UC San Diego

UC San Diego Previously Published Works

Title

Emotional intelligence and happiness in academic librarians: A cross-sectional analysis

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6fb5w31f

Journal

The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 52(6)

ISSN

0099-1333

Authors

Martin, Lisa

Villagran, Michele AL

Publication Date

2026-11-01

DOI

10.1016/j.acalib.2026.103355

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

Peer reviewed

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

Title: Emotional Intelligence and Happiness in Academic Librarians: A Cross-Sectional Analysis

Authors: Lisa Martin and Dr. Michelle Villagran

Affiliations: University of California, San Diego; San Jose State University

Abstract:
The authors conducted a mixed-methods study to examine emotional intelligence and happiness of academic librarians in a cross-sectional analysis following up on previous studies. The researchers sought to understand whether respondents who rated themselves as highly emotional intelligent would rate themselves as satisfied with life; the researchers also sought to understand whether academic librarians who responded to this study had meaningful differences in happiness and emotional intelligence than librarians who responded to the original study in 2020. Results from this study show that academic librarians' self-reported levels of satisfaction with life and emotional intelligence were within average range for both instruments, however, these numbers were lower than the previous study and examples from the qualitative section of this research bear that out. Finally, the authors discuss limitations, implications for future research, and conclusions.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, happiness, satisfaction with life, academic librarians, cross-sectional analysis

Introduction

Emotional intelligence has a significant effect on individuals in the workplace, both in interactions from their supervisors and in their own interactions; satisfaction with life, or dimensions of happiness, are also important to understand individuals' experiences in the workplace. Academic librarians are no exception, but it is notable that many academic librarians report stress, burnout, and toxicity in their workplaces. Research has shown that emotional intelligence and well-being play a meaningful role in how individuals experience their work environments (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017). It is reasonable to consider whether emotional intelligence and happiness also shape job satisfaction and morale in academic libraries. Reports of low morale, limited autonomy, and the demands of emotional labor (e.g., Kendrick, 2017) suggest that these influences may be relevant. At the same time, it is worth exploring whether academic librarians are able to sustain happiness and practice emotional intelligence within this context.

The purpose of this study, a cross-sectional analysis which re-runs a study conducted in 2020 to analyze more recent data, is to understand academic librarians' experiences of emotional intelligence and satisfaction with life in relation to the workplace.

Happiness was assessed with the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), and emotional intelligence by the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC). Participants from academic librarians were invited to self-report their levels of happiness and emotional intelligence utilizing these scales as well as their perspectives on these topics. The study followed these research questions:

- How satisfied with life are the academic librarians who participated?
- What levels of emotional intelligence do these participants report?
- How do academic librarians describe or interpret happiness in the workplace?
- How do academic librarians describe or interpret the use of emotional intelligence in the workplace?

The following presents the literature review on this topic, and the results and findings of the study. Recommendations are briefly offered for the profession to consider in order to improve the academic library workplace.

Literature Review

Emotional intelligence and happiness are well-studied concepts, with happiness in particular having been studied for millennia. Notable theoretical articles for each are included below, after which are sections for practical examples relevant to this study, and finally the authors examine the literature for these concepts in libraries.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence, the idea that one should be aware of and in control of one's own emotions and aware of and working with others' emotions, was popularized in the 1990s and early 2000s. Some of the key authors and their works to be aware of from that era are Daniel

Goleman (1995), Salovey and Mayer (1990), Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002). These works often focused on the idea of emotional intelligence as skills based and learnable, with a particular emphasis on the value of leaders learning or refining their skills in this area. Goleman's book was wildly successful in popularizing the concept of emotional intelligence and the four basic pieces (awareness of oneself, awareness of others, control of oneself, control of others). Salovey and Mayer were also critical to differentiating emotional intelligence from other forms of intelligence while also creating a scoping conceptualization of emotional intelligence (in particular, they mentioned verbal and non-verbal 'appraisal and expression of emotion' in the self and 'non-verbal perception' and 'empathy' in others while in the 'utilization of emotion' section looks at planning, creative thinking, etc. (p.190). Finally, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (who were all prominent members of the conversation about emotional intelligence) focused on leadership and they made the claim that the primary task of leadership is to generate good feelings for members of their organization.

In addition to these key theoretical works, various researchers have developed iterative models and instruments designed to measure emotional intelligence. In 2013, Brasseur, Gregoire, Bourdu, and Mikolajczak developed the Profile of Emotional Competence (PEC), and Mikolajczak, Brasseur, and Fantini-Hauwel in 2014 followed that up with the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC). The PEC and S-PEC aimed to measure what the authors considered the core emotional competencies separately (in sub scales) on a self-reported measure. Boyatzis, as mentioned a key researcher in the early explosion of emotional intelligence research, assessed the state of the field and its models and instruments in a particularly useful 2018 article which also proposed adding an additional aspect, behavior, to the assessment mix. More recent articles focus on specific aspects of emotional intelligence or of interactions of emotional intelligence with other concepts (e.g., Kohli, Nisa, and Siraj's 2025 article on looking at the sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence to determine which had an impact on happiness).

Finally, many articles and books have examined the role of emotional intelligence - and emotions broadly - within the workplace. This represented a shift from viewing emotions (or, more accurately, certain *types* of emotions) as entirely inappropriate in the workplace to a view that emotions have a role in the workplace and in developing good working relationships (exemplified through concepts like 'bringing the whole self to work,' which would be the subject of much subsequent backlash). One article, titled simply, "Emotions in the Workplace," (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017) is a particularly valuable overview that looks back at developments from the preceding twenty years and puts them in the context of this Affective Revolution. The authors review the role of emotion in organizational psychology (focused on the workplace) research via five levels of analysis ranging from a personal level to an organizational one. George's article on leadership and emotional intelligence, an excellent example of the revolution, outlines five key areas in leadership where emotional intelligence helps leaders be more effective (George, 2000). George argued that leadership effectiveness consists of collective goals, helping employees understand the importance of the work, generating and maintaining good feelings (as in *Primal Leadership* above), encouraging flexibility, and establishing and maintaining an organizational identity.

Happiness and Satisfaction with Life

Happiness has been studied for millennia but more recent research has come out of the sub-field of positive psychology, which was formally created in 1998 by Martin Seligman (Positive Psychology Center, n.d.) and exploded in popularity in the early 21st century.

Happiness can be divided into two major concepts, hedonic and eudaimonic well being, which (as the names imply) date back to the great Greek philosophers. Hedonic well being can roughly be described as pleasure seeking (focused on the here and now) while eudaimonic can roughly be described as seeking meaning in life (often longer-term oriented). Ryan and Deci (2001) published a thorough review article describing the two, reviewing then-recent research investigating how to measure them, and exploring their enmeshment with 'antecedents' such as social class and wealth. Other key concepts include subjective well-being, someone's perception of how well their life is going, and its related terms satisfaction with life, often associated with hedonic (or short term) well being, and happiness (Maddux, 2024). Two examples of measures include Lyubomirsky & Lepper's Subjective Happiness Scale (1999) and Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin's Satisfaction with Life Scale (1985). These technical articles are focused on the items in each scale and statistical reliability and validity of the measures, both of which score highly. A more recent overview of the satisfaction with life scale and research conducted on it comes from Pavot and Diener (2008) and includes both a review of the research using it and updates of the data for the scale.

As part of the Affective Revolution, many researchers in the past couple of decades have looked at happiness in the workplace. Wright and Cropanzano (2000) led two field studies which looked at well-being and job satisfaction and how they impacted job performance and found that psychological well-being was more predictive of performance than job satisfaction. In 2008, Russell wrote a review article looking at subjective well-being and work performance in addition to coming up with strategies for promoting well-being in the workplace including review of the design of the work and the leadership in an organization (Russell, 2008). A more recent example looked at workers in Pakistan to determine whether servant leadership or other factors could help mediate challenges like contract breach and abusive supervision in order to increase life satisfaction (Khan, Khan, & Waqas, 2025).

Negative Experiences, Burnout, and Toxic Workplaces in Libraries

Research on the negative experiences and toxic workplaces of libraries has increased steadily since Kaetrena Davis Kendrick's landmark 2017 article, "The Low-Morale Experiences of Academic Librarians: A Phenomenological Study." The following articles and books discuss the topic in detail.

Stark, Albro, and Kauffroath (2024) surveyed academic librarians using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) in order to determine the degree and type of burnout (personal versus work) that is experienced. Respondents showed the most personal burnout followed by workplace burnout, however, the authors theorize that those that have experienced burnout have left the profession,

and therefore were not a part of their study. Meanwhile, in Meslener and Gourlay (2025), the authors explored why some library employees choose to stay when working in dysfunctional library environments where toxic behavior, bullying and harassment are constantly occurring. They applied the concept of Corporate Stockholm Syndrome (CSS) as a reason why workers remain and even increase their commitment to toxic library organizations. Del Rio, Gray and Pankl (2023) in Holm, Guimaraes, and Marcano (2023) further explore how dysfunctional academic library culture advances burnout showing that items such as salary disparities and lack of representation are guiding elements. They assert that it is both the library's responsibility and that of the librarians to ensure they are working in positive workplaces.

Mills (2024) finds that there are ways that unionization and collective bargaining agreements in academic libraries can reduce the risk of a toxic workplace, while also bringing to light the inherent conflicts that are present in academic institutions. Gray (2025) focuses on the intersection between emotional intelligence and trauma-informed care in academic libraries offering strategies for clear communication and shared agreement while emphasizing empathy, composure, open-mindedness, and tenacity. Kenyon and Henrich (2024) conducted a mixed-methods research study focused on academic library workers' perceptions of themselves and academic librarianship; the findings showed that while respondents showed high self-confidence and personal agency, they often experienced burnout and demoralization. This study affirmed what recent studies have shown about low morale in libraries such as that from Kendrick and Damasco (2019) and Kendrick (2023). The next section explores emotional intelligence and happiness in academic libraries.

Emotional Intelligence and Happiness in Academic Libraries

Libraries, and in particular academic libraries, found emotional intelligence to be a useful concept in the early 21st century to use as a lens to examine organizations. While much of the early research focused on leadership, later articles extended their research to all library workers. Happiness is more typically covered by its lack (thus the section above on toxic workplaces in libraries) but there are a few notable articles.

Bell (2015) examined a set of questions around what is happiness, how happiness comes about, and what role librarians play in creating meaningful experiences for library users based on then-recent research. Based on the research, intentionally designing for happiness can have benefits such as people being more involved in their communities and acting with greater care. In 2019, Bell further looked at academic librarianship arguing that while librarianship can be a source of joy, it is fraught with stress, less satisfaction, and potential for newer librarians to be less engaged. Bell notes that there is a connection between staff morale and creating positive experiences for library users. However, toxic environments (as noted in the prior section) and poor management can erode such positive experiences. While happiness was not mentioned as a leadership trait that academic librarians value in Martin (2018), the results did show that effective past leaders were seen as emotionally intelligent, empowering, visionary, strong communicators, trustworthy, knowledgeable, and able to drive change.

Hernon, Giesecke, and Alire (2007) argue that emotionally intelligent leadership is crucial for the success of organizations like libraries. The authors contribute valuable research on the relationship between EI and library leadership, but gaps include how EI relates to workplace diversity and a focus on staff members rather than library leaders. Promis looked at job postings submitted to an LIS journal in 2005-2006 and reviewed each posting for connections to EI competences, described synonymously as soft skills (Promis, 2008). The author concluded that too many job postings still focused on hard, or technical, skills in place of EI, or soft, skills. Hernon and Rossiter (2006) looked at traits that make up EI and offer recommendations on which traits could be beneficial to library directors of both public and academic libraries. Similarly, Michalak (2024) claims that by utilizing EI, "…academic librarians can foster a positive, inclusive workplace culture characterized by open communication, mutual understanding, adaptability, and effective collaboration, ultimately enhancing their ability to serve patrons and meet institutional goals" (p. 847). Further, while the author emphasizes the use of technology such as AI as a helpful tool, AI cannot replace the importance of human emotional intelligence that is essential for cultivating robust academic library communities. Hashmani, Sehar, Rafiq, and Fareed (2024) focus on job satisfaction levels within Pakistan and recommend that university administrators focus on improving working conditions for LIS professionals by creating supportive environments, reducing sources of job dissatisfaction such as excessive workloads and creating clear hiring and promotion standards.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a repeated cross-sectional survey design within a concurrent convergent mixed-methods framework. Repeated cross-sectional surveying involves collecting data from different respondents at multiple points in time using the same or similar instruments. In this study, the authors utilized the same two validated data instruments from Villagran and Martin (2022) in order to capture evolving trends related to emotional intelligence and well-being of librarians in the academic workplace over time. Although the academic library respondents varied in each round of data collection (Villagran & Martin, 2022), the use of standard measurement instruments and consistent questions allowed for examination of data across all studies. The Institutional Review Board evaluated and approved the study's ethical merit (approval #20133 and August 22, 2022) prior to data collection.

Alongside the standardized scales, the survey included open-ended questions and demographic items to enrich and contextualize the quantitative findings. The authors modified the survey from the prior version to add an additional marginalized demographic question to capture if one identifies with a marginalized group. In addition, the demographic question related to the types of institution was consolidated based on the prior study in which the authors recognized lower responses for specific categories in this question and adjusted according to the survey audience. The open-ended items invited respondents to reflect on how their emotional intelligence and happiness influence their work, relationships with colleagues, and career satisfaction. This qualitative data provided deeper insight into the lived experiences behind the numeric trends.

A concurrent convergent design was used, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and then integrated during interpretation. This allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both measurable constructs and subjective perspectives. Patterns and themes that emerged from the qualitative responses were compared and contrasted with trends identified in the survey scores, facilitating triangulation and enhancing the credibility of the findings. The next section discusses cross-sectional analyses, of which this study is one example.

Cross-sectional analyses in Academic Libraries

There are a limited number of longitudinal (same cohort over time) and cross-sectional analyses (different cohorts at the same time or different cohorts over time) in library and information science (LIS) literature. Cross-sectional analysis refers to studies that collect data at a single point in time in order to examine the relationship between variables. These studies do not track change over time, but focus on providing a snapshot of perceptions or conditions within a defined population or geographies. These types of studies cannot establish causal relationships, are limited to one moment in time, and typically rely on self-reported data which can introduce bias. Beheshti (1989) offers a study about the use of library books by students within two different geographic locations (McGill and Western) in Canada. While their study represents cross-sectional analysis given it is two different geographies, it is not a repeated cross-sectional analysis. Another example within LIS is that of Andaleeb and Simmonds (1998) who surveyed library users from three different libraries over three semesters for library use satisfaction. This large cross-sectional approach allowed the researchers to gain a view of responses over different groups over time. Koffel (2015) offers another example where a survey was administered examining search strategies and librarian involvement in systematic reviews but across disciplines. Their data was collected at a single point in time. By using a powerful tool like cross-sectional analysis, it is possible to look at trends over time. In this paper, the authors look at the research questions from the introduction comparatively, by reviewing data from 2020 and 2022.

Survey & Instruments

The study measured happiness using the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and emotional intelligence with the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC). These validated instruments provided reliable indicators of respondents' subjective well-being and emotional competencies. The SWLS is a widely used scale to assess global life satisfaction, while the S-PEC measures both intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of emotional intelligence. The survey was conducted via Qualtrics, a secure platform that ensured participant anonymity and did not collect any identifying information. It remained open for a month from September 30 to October 31, 2022, and participation was voluntary. Since two separate instruments – the SWLS and S-PEC – were used together, it was necessary to assess their combined construct validity. The process employed by Villagran and Martin (2022) was utilized by the researchers, which began with confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether a single construct could represent all variables. After consulting with a statistician, the goodness-of-fit statistics revealed that seven S-PEC items had poor fit and low factor loadings. These were excluded from further analysis,

and the remaining items formed the model utilized in Villagran and Martin (2022) and herewith.

The survey instrument combined both quantitative and qualitative items, aligning with a concurrent convergent mixed-methods design. Quantitative measures included two validated scales: the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) to assess happiness and the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC) to evaluate emotional intelligence. Each scale was accompanied by a brief, accessible definition of the construct being measured.

In addition to the standardized instruments, the survey included open-ended questions designed to explore respondents' personal thoughts and reflections on happiness and emotional intelligence in the workplace. Here, "workplace" referred specifically to the academic library setting in which the respondent was employed at the time of completing the survey. These qualitative items provided deeper context and allowed respondents to express how these emotional dimensions shaped their professional experiences. To support informed participation, the survey began with a consent statement outlining the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and the researchers' definitions of key terms (see Appendix A for the full survey).

Reliability

Reliability in research refers to the consistency and dependability of a measurement instrument or study design over time. In this study, reliability was addressed using standardized, validated instruments—the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC)—which have demonstrated strong psychometric properties in previous research. By employing these same instruments across multiple rounds of data collection in a repeated cross-sectional format, the researchers ensured that the measures remained stable and comparable across time points, despite changes in the respondent pool. This consistency supports the reliability of the study's findings by reducing measurement error and enabling meaningful trend analysis. Furthermore, the concurrent collection of qualitative data provided an additional layer of reliability through methodological triangulation, allowing researchers to cross-validate emerging patterns and gain a deeper understanding of how respondents interpreted and responded to the quantitative items. Together, these design choices enhanced the overall trustworthiness and replicability of the research.

Validity

Validity in research refers to the degree to which a study accurately measures what it intends to measure and the extent to which findings can be interpreted as meaningful and trustworthy. In this study, several strategies were employed to support both construct and content validity. The use of well-established, theoretically grounded instruments—the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC)—helped ensure that the constructs of happiness and emotional intelligence were being measured accurately. Additionally, validity was strengthened through methodological triangulation, as the integration of open-ended qualitative responses with quantitative data enabled the researchers to explore how respondents made sense of emotional intelligence and happiness within the context of their workplace. This enriched the interpretation of the quantitative results and contributed to the interpretive validity of the study, ensuring that the findings reflect respondents' lived experiences

within academic library environments.

Population and Sample

A total of ninety-nine (95) respondents completed all parts of the survey, out of a total of 101 respondents who submitted results. Some questions were not addressed by all respondents. The study population consisted of academic librarians currently employed in North American academic libraries. Recruitment occurred through professional listservs, including the University Libraries and the Community and Junior College Libraries, both sections of the Association of College and Research Libraries. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis process adhered to the framework proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011). The quantitative data was prepared and imported into Excel, while the qualitative data was uploaded into the qualitative software, Taguette. Once the survey was completed, the raw data was uploaded to Taguette for thematic analysis and coding by the researchers. The researchers engaged in intercoder reliability, where they each independently coded the content of interest. Each paid attention to the hidden meanings of possible lines within the content. Upon completing the coding independently, the researchers employed a third coder to review and verify the coding for intercoder reliability. The authors followed the eight ways to evaluate and report intercoder reliability measures as outlined by Cofie, Braund, and Dalgarno (2022, p. 75): minimum of two coders, on coder removed from data collection, one coder expertise coding qualitative data, a minimum of two researchers coded qualitative data, coders used same framework, coders shared meaning of codes to come to consensus, a third coder was consulted to resolve conflicts, and codebook was developed based on this coder consensus. The results were then presented using a combination of narrative descriptions, tables, and visual figures. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings, the analysis incorporated rigorous validation procedures that assessed both validity and reliability. Finally, the results were interpreted in relation to the study's research questions, with an emphasis on alignment and analysis.

Findings & Results

Demographics

Type of Academic Institution.

Respondents could select from three options and an "Other" category. Figure 1 shows that the most significant percentage (47%) is identified as working at 4-year public universities (n=47), followed by 4-year private universities (34%, n=34), which together form the majority of survey respondents (N=81). Fifteen percent (n = 15) were from community or junior colleges. The other category represented only 4% (n=4), identifying as: medical, PhD-granting private university, research university, and a 2-year campus of a 4-year public university.

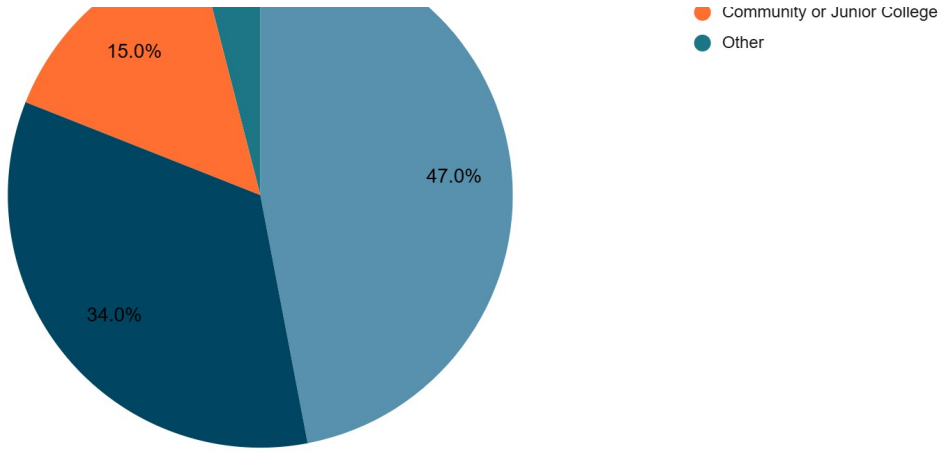


Figure 1: Type of Academic Institution

Library Special Emphasis.

There were eight options with zero responses to options: law, business, and special collections. In Figure 2, the overwhelming majority (86%, n = 99 of N = 101) of respondents were from general academic libraries with no special emphasis. Six percent (6%, n=6) identified as Other; four percent (4%, n=4) as Science, three percent (3%, n=3) as Medical/Health Sciences, and one (1%, n=1) as Engineering. Other responses included Social Sciences (n=2), Art & Design/Arts (n=2), Jesuit (n=1), and Science/Engineering/Technology (n=1).

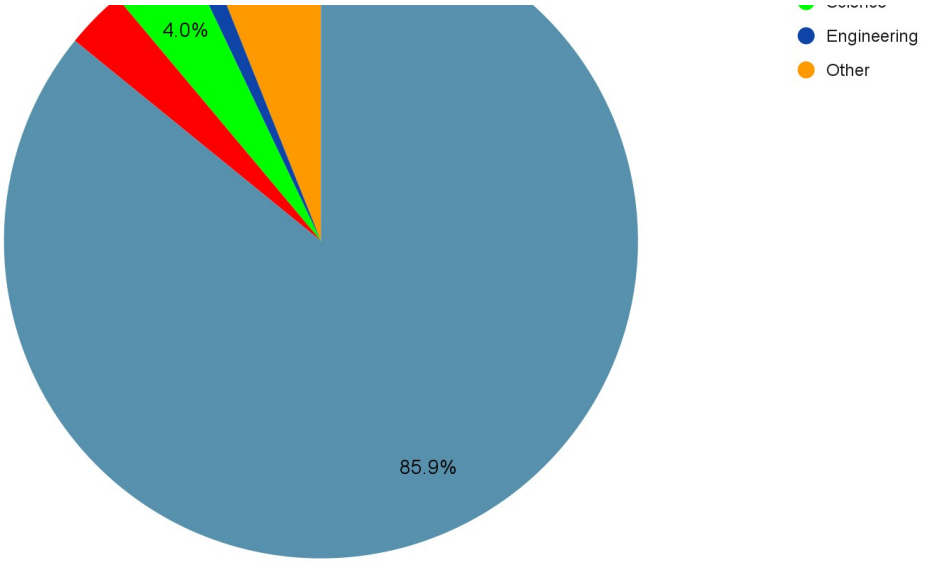


Figure 2: Special Emphasis Type

Size of Institution by Enrollment.

As Figure 3 indicates, of the 100 respondents, 46% came from institutions with more than 10,000 students, followed by 24% from institutions with 2,000-4,999 students, accounting for 70% of the respondents. The remaining 30% consisted of 17% from institutions with 5,000 to 9,999 students and 13% from those with fewer than 2,000 students.

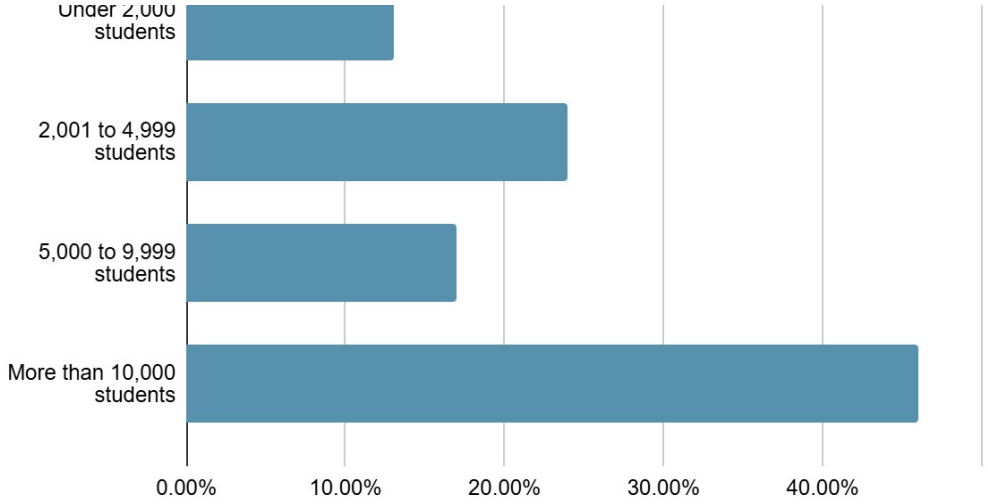


Figure 3: Size of Institution by Enrollment

Job Areas.

Four hundred responses were received for job areas that apply to your position. Respondents could select more than one role. Figure 4 shows Reference (subject, liaison, branch, etc.) had the most selections at 19% (n=76), followed by instruction (information literacy, teaching and learning at 18% (n=72), and then student success (outreach, engagement, first year experiences) at 11.50% (n=46). The remaining job areas received between 9.5% and 1% of the selections. Other included: collection management (n=1), collection assessment (n=2), collection development (n=1), and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (n=1). These results are very similar to those of the first survey, despite a potentially different pool of respondents.

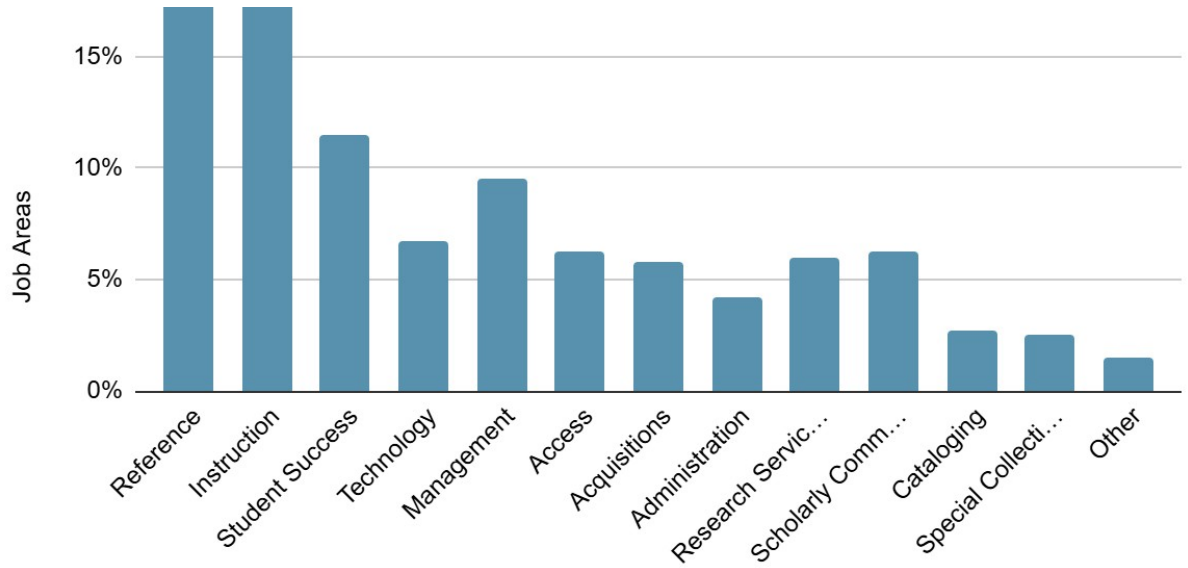


Figure 4: Job Areas

Geographic Location.

Based on Geographic Census Regions within the United States, Figure 5 shows that all 100 respondents identified their location, with the majority of respondents coming from the Midwest-East North Central (18%). There was one respondent outside of the United States, in Canada; representation also included all United States Census Regions. The top three regions included 18% (n=18) located in the Midwest - East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI), Northeast - Middle Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA) at 17% (n=17), followed by South - South Atlantic (DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV) at 16% (n=16).

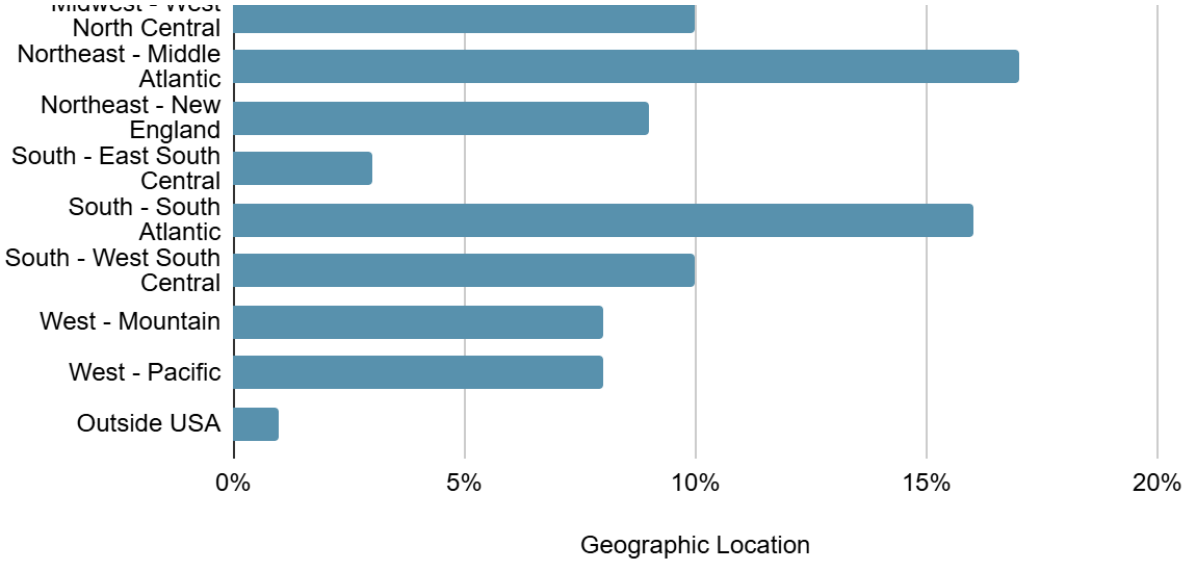


Figure 5: Geographic Location

Years of Experience.

Figure 6 shows that individuals with more than 20 years of experience and those with 5-9 years of experience were equally represented, at 26% (n = 26). While 10-14 years was at 19% (n = 19), followed by less than 5 years at 16% (n = 16). Last was 15-19 years at 13% (n = 13).

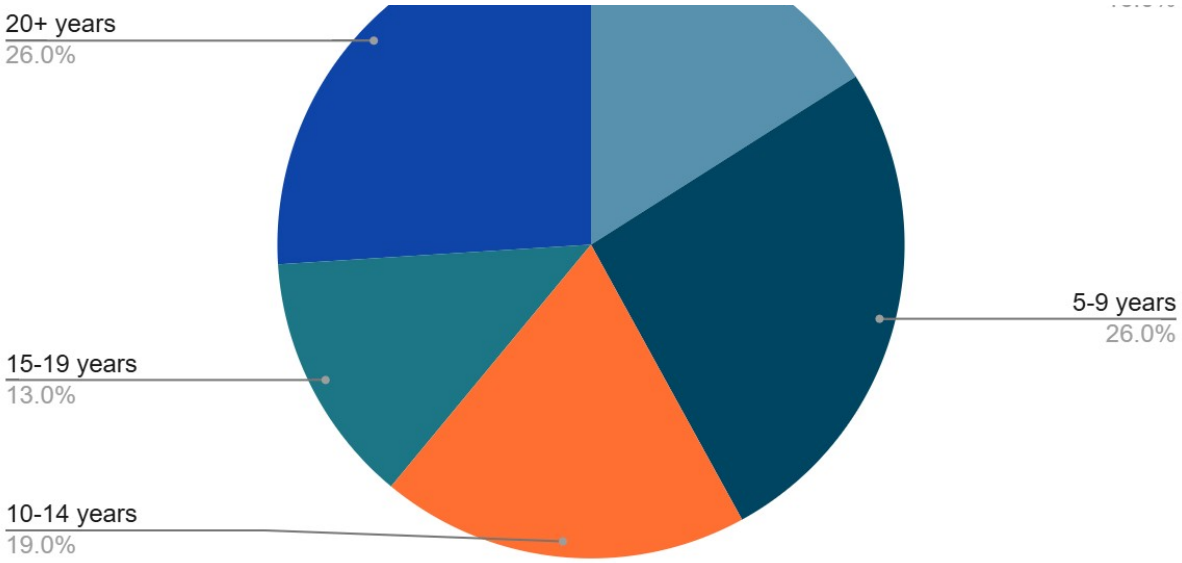


Figure 6: Years of Experience

Education.

While the authors did ask about the education completed, and 250 selections were made, they did not feel that the results were sufficiently informative, and therefore, a chart was not included. 71% (n=145) indicated having a Master's degree (MLIS, MA), and 20% (n=41) indicated they had a 4-year college degree or less.

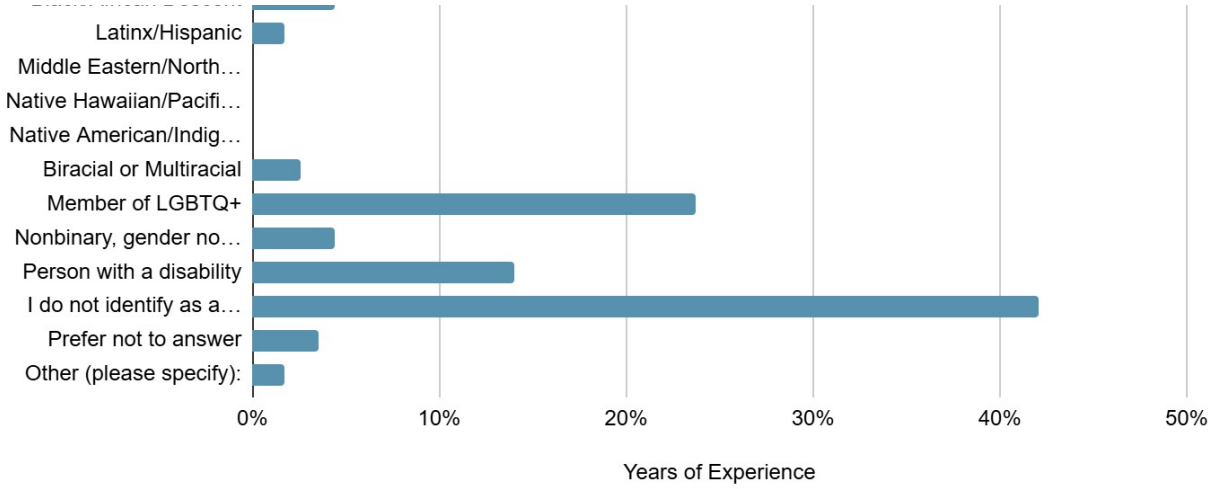


Figure 7: Marginalized Identity

Marginalized.

Figure 7 shows whether a respondent identified as a member(s) of a marginalized community. One hundred fourteen respondents answered this question, and they were able to select more than one option. 42% (n=48) did not identify as a member of a marginalized community. 23% (n=27) identified as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, 14% (n=16) identified as a person with a disability, and 4% (n=5) identified as Black/African Descent and Nonbinary, as well as gender conforming and genderqueer, among others.

Quantitative

The quantitative data indicate respondents' scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC). Respondents chose whether to complete each section, and not all respondents completed both sections; the relevant numbers of respondents are listed for each.

Of the 99 respondents who completed the Satisfaction with Life section on happiness, the mean score was 4.77 (on a 7-point scale). In the prior study, the mean score was 4.96. If one follows Diener's categorization of a happy or satisfied respondent as all those scoring in and above neutral, 84.5% (n = 84) of respondents in the most recent study met this criterion; in the prior study, the percentage was 75%. Approximately 5% (n=5) fell into the lowest two categories of happiness, and approximately 5% (n=5) of respondents scored the highest possible score, in this study.

Of the 95 respondents who completed the Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC) section on emotional intelligence, the mean score was 3.16. In the prior study, the mean score

was 3.49 when using an exploratory factor analysis model, which excluded specific S-PEC questions due to poor fit. Mean respondent scores from the validation survey for the PEC scale (Brasseur et al., 2013) are 3.33; respondents in the current survey (mean of 3.16) scored below the validation mean, which contrasts with the respondents in the prior study.

Years of experience

Respondents' years of experience were examined more closely. SWLS respondents with less than 5 years of experience scored an average of 4.84. The mean dropped to 4.36 for those with 5 to 9 years of experience. Those with 10-14 years of experience scored an average of 5.02. Those with 15-19 years of experience averaged 5.48. Finally, those with more than 20 years of experience scored an average of 4.61.

S-PEC respondents with less than 5 years of experience had the co-lowest mean score of 3.14. Those with 10-14 years of experience had a similar mean score of 3.15. Those with 5-9 years of experience also had a similar mean score, 3.17. Those with 15-19 years of experience had the highest mean score, 3.23. Finally, those with more than 20 years of experience shared the lowest mean score at 3.14.

Table 1: Years of Experience

Years of experience	SWLS - Happiness Score (Avg)	S-PEC - Emotional Intelligence Score (Avg)
Less than 5 years	4.84	3.14
5-9 years	4.36	3.15
10-14 years	5.02	3.17
15-19 years	5.48	3.23
20+ years	4.61	3.14

Identity Status

The researchers also examined the happiness (SWLS) and emotional intelligence (S-PEC) scores of individuals who identified as having a marginalized identity status and those who did not. Due to the small number of respondents per sub-category, the researchers aggregated all forms of identity into the larger category of marginalized status and compared those who identified in this way to those who did not. Those who identified as belonging to an identity considered marginalized had a mean score on the SWLS of 4.51, which is lower than the study's mean of 4.77 and the mean score, 4.95, of those did not identify as marginalized. On the S-PEC, those with a marginalized identity scored a mean of 3.16, which is identical to the study's mean score, while those who did not identify as marginalized scored a mean of 3.14.

Table 2: Average Satisfaction with Life (SWL) and S-PEC scores among Marginalized and Non-marginalized Respondents

Category	SWLS - Happiness Score (Avg)	S-PEC - Emotional Intelligence Score

		(Avg)
Member of a marginalized community	4.51	3.16
Does not identify as a member of a marginalized community	4.95	3.14
Prefers not to answer	5.50	3.33
Blank response	4.80	3.13

Qualitative

Three open-ended questions in the survey focused on emotional intelligence and happiness:

1. How would you define emotional intelligence and happiness in the workplace? (62 responses)
2. Describe a time when you thought you were exhibiting high emotional intelligence in the workplace. Did that time impact your own happiness? Did that time impact others' happiness? (63 responses)
3. Describe a time when you considered yourself very happy in the workplace. How were your emotions impacted? Were others' emotions impacted? (63 responses)

Initially, 686 passages were coded. The third coder denoted any discrepancies or potential revisions to the coding. The researchers reviewed 110 in question from the third coder and upon final review had the following changes:

- Revised the “happiness” code to “lack of unhappiness” to better indicate some emotions that are similar but not exactly unhappiness/sadness, such as social anxiety or dissatisfaction.
- Revised “internal happiness” code and “external happiness” to “intrinsic happiness” and “extrinsic happiness.”
- Revised “positive impact/intent” description to include ‘type of situation.’
- Deleted “relationship” code as duplicative of other codes relevant to specific relationships, such as “library workers.”
- Examined 23 “workplace stress” and “navigating stressful situations” codes as they overlapped. Resolved by changing the code to “moral injury” with an updated description.
- Examined phrases that were coded to both “extrinsic happiness” and “intrinsic happiness” and resolved codes based on focusing on the respondent.
- Examined phrases coded to “support(ed)” code as used for supporting external users and decided the coding matched the description as defined.
- Considered adding “communication” code to highlight examples when respondents did try to express their emotions, how that was received, etc; however, the authors decided this is a good fit for future research, as this study is more focused on perceptions.

Seven hundred and eleven passages were coded, resulting in 22 final thematic codes (see Appendix B). Table 3: Thematic Coding identifies the top 10 thematic codes and descriptions of the code ranked by the frequency of the thematic code. “Library workers” was ranked the highest

with 70 coded frequency, followed by “accomplishment” with 50, “awareness/self awareness” at 49, with both “extrinsic happiness” and “standard EI definition” at 48.

For question 1 above, emotional intelligence was still well-defined (coded 48), while happiness was only defined 20 times, which represents a significant drop. One participant defined emotional intelligence as “Being in touch with your emotions, understanding how your emotions serve you. Being empathetic to those around you and trying not to make assumptions.” with many other responses similarly stated, “ability to know your own emotions,” “understanding one's own feelings and those of others,” and the like. Others expressed further aspects of behavior or examining your own behavior, such as “acting appropriately based on this awareness” or “high engagement with empathy combined with the ability to analyze how emotions impact workplace environments.” “Standard happiness definition” (coded 20 times) was often seen in the reverse, where the definition was more unclear or related to either specific internal or external happiness, hence the revised codes. Statements such as “being respected, informed, involved, not overworked. Allowed creativity, “good balance of challenge and support,” and “one is empowered to make a positive impact that reflects one’s own goals and values” show the variation of what respondents regarded as a standard definition. More clearly “extrinsic happiness” showed up 48 coded times while “intrinsic happiness” showed up 35 coded times. Such examples of “desire to go to work every day” or “being content where you are” or “ feel satisfied with a job” represent the majority of the "intrinsic happiness” responses. For "extrinsic happiness” statements such as “being satisfied with work conditions,” or “happy with your job description” with specific examples of their work environments were most prevalent in the responses.

For question 2, regarding the exhibition of high emotional intelligence, library workers (including staff and librarians) had the largest frequency of 70, as discussed in the examples. Examples often showed that happiness was directly impacted: “It affected my own happiness because I felt I was doing my job well and connecting to my students,” and “taking time to be present and listen seems appreciated by my colleagues and that gives me satisfaction.” Many of these cases focused on navigating stressful situations (coded 42 times), which indicates a negative or lack of happiness due to the constraints of the situation. Anxiety often came up as a reason. For example, one participant noted, “As for happiness...eh, wires are too crossed for me, even yesterday a situation that should have made me happy simply made me anxious,” and another stated, “sympathizing with students going through tough situations. I don't think this really impacts my own happiness - if anything it can be very emotionally draining.” Demonstrating that managing emotions with a frequency of 44 is also crucial in considering how others and the workplace affect respondents.

For question 3, regarding a time when respondents were most happy, accomplishment was seen as the highest at 50, regardless of whether it was related to intrinsic or extrinsic examples. However, extrinsic happiness (48 frequency) outweighed intrinsic happiness (36). Extrinsic happiness involves helping others such as “Doing something for others always makes me happier” and “being successful in helping people get what they want and need.” These are often also coded to “positive impact/intent” but there doesn’t seem to be a clear connection with how their happiness impacts emotions. One participant expressed, “I'd like to think it at least helps all

to manage negative feelings" and often these examples showed the "awareness of one's emotions" which came 49 times.

Table 3: Thematic coding for top 10 codes

Thematic Code	Description	Frequency
library workers	the people mentioned in the example are library workers (staff or librarians)	70
accomplishment	when feel fulfillment or successful execution	50
awareness / self awareness	conscious of / recognize others emotions or own emotions	49
extrinsic happiness	mentions of happiness include external factors (promotions, parties, etc.)	48
standard EI definition	contains enough of the pieces of how EI is typically defined	48
understand others	ability to understand others / judgement of the situation, specific to interpersonal communication (5), others motivation (7)	46
managing emotions / emotional maturity	ability to control emotions tactfully / become mature around own emotions	44
navigating stressful situation	examples of people having to handle a stressful situation, including interpersonal conflicts (7)	42
positive impact/intent	situation(s) or type of situation(s) having a positive impact on self, others, or culture	36
intrinsic happiness	mentions of happiness include internal factors (person's feelings, motivations, desires, etc.)	35

Discussion

This study looked at four research questions, as detailed in the introduction. The discussion will focus on the answers found to each question, as well as any additional points of interest.

Research Questions

Happiness, or satisfaction with life, of respondents in this study fell within the expected range. Of the 99 respondents who completed the section on happiness, the mean score was 4.77 on a 7-point scale. This is lower than the mean score of 4.96 from the previous study. As Diener notes, however, "The average of life satisfaction in economically developed nations is in this [the 4-5] range" (2006, para 3.). Thus, even this study's lower mean score falls within the standard range. Library workers in this study expressed a wider range of satisfaction with life (some quite happy, some moderately so, some neutrally or unhappy), which does fit with recent LIS research -

highlighted in this study's literature review - on low morale, toxic workplaces, and similar concerns. The researchers used instruments in this study which did not directly focus on low morale so further discussion would be speculation.

The overall (mean) emotional intelligence of this study's respondents was 3.16. The previous study, which excluded some questions based on use of an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) model, had a mean EI score of 3.49. The authors looked at reasons for the lower SWLS and S-PEC scores in this study versus the previous one and came up with several ideas. Primarily, the authors considered the fact that the first study surveyed respondents in early summer 2020 (a time of uncertainty and fear but also one of hope and collective engagement in a common purpose) while this study surveyed respondents in Fall 2022 (a time that was just starting to see some of the uncertainties in higher education, libraries, and the US as a whole). In addition, each study had different respondents who may have been at different places within their careers, different ages and experiences in libraries, etc. Because of the nature of cross-sectional research, which unlike longitudinal research does not necessarily involve the same respondents in each connected study, it is not possible to fully compare the two respondent groups. Nonetheless, it is intriguing that respondents' SWLS and S-PEC scores were lower in this study; would the trend continue if the researchers offered the surveys a third time?

One notable contrast with the previous study involves looking at respondents by years of experience. In the previous study, happiness (Satisfaction with Life) scores followed a predictable U-curve where respondents with 10-14 years of experience were the least happy while respondents with more and less years of experience were more happy. This tracked with a finding from psychology that people experience U-shaped happiness, with middle age being a less happy time. In this study, the data was less clear-cut. Scores generally went up (with the exception of respondents with more than 20 years of experience) while happiness scores went up and down across the years. Recent data from psychology show younger people (some of whom would identify as respondents with fewer years of experience in this study) experiencing less happiness and more anxiety but the data from this study is more mixed, thus leading to an area of possible future analysis (VanderWeele et al., 2025).

Across the qualitative responses, emotional intelligence remained consistently well-defined, with respondents emphasizing empathy, self-awareness, and examples of how to act appropriately based on emotional intelligence when interacting with colleagues or staff. The conceptual clarity from respondents aligns with prior research, which suggests that emotional intelligence is perceived as a soft skill with observable behavioral outcomes (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). In contrast, happiness was less clearly defined and more context-dependent; however, notable examples of the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic happiness were observed. While intrinsic was more often associated with personal fulfillment and motivation, extrinsic was more often tied to workplace structures and support. This suggests that the happiness of library staff is understood as a function of their organizational environment.

The findings also reveal a connection between emotional intelligence and happiness. When describing situations where high emotional intelligence was exhibited, respondents frequently reported a positive impact on their happiness, particularly when they had meaningful connections

with patrons or colleagues. This supports prior research as well, from Schutte et al. (2007), which suggests that emotional intelligence can enhance well-being through interpersonal relationships. However, navigating stressful situations was often reflected in the descriptions of emotional strain or when managing the needs of others in challenging situations. This suggests that high emotional intelligence does not always correlate with increased happiness and can, at times, be emotionally draining.

The moments of greatest happiness were most often associated with accomplishment, with the extrinsic examples slightly outweighing the intrinsic ones. While these moments sometimes coincided with heightened emotional awareness or self-awareness, the findings suggest that happiness and emotional intelligence do not operate in a reciprocal manner. Rather, the relationship is dependent on situational factors, such as workplace culture, role, and the emotional intensity of interactions. This highlights the importance of considering the benefits and costs of emotional intelligence within emotionally demanding professions.

Additional Points of Interest

The institutional demographics of the respondents provide some indication of the extent to which the sample reflects the broader population of academic libraries in North America. However, because comparable population-level demographic data for the specific population targeted by this study were unavailable (such data is remarkably challenging to locate), interpret representativeness with caution. The size of respondents' institutions also indicates a sample weighted toward larger institutions. This is not a concern: "Academic librarians are distributed bimodally, with a few large libraries employing about half of all academic librarians" (Applegate, 2007, p. 59).

The sample contains a typical proportion of respondents from larger institutions. Community college libraries were overrepresented, which may have an impact on respondents' answers given differing access to resources, support, etc. in community colleges. The sample composition may have influenced the findings.

The findings should not be generalized to all North American academic libraries; rather, they should be examined in consideration of similar characteristics of those represented in the sample. The demographic distribution does not invalidate the findings, but it is an important consideration when interpreting their broader applicability. Future research could strengthen generalizability by using stratified or quota sampling to ensure representation across institutional type and enrollment size, particularly among smaller institutions and community colleges.

In addition, the researchers included a demographic question focused on marginalized identities, as they wanted to ensure that the voices and experiences of marginalized communities were recognized and considered. This decision reflects the researchers' awareness of the broader context of academic librarianship, a field in which 88% of librarians identify as white as compared to 72% in the general population, according to American Library Association Demographic Study (2017). In addition, the researchers wanted to allow respondents to self-

identify other areas of marginalization, such as disability status, which might affect their responses, and ultimately their lived experience.

By including this question, the researchers hoped to identify disparities that might otherwise be overlooked in aggregate data. Due to response numbers, the researchers needed to re-aggregate the data to address this question (but were able to preserve some data at the 'marginalized' vs. 'not marginalized' level. This allowed the researchers to start to uncover patterns and challenges that may disproportionately affect academic librarians with marginalized racial, gender, disability, or LGBTQIA+ identities. The inclusion of this question also demonstrates a commitment to inclusive, equity-centered research practices.

One notable finding to highlight is that respondents who indicated that they had a marginalized identity in some way (the researchers aggregated individual responses to preserve anonymity) had higher emotional intelligence scores (3.16, which is also the study mean) and lower satisfaction with life scores (4.51) than those who did not so identify (3.14 and 4.77, respectively). In other words, librarians with marginalized identities who responded to this study self identified as both emotionally adept and only somewhat happy. Further research is necessary to see whether this is representative of librarians with marginalized identities more broadly, but it is a concerning initial finding.

Overall, the findings suggest that in academic library settings, emotional intelligence contributes to happiness primarily when emotional engagement connects with personal and organizational values and when the emotional demands of the role are balanced with adequate support systems. This has important implications for staff development and organizational policy, as it fosters academic library environments that support both the development of emotional intelligence and the sustainability of library staff happiness. The authors recommend that academic libraries review internal policies to address language, biases, etc.; regularly review salaries for equity; incorporate ideas from ACRL and other professional associations' documentation such as relevant standards for academic libraries; and support professional development of all library staff in these areas.

Limitations

This study has potential limitations. The current research design does not allow for an objective comparative analysis of the participants over time. Because the data was collected at a different time and potentially with different participants, it is not possible to track how participant perspectives or experiences may have changed. As a result, the findings should be understood as a snapshot rather than evidence of long-term trends or developments. A longitudinal study with the same participants would be necessary to make specific, comparable analyses, as such an approach would allow researchers to observe changes, continuities, and potential patterns more clearly.

Another notable limitation in the survey is the lack of non-U.S. representation (1% of respondents were outside of the U.S.). The authors recruited respondents from American Library Association lists and, perhaps unsurprisingly, the vast majority of respondents were Americans

even though the lists do include international members. While the findings offer valuable insights into the experiences and emotional competencies of the U.S.-based academic librarians, they cannot be applied more broadly due to the absence of international voices. Given the cultural, structural, and institutional differences that shape the profession across global contexts, emotional intelligence and happiness may manifest differently in academic libraries outside the U.S. Happiness and emotional well-being are deeply tied to cultural norms, institutional support systems, and local academic pressures. Without accounting for these variations, the survey results risk reflecting a narrowly defined experience of the profession.

Recommendations & Implications

An important recommendation for future research is to move beyond cross-sectional analyses and invest in a longitudinal research approach that follows the same cohort of participants over time. Such an approach would allow for a more accurate understanding of how emotional intelligence and satisfaction with life influences academic librarians throughout their academic library career. Longitudinal data would also provide stronger evidence for causality and help to identify aspects where interventions or other supports could be most effective.
The attention to marginalized groups is also important because their perspectives can inform targeted interventions, institutional policies, and also professional development programs. Prior studies, such as the work of Villagran and Hofman (2023) on queer librarians in professional contexts, underscore the value of centering marginalized voices in order to address system inequities. Building on this research, future studies should intentionally expand inclusion efforts so that scholarship is inclusive of those within the academic library sphere.

In addition, within the library profession, 3.7 percent of library staff in the United States and 5.9% in Canada are somewhere on the neurodivergent spectrum (Brooke Doyle, 2025). These statistics indicate that a portion of the library workforce identifies as neurodivergent, yet this group is often overlooked in discussions of diversity and inclusion. Given this and to make the research more inclusive, the demographic category of marginalized should be expanded to explicitly include neurodivergence. For this study, neurodivergent would be defined as “An individual whose brain/body *diverge* in some way from the dominant societal standards of ‘normal’” (Slagus, n.d.) Including neurodivergence recognizes the varied experiences of library staff and ensures that the perspectives of this group are not excluded from considerations of equity and representation in the profession.

Future studies also should prioritize international survey outreach to organizations such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in order to compare the United States academic library perspective with that of international academic library perspectives. Doing so will not only strengthen the validity and relevance of the findings but also help foster a richer understanding of how emotional intelligence and happiness may support the well-being of academic librarians globally.

Based on the study findings, the authors suggest training and professional development in EI and satisfaction with life, an emphasis on collegial and supportive employee interactions, and other recommendations as delineated in the copious toxic workplace library literature.

Conclusion

This study highlights the context-dependent experiences of emotional intelligence and happiness among academic librarians, while underscoring the importance of research design for diversity of respondents and trends over time. The results of this study suggest that emotional intelligence plays a nuanced role in shaping workplace experiences. Although it can enhance interpersonal relationships and contribute positively to moments of fulfillment, it may also carry emotional costs, particularly in demanding or unsupportive environments. Happiness, as documented by respondents' satisfaction with life, appears to be influenced not only by individual emotional capacities but also by organizational structures, workplace culture, and external pressures. The authors draw from the data the conclusion that fostering well-being in academic libraries requires more than individual skill development; it necessitates institutional awareness and support systems that acknowledge the emotional dimensions of library work. Addressing existing limitations and broadening representation including greater attention to neurodivergence and international perspectives will be essential for developing a more comprehensive understanding of well-being in the profession.

References

American Library Association Office of Research and Statistics. (2017). "2017 ALA Demographic Study." http://hdl.handle.net/11213/19804

Andaleeb, S. S., & Simmonds, P. L. (1998). Explaining user satisfaction with academic libraries: strategic implications. College & Research Libraries, 59(2), 156-167.

Applegate, R. (2007). Charting Academic Library Staffing: Data from National Surveys. *College & Research Libraries, 68*(1), 59-68. doi:https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.68.1.59

Ashkanasy, N. M., & Dorris, A. D. (2017). Emotions in the workplace. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 4(1), 67–90. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032516-113231

Beheshti, J. (1989). A cross-sectional study of the use of library books by undergraduate students. Information processing & management, 25(6), 727-735

Bell, S. (2015, October 8). Life, library, and the pursuit of happiness. Library Journal. https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=life-library-and-the-pursuit-of-happiness

Bell, S. (2019, November 5). Academic librarians and the pursuit of happiness: From the Bell tower. Library Journal. https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=Academic-Librarians-Pursuit-of-Happiness-From-the-Bell-Tower

Boyatzis, R. E. (2018). The behavioral level of emotional intelligence and its measurement. Frontiers in Psychology, 9, 1438. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01438

Brasseur, S., Grégoire, J., Bourdu, R., & Mikolajczak, M. (2013). The Profile of Emotional Competence (PEC): Development and validation of a self-reported measure that fits dimensions of Emotional Competence Theory. PloS One, 8(5), e62635. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0062635

Brooke Doyle, P. M. (2025, February 18). *Neurodiversity and libraries*. WebJunction. https://www.webjunction.org/news/webjunction/neurodiversity-libraries.html

Cofie, N., Braund, H., & Dalgarno, N. (2022). Eight ways to get a grip on intercoder reliability using qualitative-based measures. *Canadian Medical Education Journal*, *13*(2), 73–76. https://doi.org/10.36834/cmej.72504

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research.* (2nd ed .). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Crum, J. & D. H. Ketchum (Eds.), *Trauma-Informed Leadership in Libraries*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Del Rio, L., Gray, J. K., & Pankl, L. (2023). The effect of dysfunctional culture on burnout in academic libraries. In C. Holm, A. Guimaraes, & N. Marcano (Eds.), *Academic librarian burnout: Causes and responses.* (pp. 125-142). Association of College & Research Libraries. https://csu-sjsu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CALS_SJO/14iett4/alma991014085495802919

Diener, E. D., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. Journal of personality assessment, 49(1), 71-75.

Diener, E. (2006). “Understanding Scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale.” https://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/Documents/Understanding%20SWLS%20Scores.pdf

George, J. M. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. Human Relations (New York), 53(8), 1027–1055. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726700538001

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence.* Bantam Books, Inc.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. E., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: realizing the power of emotional intelligence*. Harvard Business School Press.

Gray, P. A. (2025). Transforming chaos into compassion: Emotional intelligence and trauma-informed practices for holistic change management in libraries. In J. Crum & D. H. Ketchum (Eds.), *Trauma-Informed Leadership in Libraries* (pp. 21–41). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0732-067120250000044003

Hashmani, A., Sehar, N., Rafiq, A., & Fareed, G. (2024). Job Satisfaction of LIS Professionals: Comparative Analysis of Public/Private Sector's University of Karachi Sindh, Pakistan. *Library Philosophy and Practice, 1–26*.

Hernon, P., & Rossiter, N. (2006). Emotional intelligence: which traits are most prized? *College & Research Libraries, 67*(3), 260–275. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.67.3.260

Hernon, P., Giesecke, J., & Alire, C. A. (2007). *Academic librarians as emotionally intelligent leaders.* Libraries Unlimited.

Hofman, D., & Villagran, M. A. L. (2023). Queer Privacy Protection: Challenges and the Fight within Libraries. *International journal for the semiotics of law = Revue internationale de semiotique juridique*, 1–22. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11196-023-09994-x

Holm, C., Guimaraes, A., & Marcano, N. (Eds.). (2023). Academic librarian burnout : causes and responses (1st ed.). Association of College & Research Libraries.

Kendrick, K.D. (2017). The low-morale experience of academic librarians: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Library Administration, 57*(8): 846-878.

Kendrick, K.D. (2023). The cornered office: A qualitative study of low-morale experiences in formal library leaders. *Journal of Library Administration, 63*(3): 307-338.

Kendrick, K.D. & Damasco, I.T. (2019). Low morale in ethnic and racial minority academic librarians: An experiential study. *Library Trends*, *68*(2): 174-212.

Kenyon, J., & Henrich, K. (2024). Disruption and Demoralization in Academic Libraries: A Snapshot. *portal: Libraries and the Academy 24*(1), 137-176. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/pla.2024.a916993.

Khan, R. A., Khan, A. A., & Waqas, M. (2025). Impact of Toxic Work Environment and Well-Being on Life Satisfaction: Mediation of Servant Leadership. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies, 11*(1).

Koffel JB. (2015). Use of Recommended Search Strategies in Systematic Reviews and the Impact of Librarian Involvement: A Cross-Sectional Survey of Recent Authors. PLoS ONE 10(5): e0125931. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0125931

Kohli, M., Nisa, S., & Siraj, S. (2025). Unravelling the emotional intelligence (EI) and happiness connect: Exploring the role of EI sub-dimensions in one's happiness. *SDMIMD Journal of Management*, 105–117. https://doi.org/10.18311/sdmimd/2025/34844

Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. S. (1999). A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation. Social Indicators Research, 46(2), 137–155. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006824100041

Maddux, J.E. (Ed.). (2024). "Subjective Well-Being and Life Satisfaction: Conceptions, Theories, and Controversies" in Subjective Well-Being and Life Satisfaction: A Social Psychological Perspective (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003393368
Martin, J. (2018). What do academic librarians value in a leader? Reflections on past positive library leaders and a consideration of future library leaders. College & Research Libraries, 79(6), 799-821. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.79.6.799

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory, findings, and implications. Psychological Inquiry, 15(3), 197–215. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1503_02

Meslener, J., & Gourley, K. (2025). Corporate stockholm syndrome: An explanation for employee commitment in consistently dysfunctional library organizations? In J. Crum & D. H. Ketchum (Eds.), *Trauma-Informed Leadership in Libraries* (pp. 43–53). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Michalak, R. (2024). Suits Meet the Stacks: Drawing Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Parallels for Academic Libraries. *Journal of Library Administration, 64*(7), 845–854. https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2024.2388499

Michalak, R., Dawes, T. A., & Cawthorne, J. E. (2024.). *Toxic dynamics: Disrupting, dismantling, and transforming academic library culture* (1st ed.). Association of College and Research Libraries.

Mikolajczak, M., Brasseur, S. & Fantini-Hauwel, C. (2014). "Measuring intrapersonal and interpersonal EQ: The Short Profile of Emotional Competence (S-PEC)." *Personality and Individual Differences*, 65, 42-46, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.01.023.

Mills, C. (2024). Toxic cultures in higher education: Faculty unionization and librarian perspectives. In Michalak, R., Dawes, T. A., & Cawthorne, J. E. (Eds.). *Toxic dynamics: Disrupting, dismantling, and transforming academic library culture* (1st ed., p. 21-48). Association of College and Research Libraries.

Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (2008). The satisfaction with life scale and the emerging construct of life satisfaction. The journal of positive psychology, 3(2), 137-152.

Positive Psychology Center. (n.d.). "Martin E. P. Seligman." https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/people/martin-ep-seligman

Promís, P. (2008). Are employers asking for the right competencies? A case for emotional intelligence. Library Administration & Management, 22(1), 24-30.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Annual Review of Psychology, 52(1), 141–166. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141

Russell, J. E. A. (2008). Promoting subjective well-being at work. *Journal of Career Assessment, 16*(1), 117–131. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072707308142

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional Intelligence. Imagination, Cognition and Personality, 9(3), 185-211. https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG.

Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Thorsteinsson, E. B., Bhullar, N., & Rooke, S. E. (2007). A meta-analytic investigation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and health. Personality and Individual Differences, 42(6), 921–933. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2006.09.003

Slagus, J. (n.d.). *Keeping up with... neurodiversity*. American Library Association. https://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/keeping_up_with/neurodiversity

Stark, R. K., Albro, M., & Kauffroath, K. (2024). Burnt Ends: An Examination of Academic Librarian Burnout Using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory after COVID-19. *Journal of Library Administration, 64*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2023.2287940

VanderWeele, T.J., Johnson, B.R., Bialowolski, P.T. et al. (2025). The Global Flourishing Study: Study Profile and Initial Results on Flourishing. Nat. Mental Health 3, 636–653. https://doi.org/10.1038/s44220-025-00423-5

Villagran, M. A. L., & Martin, L. (2022). Academic librarians: Their understanding and use of emotional intelligence and happiness. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship, 48*(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2021.102466

Wright, T. A., & Cropanzano, R. (2000). Psychological well-being and job satisfaction as predictors of job performance. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5*(1), 84–94. https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.5.1.84

Appendix A: Survey

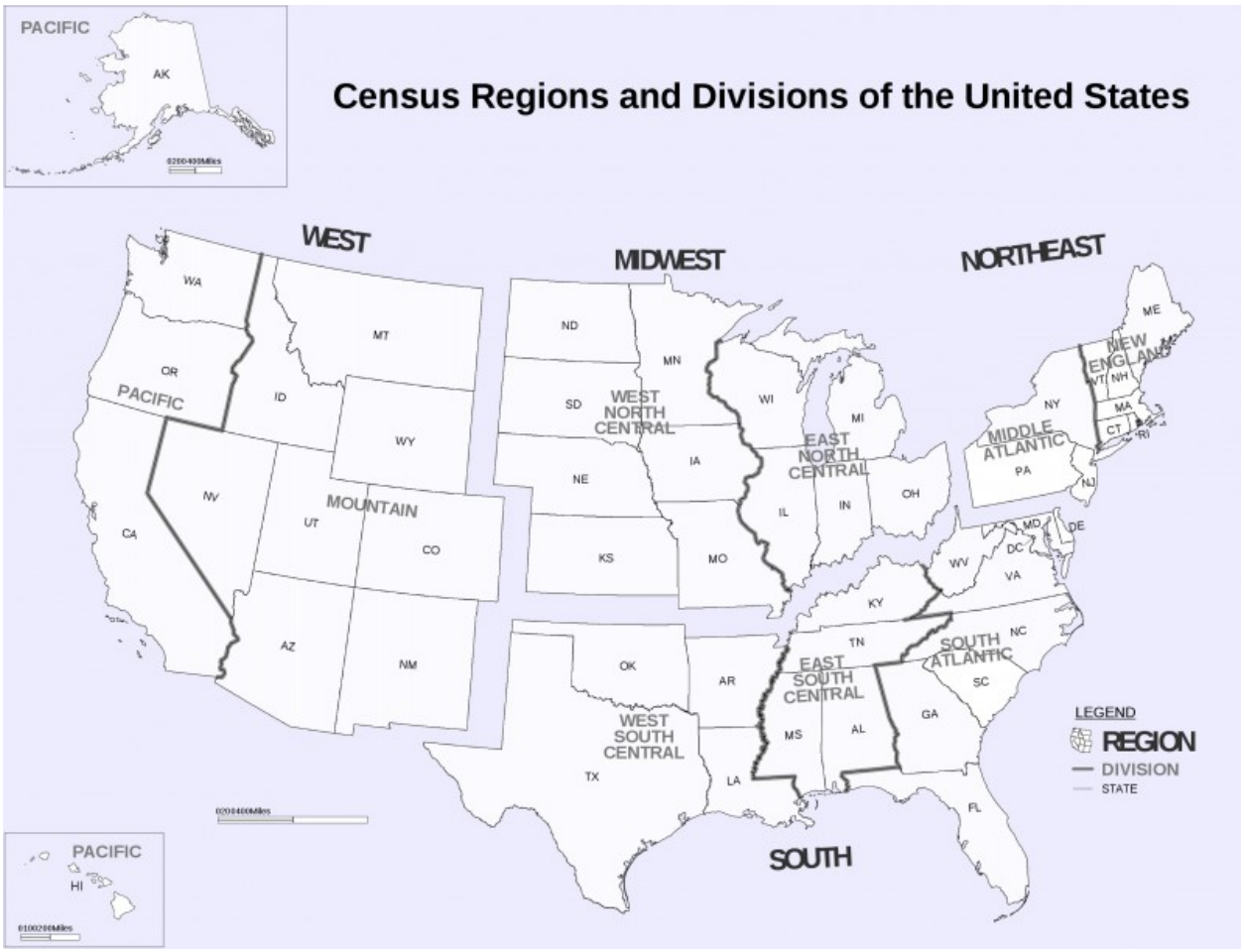
The survey includes: (a) demographic questions; (b) the 5-item 7-Likert scale "The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS);" (c) the 20-item 5-Likert scale "How Emotionally Intelligent and Competent are You? (The Short Profile of Emotional Competence, S-PEC);" (d) open-ended questions related to emotional intelligence and happiness.

Demographic Questions

- What type of academic library best describes where you work?
  - 4-year public university
  - 4-year private university
  - Community or Junior College
  - Other (please describe)
- Does your library have a special emphasis? Select only one.
  - No special emphasis (general)
  - Medical/Health Sciences

        - Law
        - Science
        - Engineering
        - Business
        - Special Collections
        - Other (please describe)
    - What is the size of your institution by enrollment?
        - Under 2,000 students
        - Under 5,000 students
        - Under 10,000 students
        - More than 10,000 students
    - Please select all job areas that apply to your position.
        - Reference (subject, liaison, branch, etc.)
        - Research services (data management, analysis, or visualization, digital humanities, grants, etc.)
        - Student success (outreach, engagement, first year experience, etc.)
        - Instruction (information literacy, teaching and learning, etc.)
        - Scholarly communication and publishing (open educational resources, open access, copyright, repositories, etc.)
        - Special collections (archivist, curator, preservation, etc.)
        - Access (circulation, ILL, media, research commons, makerspaces, etc.)
        - Acquisitions (licensing, purchasing, etc.)
        - Cataloging (metadata, resource description, bibliographer, digital materials, etc.)
        - Technology (user experience, electronic resources, discovery, digitization, etc.)
        - Management (coordinator, department head, program director, etc.)
        - Administration (dean/director or associate dean/director, human resources, assessment, development, communications, budget and finance, etc.)
        - Other (describe)

    - What is your geographic location (using the map below)?



By US Census Bureau - https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf

o Midwest - East North Central (1)
o Midwest - West North Central (2)
o Northeast - Middle Atlantic (3)
o Northeast - New England (4)
o South - East South Central (5)
o South - South Atlantic (6)
o South - West South Central (7)
o West - Mountain (8)
o West - Pacific (9)
Outside US - Canada
Outside US - Rest of world

- How many years of experience do you have working in an academic library?
  - Less than 5 years

        - 5-9 years
        - 10-14 years
        - 15-19 years
        - 20+ years
    - Please select all the education you have completed.
        - 4-year College degree or less
        - Masters degree (MLIS, MA)
        - Doctoral degree (PhD, EdD)
        - Professional degree (JD, MD)
    - If you identify as a member of a marginalized community, with which community or communities do you identify? (select all that apply)
        - Asian/Asian American
        - Black/African Descent
        - Latinx/Hispanic
        - Middle Eastern/North African
        - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
        - Biracial or Multiracial
        - Member of LGBTQ+
        - Nonbinary, gender nonconforming, genderqueer, etc.
        - Person with a disability
        - I do not identify as a member of a marginalized community
        - Prefer not to answer
        - Other (please specify)

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

Description of Measure: A 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). respondents indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Scale:

Instructions: Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with.

Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

• 7 - Strongly agree
• 6 - Agree
• 5 - Slightly agree
• 4 - Neither agree nor disagree

• 3 - Slightly disagree
• 2 - Disagree
• 1 - Strongly disagree

____ In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
____ The conditions of my life are excellent.
____ I am satisfied with my life.
____ So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
____ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Scoring: Though scoring should be kept continuous (sum up scores on each item), here are some cutoffs to be used as benchmarks. 31 - 35 Extremely satisfied 26 - 30 Satisfied 21 - 25 Slightly satisfied 20 Neutral 15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied 10 - 14 Dissatisfied 5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied

Reference:
Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. Journal of Personality Assessment, 49, 71-75.
https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/lifesatisfactionscale.pdf

How Emotionally Intelligent and Competent are You? (The Short Profile of Emotional Competence, S-PEC)
Instructions Here's another measure of emotional intelligence consisting of 20-items to assess emotional intelligence skills and competencies both in relation to oneself (e.g. identifying and understanding own emotions) and others (e.g. identifying and understanding another's emotions).

To assess these emotional intelligence and competencies, state the extent to which the statements below represent you or otherwise. Very much unlike me; Somewhat unlike me; Neither nor Somewhat like me; Somewhat like me; Very much like me

1. When I am touched by something, I immediately know what I feel.
2. When I feel good, I can easily tell whether it is due to being proud of myself, happy or relaxed.
3. I do not always understand why I respond in the way I do
4. When I am feeling low, I easily make a link between my feelings and a situation that affected me.
5. I find it difficult to explain my feelings to others even if I want to.
6. I am good at describing my feelings.
7. When I am angry, I find it easy to calm myself down.

8. I find it difficult to handle my emotions.
9. My emotions inform me about changes I should make in my life.
10. I never base my personal life choices on my emotions.
11. I am good at sensing what others are feeling.
12. Quite often I am not aware of people's emotional state.
13. I do not understand why the people around me respond the way they do.
14. Most of the time, I understand why the people feel the way they do.
15. Other people tend to confide in me about personal issues.
16. I find it difficult to listen to people who are complaining.
17. When I see someone who is stressed or anxious, I can easily calm them down.
18. If someone came to me in tears, I would not know what to do.
19. I can easily get what I want from others.
20. If I wanted, I could easily make someone feel uneasy.

Scoring Total Emotional Competence score = Average Items 1-20. Total Identification-Self score = Average items 1-2. Total Understanding-Self score = Average items 3-4. Total Expression-Self score = Average items 5-6. Total Regulation-Self score = Average items 7-8. Total Use-Self Score = Average items 9-10. Total Identification-Others score = Average items 11-12. Total Understanding-Others score = Average items 13-14. Total Listening-Others score = Average items 15-16. Total Regulation-Others score = Average items 17-18. Total Use-Others score = Average items 19-20. Reverse Scoring: Items 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 18 are reverse-scored. Interpretation: Higher scores indicate higher emotional competence. Take note of the scores obtained between your 'self' and 'other' dimensions;if one is substantially higher than the other, this may reflect better emotional competencies in one form relative to the other.

Reference

Mikolajczak, M., Brasseur, S., & Fantini-Hauwel, C. (2014). Measuring intrapersonal and interpersonal EQ: The Short Profile of Emotional Competence (s-pec). Personality and Individual Differences, 65, 42-46.

Qualitative Questions

4. How would you define emotional intelligence and happiness in the workplace?
5. Describe a time when you thought you were exhibiting high emotional intelligence in the workplace.
    a. Did that time impact your own happiness?
    b. Others' happiness?
6. Describe a time when you considered yourself very happy in the workplace.
    a. Were your emotions impacted?
    b. Were others' emotions impacted?

Appendix B: Full Thematic Coding of Qualitative Questions

Thematic Code	Description	Frequency
accomplishment	when feel fulfillment or successful execution	50
awareness / self awareness	conscious of / recognize others emotions or own emotions	49
campus community	the people mentioned in the example are faculty, staff, or students	21
extrinsic happiness	mentions of happiness include external	48

	factors (promotions, parties, etc.)	
intrinsic happiness	mentions of happiness include internal factors (person's feelings, motivations, desires, etc.)	35
library workers	the people mentioned in the example are library workers (staff or librarians)	70
managing emotions / emotional maturity	ability to control emotions tactfully / become mature around own emotions	44
navigating stressful situation	examples of people having to handle a stressful situation, including interpersonal conflicts (7)	42
negative intent	someone else tried to do something harmful to the respondent; situation(s) which have a negative impact on self and/or others	6
not standard definitions	lacks at least one piece of a standard definition of EI or happiness or both	28
perceptions	the respondent's thoughts and assumptions of how others around them responded to an example	11
positive impact/intent	situation(s) or type of situation(s) having a positive impact on self, others, or culture	36
satisfied	meeting expectations or wishes of (in situation)	27
set of skills	is an example of how EI (and, to a lesser extent, happiness) have associated skills that can be learned and developed	8
standard EI definition	contains enough of the pieces of how EI is typically defined	48
standard happiness definition	revised 2024: A comprehensive measure of individual-level happiness might include work engagement, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment. Examples include momentary mood, task enjoyment, job satisfaction, job involvement, affective organizational commitment, and group job satisfaction.//contains enough of the pieces of how happiness at work is	20

	typically defined	
supervisor	either the person themselves is a boss or they are talking about their boss	13
support(ed)	to support another; to feel supported by another	29
trusted, appreciated and valued	feeling validated / heard in the library workplace, to be of great worth, feeling or showing of respect; firm belief of truth or strength of person(s) / feeling of certainty, trust in one's own ability	27
understand others	ability to understand others / judgement of the situation, specific to interpersonal communication (5), others motivation (7)	46
lack of happiness	example of unhappiness or other emotions (anxiety, etc.), not happiness	34
moral injury	A response to witnessing or participating in behaviors that contradict one’s moral beliefs//OLD def: Workplace stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occurs when the requirements of a job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker	7
work-life balance	how a person divides their time and energy between work and personal life; having a healthy balance is thought to increase happiness	12