

## A Gender Study on Emotional Intelligence & Life Satisfaction among College Students

Simran<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

College students experience changes in lifestyle, increased workload, new responsibilities, and interpersonal relationships which further take a toll on students' physical health, emotional wellbeing, and academic success, unless they manage it appropriately. One needs to have a certain level of awareness about self, and goals related to career and life in order to successfully balance everything. Emotional Intelligence helps us achieve self-awareness and ability to balance own emotions and understands the emotions of other's as well. Emotional Intelligence is crucial to success in both professional and personal life. It describes a person's ability to sense and respond appropriately to emotions whereas; satisfaction with one's life implies content with one's life circumstances. The aim of the current research is to study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction among college students. The study was conducted on 100 young adults (50=males; 50=females) of age group 18-25. Standardized measures of Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction were administered on the participants. The results found out positive correlation between Life satisfaction and Emotional Intelligence. To promote life satisfaction among individuals it's necessary that we give required attention to development of emotional intelligence right from the childhood and prepare children for the future.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Life Satisfaction, Self-Control, Emotionality, Well-being, Sociability*

*"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lays our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom". Victor E. Frankl*

**D**rum, Brownson, Denmark & Smith, (2009) conducted a study on over 26,000 undergraduate and graduate students at 70 colleges and universities to provide insight into the full spectrum of suicidal thought, intent, and action among college students. 6% of undergraduates and 4% of graduate students reported having seriously considered suicide in the previous 12 months. The recent studies also clearly indicate that mental health problems are highly prevalent among college students. It is realised that less is known beyond clinical approaches to improve mental health in this population. Emotional Intelligence is being recognized to be a vital element in many educational institutions today.

<sup>1</sup>Graduate, Department of Psychology, MCM DAV College for Women, Punjab University, Chandigarh, India

\*Corresponding Author

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The reasons that make mental health a crucial topic for college students is; peer pressure, academic stress, increased responsibilities, social competition and financial struggle. This makes the role of Emotional intelligence and its related dimensions important. Emotional Intelligence helps the individual understand self and others' emotions, for the benefit of all. One's standing in the society in terms with the nature of their relationship with self, and rest further determines one's life satisfaction. The study is in attempt to look at emotional intelligence of college students and draw a significant relationship with self-control, emotionality, well-being, sociability and, life satisfaction.

According to Holinka (2015) life satisfaction and stress was assessed in college students and it was found that stress is negatively correlated with life satisfaction in college students.

According to Rey, Extremera and Pena (2011) relationship between perceived emotional intelligence, self-esteem and life satisfaction was studied among Spanish adolescents (179 females and 137 males), ranging in age from 14 to 18. The results found out significant role of potential mechanisms such as self-esteem in the link between perceived emotional intelligence and life satisfaction.

### ***Emotional Intelligence***

"Emotional intelligence is the ability to 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." (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). According to Mayer and Salovey's 1997 model, it comprises four abilities: to perceive and appraise emotions accurately; to access and evoke emotions when they facilitate cognition; to comprehend emotional language and make use of emotional information; and to regulate one's own and others' emotions to promote growth and well-being. According to Daniel Goleman (1995) emotional intelligence is a "person's ability to manage his feelings so that those feelings are expressed appropriately and effectively."

Holt (2007) conducted a study to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement in undergraduate students in a community college in southern California. The study established positive significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement and suggested that emotional intelligence not only contributes but also enhances cognitive abilities.

Shah and Thingujam (2008) conducted a study on 197 college students to study coping in relation to emotional intelligence. It was found that appraisal of emotions in the self was positively correlated with plan-full problem solving and positive reappraisal coping styles. Appraisal of emotions in others was positively correlated with plan-full problem solving and positive reappraisal.

### ***Self-Control***

Self-control, an aspect of inhibitory control, is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviour in the face of temptations and impulses (DeLisi, 2014). As an executive function, it is a cognitive process that is necessary for regulating one's behaviour in order to achieve specific goals (Diamond, 2013)

### ***Emotionality***

Emotionality is the observable behavioural and physiological component of emotion. It is a measure of a person's emotional reactivity to a stimulus (Reber and Reber, 2001). Most of

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these responses can be observed by other people, while some emotional responses can only be observed by the person experiencing them (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault, & Benton, 1992)

### ***Sociability***

The APA Dictionary of Psychology (2020), has defined Sociability as “the tendency and accompanying skills to seek out companionship, engage in interpersonal relations, and participate in social activities.” Sociability is a notion used by historians to apprehend different forms of social relationships, in particular interpersonal bonds that are initiated either consciously or unconsciously in a given context (Ninomiya, 2001).

### ***Well-Being***

Well-being is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and ability to manage stress (Davis, 2019). The term "subjective well-being" denotes how people experience and evaluate their lives, usually measured in relation to self-reported well-being obtained through questionnaires (Stone, Arthur, Mackie, Christopher, 2013)

### ***Life Satisfaction***

Anand and Paul (2016) defined life satisfaction (LS) as the way in which people show their emotions, feelings (moods) and how they feel about their directions and options for the future. According to Veenhoven (1996) “Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads”. According to Buetell (2006) life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one’s life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive”

Coutinho, Savia, Woolery & Lisa (2004) studied need for cognition and life satisfaction among college students. The results found out that need for cognition is a predictor of life satisfaction among college students.

Simons, Aysan, Thompson, Hamarat & Steele (2002) investigated the effects of perceived stress and availability of coping resources to predict satisfaction with life among a cohort of college students in Turkey (N=172). Results indicate that both perceived stress and coping resource availability moderately predict level of life satisfaction. It was further found that the combination of coping resource availability and perceived stress is a better predictor of life satisfaction than either variable is when considered separately. Results also indicate significant correlations between life satisfaction with perceived economic well-being, social support, and stress monitoring.

### ***Purpose***

The aim is to study Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction on college going males and females of age group 18-25.

### ***Hypothesis***

There will be a positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Life satisfaction.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample

The study was conducted on 100 young college going students (50=males; 50=females) from age group 18-25, Dehradun, Bikaner.

### Measures

The Standardized tools used for this test are:

- **Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF):** Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) as developed by (Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Petrides & Furnham, 2006) is a 30-item measure used to assess Emotional Intelligence as a trait, that covers four main dimensions of Emotional Intelligence; Self-control, Emotionality, Sociability and Well-being on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.
- **The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS):** The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) as developed by (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgements of one's Life Satisfaction, on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

### Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information to elicit their honest responses without any fear of inhibitions. Each participant was thanked for their support and kind cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to participants.

## RESULTS

Mean, Standard Deviation, Correlation and T-tests were worked out to find out the results.

*Table 1: Shows N, Mean and Standard Deviation of the sample. (N=100)*

	Group	Self-control	emotionality	Well-being	sociability	Rest	Emotional Intelligence	life satisfaction
N	Male	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
	Female	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Mean	Male	26.6	37.4	31.8	26.9	20.7	4.77	20.5
	Female	22.5	36.3	29.3	24.4	17.3	4.32	18.7
Standard deviation	Male	5.50	6.99	5.78	6.27	0.86	0.735	5.65
	Female	6.68	7.35	6.09	4.80	5.03	0.710	6.15

*Table 2: Shows the Correlation between all the three studied variables.*

	Self-control	Emotionality	Well-being	sociability	Rest	Emotional Intelligence	life satisfaction
Self-control	—						
Emotionality	0.306 **	—					
Well-being	0.589 **	0.381 ***	—				
sociability	0.326 **	0.301 **	0.426 **	—			
Rest	0.585 **	0.348 ***	0.710 **	0.473 **	—		

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**Table 2: Shows the Correlation between all the three studied variables.**

	Self-control	Emotionality	Well-being	sociability	Rest	Emotional Intelligence	life satisfaction
Emotional Intelligence	0.755**	0.662***	0.826**	0.664**	0.816**	—	—
life satisfaction	0.390**	0.212*	0.535**	0.290**	0.476**	0.502**	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 3: Shows T-test for the variables**

	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	p
Self-control	Male	50	26.58	5.500	98.0	0.001
	Female	50	22.50	6.680		
Emotionality	Male	50	37.40	6.990	98.0	0.437
	Female	50	36.28	7.351		
Well-being	Male	50	31.76	5.780	98.0	0.038
	Female	50	29.26	6.094		
Sociability	Male	50	26.90	6.274	98.0	0.025
	Female	50	24.36	4.801		
Rest	Male	50	20.74	4.856	98.0	<.001
	Female	50	17.34	5.033		
Emotional Intelligence	Male	50	4.77	0.735	98.0	0.002
	Female	50	4.32	0.710		
life satisfaction	Male	50	20.52	5.651	98.0	0.122
	Female	50	18.68	6.149		

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results found out that there is significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction ( $r = 0.502$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was found that females were higher on self-control ( $p = 0.001$ ) and well-being ( $p = 0.038$ ), but males scored higher on sociability ( $p = 0.025$ ) and emotional intelligence ( $p = 0.002$ ). Hence, the hypothesis that there will be a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction is accepted. However, life satisfaction also found out to be positively and significantly correlated with self-control, emotionality, well-being and sociability.

The trait emotional intelligence influences life satisfaction by two different pathways, with the impact of trait EI on life satisfaction mediated by social support and the impact of trait EI on life satisfaction mediated by self-esteem (Kong, Zhao & You, 2012). The trait emotional intelligence is positively correlated with life satisfaction and resilience played as a partial mediator between trait emotional intelligence and affect balance (Liu, Wang & Lu, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

Emotional Intelligence plays a major role in development of personality and related soft skills. When it comes to academic performance, studies show that emotional intelligence is as important as Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and other cognitive capabilities. Emotionally intelligent students are better equipped to handle the stress and competition that they have to face when they are in college. This ensures that their confidence and self-worth is not affected by the increased competition and failures, instead it acts as a learning experience for them.

The study was conducted on 100 college students (50= females, 50= males) to draw significant gender differences on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. The standardized measures of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction were administered on the participants through google forms. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. It was found that males scored higher on emotional intelligence. But females scored higher in some of the dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely; self-control and well-being. No significant difference on life satisfaction was found in comparison of males and females. The study has significant suggestions, such as the need to implement emotional intelligence training to students so as to better equip them with all the necessary tools required to deal with everyday challenges. To bring a significant increase in our life satisfaction, it is required to practice emotional intelligence in everyday interactions.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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