EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, SELF-EFFICACY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE AS PREDICTORS OF FACULTY LIFE SATISFACTION IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- *A committed workforce, productivity, performance, and retention are key goals for organizations, including higher education, and are better achieved when employees experience high life satisfaction that enhances engagement and motivation. Therefore, understanding the factors contributing to life satisfaction is essential. This study investigates emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and work-life balance as predictors of life satisfaction and distinguishes between high and low satisfaction levels among faculty in Indian higher education institutions.*

Design/methodology/approach- *The standardised questionnaires have been used to measure life satisfaction and its predictors, i.e., emotional intelligence (EI), work-life balance (WLB), and self-efficacy (SE). Data have been collected from 1000 faculty of the top 200 NIRF-ranked higher education institutes of India. To achieve the objective, the method of discriminant analysis has been adopted.*

Findings-*The results revealed that emotional intelligence is the most significant predictor of life satisfaction followed by self-efficacy and work-life balance.*

Practical Implications- *Understanding the impact of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and work-life balance can help employees develop skills that enhance their life satisfaction and job performance. Consequently, institutions can formulate targeted strategies and tailored programs aimed at enhancing faculty retention, productivity, commitment and overall well-being.*

Originality/value- *This study on predictors of life satisfaction among faculty in higher education offers valuable insights for both employees and institutions. It empowers employees to improve their personal and professional fulfilment that enhance their well-being. It is also provide foundation to the institutions to develop strategies and create supportive environments that boost morale, productivity, and retention, leading to greater institutional success.*

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Work-Life Balance; Self-Efficacy; Life Satisfaction; Faculty; Higher Education Institutes.

INTRODUCTION

The higher education system in India has undergone transformative growth over recent decades, emerging as the largest and most dynamic globally, playing a pivotal role in shaping the nation's socio-economic future (Ravi et al., 2019; Tilak, 2015). This rapid expansion has fostered a highly competitive environment, which in turn has increased demands on faculty to assume service-oriented roles such as publishing research, generating and securing patents and facilitating student training alongside their traditional academic

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responsibilities (AI-Zoubi et al., 2024; Patra, 2022; Shome & Gupta, 2020). Faculty of higher education institutes are considered principal assets for the educational process because they induce people, communities, and the overall population of an economy (Murkatik et al., 2020).

But the teachers who are shaping young minds and producing effective human capital (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005) are reporting low levels of satisfaction in their lives (Melnyk, 2023). This is largely due to excessive workloads of administrative work, research work, escalating publications (Rana & Soodan, 2019; Griffith & Sovero, 2021) pressure of achieving excellence in teaching, lack of support, mental overload, and emotional exhaustion (Hammoudi et al., 2023). So, various researchers and academicians have given emphasis to the need to study the life satisfaction of faculty working in the higher education institutes (Larsson & Alvinius, 2019; de Lourdes Machado-Taylor et al., 2016; Bentley et al., 2013; Lacy & Sheehan, 1997; Enders & Teichler, 1997).

Life satisfaction is a key element of subjective well-being (Cheng et al., 2022; Datu & King, 2018), which is considered as an evaluation of the overall life of an individual (Schimmack et al., 2004; Diener, 2000). It is also considered as an 'ultimate goal' of every individual's life (Ehrhardt et al., 2000). Life satisfaction can be defined as an overall evaluation of the individual's standard of living based on an idiosyncratic evaluation system and studied as a core component of well-being (Dahiya, 2022). During the past three decades, the concept of life satisfaction has attracted the interest of various empiricists of distinct disciplines due to its significant impact on the different aspects of life of an individual (Margolis et al., 2019; Pavot & Diener, 2008; Gregg & Salisbury, 2001; Diener et al., 1985; Neugarten et al., 1961). A satisfied employee can deal with the problems and issues in their work lives in a productive and effective manner, which is crucial for the organisational growth (Zhao et al., 2016). Apart from this, life satisfaction has multiple benefits, such as improving performance (Rode et al., 2007), enhancing career satisfaction, ensuring organisational commitment (Khan & Khan, 2020), reducing turnover intentions (Erdogan et al., 2012) and increasing the profitability of the organisation (Sypniewska et al., 2023). By looking at these benefits, it becomes crucial for the organisation to prioritize employee life satisfaction.

The prior studies on life satisfaction have significantly examined the various antecedents across different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics and quality of life research but there is a dearth of systematic attempts to elucidate which variable most affects the employee's life satisfaction, particularly in the context of higher education. Thus, the current analysis endeavours to fill this gap by identifying the variables that contribute to discriminating between higher and lower levels of faculty life satisfaction Al-Zoubi et al., (2024), Diani et al., (2024) .

Past studies show that there are various factors that predict the life satisfaction of working personnel. Most of the studies of life satisfaction have been done with psychological variables, social variables, interpersonal variables, and intrapersonal variables (Melendez et al., 2009; Enkvist et al., 2012; Lyons et al., 2016). For instance, Diener (1998) studied life satisfaction by considering disposition variables such as self-esteem, emotional intelligence, optimism, and positive emotions. Other researchers named as Veenhoven (2014), Triandis (2000), Vitterso et al. (2002) showed the importance of different cultures in the life satisfaction of individuals. Some researchers investigate life satisfaction by considering work-related variables, i.e., career adaptability, career choice, and job satisfaction (Lounsbury et al., 2004; Jaensch et al., 2015). While other researchers demonstrated that ambitions significantly contribute to job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Newman et al., 2015; Cheng et al., 2022), uniformly, academic achievement has been found to affect academic as well as life satisfaction (Singley et al., 2010; Ojeda et al., 2011). On the other hand, Rode (2004) in

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his study, found that employers should understand employee's personal characteristics and out-of-work lives (for example, family, friends, and society) to assess life satisfaction Elliott et al., (2007), Extremera & Fernandez-Berrocal, (2005), Greenhaus et al., (2003), Hammoudi Halat et al., (2023). In addition to this, demographic factors such as gender, marital status, income, education level, and age are linked to life satisfaction (Johnson & Krueger, 2006; Gannon & Ranzijn, 2005).

These are various factors that influence an individual's life satisfaction. To identify the most crucial among these, this study consider both the top-down and bottom-up theories. The top-down theory proposes that an individual's overall outlook and personality traits shape their life satisfaction, underscoring the role of emotional intelligence in effectively managing emotions and relationships Kipkebut, (2010), Li et al., (2021), Meléndez et al., (2009). In contrast, the bottom-up theory emphasizes external circumstances and specific life domains, such as work-life balance, as direct contributors to life satisfaction. Self-efficacy serves as a link between these perspectives by representing an individual's belief in their ability to overcome challenges and achieve goals, thereby impacting both their internal mindset and external experiences. Using these theories as a framework, this study highlights self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and work-life balance as key predictors of life satisfaction Saqib & Toheedmal, (2023), Suldo & Huebner, (2006).

Theoretical background

Numerous theories have been developed to explain the concept of life satisfaction, including spillover theory, compensation theory, Set-Point theory, PERMA model and so on. Among these, top-down and bottom-up theories, framed by Diener (1984), have gained significant attention for explaining overall life satisfaction because these theories provide a holistic approach to understand the interaction of different factors and contributions in enhancing overall life satisfaction. In top-down theory, Diener says that overall life satisfaction is significantly influenced by dispositional traits, namely emotional intelligence, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy (Loewe et al., 2014), because personality traits and other stable characteristics influence how an individual perceives and evaluates various aspects of their lives, which has a substantial influence on overall life satisfaction. On the contrary, bottom-up theory asserts that an individual's life satisfaction is an accumulation of multiple life domains such as leisure time, health, work, family and relationships (Van Praag et al., 2003; da Costa, 2008; Loewe et al., 2014; Kuykendall et al., 2015). It emphasizes that specific experiences and circumstances contribute to overall satisfaction.

So, the present work is an attempt to integrate both theories because it is beneficial for addressing individual and environmental factors, which is essential for understanding the concept of life satisfaction as a whole.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Mayer & Salovey (1995) elucidated emotional intelligence in the guise of social competence, which includes the potential of observing, discriminating, understanding, and utilizing the emotions of self and others to direct one's thinking and actions. Basically, it refers to an ability to understand, recognize, use, express, and manage one's own and other's emotions (Ismail et al., 2010). EI serves a key function in employees' well-being and satisfaction in their work lives (Dooley et al., 2019). Past studies have shown that an employee who scores high on EI enjoys a high level of satisfaction and well-being at their workplace (Sy et al., 2006; Di Fabio et al., 2012; Karimi et al., 2021). Various researchers (Extermera & Fernandez-Berrocal, 2005; Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Schutte & Malouff, 2011; Kong & Zhao, 2013; Ishaq et al., 2017; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2019) have expressed EI as

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a major determinant of life satisfaction. Montes-Berges & Augusto-Landa (2014) conducted a study on nurses to establish a relation between EI and life satisfaction and confirms that if nurses are able to manage their emotions, it will increase their life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Another study by Sanchez-Alvarez et al. (2016) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective well-being through a meta-analysis of 25 studies. The result of this study states that high EI results in high life satisfaction because emotionally skilled individuals can effectively manage and understand the emotions, which helps them in increasing their overall well-being. Similarly, Okonkwo et al. (2017) identified emotional intelligence (EI) and self-efficacy (SE) as significant predictors of life satisfaction among police officers, highlighting that those with higher levels of EI and self-efficacy typically exhibit greater job satisfaction and commitment, which subsequently contribute to increased productivity and overall life satisfaction. Additionally, Dadhania (2021) explored the association between emotional intelligence (EI) and life satisfaction (LS) among married individuals and concluded that EI and LS are significantly correlated. This finding underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in fostering happiness and enhancing overall life satisfaction. Building on this, Mushtaq & Siddiqui (2024) investigated the relationships among self-esteem, emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among employees from both state-controlled and market-driven sectors. Their study supports a positive association between EI and LS, suggesting that employees with higher emotional intelligence tend to perform better and are more likely to be retained by their organizations in the long term Sy et al., (2006) .

Conversely, certain studies have found no significant association between emotional intelligence and individuals' life satisfaction. For example, the study on employees of a private organization in Chennai, Divya & Chanchal (2014) explored the association between emotional intelligence and key indicators of subjective well-being. The results indicated that emotional intelligence enhanced positive emotions, reduced negative emotions, but did not significantly influence life satisfaction. Similarly, Alibabaie (2015) noticed the relationship between quality of life, emotional intelligence, and life satisfaction among the students in Iran and has found no correlation between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, although quality of life has shown a significant correlation with life satisfaction. This study has argued that emotional intelligence increases quality of life but does not affect the life satisfaction of students. Even Jacob (2021) supported the view that life satisfaction remained unaffected by emotional intelligence. His study examined emotional intelligence, self-compassion, and life satisfaction among clinical psychologists, revealing a significant relationship among all variables except between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Similarly, Bedi & Thakur (2024) explored the association between employees' emotional intelligence and factors such as occupational stress, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among personnel from public and private sector banks in India. Their study indicated that emotional intelligence was not significantly linked with life satisfaction.

Overall, while numerous investigations have reported a positive linkage between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction, certain studies have shown that the relationship is not statistically significant. These mixed findings highlight the need for further exploration of how emotional intelligence influences life satisfaction. Hence, the present study endeavours to explore the effect of emotional intelligence on the life satisfaction of faculty serving in higher educational institutions . Tan et al., (2024)

Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypothesis is framed:

H_1: *There is no statistically significant effect of emotional intelligence on the life satisfaction among faculty of higher education institutes in India.*

Work-life Balance (WLB)

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Over the past few years, economical, social, and cultural changes have brought substantial effect on the working and non-working lives of individuals. Specifically, transformations, including the growing participation of women in the workplace, rising standards of living, and increasing job demands have escalated pressures on individuals both in the workplace and within the family (Chandra, 2012; Kuzulu et al., 2013; Pattusamy & Jacob, 2016). Consequently, the issue of work-life balance has emerged. In the words of Hoffman & Cowan (2008), work-life balance means the effective management of professional and personal responsibilities, which has a significant impact on overall life satisfaction. Guest's model has demonstrated that wlb has a substantial impact on the life satisfaction of an individual. Similarly, Carlson et al. (2000), suggested that life satisfaction is the ultimate outcome of achieving work-life balance. Numerous studies have confirmed the relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction. For instance, Cain et al. (2018) conducted research on chef executives from North America and found that work-life balance is positively associated with life satisfaction. Similarly, Haar et al. (2014) observed that individuals who believe they have achieved work-life balance are mentally and physically healthy, enjoy relationships with loved ones, and participate in activities of interest, all of which ultimately boost their life satisfaction. Another researcher, Kismono et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of WLB in life satisfaction during the work-from-home (WFH) era following the COVID-19 pandemic, finding that acceptance does not directly influence life satisfaction. Instead, they indicate that the life satisfaction of employees improves when acceptance fosters work-life balance. Therefore, organizations must transform acceptance into effective problem-solving strategies to achieve work-life balance and enhance overall life satisfaction. Additionally, Tan et al. (2024) examined the impact of teleworking, emphasizing that work-life balance significantly mediates the relationship between teleworking and life satisfaction, alongside factors such as workplace relationships and working hours. Their study suggests that organisations should primarily focus on work-life balance and provide adequate resources to support employees in managing their telecommuting work.

On the contrary, there are some studies that show there is no relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction. For example, Sandra & Ashwini (2023) examined this relationship among Indian working professionals and found no significant relationship between the two. This study suggests that balance alone may not directly influence overall satisfaction. Similarly, Spector et al. (2007) found no relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction among the individuals living in collectivistic culture. This is because people in collectivistic cultures tend to perceive work-life imbalance as less problematic, viewing it as an inevitable sacrifice for promoting family well-being.

Overall, this review indicates that while many studies demonstrate a positive relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction, the strength and direction of this relationship vary, with some studies finding no significant association. Therefore, there is a need for further research to better understand this relationship. This study aims to explore the role of work-life balance in influencing life satisfaction among faculty of higher education institutes in India. On account of the above discussion, below hypothesis is postulated:

***H_2**: There is no statistically significant effect of work-life balance on the life satisfaction among faculty of higher education institutes in India.*

Self-efficacy (S.E.)

In the terms of Bandura (1977), self-efficacy denotes the strong conviction of a person about their competence to complete a particular job successfully. Liu et al. (2014) depict it as a judgement of what one can do with their capabilities. In the words of Hussain et al. (2022) self-efficacy is the faith of an individual to perform certain work. They also suggest that a

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strong sense of self-efficacy may reduce the likelihood of experiencing failure negatively. A person with high self-efficacy can face various difficulties (Li et al., 2021), experience psychological flow, and lead a more satisfying life. Researchers contend that self-efficacy is positively associated with life satisfaction because when individuals have a belief that they can perform well in a specific domain, it boosts their positive emotions and, consequently increases their overall life satisfaction (Lent et al., 2005). Even Salas et al. (2017) investigated the significant impact of self-efficacy and coping strategies on the life satisfaction of parents with adult children diagnosed with autism. Results of this study show that mother's life satisfaction is influenced by self-efficacy, while father's life satisfaction is affected by coping strategies. So, it is necessary to promote coping strategies and self-efficacy to enhance their life satisfaction. Similarly, Poorbaferani et al. (2018) explored the relationship between life satisfaction and self-efficacy, communication skills, and self-esteem among married working women. Their results highlight that all these variables positively correlate with life satisfaction, with self-efficacy showing the strongest association. Consequently, the study suggests that married working women can increase their life satisfaction by embracing self-efficacy abilities in themselves. Likewise, Kumar & Priyadarshini (2018) analyzed the impact of self-efficacy among the Gen Y and Gen Z individuals to see the impact on life satisfaction and found that self-efficacy significantly influences life satisfaction in both groups. Lal & Pavithra (2022) also investigated the association between life satisfaction, personality traits, and self-efficacy among adolescents. Findings of this research assert that both self-efficacy and personality play crucial roles in enhancing the adolescent's life satisfaction. Even Dos (2023) showed the interrelationship among happiness, academic S.E., general S.E., and life satisfaction. Outcomes of this research prove that all variables are significantly and positively related to life satisfaction. Additionally, Sahrah (2023) explored the alliance among life satisfaction and job engagement where self-efficacy act as mediating variable in managing work-family conflict. This study found that work engagement is positively associated with life satisfaction, with self-efficacy playing a significant mediating role. In a similar vein, Jia & Wang (2024), analysed the impact of perceived social support and self-efficacy on life satisfaction and career exploration. Results show that higher perceived social support boosts self-efficacy, which in turn enhances life satisfaction and encourages greater engagement in career exploration.

Contrary to these studies, there are some studies which show negative relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction. For example, the study by Taris et al., (2001) indicated that excessively high self-efficacy can negatively impact life satisfaction. Specifically, educators with unrealistically high self-efficacy may over commit and set overly ambitious goals, causing chronic stress and burnout, which ultimately lowers their overall well-being and life satisfaction. Similarly, Winefield et al. (2003) found that university staff with high self-efficacy sometimes experienced frustration due to institutional constraints, which hindered their effectiveness and negatively impacted their life satisfaction.

Given these mixed findings, the relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction remains inconclusive. Therefore, it is crucial to explore this further, and this study aims to examine the impact of self-efficacy on life satisfaction among faculty of higher education institutes in India.

On the basis of preceding discussion, below hypothesis is postulated:

***H_3**: There is no statistically significant effect of self-efficacy on life satisfaction among faculty of higher education institutes in India.*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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This study applies correlation and discriminant analysis to assess the impact of emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and self-efficacy on life satisfaction among faculty in Indian higher education institutions, and to identify the high and low predictors of life satisfaction.

Sample and Data collection

Data has been collected from the faculty of India's top 200 higher education institutes, as ranked by NIRF. The sample consists of 1,000 married faculty aged 25 to 55 years who have children between the ages of 1 and 15. A sample of 500 faculty has been collected through personal visits, and additional data has been gathered using a Google Form that has been sent via email to geographically dispersed institutions listed in the NIRF rankings.

Research Instrument

The standardized questionnaires using the Likert scale have been used to measure dependent and independent variables which are explained as follows:

1. The life satisfaction scale developed by Na-Nan & Wongwiwatthananukit (2020) has been used to measure life satisfaction. This scale contains 18 items, and each item are categorized into four dimensions named as (i) Relationship with family and others, (ii) Personal Life, (iii) Working life and self-development, and (iv) Life and society. All the items have been measured by using a 5 – point Likert scale, labelled from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
2. The work-non-work balance crafting scale developed by Kerksieck et al. (2022) has been used to measure the work-life balance. This scale consists of 16 items and is comprised of three dimensions i.e., (i) physical crafting, (ii) emotional crafting and (iii) relational crafting and has been measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
3. The short-form of the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), developed by Schutte (2011), has been used to assess emotional intelligence and measures its items by using a 5-point Likert scale (5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree). This scale contains 33 items and has four dimensions, such as (i) managing own emotions, (ii) perception of emotions, (iii) utilisation of emotions, (iv) managing other's emotions.
4. Self-efficacy has also been measured by using the scale developed by Zhou (2016), named the General Self-Efficacy Scale, which contains 10 items that are divided into two dimensions i.e. (i) action S.E. and (ii) coping S.E. All such items have been assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS RESULTS

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Intelligence	**1000**	129.32	15.614	-0.859	2.517
Work-life Balance	**1000**	62.69	8.416	-0.706	1.110
Self-efficacy	**1000**	38.58	6.110	-0.647	0.676
Life Satisfaction	**1000**	73.00	10.385	-0.811	1.303

The result of Table 1 represents the descriptive analysis of predictors of life satisfaction. It has been found that faculty of higher education institutes are more satisfied if they are emotionally intelligent (M= 129.32, SD= 15.614), followed by work-life balance (M= 62.69, SD= 8.416) and self-efficacy (M= 38.58, SD= 6.110). To assess the normality of the predictors, the skewness and kurtosis values for each predictor have been calculated. Values ranged between -1 and +1 for skewness, while values ranged between -3 and +3 for

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kurtosis, proving that the predictors are normally distributed (Bland & Altman, 1996; Krzanowski, 1990).

Table 2
PEARSON CORRELATION ANALYSIS

S.No.	Variables	Life Satisfaction
1	Emotional Intelligence	0.849
2	Work-life Balance	0.639
3	Self-efficacy	0.782

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

After verifying the normality of the data, correlation analysis has been conducted to examine the impact of the predictors on life satisfaction. The results, presented in Table 2, indicate that emotional intelligence has the strongest correlation with life satisfaction (r = 0.849), followed by self-efficacy (r = 0.782) and work-life balance (r = 0.639), both showing significant relationships. These findings demonstrate that all the predictors have a significant impact on the life satisfaction of faculty.

Table 3
ANALYSIS CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY

Unweighted cases	N	Percent
Valid	509	50.9
Excluded	491	49.1
Total	1000	1000

While conducting discriminant analysis, out of a total of 1,000 data, only 509 are utilized to predict high and low levels of life satisfaction, as shown in table 3. The remaining 491 data are excluded from the analysis, as these samples have reported a moderate level of life satisfaction.

Table 4
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATION AND RESULTS OF THE T-TEST AND DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

Variable	**Life satisfaction**				**t-test**	**P**
	Low Level		**High Level**			
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**		
1. Perception of emotions	33.18	4.67	41.22	4.09	-20.65	< 0.001
2. Managing own emotions	31.36	4.612	40.62	3.296	-26.081	< 0.001
3.Managing other's emotions	27.19	4.647	35.32	2.952	-23.553	< 0.001
4. Utilisation of emotions	21.22	3.507	27.37	2.727	-22.067	< 0.001

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5. Action Self-efficacy	16.68	2.995	22.47	2.525	-23.581	< 0.001
6. Coping Self-efficacy	15.48	2.964	21.35	2.791	-22.997	< 0.001
7. Emotional crafting	28	4.793	33.72	4.621	-13.701	< 0.001
8. Physical crafting	7.35	1.596	8.55	1.427	-8.875	< 0.001
9. Relational crafting	20.44	3.786	26.69	2.563	-21.813	< 0.001

Wilks' lambda = 0.317 (F= 4.214, p <0.001); canonical correlation = 0.826 (Eigenvalue = 2.155, with same F and p)

Before conducting discriminant analysis, a t-test has been performed to identify statistically significant differences in the mean scores of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and work-life balance between the high and low life satisfaction groups. As shown in Table 4, the mean values for the high satisfaction group have been higher than those for the low satisfaction group. Furthermore, the t-test results and corresponding p-values have indicated a significant difference between the two groups.

Wilk's lambda value, eigenvalue, and canonical correlation have been calculated to assess the significance of differences between group means. Wilk's Lambda lies between 0 and 1, where values closer to 0 indicate that the discriminant function explains a larger proportion of the variances between groups, and values closer to 1 indicate less explanation (Elliot and Woodward, 2007). The results indicate that a low Wilk's lambda value (0.317) combined with a significant p-value ($p < 0.001$) demonstrates the canonical discriminant function's strong effectiveness in accurately classifying cases into their respective groups. And the value of canonical correlation (0.826) indicates a strong association between the discriminant function and the grouping variables. Therefore, these values show that the discriminant function effectively classifies cases into their respective groups.

An equation of discriminant function to differentiate satisfaction level groups depends on raw canonical coefficients has been formulated as follows:

Z(discriminant score) = -11.276 + perception of emotions (0.044) + managing own emotions (0.074) + managing others emotions (0.000) + utilisation of emotions (0.067) + action self-efficacy (0.068) + coping self-efficacy (0.072) + emotional crafting (0.002) + physical crafting (0.042) + relational crafting (0.098).

As the value of Wilks' lambda is 0.317 and the canonical correlation is 0.826, with F = 4.241 and $p < 0.001$, the above equation has been accepted.

On the other hand, a higher eigenvalue indicates a more significant function in terms of explaining the variance between the groups. Here, the eigenvalue of 2.155 is relatively high, suggesting that this function is quite effective in distinguishing between groups. Thus, the value of canonical correlation, Wilk's lambda, and eigenvalue with $p < 0.001$, proves that the discriminant function discriminates faculty life satisfaction.

Table 5
DISCRIMINANT LOADINGS

Predictors	Discriminant loadings (structure matrix)
1. Managing own emotions	0.787
2. Action Self-efficacy	0.712
3. Managing other's emotions	0.711

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4. Coping Self-efficacy	0.694
5. Utilisation of emotions	0.666
6. Relational crafting	0.658
7. Perception of emotions	0.623
8. Emotional crafting	0.414
9. Physical crafting	0.268

The discriminant function produced discriminant loadings to ascertain the relative influence of each independent variable on the life satisfaction of faculty at higher education institutes, as shown in Table 4. According to Hair et al. (1998) discriminant analysis is suitable for interpreting magnitude, as standardized discriminant coefficients can become unstable and unreliable when multicollinearity is present. As presented in Table 5, all independent variables loadings are positive and greater than 0.20. The most significant discriminant variables are managing own emotions (0.787), followed by action self-efficacy (0.712), managing other's emotions (0.711), coping self-efficacy (0.694), utilisation of emotions (0.666), relational crafting (0.658), perception of emotions (0.623), and emotional crafting (0.414). The least influential discriminant variable identified is physical crafting (0.268).

Table 6
PREDICTION MATRIX

	Satisfaction Level	**Predicted group membership**		**Total**
		Low Level	**High Level**	
	Low Level	244 (96.0%)	10 (3.93%)	254
Original value	**High Level**	9 (3.52%)	246 (96.4%)	255
	Total	247 (48.5%)	262 (51.47%)	509
	Error count estimates	3.93%	3.52%	3.73%

96.3% of original grouped cases correctly classified

Table 6 shows the predictive accuracy level by examining the discriminant model. According to the result, 96.3% out of the 1000 cases of the original group have been accurately classified. This value close to 100 demonstrates the effectiveness of the model. Initially, this study hypothesized that 254 faculty would report a minimal level of life satisfaction and the other 255 faculty would report a substantial level. However, the analysis revealed that, out of 1000 faculty, only 244 reported a low level of life satisfaction and 246 reported a high level. The error count estimate is 3.725%, which is acceptable.

DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to examine the impact of emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and self-efficacy on faculty life satisfaction, and to analyze the factors distinguishing high and low life satisfaction levels among faculty in Indian higher education institutions. It is very crucial to understand the predictors that affect the life satisfaction of employees because it directly impacts their productivity, performance, retention, stress level, and overall organizational well-being (Leung et al., 2011). The outcomes of this research corroborate the top-down and bottom-up approaches, which provide the basis for predictors (work-life balance, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence) of faculty life satisfaction. The multivariate discriminant function includes dimensions of all independent variables, which are all found to be significant in discriminating the high and low levels of life satisfaction.

After analysis, it has come out that among all the variables, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been identified as the most significant predictor of achieving a high level of life satisfaction (LS). This outcome is compatible with the results of Kong and Zhao (2013); Montes-Berges and Augusto-Landa (2014); Sanchez-Alvarez et al. (2016); and Lopez-Zafra

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et al. (2019), who reported EI as a crucial predictor of life satisfaction. Specifically, the findings of this study indicate that faculty who are more efficient in managing emotions experience a higher degree of life satisfaction. While the utilization and perception of emotions are important aspects of emotional intelligence, effectively managing one's own emotions and those of others is even more crucial for faculty in fostering greater life satisfaction. A possible explanation of this result is that awareness alone is not sufficient for handling situations, the actual outcome can be seen after effective management. A person who skilfully manages their own emotions and those of others can maintain positive relationships, create a supportive and collaborative work environment, reduce stress, and enable themselves in navigating conflicts, which ultimately contribute to enhanced life satisfaction. Thus, the H1 of this study has been rejected.

Another variable that is also responsible for enhancing level of life satisfaction is self-efficacy (S.E.). Both action and coping self-efficacy, as dimensions of self-efficacy, serve as important predictors of life satisfaction. This may be because a person with high belief or high efficacy in them can better cope with the challenges and achieve goals, ultimately increasing their life satisfaction (Wood et al., 2018). Action S.E. fosters confidence and motivation to take proactive steps to meet challenges. The results indicate that faculty with high action self-efficacy experience a sense of control, autonomy, and fulfilment, which leads them to increase their life satisfaction. Whereas, coping self-efficacy helps individuals to effectively manage stress and difficulty. When individuals have confidence in their ability to grapple with challenges, they are more prone to be more confident, which helps them in regulating their emotions, and as a result, it reduces stress and enhances overall well-being. In line with the findings, faculty having high coping self-efficacy experience minimal stress, which makes them more confident to face various challenges, such as heavy workloads, high expectations, or intense pressure to publish, ultimately contributing to enhanced life satisfaction. Therefore, H3 has been rejected.

On the other hand, the third variable that predicts level of life satisfaction is work-life balance (WLB), but it is not statistically significant. According to the results, among all variables, work-life balance has been identified as the least discriminant. The research outcome of this study is in tune with Hasan et al. (2020), which shows that WLB is the least important variable to attain life satisfaction because there are some individuals who score high on intrinsic motivation may not prioritize work-life balance. They may be focused on achieving goals and contributing to their work and not feel the need to rigidly Octarate work and personal life. Another reason behind this may be that faculty finds joy and purpose from their teaching, research work, or mentoring roles, which make the division of work and personal life less relevant for them. Specifically, findings of the study show that while creating work-life balance, physical crafting approach don't contribute much in enhancing life satisfaction of faculty because they primarily focus on managing time and organizing tasks, which may not be important for faculty in creating better life satisfaction. But, in contrast, relational crafting approaches to work-life balance are important for creating better life satisfaction of faculty because it enables them to proactively shape and manage their relationships, roles, and responsibilities in both their working and non-working lives. This approach allows faculty to nurture supportive relationships, which helps them in creating balance between professional and personal life, ultimately enhancing their overall life satisfaction. Also, the emotional crafting approach to work-life balance is crucial for creating better life satisfaction among faculty, as it enables them to intentionally administer and control their emotions, which has a direct impact on overall well-being. Hence, H2 has been rejected.

Overall, the outcomes of this study state that among all the predictors of life satisfaction, EI and S.E. are more crucial as compared to work-life balance. Individuals who

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have strong emotional intelligence skills along with self-efficacy are equipped to manage emotions, stress, and anxiety, set boundaries, and maintain the confidence to overcome challenges and achieve their goals. These traits, in turn, enable them to attain a healthier work-life balance and greater life satisfaction. Therefore, to enhance the life satisfaction of faculty, efforts should be prioritize developing their emotional intelligence and self-efficacy over solely focusing on work-life balance.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of this research suggests that among the predictors of life satisfaction, emotional intelligence reported the highest level of satisfaction, followed by self-efficacy and work-life balance. Faculty having high EI skills and a high sense of self-efficacy in themselves are better equipped in managing emotions, coping with stress, and establishing boundaries, along with possessing a strong conviction in their capability to overcome challenges and accomplish their aims. Such individuals tend to attain a better work-life balance, ultimately enhancing their overall life satisfaction. Consequently, to improve the life satisfaction of faculty in higher education institutions, greater emphasis should be placed on developing their emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and work-life balance.

Implications

- This research offers valuable insights to institutional policymakers, administrators, management, and educational institutions regarding the various predictors that report high and low levels of life satisfaction.
- Such understanding is essential for promoting employee retention, enhancing performance, and improving overall well-being. The findings will emphasize the significance of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, as well as work-life balance, highlighting their respective impacts on faculty life satisfaction.
- Additionally, the findings of this study will be valuable for faculty, as understanding the key factors influencing life satisfaction can enable them to recognize personal capabilities and aspects needing improvement, fostering deeper understanding of oneself and overall professional enhancement.
- By understanding the nexus between work-life balance and life satisfaction, workforce can make more informed choices about how to manage their time and commitments, leading to a healthier balance between work and non-work life.
- A study on life satisfaction provides employees with valuable insights that can enhance their emotional well-being, inform their personal and professional development, and contribute to

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