

# Prediction of life Satisfaction Based on Emotional Intelligence, Happiness and Religious Attitude Among Female Teachers of Urmia City, North West of Iran

Iraj Mirkhan<sup>1,\*</sup>; Iraj Shakerinia<sup>1</sup>; Mousa Kafi<sup>1</sup>; Nourallah Khalilzade<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, Gilan University, Rasht, IR Iran

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Payame Noor University, Urmia, IR Iran

\*Corresponding author: Iraj Mirkhan, Department of Psychology, Guilan University, Rasht, IR Iran. Tel: +98-9145460275, E-mail: mirkhan\_iraj@yahoo.com

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**Background:** Life satisfaction is considered to be a variable state, and not a permanent trait of the respondent but rather something present and contextual. Teachers' life satisfaction helps to improve the quality of education and create a favorable environment for the students.

**Objectives:** This study aimed to investigate the prediction of life satisfaction based on emotional intelligence, happiness and religious attitudes among female teachers of Urmia city.

**Materials and Methods:** The present study was a descriptive correlative research, comprised of 262 teachers of Urmia high schools. The participants were randomly selected and asked to complete the religious attitude Khodayarifard questionnaire, Oxford Happiness, Emotional intelligence Bar-On Inventory and Satisfaction with life scale Diener. Data were analyzed by the SPSS software 18 using Pearson's correlation and regression test.

**Results:** The results showed that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction and also a positive correlation between happiness and life satisfaction in female teachers, yet no relationship between religious attitude and life satisfaction. The results also indicated that happiness is the only determinant predicting life satisfaction.

**Conclusions:** Our findings indicate that the components of emotional intelligence and happiness play an important role in life satisfaction of female teachers. Therefore, due to the important role of teachers in the development of any society, extensive efforts should be made to improve their life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Life; Satisfaction; Emotional Intelligence; Happiness; Attitudes

## 1. Background

Life satisfaction is defined as a judgmental process in which individuals assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own unique criteria, and is considered to be a variable state. Also it is not regarded as a permanent trait of the respondent but rather something present and contextual (1). However, it is important to note that measuring life satisfaction is not too sensitive to change, since use its application in limiting condition. It is important to note that life satisfaction has been explored by many studies (2). Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive and express emotion, access and use emotions to facilitate thought, and understand and manage emotions. A growing body of research has found links between EI and a wide range of important life events not adequately predicted by traditional measures of intelligence. However, many EI scales have been found to overlap with personality scales, and some have argued that they measure personality traits. This issue is complicated by the different models of EI, which fall into two main categories, know as the mixed and ability mod-

els (3). Religious beliefs are present across all cultures (4, 5), and are a critical part of many people's lives (6, 7), and have consistent relationships with health and happiness (8). Religious beliefs and attitudes have been the subject of many psychology-based studies, and are issues requiring further in-depth analysis. Although considerable research has been devoted to individual differences in self-reported religious motivation (9), little is known about the deeper structure of religious beliefs (10). Our literature review identified numerous studies investigating this link in various populations. However, clear-cut findings are rare. Some studies have shown a positive relationship and others no correlation or even a negative connection between religion and mental health (11). The emphasis on describing psychological health in terms of 'what is right' has been growing ever since Martin P. Seligman coined the term 'Positive Psychology' in 1998 (12). Some believe that happiness is an emotional phenomenon while others believe it is a cognitive entity (13). As an emotional experience, the term happiness refers

to people who feel fine with their life, or more formally, the degree which assesses someone's life as a whole (14). Unlike Diener et al. (15) who claimed that happiness is a cognitive phenomenon, a person is happy when satisfactory and joyful aspects of life outweigh its painful experiences. Recently Annas stated that happiness relates to efforts made by people to achieve their objectives (16). Recently, a commonly discussed issue has been the "knowledge of happiness". Nowadays, psychologists put emphasis on mental health and happiness. Happiness in life is an important factor which peoples have a good feeling about theirs life and other peoples' lives. Individuals with a sense of happiness tend to stay away from feelings of frustration and accept their weaknesses (17). Happy individuals have higher efficiency, hope, thinking ability, educational success and quality of life. On the other hand, depression reduces reasoning power and efficiency (18). Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the role of various variables including emotional intelligence, happiness and religious attitudes in order to predict life satisfaction in female teachers. Various studies have examined the relationship between emotional intelligence, religious attitudes and happiness with life satisfaction. A study investigating the relationship between religious attitudes, happiness and life-satisfaction showed that there is positive correlation between these three variables (19). In summary, the results of many researches from various countries have shown that religion and religious attitudes are supportive powers that help reduce distress, corruption tendency and reinforce life-satisfaction (20). Several studies have shown that personality is an essential determinant of life satisfaction (21-23). Emotional intelligence has been theoretically related to several important human values including life satisfaction, quality of interpersonal relationships, and success in occupations that involve considerable reasoning with emotional experiences relating to creativity, leadership, sales and psychotherapy (24, 25). Several studies have examined the relationship between EI and life satisfaction (26, 27). Research with self-report measures (e.g. the emotional quotient inventory (EQi), Bar-On, trait meta mood scale (TMMS), Martinez-Pons) have found moderate positive correlations between EI and life satisfaction; e.g. the total emotional quotient EQ scale score of the EQI correlated with the Kirkcaldy Quality of Life Questionnaire,  $r = 0.41$ ,  $P < 0.001$ , as specified by Bar-On (26). Similarly, research on performance-based measures of EI (3) has found low to moderate positive correlations between EI and life satisfaction ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ; and  $r = 0.28$ ,  $P < 0.005$ ) (30). Importantly, studies found that EI correlated with life satisfaction ( $r = 0.22$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) even after controlling for IQ and personality variables, suggesting that EI accounts for unique variance (27).

## 2. Objectives

This study aimed to investigate the prediction of life satisfaction based on emotional intelligence, happiness and

religious attitudes among female teachers of Urmia city. Thus, in order to achieve this goal the following four hypotheses were tested: 1) there is a relationship between religious attitudes and life-satisfaction among female teachers, 2) there is a relationship between happiness and life satisfaction among female teachers, 3) there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among female teachers, 4) religious attitude, happiness and emotional intelligence can predict life satisfaction.

## 3. Patients and Methods

The present study was a descriptive-correlation research. The participants comprised of 262 female high school teachers aged between 23 and 60 years, of whom 36 were single and 226 married, and selected by randomized cluster sampling. The participants completed the Khodayarifard Religious Attitude Inventory, Oxford Happiness, Bar-On Emotional Intelligence and Satisfaction with Life Scale Diener. Data were analyzed by the SPSS 18 software using Pearson's correlation test and regression, and considering  $P \leq 0.05$  as significant.

### 3.1. Assessment Tools

#### 3.1.1. Satisfaction With Life Scale

The life satisfaction of participants was assessed by employing the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), which had good reliability and validity (28), and comprised of five items. Participants were instructed to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a 7-point Likert type scale. It included items such as, "I am satisfied with my life" and "in most ways my life is close to my ideal".

#### 3.1.2. Emotional Intelligence Bar-On Inventory

The other instrument used in this study, was the EQ Bar-On Inventory. The normalized version of this questionnaire, which was designed by Esfahan University included 90 multiple choice questions with five choices; completely agree, agree, neutral, disagree, completely disagree. This questionnaire consisted of 15 elements related to the so called emotional self; awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship, reality testing, flexibility, problem solving, happiness, impulse control, optimism, and stress tolerance. Each subscale included six questions, for which the minimum point was six and maximum was 30 with an average point estimated as 18. For the entire test the minimum point was 90, and maximum 450 with an average of 270 (29). The reliability of the instrument using the Cronbach Alpha of 0.93 has been reported (30).

#### 3.1.3. Religious Attitude Khodayarifard Inventory

This instrument was used for measuring the religious

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for the Research Variables Among Participants (n = 262)

Variables	Min	Max	Mean ± SD
Age, y	23	60	39.99 ± 6.970
Teaching background, y	2	37	16.98 ± 6.970
Life satisfaction	5	35	24.26 ± 6.916
Religious attitudes	76	183	151.88 ± 16.342
Happiness	10	86	44.85 ± 13/478
Emotional intelligence	228	421	321.10 ± 34.816

**Table 2.** Correlations Between Life Satisfaction and Religious Attitudes, Happiness and Emotional Intelligence

Variables	1	2	3	4
<b>1. Life satisfaction</b>				
<b>2. Religious attitudes</b>	-0.44			
<b>3. Happiness</b>	0.469 <sup>a</sup>	-0.153 <sup>b</sup>		
<b>4. Emotional intelligence</b>	0.319 <sup>a</sup>	-0.161 <sup>b</sup>	0.546 <sup>a</sup>	

<sup>a</sup> P < 0.01.<sup>b</sup> P < 0.05.**Table 3.** Summary of the Inter-Regression Model to Predict Life Satisfaction<sup>a,b,c</sup>

Model	Beta	T	Adjusted R Square
<b>1. Happiness</b>	0.45	6.69	0.23
<b>2. Emotional intelligence</b>	0.07	1.051	

<sup>a</sup> Predictors: Happiness; Emotional intelligence.<sup>b</sup> Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction.<sup>c</sup> R = 0.49; R Square = 0.24; F = 39.55; Sig = 0.00.

attitude of teachers. The questionnaire included 40 questions, each with a 5-point Likert scale including, completely agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and completely disagree. The reliability of the Khodayarifard inventory (31) was tested using two methods of Spearman 0.93 and Gutmann 0.92.

### 3.1.4. Oxford Happiness Scale

This scale was introduced by Argil and Lu in 1990, and included 29 multiple-choice items that could be scored from 0 to 3 (32). Using Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability and accuracy of this test in Iran was reported as 0.93 and 0.92, respectively by Alipour and Nourbala (33) with a sample size of 101 individuals.

## 4. Results

The participants were 262 teachers with a mean age of 40 ± 06.970 SD years and mean teaching background of 16.98 ± 6.970 SD years. Their mean life satisfaction score was 24.26 ± 6.916 SD, religious attitudes 151.88 ± 16.342 SD, happiness 44.85 ± 13.478 SD and emotional intelligence 321.10 ± 34.816 SD (Table 1). Pearson's correlation showed no relationship between religious attitudes and life-satisfaction among female teachers (r = -0.44, P = 0.692). The

results showed a relationship between happiness and life satisfaction among female teachers (r = 0.469, P = 0.0001). The results also indicated a relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among female teachers (r = 0.319, P = 0.001), (Table 2). It was indicated that 0.45 of the variance in life satisfaction is predicted by happiness, but emotional intelligence despite having a relationship with life satisfaction, does not predict variance of life satisfaction. It is important to note that religious attitude because of a lack of relationship with life satisfaction was not entered in the regression (Table 3).

## 5. Discussion

We know that the education system has a major role in evolution and progression of every society. The results of this research show that happiness plays a major role in life satisfaction of female teachers. Here we interpret our results by discussing our findings regarding the hypotheses made in the introduction section.

Hypothesis 1: there is a relationship between religious attitude and life-satisfaction among female teachers: the examination of this hypothesis showed no significant relationship between religious attitudes and life-satisfaction. The results obtained were in agreement with those of Maheshwari and Sing (19), Adler and Fagley (34)

and Tate and Forchheimer (35), yet in contrary with those reported by Cohen (9). A significant positive correlation was found between religion and life satisfaction among Taiwanese women (36). In regards to analysis of these findings the following aspects should be considered:

1) The results show that the subjects were sensitive to religious attitude but this is probably because of self-censorship. Thus our participants did not give correct answers to religious questions of the questionnaire, a condition affecting the results.

2) Most conducted researches have investigated certain facets of religion. This sometimes reflects different dimensions of religion which is in conflict with life satisfaction.

3) Primarily, religion may not directly affect life satisfaction, haply may affected By other variables include optimism.

4) The lack of significant relationship between the two factors can be due to the large number of items and limited sample size.

Hypothesis 2: there is a relationship between happiness and life satisfaction among female teachers.

The results of this research show that there is a significant relationship between happiness and life satisfaction. The obtained results are consistent with those of Borooah (37) Lyubomirsky (38) Siahpush (39) and Lin et al. (40). According to a research on happiness and life satisfaction in 27 countries it was indicated that elements of happiness included pleasure, engagement and meaning in life, which could predict satisfaction with life (41). This finding is explained by the fact that happiness is a measure of life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between EI and life satisfaction among female teachers.

This study indicates a significant relationship between EI and life satisfaction among female teachers. These findings are consistent with those of Brillhart (42), Ignat and Clipa (43), Deniz et al. (44), Gannon and Ranzijn (45). These findings show that reduction of emotional problems lead to an increase in life satisfaction. People with high EI can control, recognize and use emotional experiences. They can also deal with problems by broadening their perspectives, develop positive outlooks about incidents and use prevalent strategies to promote their mental health (3).

Hypothesis 4: religious attitude, happiness and EI can predict life satisfaction. The results showed that among the existing variables, only happiness, could predict life satisfaction, although religious attitude was not included in the regression analysis due to a lack of relationship with life satisfaction. In this context, research about the role of happiness and optimism in life satisfaction showed that they are strong predictors of life satisfaction (39). Several studies have examined the relationship between EI and life satisfaction and research regarding self-report measures found a moderate positive correlation between EI and life satisfaction (26, 27). Our findings indi-

cate that happiness plays an effective role in life satisfaction. Thus, instituting training programs based on EI and creating a favorable environment in schools could help improve life satisfaction of female teachers.

### 5.1. Limitations

1) Lack of cooperation of a number of schools and teachers, 2) prolonged process of the questionnaires' completion by the teachers, and 3) the abound of questionnaires and questions.

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