

# Predictive Power of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction: A Study Amongst Nurses

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## Abstract

*Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage emotions to promote growth. It has been gaining prominence in the literature. Job satisfaction indicates the general attitude towards the work and is influenced by the perception one has about his/her job. The present study attempts to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among nurses working in Kerala. Data are collected from 169 nurses working in various hospitals in Kerala. Emotional intelligence is measured by the scale developed by Wong and Law (2002) and job satisfaction is assessed by using Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (1967). Results reveal a significant positive relationship between the two variables. The study while assessing the influence of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction finds that emotional intelligence is exerting a significant impact on job satisfaction. Results also find that the level of emotional intelligence of nurses is slightly higher, but job satisfaction of these nurses is only moderate. The study establishes a significant difference in emotional intelligence with respect to gender. In the case of job satisfaction, the study observes a significant difference with respect to type of hospitals. No significant difference in job satisfaction is found with respect to other demographic variables.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence; Job satisfaction; Emotion; Job performance, Attrition

## Introduction

The concept of Emotional intelligence has received immense attention from scholars across different fields in recent decades. This is evidenced from a number of studies reported across different industries by researchers from different disciplines including social sciences, natural and health sciences. Reuven Bar-On (1996) defined emotional intelligence as “an array of non-cognitive (emotional and social) capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one’s ability to deal with environmental demands and pressures.” Emotional intelligence is ranked by World Economic Forum as the sixth preferred skill set by the organizations across the world. Akhter et al. (2017) considers EI as a psychological factor which can influence ability and performance of employees. Job satisfaction is

the pleasurable state that the worker attains from his job and job experience (Tantiverdi, 2008). Robbins (2000) explains the concept of job satisfaction as the overall feeling towards or attitude about the job that one performs.

Indian health care industry is witnessing a sea change in the present environment. With growing number of hospitals entering into the industry, increase in the number of qualified doctors, nurses and other employees, more demanding patients, increase in the medical expenditure and the volatility of the environment are posing great challenges to the hospitals. Many issues like high level of attrition, job dissatisfaction and stress & burnout of nurses are reported by different researchers. Job satisfaction is influenced by different factors as reported in the literature. In the present study an attempt is made to find whether emotional intelligence is having any predictive power on job satisfaction among nurses in Indian context.

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## Literature Review

The review of literature has been done in two sections e.g. Emotional Intelligence(EI) and Job Satisfaction (JS).

### Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional intelligence occupies a pivotal role in the work environment. Mayer and Salovey (1995) define emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive emotions, integrate emotions to facilitate thoughts, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth.” Considerable attention is placed on EI after the revelation that emotions of employees are also an integral part of work place. Research studies conducted by Kelly and Barsade (2001), Caruso et al. (2002), Salovey and Pizarro (2003), Rubin et al. (2005), Cote and Miners (2006) prescribe self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social management as the important dimensions of EI. In the same vein, Goleman et al. (2002) also identify self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management as the important constituents of EI. Other components of EI are also found in the extant literature. Prominent among them are the components prescribed by Bar-On (1997) and Reus and Liu (2004). In his model of EI, Bar-On (1997) suggests intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management general mood as the major elements of EI. Reus and Liu (2004) propose emotional recognition and emotional regulation as the major EI components. A careful look at the different studies conducted in EI area reveals that there are two models of EI: the ability model and the mixed model. Ability model views EI in terms of abilities much like intelligence. This model is propounded by Salovey and Mayer (1990), Huy (1999) and Mayer et al. (2000). On the other hand, mixed model considers EI as a range of non-cognitive factors such as personality and motivation. This is evidenced from

the works of Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (1997). Among these two different models, ability model is more prevalent among the scholars as opined by Mathews et al. (2004)

### Job Satisfaction (JS)

The second variable in the study is job satisfaction. It has been extensively researched. Different definitions, approaches and models have been prescribed by many scholars. According to Lock (1976) and Berry (1997) JS is “a pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from the assessment of one’s work or work experiences”. O’Reilly (1991) defines JS as the workers’ feeling about his/her job. It indicates the general attitude towards the work and is influenced by the perception one has about his/her job. Literature points out two dimensions of JS such as internal and external satisfaction. Development of a skill, feeling of pleasure and morality motivates a person to perform a particular task. This gives internal satisfaction to the person. In addition to the internal factors, external factors such as money, promotion and other rewards also motivate a person to perform and provide satisfaction. JS is subjective and individualized. Gomes (2002) opines that JS is the rational conclusion of the comparison of a person’s expectation and reality. In the same vein Weiss (2002) and Rivai (2009) also comment that JS is an evaluation by an individual which describes his feelings of happiness/unhappiness at work. JS is an important variable because it affects the performance of employees in the organization.

### Relationship between Emotional intelligence and Job satisfaction

Extant literature highlights a number of studies linking EI and JS. Gholipour Soleimani and Einolahzadeh (2017) find a positive relationship between EI and JS in their a study on Iran. They find that EI improves staff attitude towards decreasing turnover and increasing job satisfaction.

Relationship between these two variables is established by Tagoe and Quarshie (2016) in their study among nurses working in Ghana. They find a positive correlation between EI and JS. Liu (2016) in his study about the Chinese employees observes a significant relationship between the two variables. He also finds that social support partially mediates the effect of EI on JS. Mahal (2016) has conducted a study among the managers in service sector in North India and has found a very strong linear relationship between the two variables. Das & Ali (2014) also mention significant relationship between EI and JS in their study conducted among employees of banking industry. They observe moderate influence of EI on JS. Trivellas et al. (2013) study EI and JS of nurses and affirm the relationship between the two variables. According to them, EI not only impacts JS but also predicts turnover intention of nurses. Psilopanagioti et al. (2012) in their study among physicians in Greece establish a positive relationship between EI and JS. They find that physicians having high EI are also having high JS. Cekmecelioglu et al. (2012) analyse the relationship between EI and JS and find a positive correlation between the two variables. They have conducted their study among the call centre employees working in Istanbul. According to them, employees having high emotional recognition are more likely to have high JS. Other earlier findings affirming the relationship between the two variables can be evidenced from the studies conducted by Thomas and Tram (2006), Stough (2003), Carmeli (2003) and Abraham (2000).

Literature also contains studies which establish no significant relationship between EI and JS. Prominent among these studies is the work of Millet (2007). He finds no significant relationship between the two variables in his study among police officers. Similarly, Hosseinian et al. (2008) also find no significant relationship between the variables during his study conducted in Iran. Other studies

which are in resonance with this findings are the works of Hendee (2002), Villard (2004) and Casper (2007). All these studies reaffirmed that there is no significant relationship between EI and JS.

As existing research studies are not conclusive and only few studies are conducted in the Indian context to assess the relationship between the variables, there is compelling reason for the present study to carry out research in this field. The important objectives set out for the study are:

- To study the level of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among nurses working in hospitals in Kerala
- To find out the relationship impact of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction among nurses in Kerala
- To find out the difference of opinions on emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among the respondents with respect to demographic variables like type of organization, gender, age group and experience

## Methodology

The present research has been undertaken to study the impact of EI on JS among nurses working in Kerala. Nurses working in both government and private hospitals in Kerala have participated in the study as respondents. A two stage sampling technique is adopted for the collection of data. Simple random sampling is used to select the hospitals from each of the regions that serve the population setting. 16 hospitals (8 from government sector and 8 from private sector) from the south, central and northern region of Kerala are selected for the study. 169 nurses working in these 16 hospitals constitute random sampling for administering the questionnaire. The questionnaire has two sections-measuring emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. In addition, the questionnaire also has a section on demographic information of the respondents.

Data are collected from 169 respondents selected by using simple random sampling method. Of these 54 are male and 115 are female nurses participated as respondents. Among them 64 are married and 105 were unmarried. 28.4% of respondents belong to the age group 20-30, 29 % belongs to 31-40, 27.8 % belongs to 41-50 age group and the remaining 14.8 % were above 50 years. With respect to the experience of the respondents, 45 % have work experience of 0-10 years, 36.1 % have 11-20 years and 18.9% have more than 20 years of work experience. With regard to the type of hospitals, 64.5% of respondents are from private hospitals and remaining 35.5% were from the government hospitals in Kerala. Among the 169 respondents, 37.9% were from southern region of Kerala state, 31.4% were from northern region and the remaining 30.8% were from the central Kerala.

### Measures

Two structured questionnaires were used for the study. The sections of the questionnaire are detailed below:

**Emotional Intelligence:** In the present study, EI is measured by using the scale developed by Wong and Law (2002). This instrument which has sixteen statements to measure the EI is popular and is widely used in empirical research. Some of the statements in the questionnaire were “I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time.”, “I always know my friends emotions from their behaviour” and “I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally.” The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with each item by assigning a value of 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). Higher the score, higher is the level of emotional intelligence.

**Job satisfaction:** Turnover intension was assessed by using Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

(1967). The questionnaire consists of 20 items on a 5 point scale. The typical statements from the scale include “The way my job provides for steady employment”, “The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities” and “The freedom to use my own judgement”. The scale was anchored by 1 (very dissatisfied) and 5 (very satisfied). A higher score in the scale is the representation of more satisfaction in the job.

### Reliability of the Tool

A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaires. A sample of 50 respondents were selected for the pilot study. Both the questionnaires’ Cronbach’s alpha value were found to be greater than 0.7 (emotional intelligence: 0.874, job satisfaction: 0.890). Thus reliability of the tool was tested and found to be good.

### Results and Discussion

The frequency distribution (mean and standard deviation) pertaining to the two variables are presented in Table 1 (in Appendix).

From table 1, majority of the nurses agree that they can understand and manage their emotions in a better manner. On the other hand, results of JS reveal that it is moderate among nurses working in hospitals in Kerala. This may be one of the reasons for the high attrition rate among the nurses working in Kerala.

Correlation analysis was done to find out the relation between the two variables. The results are presented in Table 2 (in Appendix).

In table 2, correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction (0.418 and is significant at 0.01 level There is a positive correlation between the two variables which indicate if employees working in the organization are emotionally intelligent, then they will be satisfied too. This result is corroborated by number of earlier findings. Earlier studies by

Zito et al. (2018), Lim (2016), Sang Long et al. (2016), Hamid Taboli (2013), Supriyanto and Troena (2012), Hasankhoyi (2006), Thomas and Linda (2006) and Busso (2003) also established a significant relationship between EI and JS. Emotionally intelligent nurses experience positive feelings about the job and work environment which in turn affects their performance.

The study also assessed the impact of EI on JS among nurses working in hospitals. Since the study involved only one independent variable (emotional intelligence), a simple linear regression analysis is done. The results are presented in Table 3 (in Appendix).

Table 3 summarizes the impact of EI on JS. An unstandardised regression equation is estimated and F value is found to be  $(F(1,167) = 35.362, p < 0.001)$ , with an  $R^2$  of .175. That is 17.5 % of JS variance can be predicted by EI. The regression analysis reveals positive regression between EI and JS.

Standardised regression of EI is found to be statistically significant in predicting JS ( $\beta = 0.418, sig < 0.05$ ). Moreover, as a result of regression analysis, it is possible to predict the JS by the equation as follows:

Job satisfaction =  $1.973 + 0.312$  (Emotional intelligence)

Thus for each one unit increase of EI, JS increases by 0.312.

This result is in resonance with some of the earlier studies reported in the literature. The study conducted by Downey (2005) and Ashkanasy (1997) reveal that EI can predict 18 and 26 percent of job satisfaction variance. A higher variance is established by Thiebaut (2005) in which 42 percent of variance in JS was explained by EI. Other previous studies which support the results of the present study include the works of Rahman and

Haleem (2018), Ghoreishi et al. (2014), Mousavi et al. (2012) and Anari (2012). Absence or low EI can negatively affect a person's job satisfaction. Organizations can also help nurses to improve their EI by providing training programs and counselling. This will help nurses to manage their emotions and the benefits will be reflected in the form of enhanced job satisfaction and performance.

An attempt is also made to investigate the relationship of various demographics on the variables selected for study. Table 4 (in Appendix) presents the t-value of the respondents based on gender and type of organizations

The study thus establishes that there is a significant difference in EI between male and female nurses. This supports the earlier findings of Agarwal and Satsangi (2018) and Anari (2012). They also established a significant difference in EI between male and female students in their study. This may be because of the difference in socialization process and training programs in the hospitals as some hospitals have a tendency to show gender based bias in providing these programs to their nurses. No significant difference in JS was observed between male and female nurses working in Kerala. This result supports the earlier studies conducted by Tagoe and Quarshie (2016), Emdady and Bagheri (2013) and Keshani (2004). With respect to the EI of nurses working in the government and private hospitals in Kerala, there was no significant difference between these two different categories. A significant difference is observed in JS with respect to nurses working in the government and private hospitals in Kerala. This finding is in line with the finding of Pillay (2009). His study found a significant difference in JS between the private and the public sector nurses. According to him nurses belonging to the private sector were more satisfied than the public sector nurses. However in the present study the government sector nurses are

more satisfied than those in the private sector.

The study also analysed whether there is any significant difference of opinion on EI and JS among the respondents belonging to different age group and possessing different years of work experience. The results are presented in Table 5 and 6 (in Appendix).

Tables 5 and 6 show that there are no significant difference among the nurses belonging to different age group and having different years of experience with respect to EI and JS ( $\text{sig} > 0.05$ ). These support the earlier study conducted by Casper (2007) in which no significant differences are observed in EI with respect to demographic variables such as age and experience. Literature also contains studies which contrast the findings of the present study. Prominent among such earlier works were the study conducted by Ghoreishi et al. (2014) among the nurses working in South Africa. With respect to job satisfaction, the present findings support the earlier works of Hodson (1989) and Schiestel (2007).

### **Managerial Implications**

Providing better patient satisfaction is one of the challenges of the hospitals. This challenge is even more complex if there is high attrition rate among the nurses. Nurses are instrumental in providing patient delight. Job dissatisfaction among the nurses affects patient care. Nurses having high EI can experience positive feelings and evaluations in their jobs and hospitals. Hospitals at the time of selection of nurses should measure the emotional quotient (EQ) of nurses and only those with high EQ should be hired. Apart from this, hospitals can provide training programmes and counselling sessions for the nurses to improve their EI. Salovey et al. (2011) opined that emotional intelligence not only helps individuals to use their emotions to solve problems but also stimulates creativity in the process. EI not only assists in managing stressful

situations but also essential for perceptive thinking and intuitive emotional response. Different research studies (Wong and Law, 2002; Sy et al., 2006; George, 2000; Law et al., 2004; Cote and Miners, 2006; Goleman and Cherniss, 2001; Lam and Kirby, 2002) established that employees with high EI can create a conducive working environment and thereby influence at the same time, job performance and productivity. Organizations shall take necessary steps to assess and improve EI as it has multifaceted benefits.

### **Conclusion**

The present study highlights the role of emotional intelligence in determining the job satisfaction. Even though the concept job satisfaction has been very traditional, it is still one of the major challenges of organizations. This challenge is more in healthcare industry where there is more direct interface with the public. It is imperative on the part of the hospitals to provide more satisfactory job experience to the nurses. Among the things which these hospitals can do is to promote training and counselling to manage emotions as these are very important for nurses to become more emotionally intelligent. It will result in better management of emotions which will culminate in positive valuation of job experience and environment. This will ultimately result in better job performance, patient satisfaction and delight.

### **Limitations and future research directions**

Despite the significant contribution of the present study to the growing body of EI and JS literature, there are certain limitations. This research selected only 16 hospitals and 169 nurses for the study. Nevertheless, the sample may not be 100% representation of the total population. Future researchers can conduct the same study using a large sample in other industries in India such as Information technology, Telecom and Banking

to reaffirm the relationship as few studies were conducted in Indian context. Future research studies can also include other variables like job performance, personality factors in the study to develop a conceptual model supporting the relationship between EI and JS.

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## Appendix

**Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of the variables**

	Emotional Intelligence	Job satisfaction
Mean	5.4149	3.6633
Standard deviation	0.56565	0.42245

Source: Author's analysis

**Table 2: Correlation between the variables studied**

	Emotional Intelligence	Job satisfaction
Emotional Intelligence	1	0.418**
Job Satisfaction	0.418**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. Source: Author's analysis

**Table 3: Linear Regression analysis between EI and JS**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standard error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	Sig	R <sup>2</sup> value	F value	Df
Constant	1.973	0.286		6.902	.000	0.175	35.362	1
Emotional Intelligence	0.312	0.053	0.418	5.957	.000			

Dependent variable: job satisfaction, Source: Author's analysis

**Table 4: Data and t-value of respondents based on gender and type of organization**

	<b>Gender &amp; Type of organization</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>t value</b>
Emotional Intelligence	Male	54	5.2326	0.51858	-2.935*
	Female	115	5.5005	0.56865	
Job satisfaction	Male	54	3.6796	0.29098	0.343**
	Female	115	3.6557	0.47271	
Emotional Intelligence	Government	60	5.4865	0.66305	1.221**
	Private	109	5.3756	0.50314	
Job satisfaction	Government	60	3.7525	0.37916	2.056*
	Private	109	3.6142	0.43844	

\*significant, \*\* not significant, Source: author's analysis

**Table 5: Anova-Emotional Intelligence, Job satisfaction and Age group**

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	.570	3	.190	.590	.622**
	Within Groups	53.183	165	.322		
	Total	53.754	168			
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	1.360	3	.453	2.613	.053**
	Within Groups	28.623	165	.173		
	Total	29.983	168			

\*\*Not significant, Source: Author's analysis

**Table 6: Anova-Emotional Intelligence, Job satisfaction and Experience**

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	.003	2	.002	.005	.995**
	Within Groups	53.750	166	.324		
	Total	53.754	168			
Job satisfaction	Between Groups	.266	2	.133	.744	.477**
	Within Groups	29.716	166	.179		
	Total	29.983	168			

\*\*Not significant, Source: Author's analysis