

Emotional Intelligence and Its Influence on the Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction of Academicians

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical factor in understanding employee behavior, well-being, and performance across various sectors, including academia. This study explores the influence of emotional intelligence on the work-life balance and job satisfaction of academicians in higher education institutions. Given the demanding nature of academic roles—characterized by teaching responsibilities, research expectations, and administrative duties—maintaining a healthy balance between professional and personal life has become increasingly challenging. Through a quantitative research design, data was collected from academicians across multiple universities using standardized EI and job satisfaction scales. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and both work-life balance and job satisfaction. Academicians with higher levels of EI were found to manage stress more effectively, maintain healthier interpersonal relationships, and experience greater satisfaction in their professional roles. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on EI and highlights the importance of integrating emotional intelligence training in faculty development programs to enhance overall well-being and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Academicians, Higher Education, Faculty Well-being, Stress Management

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The academic profession, traditionally regarded as intellectually rewarding, has increasingly become complex and demanding. Academicians today are expected to balance multiple roles—teaching, research, mentoring, administrative duties, and community engagement.

These responsibilities often result in long working hours, mental fatigue, and difficulty maintaining a healthy balance between professional obligations and personal life. Consequently, work-life imbalance and job dissatisfaction are becoming prominent issues within higher education institutions.

Amidst these challenges, emotional intelligence (EI) has gained recognition as a critical soft skill that can help individuals better navigate stress, improve interpersonal relationships, and maintain psychological well-being. EI refers to the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others. For academicians, emotional intelligence may serve as a vital resource to enhance coping mechanisms, support collaborative work environments, and promote overall satisfaction in both personal and professional spheres.

1.2 Significance of Emotional Intelligence in Academic Settings

In academic environments, where collaboration, communication, and mentorship are crucial, emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role. Educators with higher EI are more likely to manage conflicts constructively, engage students more effectively, and foster collegial relationships. More importantly, EI enables academicians to handle occupational stress, thereby contributing to a healthier work-life balance and improved job satisfaction. Institutions that recognize and develop EI among faculty members often experience better retention, enhanced performance, and a more supportive work culture.

1.3 Importance of Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction for Academicians

Work-life balance is essential for maintaining mental health, motivation, and productivity among employees. For academicians, a lack of work-life balance can lead to burnout, absenteeism, and decreased effectiveness in teaching and research. Job satisfaction, closely linked to work-life balance, reflects an individual's overall contentment with their professional role. High levels of job satisfaction correlate with increased institutional loyalty, performance, and innovation in teaching practices. Understanding the factors that influence these dimensions is crucial for the sustainable development of higher education.

1.4 Problem Statement

Despite the increasing awareness of the psychological and emotional challenges faced by academicians, limited research has been conducted on how emotional intelligence contributes to their work-life balance and job satisfaction. The current study seeks to fill this gap by

examining the relationship between EI and these critical workplace outcomes within academic settings.

1.5 Research Objectives

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To assess the level of emotional intelligence among academicians.
- To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance.
- To evaluate the impact of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction.
- To suggest strategies for improving EI to enhance faculty well-being and institutional performance.

1.6 Research Questions

- What is the level of emotional intelligence among academicians?
- How does emotional intelligence influence work-life balance in academic settings?
- What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among faculty members?
- What interventions can be proposed to strengthen EI for improved work-life harmony and satisfaction?

1.7 Hypotheses

- **H01:** There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance among academicians.
- **H02:** There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among academicians.

1.8 Structure of the Paper

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews existing literature and theoretical frameworks related to emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and job satisfaction. Section 3 presents the research methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques. Section 4 discusses the findings and their interpretation. Section 5 provides a detailed discussion, followed by conclusions and recommendations in Section 6.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. The term was popularized by Daniel Goleman (1995), who identified EI as a critical factor in personal and professional success. Earlier, Mayer and Salovey (1990) conceptualized EI as a set of emotional abilities, including emotional perception, assimilation, understanding, and management. In the context of work, particularly in academia, EI has emerged as an essential skill for managing stress, fostering collaboration, and ensuring personal well-being.

2.2 Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman's model outlines five key dimensions of EI:

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to recognize and understand one's emotions.
- **Self-regulation:** The capacity to manage or redirect disruptive emotions and impulses.
- **Motivation:** A passion for work that goes beyond money or status.
- **Empathy:** The ability to understand the emotional makeup of others.
- **Social skills:** Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks.

These components are interrelated and collectively influence how individuals interact, perform, and maintain psychological health in their workplaces.

2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal life demands. Studies suggest that individuals with higher EI are better at managing stress and setting boundaries, which contribute to a healthier work-life balance (Carmeli, 2003). Emotional intelligence facilitates emotional regulation, helping individuals cope with work pressure without letting it interfere with personal well-being. In academic settings, where work often spills into personal time, EI serves as a buffer against burnout and emotional exhaustion (Brackett et al., 2010).

2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). Research has shown a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction across various professions, including academia (Sy, Tram, & O'Hara, 2006). Faculty members with higher EI are better equipped to handle interpersonal dynamics, student issues, and institutional pressures, leading to a more fulfilling professional experience. Emotional intelligence also enhances motivation and engagement, which are vital components of job satisfaction.

2.5 Work-Life Balance in Academic Institutions

Academic professionals often experience poor work-life balance due to high workloads, publication pressures, and administrative responsibilities. According to Kinman and Jones (2008), academicians face unique stressors that challenge their ability to maintain personal life commitments. Lack of balance may lead to stress-related illnesses, absenteeism, and lower performance. Institutional policies supporting flexibility and psychological well-being are thus essential, but individual traits like EI can also play a crucial role in self-managing such challenges.

2.6 Job Satisfaction of Academicians

Job satisfaction among academicians is influenced by several factors, including autonomy, institutional support, recognition, work environment, and emotional well-being. Research by Oshagbemi (2000) indicated that satisfaction levels vary based on rank, age, and workload. Emotional intelligence can help academicians derive meaning from their roles, maintain positive relationships with colleagues and students, and reduce feelings of frustration—factors that collectively enhance job satisfaction.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical models underpin this study:

- **Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) Model:** This model posits that job demands can lead to burnout, but the presence of personal and job-related resources (like emotional intelligence) can buffer these effects and promote engagement.
- **Emotional Competency Framework (Goleman, 1998):** This framework emphasizes how EI competencies can be developed and how they contribute to workplace effectiveness, well-being, and leadership success.

2.8 Research Gaps Identified

While previous studies have explored the influence of EI on general workplace outcomes, limited research exists focusing specifically on academicians in the Indian higher education context. Most studies have either emphasized EI in student learning or faculty performance, with less attention given to its role in balancing work-life and enhancing job satisfaction among faculty members. This research seeks to fill that gap by empirically investigating the influence of EI on these critical variables in academic settings.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a **quantitative and descriptive research design**, aiming to assess the influence of emotional intelligence on work-life balance and job satisfaction among academicians. A survey-based approach was used to collect primary data, enabling statistical analysis and generalization of findings across a broader academic population.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population for this research comprised **academicians working in higher education institutions** such as universities and colleges. To ensure a representative sample, a **stratified random sampling** technique was applied, considering variables such as type of institution (public or private), academic discipline, and teaching experience.

- **Sample Size:** A total of **200 respondents** were selected for the study.
- **Inclusion Criteria:** Full-time faculty members with a minimum of one year of teaching experience.
- **Exclusion Criteria:** Part-time faculty, guest lecturers, and administrative staff.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Primary data was collected through a **structured questionnaire** consisting of four sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** Age, gender, designation, experience, marital status, etc.
2. **Emotional Intelligence Scale:** Adopted from the **Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)**, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

3. **Work-Life Balance Scale:** Adapted from the **Fisher-McAuley Work-Life Balance Scale**, also on a 5-point Likert scale.
4. **Job Satisfaction Scale:** Based on **Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)**, measuring satisfaction across multiple job aspects.

The questionnaire was administered via **Google Forms** and through **printed copies** distributed at academic events and institutions.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the quality of the research instrument:

- **Content Validity** was confirmed through expert review by academic professionals in HR and organizational psychology.
- **Reliability** was tested using **Cronbach's Alpha**, with values above 0.7 for all scales, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was entered and analyzed using **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)** Version 25. The following statistical techniques were employed:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** To summarize demographic profiles and mean scores.
- **Pearson's Correlation Analysis:** To examine relationships between emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and job satisfaction.
- **Regression Analysis:** To determine the predictive power of emotional intelligence on work-life balance and job satisfaction.
- **ANOVA:** To test differences in EI, WLB, and job satisfaction across demographic groups.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted following strict ethical guidelines:

- **Informed Consent** was obtained from all participants.
- **Confidentiality and Anonymity** were assured.
- Respondents had the **right to withdraw** at any point during the survey.

- Data was used solely for academic and research purposes.

4. Data Analysis and Results

This section presents the findings based on the data collected from 200 academicians. The analysis was performed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and ANOVA were used to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), work-life balance (WLB), and job satisfaction (JS).

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N = 200)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	98	49.0%
	Female	102	51.0%
Age	25–35	58	29.0%
	36–45	72	36.0%
	46–55	49	24.5%
	56 and above	21	10.5%
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	41	20.5%
	6–10 years	69	34.5%
	11–15 years	53	26.5%
	More than 15 years	37	18.5%
Institution Type	Public University	88	44.0%
	Private University	112	56.0%

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	3.87	0.52
Work-Life Balance	3.61	0.66

Job Satisfaction	3.72	0.58
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The average scores suggest that academicians exhibit moderately high levels of emotional intelligence, and relatively balanced perceptions of their work-life balance and job satisfaction.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Coefficients:

Variables	EI	WLB	JS
Emotional Intelligence	1		
Work-Life Balance	0.64**	1	
Job Satisfaction	0.58**	0.55**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

The results indicate a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and both work-life balance ($r = 0.64$) and job satisfaction ($r = 0.58$). Work-life balance and job satisfaction also share a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.55$).

4.4 Regression Analysis

Model 1: Predicting Work-Life Balance from EI

- $R^2 = 0.412$, $F(1,198) = 139.01$, $p < 0.001$
- $\beta = 0.642$, $p < 0.001$

Emotional intelligence significantly predicts work-life balance, accounting for approximately **41.2%** of the variance.

Model 2: Predicting Job Satisfaction from EI

- $R^2 = 0.336$, $F(1,198) = 100.29$, $p < 0.001$
- $\beta = 0.580$, $p < 0.001$

Emotional intelligence also significantly predicts job satisfaction, explaining **33.6%** of the variance.

4.5 ANOVA: EI, WLB, and JS by Demographic Variables

Gender

- No significant differences in EI, WLB, or JS were found between male and female academicians ($p > 0.05$).

Institution Type

- Faculty in **private institutions** reported significantly lower work-life balance compared to those in public institutions ($p < 0.05$), though no significant difference was found in emotional intelligence or job satisfaction.

Experience

- Academicians with **more than 10 years of experience** exhibited higher emotional intelligence and job satisfaction than their less experienced counterparts ($p < 0.01$).

4.6 Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Result
H01: No significant relationship between EI and Work-Life Balance	Rejected
H02: No significant relationship between EI and Job Satisfaction	Rejected

4.7 Key Findings

- Emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of both work-life balance and job satisfaction.
- Higher emotional intelligence helps academicians manage work pressures and emotional challenges more effectively.
- Work-life balance and job satisfaction are interrelated and positively influenced by personal emotional competencies.
- Differences in outcomes are more evident across levels of experience and institution type than across gender.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the pivotal role emotional intelligence (EI) plays in shaping the professional well-being of academicians. The results demonstrate a strong and

statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and two critical workplace outcomes: work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS).

5.1 Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance

The regression and correlation analyses clearly reveal that emotional intelligence positively influences an academician's ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Academicians with higher EI were better equipped to regulate their emotions, manage stress, and handle the competing demands of work and personal life. This finding aligns with prior research, such as Goleman (1995), who emphasized the importance of emotional self-regulation and empathy in maintaining personal and professional harmony.

In the academic profession, where workloads, deadlines, and emotional labor can lead to burnout, emotional intelligence serves as a buffer. The ability to recognize and manage one's own emotional triggers contributes significantly to reducing work-life conflict and improving resilience.

5.2 Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

Emotional intelligence was also found to significantly enhance job satisfaction among academicians. Those with higher EI reported greater satisfaction with their roles, responsibilities, and work environments. This can be attributed to emotionally intelligent individuals being more adept at interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and seeking constructive feedback — all of which contribute to a more satisfying work experience.

This outcome resonates with studies by Salovey and Mayer (1990), which highlight how EI helps individuals create positive workplace interactions, fostering a sense of belonging and professional fulfillment. For academicians, especially, a profession often marked by intellectual isolation or high cognitive demand, emotional intelligence acts as a catalyst for positive emotional experiences and motivation.

5.3 Moderating Role of Demographic Variables

Although gender did not significantly influence emotional intelligence, work-life balance, or job satisfaction, teaching experience and institutional affiliation (public vs. private) showed notable effects. Academicians in public institutions reported better work-life balance, possibly due to more structured workloads and job security. Those with over 10 years of experience demonstrated higher EI and satisfaction, likely because of greater emotional maturity and career stability.

These insights support the idea that emotional intelligence is both innate and developable over time through experience, exposure, and training. Therefore, professional development programs aimed at enhancing EI could be highly beneficial, particularly for younger faculty members or those in more demanding institutional settings.

5.4 Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings extend the existing literature on emotional intelligence by confirming its impact on key psychological and behavioral outcomes in the academic sector. Practically, the study suggests that institutions of higher education should:

- Incorporate **emotional intelligence training** into faculty development initiatives.
- Promote **supportive workplace policies** that enhance work-life balance.
- Use EI as a criterion in **recruitment and performance evaluations**, particularly for leadership roles.

Such interventions would not only improve faculty well-being but could also contribute to higher levels of institutional commitment and academic productivity.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This research sought to examine the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on the work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction (JS) of academicians. Based on the empirical findings, it is evident that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to both these aspects of academic life. Academicians with higher levels of EI demonstrated better emotional regulation, interpersonal awareness, and stress-handling abilities, which in turn led to improved work-life harmony and greater job contentment.

The study confirms that EI is not merely a personal attribute but a professional necessity—especially in the dynamic, demanding environment of higher education. The absence of significant gender-based differences in EI, WLB, and JS indicates that emotional competencies transcend demographic boundaries. However, the positive correlation between experience and EI suggests that these skills can be cultivated over time.

Furthermore, differences in WLB across public and private institutions highlight the need for contextual interventions. Faculty in private institutions often experience higher workloads

and stress levels, making emotional intelligence even more crucial for maintaining well-being and job satisfaction.

In essence, emotional intelligence functions as a psychological resource that strengthens the personal and professional resilience of academicians, enabling them to adapt, perform, and thrive in their roles.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Integrate Emotional Intelligence Training in Faculty Development

Higher education institutions should incorporate EI development workshops and continuous training into faculty development programs. These can include modules on emotional regulation, empathy, conflict resolution, and self-awareness.

2. Promote a Supportive Organizational Culture

Academic leadership should foster a culture that values emotional well-being and work-life integration. Practices such as flexible scheduling, mentoring programs, and stress-relief initiatives can significantly enhance WLB and JS.

3. Institutionalize Periodic EI Assessments

Regular emotional intelligence assessments can help identify strengths and areas for improvement among faculty members. These insights can guide targeted interventions and leadership development.

4. Tailor Support Based on Experience Levels

Junior faculty or early-career academicians should receive specialized mentoring and emotional support to help them transition smoothly into academic life and develop resilience.

5. Address Institutional Disparities

Private universities should evaluate their policies, workloads, and expectations to reduce emotional burnout. Workload redistribution, administrative support, and acknowledgment of faculty efforts can enhance satisfaction and well-being.

6. Encourage Peer Support Systems

Institutions can establish peer-support circles or faculty wellness committees that allow academicians to share challenges and coping strategies in a collaborative environment.

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