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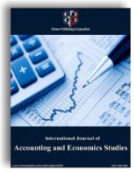

Demographic and Professional Determinants of Emotional Intelligence among Women Journalists in Kerala and Their Impact on Life Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, regulate, and utilize emotions efficiently. has arisen as a critical psychological asset influencing well-being, adaptability, and occupational success across various professions. In high-pressure fields such as journalism, where emotional labor, tight deadlines, and unpredictable work schedules are routine, EI plays a dynamic role in mediating both personal and professional outcomes. This study investigates the impact of EI on work-life balance, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among women journalists in Kerala, a state known for its vibrant media landscape and increasing female workforce participation. A sample of 196 women journalists representing diverse media types (print, television, radio, and online) and spanning various age groups and experience levels participated in the study. Employing a mixed-method analytical framework comprising One-Way ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression, the research revealed statistically significant variations in overall and dimension-wise EI across age, experience, and media type. Notably, professionals aged 40–49 and those in online media roles demonstrated the highest EI scores, particularly in empathy and motivation. EI showed a strong positive correlation with life satisfaction ($r = 0.446$), and moderate correlations with job satisfaction ($r = 0.323$) and work-life balance ($r = 0.181$). Regression analysis further confirmed that EI significantly predicts these well-being outcomes. These findings underscore the necessity of integrating EI-enhancing interventions within media organizations to foster resilience and satisfaction among women journalists. Beyond psychological implications, the study highlights the economic relevance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in journalistic organizations. Higher EI scores among mid-career and online media professionals are not only linked to greater well-being but also suggest potential gains in organizational productivity and employee retention. By identifying EI as a predictive variable for satisfaction outcomes, media firms can assess the cost-effectiveness of EI development programs, thereby aligning human capital investments with improved organizational performance.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Women Journalists, Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, Cost-effectiveness*

1. Introduction

In the evolving landscape of modern workplaces, the concept of EI has emerged as a crucial determinant of individual effectiveness, interpersonal relationships, and occupational well-being (Mrisho, D. H., & Mseti, S., 2024). Emotional intelligence broadly refers to an individual's ability to perceive, interpret, and regulate emotional information in oneself and others (Zhang, W., & Adegbola, O., 2022). This includes recognizing emotions accurately, utilizing emotional insights to facilitate cognitive activities, understanding emotional fluctuations, and managing emotions in adaptive and constructive ways. As contemporary professions become increasingly dynamic, fast-paced, and socially interconnected, emotional intelligence is being recognized not merely as a personal trait but as a professional necessity, especially in high-demand fields that require constant emotional regulation and relational engagement.

The value of EI is particularly profound in professions where human interaction is central, such as healthcare, education, law enforcement, and, notably, journalism (Andrushko et al. 2021). Journalism, in its essence, is not just about reporting facts but also about interpreting societal moods, navigating complex human experiences, and conveying narratives that resonate with audiences. Journalists operate at the intersection of information and emotion. Whether they are covering conflict zones, interviewing individuals in distress, or relaying sensitive socio-political events, their ability to empathize, remain composed under pressure, and communicate with clarity becomes vital. In such emotionally charged and unpredictable environments, emotional intelligence becomes a core asset that supports resilience, ethical decision-making, and relational balance.

In the field of journalism, professionals are frequently exposed to high-stress scenarios that demand quick decision-making, multitasking, and interpersonal sensitivity. The newsroom is often a site of tight deadlines, editorial pressures, public scrutiny, and competitive workflows (Ruth, D. 2023). In addition to factual accuracy and narrative clarity, journalists are expected to manage the psychological weight of their assignments, sustain professional decorum, and maintain constructive relationships with peers, sources, and the public. This is particularly true in the digital age, where 24/7 news cycles and social media engagement escalate the emotional and cognitive demands placed on journalists. Hence, emotional intelligence in journalism is not an optional soft skill—it is a psychological toolkit essential for long-term professional sustainability and integrity.

One of the most important components of emotional intelligence in journalism is self-awareness (Antonopoulou, H. 2024). Journalists must be constantly aware of their biases, emotional reactions, and communicative tone. This self-awareness enables them to approach their subjects with fairness and objectivity, even when personal feelings are triggered. For instance, while covering contentious social issues or personal tragedies, the journalist's emotional response must be managed in order to uphold journalistic standards. The absence of this self-regulatory ability can compromise both the quality of reporting and the emotional well-being of the journalist. Self-awareness is the foundation upon which all other EI competencies are built, influencing how journalists process experiences, respond to stress, and present themselves professionally.

Self-regulation, another core dimension of emotional intelligence, enables journalists to remain composed, adaptive, and ethically consistent even in volatile situations. The nature of journalism often entails exposure to traumatic events, unexpected challenges in the field, or heated editorial discussions. Self-regulation allows for emotional control without suppression, helping journalists process emotional arousal in healthy ways while continuing to perform their duties effectively. It supports clarity in judgment, professionalism in demeanor, and consistency in action, especially under crisis conditions or ethical dilemmas.

Equally vital is empathy, the ability to sense, understand, and react to the emotions of others (Drigas et al. 2023). Empathy plays a dual role in journalism: it enhances the depth and humanism of stories, and it improves professional interactions. An empathetic journalist can conduct interviews more sensitively, represent diverse perspectives more responsibly, and connect with audiences on an emotional level. Empathy also fosters compassion and respect in peer relationships within the media ecosystem, reducing conflicts and promoting inclusive collaboration. Without empathy, journalism risks becoming detached, sensationalist, or emotionally exploitative.

Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation driven by purpose and curiosity, is another EI component that aligns closely with the core values of journalism. Emotionally intelligent journalists are driven not only by external rewards but by an internal commitment to truth, justice, and social contribution. This motivation sustains them through fatigue, professional setbacks, and public criticism. It encourages them to pursue difficult stories, question dominant narratives, and remain engaged with their professional mission even when circumstances are discouraging. Motivation fuels both resilience and excellence in the journalistic craft.

Finally, social skills are indispensable in the journalistic profession. These include effective communication, conflict management, teamwork, and relationship-building. Journalists must constantly interact with diverse individuals—editors, colleagues, informants, government officials, and the public. The ability to navigate these social terrains with tact, diplomacy, and assertiveness is crucial. Social skills also contribute to leadership within journalistic teams, foster positive newsroom climates, and facilitate audience trust. Emotionally intelligent journalists can manage disagreements without hostility, give and receive feedback constructively, and influence others through empathy and clarity.

The relevance of emotional intelligence in journalism is further magnified when considering the gendered nature of professional challenges. Women journalists often face additional pressures, including gender bias, safety risks, role strain between personal and professional responsibilities, and underrepresentation in decision-making roles (Zaeem Yasin, D. A. A., & Musarat, A., 2023). These challenges can impact emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and career advancement. In such contexts, emotional intelligence serves as a critical psychological buffer and empowerment tool, helping women journalists cope effectively, advocate for themselves, and remain resilient in demanding environments. Emotional intelligence enhances not only individual adaptation but collective transformation by promoting inclusive, respectful, and emotionally aware professional cultures.

In the Indian context, and particularly within the state of Kerala, journalism remains a vital part of the socio-political fabric. Kerala boasts a literate, media-savvy population and a relatively progressive media environment. Yet, the pressures and challenges facing women journalists in Kerala mirror global trends, including long working hours, unpredictable schedules, technological disruption, and gender-related professional hurdles. As the media landscape continues to shift toward digital platforms and 24/7 news cycles, the emotional demands of journalism are only intensifying. The integration of emotional intelligence into journalistic training and organizational practices becomes not just beneficial but essential for sustainable careers and ethical storytelling (Escudero et al. 2023).

Despite the theoretical and practical relevance of emotional intelligence in journalism, empirical studies in this area—especially focusing on gender-specific dynamics in the Indian context—remain limited. Most existing research emphasizes cognitive competencies or ethical challenges, with limited attention to emotional labor, psychological well-being, or emotional resilience in journalistic settings. There is a pressing need to examine how emotional intelligence interacts with other facets of professional life, particularly for women professionals. A nuanced understanding of these dynamics can inform better policies, training modules, and support systems in the media industry.

In today's knowledge-based economies, emotional intelligence (EI) has become a critical component not just for individual well-being, but for organizational efficiency and cost optimization. Empirical research has shown that higher EI levels are associated with reduced absenteeism, lower burnout rates, and enhanced productivity—all of which have direct cost implications for employers. Integrating EI into workforce development strategies, especially in media organizations, offers a cost-effective path to improving performance and organizational sustainability. Therefore, the present study contributes to both psychological understanding and economic evaluation of EI.

The proposed research seeks to address this critical gap by exploring how emotional intelligence influences the professional and personal well-being of women journalists in Kerala. By examining both overall and dimension-specific EI and linking it to factors such as age, experience, media type, and key well-being indicators, the study aims to offer actionable insights into how emotional intelligence can be leveraged as a resource for empowerment, effectiveness, and holistic development in journalistic careers.

1.1 Research questions

1) How do emotional intelligence levels and their five dimensions (Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills) differ among women journalists in Kerala across demographic and professional variables such as age, experience, and media type (e.g., print, television, digital, and radio)?
2) Which specific dimensions of emotional intelligence are comparatively more developed or less developed among women journalists working in different categories of media organizations in Kerala?

3) To what extent does EI serve as a moderating or mediating variable in the relationship between WLB and JS among women journalists in Kerala?
4) In what ways does emotional intelligence shape the combined influence of WLB, JS, and life satisfaction on the overall well-being of women journalists in Kerala?

1.2 Objectives

- To assess the variations in the level of emotional intelligence and its five core dimensions—Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills—among women journalists in Kerala, with respect to demographic and professional factors such as age, years of experience, and media type (print, television, digital, and radio).
- To examine the role of emotional intelligence in influencing the relationship between work-life balance, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among women journalists in Kerala, with a view to understanding its predictive and integrative impact on personal and professional well-being.

1.3 Proposed hypotheses

H01: There exists no statistically verifiable differentiation in the overall emotional intelligence scores or in its five constituent dimensions when compared across women journalists categorized by age, professional experience, and media type (print, digital, television, and radio) in the context of Kerala.
H1: Statistically significant differences are observed in the overall emotional intelligence levels and their five constituent dimensions among women journalists in Kerala, when grouped according to age, professional experience, and media platform.
H02: Emotional intelligence does not exert a statistically meaningful influence on the interrelationship between WLB, occupational satisfaction, and overall life satisfaction among women journalists in Kerala.
H2: Emotional intelligence significantly influences the structural relationship between WLB, JS, and life satisfaction, indicating its predictive and potentially moderating role among women journalists in Kerala.

2. Related Works

Tritami et al. (2025) employed a quantitative approach using moderation regression analysis to explore the role of EI in enhancing employee interaction quality and its subsequent impact on customer satisfaction, with Work Life Balance (WLB) as a moderating variable. The study was conducted among 200 customer service professionals, primarily in Indonesia, reflecting sectors with high client engagement and emotional demands. Findings indicated that emotional intelligence significantly influenced employee interactions, which in turn positively affected both work-life balance and customer satisfaction. Shaban et al. (2025) conducted a cross-sectional study in Damnhour City, Egypt, to investigate the mediating role of EI in the relationship between burnout and technostress among 180 critical care nurses. Findings revealed that EI significantly mediated the link between technostress and burnout, reducing emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Despite the meaningful insights, the study faced limitations, including its cross-sectional design, limited geographic scope, reliance on self-reported data, and a relatively modest sample size.
Huseini et al. (2025) conducted a cross-sectional study in Oman to evaluate the level of occupational burnout among first-year medical residents and its association with trait EI. Using stratified random sampling and standardized tools such as the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and the Maslach Burnout Inventory, data were collected from 122 residents across various specialties. The study found a 25.8% burnout prevalence, with high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. A significant positive correlation was identified between personal achievement and EI. Notably, age and marital status were linked to burnout dimensions. Limitations included potential underreporting due to cultural norms, the cross-sectional design, possible selection bias, and the exclusion of variables like work–life balance and personality traits.
Razzaq et al. (2025) conducted a correlational study in Faisalabad, Pakistan, to examine the relationship between work-related stress, EI, and life satisfaction among nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. A purposive sample of 200 nurses (100 male and 100 female) was selected from public hospitals, and data were collected using standardized tools. Analyses were performed using SPSS, employing Pearson correlation, regression, and t-tests. Results indicated a significant negative correlation between work stress and both EI and life satisfaction, with work stress emerging as a strong predictor of life dissatisfaction. Nathaya et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative study to explore the effects of EI on JS, WLB, and burnout among teachers at State Vocational Schools in DKI Jakarta. Utilizing purposive sampling, 248 respondents were selected from a population of 3,181. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a 4-point Likert scale and analyzed via SEM with SmartPLS 3.0. The findings confirmed that emotional intelligence positively influenced JS and WLB, while negatively affecting burnout. Additionally, WLB and burnout served as mediators in the relationship between EI and JS.
Naz et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative, correlational study to explore the relationship between EI and WLB among working women in public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. A sample of 330 participants was randomly selected from six universities, and data were collected using structured questionnaires measuring EI and WLB. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship, indicating that higher EI levels were associated with better work-life balance. The study emphasized the importance of emotional regulation, institutional support, and self-management in promoting WLB. However, data collection was constrained by cultural sensitivities and COVID-19-related limitations, particularly in accessing respondents.
Masood et al. (2023) conducted a quantitative study in Pakistan to examine the relationship between EI, WLB, and JS among 320 nurses across various healthcare facilities. Data were collected through structured online questionnaires using Google Forms. Statistical analyses, including correlation, ANOVA, regression, and t-tests, were employed, revealing a strong positive relationship between EI and both WLB and JS, with R^2 indicating that EI accounted for 60% of the variance in job satisfaction. The study underscored the significance of EI in managing occupational stress, especially in high-pressure environments like nursing.
Geraci et al. (2023) conducted a study in Sicily during the COVID-19 lockdown to examine the role of EI and perceived emotional intelligence (PEI) in mitigating burnout, maintaining self-efficacy, and sustaining work engagement among 65 teachers. Utilizing self-report questionnaires and retrospective assessment (T1 before and T2 during the pandemic), the study revealed increased burnout and reduced self-efficacy and engagement due to the stressors of remote teaching. Results indicated that higher EI and PEI levels served as protective factors during this period. Despite technical readiness, difficulties in classroom management and motivation persisted. The study was limited by its small, predominantly female sample and the simultaneous data collection for both time points.

Alkorashy et al. (2024) employed a cross-sectional, correlational design to investigate how EI moderated the relationship between nurses' preparedness to care for COVID-19 patients and quality of work life (QoWL) across multiple healthcare settings. Using standardized self-report scales to assess EI and QoWL, data were gathered from 267 nurses, predominantly female, with high levels of personal and social competencies. Although preparedness alone did not significantly predict QoWL, hierarchical regression revealed that EI significantly moderated this relationship, explaining 41% of the variance in QoWL. Findings emphasized the buffering role of EI in high-stress environments. Ahmed and Yousaf (2021) conducted a quantitative study in Pakistan to examine the influence of EI on journalists' attitudes toward peace journalism. Utilizing the TEIQue-SF by Petrides and the conflict reporting attitude scale by Neumann and Fahmy, responses from 793 conflict-reporting journalists in Lahore, Islamabad, and Karachi were analyzed using SPSS and PLS-SEM. The study revealed that EI and its components had significant positive correlations with peace journalism attitudes, with global trait EI showing the strongest predictive value ($\beta = 0.510$).

EI has received growing attention in labor economics and organizational behavior as a non-cognitive skill with tangible impacts on performance, satisfaction, and retention. While multiple studies have established a positive link between EI and job satisfaction, findings remain inconsistent across contexts and industries. Despite the proliferation of EI research, theoretical integration remains limited. From a human capital theory standpoint, EI represents a form of soft-skill investment that enhances worker efficiency, adaptability, and team cohesion—ultimately contributing to organizational performance. Similarly, behavioral economics emphasizes bounded rationality and emotional regulation, arguing that emotionally intelligent employees are less susceptible to cognitive bias and more consistent in decision-making under pressure. Yet, few studies directly apply these economic models to media environments, leaving a gap in understanding how EI translates into cost-effective workforce development in journalism. The present study addresses this gap by bridging emotional intelligence with both psychological satisfaction outcomes and potential economic returns.

Despite extensive scholarly attention to EI across diverse professional contexts—including nursing, education, and customer service—the existing methodologies display several recurring limitations that underscore the need for further investigation, particularly within the field of journalism. Many of the studies adopt cross-sectional designs and rely heavily on self-reported data, which introduces the risk of social desirability bias and restricts causal inferences (e.g., Shaban et al. 2025, Al-Huseini et al. 2025, Nathaya et al. 2022). Additionally, sample populations are often limited in size or geographically constrained, reducing generalizability across broader occupational or cultural settings, especially in underrepresented sectors such as media and journalism (Al-Huseini et al. 2025, Ruth, D. 2023, Drigas et al. 2023). While advanced statistical techniques like SEM and PLS-SEM have been employed, there remains a tendency to prioritize trait-level or global EI assessments, often at the expense of exploring how individual EI dimensions distinctly impact personal and occupational outcomes (Tritami et al. 2025, Razzaq et al. 2025, Ahmed, M., & Yousaf, Z. 2021). Moreover, limited attention has been given to the mediating or moderating role of EI in complex psychological constructs such as WLB and life satisfaction, particularly among women professionals in emotionally demanding roles. These methodological gaps, combined with a lack of sector-specific focus—especially within the journalism profession in developing contexts—highlight a critical research void.

3. Methods

3.1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study is anchored in the theoretical idea that EI functions as a multidimensional psychological resource that both influences and is influenced by individual and contextual factors. Within this framework, EI is posited to be shaped by key demographic and professional determinants, reflecting its developmental and experiential nature. The five core dimensions of EI are treated as integral constructs that jointly define the emotional functioning of women journalists. These EI dimensions are hypothesized to exert a direct and significant influence on three central indicators of well-being: work-life balance, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study, outlining the hypothesized relationships between emotional intelligence and the selected outcome variables within the context of women working in the news media industry in Kerala.

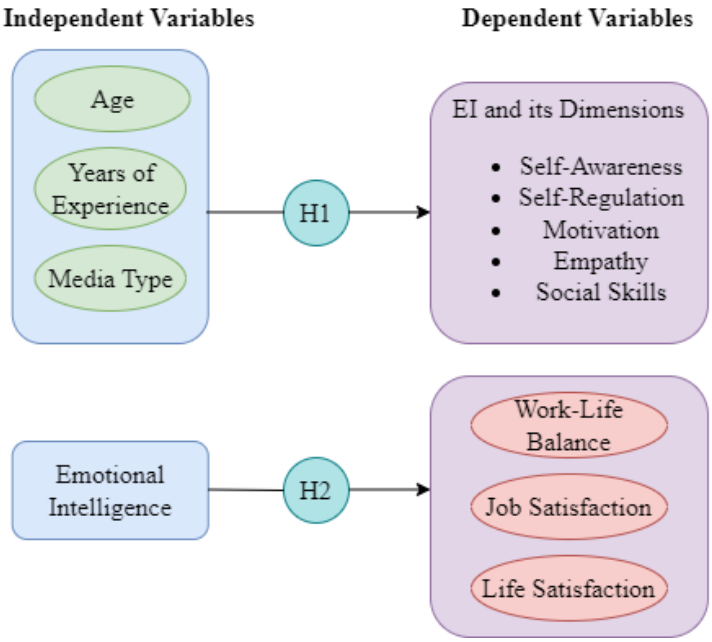

Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of the proposed research

3.2 Research design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to investigate the influence of EI on the professional and personal well-being of women journalists in Kerala. The research seeks to examine both the variability in emotional intelligence across demographic and occupational classifications, as well as its functional role in shaping key outcome variables such as WLB, JS, and life satisfaction.

3.3 Population and sample

The present study focuses on understanding emotional intelligence and its relationship to professional and personal well-being among women journalists in Kerala. The population of the study comprises women working in print, electronic, and new media, with a total size of 435 individuals. The study is geographically confined to the state of Kerala, with a specific focus on three major districts—Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode—which were purposively selected due to their high concentration of women journalists and media establishments. To ensure representativeness across different media sectors, the study adopted a disproportionate stratified sampling technique, where media type served as the basis for stratification. The population was classified into four strata: Print Media (270), Television (82), Online Media (48), and Radio (35). From this total population of 435, a sample size of 196 respondents was drawn. The distribution of the sample included 85 from Print, 56 from Television, 39 from Online Media, and 16 from Radio, encompassing professionals from 33 prominent media organizations operating in the state. In the case of radio, only All India Radio was considered for sampling, as it is the only radio organization in Kerala with officially recognized news units, located in Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode. Since Ernakulam lacks a news unit under All India Radio, it was excluded from the radio sampling frame. To determine the appropriate sample size, the study employed Cohen's Table, a widely accepted standard in social sciences for calculating sample size based on population size and desired precision.

$$n = \frac{N.Z^2.p\ (1-p)}{(N-1).e^2+Z^2.p(1-p)} \quad (1)$$

where n is the required sample size, N is the total population, Z is the Z-value for 95% confidence level, p is the estimated proportion, e is the and margin of error

$$n = \frac{435.(1.96)^2.0.5\ (1-0.5)}{(435-1).(0.05)^2+(1.96)^2.0.5(1-0.5)}$$
$$n = \frac{417.74}{2.0454} \approx 204$$

Hence, the minimum required sample size is approximately 204 respondents. However, the study used a final sample of 196 women journalists, which is very close to this threshold and still provides a statistically valid representation of the population. The small deviation is acceptable given the high response quality and the focused sampling approach adopted, including stratification by media type and district. Therefore, the sample size of 196 ensures both analytical adequacy and methodological soundness for the scope and objectives of the research.

3.4 Data collection

Data were collected through both primary and secondary sources to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research objectives. The primary data were gathered using a well-structured questionnaire, designed to capture detailed information aligned with the specific objectives of the research. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and scaled items, enabling the collection of quantifiable responses related to emotional intelligence, work-life balance, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among women journalists in Kerala. It was administered directly to the selected respondents across the three major districts—Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, and Kozhikode—through field visits and coordinated outreach. In parallel, secondary data were sourced from a wide range of credible materials, including academic journals, doctoral theses, books, government publications, media reports, and institutional records. Key references included the Media Handbook published by the Public Relations Department, Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ) documents, and relevant data from All India Radio. The secondary data served to contextualize the study, particularly in analyzing the participation trends and organizational distribution of women journalists in Kerala's media industry.

3.5 Data analysis

The data for this study were analyzed using SPSS version 26.0, a comprehensive statistical software widely adopted in social science research. Initial analyses included descriptive statistics to summarize demographic and professional characteristics of the 196 women journalists surveyed in Kerala. Following this, inferential statistical methods were employed to examine group differences and relational patterns within the data. Specifically, One-Way ANOVA and dimension-wise ANOVA were used to assess variations in emotional intelligence scores across categories such as age, media type, and professional experience. To explore associations and predictive relationships among variables, Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analyses were conducted. Supplementary visualizations, including heatmaps, radar charts, and scatterplots, were generated to enhance interpretability and highlight trends. In addition to psychological correlations, the study implicitly considers the economic value of EI by linking it to performance-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and work-life balance—factors with well-established implications for productivity and organizational cost-efficiency.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of demographic profile

Table 1 and Figure 2 offer a detailed breakdown of the sociodemographic and occupational characteristics of the sample comprising 196 women journalists. The respondents represented a diverse age range, with a significant proportion (36.7%) belonging to the 30–39 age

category, suggesting they are in the most active professional stage. A majority had 5–10 years of experience, reflecting a mid-career position where emotional resilience and work-life tensions are especially relevant.

Table 1: Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30	58	29.6%
	30–39	72	36.7%
	40–49	44	22.4%
	50 and above	22	11.2%
Experience (Years)	Below 5	60	30.6%
	5–10	74	37.8%
	11–20	40	20.4%
	Above 20	22	11.2%
Marital Status	Married	102	52.0%
	Unmarried	94	48.0%
Media Type	Print	85	43.4%
	Television	56	28.6%
	Online Media	39	19.9%
	Radio (AIR)	16	8.2%
District	Thiruvananthapuram	65	33.2%
	Ernakulam	67	34.2%
	Kozhikode	64	32.6%
Education Level	UG Degree	68	34.7%
	PG Degree	102	52.0%
	M.Phil/PhD	26	13.3%
Designation	Reporter/Correspondent	84	42.9%
	Sub-Editor/Editor	52	26.5%
	Anchor/Presenter	24	12.2%
	Freelance Contributor	36	18.4%
Work Shift	Fixed Day Shift	114	58.2%
	Rotational/Night Shift	82	41.8%
Organization Type	Public Sector	38	19.4%
	Private/Corporate	122	62.2%
	Independent/Start-up	36	18.4%
Avg. Weekly Working Hours	Less than 40	44	22.4%
	40–50	106	54.1%
	More than 50	46	23.5%

Educational attainment shows a highly qualified respondent pool, with 52% holding postgraduate degrees and an additional 13.3% with M.Phil/PhD qualifications. This suggests a strong academic foundation, which could influence emotional regulation and professional self-awareness. Designation-wise, reporters/correspondents (42.9%) formed the largest group, followed by sub-editors/editors. Interestingly, freelance contributors (18.4%) were also significantly represented, indicating a shift toward non-traditional and independent journalistic roles—often associated with flexible schedules but unstable work-life dynamics. Work shift patterns indicate that 41.8% of respondents worked rotational or night shifts, conditions which can significantly influence emotional exhaustion and disrupt work-life balance. In terms of marital status, the sample was fairly balanced, which supports the study's objective to assess differences in life satisfaction and job satisfaction across personal commitments. Notably, 62.2% of respondents were employed in the private sector, where work pressure and competitiveness may be higher than in public media institutions. Furthermore, 54.1% worked 40–50 hours weekly, with 23.5% exceeding 50 hours, indicating a demanding work schedule with potential implications for emotional fatigue, motivation, and personal life satisfaction. Overall, this detailed demographic profile establishes a comprehensive base for analyzing emotional intelligence and its predictive value in shaping workplace and life outcomes.

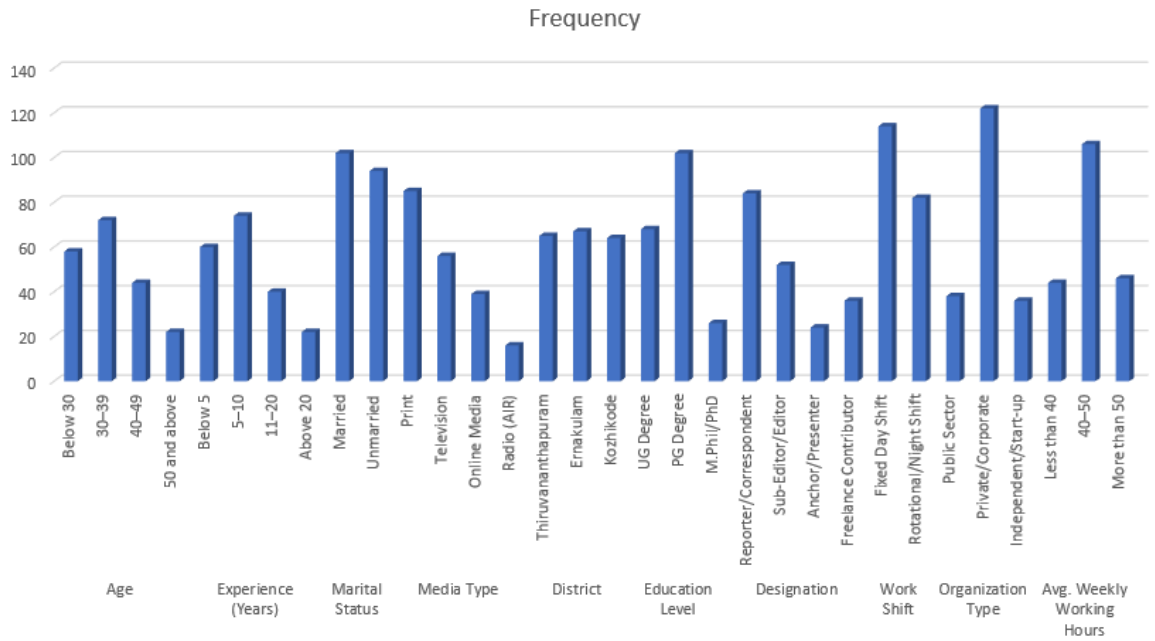

Fig. 2: Illustration of the demographic profile of the respondents

4.2 Analysis of emotional intelligence across age, experience, and media type

To empirically evaluate the variability in emotional intelligence and its five core dimensions across key demographic and professional categories among women journalists in Kerala, a series of One-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. ANOVA was deemed the most suitable analytical method for this stage of the research, as it enables comparison of mean scores for multiple continuous dependent variables (EI dimensions) across categorical independent variables, including age group, years of professional experience, and media type. Table 2 offers a comprehensive examination of how EI varies among women journalists in Kerala based on their age, work experience, and media specialization. In terms of age, emotional intelligence demonstrates a positive trajectory, rising steadily from a mean score of 69.22 in journalists under 30 to a peak of 74.13 in the 40–49 age group. This upward trend supports developmental theories suggesting that emotional competence increases with maturity and cumulative life experiences. However, a modest decline is observed among those aged 50 and above (71.56), which could be attributed to reduced frontline engagement or shifts in job responsibilities in senior roles. When analyzed across years of professional experience, a similar progression is evident. Early-career journalists with less than five years of experience report the lowest mean EI score (68.84), whereas those with 11–20 years of experience exhibit the highest score (74.05). This indicates that professional exposure plays a formative role in developing emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal awareness—skills that are gradually honed in high-pressure newsroom environments. A deeper look into the media type reveals the most striking differences. Online media professionals outperform their counterparts with a mean EI score of 74.92, reflecting the multifaceted demands of digital journalism—autonomy, multitasking, and high-speed decision-making—which may foster emotional adaptability. Conversely, television journalists record the lowest mean score (70.43), likely due to the intense pressures of deadlines, live reporting, and shift-based routines, which may impede emotional self-regulation and social balance. Print (72.18) and radio (73.11) journalists occupy middle positions, benefiting from structured work settings and consistent audience engagement.

Table 2: Mean Emotional Intelligence Scores by Grouping Variables

Variable	Category	Mean EI Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
Age	Below 30	69.22	6.38
	30–39	72.95	5.72
	40–49	74.13	4.89
	50 and above	71.56	6.14
Experience	Below 5 years	68.84	6.77
	5–10 years	72.62	5.89
	11–20 years	74.05	4.73
	Above 20 years	73.81	5.01
Media Type	Print	72.18	5.64
	Television	70.43	6.91
	Online Media	74.92	4.58
	Radio	73.11	5.82

Table 3 presents the results of the one-way ANOVA conducted to evaluate whether statistically significant differences exist in EI scores among women journalists in Kerala based on three categorical variables: age, years of experience, and media type. The results show that age has a statistically significant influence on EI scores, with an F-value of 4.617 and a p-value of 0.004, indicating significance at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that emotional intelligence varies meaningfully across different age groups. Similarly, experience yields an even stronger statistical effect ($F = 5.282$, $p = 0.002$), affirming that years of professional exposure contribute to notable differences in emotional intelligence. Finally, media type also shows a significant effect ($F = 3.919$, $p = 0.010$), though at a slightly less stringent 5% level ($p < 0.05$). This implies that the occupational setting—whether in print, television, digital, or radio—also shapes the development of emotional competencies.

Table 3: ANOVA Results for EI Differences by Grouping Variables

Grouping Variable	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	4.617	0.004	Significant at $p < 0.01$
Experience	5.282	0.002	Significant at $p < 0.01$
Media Type	3.919	0.010	Significant at $p < 0.05$

To delve deeper, EI was further decomposed into its five key components to examine how each dimension differs across demographic and professional contexts.

4.2.1 Dimension-wise analysis of emotional intelligence across groups- age

As shown in Table 4, all five EI dimensions demonstrate an upward trend from the youngest age group (below 30) to the 40–49 age group. Self-Awareness improves markedly from a mean of 68.1 to 74.4, while Empathy increases from 69.5 to a peak of 75.3, indicating a strong maturation effect on emotional perception and interpersonal sensitivity. Social Skills and Motivation also rise with age, reflecting greater emotional atonement and goal orientation. A modest decline in most dimensions is seen in the 50+ group, possibly due to reduced operational demands or cognitive-emotional recalibration in later career stages. These patterns confirm that age and emotional intelligence are positively related, particularly for empathy and motivation, before plateauing.

Table 4: Mean EI Dimension Scores by Age Group

Age Group	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
Below 30	68.1	69.2	70.4	69.5	68.8
30–39	71.9	72.3	73.2	73.1	71.2
40–49	74.4	74.0	74.6	75.3	73.8
50 and above	72.0	71.8	72.1	72.5	70.9

Figure 3 presents the radar chart for different age groups. A clear trend emerges in which emotional intelligence dimensions improve with age, peaking in the 40–49 group. This group demonstrates the most expansive and balanced radar shape, especially in Empathy and Self-Awareness, indicating that emotional maturity and professional exposure contribute to elevated emotional functioning. However, a slight

contraction is seen in the "50 and above" group, particularly in Motivation and Social Skills, possibly reflecting reduced active engagement or transition into senior, less-interactive roles.

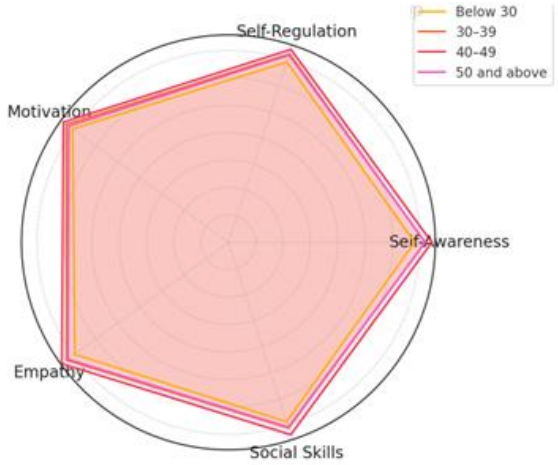

Fig 3: Age group radar chart

4.2.2 Dimension-wise analysis of emotional intelligence across groups- experience

Table 5 illustrates that emotional intelligence dimensions improve progressively with increasing professional experience. Journalists with less than five years of experience show the lowest scores across all dimensions, especially in Self-Awareness (67.5) and Social Skills (67.8). In contrast, those with 11–20 years of experience demonstrate the highest scores, notably in Empathy (75.2) and Motivation (75.0), suggesting that prolonged exposure to dynamic media environments fosters higher emotional engagement and regulation. Those with over 20 years of experience also sustain high EI scores, confirming that emotional competencies are strengthened and retained with time and exposure.

Table 5: Mean EI dimension Scores by experience group

Experience Group	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
Below 5 years	67.5	68.4	70.0	68.9	67.8
5–10 years	72.1	71.9	73.4	73.2	70.7
11–20 years	74.5	73.9	75.0	75.2	73.4
Above 20 years	74.1	73.4	74.3	74.6	72.8

Figure 4, focusing on professional experience, reveals a similar developmental trajectory. Early-career journalists (<5 years) show a smaller radar plot, highlighting limited proficiency in Self-Awareness and Social Skills. The shape expands noticeably for the 11–20 years group, which scores highest across all five dimensions, forming the most symmetrical and outward-stretched polygon. Interestingly, journalists with over 20 years of experience sustain high EI but exhibit a minor dip in Motivation, potentially reflecting reduced novelty or career fatigue. This plot underscores how emotional intelligence can be cultivated through sustained experiential learning and exposure to professional diversity.

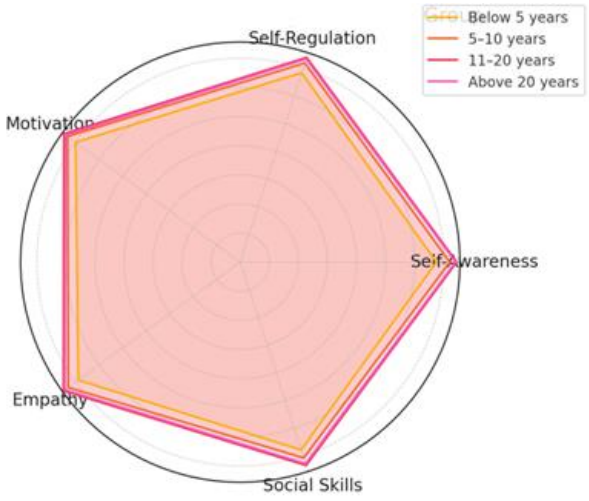

Fig. 4: Experience group radar chart

4.2.3 Dimension-wise analysis of emotional intelligence across groups- media type

According to Table 6, Online Media professionals consistently outperform others across all five EI dimensions. Their highest scores appear in Motivation (76.1) and Empathy (75.9), possibly due to the fast-paced, multi-platform, and collaborative nature of digital journalism that requires both task-driven initiative and emotional receptiveness. Radio journalists follow closely, particularly in Empathy (73.8) and Self-Regulation (72.2), which may reflect the reflective and listener-centric nature of radio broadcasting. Print media professionals exhibit

moderate scores, while television journalists report the lowest across most dimensions, especially in Self-Regulation (68.7) and Social Skills (69.8). The high-pressure, time-bound context of TV journalism may explain these constraints on emotional balance and interpersonal flexibility.

Table. 6: Mean EI Dimension Scores by Media Type

Media Type	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
Print	71.8	70.2	73.1	72.4	71.3
Television	69.9	68.7	71.4	70.6	69.8
Online Media	75.2	74.8	76.1	75.9	74.2
Radio	73.4	72.2	74.3	73.8	72.7

Figure 5, which captures EI profiles by media type, exhibits the greatest variance in polygon shape. Online media professionals possess the most expansive radar chart, dominating especially in Motivation and Empathy, likely due to the demanding, collaborative, and rapidly evolving nature of digital journalism. Radio professionals follow, with notable strengths in Self-Regulation and Empathy, reflective of their intimate audience connection and steady pacing. Print media journalists hold moderate scores across all areas, while television journalists display the most constricted shape, especially in Self-Regulation and Social Skills, possibly owing to deadline pressures, screen presence demands, and fragmented work shifts.

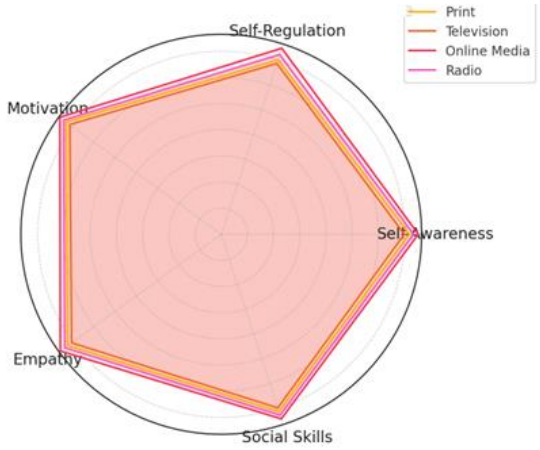

Fig. 5: Media type group radar chart

Figure 6 provides a visual synthesis of the EI dimension scores across the demographic and professional subgroups of women journalists in Kerala. The heatmap reveals that the 40–49 age group and the 11–20 years' experience group consistently exhibit higher intensity scores, particularly in Empathy, Motivation, and Self-Awareness, suggesting a maturation effect in emotional competencies. Conversely, the below-30 age group and early-career journalists (less than 5 years) display noticeably lighter tones, indicating relatively lower scores in all EI dimensions, especially Social Skills and Self-Regulation. Among media types, Online Media professionals are distinguished by the highest intensity across nearly all EI components—most notably Motivation (76.1) and Empathy (75.9)—highlighting the emotionally adaptive demands of digital journalism. Television journalists, by contrast, show the lowest values, particularly in Self-Regulation (68.7) and Social Skills (69.8), which may be linked to the high-pressure, time-sensitive nature of broadcast media. Overall, the heatmap visually affirms previously observed trends in the tabular data and reinforces the conclusion that both demographic maturity and media context significantly shape the emotional intelligence profile of women journalists. The color intensity gradients serve as intuitive indicators for identifying areas where targeted emotional development interventions could be most impactful.

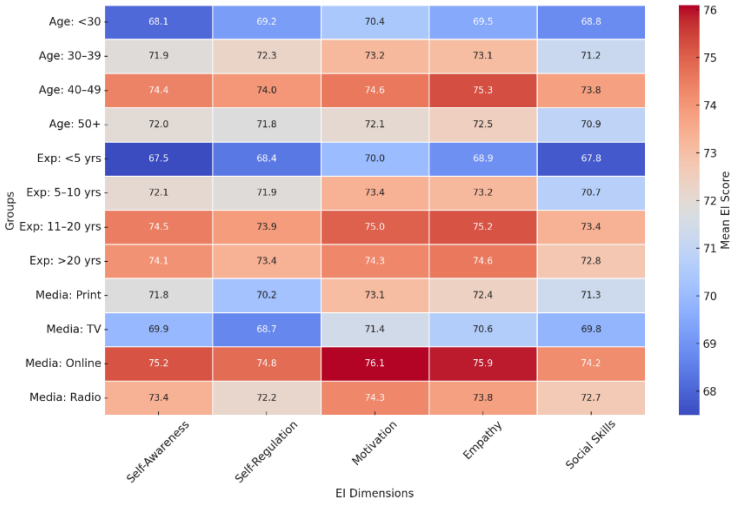

Fig. 6: Heatmap of mean emotional intelligence dimensions

The combined findings from both the overall and dimension-wise analyses of EI among women journalists in Kerala affirm that significant and measurable differences exist across the demographic and professional categories of age, experience, and media type. This evidentiary pattern leads to the rejection of H01 and the acceptance of H1, thereby confirming that EI and its five core dimensions are meaningfully

shaped by contextual factors. These insights hold substantial implications for workforce development within the media sector. Specifically, differentiated capacity-building initiatives that address the emotional needs of journalists across career stages and media platforms are essential. Early-career and television-based professionals, who exhibited relatively lower scores in self-regulation and social competencies, may particularly benefit from structured emotional intelligence training. Additionally, mentorship programs leveraging the expertise of seasoned journalists could further enhance empathy and motivational orientation across newsrooms, fostering not only professional efficacy but also personal resilience in high-pressure media environments.

4.3 Emotional intelligence as a correlate of WLB, JS, and life satisfaction

To examine the role of EI in influencing Work-Life Balance (WLB), Job Satisfaction (JS), and Life Satisfaction (LS) among women journalists in Kerala, a correlation analysis was performed using Pearson's method. The results are presented in Figure 7, which shows a clear pattern of positive associations between EI and all three indicators of personal and professional well-being. Among these, the strongest relationship appears between EI and life satisfaction (r = 0.446). This suggests that women journalists with higher emotional intelligence tend to report greater overall satisfaction with life. This connection likely reflects the benefits of emotional regulation, empathy, and resilience in navigating life's challenges, both personal and professional.

Fig. 7: Correlation matrix

The correlation between EI and job satisfaction (r = 0.323) is also statistically meaningful. This suggests that emotionally intelligent individuals manage workplace demands more effectively, maintain positive relationships, and find greater personal value in their roles. Even though weaker, the correlation between EI and work-life balance (r = 0.181) still reflects a noteworthy relationship. In the context of journalism—characterized by irregular schedules and emotional demands, this suggests that emotional intelligence may support role balance by facilitating prioritization, emotional regulation, and conflict management. To extend this analysis, multiple regression was used to assess how well EI predicts each of the three outcomes. Regression analysis not only shows that a relationship exists but also estimates the strength of that relationship and how much of each outcome can be explained by EI.

To build upon the insights gained from the correlation matrix, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive strength of EI on each of the three well-being variables: WLB, JS, and LS. While correlation confirms association, regression reveals directional influence, estimating how much of the variability in the dependent variable can be explained by emotional intelligence. The regression results, as shown in Table 7, affirm that EI is a statistically significant predictor of all three outcomes, albeit with differing magnitudes of influence. Notably, life satisfaction yielded the highest standardized beta coefficient (β = 0.429), with an R^2 of 0.200, indicating that emotional intelligence alone accounts for 20% of the variance in life satisfaction. This reinforces the earlier correlation finding (r = 0.446) and underscores the essential role of EI in shaping individuals' holistic sense of well-being.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Results: EI Predicting Well-Being Outcomes

Dependent Variable	Standardized Beta (β)	R^2	Adjusted R^2	p-value	Interpretation
Life Satisfaction	0.429	0.200	0.198	< 0.001	EI significantly predicts life satisfaction (the strongest impact)
Job Satisfaction	0.318	0.101	0.098	< 0.001	EI moderately predicts job satisfaction
Work-Life Balance	0.174	0.031	0.028	0.014	EI has a weaker yet significant influence on WLB

For job satisfaction, the beta value stands at 0.318, with an R^2 of 0.101, suggesting a meaningful, though comparatively smaller, predictive power. This implies that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to handle occupational stress, foster collegial relationships, and find intrinsic meaning in their professional roles. In the case of WLB, while the relationship is statistically significant, the beta value

($\beta = 0.174$) and R^2 (0.031) indicate a weaker but still relevant influence. Overall, these findings extend and validate the initial correlational results by quantifying the influence of EI across key dimensions of personal and occupational well-being.

Figures 8, 9, and 10 collectively provide visual evidence of the predictive relationship between EI and the three well-being indicators among women journalists in Kerala. Figure 8 shows a strong clustering of data points along the diagonal line, which indicates that the predictions made by the model match closely with actual life satisfaction scores. The tight alignment reflects the strong influence of EI in predicting life satisfaction. The plot for job satisfaction, as in Figure 9, shows moderate clustering of data points near the diagonal. This reflects a moderate level of prediction accuracy. The visual confirms the statistical result that EI meaningfully but not exclusively influences job satisfaction. In contrast, Figure 10 shows a wider dispersion of data points. While a general upward trend is still visible, the loose alignment indicates that EI's predictive power for WLB is weaker. This suggests other external or structural factors may play a larger role. Together, these plots visually validate the differential but significant impact of EI across the three domains of well-being.

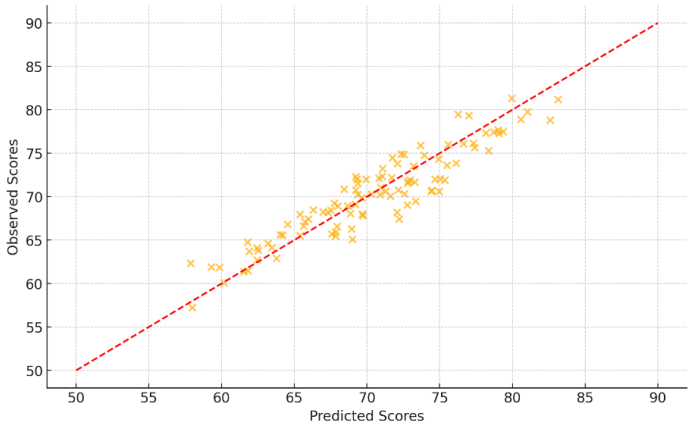

Fig. 8: Predicted versus observed scatter plots for life satisfaction

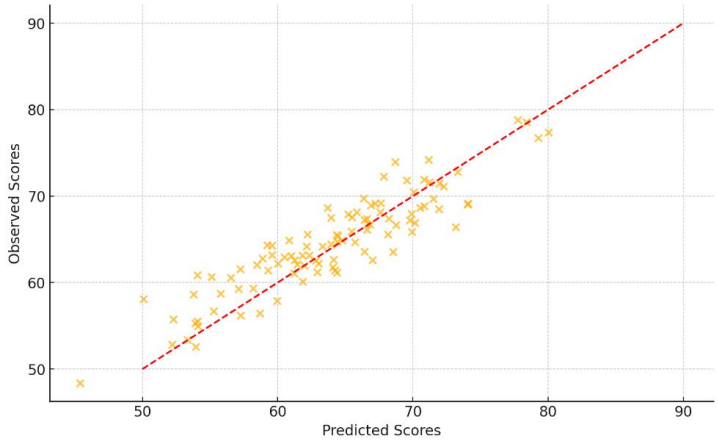

Fig. 9: Predicted versus observed scatter plots for Job satisfaction

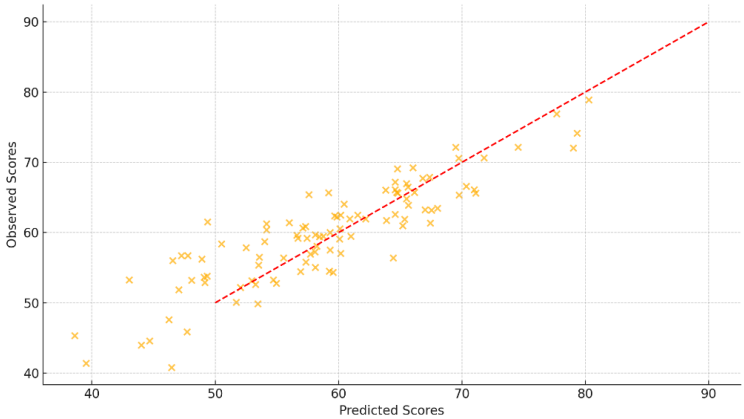

Fig. 10: Predicted versus observed scatter plots for work-life balance

The convergence of correlation and regression results solidifies the claim that EI plays a central role in enhancing both personal and professional outcomes for women journalists. With statistically significant positive influences observed across all three domains, H02 is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H2) is accepted. These insights underscore the value of integrating emotional intelligence training modules within organizational development strategies. Such initiatives can serve not only to elevate employee well-being but also to bolster organizational commitment, adaptability, and resilience, especially in high-pressure media environments.

5. Discussions

The findings of the present study underscore the multifaceted and statistically significant role of EI in influencing key indicators of psychological and occupational well-being, namely, WLB, JS, and LS, among women journalists in Kerala. The dimension-wise analysis across demographic (age) and professional (experience, media type) groups revealed that EI is not a uniform trait but rather a dynamic construct that evolves in response to contextual, experiential, and occupational stimuli. Specifically, peak EI scores among the 40–49 age group and those with 11–20 years of experience support psychosocial maturation theories, indicating that emotional regulation, empathy, and motivation become more refined with age and professional exposure. Likewise, the significantly higher EI among online media professionals suggests that emotionally demanding and cognitively flexible work environments foster superior emotional competencies.

The application of both Pearson's correlation and multiple linear regression provided a robust methodological framework to assess not only the associations but also the predictive strength of EI in determining well-being outcomes. The highest correlation and predictive power were observed between EI and life satisfaction ($r = 0.446$, $\beta = 0.429$, $R^2 = 0.200$), suggesting that emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to achieve higher levels of psychological fulfillment and affective well-being. Moderately strong but statistically significant associations were also observed for job satisfaction ($r = 0.323$, $\beta = 0.318$, $R^2 = 0.101$), affirming that EI facilitates adaptive coping strategies, interpersonal efficacy, and intrinsic motivation within the workplace. While the correlation with work-life balance was weaker ($r = 0.181$, $\beta = 0.174$, $R^2 = 0.031$), it still demonstrates that EI plays a role—albeit moderated by organizational structures, workload intensities, and scheduling constraints—in helping individuals navigate the personal-professional interface.

Taken together, the statistical outcomes corroborate the conceptual assertion that EI functions as both a mediating and integrative psychological resource, linking affective states with functional outcomes in the workplace. These findings have important theoretical and practical implications: theoretically, they validate the inclusion of EI within job satisfaction and life satisfaction models in media psychology and organizational behavior frameworks. Practically, they offer actionable insights for media institutions seeking to enhance journalist resilience, reduce burnout, and improve employee retention. Targeted EI training, peer mentoring, and structural reforms—such as flexible scheduling and emotional wellness programs—could be particularly impactful for early-career and broadcast journalists, who exhibited relatively lower emotional regulation and social skill scores. By highlighting EI as a modifiable and developmentally responsive trait, this study adds empirical rigor to the call for emotionally intelligent newsrooms in an era of high-pressure, 24/7 journalism.

The economic interpretation of the findings warrants attention. The statistically significant predictive power of EI on job and life satisfaction indicates that higher emotional intelligence not only benefits individuals but also enhances workforce stability. For media organizations—especially those in the private sector—investments in EI training may translate into improved output, higher retention rates, and better morale, reducing costs associated with high attrition or poor performance. Future cost-benefit analyses could further quantify the return on investment (ROI) of targeted EI programs in media houses, aligning human development strategies with economic performance indicators.

The findings support the formulation of sector-specific policy interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence (EI) among media professionals. Regulatory bodies and labor ministries can consider mandating EI training programs in media organizations as part of occupational wellness standards. Such mandates may be integrated into broader mental health frameworks or professional licensing criteria. At the organizational level, policy guidelines should incentivize investment in EI as part of strategic human capital development. Economic analysis suggests that EI-enhancing interventions can reduce costs associated with high staff turnover, absenteeism, burnout, and workplace conflict. For instance, integrating EI modules into professional development plans has the potential to reduce replacement and retraining costs, improve editorial productivity, and foster long-term workforce retention. These interventions also align with Sustainable Development Goal 8 by promoting decent work environments and enhancing labor efficiency. Policymakers may also consider tax incentives or subsidies for organizations implementing EI-based workforce development, further amplifying the economic and social returns of such initiatives.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive empirical analysis of the role of EI in shaping personal and professional well-being among women journalists in Kerala, with a specific focus on its influence across age, experience, and media type. The findings clearly establish that EI and its five core dimensions—Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills—vary significantly with demographic and occupational factors. Through one-way ANOVA and dimension-wise profiling, the study demonstrates that mid-career professionals and those in online media exhibit the highest EI scores, suggesting that both experiential maturity and dynamic work contexts foster emotional competencies. Furthermore, correlation and regression analyses confirm that EI is a statistically significant predictor of life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and work-life balance, reinforcing its integrative and moderating role in overall well-being. These outcomes underscore the critical importance of embedding EI development into organizational training frameworks to enhance both individual resilience and systemic efficiency in high-pressure media environments. The research also addresses a vital gap by focusing on women journalists—an understudied but increasingly influential segment of the media workforce—thereby contributing novel insights to the fields of media psychology and occupational well-being. Future research could build on these findings by employing longitudinal designs to track the evolution of EI over time, exploring cross-gender comparisons, and integrating structural equation modeling (SEM) to test mediating pathways between EI, stress, and adaptive behaviors. Additionally, qualitative inquiries could enrich the understanding of lived emotional experiences in media workplaces. The research not only validates EI as a pivotal psychological asset but also sets the groundwork for more inclusive, emotionally sustainable journalism ecosystems. These insights reinforce the importance of emotional intelligence not only as a psychological asset but also as an economic driver. Media organizations seeking to boost workforce productivity and reduce hidden HR costs should consider EI development a strategic investment.

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