



# Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction: A Review

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## ABSTRACT

Life satisfaction is the ultimate goal of a human being. To achieve this goal, individuals struggle throughout their life. The biggest challenge they face while accomplishing this goal is to deal with their emotions because emotional intelligence has a power to affect interpersonal relationships and organizational performances. Researchers from various disciplines are increasingly interested in investigating the concept of life satisfaction in relation to emotional intelligence because of the insightful results it produces in every area. This study aims to review the various research papers published in accordance with the relationship of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Analysis of various researches shows that there are various factors that affect the life satisfaction but emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in determining life satisfaction.

**keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Life Satisfaction, Human being

## Introduction

Life satisfaction is a subjective and multifaceted concept, influenced by individual values, beliefs, and priorities. It is dependent on one's attitude, resilience, and ability to find joy and meaning in life. Traditionally, life satisfaction has been considered a rational comparison of what people have and what they think they deserve or expect (Campbell et al., 1976). Now, it has been conceptualised as a cognitive, global appraisal that people

make when considering their contentment with their life as a whole or with regard to specific domains such as family, colleagues, society, etc. (Suldo et al., 2008). Various researchers and scholars define life satisfaction in numerous ways, such as Diener (1984) define life satisfaction as an individual's cognitive judgement about comparisons based on the compatibility of their own living conditions with the standards. Similarly Veenhoven (1996), define life satisfaction as the overall satisfaction of an individual towards his or her various aspects of life, or, as they say, an evaluation of a person's quality of life. Also Dahiya et al. (2021), define it as the overall cognitive evaluation of the life quality of an individual based on his or her self-developed unique set of criteria and is regarded as the central indicator of happiness or subjective well-being. Overall, it refers to the general attitude of the individual towards life. It is the cognitive dimension of subjective well-being (Cheng et al., 2022) that is considered an evaluation of the overall life of an individual.

Life satisfaction plays a crucial role in the growth of organisations as it directly impacts employee well-being, productivity, and retention. For an organisation, it is necessary to satisfy their employees because employees spend a huge amount of their time at work and are mentally and physically involved. Research has consistently shown that happy and satisfied employees are not only more productive but also contribute to the overall performance and profitability of the organisation (Sypniewska et al., 2023). There is a need for organisations to ensure a high level of employee satisfaction and commitment (Khan et al., 2016) because satisfied employees can deal with problems and issues in their work lives in a productive and effective manner (Zhao and Ghiselli, 2016). Life satisfaction is associated with greater career satisfaction, increased organisational commitment, and decreased turnover intention (Erdogan et al., 2012). Another benefit of life satisfaction in the workplace is improving employee performance (Rode et al., 2007), which leads to various positive outcomes. Thus, for retaining and developing human capital, it becomes crucial for organisations to promote employee satisfaction.

However, researchers and academicians continue to grapple with how to satisfy an employee because the satisfaction of employees largely depends on numerous factors (Melie et al., 2020). They have explored the

concept in both the personal and professional domains of an individual. Various studies examined life satisfaction with psychological, social, interpersonal, and intrapersonal variables to establish its relevance in the personal lives of individuals (**Melendez et al., 2009; Enkvist et al., 2012; Lyons et al., 2016**). In earlier research, personality variables such as self-esteem, optimism, and positive emotions predicted one's level of life satisfaction (**Diener, 1996; Lucas et al., 2016; Diener et al., 1999**). Culture also played an important role in influencing life satisfaction (**Diener et al., 2000**). Also, multiple studies have explored the concept of life satisfaction in professional domains such as career adaptability, career choice, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy (**Lounsbury et al., 2004; Jaensch et al., 2015**).

Among these factors, emotional intelligence (EI) is considered as a most crucial factor that impacts the life satisfaction of employees because many individuals who experience issues balancing life demands also experience emotional exhaustion caused by psychological and emotional demands made on them (**Boles et al., 1997**). **Goleman (1995)** popularised the concept of emotional intelligence, with the key message being that if a person is able to manage his or her emotions, then he or she is more likely to be successful in life. Emotional intelligence can be defined as "a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions" (**Mayer and Salovey, 1993**). It refers to the ability of an individual to use emotions depending on the time and situation. Overall, EI is a set of abilities that can be trained, whereby people obtain information from their emotions and use it to guide their thinking and actions for optimal adaptation (**Hodzic et al., 2018**). As EI is a trait most desired and preferably inculcated on all levels in any organization. Though most of the research on EI in the field of management is focused on understanding, developing, and inculcating emotional intelligence among top managers and leaders, EI plays a crucial role in managing work stress and evaluating job satisfaction among employees at all levels. So, it is important to study the impact of emotional intelligence on the life satisfaction of employees.

### Literature Review

Emotions play a very crucial role in one's life. It has gained significant attention in the field of management because it is believed that it plays a crucial role in employees' overall well-being and satisfaction in their work lives (**Hac, 2019**). However, its relationship with life satisfaction is very crucial.

Various research studies have shown that employees with high levels of emotional intelligence tend to have a higher level of job satisfaction, engagement, and overall well-being in the workplace (**Di Fabio and Palazzeschi 2012**). **Waite and Gallagher (2001)** state that employees with high EI are in touch with their emotions and can regulate them in a way that promotes well-being and the ability to cope with environmental demands, resulting in a more balanced life and ultimately increasing satisfaction in life. **Palmer et al. (2002)** examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, and to establish a relationship among them, personality constructs have also been assessed to predict life satisfaction. The findings of this study prove that components of the EI construct account for variance in this important human value not accounted for by personality. **Rey et al. (2011)** conducted research on Spanish adolescents to establish a relationship between perceived emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. The results of this study find out that self-esteem has a significant role in linking perceived emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Even **Sanchez-Alvarez et al. (2016)** conducted a meta-analysis to establish a relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective well-being, which results out that people with higher emotional intelligence can manage and understand emotions and tend to be more satisfied with their lives. **Szczesniak and Tuleka (2020)** examine the mediatory role of emotional intelligence on the relationship between family functioning and life satisfaction. Result of this study shows that emotional intelligence partially mediates the relationship between family functioning and life satisfaction. In the same way, **Seinauskiene et al. (2021)** examine the nature of the relationship between emotional intelligence and materialism by considering subjective well-being as a mediator. Subjective well-being has two dimensions, i.e., satisfaction with life and affect balance. The findings indicate that emotional intelligence has a negative effect on materialism but has a positive impact on satisfaction with life and affect balance, which means that emotional intelligence can prevent materialistic inclinations by improving life satisfaction and affect balance. This result is in congruence with the result of a study conducted by **Diener et al. (2003)**, which states that EI and subjective well-being (SWB) may provide insight into the mechanisms by which people use emotional information to engage in a more satisfied and happier life because emotional intelligence is a competency that influences one's ability to recognise, understand, and manage emotions, to relate with others, to adapt to change and solve problems and to effectively cope with challenges and pressures that ultimately lead to life satisfaction (**Bar-on 2007**). Similarly, **Asif et al. (2022)** examined the mediating role of affectivity between the relationship of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among students of medical colleges. After correlation analysis, the results of this study state that both positive and negative affect partially mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction and provide a notion that emotionally intelligent people are likely to have satisfaction in life because emotions have dynamic role in cognitions about quality of life.

Also, EI proves to be a better tool for individual-level analysis in organisations which helps in increasing their life satisfaction (**Bali and Raj, 2019**). Like, **Law et al. (2008)**, focuses on the effect of emotional

intelligence on job performance and life satisfaction among research and development scientists in China. They argue that EI is a significant predictor of job performance and life satisfaction because a person who scores high on EI can manage and regulate their emotions effectively which ultimately help in enhancing performance and create satisfaction in life. Another researcher, **Kaur Mahal (2016)**, explores the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among executives working in service sectors. This study found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction because high emotional intelligence leads to better performance, which will ultimately increase their life satisfaction. Similarly, **Okonkwo et al. (2017)** investigate the life satisfaction of police officers by considering emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors and find out that life satisfaction of police officers has been associated with emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Even **Naseem (2018)** proves that employees with higher emotional intelligence will perceive less stress and enjoy a higher level of happiness and life satisfaction. It is widely acknowledged that people with high levels of emotional intelligence report high levels of life satisfaction (**Lopez-Zafrá et al., 2019**). Also, **Himanshu et al. (2017)** look at the relationship of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Data has been collected from the employees of the IT sector in India. After quantitative analysis, a positive and significant relationship has been emerged between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.

Additionally, **Kaur and Shaw (2020)** assess the relationship of emotional intelligence with life satisfaction among working professionals, such as academicians and corporate. The result concludes that there is a sound relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. It indicates that if academicians and corporations score high on emotional intelligence, it will result in high life satisfaction. In a similar vein, **Barik et al. (2021)** investigate the role of employment status and emotional intelligence in Indian working women's life satisfaction. Results of this study highlight the importance of emotional abilities in influencing perceived stress and well-being. **Sammer and Majeed (2022)** determine the life satisfaction of doctors working in emergency departments by considering emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors of life satisfaction. The outcome indicates that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy have a positive correlation with life satisfaction.

In connection with these studies, **Jain (2023)** intends to compare life satisfaction and emotional intelligence among employees and entrepreneurs. After statistical analysis, the result of this study concludes that there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, but there is no significant difference found between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among employees and entrepreneurs. Whereas **Den et al. (2023)** analyse the effect of trait emotional intelligence, including three dimensions, i.e., appraisal and expression of emotions, utilisation of emotions, and regulation of emotions, has positive and negative affect on the life satisfaction of teachers in rural schools. The result shows that teachers with high emotional intelligence are more likely to have positive emotions, which ultimately increase life satisfaction. Also, **Mushtaq and Siddiqui (2024)** explore the connection between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among public and private sector employees. The result of this study indicates that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction in employees. This study supports that emotional intelligence is critical to life satisfaction because a person with a high emotional intelligence level will perform better at work and be retained with the organisation for the long term.

Besides these, various researchers state that if socio demographic variables are controlled (**Gohm et al., 2005; Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2014**), emotional intelligence and life satisfaction are positively associated (**Urquijo et al., 2016**). For example, **Ozyer et al. (2011)** investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction and prove that higher emotional intelligence is associated with higher life satisfaction. Similarly, **Ardahan (2012)** studies the relationship between life satisfaction and emotional intelligence of outdoor sports participants (OSP) and non-participants of outdoor sports (NPOS) by comparing it with respect to gender, marital status, education level, and age. The outcome of this study reveals that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on life satisfaction. Another study conducted by **Hafiz and Chouhan (2015)** investigates the impact of emotional intelligence on life satisfaction among university employees. Overall, the result highlights that employees with high emotional intelligence have higher life satisfaction, but there is a gender difference exists. According to this study, male employees scores higher on life satisfaction as compared to females.

On the contrary, **Divya and Chanchal (2014)**, examine the influence of emotional intelligence on life satisfaction of employees in a private organization. Findings of this study show no relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. This study states that life satisfaction of an individual is not solely dependent on emotional intelligence, it may depend on the personal values of the individual which may range from family to materialistic possessions. In line with this study, **Alibabaie (2015)** noticed the relationship between quality of life, emotional intelligence, and life satisfaction among the students of Iran and found no correlation between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, but quality of life has a significant correlation with life satisfaction. This study argues that emotional intelligence increases quality of life but does not affect the life satisfaction of students. Another study of **Jacob (2021)** also supports that there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Researchers explore the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-compassion, and life satisfaction among clinical psychologists. The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-compassion and between self-

compassion and life satisfaction, but there is no relationship found between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Even **Jindal et al. (2022)** show negative relationships between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. They analyse the relationship among emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and life satisfaction for adolescents. The results show that emotional intelligence has no correlation with the life satisfaction of adolescents because, according to this study, adolescents may manage their emotions well, but there are many other factors contributing to their life satisfaction, and self-esteem has a direct correlation with life satisfaction. In a similar vein, **Bedi and Thakur (2024)** describe the relationship of employee emotional intelligence to occupational role stress, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction across public and private sector banks in India. No significant relationship has been found between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. **Jain and Yadav (2024)** also find out no significant difference between emotional intelligence, resilience, and life satisfaction among psychology and non-psychology students. The reason behind this is that the mental health of psychology students is not taken seriously, which leads to an increase in the number of disorders and compassion fatigue, and the New Education Policy has introduced a number of workshops and mental health initiatives in colleges that can assist non-psychology students to help them build emotional intelligence, resilience, and life satisfaction.

### Conclusions

The aim of this study is to review the research papers published on the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Across occupation and ages, various researchers considered emotional intelligence as a crucial predictor for enhancing life satisfaction because emotions are inseparable part of human nature. If they are emotionally intelligent, they can face the challenges and find the solution which will leads them towards the enhancement of life satisfaction, however other studies states that emotional intelligence is not solely responsible for increasing satisfaction in life, other factors may also affect the life satisfaction. So, to identify the predictors of life satisfaction, emotional intelligence should be explored with other factors.

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