

Can Life Satisfaction be predicted by Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction and Personality type?

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the role of Emotional Intelligence, Personality and Job Satisfaction in determination of Life Satisfaction. Data was collected using a battery of tests from two hundred middle and senior level managers who completed the MSCEIT test of EI, NEO Personality scale, Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Index of Job Satisfaction. Results indicated that there was no significant correlation between aspects of Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction scores. A significant positive correlation was seen between Life satisfaction and Job Satisfaction ($r= 0.34, p<01$), Extraversion ($r= 0.31, p<01$) as well as Conscientiousness ($r=0.22, p<01$). Neuroticism was found to have significant negative correlation with Life Satisfaction scores ($r= - 0.24, p<01$). Multiple regressions analysis results led to emergence of Job Satisfaction ($Adj R^2 = 0.11$) and Extraversion ($Adj R^2 = 0.17$) as positive predictors of Life Satisfaction.

KEY WORDS: Performance based Emotional Intelligence, Life Satisfaction, Big Five Personality, and Job Satisfaction.

According to Eleanor Roosevelt "Happiness is not a goal...it's a by-product of a life well lived." Positive Psychology has emphasized on the systematic study of what leads to happiness. Happiness as measured in terms of Life Satisfaction has been a subject of extensive research for the past many decades. The popularity of the concept can be attributed to its underpinning to positive living and its association to Subjective Well-being (SWB). SWB is a phenomenon that includes people's emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgment of life satisfaction. Researchers have

typically distinguished between three components of SWB, namely, pleasant affect, unpleasant affect, and Life Satisfaction (Andrews and Whitney, 1976; Diener, 1984). Life Satisfaction represents a global cognitive evaluation or judgment of one's satisfaction with his or her life.

Numerous studies have been conducted to assess the relationship between Life Satisfaction and critical variables such as age (Cummins, 1995), personality dispositions (Diener et al, 2003), goal attainment (Higgins et al, 1997). However most of these studies are conducted taking a sample

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from an individualistic culture and generalizing the results to the collectivistic culture based societies. This can lead to serious misunderstandings of "what makes one happy" and have serious bearing on initiatives designed or advice provided by Mental Health Practitioners as well as Human Resource Teams. An aspect such as EI also has to be understood in the light of cultural milieu. Thus the current study aimed to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and other significant predictors in a collectivistic society. The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- To examine the linkage between Life Satisfaction and Emotional Intelligence using the MSCEIT, a performance-based measure.
- To study the association between Personality variables and Life Satisfaction judgments.
- To explore the association between Job satisfaction and Life satisfaction.

Emotional Intelligence as defined by Mayer et al (2002) as is "the capacity to reason about emotions and of emotions to enhance thinking". A number of studies have found EI to be low to moderately positively correlating with Life Satisfaction (Ciarrochi et al, 2000; Brackett & Mayer, 2003). The role of Culture and Personality has also been the focus of a various studies (Diener et al, 2003, Suh et al, 1998). It can be expected that individuals with higher Emotional Intelligence, who are better at understanding and regulating their emotions, have a better understanding of the environment around them. This leads to a better emotional reaction to events as well as people. Such individuals may be better able to resist any threats to positive self-esteem

and are consequentially better able to enhance and maintain positive well-being.

Most of the EI research and the findings thereof get influenced by the model of EI to which the researchers show an allegiance and the tool that is used for this purpose. Broadly EI can be understood in terms of the Ability Model or the Mixed Model (Mayer and Salovey, 2000). The Mixed models are those conceptual frameworks of EI which expand the concept beyond cognitive abilities and look at it as an assimilation of a number of non-cognitive/ personality traits. Models given by Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997) represent the mixed models of EI. Most of the self-report tools drawing from the mixed models show a significant correlation with personality traits and are therefore criticized as having low predictive ability. In spite of statistical superiority and predictive ability of the performance-based tools drawing from Ability models of EI (Brackett and Salovey, 2006), there is a paucity of Indian studies using this measures. This can be mainly attributed to the consensus based scoring system of the MSCEIT scale, one of the most prominent tools, which has been derived from data based on the western population. The current study aimed at adding to the existing knowledge base by creating local norms for the MSCEIT test, as prescribed by the test authors.

SWB has also been associated with internal variables such as personality traits. Personality theorists have proposed two types of explanations about the Personality and Life Satisfaction linkages; the Temperamental approach, where in traits such as Neuroticism and Extraversion are

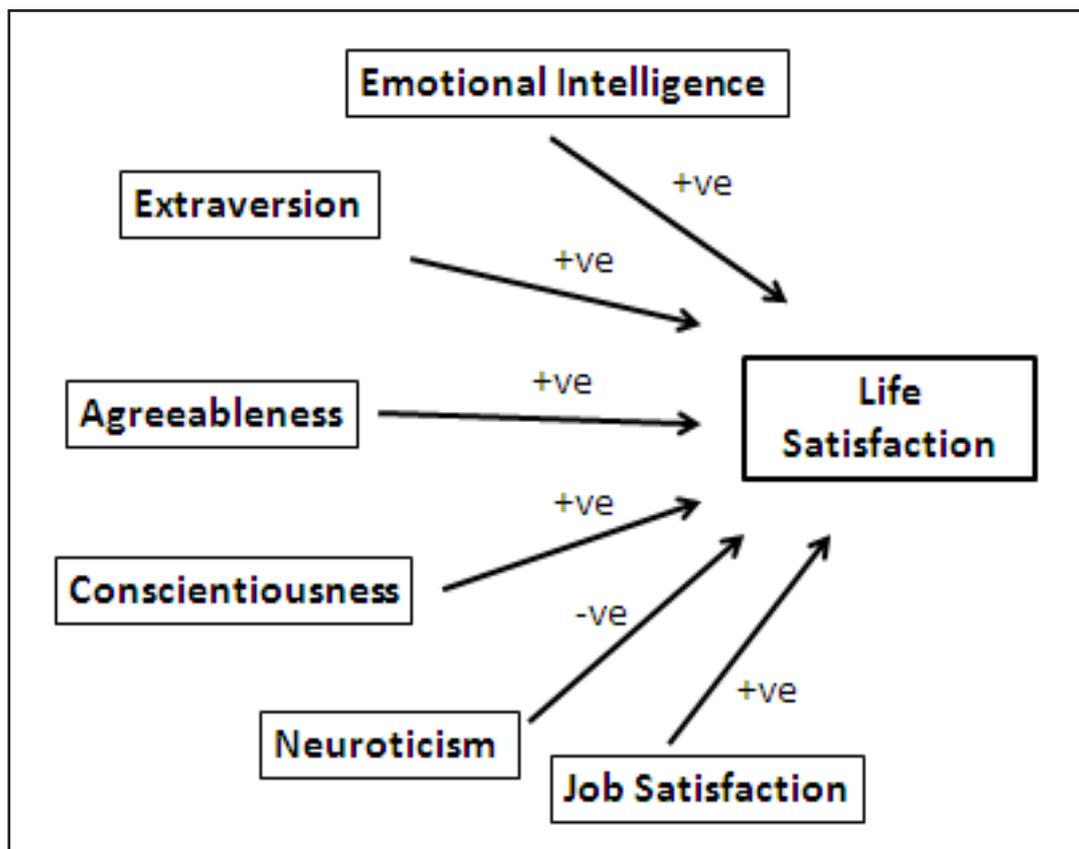
directly known to relate to Life Satisfaction because they represent enduring affective dispositions (Heller et al, 2004). The second approach is the Instrumental approach that focuses on actions and behavioral patterns linking personality to life satisfaction. For example, extroverts tend to socialize more frequently than introverts, which in turn lead to greater positive affect and therefore more positive estimation of life. Thus it has been suggested that extraversion and neuroticism provide the primary links between Personality and Life satisfaction.

Another factor of interest for researchers has been

Job Satisfaction. Job Satisfaction (JS) can be understood in terms of the definition given by Hoppock (1935) as - any combination of psychological and environmental circumstances that cause a person to say truthfully, - I am satisfied with my job. Tait, Padgett and Baldwin (1989) provided the first meta-analytic estimate of the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction showing positive association between the two constructs.

The relationship between Life satisfaction and the various variables, as hypothesized in this study has been presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Relationship between Life Satisfaction, EI, Personality and Job Satisfaction



EI subsuming its positive influence on the ability to handle and regulate emotions in self and others was expected to emerge as a positive predictor of Life satisfaction. Similarly Extraversion and Agreeableness due to their positive impact on Interpersonal relationships were expected to be positively associated to Life Satisfaction. Conscientiousness as understood from a Big Five personality model perspective is related to extensive planning, goal orientation and superior execution. This in turn can create a better sense of control for the individual yielding a positive influence on Life Satisfaction. In today's competitive world work roles hold great value, as it is a major source of positive self esteem and enhanced social status. Thus it can be expected that feeling of job satisfaction will positively contribute to Life Satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS

The hypotheses for the current study can thus be summarized as follows:

1. Emotional Intelligence is positively associated with Life Satisfaction Judgments.
2. Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are positively associated with Life Satisfaction whereas Neuroticism is negatively associated with Life Satisfaction.
3. Job Satisfaction is positively associated with Life Satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

The sample comprised of 200 middle level/senior level executives who were functioning as group

leaders. Participants' ages ranged from 35 to 58 years, with the average age of 46.74 years (SD = 4.14). Out of the 200 executives, 38 (19 %) managers were female managers and 162 (81 %) were males. 53 % of the executives hailed from the private sector, 23 % from the public sector and 24 % from multinationals. 54.5 % of the participants belonged to the manufacturing sector, 23 % belonged to the service sector, 16 % belonged to the Banking and Insurance Sector and 6.5 % belonged to IT and Telecommunications sector. The average years of service put in by the participants were 23 years (S.D = 4.69).

MEASURES

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

EI was measured by the MSCEIT V.2 test (Mayer 2002). The MSCEIT is a 141 item scale which yields a Total score, two area scores and four Branch scores. For the current study the Overall EI score were considered. The MSCEIT has a full scale reliability of .91 with area reliability of .90 (EEIQ) and .85 (SEIQ). Brackett and Mayer (2003) found a test-retest reliability for the full-scale MSCEIT V2.0 of $r = .86$. Branch scores reliabilities range from .74 to .89. The Cronbach's alpha value of the current sample was found to be 0.72.

PERSONALITY

Personality was measured with the Big Five taxonomy using the Costa - McCrae's Big Five Personality Scale (NEO-FFI) (Costa, McCrae, 1992) version was used in this study. The five personality factors that are measured using NEO-FFI scale are Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Agreeableness and

Conscientiousness. The NEO-FFI scales show correlations of .75 to .89 with the NEO-PI validimax factors. The values ranged from 0.68 (A) to 0.86 (N). The scale alpha reliabilities for this sample were .88 (Neuroticism), .81 (Extraversion), .74 (Openness), .77 (Agreeableness) and .87 (Conscientiousness).

JOB SATISFACTION

Overall job satisfaction was measured by Index of Job Satisfaction developed by Brayfield - Rothe (Brayfield and Rothe 1951). This 18 item attitude scale was constructed by a combination of Thurstone and Likert scaling method. Respondents are expected to select one option from a five point rating scale ranging between Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The scale has a high index of reliability and high coefficient of correlation of .87. The Cronbach Alpha value for the current sample was 0.82.

LIFE SATISFACTION

Life Satisfaction was measured by Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener (Diener, 1984). Life Satisfaction is a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his/her chosen criterion. It is a five item scale which measures the cognitive aspect of subjective

well being. It has a reliable coefficient exceeding 0.80 and a two months test-retest reliability of 0.82. The Cronbach's alpha for the current scale 0.86.

PROCEDURE

The measures were administrated to the participants.

Developing Local Scoring for MSCEIT

MSCEIT is scored according to the consensus scoring method. The test authors have devised scoring patterns both by general consensus and expert scoring. In the current study a general consensus method was followed. The procedural steps as recommended in the "Developing Local Norms' sub-section of the "About the Mayer - Salovey - Caruso Emotional Intelligence Tests (MSCEIT's)" section on the web site <http://www.unh.edu/Emotional-Intelligence/index> were adhered to in order to be able to score each participant according to the consensus method.

RESULTS

A Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between Life Satisfaction and the EI, Personality Variables as well as Job Satisfaction.

Table I: Correlation between Life Satisfaction, Emotional Intelligence, Personality variables and Domain Satisfaction (N=200)

	EI	N	E	O	A	C	JS
Life Satisfaction	0.04	-0.24**	0.31**	0.03	0.12	0.22**	0.34**

**Correlation significant at $p < .01$ level (1-tailed), * Correlation significant at $p < .05$ level (1-tailed). Note: EI= Emotional Intelligence, N= Neuroticism, E= Extraversion, O= Openness to Experience, A= Agreeableness, C= Conscientiousness, JS= Job Satisfaction.

Table 1 specifies the association between Life Satisfaction and other variables in question.

Contrary to the expectation, Life Satisfaction showed a non-significant correlation with Emotional Intelligence ($r = 0.04$, ns). Past studies have shown a low positive correlation between EI scores and measures of Life Satisfaction (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; Martinez-Pons, 1997; Mayer et al., 2000). However current study failed to ascertain this relationship. This is an important finding given that most of the studies in the Indian context have reported findings based on self-report measures. The strong overlap between self report measures of EI and Personality measures has left researchers with a doubt of whether the association between EI and Life satisfaction is more a function of personality predispositions or the core EI abilities. The current findings challenge the significance of EI in stable perceptions such as Life Satisfaction. In the collectivistic society, interpersonal goal attainment and harmony are the most valued aspects for a happy life. Instead of focusing on individual feelings, aspirations and needs, collectivistic cultures promote "sacrifice of the small self to accomplish the Great self" (Lu et al, 2001). As a result Life Satisfaction would depend more on the attainment of interpersonal harmony. Thus the first hypothesis that Emotional Intelligence is positively associated with Life Satisfaction Judgments was rejected.

As seen in Table I, Life Satisfaction scores showed a significant positive correlation with Job Satisfaction ($r = 0.34$, $p < .01$), Extraversion ($r = 0.31$, $p < .01$) and Conscientiousness ($r = 0.22$, $p < .01$). It also showed a significant negative correlation with Neuroticism ($r = 0.24$, $p < .01$). No significant correlation was seen with Agreeableness and Openness to Experience dimensions of the Big Five. These results corroborate with earlier studies which have found strong associations between Personality dimensions and Life Satisfaction estimations. Thus hypothesis 2 that Extraversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are positively associated to Life Satisfaction whereas Neuroticism is negatively associated to Life Satisfaction was supported to a large degree.

Life Satisfaction scores showed a significant positive correlation with Job Satisfaction ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$). These results are in line with earlier studies (Tait et al, 1989, Heller et al, 2004). Thus the hypothesis 3 that Job satisfaction is positively associated with Life Satisfaction was accepted. Another question examined in the study was "what predicts Life Satisfaction?"

Table II presents the findings of a multiple regressions analysis conducted

A step-wise multiple regressions analysis was

Table II: Multiple Regressions Analysis predicting Life Satisfaction

Steps	Variables	β	R^2	Adjusted AR^2	F Value
1	Job Satisfaction	0.29	.12	0.11	F (1,197) = 14,50 P<.01
2	Extraversion	0.25	.18	0.17	

**Correlation significant at $p < .01$ level * Correlation significant at $p < .05$ level

applied to identify predictors of Life Satisfaction. The analysis indicated that two predictors explained 18 % of the variance ($R^2=.18$, $F(1,197)=14.50$, $p<.001$). Job Satisfaction significantly predicted Life Satisfaction ($\beta=.29$, $p<.001$) as did Extraversion ($\beta=.25$, $p<.001$). The personality correlates namely Neuroticism and Conscientiousness, although significant correlates, failed to emerge as significant predictors of Life Satisfaction. Thus in the current sample, Life Satisfaction judgments seem to be based on perception of well-being at the work place and the inherent disposition towards positive affect and socialization.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of the current study was to ascertain the role of Emotional Intelligence, Personality and Job Satisfaction in Life Satisfaction judgments. Results indicated no relationship between EI and Life Satisfaction. Job Satisfaction and Extraversion emerged as positive predictors of Life Satisfaction. The lack of correlation between EI and Life Satisfaction in the current sample could at least partly be attributed to the collectivistic cultural representation of the current sample.

Culture has been proposed to have a significant impact on feeling of happiness (Lu and Shih, 1997) and consequently on Subjective Well Being (Chiasson, Dube and Blondin, 1996). One dimension of culture that has been particularly useful in identifying systematic differences in the processes underlying SWB is individualism versus collectivism (Triandis, 1989). This dimension defines the degree to which people view self as an autonomous, self sufficient entity. In an individualistic culture, individuals typically attempt

to differentiate themselves from others. Consequently, feelings and emotions weigh heavily as predictors of Life Satisfaction (Suh, Diener, Oishi and Triandis, 1998). In collectivistic culture however, the central goal of an individual is not to distinguish himself or herself from others but to maintain harmony with them. Ones personal desires often are subordinated to those of the group. Because of the lessened importance of autonomy, feelings, emotions and other thoughts experienced by the individuals are seen as less important determinant of behavior. Consequently, feelings about self and emotions weigh less heavily on satisfaction judgment in collectivistic society. Similar findings have been reported by Thingujam (2011), where in association between Life Satisfaction and EI did not remain significant after controlling for either positive or negative affect or personality. A similar pattern of results was also found between Asian American and White American students in the US (Suh et al., 1998).

Personality has been one of the most consistent predictors of Subjective Well-being (for e.g. Watson and Clark, 1997). Some researchers argue that Extroverts are happier because of greater personality environment fit (Diener, 1984). According to this explanation, because Extroverts are more comfortable and happy in social situations they experience greater satisfaction from social interactions. Heady and Wearing (1989) proposed a - dynamic equilibrium theory in which personality determines baseline levels of emotional responses. Events can move people above or below this baseline but they will in time return to this stable set point. The current study reiterates the earlier finding and

is in line with the Top Down model (David et al, 1997) which emphasizes the role of dispositional factors such as personality on Life Satisfaction judgments. The Agreeableness trait failed to show a significant correlation with Life Satisfaction. An agreeable individual is compassionate, good natured and eager to co-operate and avoids conflict is said to be an agreeable person. If the current findings are understood in the light of collectivism, this a surprising finding as high degree of agreeableness would lead to better interpersonal relationship which in turn can raise the perception of Life Satisfaction. One possibility could be that executives may not reap very positive benefits of being agreeable. McClelland and Boyatziz's (1982) research has shown that a high need for affiliation, a component of A, can be detrimental to the career of managers because it may interfere with their ability to make difficult decisions affecting subordinates and co-workers. Barrick and Mount (1993) found that Agreeableness was the predictor of poor performance in managers afforded high autonomy. Thus agreeableness may in turn lower life satisfaction judgments rather than contribute to it. However these findings call for a systematic probe in associative value of the two constructs.

Job Satisfaction (JS) emerged as the strongest predictor of Life Satisfaction (LS). These findings are not surprising given the centrality of the work role in one's life. Employees today have been working longer hours and spending less time with their families indicating that boundaries between work and life are blurring (Heller et al, 2004). Individuals also derive a sense of purpose and meaning as well as a sense of identity from their work. Hence a strong association between JS and

LS obtained in the current study as well as in a recent quantitative review is hardly surprising. Past research has pointed to the fact that people do make use of domain satisfaction information when making overall satisfaction (Schwarz, Strack and Mai, 1991). This point out more towards the bottom-up approach tries to address how external events, situations and demographic variables influence feeling of well-being.

The results also question the wave of excitement built around the predictive value of EI. While EI can be a positive impact on interpersonal relationships and subsequently on subjective well being, it does not seem to consistently stand up to strong quantitative scrutiny. It also cautions practitioners against the rampant advocating EI as a one stop solution to all positive living. The findings can thus be summarized in figure 2 and 3.

Figure 2: Tested Model

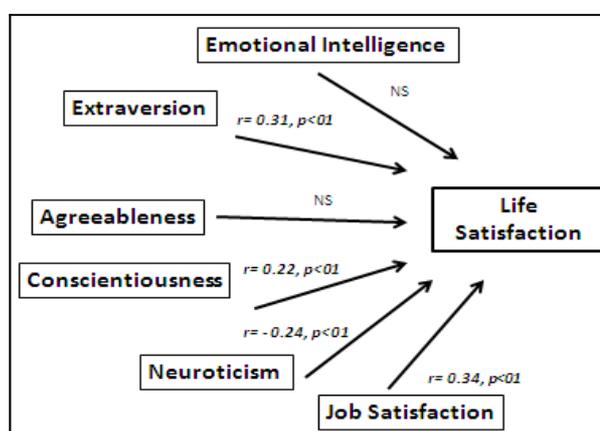
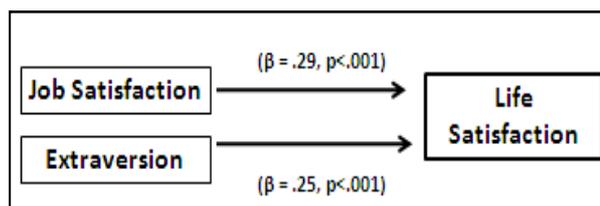


Figure 3: Predictors of Life



The findings of the current study are of significant value for Talent management teams and Human Resource Department since the investment in employee welfare activities not only is likely to have engaged and loyal work force but a happier, healthier work force ensuring higher levels of productivity and efficiency. Having said this other important variables could also be in play during Life Satisfaction judgments and require systematic probe. The study also questions the blind generalization of findings emerging out of studies conducted on the western population especially in case of cultural sensitive constructs such as Emotional Intelligence, Life Satisfaction and domain satisfaction. An in-depth study of culture with respect to important life outcomes is advocated to truly answer the question "what make our people happy?" to promote positive living.

LIMITATION

The current study was conducted with working individuals, primarily senior executives. Thus the generalizability of the findings is limited. While MSCEIT V2 is an extensively researched tool, an Indian adaptation may lead to a better predictive validity of the instrument. Finally, the findings were based on paper pencil tools and can immensely benefit by inclusion of qualitative tools such as observer records, focus group discussions.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize EQ did not correlate with Life Satisfaction (LS) indicating that LS depends on factors other than ability to perceive, regulate, understand and manage emotions in self and others. In keeping with the personological

approach, three out of the five personality traits form the Big Five factors viz. Extraversion, Neuroticism and Conscientiousness showed substantial association with global Life Satisfaction. Job Satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictors of Life Satisfaction followed by Extraversion. Thus it can be concluded that both personality factors as well as domain satisfaction become important contributor to Life Satisfaction.

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QUOTES

We must think and act like a nation of a billion people and not like that of a million people.

Dream, dream, dream!

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

When you speak, speak the truth; perform when you promise; discharge your trust... Withhold your hands from striking, and from taking that which is unlawful and bad...

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of a human being, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful and to remove the wrongs of injured

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam