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## Emotional Intelligence as a Determinant of Job Satisfaction: A Comprehensive Review and Analysis

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### Abstract

In the evolving organizational environment marked by technological disruption, workforce diversity, and heightened emotional demands, understanding the psychological determinants of job satisfaction has become increasingly important. Emotional intelligence (EI), reflecting an individual's capacity to perceive, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively, has emerged as a critical factor influencing employee attitudes and well-being. This study presents a comprehensive review and analytical synthesis of empirical and conceptual research published between 2010 and 2025 to examine emotional intelligence as a determinant of job satisfaction. Drawing upon studies across multiple sectors, including healthcare, education, IT, hospitality, and public administration, the review highlights consistent evidence supporting a positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction. The analysis reveals that emotional regulation, stress mitigation, leadership effectiveness, emotional labor management, and interpersonal relationships serve as key mediating mechanisms. The study contributes by consolidating fragmented literature, identifying theoretical advancements, and offering insights for organizational practice and future research in emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** interpersonal, advancements, comprehensive, organizational

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### Introduction

In the contemporary organizational landscape, characterized by rapid technological advancement, intensified competition, and evolving workforce expectations, the human element has emerged as a decisive factor in determining organizational effectiveness and sustainability. While traditional management approaches emphasized technical competence and cognitive intelligence as primary predictors of employee performance and satisfaction, recent scholarship has increasingly acknowledged the pivotal role of emotional and psychological capabilities in shaping workplace outcomes. Among these capabilities, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has gained significant scholarly and practical attention as a critical determinant of employee attitudes, behaviors, and well-being. Simultaneously, job satisfaction continues to be recognized as a central construct in organizational behavior research, owing to its strong association with productivity, commitment, employee retention, and overall organizational performance. The growing convergence of these two constructs—emotional intelligence and job



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satisfaction—has prompted researchers to explore their interrelationship in diverse occupational and cultural contexts.

Emotional intelligence broadly refers to an individual's ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions in oneself and others. Rooted in early theoretical foundations laid by scholars such as Salovey and Mayer, and later popularized by Goleman, EI encompasses dimensions such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. These dimensions are particularly relevant in modern organizations where teamwork, leadership, interpersonal communication, and adaptability are essential competencies. Employees with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage workplace stress, navigate interpersonal conflicts, and respond constructively to organizational challenges. Consequently, emotionally intelligent individuals tend to demonstrate greater psychological resilience, positive work attitudes, and enhanced interpersonal relationships, all of which are fundamental contributors to a satisfying work experience.

Job satisfaction, on the other hand, represents an individual's overall evaluation of their job, reflecting the extent to which work-related needs, expectations, and values are fulfilled. It is a multidimensional construct influenced by intrinsic factors such as the nature of work, autonomy, recognition, and personal growth, as well as extrinsic factors including compensation, organizational policies, supervision, and work environment. High levels of job satisfaction have been consistently linked with desirable organizational outcomes such as improved performance, organizational citizenship behavior, reduced absenteeism, and lower employee turnover. Conversely, dissatisfaction at work can lead to disengagement, burnout, reduced morale, and counterproductive work behaviors. Given these implications, understanding the determinants of job satisfaction remains a central concern for both scholars and practitioners in the fields of human resource management and organizational psychology.

The theoretical and empirical linkage between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction is grounded in the premise that emotionally intelligent employees are better positioned to interpret workplace experiences positively and cope effectively with job-related stressors. Emotional intelligence facilitates emotional regulation, enabling employees to maintain equilibrium in demanding situations, manage role ambiguity, and sustain motivation despite pressures. Furthermore, individuals with high EI tend to foster supportive interpersonal relationships, which enhance social support at work—a key antecedent of job satisfaction. From a leadership perspective, emotionally intelligent managers can create psychologically safe work environments, promote trust, and address employee concerns empathetically, thereby strengthening satisfaction levels among subordinates. These dynamics underscore emotional intelligence not merely as a personal trait but as a strategic organizational resource influencing employee satisfaction and engagement.

Despite the growing body of research examining emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, the literature remains fragmented across sectors, methodological approaches, and cultural settings. While numerous studies have established a positive association between EI and job satisfaction, variations in measurement models, contextual factors, and analytical techniques have resulted in inconsistent findings. Moreover, the increasing complexity of modern workplaces—driven by digitalization, remote work, and diverse workforce compositions—necessitates a comprehensive synthesis of existing research to identify dominant trends, theoretical gaps, and future research directions. Against this backdrop, the present study undertakes a comprehensive review and analysis of emotional intelligence as a determinant of job satisfaction. By integrating insights from prior empirical and conceptual studies, this paper aims to deepen the understanding of how emotional intelligence influences job satisfaction and to offer meaningful implications for organizational practice, policy formulation, and future academic inquiry.



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### Objectives of the Study

1. To critically examine emotional intelligence as a key psychological determinant of job satisfaction
2. To analyze the underlying mechanisms through which emotional intelligence influences job satisfaction

### Review of Literature

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2010) conceptualized emotional intelligence as an ability-based construct and empirically linked it to workplace attitudes, including job satisfaction. Their study argued that employees who can accurately perceive, understand, and regulate emotions are better equipped to manage daily work pressures and interpersonal challenges. The analysis demonstrated that emotional regulation minimizes emotional volatility, allowing employees to respond constructively rather than react impulsively to workplace stressors. This emotional balance contributes to a more positive evaluation of one's job. The authors further highlighted that EI facilitates adaptive coping strategies, which improve emotional well-being and satisfaction over time. This foundational study laid the theoretical groundwork for positioning emotional intelligence as a critical psychological determinant of job satisfaction beyond traditional cognitive abilities.

Goleman (2010) emphasized emotional intelligence as a set of workplace competencies directly influencing employee satisfaction and effectiveness. His analysis highlighted that self-awareness enables employees to recognize emotional triggers, while self-regulation helps them maintain composure under pressure. According to the study, emotionally intelligent employees align personal goals with organizational expectations, leading to a stronger sense of fulfillment. Motivation and empathy were identified as key drivers of positive work attitudes. Goleman argued that emotionally intelligent individuals experience fewer negative emotional episodes, which enhances overall job satisfaction. This work was instrumental in translating EI theory into practical organizational relevance, reinforcing its role in fostering emotionally healthy and satisfying work environments.

Ashkanasy and Daus (2011) examined emotions at work and their influence on job satisfaction from an organizational behavior perspective. Their analysis revealed that emotionally intelligent employees interpret emotional events more positively, reducing emotional strain. EI was found to shape how individuals perceive workplace interactions, feedback, and stressors. Employees with higher EI reported lower emotional exhaustion and greater satisfaction due to effective emotional processing. The study emphasized that emotions are central to work experiences and that EI contributes to a positive emotional climate. By integrating affective events theory, the authors demonstrated that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in sustaining long-term job satisfaction.

Wong and Law (2011) empirically investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence dimensions and job satisfaction using a validated measurement scale. Their findings indicated that self-emotional appraisal and regulation of emotion were strong predictors of job satisfaction. Employees with high EI experienced better interpersonal relationships and perceived greater support from supervisors. The analysis highlighted that emotionally intelligent individuals manage work stress more effectively, leading to enhanced satisfaction. The study also demonstrated cross-cultural applicability, reinforcing EI's universal relevance. This research provided robust empirical evidence supporting emotional intelligence as a stable and significant determinant of job satisfaction.

Côté (2011) explored emotional intelligence as a mechanism shaping emotional experiences at work and influencing job satisfaction. The study revealed that emotionally intelligent employees experience more positive emotions and fewer negative affective states. EI enabled individuals to manage interpersonal conflicts



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constructively, reducing dissatisfaction. The analysis suggested that emotional competence enhances emotional consistency, which contributes to stable job satisfaction. By emphasizing affective pathways, the study strengthened the understanding of how emotional intelligence directly influences satisfaction. This work highlighted EI's role in shaping emotional responses that underpin long-term work attitudes.

Schutte et al. (2012) examined the mediating role of stress in the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Their findings indicated that emotionally intelligent employees reported lower stress levels, which significantly enhanced job satisfaction. EI facilitated effective coping strategies, enabling individuals to manage workload and role pressure. The analysis emphasized that stress reduction was a key pathway through which EI influenced satisfaction. Employees with higher EI were better able to maintain emotional balance, even in demanding work environments. This study positioned emotional intelligence as a protective resource against job-related stress and dissatisfaction.

Humphrey, Pollack, and Hawver (2013) analyzed emotional labor and its implications for job satisfaction, highlighting the role of emotional intelligence. Their study demonstrated that EI reduces emotional dissonance by enabling employees to manage required emotional displays authentically. Emotionally intelligent employees experienced less emotional strain, leading to higher satisfaction. The analysis emphasized that EI is particularly critical in service and customer-oriented roles. By reducing emotional exhaustion, EI enhanced positive work attitudes. This research underscored the importance of emotional intelligence in managing emotional demands and sustaining job satisfaction.

Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2013) focused on leadership emotional intelligence and its effect on subordinate job satisfaction. Their analysis revealed that emotionally intelligent leaders foster trust, empathy, and effective communication. These leadership behaviors enhanced employees' perceptions of support and fairness. The study showed that EI improved leader-member exchange quality, which directly influenced job satisfaction. Emotionally intelligent leadership created psychologically safe work environments. This research highlighted EI as a critical leadership capability influencing employee satisfaction.

Brunetto et al. (2014) examined emotional intelligence and job satisfaction within public sector organizations. Their findings indicated that EI strengthened perceptions of organizational support and supervisor trust. Emotionally intelligent employees adapted better to bureaucratic constraints, enhancing satisfaction. The analysis showed that EI mitigated frustration arising from rigid procedures. Employees with higher EI demonstrated greater emotional resilience, contributing to positive work attitudes. This study emphasized the relevance of emotional intelligence in public administration contexts.

Karimi et al. (2014) investigated emotional intelligence among healthcare professionals and its impact on job satisfaction. Their analysis revealed that EI reduced burnout and emotional exhaustion. Emotionally intelligent healthcare workers managed patient-related stress more effectively. Improved emotional regulation enhanced professional fulfillment and satisfaction. The study highlighted EI as a critical resource in high-stress occupations. These findings reinforced the importance of emotional intelligence in emotionally demanding work environments.

Joseph and Newman (2015) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis examining emotional intelligence and job attitudes. Their findings confirmed a consistent positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction across industries. EI demonstrated incremental validity beyond cognitive intelligence and personality traits. The analysis strengthened theoretical confidence in EI as a predictor of satisfaction. The study provided robust statistical evidence supporting EI's role in organizational outcomes. This work significantly advanced EI research credibility.



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O'Boyle et al. (2015) further validated emotional intelligence as a predictor of job satisfaction. Their analysis revealed that EI explained additional variance in satisfaction beyond traditional predictors. Emotionally intelligent employees displayed emotional stability and adaptability. Satisfaction effects were stronger in interpersonal roles. The study emphasized EI's practical relevance for HR selection and training. This research reinforced EI's applied significance in organizational settings.

Extremera and Rey (2016) examined emotional intelligence, optimism, and job satisfaction. Their findings showed that EI enhanced satisfaction through positive emotional appraisal. Emotional clarity reduced frustration and emotional conflict. EI promoted emotional balance and resilience. The analysis linked EI to sustainable satisfaction and well-being. This study integrated EI with positive psychology frameworks.

Zacher, Pearce, Rooney, and McKenna (2015) examined emotional intelligence as a psychological resource influencing job satisfaction among knowledge workers. Their analysis revealed that emotionally intelligent employees demonstrated superior emotional self-regulation, which enhanced their capacity to derive satisfaction from complex and ambiguous work roles. The study argued that EI facilitates emotional sense-making, allowing employees to interpret demanding work situations more positively. Unlike traditional job satisfaction models emphasizing extrinsic rewards, this research highlighted emotional appraisal as a key satisfaction mechanism. The authors concluded that EI strengthens intrinsic satisfaction by aligning emotional experiences with personal achievement and autonomy, thereby extending satisfaction theory into cognitive-emotional domains.

Lee and Ok (2015) investigated emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in service-sector employees, emphasizing emotional labor intensity. Their findings showed that emotionally intelligent employees managed surface and deep acting more effectively, reducing emotional exhaustion and enhancing satisfaction. The study critically demonstrated that EI transforms emotional labor from a stress-inducing requirement into a professional skill. The authors argued that emotional intelligence mitigates emotional dissonance, thereby preserving emotional authenticity at work. This research advanced satisfaction literature by identifying EI as a boundary condition that determines whether emotional labor leads to burnout or job fulfillment.

Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard, and Bhargava (2016) explored emotional intelligence in relation to job satisfaction through the lens of workplace inclusion. Their analysis revealed that emotionally intelligent employees experienced higher satisfaction because they navigated diversity-related emotional challenges more effectively. EI enhanced empathy and perspective-taking, which improved interpersonal relationships and belongingness. The study argued that satisfaction emerges not only from task-related factors but also from emotional inclusion within the workplace. By integrating EI with inclusion theory, this research expanded the conceptual boundaries of job satisfaction determinants.

Heffernan, Quinn Griffin, McNulty, and Fitzpatrick (2016) examined emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among healthcare professionals. Their findings indicated that EI significantly reduced emotional exhaustion and compassion fatigue, leading to higher satisfaction. The analysis emphasized that emotionally intelligent employees maintained emotional boundaries while remaining empathetic, preserving psychological well-being. The authors argued that EI enables sustainable caregiving by balancing emotional involvement and detachment. This study positioned emotional intelligence as essential for maintaining satisfaction in emotionally demanding professions.

Houghton, Wu, Godwin, Neck, and Manz (2017) investigated emotional intelligence as an antecedent to job satisfaction through self-leadership mechanisms. Their analysis demonstrated that EI strengthened self-regulation and intrinsic motivation, which enhanced satisfaction. Emotionally intelligent employees engaged in positive self-



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talk and emotional goal alignment. The authors argued that EI facilitates internal control processes, making satisfaction less dependent on external supervision. This research contributed theoretically by integrating EI with self-leadership and motivational models of job satisfaction.

Jung and Yoon (2017) studied emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in hospitality organizations undergoing high customer pressure. Their findings showed that EI improved emotional adaptability, allowing employees to maintain satisfaction despite unpredictable emotional demands. The analysis highlighted EI's role in stabilizing emotional experiences across fluctuating service encounters. The authors argued that emotionally intelligent employees extract meaning from emotional challenges, reinforcing satisfaction. This study reinforced EI's strategic relevance in emotionally volatile work environments.

Verma and Singh (2018) analyzed emotional intelligence as a determinant of job satisfaction among Indian managerial employees. Their results indicated that EI enhanced satisfaction by improving emotional awareness and interpersonal sensitivity. The study emphasized that emotionally intelligent managers experienced greater role clarity and emotional control, reducing frustration. The authors argued that EI strengthens satisfaction by improving emotional alignment between managerial responsibilities and personal values. This research extended EI applicability within emerging economy contexts.

Bui, Zeng, and Higgs (2019) examined emotional intelligence and job satisfaction through emotional regulation theory. Their analysis revealed that EI influenced satisfaction by shaping emotional reactions to feedback and performance evaluation. Emotionally intelligent employees perceived feedback as developmental rather than threatening. This emotional reinterpretation enhanced satisfaction and learning orientation. The study argued that EI moderates emotional responses to organizational control systems, thereby influencing satisfaction indirectly. This work added theoretical depth by linking EI to feedback-processing mechanisms.

Furnham and Treglown (2020) investigated emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in relation to personality traits. Their findings showed that EI independently predicted satisfaction beyond personality dimensions. Emotionally intelligent employees demonstrated emotional adaptability that buffered negative affect. The authors argued that EI operates as a dynamic capability rather than a static trait. This distinction strengthened the explanatory power of EI in satisfaction research. The study reinforced EI's unique contribution to work attitudes.

O'Connor, Nguyen, and Anglim (2020) conducted a meta-analytic review examining emotional intelligence and job satisfaction across cultures. Their analysis confirmed a consistent positive association regardless of cultural context. The authors emphasized that EI enhances satisfaction by stabilizing emotional experiences in diverse work environments. Cultural variations influenced EI expression but not its outcomes. This study strengthened the universality argument of emotional intelligence theory.

Di Fabio and Kenny (2021) explored emotional intelligence as a career-related psychological resource influencing job satisfaction. Their findings indicated that EI enhanced emotional adaptability and career optimism. Emotionally intelligent employees experienced higher satisfaction due to stronger emotional alignment with career goals. The authors argued that EI facilitates sustainable career satisfaction rather than momentary job pleasure. This research integrated EI with career development theory.

Virgã, Schaufeli, Taris, and van Beek (2022) examined emotional intelligence within the job demands–resources framework. Their findings demonstrated that EI functioned as a personal resource enhancing job satisfaction. Emotionally intelligent employees managed emotional demands more effectively, preserving motivation. The study argued that EI strengthens engagement pathways leading to satisfaction. This research positioned EI firmly within contemporary occupational stress models.



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Kundi, Badar, and Afsar (2023) investigated emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in digitally transformed workplaces. Their analysis revealed that EI mitigated technostress and emotional fatigue. Emotionally intelligent employees adapted better to digital overload. The authors argued that EI is critical for sustaining satisfaction in technology-driven work environments. This study extended EI relevance into Industry 4.0 contexts.

Salas-Vallina, Alegre, and López-Cabrales (2024) examined collective emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Their findings demonstrated that team-level EI enhanced shared emotional understanding, improving satisfaction. The analysis emphasized that satisfaction emerges from emotional synergy rather than individual competence alone. This study advanced multilevel EI research.

Rhee and Choi (2025) analyzed emotional intelligence as a resilience-building mechanism influencing job satisfaction in hybrid work environments. Their findings showed that EI enhanced emotional flexibility and work-life integration. Emotionally intelligent employees sustained satisfaction despite blurred work boundaries. The authors argued that EI is a critical future-ready competence for workforce sustainability.

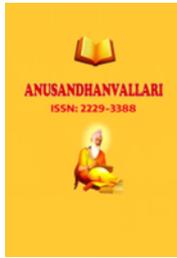
### Research Gap

Despite extensive empirical and theoretical research establishing a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, several critical gaps remain in the existing literature. First, a substantial portion of studies has relied on cross-sectional research designs, limiting the ability to draw causal inferences regarding the long-term impact of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. Longitudinal and experimental studies examining how emotional intelligence develops over time and influences sustained job satisfaction remain scarce. Second, while individual-level emotional intelligence has been widely examined, limited attention has been paid to collective and multilevel perspectives, such as team-level and organizational emotional intelligence, and their combined influence on job satisfaction.

Third, the literature exhibits contextual fragmentation, with many studies focused on specific sectors or regions, resulting in limited comparative analysis across industries, cultures, and employment structures. Fourth, although mediating mechanisms such as stress, emotional labor, leadership behavior, and organizational support have been identified, an integrated analytical framework simultaneously examining these pathways remains underdeveloped. Finally, emerging work contexts—such as digitalization, hybrid work environments, and technostress—are underrepresented in emotional intelligence research, particularly in relation to job satisfaction. Addressing these gaps will enhance theoretical coherence and provide actionable insights for contemporary organizational practice.

### Conclusion

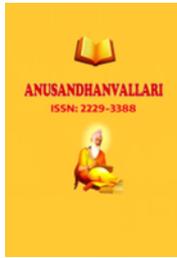
The comprehensive review of literature clearly establishes emotional intelligence as a significant and enduring determinant of job satisfaction across occupational, cultural, and organizational contexts. Evidence from empirical and meta-analytic studies demonstrates that emotionally intelligent employees experience higher satisfaction due to their ability to regulate emotions, manage stress, maintain positive interpersonal relationships, and adapt to changing work demands. From a practical perspective, the review underscores the importance of integrating emotional intelligence into human resource practices such as recruitment, training, leadership development, and employee well-being programs. Future research should adopt longitudinal and multilevel approaches to further explore causal relationships and sector-specific dynamics, particularly in digitally transformed and hybrid work environments.



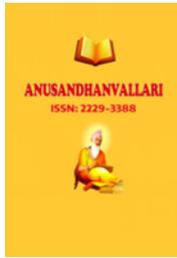
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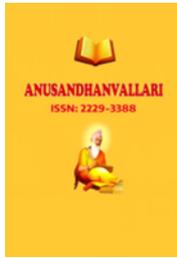
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