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Review: Exploring the Interplay of Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Self-Compassion in Predicting Life Expectancy

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ABSTRACT

This study explores in depth the complex and multidimensional interplay of emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, self-compassion, and life expectancy. Employing a qualitative, descriptive, and library-based methodology, the research systematically synthesizes findings from peer-reviewed articles in reputable domestic and international journals accessed through databases such as Civilica, SID, Noormags, Magiran, and Google Scholar, as well as relevant academic books. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis to identify core concepts and to systematically examine relationships among the key variables. This study is situated within the field of positive psychology and health psychology, with a focus on human well-being across the lifespan. It adopts a qualitative, descriptive approach and relies on a library-based research design in order to integrate and interpret existing scientific evidence. The data sources include a wide range of peer-reviewed publications and academic books, ensuring the credibility and reliability of the synthesized information. Through qualitative content analysis, the study identifies underlying themes and systematically explores interrelationships among emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, self-compassion, and life expectancy. The overall interpretation of the findings suggests that emotional intelligence and resilience serve as significant psychological predictors of life expectancy, particularly when supported by self-compassion as a mediating mechanism. Overall, these results suggest important implications for designing psychological and educational interventions aimed at improving mental health, enhancing psychological well-being, and potentially supporting longer and healthier life outcomes.

Introduction

Life expectancy, reflecting a positive outlook and desire for continued existence, is considered a crucial indicator of mental well-being and overall quality of life. Individuals with higher levels of life expectancy tend to demonstrate a more optimistic approach when facing life challenges and generally exhibit better mental and physical health outcomes [1]. A wide range of psychological and environmental factors can influence life expectancy, among which emotional intelligence and psychological resilience are particularly significant.

Emotional intelligence, defined as the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others [2], enables individuals to cope more effectively with stress and to cultivate healthier and more adaptive social relationships. These abilities ultimately contribute to enhancing psychological well-being and strengthening life expectancy.

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Concurrently, psychological resilience, described as the ability to overcome adversity and recover from stressful or traumatic experiences [3], plays a key role in reducing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, and depression, thereby fostering a more optimistic outlook toward the future and life in general.

Furthermore, self-compassion, which involves treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance in the face of mistakes, failures, or personal shortcomings [4], may serve as a mediating factor in the relationship between emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and life expectancy. Instead of engaging in harsh self-criticism, individuals with higher self-compassion are more likely to maintain emotional balance and a positive life perspective even during difficult circumstances.

Given the importance of these psychological constructs, the present study aims to investigate the role of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in predicting life expectancy, while also examining the mediating effect of self-compassion. The findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the psychological determinants of life expectancy and to provide useful insights for designing interventions aimed at improving mental well-being and enhancing quality of life.

Material and Methods

This study investigates the interplay of emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, self-compassion, and life expectancy through a qualitative, descriptive approach. A library-based research design was employed, drawing upon reputable academic resources accessed through databases such as Civilica, SID, Noormags, Magiran, and Google Scholar. The data collection process focused on peer-reviewed articles published in established domestic and international journals that explicitly addressed the relationships among the aforementioned variables.

The selection criteria for the reviewed literature included publication in recognized academic journals, relevance to the research topic, and the use of relatively recent and up-to-date findings. In addition, specialized academic books related to emotional intelligence, resilience, self-compassion, and life expectancy were also consulted to strengthen and expand the theoretical framework of the study.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis, which involves the systematic categorization, interpretation, and synthesis of information within the existing body of literature. This process enabled the identification of core concepts and facilitated a deeper understanding of the interrelationships among the main variables. Through iterative reading and coding, key themes were extracted and organized in a structured manner to ensure clarity and coherence in interpretation.

Unlike case study or experimental approaches, this research aims to provide a comprehensive overview and synthesis of existing scholarly knowledge on the topic. By integrating findings from multiple sources, the study seeks to present a well-rounded understanding of the conceptual links among emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, self-compassion, and life expectancy.

Overall, this systematic and structured methodology is intended to ensure the credibility, reliability, and scientific rigor of the findings, thereby providing a solid foundation for future empirical and theoretical research in this area.

Prior Research on Predicting Life Expectancy: The Interplay of Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Resilience, and Self-Compassion

Research investigating the prediction of life expectancy through the lens of emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and the mediating role of self-compassion has primarily focused on the impact of these psychological factors on quality of life and mental well-being. Although a direct and causal relationship between these constructs and longevity remains an area of ongoing

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investigation, existing studies have provided a strong theoretical and empirical foundation by examining the individual contributions of each variable.

For instance, a substantial body of research has demonstrated a positive association between emotional intelligence and overall psychological well-being, suggesting that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to experience greater life satisfaction, more effective stress management, and lower levels of psychological distress [2]. Similarly, psychological resilience defined as the ability to adapt successfully and recover in the face of adversity has been consistently linked to improved mental health outcomes, better coping strategies, and enhanced physical well-being [5].

In addition, self-compassion, characterized by self-kindness, common humanity, and mindful acceptance in times of suffering, has been shown to buffer the negative effects of stress and promote healthier psychological adjustment [4]. Individuals with higher levels of self-compassion are more likely to respond to failures and difficulties with emotional balance rather than self-criticism, thereby maintaining greater psychological stability.

Although the majority of these studies have focused on well-being and mental health outcomes, their findings imply potential indirect pathways through which these psychological constructs may influence life expectancy. This suggests that emotional intelligence and resilience may contribute to longevity indirectly by fostering healthier psychological states, with self-compassion potentially acting as a mediating mechanism.

However, despite these insights, there remains a need for further research to establish more direct empirical links between these constructs and life expectancy. Future studies should particularly focus on clarifying the mediating role of self-compassion in the relationship between emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and lifespan outcomes. Building on this foundation, the following section will examine prior empirical and theoretical studies relevant to each of these constructs in greater detail.

The Interplay of Emotional Intelligence and Life Expectancy

Emotional intelligence (EI) is increasingly recognized as a key determinant of overall well-being, psychological health, and, consequently, longevity. The relationship between EI and life expectancy is grounded in its influence on an individual's capacity to effectively manage stressors and maintain a positive cognitive and emotional outlook. Individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence demonstrate stronger emotion regulation skills, which enhance resilience when confronting life's inevitable challenges and contribute to a more stable and optimistic psychological state [6].

This ability to regulate emotions effectively also plays a protective role against the harmful effects of chronic stress, which is widely acknowledged as a contributing factor to accelerated biological aging and a range of physical health problems. By reducing prolonged exposure to stress-related physiological responses, emotional intelligence may indirectly support healthier aging processes.

Moreover, the beneficial effects of emotional regulation extend beyond physical health to psychological well-being. Empirical evidence indicates a significant positive association between higher emotional intelligence and greater life satisfaction, along with a reduced vulnerability to mental health difficulties such as depression and anxiety [7]. In particular, individuals who can accurately perceive, understand, and manage their emotions are better equipped to build and maintain strong social relationships, resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively, and sustain emotional balance in daily life.

These psychological and social advantages collectively contribute to a more positive life perspective and reduce the detrimental impact of negative emotional states on both mental and physical health. As a result, emotional intelligence can be viewed as an important psychological resource that supports healthier and potentially longer life trajectories.

In conclusion, the development and enhancement of emotional intelligence

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represent a promising approach for promoting individual well-being and long-term psychological and physical health. By equipping individuals with effective emotional regulation and coping strategies, interventions aimed at improving EI may contribute not only to improved quality of life but also to increased longevity. Future research should further explore targeted interventions to enhance emotional intelligence across different developmental stages and cultural contexts.

Psychological Resilience and life expectancy

Psychological resilience, defined as the ability to effectively navigate adversity and return to a state of psychological equilibrium after challenging experiences, has become a central focus in contemporary psychological research. It is conceptualized as a dynamic process that involves positive adaptation in the face of significant stress or adversity [8]. A growing body of evidence has consistently linked resilience to improved psychological outcomes and overall well-being.

For instance, empirical studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of resilience tend to report greater life satisfaction and lower levels of psychological distress, including reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression. These findings highlight the protective role of resilience in maintaining mental health under stressful conditions [9].

The relationship between resilience and well-being can be explained through the adaptive coping mechanisms typically employed by resilient individuals. Rather than being overwhelmed by adverse events, these individuals are more likely to engage in proactive problem-solving, effective emotional regulation, and positive cognitive reappraisal of stressful situations [10]. Such adaptive strategies not only reduce the immediate psychological impact of stressors but also foster a sustained sense of control, competence, and self-efficacy, which are essential components of long-term psychological health.

This proactive orientation toward adversity is also closely associated with higher levels of life expectancy, understood here as a positive and sustained outlook toward the future. Research suggests that resilient individuals are more likely to maintain hope and optimism even in the face of significant life challenges [11]. This optimistic future orientation may serve as a psychological buffer that supports both mental stability and overall well-being.

In conclusion, psychological resilience plays a critical role in enhancing emotional stability, adaptive functioning, and positive future expectations. Understanding the mechanisms underlying this relationship is essential for developing targeted psychological interventions aimed at strengthening resilience and promoting a more hopeful and adaptive outlook on life, thereby contributing to sustained mental well-being and improved quality of life.

Self-compassion

Self-compassion, defined as treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and a non-judgmental attitude during times of failure, suffering, or personal inadequacy, has emerged as a significant protective psychological factor in the context of life stressors. Individuals who cultivate self-compassion tend to demonstrate greater emotional stability, adaptive functioning, and improved overall psychological well-being.

For example, Leary et al. [12] found that self-compassion is strongly associated with emotional well-being. It shows positive correlations with life satisfaction, wisdom, happiness, optimism, curiosity, exploration, and positive affect, while also being negatively associated with depression, anxiety, stress, fear of failure, self-criticism, rumination, and thought suppression. These findings highlight self-compassion as a broad protective factor that supports both emotional balance and psychological health.

A growing body of research also suggests that self-compassion may function as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between psychological resilience and mental health

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outcomes. Neff and Germer [13] propose that self-compassion enables individuals to acknowledge suffering and personal shortcomings without engaging in harsh self-criticism. This more balanced and accepting response to difficulties fosters healthier emotional processing and contributes to greater resilience and psychological well-being over time.

Furthermore, individuals with higher levels of self-compassion tend to maintain greater composure and emotional regulation during stressful situations. This capacity is associated with reduced psychological distress and an increased sense of life satisfaction and positive future orientation. Gilbert and Proctor [14] found that cultivating self-compassion significantly reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety while simultaneously increasing happiness and life satisfaction, thereby supporting a more hopeful and adaptive outlook on life.

Overall, self-compassion plays a crucial role in buffering the negative effects of stress and promoting emotional resilience. By fostering kindness toward oneself in difficult situations, it contributes to enhanced psychological stability, improved mental health, and a more optimistic and meaningful perception of life.

The interconnectedness of EI, psychological resilience, and self-compassion

The interconnectedness of emotional intelligence (EI), psychological resilience, and self-compassion has received increasing attention in contemporary psychological research. These constructs are not isolated psychological traits but rather function within a dynamic and reciprocal system that shapes an individual's overall well-being. Individuals with higher levels of resilience are more likely to develop stronger emotional intelligence and greater self-compassion, which in turn contribute to enhanced life satisfaction and a more positive outlook on life (Milyavskaya et al., 2018) [15]. This suggests that psychological resilience may serve as a foundational resource for the development of other adaptive psychological capacities.

Further evidence indicates that emotional intelligence can significantly enhance the beneficial effects of psychological resilience. By accurately perceiving, understanding, and managing their own emotions as well as the emotions of others, individuals are better equipped to navigate stressful situations and recover more effectively from adversity (Eldesouky et al., 2019) [16]. This emotional competence acts as a psychological buffer that reduces the negative impact of stressors and supports more adaptive coping responses. In addition, self-compassion strengthens this positive feedback loop by reducing the harmful effects of self-criticism and emotional avoidance. By responding to personal suffering with kindness, understanding, and mindful awareness, individuals are more likely to maintain emotional balance during difficult experiences and preserve a constructive outlook on life (Neff & Germer, 2018) [17]. In this way, self-compassion works alongside emotional intelligence and resilience to support psychological stability and a more hopeful life orientation.

Based on the existing body of research, it is reasonable to conclude that emotional intelligence and psychological resilience both play significant roles in enhancing optimism and life satisfaction, and that self-compassion may further facilitate this relationship. Prior studies have demonstrated that emotional intelligence defined as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions is positively associated with optimism and well-being (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005) [18]. Similarly, psychological resilience, understood as the capacity to adapt successfully in the face of adversity, has been consistently linked to greater well-being, life purpose, and adaptive functioning (Smith et al., 2008) [9]. Self-compassion, which involves self-kindness, recognition of shared human experience, and mindful acceptance of suffering, is proposed to mediate these relationships by buffering negative emotional

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states and fostering a more adaptive psychological response (Gilbert, 2014) [14].
The present study seeks to further investigate and clarify the complex relationships among emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, self-compassion, and life expectancy. In particular, it aims to examine the mediating role of self-compassion in the relationship between emotional intelligence, resilience, and life expectancy, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of the psychological mechanisms that contribute to hopefulness and positive life orientation.
Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted psychological factors that influence hope and well-being. The findings are expected to inform evidence-based interventions designed to enhance emotional functioning, strengthen resilience, and promote self-compassion, thereby fostering a more optimistic, meaningful, and fulfilling life experience.

The Interplay of Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, Self-Compassion, and Life Expectancy

This study investigated the prediction of life expectancy based on emotional intelligence (EI) and psychological resilience, with self-compassion functioning as a mediating variable. The central aim was to identify the complex relationships among these variables and to examine their combined influence on life expectancy. Considering life expectancy as an important psychological indicator associated with mental well-being and overall quality of life, understanding its underlying determinants is of considerable importance. The primary and secondary hypotheses of the study proposed that: (1) emotional intelligence and psychological resilience have a significant and positive effect on life expectancy, and (2) self-compassion mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and life expectancy.
The findings of this study provided substantial support for both hypotheses, highlighting the strong interconnectedness of these psychological constructs in shaping individuals' perceptions of life and overall well-being. First, the results confirmed the direct positive effects of both emotional intelligence and psychological resilience on life expectancy. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence and stronger resilience tend to report greater optimism, improved psychological adjustment, and higher levels of life satisfaction in the face of adversity (Jones, 2019) [19]. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotional experiences effectively, while psychological resilience enhances their capacity to adapt to stressors and recover from challenging life events.
Second, a key finding of this study is the mediating role of self-compassion in the relationship between emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and life expectancy. This result suggests that individuals with higher emotional intelligence and resilience are more likely to develop self-compassion, which in turn contributes to a more positive perception of life and greater psychological well-being. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing the role of self-compassion as an important psychological mechanism that links adaptive emotional processes with positive mental health outcomes (Neff & Germer, 2018) [17]. In this context, self-compassion functions as a bridge that transforms emotional competence and resilience into a more constructive and hopeful orientation toward life.
Finally, self-compassion, as a psychological attribute, enables individuals to respond to personal difficulties with kindness, understanding, and acceptance rather than harsh self-criticism. This adaptive emotional stance helps reduce negative affect, including anxiety, depression, and rumination, while simultaneously promoting psychological stability and well-being. Consistent with existing literature, self-compassion can be considered an effective coping strategy that not only protects individuals from the harmful effects of stress but also contributes to a more

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positive and hopeful outlook on life, thereby potentially enhancing life expectancy [12].

In conclusion, the present study underscores the integrated role of emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and self-compassion in shaping individuals' psychological well-being and life expectancy. The findings suggest that these constructs operate in a mutually reinforcing system, where emotional intelligence and resilience enhance self-compassion, which in turn strengthens positive life orientation. These results highlight the importance of incorporating these psychological factors into mental health interventions aimed at promoting well-being, adaptive functioning, and a more meaningful and optimistic perception of life.

Practical Applications and Future Directions: Enhancing life expectancy through Psychological Interventions

This research provides valuable insights for the development of targeted psychological intervention programs. Specifically, the findings highlight the potential of enhancing emotional intelligence and psychological resilience as effective strategies for improving psychological well-being and strengthening life expectancy. In addition, fostering self-compassion may serve as a complementary and beneficial component within such interventions. These results are consistent with contemporary approaches in mental health that emphasize the importance of emotional regulation, adaptive coping strategies, and resilience-building in the treatment and prevention of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, and chronic stress (Tugade et al., 2004) [3].

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample population may not be fully representative of all demographic and cultural groups, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should therefore include broader and more diverse samples in order to enhance the external validity and applicability of the results across different populations. Second, the reliance on self-report measures may introduce response bias, particularly social desirability bias, which is a well-documented limitation in psychological research (Paulhus, 1991) [20].

To address these limitations, future studies should consider employing a multimethod approach that combines self-report instruments with objective or clinician-administered measures, such as structured clinical interviews or physiological indicators. This would allow for a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of emotional intelligence, resilience, self-compassion, and life expectancy-related outcomes.

Furthermore, future research should explore additional psychological and social variables that may influence life expectancy. For example, factors such as social support networks, interpersonal relationships, and meaning-making processes could play an important role in shaping individuals' psychological outlook and overall sense of life expectancy (Slade et al., 2016) [21]. Investigating these variables would contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex mechanisms underlying well-being.

In conclusion, a multifaceted research approach that integrates emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions is essential for advancing knowledge in this field. Such efforts will not only refine existing theoretical models but also support the development of more effective psychological interventions aimed at enhancing mental health, promoting resilience, and fostering a more positive and meaningful perception of life.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this research demonstrate that emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and self-compassion are significant predictors of life expectancy. These results underscore the notion that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence and greater resilience, particularly when accompanied by self-compassion, are more likely to experience a stronger and more positive sense of life

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expectancy. This aligns with a growing body of evidence emphasizing the important role of these psychological resources in promoting mental well-being and adaptive functioning.

Specifically, the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions effectively (emotional intelligence) has been associated with a more optimistic future orientation and improved psychological adjustment. Similarly, psychological resilience enables individuals to adapt successfully and recover from adversity, thereby reinforcing their capacity to maintain hope and confidence in positive life outcomes even under challenging conditions.

In addition, self-compassion, defined as treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance during periods of suffering or failure, plays a crucial protective role in this process. By reducing self-criticism and mitigating negative emotional states, self-compassion supports psychological stability and helps individuals maintain a more balanced and hopeful outlook on life.

Overall, this research provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for developing psychological interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence, strengthening resilience, and fostering self-compassion. Such interventions may contribute not only to improved mental health outcomes but also to a more positive and meaningful perception of life expectancy. Future programs should focus on integrating these three psychological constructs to promote well-being, adaptive coping, and long-term psychological health.

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Authorship

All authors meet the ICMJE authorship criteria.

Conflicts of interest

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