their mind, focusing on the causes of their emotions, specifically access the unconscious process.
creating such emotions. While this theory has merit there are certain shortcomings that must be addressed. Firstly, cognitive theories rely on self-report and people often aren’t able to know what they are feeling. Secondly, a person’s ability to access information from their unconscious is questionable and lastly, appraisal theory puts a large amount of emphasis on the cognitive, blurring the lines between emotion and cognition (Le Doux, 1998, pp. 50-51).

Rolls (1999) analyses the relationship between emotion and environmental stimuli from a behavioural perspective, and states that emotions are elicited by rewards and punishers as well as changes to these rewards and punishers. A person will work towards a reward while try to avoid a punishment (Rolls, 1999). Rolls (1999, p.61) defines emotions as “states produced by instrumental reinforcing stimuli.” If these reinforcing stimuli are terminated or omitted then they will change the likelihood of a future emission of that response. Some of these stimuli are unlearned or “primary re-enforcers” (Rolls, 1999, p.61). Examples of these may be pain or taste. Other stimuli are learned (usually through classical conditioning) and called “secondary enforcers” (Rolls, 1999, p.62). They are called secondary enforcers because of their association with primary re-enforcers. This form of conditioning is called “stimulus-re-enforcement association” (Rolls, 1999, p.62).

3.3.2.2 Function of cortex

After looking at the sub-cortical structures, the role the cortex, in emotional processing, is now highlighted. Evidence suggests that activity in the frontal lobe co-varies with
emotional states (Banich, 1997). The cerebral cortex is involved with the perception, comprehension and recall of emotionally meaningful material. The expression of emotion in the face, tone of voice and through gestures and the experience of emotion or emotional state (Banich, 1997). Much evidence suggests that the right hemisphere of the brain is responsible for the interpretation of non-verbal emotional information, such as facial expressions. The left hemisphere is able to process certain ideas about emotions. They call this ‘emotional semantics’, which is the ability to label emotions and link certain situations to specific emotions (Banich, 1997; Lane, 2000).

Emotions have also been found to be involved in the decision making process. This has been investigated by analysing the ventromedial pre-frontal cortex. Subjects with ventromedial prefrontal damage, as in the case of Phineas Gauge, have been able to maintain intellect but show signs of behaviour change, inability to maintain relationships and jobs. In an experiment carried out by Bechara et al. (2000) subjects with damage to their ventro-medial prefrontal cortex were found to consistently make disadvantageous decision. This occurred even when faced with advantageous or disadvantageous choices, even when they knew which choice would have a beneficial outcome and which one would not. In contrast the control group were able to consistently make advantageous decisions from the same choices.

Ultimately one looks for a balance between the emotional (amygdala and neo-cortical system) and the rational, (the cortex, particularly the frontal lobes) thought. It is this balance between “thinking and feeling” (Goleman, 1996, p.27) that one strives to achieve
and has become to be integral in leading successful lives. As Goleman (1996) identified, the cortex is responsible for assessing the weight of the reaction before reacting i.e. rational thought. While, the amygdala is responsible for emotional memory which is mapped out through life experience. Goleman (1996) purposes that the cortex is also responsible in accessing this emotional memory stored in the amygdala and integrating this with the rational thought processes of the cortex. Through this one can arrive at the conclusion that emotional experience plays a role in rational thought and the ability to balance the emotional with the rational is termed Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1996).

Where emotions and cognitions were once thought to be dichotomous structures, the literature now shows that there is an integral link between cognition and emotion, with no single neurological system responsible for either one. Cognitions are not the lifeless cold constructs void of any warmth as previously stated, and emotions cannot be reduced to any one system, independent of cognitive processes. Memory is also shown to play an integral role in the processing of emotion, no longer being described as a cognitive function of the brain, while certain behavioural factors cannot be ignored in their motivation roles. The findings call for a reassessment of the relationship between emotion and cognition and where it lies in the construct of intelligence (Rolls, 1999, Le Doux, 1998).
3.4 Emotional intelligence applied

3.4.1 Introduction

Having specifically looked at emotions and intelligence, attention can now be turned to
the cooperative combination of intelligence, emotion, and further investigating EI from a
theoretical perspective. Mayer, et al. (2004, p.197) define EI as “the capacity to reason
about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to
accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to
understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so
as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.”

3.4.2 Emotional information

Mayer et al. (2004, p.198) believe EI functions on emotional information. The
philosophical and later evolutionary perspective is that emotions preside over, and often
indicate, motivated responses to situations. Emotional research classifications have
projected anywhere from two dimensions or categories of emotions to six, eight or ten
(Mayer, et al., 2004). Specific emotions are believed to arise in response to appraisals of
different categories of relationships (Mayer, et al., 2004, p.198). In particular definite
relationships involve those important to survival and reproduction including “threats
attacks …courtships, isolation… greetings, appeasement, and play” (Mayer, et al., 2004,
p.198, 199).
Each emotion conveys an inimitable set of identifying signals or emotional information (Mayer, et al., 2004). The emotional information is usually delivered through its own distinctive communication channels as well as unique patterns of associated signals from proprioceptive, effective and cognitive channels, such emotional signals communicate information about the person’s appraisals and motivated reactions to relationships and other change of circumstances (Mayer, et al., 2004).

There has been a great deal of evolutionary progression regarding the way people process emotional information, specifically language. The way in which emotional language is processed depends on the context in which it occurs. The context means the relationship between the people communicating with each other. Other forms of language, that are not emotionally based, rely less on context for interpretation (Mayer, et al., 2004).

While general language is a feature of educational processes, emotional literacy tends to be neglected. Emotions and their functioning have only recently been introduced in the culture and a viable aspect of information, but generally are not as yet a part of formal education curricula (institutionalised) (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004)

The institutionalisation of information is the extent to which a culture recognises information as important, records its meanings, and acknowledges expertise in the area (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004, p.199). Simply put, EI is not yet taught in schools or other learning institutions and documented in text books as part of curriculum content.
3.4.3 The four-branch ability model

Mayer et al. (2004, p.199) divide abilities and skills of EI into four areas: The ability to (a) perceive emotion, (b) use emotion to facilitate thought, (c) understand emotions and (d) manage emotion. These four areas become known as the four-branch model (Mayer et al., 2004, p.199). The order of the branches from perception to management represents the degree to which the ability is integrated within the rest of the individuals’ major psychological subsystems – that is within their overall personality (Mayer et al., 2004, p.199). Thus, the perception and expression of emotion (Branch 1) and the capacity of emotion to enhance thought (Branch 2) are relatively discreet areas of information processing that is expected to be modularised or bound within the emotion system. Emotion may also be located in the language system, in the understanding of emotion and their outcomes (Branch 3). By contrast, emotional management (Branch 4) must be integrated within an individual’s overall plans and goals. Within each branch are the developmental progressions of skills from the more basic to the more sophisticated (Mayer et al., 2004, p.199).

Branch 1, reflects the perception of emotion and involves the capacity to recognise emotion in others’ facial and postural expressions. It involves non-verbal perception and expression of emotion in the face, voice and related communication channels (Mayer, et al. 2004, p.199).

Branch 2, facilitation, involves the capacity of emotions to assist thinking. Most emotion theories include a *feeling* component (rather than a feeling *and* thinking component), and
many discuss the existence of distinctive physiological signs of some emotions. Part of intelligence involves developing a knowledge base about such experiences on which the intelligence can draw. Knowledge of the link between emotions and thinking can be used to direct one’s planning. By example, some types of problem solving are specifically facilitated by some emotions and not by others (Mayer et al., 2004, p.199).

Branch 3, the understanding of emotion, reflects the capacity to analyse emotions, appreciate their probable trends over time, and understand their outcomes. The developmental aspect of branch 3 coincides with the growth of language and prepositional thought.

Branch 4, reflects the management of emotion, which necessarily involves the rest of personality. Emotions are thus managed in the context of the individuals’ goals, self-knowledge and social awareness. By early adulthood, the means of emotional self-management have grown, including abilities to avoid feelings or to reframe appraisals to reassure one or achieve equanimity (Mayer et al., 2004, pp.199-200).

3.4.4 Testing EI

A key factor to any construct is the ability to measure it. Two such tests used to measure EI are the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 1999) and the Self Report Inventory (SRI) (Schutte et al., 1998). Both tests are based on the Mayer et al, (1998) four branch ability model. Recently, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso
Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (1999) has been developed. Research to date has focused on the MEIS with results of the MSCEIT, slowly becoming available.

The MEIS consists of 12 tasks, which measure the four branches of EI. The tasks are divided into four groups. The first group measures emotional perception by asking people to identify emotions that are present in various stimuli. Examples may require the respondent to identify emotions in faces or stories. Answers in the form of a Likert scale ranging from a 1 “none” to 5 “extreme amount” (Mayer, 2001, p 424).

The second group of tasks test emotional integration. It asks people to compare emotional sensation with other mental phenomena, and tries to understand how emotions may change thought. An example is “what colour is anger?” The third set measures peoples understanding of their emotions. Example: Contempt most strongly resembles which two emotions (1) anger and fear (2) fear and surprise (3) disgust and anger (4) surprise and disgust (Mayer, 2001).

The fourth measures the way people manage emotions. The task is to present them with a situation and ask them which social response is best for managing the feelings of the situation. Example “A co-worker says he lied on his job application to get a job, and it has been bothering him.” The test taker is asked to evaluate various alternatives so to effectively manage the co-worker’s emotions. The findings of the MEIS support the existence of EI. The test may be scored using a single factor. Alternatively, the score may
be reduced into three factors namely emotional perception, emotional understanding and emotional management (Mayer, 2001).

The SRI is developed around the four branch ability model (Mayer et al, 1998). It contains 33 items and asks respondents to rate the response on a Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measure of EI assesses the extent individuals adaptively perceive, understand, regulate and harness emotion. The internal consistency of the SRI was between .87 and .90. Examples of questions on the SRI include: “I know when to speak about my personal problems to others,” “I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people” and “I have control over my own emotions” (Schutte et al, 1998).

There is a strong relationship between the MEIS and SRI; both tests prove valuable in their ability to test EI. The tests may need further development in order to be predictive in value. The tests will eventually aim to describe the behaviour of a person who obtains a certain score. At this point, the tests are more accurate identifying the innate presence of EI rather then predicting EI as an external ability (Mayer, 2001).

3.5 Critique of emotional intelligence as a valid construct

To fully understand EI as a construct, cognisance must be taken of the debate surrounding the validity and reliability, even the very existence of EI as a legitimate construct. Many proponents of EI claim that this construct plays a fundamental role in
education, the work place and quality of life in general. It does so through the ability to regulate one’s emotions and better understand the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995). A utopian, intellectually classless society is given as another reason for the uncritical acceptance of EI as anyone can attain a high EI. There is the idea that everybody can attain a high EI. In attaining a high EI, people can transcend the barriers of an intellectually superior society (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

The argument raised against EI, with its recent popularity, is whether it will develop into a solid construct and gain the empirical support necessary, to fully back up the claims made by scientific and popular authors, or whether it will be another passing phase in the history of psychology. The argument is to not completely discard EI, but to highlight various shortcomings in the literature, that may hamper its development into a recognised, valid construct (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

The critique uses the IQ construct as a yardstick by which to assess where EI lies on the developmental continuum. This critique also assesses the ability to define, measure, identify neurological evidence for, and generalise EI abilities across many contexts.

3.5.1 Multiple Definitions

Definitions of EI cover emotional, social and personal competencies, qualities of emotion, mood, personality and social orientation in both personal and interpersonal contexts. Others define EI as the ability to generate feelings, understand ones own
feelings and the feelings of others including the ability to understand and express emotional knowledge (Mayer et al., 2004). Goleman (1995) defines EI by a process of elimination, claiming everything that does not fall into intellectual intelligence, is emotional intelligence, referring to it then, as that by which ones character is defined.

Their inability to find one coherent definition as well as the current array of definitions becomes overwhelming. The numerous definitions prevent EI being described as either; a cognitive ability to process emotion, or an attribute of personality or a skill utilised to deal with difficult social situations. (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004). Avrill (2004) inquires about the meaning of ‘emotion’ in EI. Exactly which emotion is being described, and further elaboration is needed in the definition of the term emotion. There is, however, a strong counter-argument regarding the issue of a single, coherent definition. In popular literature there is often a need for one coherent definition of a concept. Given that EI is a new construct, it may actually benefit from multiple definitions. There is still controversy surrounding the definition of numerous constructs within psychology including personality and intelligence (Gohm, 2004; Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004). The inability to define EI may wonder into developmental issues. These issues question which aspects actually belong to EI and which form part of older, more established constructs.

### 3.5.2 Developmental and behavioural variables of EI

There are various developmental variables that could affect EI, namely the biological and genetic predisposition of the child, social interaction with the caregivers and quality of parenting received. The regulation of emotion is also embedded in cultural rules and
norms, often dictating the implicit and explicit learning skills necessary for the appropriate display of emotion. Through emotional discussion, a person is provided with the ability for self-evaluation and self-reflection. These different aspects of emotional regulation may all be interrelated or part of a wide variety of weakly related constructs, rather than exclusively in the EI construct itself (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

A behavioural factor is found to be involved in EI. Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997) describe positive mood as being part of EI. However, it becomes difficult to make the distinction as to whether a positive mood is the outcome of, or reason for, successfully solving a challenging situation. There appears to be a neurological foundation for positive and negative affect, which may be triggered by environmental stimuli. The neuropsychological system and external environment appear to be interconnected, with neither one alone, taking responsibility for the creation of positive (joy) or negative (fear) affect (Le Doux, 1998).

3.5.3 Critique of EI as legitimate intelligence

The test of any construct is whether it can be measured with validity and reliability, according to a set of criteria (Matthews, Roberts and Zeidner, 2004). The critique questions the ability to successfully test EI, whether the results can be predictive of future behaviour and whether this behaviour can be generalised across various situations. It also questions the neurological basis for the presence of EI.
Matthews, Roberts and Zeidner (2004) question whether EI fulfils the criteria for a traditional, cognitive intelligence test. To do this it would need to meet the conceptual, psychometric, and developmental criteria to form a legitimate scientific domain, and therefore a legitimate form of intelligence (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

Intelligence is not a concrete full-proof construct. However, intelligence has proven to be a relatively useful and reliable and, which professionals in many fields are able to utilise with a degree of confidence. What makes this possible is that it can be operationalised into a set of abilities (in the case of EI these would be emotionally based) and these abilities must have clearly defined performance components. As a result “EI should indicate cognitive performance rather than non-intellective attainments or preferred ways of behaving” (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004, p.185). This would mean that answers to emotional intelligence questions could be categorised as correct or incorrect.

Traditional intelligence tests use formal, rule bound systems. These systems state, definitely, whether the answer is correct or incorrect and the validity of that answer is supported on a logical and rational basis. Alternatively, the outcomes of emotional problems very rarely have clearly defined answers, and the response depends on the context in which the problem occurs. The dilemma is how to score an EI test to determine emotional intelligence (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

Averill (2004) questions the effectiveness in searching to fit EI into a traditional intelligence format. Rather, suggests that EI is much better tested in the realm of creative
expression such as art or literary works, in which emotions may be assessed. He also
notes that it is situations where action is required but logical arguments and empirical
evidence holds little weight, that emotions are needed. These emotions are in the form of
persuasion, a situation well suited to the expression and evaluation of EI (Averill, 2004).
With no set definition, or operationalised criteria, it becomes difficult to test for EI, and
harder to score these tests. The majority of scoring methods lend themselves to subjective
opinion and is discussed below.

3.5.4 Methods of scoring EI tests

To overcome this problem, three methods are used to score performance based measures
of EI, measuring creative, social and practical intelligence. These include “expert scoring,
target judgement and group consensus.” Problems have been found with all three

Expert judgement is when a group of experts determines the correct answer to a set of
questions, yet which criteria are used to decide who is an expert on emotions? Target
scoring happens when the correct answer is determined by the creator of the stimuli. The
weakness with this method is the target maker not being able to accurately express their
emotion or being pro social when delivering their report. Consensus scoring allocates a
score to each option according to the percentage of people choosing that option. This
scores an option on a continuum of EI ability rather than an outright correct or incorrect
answer (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004). It also implies a common benchmark for
judging, implying a biological basis for emotion (Averill, 2004). I.e. it assumes each person is born with the same inherent emotional potential.

This test will pose problems on the upper end of the scale, when determining an emotionally gifted person from the average emotionally intelligent person. If the question asks about a very difficult emotional situation, and only ten percent of the respondents answer correctly, consensually, that answer will be incorrect (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

This view is strongly supported by Averill (2004) who states that consensus testing does not allow for creativity, penalising idiosyncratic emotional responses on the basis of rating consensus on a majority scale. It should also be noted that expert and consensus views may reflect cultural and Western norms, as well as approaches that conform to various belief systems, rather than actual ability. Although the tests for EI are progressing in reliability and validity, there is still much improvement needed (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004). Gohm (2004) dismisses the debate that seeks to make EI meet the criteria for intelligence, claiming the argument to be unproductive and of little use. It would be more productive to conceptualise EI as a set of skills that can be reliably and validly tested and measured, so the theoretical construct can explain psychological processes and predict important outcomes (Gohm, 2004). The researcher may need to accept that at this point, there may not be a completely accurate measurement available. However, that is not to negate the fact that the EI construct may still prove exceptionally useful in its informative and predictive ability (Gohm, 2004).
Given that EI works within the grey areas of social development and interaction, it has proven difficulty to construct a test that has accurately measurable answers. This is because answers to EI tests are not obviously wrong or right, and finding individuals to score the results proves difficult, given the ambiguity of the construct. Given these difficulties in testing the construct, would it then be fair to look at EQ in the same light as IQ?

3.5.5 EI versus IQ

Does EI relate to emotions in the same way IQ relates to cognitions? In order to validate the EI construct, it must be shown that there is a distinct form of intellectual processing that occurs when dealing with emotional situations (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004). However, there need not be a clear understanding of this complex relationship between emotion and cognition, to rank order individuals according to their ability to understand their own and others emotions. This is because the management of emotions can be accomplished regardless of whether there is or isn’t an understanding of this relationship (Gohm, 2004).

These processes can relate to cognitive architecture, learned skills used in the processing of information and the availability of culture bound knowledge (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004, p.187). It must then be shown, that having these processes, gives one a distinct advantage in difficult, real emotional situations (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner,
A test displaying this will have “demonstrable predictive validity and practical implications” (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004, p.187)

The following concept addresses the idea that people can be ranked according to their level of emotional processing in the same way people are ranked based on level of IQ. It assumes that the emotional processing of a high EI person gives them an added advantage, which can be generalised across all situations and contexts (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004). To address this problem the questionable distinction between the emotional mind and the rational mind needs to be addressed (Goleman 1995).

3.5.6 Neurological basis for EI

Matthews, Roberts and Zeidner (2004) state that the split between cognition and emotion is as a result of a misunderstanding of cognitive theories, which claim cognitive theory to be void of any feeling, leaving it cold and clinical. They argue that much cognitive processing takes place unconsciously and involve the retrieval from memory of various schemata, which allow the individual to attach meaning to a stimulus. It is this very meaning that evokes an emotional response and so demonstrates that emotion and cognitive process works together. Averill (2004) supports this theory stating that the same neurological processes are involved in both emotional and cognitive information. Once a distinction is made between the emotional brain being primitive and the cognitive brain being a result of more recent structures, it becomes ingrained in our language and difficult to integrate the two (Averill, 2004).
Neuropsychological data, maps different brain systems for emotion and cognition attributing EI to specific brain systems, particularly amygdala and parts of the frontal cortex (Adolphs & Damasio, 2000; Banich, 1997; Le Doux, 1998). Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner (2004) describe three distinct problems with the neurological studies. They point out that the neurological research fails to take hardware and software approaches into account. The research describing the theory of inter-connectedness between various systems and parts of the brain is far more accurate in describing the neurological basis for EI. There is no cause and effect between emotion and behaviour in humans, and studies into behaviour show a large cognitive component in controlling human behaviour. Lastly there is not enough emphasis on the role of cognitive control of outputs from the brain systems that have been linked to emotion (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

Further research shows that emotion is intimately linked to appraisal; perception of control, self appraisal and changes in emotion is accompanied by changes in motivation and cognition. By example, this point can be demonstrated in the criticism of Goleman (1995) description of a panic attack, which he describes as an emotional hijacking of the rational mind (frontal cortex) by the limbic system. Matthews, Roberts and Zeidner (2004) point out that there is a large cognitive element to a panic attack in which somatic symptoms are falsely attributed to be indicative of a life threatening event, such as sweating and increased heart rate, taken to mean the start of a heart attack. Based on this, emotions and cognitions relating to ones self can form a self regulatory system which is supported by many neural systems. EI then forms an executive function based on
cognition, emotion and motivation. Joining the emotional and rational brain and viewing EI as a combination of these systems with an executive function shows more promise than simply separating the brain into two. It also negates much of the neurological research done on animals in that animals have very little executive functioning and high primitive emotional areas of the brain (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

Essentially, Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, (2004) believe that there has been too much focus on the role of emotion and not enough on the role of cognition in the neurological study of EI. It should be looked at from a multitude of perspectives, rather than simply investigating the split between emotion and intelligence.

3.5.7 Generalising EI across contexts

Having discussed neurological and measuring processes, the research focuses on the outcomes of these processes. This includes the coping and adaptive mechanism that EI is claimed to portray. Essentially Matthews, Roberts and Zeidner, (2004), state that the ability to adapt can be a result of many variables, including personality traits and external circumstances. Firstly, depending on whether a person is an extrovert or introvert will depend on their action taken in response to a stressful situation. The individual’s disposition will determine the context in which they are able to adapt and which they are not able to adapt. Also, an individual may be able to adapt in specific situations and not in others, and strategies that work in one context may not work in another context, creating various short and long term outcomes.
This position is supported by Gohm (2004) who finds insufficient data to support EI as a predictor of coping along generalised contexts. Outcomes to stress are not easily measured, given that within one outcome; there may be cost and benefits rather than a positive or negative outcome alone. Stress regulation cannot be dealt with through one singular, all encompassing process, and EI is not one singular process. Therefore, the ability to adapt to various situations requires processes for mood regulation, meta cognitively appraising codes and sensations of their own mood, and wider appraisals processes, aimed at the external stimuli (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004).

An important part of EI is finding behavioural validation for the construct. Various EI tests assess various branches of EI. However, being proficient in one branch does not guarantee that one can carry out that behaviour in a real situation. It is one thing to be able to regulate emotions as shown on a test, but different to actually carry out the behaviour in the moment. A validation of EI tests would not simply be indicating various levels of EI, but rather displaying evidence that these findings can be behaviourally translated into action (Gohm, 2004). e.g.: the person who is able to manage anger is also able to deal with situations that create fear or boredom.

Brody (2004) finds Gohm’s (2004) point to be fundamental to the development of the EI construct, with reference to testing. In terms of consensus and expert scoring on which much of EI is assessed, to what degree is it possible that a person who has expert knowledge of emotions may not be skilled in the regulation of emotions in their own
lives? What Brody (2004) further proposes, is that the distinction between the knowledge and the application of emotional information, in the expert’s life, is not as relevant as the consensus in the scoring between experts. There is very little disagreement among experts in cognitive testing, allowing a person with high cognitive ability to give a response on a test, that is correct but non-consensual, while the same cannot be said for answers on emotional testing (Brody, 2004).

Oatley (2004) takes a different approach to understanding EI adaptability across various contexts. Acknowledging that the construct is in its early stages, he steps away from a scientific approach, stating that not every problem is solved scientifically in a laboratory. Oatley (2004) pays specific attention to the branch of EI describing a person’s ability to regulate their emotions. Applying this principle into real world competency questions the skills fit into all contexts or just specific domains. Psychology has typically focused on the development of skills for one specific domain, however there is evidence describing not just the ability to be an expert in a domain, rather the general pattern and ability to be an expert in any field (Oatley, 2004). The underlying principle is that once we are able to learn more about ourselves, as we would any other skill, we can apply what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) terms “flow”. Flow means completing a task and being completely in the moment, without distraction or resentment at completing a task. This principle of flow can be applied to emotional situations and give us the ability to be creative within any interpersonal situation (Oatley, 2004).
3.5.8 Conclusion

The critical stance taken by Matthews, Roberts and Zeidner, (2004) is not aimed at disposing or denying the existence of EI. It proposes to separate that which is factual, from that which is popular. Their aim is to highlight the areas of EI that require further research, with the intention to fully operationalise this concept into a valid construct, as to solidify its place in future psychological works. Averill (2004) puts the EI concept into perspective describing the development of the EI concept as motivation for the re-framing of emotional research and cautioning against the need to quickly define a construct, which like many concepts throughout the ages, takes time to come into its own. He states that the concepts such as emotion, which develop as expression of language, are prone to ambiguity and subject to interpretation through context. It is approaching the concept of emotion from a language and cognitive based perspective that allows us to enter into dialogue on the merits of the EI construct (Averill, 2004).

The criticism on EI appears to be delivered with little regard for context. At this point in time, the authors of the EI construct do not lay claim to EI changing a person’s life or being more important than IQ. What they do say is that EI has social and cultural implications. It opens up a debate around emotions conveying important information. If there are rules for processing that information then the bother of emotions getting in the way of reason is no more. Rather the presence of emotion will convey important information. EI has implications from a societal context. It says that research is transcending the gap between the stoics’ idea that emotions cloud the mind and the romantics’ idea that one should follow their heart. From an individual perspective this
gives hope to romantics everywhere. It says they there is sophisticated processing going on within them. Recognising the possibility of EI legitimises discussion around emotion in institutions everywhere, indicating a turning point in the battle between the head and the heart (Mayer, 2001).

3.6. Relationships

3.6.1 Introduction

Today, more than ever before, there is increased pressure on marriage as the divorce rate steadily climbs (Goleman, 1996). Previously, social pressures such as the stigma of divorce, served to keep difficult relationships intact. These pressures are no longer responsible for holding marriages together and so now more than ever, emotions play a very dominant role in the success of such unions (Goleman, 1996).

3.6.2 Socialisation in the development of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman (1996) suggests that a large part of the understanding of emotions within a relationship can be seen from the perspective of the child. The way in which boys and girls are socialised is very different. Girls and boys remain friends until around five years old where they then socialise in different groups only to meet up again when they start dating as teenagers. Boys and girls are taught about emotions in very different ways. Parents discuss emotions, excluding anger, more often with their daughters then with their sons. Girls are exposed to more emotional information than boys. Mothers will
discuss feelings with daughters while with sons they are more inclined to discuss the causes and consequences resulting from emotions such as anger. A result of this is that girls are able to develop language and emotional literacy. The ability to verbalise the emotion serves as a substitute for other modes of emotional expression such as physical fighting. In boys this emotional expression is less developed and as a result they are unable to understand and give words to their own emotional states and those of others (Brody & Hall, 1993).

At age thirteen, greater differences emerge between boys and girls in expression of aggression. Girls become skilled at expressing aggression in subtle verbal ways while boys maintain confrontation as the primary means of expressing anger. Further, girls maintain small intimate groups, which focus on co-operation while boy’s play-groups focus on competition. A key difference between boys and girls at play is that boys take pride in lone, tough minded independence and autonomy while girls see themselves as part of a web of connectedness (Brody & Hall, 1993). As a result of this form of social education, girls become skilled at reading verbal and non-verbal emotional cues and expression of emotion and boys become skilled at suppressing various emotions, particularly guilt, fear and hurt (Brody & Hall, 1993).

According to Goleman (1996) women are able to experience a wider variety of emotions with greater intensity. This in turn makes women, by their very nature, more emotional then men. As a result women arrive into a relationship more emotionally prepared, realising the importance of emotional skill in making the relationship survive while men
arrive with far less appreciation for the importance of emotions in the survival of the relationship. Women believe that intimacy within a relationship is good communication while men do not necessarily understand that. Men find companionship in doing things together rather than talking and are less likely to recognise problems within their marriage. This sluggishness in recognising problems in a marriage is largely due to men’s lack of skill in recognising verbal and non-verbal emotional cues (Goleman, 1996).

Goleman’s (1996) findings are supported by Ciarrochi, Hynes and Crittenden (2005) who find women to be more emotionally aware than men, both of their own emotions and those of others. Women are more emotionally expressive than men and more aware of noticing emotional expressions in others. They too confirm that emotions are socialised through parent child interactions. Mothers tend to use more expressive and feeling orientated language with their daughters than with their sons. Ciarrochi et al., (2005) point out that emotions are malleable. Much emotional behaviour displayed particularly by men, only develops later on in life and is determined by external cues and gender norms.

The most significant finding, however, showed that with sufficient motivation, men were able to increase the level of their emotional awareness, to equal that of women, indicating that emotional awareness is socialised and not innate (Ciarrochi et al., 2005).
3.6.3 Self-regulation

From a social behavioural perspective, Bell and Calkins, (2000) draw attention to the role relationships play in the development of emotional regulation. They believe that relationships serve as both inputs and outputs for emotional regulation. By this they mean that emotional regulation develops in the context of relationships, and that emotional regulation is an essential component of a healthy relationship. Self-regulation is integral to an individual’s developmental functioning; and is often evaluated in relation to skills displayed in the context of significant others (Bell & Calkins, 2000).

The infant relies on its parents for emotional regulation but as it develops, it begins to develop strategies for its own emotional regulation, finding out which strategies work and which don’t work (Bell & Calkins, 2000). The development of these strategies is largely dependant on the parenting skills of the caregiver. The child seeks a level of autonomy and structure. Not allowing the child a level of independence is related to less adaptive emotional regulation strategies and less physiological regulation during emotional eliciting situations. More positive re-enforcement and verbal guiding is related to more compliant behaviour in emotionally charged situations (Bell & Calkins, 2000). Therefore, although strategies and behaviours children acquire are meant as self regulating, and lead to more independent and self-guided behaviour, which is learned in the context of, and so controlled by, dyadic relationships (Bell & Calkins, 2000).

Dyadic relationships play a secondary role in the development of children’s self-regulation. A child’s capacity for self-regulation will determine their success in terms of
interaction with their peer group within formal or informal contexts (Bell & Calkins, 2000). Without gaining the skills to manage emotional arousal and responses, children will have difficulties in such areas of interaction (Bell & Calkins, 2000). Family relationships continue to assert influence over self-regulation well into adolescence. Parental undermining of adolescence autonomy in interactions has been shown to lead to increased hostility towards others in later years (Bell & Calkins, 2000). The way in which adolescents perceive their parental relationships is also related to their emotional regulation strategies and social adjustment (Bell & Calkins, 2000).

3.6.4 Conflict resolution

It is not necessarily financial, sexual or child-rearing issues that will end a marriage but rather the way in which these conflicts are resolved. Both partners have to overcome their differences in emotional functioning, in order to navigate through the conflicts. Without this ability couples become vulnerable to the emotional splits and Goleman (1996) believes these are more likely to develop if there is a deficit in emotional intelligence.

In describing conflict resolution, Goleman (1996) points out the difference between complaints and personal criticisms. He is referring to Gottman et al., (1998) four horses of the apocalypse. As previously mentioned, these include “criticism, defensiveness, contempt and stonewalling” and later “belligerence” was included. When one complains, they complain about an action and the feelings that result from that action. This, according to Goleman (1996) is an expression of basic emotional intelligence, while a personal criticism is often generalised and is an attack on the person’s character, very
often leaving them feeling “ashamed, disliked and defective” (Goleman, 1996, p.135). This behaviour will lead to defensiveness resulting in retaliation and so escalating the conflict (Goleman, 1996). Gottman (1994) points out that the emotion of contempt, expressed very often (four or more times in a fifteen minute conversation) in a relationship both verbally in the form of name-calling or non-verbally by the rolling back of eyes, adverse body language and expression of muscular movement of the mouth, particularly the curled lip and sneer. This is an implicit sign that a couple would split up (Goleman, 1996). This should be seen in the context of marital research that says minor, everyday interactions, however subtle they may be, accumulate and consciously or unconsciously affect marital satisfaction (Driver & Gottman, 2004).

One can often chose the fight or flight response to such conflict. In terms of the fight response, arguments and retaliation can increase the conflict while the application of the flight response signifies withdrawal. This withdrawal is labelled stonewalling (Goleman, 1996, 137). Stonewalling is when one partner goes blank and withdraws from the conversation distancing themselves from their partner and effectively ending all chance of the conflict being resolved (Goleman, 1996). Goleman (1996) describes an emotional exchange, the thoughts around that emotional exchange and then goes on to describe still another layer of thoughts above those initial thoughts. Goleman (1996) calls these secondary thoughts “automatic thoughts” (Beck in Goleman, 1996, p.137). These automatic thoughts are indicative of our assumptions about others and us and represent our deepest emotional attitudes (Goleman, 1996).
These thoughts are dangerous in that they create a pattern of thinking allowing one to see only the negative aspects in their partner and not notice the positive aspects. The other concern is that they allow us to interpret neutral events in a negative light. This consistent negative outlook allows one to create the impression that their partner is inherently flawed and the marriage or partner is inherently damaged and then so is the marriage (Goleman, 1996).

The result of such cognitions is a perpetual state of crisis, which more often than not creates, an emotional hijacking. With time it becomes increasingly difficult to recover from this emotional hijacking. Gottman in Goleman (1996) uses the term “flooding” (Goleman, 1996, p.138) to describe someone who is susceptible to frequent emotional distress. “Flooded husbands or wives are so overwhelmed by their partner’s negativity and their own reaction to it that they are swamped by dreadful out-of-control feelings” (Goleman, 1996, p.139). People who experience flooding are unable to hear clearly or remain level headed in their responses (Goleman, 1996). Goleman (1996) states in summation that it is the ability to resolve conflict through namely three qualities, empathy, listening well and the ability to calm yourself and your partner down.

3.6.5 The emotionally intelligent partner

EI theorists describe the emotionally intelligent partner as someone who knows when he or she is feeling something and accurately recognises the nature of the feeling. The emotionally intelligent person notices when others are experiencing emotions and can
accurately identify the emotions. People vary in their abilities to accurately perceive and identify emotions. Some people may be exceptionally sensitive to others feelings, detecting their spouses immediately, for example a subtle non-verbal cue such as a frown. Others may completely insensitive to their partner’s feelings. They may have no idea that their spouse, for example, is angry, sad or jealous (Fitness, 2001).

Emotionally intelligent people posses highly complex and fine-grained emotional knowledge. They are able to distinguish the causes, features and consequences of very closely related emotions such as “anger and hate, shame and guilt, jealousy and envy” (Fitness, 2001). They are able to predict how emotional scripts may unfold, example ‘If X says this, then Y will react in a particular way’. Finally, they are able to behave in a certain way because they are able to regulate and manage their own and others emotions. With reference to Mayer et al., (2004) model, it takes a combination of the four branches to regulate, understand and manage ones emotions (Fitness, 2001).

3.7 Conclusion

To fully appreciate EI, it must be seen as a construct that is in its infancy. EI appears to require the space to develop into its own character, away from the finite scientific constructs of the IQ measure. The reason being is that so much of EI focuses in the realm of emotions, which, thanks to this construct, is being looked at through new lenses. Emotions appear to be relatively complex systems to explain comprehensively. However, the strength of EI appears to lie in its abilities model, rather then its inherent neurological
foundation. The evidence is strongest in the display of EI abilities within interpersonal relationships (Fitness, 2001; Mayer, 2001). Greater martial satisfaction has been attributed to EI, when other variables such as intelligence and personality have been accounted for (Fitness, 2001; Mayer, 2001). This can be understood by analysing the fundamental skills needed in marital satisfaction, namely, intimacy and conflict resolutions skills. Intimacy and conflict resolution both appear to benefit from the ability to listen, empathise and understands one’s partners emotions. Also, the ability to regulate ones own emotions, has shown to prevent conflict. These too, form part of the four branch EI model. While there is little empirical evidence to confirm this link, the literature produces uncanny similarities in describing high levels of marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence. Lastly, while EI may be a work in progress, it has given cognisance to issues of the heart.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, participants and method of application. The measuring instruments, hypothesis as well as the data analysis will be presented.

4.2 Participants

A convenience sample was used as the prime source of data for this project. Kies (1989) argues that as long as the groups created are mostly equivalent, convenience sampling typically does not limit the importance of experimentation (Kies, 1989).

4.3 Problem statement and Hypothesis

The hypotheses called for a modernistic empirical design, making use of questionnaires and statistical analysis. The basic hypothesis of this study is to investigate whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction, as well as, significant relationship between each partner’s levels of emotional intelligence.
H1 = Emotional intelligence will be significantly linked with marital satisfaction. More specifically, higher emotional intelligence will be significantly linked to positive aspects of marital satisfaction.

H2 = There will be a significant correlation between partners EI scores.

4.4 Measuring instruments

There is considerable debate concerning the measurement of EI (Gohn, 2004; Matthews, Roberts & Ziedner, 2004; Oatley, 2004) and marital satisfaction (Stanley, Bradbury & Markham, 2004). Both constructs are difficult to define and no single EI or marital satisfaction test can fully account for the many outcomes of each construct. The current study applies two instruments as a means to address the research hypotheses. The Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) (1998) and the Schutte Self Report Inventory (SRI) (1998) for EI. In addition to these two instruments, a biographical questionnaire was constructed to obtain relevant personal information about individual respondents. Emphasis was placed on acquiring information that would allow for the testing of the hypothesis in respect of the variables of interest. The biographical questionnaire also served to identify certain features specific to the sample. The information required was the following: ethnicity, years married, times married, number of children and employment status. The entire test battery is presented as Annexure A.
4.4.1 Marital satisfaction Inventory- Revised

4.4.1.1 Rationale

The MSI-R is a revised and re-standardised version of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI, Snyder, 1981). For over 15 years, the MSI has been used as a tool for couples therapy and marital relationships, to assess the quality of marital satisfaction within a marital relationship (Snyder, 1997). It was developed to address both psychometric and clinical concerns in evaluating couples relationships. The MSI-R is a multidimensional, self-report measure of relationship satisfaction. It has 20 years of empirical and clinical studies supporting its reliability, validity, and utility in assessing and treating distressed couples (Means-Christensen, Snyder & Negy, 2003).

4.4.1.2 Nature and administration

The MSI-R is a self report measure that identifies the nature and level of distress each partner is experiencing in their relationship. It uses several key dimensions via a “true” or “false” response to 150 MSI-R inventory items. The items are in English, use language on a 6th-grade level and administration takes around 25 minutes. Results are calculated separately and can be plotted individually or together.

The MSI-R uses 13 scales to score individuals responses. These include 2 validity scales (inconsistency and conventionalisation), 1 global effective scale (Global distress), and 10 additional scales measuring specific dimensions of relationship distress. The 10 criteria

4.4.1.3 Motivation for use

The MSI-R is a comprehensive test investigating the numerous facets of marital satisfaction, assessing the nature and level of satisfaction in the relationship. The MSI-R was considered beneficial to this current study because it is able to gather a wide range of sensitive information, allowing each person to convey information that they wish to communicate in a discreet, non-evasive manner (Snyder, 1997).

4.4.1.4 Reliability and Validity

Cronbach’s alpha coefficient confirms the internal consistency of the MSI-R scales, ranging from .70 to .93 with a mean coefficient of .82. Test re-test coefficients confirm the stability of individual scales ranging from .74 to .88 with a mean coefficient of .79 (Snyder).
4.4.2 Schutte Self Report Inventory (SRI)

4.4.2.1 Rationale

The Schutte Self Report Inventory (1998) is an EI measure used to assess to the extent to which individuals adaptively perceive, understand, regulate and harness emotions.

4.4.2.2 Nature and administration

The Schutte Self Report Inventory (SRI) was developed according to the Mayer and Salovey (1990) four branch model of emotional intelligence. The model provided the conceptual framework for the criteria included in the test (Schutte et al., 1998). Through factor analysis of a larger pool of items, the test was scaled to a 33 item, one factor solution. The SRI tests for the following categories: appraisal and expression of emotion in self and others, regulation of emotion in the self and others, and utilisation of emotions in solving problems (Schutte et al, 1998). The SRI consists of a 33 items. It is answered on a five point Likert-type scale and the individual has to indicate to what extent they agree with these 33 items.
4.4.2.3 Reliability and Validity

Internal reliability was shown to be good in two different samples. Two week test-retest reliability indicated that scores were fairly stable over time. There is evidence that the scale is valid, as scores of the scale, were related to eight of nine measures, predicted to be related to the emotional intelligence. The SRI showed evidence of predictive and discriminant validity and was found not to be significantly related to four of the big five personality factors (Ciarrochi, Deane, & Anderson, 2002; Schutte et al., 1998).

The internal consistency of the measure of emotional intelligence was between .87 and .90. Validation studies shows that scores on the emotional intelligence measure (a) were related as expected to characteristics such as optimism, impulse control, and lack of depressed affect, (b) predicted student grades during the first year of college (c) were higher for groups one would expect to score higher on emotional intelligence, and (d) showed evidence of discriminant validity (Schutte et al., 2001). Although Schutte et al., (1998, 2001) reports finding that college students who score high on the SRI showed higher end of year grades, Ciarrochi, Deane and Anderson, (2002) report that there is content overlap between the aspects of EI and optimism/ pessimism. As a result Schutte et al., (1998, 2001) claim may only be a replication of previous findings that state, optimistic students achieve superior results at school.

The SRI has been shown to be susceptible to faking good (Schutte et al., 1998). This short-coming is highlighted by Ciarrochi, Chan and Bajgar, (2001). They describe the
SRI as reliable and distinct from the standard personality factors, such as neuroticism and extraversion, but doubt the ability of the SRI to add any incremental value over established measures of self-esteem. They predict that people with high self-esteem will be prone to faking good by answering positively to various items on the test. To be valid, the SRI needs to distinguish itself from other well established tests (Ciarrochi, Chan & Bajgar, 2001). Therefore, it can not yet be assumed that the factors reported from the SRI can be identified as a significant individual differences to that of the factors relating to general intelligence or the big five (Matthews, Roberts, & Zeidner, 2004)

4.4.2.4 Critique of SRI

Matthews, Roberts and Zeidner (2004), report finding no correlation between SRI and various tests measuring crystallised and fluid intelligence. As a result, they find the SRI to be deficient in both convergent and divergent validity, because its correlations with other intelligence criteria are too low. It should be noted the EI operates in social and emotional contexts, while IQ operates in the intellectual context. It would be presumptuous to compare these two constructs along the same criteria. It may be beneficial to view EI as a unique ability, independent of IQ and the testing instruments should reflect this.
4.4.2.5 Motivation for use

The SRI is a compact test and covers the four branches of EI, delivering a single factor EI score. It has proved to be a reliable and useful self-report measure.

4.5 Procedure

Each partner was given a set of questionnaires to fill out with instructions to not collude in their responses. For practical reasons, it was not possible for an independent observer to monitor the couples while they completed the questionnaire. Upon completion, the questionnaires were returned in a sealed envelope to be scored. The distribution of questionnaires took place over several months and couples were given no time limit in which to complete them. Each set of questionnaires included an indemnity form offering assistance should they incur any distress as a result of completing the questionnaires.

4.6 Data Analysis

The statistical measures used to analyse the data included Multiple Analysis of Covariance and Analysis of Covariance. The MANCOVA is used in this study as the couples data in both instruments is dependent data. The ANCOVA is used in this study as it is able to compare the effect of more than one independent variable and correlations on the dependent variable. In this study, EI was the independent variable and the sub-scales of marital satisfaction where the dependent variables.
Finally a paired two-tailed t-test was used to look for the association between each couple’s EI scores. These included the correlation between individuals EI and marital satisfaction.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes and summarises the statistical findings with regards to the research questions and the hypotheses of this project. The validity of each questionnaire was assessed using the Inconsistency and Conventionalisation scale. The Inconsistency scale measures the response accuracy, and indicates whether respondents attempted to answer sincerely. The Conventionalisation scale assesses the degree to which the respondent attempts to distort the appraisal of their relationship, in a socially desirable direction (Snyder, 1998). Both the Inconsistency and Conventionalisation scales showed no inadmissible responses. This indicates that the responses may be deemed valid, with all respondents giving an undistorted reflection of their marriages.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

The following demographics were elicited from the 121 participants (61 couples).
Table 5.1 Mean and frequency of respondent's age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female n(%)</th>
<th>Male n(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-28</td>
<td>12 (19.7)</td>
<td>6 (9.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-38</td>
<td>10 (16.4)</td>
<td>12 (19.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-48</td>
<td>8 (13.1)</td>
<td>8 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-58</td>
<td>20 (32.8)</td>
<td>20 (30.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;59</td>
<td>5 (8.2)</td>
<td>6 (9.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 shows that the majority of respondents are between the ages of 49-58 years old. However the second highest portion of respondents fell between the ages of 19-28 years for females and 29-38 years for males. Given that data on age is relatively polarised, it appears the study will report on data from new marriages as well as more established marriages. However, the data is skewed towards more enduring marriages, as the average length of a marriage in this study is 19.7 years. This is significant as a large portion of studies on marital satisfaction appear to mainly focus on newlywed couples. Further, over 80% of respondents were dual-earner couples, with the males having a slightly higher level of education (14.7 years) than the females (13.6 years). Given the polarised age groups, this sample may allow the data to reflect the manner in which couples deal with education and work related issues at various stages in their marriage.
5.2.1 The frequency and range of MSI-R subscale scores.

Tables 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 present the frequency of scores for all the dimensions of the MSI-R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2</th>
<th>Global Distress</th>
<th>Affective communication</th>
<th>Problem-Solving communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Male n(%)</td>
<td>Female n(%)</td>
<td>Male n(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>19 (31.1)</td>
<td>11 (18.0)</td>
<td>11 (18.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>12 (19.7)</td>
<td>26 (42.6)</td>
<td>17 (27.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>24 (39.7)</td>
<td>18 (29.5)</td>
<td>25 (41.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>6 (9.8)</td>
<td>6 (9.8)</td>
<td>8 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 &gt;</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.3</th>
<th>Aggression</th>
<th>Time Together</th>
<th>Disagreement about finances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Male n(%)</td>
<td>Female n(%)</td>
<td>Male n(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>16 (26.2)</td>
<td>19 (31.1)</td>
<td>11 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>21 (34.4)</td>
<td>21 (34.4)</td>
<td>26 (42.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>19 (31.1)</td>
<td>14 (23)</td>
<td>16 (26.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>5 (8.2)</td>
<td>7 (11.5)</td>
<td>8 (13.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 &gt;</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.4</th>
<th>Sexual dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Role Orientation</th>
<th>Family history of distress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Male n(%)</td>
<td>Female n(%)</td>
<td>Male n(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>14 (23.0)</td>
<td>15 (24.6)</td>
<td>5 (8.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>19 (31.1)</td>
<td>21 (34.4)</td>
<td>30 (49.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>14 (23.0)</td>
<td>16 (26.2)</td>
<td>20 (32.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>14 (23.0)</td>
<td>9 (14.8)</td>
<td>4 (6.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 &gt;</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
<td>61 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.5</th>
<th>Dissatisfaction with children</th>
<th>Conflict over child rearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Male n(%)</td>
<td>Female n(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-30</td>
<td>1 (1.7)</td>
<td>1 (1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>14 (25.0)</td>
<td>14 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>26 (46.4)</td>
<td>17 (30.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>10 (17.8)</td>
<td>20 (35.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70</td>
<td>5 (8.9)</td>
<td>4 (7.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 &gt;</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56 (100)</td>
<td>56 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the above tables, high scores represent dissatisfaction. Snyder (1998) indicates scores above 60 are distress signals. Perusal of the various subscales shows, within this study, a significant proportion of the participant’s scores fell in the high end of the scale. This suggests marginal dissatisfaction with those constructs. More detailed information regarding each construct will be presented with statistical analysis that follows in the chapter.

5.3 Emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction

The first hypothesis investigates the link between EI and marital satisfaction. The key measure of the study was the search for a significant positive link between EI and marital satisfaction. The Schutte Self Report Inventory (SRI) produced a global score representing the individual’s EI. The Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R) unpacked marital satisfaction into several subscales. The relationship between each subscale and the EI score was measured, and significant results reported in this chapter.

The reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) of the SRI response was a robust .87 suggesting that the instrument was completed in a satisfactory manner. It was not possible to get the reliability of the MSI-R responses because the data was captured as normed scores rather than individual responses. Snyder, however, reported a Cronbach alpha of .82. This was a mean score representing 11 scales of the MSI-R and indicates a strong reliability.
5.3.1 Affective communication

The affective communication scale evaluates the respondent’s satisfaction with the amount of affection and understanding expressed by his or her partner. The affective communication scale provides the best single measure of emotional intimacy experienced in the relationship (Snyder, 1998). The aspects of affective communication tested include lack of affection and support as well as lack of empathy and mutual disclosure.

Affection and support is tested using the following statements:

- There is a great deal of love and affection expressed in our relationship
- Whenever I’m feeling sad, my partner makes me feel loved and happy again.

Empathy or mutual disclosure is tested using the following statements:

- It’s sometimes easier to confide in a friend then in my partner
- Sometimes my partner just can’t understand the way I feel (Snyder, 1998).

The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective communication</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.90</td>
<td>8.62</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51.00</td>
<td>8.72</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An individual scoring low on the affective communication scale would describe their relationship as happy and fulfilling, and their partners as loving and supportive. They would generally feel understood by their partners and would be able to confide in them. It may be that the positive feelings experienced by the person in the relationship, may allow them to share intimate and potentially conflicting feelings (Snyder, 1998).

An individual scoring high on the affective communication scale indicates more extensive dissatisfaction with the amount of love and affection expressed in the relationship. Individuals with a high score on the affective communication scale, may describe their partners as emotionally distant and uncaring, reluctant to share intimate feelings, and unsupportive. These people may feel unappreciated and misunderstood (Snyder, 1998).

Note that the means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low to moderate (50-60) and the average male and female’s affective communication have very similar means. See table 5.2 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using the affective communication scale as the dependent variable (Table 5.7), found a significant difference when mediated by EI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.7 MANCOVA for Affective communication from the MSI-R and SRI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female EI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male EI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05
The effect that male and female EI has towards affective communication was tested by means of a MANCOVA. The results of the MANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI and affective communication. Male EI Scores \[ F(2.57) = 6.303, \text{Wilk's } \Lambda = 0.819, p = 0.003, \eta^2 = 0.181 \] and female EI scores \[ F(2.57) = 0.236, \text{Wilk's } \Lambda = 0.992, p = 0.790 \]. Male EI explained approximately 18% of the variance in the combination of the couple's affective communication. This may be described as a strong effect and shows the male EI has a practical effect on the couple's communication. A follow up ANCOVA is presented in table 5.8.
The ANCOVA’s showed statistically significant differences between males EI score and female’s satisfaction regarding affective communication. Male [F (1) = 11.170, p = 0.001, η² = 0.161] and female scores were not significant [F(1) = .250, p =.619 (n.s)]. Male EI accounted for 16% of the variance in female’s dissatisfaction with affective communication. This result shows that the higher the male EI, the more satisfied the female was with her husband’s affective communication. Female EI had no significant
impact on male satisfaction in regard to affective communication. Staying with affective communication, correlation statistics presented in table 5.5 were revealing.

Table 5.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective communication</th>
<th>Male EI</th>
<th>Female EI</th>
<th>Absolute Difference in EI (Female – Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.402</td>
<td>-.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001*</td>
<td>.621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td>-.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

There is a large negative correlation between female affective communication and male EI. Therefore, the higher the male EI (in a couple), the lower the female dissatisfaction with affective communication (in a couple). No statistically significant relationship between the female EI and the female dissatisfaction with affective communication was found. The couples EI range was also revealing, and significant, with the higher the difference in the couples EI, the higher the female’s dissatisfaction over affective communication. There is no statistically significant relationship between the females EI and the male’s dissatisfaction with affective communication. Overall, affective communication was found to be a highly pertinent variable when mediated by EI.

Please note that for future subscales, for space considerations, presentation of results will be done textually and not with tables.
5.3.2 Problem solving communication

The problem solving communication scale assesses the couple’s effectiveness in resolving differences. It measures overt discord, rather than underlying feelings of estrangement. The three aspects of problem solving communication covered in this scale include: Failure to resolve even minor differences, lack of specific problem solving skills and over-reactivity of partner and inability to discuss sensitive topics.

Failure to resolve even minor differences is tested for using the following statements:

- A lot of our arguments seem to end in depressing stalemates
- Minor disagreements with my partner often end up in big arguments.

Lack of specific problem solving skills is tested using the following statements:

- Even when angry with me, my partner is able to appreciate my viewpoints
- When we disagree, my partner helps me find alternatives acceptable to both of us.

Over-reactivity of partner and inability to discuss sensitive topics is tested using the following statements:

- My partner is so touchy on some subjects that I can’t even mention them
- My partners feelings are too easily hurt (Snyder, 1998).

The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.10.
An individual who scores low on the problem solving communication scale reports little overt disharmony in their relationship. The couple is likely to be committed to resolving differences when they occur, and to be reasonably effective in doing so. Respondents are likely to describe their partners as fair and receptive to compromise (Snyder, 1998).

An individual who scores high on the problem solving communication scale generally have an extensive history of unresolved conflicts and arguments are frequent. The respondent may describe his or her partner as being emotionally hurtful or abusive during arguments (Snyder, 1998).

The means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low to moderate (below 50). This indicates that the average male and females problem solving communication has very similar means. See table 5.2 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using the problem solving communication as the dependent variable, found no significant difference when mediated by EI.

The results of the MANCOVA showed no statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI and problem solving communication. Male scores were $F(2, 57) =$
2.761, Wilk’s Λ = 0.912, p = 0.072, $\eta^2 = 0.088$], and female scores [F(2, 57) = .012, Wilk’s Λ = 1.00, p =.988 (n.s)]. Given the strong trend in male score, it was suspected that the MANCOVA masked collective problem solving scores in the couple, and may have cancelled out any significant difference in the separate genders. A follow up ANCOVA was done which showed statistically significant differences between male EI scores and female satisfaction with problem solving communication. Male score [F(1) = 5.613, p = 0.021, $\eta^2 = 0.088$]. The female score was [F(1) = 0, p = .998 (n.s)]. Hence the higher the male’s EI, the more satisfied the female was with problem solving communication. Male EI accounted for approximately 8% of variance with regard to female satisfaction with problem solving communication. This was explored further in a correlation analysis (Table 5.11).

### Table 5.11
**Pearson correlation of EI and Problem Solving Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem solving Communication</th>
<th>Male EI</th>
<th>Female EI</th>
<th>Absolute Difference in EI (Female – Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.310</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.015*</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td>.023*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.184</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.155</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p<0.05$

The above table indicates a moderate negative correlation between the female problem solving communication and male EI. The higher the male EI in the couple, the lower the female dissatisfaction with problem solving communication. There was no statistically significant relationship between the female EI and the female dissatisfaction with
problem solving communication. In addition, the greater the gap in the couples EI, the higher the female’s dissatisfaction with problem solving communication. There was no statistically significant relationship between the female EI and the male’s dissatisfaction with problem solving communication.

5.3.3 Aggression

The aggression scale assesses the level of intimidation and physical aggression experienced by respondents from their partners. Items that reflect intimidation include the partners shouting when angry, slamming things, and/or throwing objects at the respondent. Items that assess physical aggression range from pushing or shoving, to being physically injured by the partner. The item scale is designed as a screening measure to test the potential for relationship violence. The scale enquires whether a particular act of intimidation or physical aggression has ever occurred, rather than assessing the frequency or regency of such acts. The items scale addresses physical aggression and non-physical aggression or intimidation (Snyder, 1998).

Physical aggression is tested for using the following statements:

- *My partner has left bruises or welts on my body*
- *My partner has never injured me physically.*

Non-physical aggression or intimidation is tested for using the following statements:

- *My partners has slammed things around or thrown things in anger*
- *My partner sometimes screams or yells at me when he or she is angry* (Snyder, 1998).
The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.12

Table 5.12
Means and Standard Deviations for aggression from the MSI-R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggression</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48.75</td>
<td>7.83</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.51</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A low score indicates an absence of physical aggression or intimidation of the partners beyond the occasional screaming. High scores on the aggression scale would indicate previous occurrence of at least moderate levels of intimidation (threats of physical harm) as well as low levels of physical aggression (pushing, grabbing or slapping). The means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low (below 50). This indicates that on average, there was no physical aggression or intimidation beyond occasional screaming or shouting. See table 5.3 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using aggression as the dependent variable, found no significant difference.

The results of the MANCOVA showed no statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI and aggression. Male score \( F(2, 57) = 1.118, \) Wilk’s \( \Lambda = .962, p = 0.334 \). Female score \( F(2, 57) = 2.766, \) Wilk’s \( \Lambda = 0.912, p < 0.071, \eta^2 = 0.088 \).

Given the strong trend in female score, it was suspected that the MANCOVA masked collective aggression in the couple, may have cancelled out any significant difference in the separate genders. A follow up ANCOVA was done which showed statistically
significant differences between female EI scores and male aggression. Females score 
\[F(1) = 5.6, p = 0.021, \eta^2 = 0.088\]. Male score was \[F(1) = 1.207, p = .276\ (n.s)\]. Hence 
the higher the female EI, the lower the levels of male aggression. There is no significant 
score for the male EI scores and female aggression. This suggests that female EI, 
significantly mediates the male’s possible propensity for violence.

5.3.4 Time together

The time together scale evaluates the couple’s companionship as expressed in terms of 
the time they spend together during leisure activity. The scales reflect shared leisure time 
together as well as shared interests. The scale can be viewed as a measure of the couples 
“friendship” as reflected in behavioural intimacy (as compared to emotional intimacy 
assessed in the affective communication scale, and sexual intimacy assessed in the sexual 
dissatisfaction scale). The time together scale measures shared leisure activity and shared 
interests (Snyder, 1998).

Shared leisure activity is assessed by statements such as:

- My partner and I spend a good deal of time together in different kinds of play and 
  recreation
- I spend at least one hour each day in an activity with my partner.

Shared interests are assessed by statements such as:

- My partner and I don’t have much in common to talk about
- My partner doesn’t take enough time to do some of the things I would like to do 
  (Snyder, 1998).
The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.13.

Table 5.13
Means and Standard Deviations for time together from the MSI-R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time together</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49.10</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.54</td>
<td>9.70</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents who score low on the scale describe their partners as being good friends and fun to be with. They generally report feeling satisfied with the time they spend together doing leisure activities. They also report sharing many common interests with their partners during activities in and out the home. A high score on the time together scale extends beyond complaints of insufficient time for shared leisure activity. It includes concerns for lack of common interests, friends and feelings of emotional distance from the partner (Snyder, 1998).

The means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low (below 50). This indicates the male and female’s time together has very similar means with partners being good friends and having fun together. See table 5.3 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using time together as the dependent variable found no significant difference when mediated by EI.
The MANCOVA indicated that the relationship between female EI and time together was not significant. Male was score \([F(2, 57) = 3.036, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = .904, p = .56]\), and female score was \([F(2, 57) = .208, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = .993, p = .813 (\text{n.s})]\). Given the strong trend in male score, it was suspected that the MANCOVA masked time together in the couple, and may have cancelled out any significant difference in the separate genders. A follow up ANCOVA was done which showed statistically significant differences between female EI scores and time together.

The ANCOVA showed the male score as \([F(1) = 6.143, \ p = 0.016, \eta^2 = 0.096]\), and female score \([F(1) = .185, \ p = .669 (\text{n.s})]\). Hence the higher the male EI, the more satisfied the female was with time spent together. There were no significant findings between female EI and male satisfaction with time spent together. This was explored further with a correlation analysis (Table 5.14).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time together</th>
<th>Male EI</th>
<th>Female EI</th>
<th>(Female – Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.307</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.016*</td>
<td>.748</td>
<td>.011*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.191</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>.033*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

There is a moderate negative correlation between female dissatisfaction with time spent together and male EI. The lower the male EI (in a couple), the higher the female
dissatisfaction with time spent together. There was no statistically significant relationship between the female EI and female satisfaction with time spent together.

The greater the gap in EI, the higher the male and female’s dissatisfaction with times spent together. There is no significant difference between the females EI and the males satisfaction with time spent together.

5.3.5 Disagreement about finances

The disagreement about finances scale assesses relationship discord regarding the management of finances. There are three aspects to this scale, namely, concerns regarding finances, confidence in partners handling of finances and arguments with partner over finances (Snyder, 1998).

Concerns regarding finances are assessed using statements such as:

- *Our relationship has never been in difficulty because of financial concerns*
- *Our financial future seems quite secure.*

Confidence in partners handling of finance is assessed using statements such as:

- *I trust my partner with our money completely*
- *My partner buys too many things without consulting me first.*

An argument with partner over finance is assessed using statements such as:

- *It is often hard for us to discuss our finances without getting upset with each other*
• *Trying to work out a budget causes more trouble with my partner than it is worth* (Snyder, 1998).

The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.15.

**Table 5.15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagreement about finances</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48.21</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49.79</td>
<td>9.42</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A low score indicates that finances constitute an area of relative agreement in the couple’s relationship. Fiscal responsibilities are likely to be shared by both spouses. Individuals are likely to describe their partners as being good providers, generous and adept at managing money. If strains are experienced by the couple, they are not likely to effect the entire relationship (Snyder, 1998).

A high score indicates that finances are likely to represent a major source of relationship conflict, and that arguments in this domain are intense. In relationships where the score is high, disagreements about money often extend beyond the adequacy of income to include negative attributions regarding the partner’s selfishness, irresponsibility or lack of commitment towards resolving the couple’s financial difficulties (Snyder, 1998).
The means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low (below 50), and that the average male and female’s disagreement about finances have very similar means. See table 5.3 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using the financial disagreements scale as the dependent variable, found a significant difference when mediated by EI.

The results of the MANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI and disagreement about finances. Males score \[F(2, 57) = 6.253, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = 0.820, p = 0.004, \eta^2 = 0.180\]. Female score was \[F(2, 57) = .417, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = .986, p =.661 \text{ (n.s)}\]. EI explained approximately 18% of the variance in the combination of male and female scales of MSR-I. This may be described as a strong effect and shows the difference between partners EI and disagreement about finances and had practical implications.

The ANCOVA’s showed statistically significant differences between males EI score and female’s satisfaction regarding affective communication. \[F(1) = 8.219, p = 0.006, \eta^2 = 0.124\]. Male EI accounted for 12.4% of the variance in female’s dissatisfaction in disagreement around finances. While male EI was statistically significant \[F(1) = 12.396, p = 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.176\]. Male EI accounted for 17.6% in the variance in male’s dissatisfaction around disagreements about finance. This result shows that the higher the male EI, the more the couple where able to co-operate around finances. They also show, the higher the male EI, the less disagreement he will have with his wife regarding finances and the better he will be able to deal with his own financial issues. There were no significant findings with regard to the role of female EI in relation to male satisfaction.
with finances. \([F(1) = .519, p = .474 \text{ (n.s)}]\). It is possible that a higher male EI, meant men in better earning jobs, hence finances less of an issue. Further exploration using correlation analysis is presented in Table 5.16.

**Table 5.16**  
**Pearson correlation of EI and Disagreement about Finance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagreement about finances</th>
<th>Male EI</th>
<th>Female EI</th>
<th>Absolute Difference in EI (Female – Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.395</td>
<td>-.224</td>
<td>.295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.021*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>-.456</td>
<td>-.218</td>
<td>.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000**</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\(p<0.05\)  
**\(p<0.001\)

Supporting the findings of the MANCOVA, there is a strong negative correlation between the female’s disagreement about finances and the male EI. The higher the male EI in a couple, the lower the female dissatisfaction over disagreements about finances. There is a large significant negative correlation between male EI and male’s dissatisfaction over disagreements about finances. The higher the male’s EI, the lower the level of male’s dissatisfaction over disagreements about finances. In sum, the higher the male EI, the lower the male and female satisfaction over disagreements about finances. The high male EI means they will be able to mediate tensions between himself and his wife with regard to the issue of finance.
There was no significant relationship between the female EI and the female
dissatisfaction over disagreements about finances. The difference in the partners EI has
no significant effect on the female’s dissatisfaction over disagreements about finances.
The greater the gap in EI, the more the female and male struggle to negotiate their
financial concerns.

5.3.6 Sexual dissatisfaction

The sexual dissatisfaction scale reflects the respondent’s level of discontent with the
frequency and quality of intercourse and other sexual activity. The sexual dissatisfaction
scale addresses the following three dimensions. These include: General dissatisfaction
with the sexual relationship, partner’s lack of interest in the sexual relationship and
inadequate affection during sexual exchanges.

General dissatisfaction with the sexual relationship is assessed using statements such as:

- One thing my partner and I don’t fully discuss is our sexual relationship
- Our sexual relationship is entirely satisfactory.

Partner’s lack of interest in the sexual relationship is assessed using the following
statements:

- My partner sometime shows too little enthusiasm for sex
- There are some things I would like us to do, sexually, that my partner doesn’t
  seem to enjoy.

Inadequate affection during sexual exchanges is assessed using the following
statements:
- *I have never seriously considered having an affair*

- *I would like my partner to express a little more tenderness during intercourse.*

The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.17.

**Table 5.17**  
**Means and Standard Deviations for sexual dissatisfaction from the MSI-R.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47.82</td>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.64</td>
<td>11.18</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low scores indicate a generally positive attitude toward the overall quality of the couple’s sexual relationship. Disagreements regarding the frequency or specific content of sexual behaviour are likely to be uncommon and to be viewed as having little importance to the overall relationship. Respondents who obtain low scores describe their partners as sexually exciting, and the sexual relationship as satisfying for both the partners and themselves (Snyder, 1998).

A high score on the sexual dissatisfaction scale would indicate extensive dissatisfaction with the sexual relationship and the frequency of sexual exchanges. Individuals who obtain high scores are likely to describe their partners as uninterested or not caring about the sexual relationship. They may also describe their partners as not being sexually satisfying (Snyder, 1998).
Note that the means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low to moderate (50-60), and that the average male and female’s sexual dissatisfaction have very similar means with both partners having a positive attitude toward overall quality of the couple’s relationship. See table 5.4 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using the sexual dissatisfaction scale as the dependent variable, found a significant difference when mediated by EI.

The results of the MANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI and sexual dissatisfaction \([F(2, 57) = 3.825, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = 0.882, p = 0.028, \eta^2 = 0.118]\). EI explained approximately 11.8\% of the variance in the combination of male and female scales of MSR-I. This may be described as a strong effect and shows the difference between partners EI and sexual dissatisfaction has practical implications. The females score was not significant \([F(2, 57) = .258, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = 0.991, p = 0.773]\).

The ANCOVA’s showed statistically significant differences between males EI score and female’s sexual dissatisfaction. The male score was \([p = 0.007, \eta^2 = 0.118]\). Male EI accounted for 11.8\% of the variance in female’s sexual dissatisfaction. Hence, the lower the male EI, the higher the level of female sexual dissatisfaction. The female EI score had no significant relationship with the level of male sexual satisfaction. The female score was \([F(1) = 0.004, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = .540, p = 0.947 \text{ (n.s.)}]\). This was explored further in a correlation analysis (Table 5.18).
Table 5.18
Pearson correlation of EI and Sexual Dissatisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Absolute Difference in EI (Female – Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male EI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

There is a moderate negative correlation between female sexual dissatisfaction and male EI. The higher the male EI in a couple, the lower the level of female sexual dissatisfaction. There is no statistically significant relationship between female EI and female sexual dissatisfaction.

Table 5.18 further indicates, that the greater the gap in the couples EI, the higher the level of female sexual dissatisfaction. The results suggest that men with a higher EI place significant emphasis on intimate behaviour in their relationship, which may enhance their wives sexual satisfaction. These men are able to be more expressive, emotionally available and sensitive to their partner’s needs, all of which will enhance their partner’s level of satisfaction. There is no statistically significant relationship between the female EI and the male’s sexual dissatisfaction.
5.3.7 Role orientation

The role orientation scale evaluates the extent to which a respondent professes a traditional versus non-traditional orientation toward marital and parental gender roles. Items are not scored in the traditional direction, as other scales in the instrument. High scores on this scale reflect more egalitarian views. This particular scale does not look at partner’s satisfaction per se. Rather it looks at partners differences in views on marital and parental roles. Relationship conflict may be inferred based on the different views between roles.

The role orientation scale addresses the following three dimensions. These include division of household or childcare responsibilities, equality of status and influence, and equality of career opportunity and importance.

Division of household and child care responsibilities are assessed using the following statements:

- *Such things as laundry, cleaning, and child care are primarily a women’s responsibility in a relationship*
- *A major role of a woman should be that of a housekeeper.*

Equality of status and influence may be assessed using the following statements:

- *The man should be the head of the family*
- *A woman should take her husbands last name after marriage.*

Equality of career opportunity and importance is assessed using the following statements:
• There should be more day-care centres and nursery schools so that more mothers of young children could work and if a child gets sick

• If both parents work, the father should be just as willing as the mother to stay home from work and take care of the child (Snyder, 1998).

The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Orientation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47.92</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.46</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low scores indicate a highly traditional orientation toward marital and parental gender roles. The traditional orientation emphasises men’s dominance in decision making and as primary wage earners. Men who obtain low role orientation scores tend to presume a lower proportion of house care or child rearing responsibilities. Women who obtain low role orientation scores tend to invest themselves more fully in their roles as wives and mothers at home. The inequity of the partners’ influence in decision making may contribute to difficulties in conflict resolution that is based on negotiation and mutual compromise (Snyder, 1998).

High scores on the role orientation scale reflect a less traditional view of marital and parental roles. Decision making is likely to be shared more fully, as are house care and child rearing responsibilities. Among respondents with high role orientation score, a
woman’s career gains status in comparison with her role as mother. Men are likely to view their roles in the home as having equal priority to their own career opportunities (Snyder, 1998). It should be noted that role scores on this scale reflect the role values or preferences, not the role behaviours. The essence of this scale is to assess the congruence between each partner’s role orientations.

The means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low (below 50). This indicates the male and female role orientation have very similar means. See table 5.4 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using time together as the dependent variable found no significant difference when mediated by EI.

The results of the MANCOVA showed no statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI and role orientation. Female score was [$F(2, 57) = 2.774$, $\text{Wilk's } \Lambda = 0.911, p = 0.071, \eta^2 = 0.089$] and male’s score was [$F(2, 57) = 1.145$, $\text{Wilk's } \Lambda = 0.961, p = 0.325$]. Given the strong trend in female score, it was suspected that the MANCOVA masked collective role orientation in the couple, and may have cancelled out any significant difference in the separate genders. The ANCOVA was done which showed statistically significant differences between female EI scores and female role orientation [$F(1) = 5.234, p = 0.026, \eta^2 = 0.083$]. Hence the higher the female EI, the more she was able to adapt to traditional female roles without distress. The male EI played no significant role in female role orientation. The male score was [$F(1) = 0.240, p = 0.626 (\text{n.s})$]. These results suggest that a high EI assists the female in adapting to
various gender and parental roles. EI gives her a level of flexibility with which to
manoeuvre between a multitude of societal roles.

5.3.8 Family history of distress

The family history of distress scale assesses the disruption of relationships within the
respondent’s family of origin. This scale is included in the MSI-R on the premise that
either unresolved conflicts evolving from the family of origin or an absence of adequate
parental models may contribute significantly to distress in the current relationship.
Family history of distress is assessed along three criteria. These include: despondent
describes an unhappy childhood, disruptions in the parents marriage and disrupted
relationships among family members (Snyder, 1998).

The respondent describing an unhappy childhood is assessed using the following
statements:

- *I was very anxious as a young person to get away from my family*
- *My parents never really understood me.*

Disruption in the parent’s marriage was assessed using the following statements:

- *My parents didn’t communicate with each other as well as they should have*
- *I often wondered whether my parent’s marriage would end in divorce.*

Disrupted relationships among family members were assessed using the following
statements:

- *All the marriages on my side of the family appear to be quite successful*
• *Members of my family were always very close to each other* (Snyder, 1998).

The means and standard deviations of the male and female couple’s responses to the MSI-R and SRI scores are reported in table 5.20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family history of distress</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.56</td>
<td>11.23</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46.13</td>
<td>9.63</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People who obtain low scores report a history of satisfying relationships within their families of origin. They are likely to describe a fairly happy childhood and positive feelings towards their siblings and parents. They describe their parent’s marriages as being relatively free from distress. The parents may have provided positive models for expression of affection and resolution of differences (Snyder, 1998).

High family history of distress scores indicates extensive conflicts in the family of origin. Individuals who obtain high scores on this scale often describe alienation from parents, siblings or both. Disrupted relationships among extended family members are also common (Snyder, 1998).

The means in this study were in the range described by Snyder (1998) as low to moderate (45-55), and that the average male and female family history of distress has very similar
means. However their may have been tension present at times and the occasional conflicted relationship. See table 5.4 for fuller presentation of the range. The MANCOVA using family history of distress scale as the dependent variable, found a significant difference when mediated by EI.

The results of the MANCOVA showed a statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI in female response to the couples family history of distress \([F(2, 57) = 3.970, \text{Wilk's } \Lambda = 0.024, p = 0.878, \eta^2 = 0.122]\). There was also a statistically significant difference between the couples collective EI in the male response to couple’s family history of distress \([F(2, 57) = 3.786, \text{Wilk’s } \Lambda = 0.883, p = 0.029, \eta^2 = 0.117]\). EI explained approximately 12.2% of the variance in the couple from the female response and 11.7% of the variance in the couple from the male response to the scales of MSR-I. This may be considered a strong effect and shows the difference between partners EI and family history of distress has practical implications.

The ANCOVA’s showed statistically significant differences between males EI score and female’s history of distress \([F(1) = 5.772, p = 0.020, \eta^2 = 0.091]\). Male EI accounted for 9.1% of the variance in female’s coping with family history of distress. Male EI was statistically significant \([F(1) = 4.569, p = 0.037, \eta^2 = 0.073]\). Male EI accounted for 7.3% in the variance in male’s coping with family history of distress. Finally, female EI was also statistically significant \([F(1) = 7.608, p = 0.008, \eta^2 = 0.116]\). Female EI accounted for 11.6% in the variance in female’s ability to cope with family history of distress, and
her score was $[F(1) = 2.565, p = .115 \text{ (n.s)}]$. The female EI had no relationship with male family history of distress.

Hence, the higher the male EI, the better the female was able to handle her family history of distress and the better the male was able to handle his family history of distress. The higher the female EI, the better she handled her family history of distress. This was explored further in a correlation analysis (Table 5.21).

Table 5.21
**Pearson correlation of EI and Family History of Distress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family history of Distress</th>
<th>Female EI</th>
<th>Male EI</th>
<th>Absolute Difference in EI (Female – Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Correlation</td>
<td>-.387</td>
<td>-.416</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.002*</td>
<td>.001*</td>
<td>.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Correlation</td>
<td>-.333</td>
<td>-.286</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.009*</td>
<td>.026*</td>
<td>.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

Table 5.21 indicates that there is a moderately significant negative correlation between female family history of distress and male EI. The higher the male EI (in the couple), the lower the level of female family history of distress. There is a moderately significant correlation between female family history of distress and female EI. The higher the female EI (in the couple) the lower the level of female family history of distress.

There is a moderately significant correlation between male family history of distress and male EI. The higher the male EI (in the couple), the lower the level of male family
history of distress. In sum, the higher the male EI the better the male is able to deal with the male and female family history of distress. While the higher the female EI the better she is able to deal with only the female history of distress. A difference in EI between partners had no statistical significance on role of family of origin.

5.3.9 Summary of results

Table 5.22 is a summary of all the subscales of the MSI-R, and the resulting impact by EI, as determined by the respective ANCOVA’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-scale of MSI-R</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective communication</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving communication</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time together</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement about finances</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role orientation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history of distress</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family history of distress</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table (5.22) lists the MSI-R subscales of marital satisfaction. It then describes whether male or female EI had an effect on the male or female’s level of satisfaction in these subscales. For example, the higher the male EI, the more satisfied the female in regard to Affective communication. Another example, the higher the female EI, the more satisfied the female was in dealing with her family history of distress.
Based on the results displayed in table 5.22 EI was found to have an effect on certain subscales of marital satisfaction. It appears that in the majority of the subscales, the male EI had an effect on the female’s level of satisfaction. It is particularly interesting to note that the subscales such as affective communication, sexual dissatisfaction and time together were all affected by the male EI. In these subscales, the higher the male EI, the greater the female level of satisfaction. All three subscales tested different forms of intimacy (communicative, behavioural and sexual). This may indicate a relationship between intimacy and the level of male EI on female marital satisfaction. Subscales measuring problem solving, such as problem solving communication and disagreement about finances, appear to be effected by EI. Results in those two subscales indicate, the higher the level of male EI, the greater the level of female satisfaction. The subscales measured a couple’s ability to successfully resolve conflict Therefore these results may indicate a relationship between male EI, problem solving skills and female marital satisfaction. Finally, the effect of EI appears to be gender specific, with male EI having greater influence in subscales involving intimacy and conflict resolution. Females EI appears to influence fewer subscales of marital satisfaction. However, a higher female EI, appears to be present in subscales requiring greater levels of emotional flexibility such as role orientation and family history of distress.

5.4 Correlational analysis of partners EI scores

The second hypothesis suggested a correlation between partners EI scores. The correlational tests measured for similarities and differences between partners EI scores, and whether this relationship would effect their marital satisfaction.
5.4.1 Partners EI scores

Table 5.23  Male and female EI scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female: EI</td>
<td>133.72</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11.993</td>
<td>1.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male: EI</td>
<td>126.72</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17.324</td>
<td>2.218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.24  Male and female EI scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.018*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p <0.05

Table 5.25  Paired sample T-Test – Male and Female EI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Female: EI - Male: EI</td>
<td>7.000</td>
<td>17.835</td>
<td>2.284</td>
<td>3.065</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

The above results indicate that there is no link between the couples EI levels. This is deduced from the significant difference in the mean of the EI scores, suggesting that they tend to be relatively far apart. The gap between couple’s scores was large and significant enough to show that individuals chose partners with a dissimilar EI levels to themselves.
5.5 Correlational Analyses

Further results show significant correlation between other variables that influence levels of marital satisfaction. These include age of partner, duration of marriage and levels of education.

5.5.1 Sexual Dissatisfaction

The results of a correlational analysis in table 5.26, indicated there was a significant correlation between age of male, age of female, duration of marriage and sexual dissatisfaction. It showed that over time, there were shared changes in sexual dissatisfaction.

Table 5.26
Pearson correlation of Sexual Dissatisfaction and time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Dissatisfaction</th>
<th>Female age</th>
<th>Male age</th>
<th>Years married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>.555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Male

| Correlation            | .335       | .369     | .300          |
| Sig. (2-tailed)        | .012*      | .006*    | .019*         |
| N                      | 55         | 54       | 61            |

*p<0.05

The results indicate that as the length of marriage increased, and the male and female age increased so the male’s level sexual dissatisfaction increased. As males got older, and their wives got older, and their marriages endured, so the male became increasingly sexually dissatisfied. Female dissatisfaction did not seem to be affected by length of
marriage or age. Explanations for the decline in male’s sexual satisfaction as marriages endure may be as a result of physiological changes that occur with age. This may include changes in hormone levels, which could affect frequency of sexual relations. Habituation may also play a role, with couples increasing familiarity with one another resulting in the sexual relationship no longer being novel. It may also be related to level of work stress with a decreasing capacity to deal with the demands of work and family.

### 5.5.2 Family history of distress

The results of a correlation analysis displayed in table 5.27, indicated there was a significant correlation between age of male, age of female, duration of marriage and family history of distress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family history of distress</th>
<th>Female age</th>
<th>Male age</th>
<th>Years married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.381</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.022*</td>
<td>.048*</td>
<td>.021*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

As the male got older and the female got older and the longer the marriage, so their tended to be more dissatisfaction with his family history of distress. With the increasing age of male and duration of marriage, the male became less able to deal with his family history of distress. The family history of distress indicates that the male had problematic
relationships with his family of origin. This conflict may have isolated the male from his family of origin. If the male does not have the skills to overcome this problematic relationship or adopts maladaptive problem solving skills, he may not be able to resolve the conflict. With time, these maladaptive problem solving behaviours become entrenched and furthers isolates the male from his family of origin. Within the culture of the current sample, there may be a propensity for males to move away from their family of origin and form closer ties with their wives family of origin. This may be as a result of females maintaining stronger bonds with their family of origin. The result of this is males may be further alienated from their family.

5.5.3 Problem solving communication

The results of the correlation analysis displayed in table 5.28, indicated there was a significant correlation between males and females level of education and female problem solving communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pearsons Correlation for Problem Solving Communication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem solving communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05
The more educated both partners were, the higher the females level of satisfaction with their problem solving communication. Education may be academic, intrapersonal and interpersonal in nature. An increased level of education may increase the partner’s skills in problem solving, given that education allows one to develop skills to deal with various problems. These skills may include the ability to deal with people. While higher education does not eliminate problems, it may increase personal, intellectual, financial and social resources with which to resolve the problems.

5.5.4 Disagreement about finances

The results of a correlation analysis displayed in table 5.29, indicated there was a significant correlation between males satisfaction with financial disagreement and females hours worked per week.

Table 5.29
Pearson Correlation Disagreement about Finances and Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagreement about finances</th>
<th>Female: Hours worked per week</th>
<th>Male: Hours worked per week</th>
<th>Female: Education (years completed)</th>
<th>Male: Education (Years completed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Correlation -.027</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-.257</td>
<td>-.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed) .875</td>
<td>.681</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation -.453</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.251</td>
<td>-.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed) .005*</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05
The less the female was involved in work, the greater the male’s dissatisfaction regarding communication around finances. The female working may be indicative of a more egalitarian relationship, in which there is joint decision making and more equal distribution of power. This may lead to a similar value being assigned by both husband and wife to financial concerns. Another explanation may be, dual earning couples may have greater financial resources, thereby decreasing stress around financial issues.

5.5.5 Role orientation

The results of the correlation analysis displayed in table 5.30, indicated there was a significant correlation between males role orientation females level of education.

Table 5.30
Correlation test – Role orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role orientation</th>
<th>Female: Hours worked per week</th>
<th>Male: Hours worked per week</th>
<th>Female: Education (years completed)</th>
<th>Male: Education (Years completed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .256</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>-.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.604</td>
<td>.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .168</td>
<td>-.086</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>.048*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

The more educated the female, the more the male struggled with his role orientation. The age of the average male respondent may explain this result. Historically, the male respondents may have grown up in a conservative society, which embraced traditional
roles. Often males had a higher level of education then females. As gender norms change, so the male may struggle to adapt to these changes. The higher level of female education, may indicate a more egalitarian relationship, with women demanding greater equality in various aspects of the relationship.

5.6 Conclusion

The results received from the couples showed there was a significant relationship between EI and marital satisfaction. However, it was the male EI that appeared (in the majority of results) to be responsible for his and her levels of marital satisfaction. The greater the difference between the couples EI scores, the greater the level of dissatisfaction between them.

It is worth noting, that several measures of marital satisfaction were found to share a relationship with more than one variable. The measures include sexual dissatisfaction, family history of distress, role orientation, problem solving communication, disagreement about finances and dissatisfaction with children. These variables were found to be affected by duration of marriage, age, level of education and couples working hours. The levels of marital satisfaction were found to decrease, as the variables increased, with the exception of financial disagreement. When the female worked, couples were more satisfied with the way they dealt with financial disagreements. Lastly, the subscales that were effected by EI, either involved some form of intimacy or conflict resolution skill. The intimacy or conflict resolution skill formed the basis by which satisfaction within
that subscale was determined. The relationship between these factors will be discussed further in chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the implications of the results presented in chapter 5. The findings will be discussed in the context of previous research findings with regards to the relationship between EI and marital satisfaction. Thereafter the research implications, as well as the limitations of the study, will be reviewed and suggestions for future research will be made.

6.2 Emotional intelligence

EI appears to play a largely hidden but important role within individual’s life and within relationships. EI helps mediate relationships in ironing out conflicts and creating intimacy, through empathy and affective listening. EI allows partners to express and understand each others emotions as well as those of their own.

6.2.1 Gender and emotional intelligence

The results showed that on average women within this sample had higher EI then men. These findings are congruent with the developmental literature on EI. Men and women experience different socialisation processes in childhood and adolescence. Girls are
exposed to a greater array of emotional language and allowed greater freedom in
expressing their emotions. As a result, women generally arrive in the relationship with a
greater ability to express their emotions and understand their partner’s emotions
(Ciarrochi, 2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that there is a discrepancy in their levels
of EI. What is surprising is that the male EI seem to play a more significant role.
However, results also show that the greater the difference in EI (between husband and
wife) the greater the level of marital dissatisfaction in this study. The findings below
report on areas of marital satisfaction that were affected by EI. The degree of
dissatisfaction was accentuated as the difference between individuals EI score grew
wider. The difference in partner’s EI scores indicates that the respondents did not appear
to choose a partner with a similar EI to them. In this regard, it appeared that men with a
higher level of EI chose a partner with a similar EI to themselves. Men with a lower EI
and women were less discriminating in their choice of partners.

6.2.2 Intimacy and emotional intelligence

When the term intimacy was deconstructed, several components of intimacy became
apparent. These include positive affect, (as measured in the affective-communication
scale), quality of time spent together and shared interests (as measured in the time-spent-
together scale). It also included self-disclosure, empathy and effective listening. These
measures form an integral part of the intimacy construct, as well as qualities of high
emotional intelligence. EI requires an individual to be aware of their own emotions, those
of their partner, and the ability to affectively express them. Results show that intimacy in
an integral part of marital satisfaction and EI shares common qualities with the intimacy construct.

It was found that the men’s EI, rather than the women’s EI, had a greater effect on the components of marital satisfaction. The lower the males EI, the less satisfied females were with affective communication, time spent together and sexual relations. Affective communication was defined as the amount of understanding expressed towards his or her partner (Snyder, 1998). According to Snyder (1998) the affective-communication scale provides the best single measure of emotional intimacy experienced in the relationship. The time-spent-together scale was the strongest indicator of behavioural intimacy. Behavioural intimacy being the time the couple spends together doing leisure activities. This indicates the strength of the couple’s friendship and common interests. These two scales are related to the sexual-dissatisfaction scale, which assesses the couple’s discontent with the frequency and quality of sexual interaction. It appears that dissatisfaction in the affective-communication scale and the time-spent-together scale, leads to a greater level of sexual dissatisfaction. The reason for this is the affective-communication scale measures emotional intimacy and the time-spent-together scale measures behavioural intimacy. Greef and Malherbe (2001), show that sexual satisfaction, among women, relies on the presence of intimacy. However, intimacy is interpreted differently between men and women. Women were found to perceive sexual interaction as an expression of intimate behaviour and required a level of intimacy as a precursor to sexual relations. However, men were found to see sexual relations as a
means of creating intimacy (Greef & Malherbe, 2001). Intimacy appears to be the
catalyst affecting all three scales (affective, sexual and time-together).

It is worth noting that sexual dissatisfaction was significantly associated with age and
duration of marriage. As the male and female got older, and the marriage increased in
duration, so the male got increasing sexually dissatisfied. The collective result of this is
the decline in both men and women’s level of sexual satisfaction, albeit for different
reasons. The decline may be related to physiological changes, such as reduction in
hormones and age related physical functioning. It may also be related to habituation and
increased stress. However, it appears the EI may prevent this decline, by facilitating
intimacy, which was found to enhance female sexual satisfaction.

6.2.3 Conflict resolution and emotional intelligence

Intimacy also plays a role in conflict resolution. Intimacy coupled with conflict resolution
skills, allows for the successful diffusion of conflict between partners (Gottman & Driver,
2004). Conflict was measured in the MSR-I using the problem-solving communication
scale and the financial-disagreement scale. The problem-solving communication scale
assesses the couple’s general ineffectiveness in resolving differences. It measures overt
discord, rather than underlying feelings of estrangement. The results determined that the
greater the level of male EI, the greater the female’s satisfaction with conflict resolution
communication.
Conflict deals with negative emotions which Gottman et al., (1998) deemed to be anger, resentment and belligerence. The branch of EI that determines the resolution of conflict is the ability for each partner to manage or regulate their emotions (Mayer et al., 2004). According to the results in this study, it would be the male who developed the ability to regulate his emotions. With reference to the Gottman et al., (1998) De-Escalation Model, it would relate to the man’s ability to regulate and control his anger, in response to his wife’s negative affect. This may relate to the results showing, the higher the female EI, the lower the level of male aggression. The wife’s high EI, makes her perceptive to the emotional state of her partner. Applying Gottman et al., (1998) De-Escalation Model, the wife may become aware of the husband escalating aggression. This may be through emotional cues, example, tone of voice or facial expression. She may then display behaviour that will de-escalate the levels of aggression before they overwhelm the husband. Alternatively, the male with a high level of EI will be able to keep his anger in check, thinking the situation through before reacting. He is therefore able to prevent his anger escalating, directing it towards the situation at hand rather than his partner.

Finally, conflict resolution is as important as conflict prevention. Cognisance should be given to the small, intimate micro-behaviours that serve to prevent conflict. They also allow for the smooth resolution of conflict when it occurs, preventing it from engulfing the relationship (Gottman & Driver, 2004). Essentially, the men’s low EI score means that they experienced difficulty managing their emotions during conflict situations. They may also be responsible for escalating negative affect during conflict situations. Another factor that promotes increased satisfaction with conflict resolution was level of education.
The more educated both partners were, the greater the females satisfaction with problem solving communication. This is supported by Amato et al. (2003) who found that better educated couples experience a higher level of marital satisfaction. Well educated individuals, compared with poorly educated individuals, were found to earn higher income, possess better communication skills, are less prone to depression and experience a stronger sense of personal control.

The disagreement-about-finances scale assesses the relationship discord involving the management of finances. While the above literature pertains to conflict resolution, there were added results that correlated with the disagreement-about-finances scale. Couples, in which the wife worked, were able to resolve their disagreements about finances easier then couples where the wife did not work.

These findings are consistent with the literature which found egalitarian marriages to enjoy a great amount of satisfaction. Within these marriages there is generally a level of equality in decision making and income (Amato et al, 2003). With both husband and wife working there is a dual income, potentially increasing financial security. Smock (2004) found that a certain level of enhanced financial status is required for couples to get married and remain married.
6.2.4 Family of origin and emotional intelligence

Many of the conflict resolution skills and the ability to regulate emotion was found to develop in the family of origin. Family of origin proved to be a significant determinant in marital satisfaction. It was within the family of origin that conflict resolution skills were learnt, attachment schemas developed and it was shown to play a role in academic attainment. Essentially, much of what occurs in the family of origin recurs in the marital context (Amato & Booth, 2001). The MSI-R tests for this using the family history of distress scale. The family history of distress scale assesses the disruption in relationships within the respondent’s family of origin. The scale was included in the MSI-R on the premise that either unresolved conflict evolving from the family of origin, or an absence of adequate parental models may contribute significantly to distress in the current relationship (Snyder, 1998). The results showed that the higher the male EI, the better he was able to deal with his family history of distress and his wife’s family history of distress. The higher the wife’s EI, the better she was able to deal with her family history of distress. The importance of family of origin appears to be confirmed in the literature. The ability to regulate emotion (a branch of EI) and the ability to resolve conflict may be partially learnt in the family. Failure to learn these skills then decreases the level of EI and ability to resolve conflict. Overall, family history of distress can be seen as an indicator of EI levels within a relationship. It can serve as an explanation for the inability to resolve conflict or form secure attachments within a marriage (Bradbury & Karney, 1995).
Further results show that there is strong correlation between the couple’s age, duration of marriage and ability to deal with family history of distress. Essentially, if the couple are unable to work through the problems relating to family history of distress, the problems may escalate. As the marriage progresses and the couple get older, the problems become progressively more difficult to deal with.

6.3 Application of results

The application of empirical data combined with the literature would describe marriage in the following way. It appears no marriage is free from external stress. However, it is not these external stressors that will determine marital satisfaction. It is the ability for the couple to work through these problems that determines marital satisfaction. In accordance with the results, the level of the male or female’s EI did not effect the global distress scale. Global functioning was presented as a sub-scale in the MSI-R. It appeared to not be directly effected by the other eleven sub-scales. The majority of respondents scored moderately on the sub-scales, therefore it could be said that the average marriage tested was in no severe form of distress. As a result, the global satisfaction sub-scale would not be affected. The evidence does however lend itself, for the profiling of what constitutes an emotionally intelligent man and a satisfactory marriage.

The male with a high EI can express himself. He is affectionate towards his wife and can control his anger. He is able to do this because he can manage his emotions. The management of emotions displays his ability to utilise both emotions and cognitions in
decision making. When angered he does not react immediately. Rather he is able to think through the various consequences to his possible choice of reactions. When anger is expressed, it is in a contained manner. He does not fight for revenge or to hurt his partner, but rather to expresses his anger over the issue at hand. When communicating feelings of anger, he combines language with positive effect to work towards a resolution. In daily interaction with his wife he shows affection. He is able to self-disclose, listens to his wife’s self-disclosure and responds empathetically. He would be able to read her facial expression, notice subtle nuances, and with time, learn to predict and understand much of her emotional expression, language and reactions. By communicating in such way he emotionally validates his wife, creating an environment of mutual warmth and positive affect.

6.4 Recommendations and limitations

Marital satisfaction appears to be a well established construct, while EI is still a relatively new construct. The current study was a cross-sectional analysis of the relationship between martial satisfaction and EI. It may be useful to perform a longitudinal study tracking the relationship between EI and marital satisfaction. This may describe the evolution of EI throughout the duration of the marriage.

The research on culture and EI is relatively limited. There were fleeting descriptions within the literature referring to the cultural implications relating to development and expression of emotions (Matthews, Roberts & Zeidner, 2004). Further, given the many
cultures of South Africa, findings may differ across cultures with regards to EI and marital satisfaction. The sample was relatively small and given the average age of the respondents, it is questionable whether a greater sample size would yield the same results. It may be worth measuring the EI of couples who got divorced, to work as a control group against the EI measure. Due to the potential for subjective bias in a self-report measure, it would be interesting to note the EI scores achieved using a more objective measurement tool. Future studies may chose to use a more diverse sample with regard to social class and lifestyle. Given the significance of finance and education in a marriage, it may be useful to use a sample from wider range of educational and socio-economical circumstances.

Finally, the results of this study may have implications for marital education programs and marital counselling. It appears that both marital satisfaction and EI are malleable constructs. Marriage programs may benefit by including tasks and education that would improve partner’s levels of EI, especially for men.

6.5 Conclusion

The findings of this study in context with past research and, given the limitations, should be considered as explanatory with regards to EI and marital satisfaction. It appears that within a marriage there is an unspoken emotional dialogue present with every interaction between partners. It is present whether the interaction is verbal or non-verbal, significant or fleeting. This study demonstrated that emotional communication plays a significant
role in marital satisfaction. The application of the EI construct to marital satisfaction allows emotions to be viewed in a different way. It says there is some complex processing occurring in what has traditionally appeared to be the simple world of romantics and couples in love. Emotions are a language of their own. Couples may acquire the skills to use and recognise this form of communication, and in doing so, may significantly improve the level of satisfaction within their marriage.
References list


ANNEXURE 1

Please note that it was not possible to include a sample of the MSI-R due to copyright prohibition.

Assessing Emotions

Directions: Each of the following items asks you about your emotions or reactions associated with emotions. After deciding whether a statement is generally true for you, use the 5-point scale to respond to the statement. Please circle the “1” if you strongly disagree that this is like you, the “2” if you somewhat disagree that this is like you, “3” if you neither agree nor disagree that this is like you, the “4” if you somewhat agree that this is like you, and the “5” if you strongly agree that this is like you.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please give the response that best describes you.

1 = strongly disagree
2 = somewhat disagree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
4 = somewhat agree
5 = strongly agree

1. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.     1  2  3  4  5
2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.     1  2  3  4  5
3. I expect that I will do well on most things I try.     1  2  3  4  5
4. Other people find it easy to confide in me.     1  2  3  4  5
5. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.     1  2  3  4  5
6. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.     1  2  3  4  5
7. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.     1  2  3  4  5
8. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.     1  2  3  4  5
9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.     1  2  3  4  5
10. I expect good things to happen.     1  2  3  4  5
11. I like to share my emotions with others.  

12. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last. 

13. I arrange events others enjoy. 

14. I seek out activities that make me happy. 

15. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others. 

16. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others. 

17. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me. 

18. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing. 

19. I know why my emotions change. 

20. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas. 

21. I have control over my emotions. 

22. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them. 

23. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on. 

24. I compliment others when they have done something well. 

25. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send. 

26. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I experienced this event myself. 

27. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas. 

28. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail. 

29. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.
30. I help other people feel better when they are down.  

31. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.  

32. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.  

33. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.
Dear Participant

Thank you for taking the time to fill in the following questionnaires. Before proceeding on to the marital satisfaction questionnaire (in red) and the emotional intelligence questionnaire, please fill in the biographical questionnaire below.

Once again the information received will be treated in the strictest confidence

Please mark the appropriate box below.

1. Ethnicity
   - Black [ ]
   - White [ ]
   - Indian [ ]
   - Coloured [ ]
   - Other __________

2. How many years have you been married?
   ___________ Years

3. How many times have you been married?
   ___________

4. How many children do you have?
   ___________

5. Are you currently employed?