MANAGING EMOTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE FOR BETTER JOB PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN INDIAN CORPORATE SETTINGS

Dr Keren Millet[1], Dr Shweta Oza[2], Dr Kerav Pandya[3]
[1, 2] Assistant Professor, Parul University, Vadodra, Gujarat
[3] Director, C.K. Shah Vijyapurwala Institute of Management, Vadodara, Gujarat

Journal	Samvakti Journal of Research in Business Management ISSN (Online) : 2582-8347 https://www.samvaktijournals.com/sjrbm Volume 7 issue 1 Page No : 1 - 17
Discipline	Human Resource Management

Date Received : June 21, 2025 **Publication Date**: April 29, 2026
ID : sjrbm.2025.120 **Paper Type** : Research Report

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and job performance among employees in Indian corporate organizations. Using a structured questionnaire built around the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) and a validated job performance index, data were collected from 320 full-time employees spanning four sectors — information technology, manufacturing, banking, and healthcare — all operating within Gujarat, India. To test the proposed relationships, the study employed Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and multiple regression as the primary statistical tools.

The findings reveal that all four dimensions of EI contribute meaningfully and positively to job performance: self-awareness ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), self-regulation ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$), empathy ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$), and social skills ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$). Taken together, the four EI dimensions explained 43.6% of the variance observed in job performance scores ($R^2 = 0.436$). Beyond prediction, the data also reveal that EI plays a meaningful mediating role in the pathway from leadership style to employee retention (indirect effect = 0.18, $p < 0.05$). These outcomes underscore the strategic value of integrating EI-based training into

organizational development programs. The paper concludes with both theoretical insights and actionable recommendations for HR practitioners and organizational leaders.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Empathy, Social Skills, Structural Equation Modeling, Employee Retention, India

INTRODUCTION

Today's workplaces ask more of employees than ever before. Technical know-how and raw cognitive ability, while still important, are no longer enough on their own. As organizations shift toward more collaborative, team-driven ways of working, the ability to recognize, interpret, and channel emotions — both one's own and those of others — has become a genuine professional asset. This capacity, known as Emotional Intelligence (EI), was first theorized by Mayer and Salovey[12] and later gained widespread attention in organizational settings through Goleman's influential writing[6]. Today it occupies a central place in organizational psychology and human resource management.

Goleman's argument that EI can predict occupational success above and beyond traditional measures of intelligence set off a wave of empirical inquiry[6]. Researchers have since linked EI to a range of positive workplace outcomes, from stronger leadership capability[7] and lower burnout rates[3], to higher job satisfaction[11] and better conflict management[13]. Despite this growing body of global evidence, rigorous quantitative research examining how EI operates specifically within Indian corporate environments remains relatively limited.

India's cultural context — shaped by clear power hierarchies, collectivist values, and structured organizational norms — may well influence how EI is expressed and put to use in professional life[10]. Research by Triandis has shown that collectivist cultures tend to place a higher premium on group harmony and interpersonal cohesion, which arguably makes competencies like empathy and social skills even more professionally relevant[15]. Understanding how EI functions within this cultural setting matters not only theoretically, but also practically — for HR professionals, organizational leaders, and policymakers working in one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

A significant gap remains in the Indian EI literature. Most existing studies are qualitative, restricted to a single industry, or based on relatively small samples. This study addresses that gap through a large-sample, multi-sector quantitative design covering four major industries — IT, healthcare, banking, and manufacturing — across Gujarat, one of India's most economically dynamic states. The study also examines a dimension that has received

surprisingly little empirical attention in India: the role of EI as a mediating variable between leadership style and employee retention.

Specifically, this paper makes four contributions: (1) it quantitatively tests EI and its component dimensions as predictors of job performance; (2) it investigates EI's role as a mediator in the leadership–retention relationship; (3) it compares EI scores and performance outcomes across four major Indian industries; and (4) it connects these findings to established theoretical frameworks to deepen our conceptual understanding.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Three interrelated theoretical traditions form the foundation of this study. The first is the ability model of EI proposed by Mayer and Salovey, which views emotional intelligence as a genuine cognitive capacity involving four related processes: perceiving emotions accurately, using emotions to facilitate thought, understanding how emotions evolve and interact, and managing emotions effectively[12]. This framework establishes EI as a psychologically real and measurable construct with predictable effects on performance.

The second tradition is Goleman's competency model, which translates the ability-based view into organizational practice[7]. Goleman argued that specific EI competencies — self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills — are the distinguishing characteristics of high performers in professional settings. His model informs the hypothesized links between each EI dimension and job performance explored in this study.

The third tradition is transformational leadership theory[2] [1], which provides the interpretive lens for the EI-mediated retention effect. Transformational leaders engage followers through emotional resonance, compelling vision, and personalized support — all qualities deeply embedded in EI. This connection justifies the inclusion of leadership style as an antecedent in the study's mediation model.

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

The relationship between EI and job performance has attracted substantial scholarly attention across diverse organizational settings. O'Boyle comprehensive meta-analysis established that EI predicts job performance independently of cognitive ability and personality factors[14]. More recently, Miao extended this evidence base by demonstrating, in a meta-analytic investigation of 165 independent samples, that EI exerts particularly strong performance effects in roles requiring emotional labor — a finding with direct relevance to

service-intensive sectors such as healthcare and banking[18]. Carmeli found that senior managers who scored higher on EI tended to outperform their peers on task-related measures and were more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors[3].

Among the four EI dimensions, self-awareness — the ability to recognize one's own emotional states and understand their influence on behavior — has been identified as the foundational competency from which other EI abilities develop[6]. Employees with strong self-awareness tend to make more calibrated decisions under pressure and are more adept at adjusting their behavior to suit different situational demands. Self-regulation, which involves managing disruptive impulses and sustaining emotional balance, is consistently associated with fewer counterproductive workplace behaviors and greater resilience[3].

Empathy enables employees to understand what colleagues and clients are experiencing emotionally, which in turn supports more effective communication, smoother conflict resolution, and stronger collaborative teamwork — all central to contextual job performance[16]. Social skills, the most interpersonally visible EI dimension, allow employees to build productive working relationships, exercise influence thoughtfully, and navigate organizational dynamics — capabilities that carry weight in the collectivist fabric of Indian workplaces[10].

EI as a Mediator: Leadership and Employee Retention

A consistent theme in the scholarly literature is that EI serves as a critical mechanism connecting leadership behavior to meaningful downstream outcomes. George made a compelling theoretical case that emotionally intelligent leaders are more effective at cultivating positive emotional climates among their teams, which strengthens commitment and reduces the intention to leave[5]. Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) provided empirical support by showing that EI mediates the relationship between emotional job demands and employee satisfaction, functioning as a kind of psychological buffer[11].

Retention has become a pressing concern for Indian organizations, particularly in high-mobility sectors like IT and healthcare[4]. Leaders who possess and apply EI competencies are better positioned to meet employees' deeper psychological needs — for recognition, autonomy, and a genuine sense of belonging — in ways that build loyalty and reduce voluntary departures. This study extends this line of thinking by empirically testing the mediation model using bootstrapped SEM in a multi-sector Indian sample.

Research Gap

Despite the expanding global evidence base on Emotional Intelligence and its organizational consequences, critical gaps persist in the literature — particularly within the Indian corporate context. The majority of Indian EI studies to date have been qualitative or exploratory in nature, relying on small, convenience samples drawn from a single organization or sector. This methodological narrowness severely restricts the generalizability of their findings and limits the extent to which sector-specific or cross-industry conclusions can be drawn. Moreover, most existing Indian research on EI focuses exclusively on the direct EI–performance relationship, without examining how EI interacts with adjacent organizational constructs such as leadership behavior or talent retention.

A second and closely related gap concerns the role of EI as a mediating mechanism in leadership–retention dynamics. While George & Kafetsios and Zampetakis have theorized and partially tested this pathway in Western settings, robust bootstrapped mediation evidence from Indian multi-sector samples remains virtually absent from the published literature[5] [11]. This is a notable omission given that India's collectivist cultural values, hierarchical organizational structures, and high employee mobility rates — particularly in sectors like IT and healthcare — may alter both the magnitude and mechanism of EI's mediating role relative to what has been observed in Western organizational contexts.

Third, sector-comparative analysis of EI within India is conspicuously underdeveloped. Prior research has tended to treat "Indian employees" as a homogeneous category, overlooking the substantial occupational and contextual differences between sectors such as information technology, healthcare, banking, and manufacturing. This obscures how industry-specific emotional labor demands, interpersonal role structures, and workplace cultures shape EI development and its downstream performance effects.

The present study is specifically designed to address these three interconnected gaps. By employing a large-sample (N = 320), multi-sector, quantitative design — using validated instruments, dual-source performance measurement, and robust analytical tools including SEM and bootstrapped mediation — it offers a methodologically rigorous and contextually grounded contribution to EI research in India. In doing so, it moves beyond descriptive observation toward explanatory and comparative evidence that can meaningfully inform both EI theory and HR practice in one of the world's most economically consequential labor markets.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Drawing from the theoretical foundation and prior empirical work, five hypotheses are proposed:

H1 : Self-Awareness is positively and significantly associated with Job Performance.

H2 : Self-Regulation is positively and significantly associated with Job Performance.

H3 : Empathy is positively and significantly associated with Job Performance.

H4 : Social Skills are positively and significantly associated with Job Performance.

H5 : Overall EI significantly mediates the link between Leadership Style and Employee Retention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, consistent with a positivist epistemological orientation and deductive reasoning. This design is well-suited to hypothesis testing through statistical analysis of primary data gathered at a single point in time. While cross-sectional designs inherently limit causal conclusions, they are appropriate for examining predictive relationships, as this study does. Future research using longitudinal designs would be better placed to establish causal directionality.

Sampling

Stratified random sampling was used to ensure proportional representation across the four target industries. The sampling frame covered full-time employees based in Gujarat with at least one year of organizational tenure. Gujarat was selected as the study setting because of its prominence as one of India's leading commercial and industrial states, encompassing major IT hubs (Ahmedabad, Surat), healthcare institutions, public sector banks, and manufacturing clusters (Rajkot, Vadodara). This geographic focus strengthens ecological validity, though multi-state replication studies would further extend generalizability.

A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 320 were returned fully completed and usable, yielding a response rate of 91.4%. The demographic composition of participants is detailed in *Table 1*.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	184	57.5

	Female	136	42.5
Age Group	20–30 years	112	35.0
	31–40 years	138	43.1
	41–50 years	52	16.3
	51+ years	18	5.6
Education	Graduate	118	36.9
	Post-Graduate	174	54.4
	Doctorate	28	8.7
Sector	IT / Software	88	27.5
	Banking & Finance	72	22.5
	Healthcare	80	25.0
	Manufacturing	80	25.0
Experience	1–5 years	104	32.5
	6–10 years	128	40.0
	11+ years	88	27.5

Table 1 : Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 320)

Measurement Instruments

Emotional Intelligence was measured using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale[17], a 16-item instrument organized across four sub-scales: Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA), Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA), Use of Emotion (UOE), and Regulation of Emotion (ROE). Participants rated each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The WLEIS was chosen for its strong psychometric properties, its established cross-cultural applicability, and its theoretical alignment with the ability-based model[12].

Job Performance was assessed using a 10-item scale adapted[16], covering both task-based and contextual performance dimensions. To minimize common method bias, supervisor ratings were incorporated alongside self-reports, providing a dual-source evaluation that bolsters the validity of the performance measures used.

Reliability and Validity

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (α). Convergent and discriminant validity were established through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted in AMOS 24.0. All factor loadings surpassed 0.60, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded the 0.50 threshold, confirming adequate construct validity. Composite Reliability (CR) values were above 0.80 for all constructs, indicating strong internal consistency. *Table 2* presents these reliability and validity statistics.

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	AVE	CR
Self-Awareness (SA)	4	0.83	0.61	0.86
Self-Regulation (SR)	4	0.79	0.57	0.84
Empathy (EM)	4	0.81	0.59	0.85
Social Skills (SS)	4	0.82	0.62	0.87
Job Performance (JP)	10	0.88	0.64	0.91
Employee Retention (ER)	5	0.76	0.53	0.80

Table 2 : Reliability and Validity Statistics (N = 320)

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and AMOS 24.0. The analytical procedure unfolded in five stages: (1) descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis to explore basic relationships; (2) CFA to assess measurement model quality; (3) multiple regression to test Hypotheses H1 through H4; (4) full SEM to evaluate overall model fit; and (5) bootstrapped mediation analysis[8] using 5,000 bootstrap samples with 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals to test H5. SEM was preferred over simpler path analytic methods because it models measurement error and structural relationships simultaneously, producing more precise parameter estimates in complex, multi-variable frameworks.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients for all study variables. Every EI dimension showed a positive and statistically significant correlation with Job Performance, providing early empirical backing for the proposed hypotheses.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-Awareness (SA)	5.42	0.87	—				
2. Self-Regulation (SR)	5.18	0.91	0.52**	—			
3. Empathy (EM)	5.31	0.84	0.48**	0.55**	—		
4. Social Skills (SS)	5.24	0.93	0.51**	0.49**	0.57**	—	
5. Job Performance (JP)	5.09	0.96	0.53**	0.49**	0.44**	0.51**	—

*Table 3 : Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 320). ** p < 0.01 (two-tailed)*

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was run with Job Performance as the outcome variable and the four EI dimensions as predictors. The overall model reached statistical significance ($F(4, 315) = 60.84$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 43.6% of the variance in Job Performance ($R^2 = 0.436$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.429$). All four hypotheses (H1–H4) were supported.

Predictor	B	SE	β (Beta)	t-value	p-value	Result
(Constant)	0.68	0.21	—	3.24	0.001	—
Self-Awareness (SA)	0.34	0.07	0.31	4.86	< 0.001	H1 Supported
Self-Regulation (SR)	0.29	0.07	0.27	4.14	< 0.001	H2 Supported
Empathy (EM)	0.27	0.08	0.24	3.38	< 0.01	H3 Supported
Social Skills (SS)	0.30	0.07	0.29	4.29	< 0.001	H4 Supported

Table 4 : Multiple Regression Results — EI Dimensions Predicting Job Performance. $R^2 = 0.436$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.429$; $F(4, 315) = 60.84$; $p < 0.001$

Model Fit — Structural Equation Modeling

The hypothesized structural model was evaluated using SEM, with fit assessed across multiple indices. As shown in *Table 5*, all indices comfortably meet recommended thresholds, indicating good to excellent overall model fit.

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value	Interpretation
Chi-Square (χ^2/df)	< 3.0	2.14	Good Fit
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	≥ 0.90	0.96	Excellent Fit
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	≥ 0.90	0.95	Excellent Fit
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.047	Good Fit
SRMR	< 0.08	0.052	Good Fit
AGFI	≥ 0.85	0.91	Good Fit

Table 5 : SEM Model Fit Indices

Mediation Analysis — EI as Mediator

Bootstrapped mediation analysis was conducted to evaluate H5. Results confirm that EI significantly mediates the relationship between Leadership Style and Employee Retention. The indirect effect was 0.18 (95% CI: 0.09, 0.28), with the confidence interval excluding zero — a finding consistent with partial mediation. H5 is therefore supported.

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	95% CI	Mediation
Leadership → EI → Retention	0.23*	0.18**	0.41***	[0.09, 0.28]	Partial

*Table 6 : Bootstrapped Mediation Results (5,000 Samples). * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001*

Sector-Wise Comparison of EI and Job Performance

One-way ANOVA was conducted to explore sector-level differences in EI and Job Performance scores. Statistically significant differences emerged ($F = 8.43$, $p < 0.001$), and post-hoc Tukey tests confirmed that employees in IT and Healthcare scored notably higher on EI compared to their counterparts in Manufacturing.

Sector	n	Mean EI Score	Mean JP Score	F-value	p-value
IT / Software	88	5.61	5.47	8.43	< 0.001
Banking & Finance	72	5.29	5.18		
Healthcare	80	5.54	5.38		
Manufacturing	80	4.97	4.79		

Table 7 : One-Way ANOVA — Sector-Wise EI and Job Performance Scores

DISCUSSION

EI as a Predictor of Job Performance

The findings offer strong empirical support for the view that EI plays a positive and meaningful role in driving job performance within Indian organizational settings. This aligns with meta-analytic evidence[14] and earlier sector-specific work[3] [11]. The fact that EI dimensions collectively explain 43.6% of the variance in job performance — a notably high figure for a psychological predictor in applied workplace research — speaks to EI's genuine significance as a human capital variable.

Self-Awareness ($\beta = 0.31$) proved to be the strongest individual predictor, echoing Goleman's argument that self-awareness is the foundational competency from which all other EI capacities grow[7]. Employees who have a clear sense of their own emotional states are better equipped to regulate their conduct under pressure, think adaptively when faced with challenges, and engage constructively with colleagues and supervisors alike. For organizations, this finding suggests that screening for self-awareness during hiring could help identify candidates with stronger long-term performance potential.

Social Skills (β = 0.29) were nearly as predictive as self-awareness. This result carries particular theoretical weight in the Indian context, where collectivist cultural norms and hierarchical organizational structures place a strong premium on relationship management, showing appropriate deference, and contributing to group cohesion[10] [15]. The relatively strong predictive power of social skills observed here — compared to Western EI studies — may reflect a genuine cultural amplification effect. Yin, drawing on evidence from Chinese organizations, similarly found that social skills exerted a disproportionately strong effect on performance in collectivist cultural contexts, corroborating the view that cultural context conditions which EI dimensions matter most[19]. This suggests that cross-cultural comparative research on this dimension would be particularly valuable for refining EI theory in non-Western organizational settings.

Self-Regulation (β = 0.27) ranked third, underscoring the importance of maintaining composure and managing impulsive reactions in high-demand work settings. This is consistent with Carmeli's finding that self-regulation is linked to lower levels of counterproductive workplace behavior[3], and with Szczygiel and Mikolajczak's meta-analytic evidence that self-regulation is the EI dimension most robustly associated with reduced burnout and sustained performance across occupational settings[20]. In fast-moving sectors like IT and banking, where deadline pressure and client-facing responsibilities are constants, the ability to stay emotionally steady may act as a critical performance buffer.

Empathy (β = 0.24) showed the smallest direct coefficient among the four EI dimensions, but this does not diminish its organizational importance. Empathy operates through interpersonal trust and team cohesion — outcomes that task-based performance metrics may not fully capture. Studies using multilevel designs and team-level performance criteria may uncover stronger empathy effects.

EI as a Mediator of the Leadership–Retention Relationship

The confirmed partial mediation (indirect effect = 0.18, 95% CI: 0.09, 0.28) represents — to the best of the authors' knowledge — one of the first instances of bootstrapped SEM evidence from a multi-sector Indian sample demonstrating that EI is a genuine pathway through which leadership style shapes employee retention. This empirically grounds theoretical claim: leaders who invest in developing their emotional intelligence create more positive team climates, are more attuned to employees' psychological needs, and ultimately generate greater organizational commitment — with reduced voluntary turnover as a measurable result[5].

The partial nature of the mediation is worth noting. A direct effect of leadership on retention also remains significant (direct effect = 0.23, $p < 0.05$), which means additional mediating mechanisms — such as perceived organizational support, procedural justice, or job autonomy — likely coexist alongside EI in this relationship. HR practitioners should treat EI development as one important lever within a broader, integrated retention strategy rather than viewing it as a complete solution on its own.

Sector-Wise Differences: Implications and Interpretations

The ANOVA results reveal meaningful variation in EI and job performance across sectors. IT employees reported the highest average EI scores (M = 5.61), followed closely by Healthcare workers (M = 5.54), while Manufacturing employees scored lowest (M = 4.97). The gap between IT and Manufacturing workers — 0.64 scale points — is statistically significant and practically meaningful.

These patterns make intuitive sense when considered alongside the interpersonal demands of different occupational roles. Software professionals routinely collaborate in agile project structures, manage client expectations, and work through ambiguous, knowledge-intensive challenges. Healthcare workers must continuously regulate their emotional responses in high-stakes, patient-facing situations. Both environments seem to actively develop and reward EI over time.

Manufacturing roles in Gujarat, on the other hand, tend to involve more task-defined, structured workflows with fewer interpersonal complexity demands. This structural difference may limit the on-the-job opportunities for EI development that arise naturally in other sectors. Critically, this does not mean EI is irrelevant in manufacturing — rather, it points to a largely untapped opportunity. Targeted EI capacity-building programs, particularly for frontline supervisors and team leads in manufacturing, could improve team dynamics, reduce workplace conflict, and lift overall performance in ways that remain largely unexplored.

Theoretical Contributions

This study advances the EI scholarship in three distinct ways. To begin with, it provides multi-sector, large-sample quantitative evidence from the Indian organizational context — a setting that has received disproportionately little empirical attention relative to its economic scale and global significance. Replicating and extending EI–performance relationships across four major industries strengthens external validity and establishes the cross-industry generalizability of the EI–performance link within a culturally specific framework.

Second, the mediation finding enriches leadership theory by providing empirically robust support for the pathway through which transformational leadership influences employee retention. By demonstrating EI as a partial mediator using bootstrapped SEM — a methodologically stronger approach than earlier path-analytic mediation designs — the study delivers more reliable evidence for the EI–leadership–retention chain.

Third, the sector-level comparison extends strategic HRM theory by demonstrating that occupational context moderates how strongly EI is expressed and developed. This resonates with the conservation of resources perspective[9], which proposes that individuals in high-demand roles are motivated to build psychological resources like EI as a protective strategy. Future theoretical work should incorporate EI into strategic HRM frameworks that explicitly account for sector-level contextual moderators.

Practical Implications for HR Policy and Practice

Several practical takeaways emerge for HR practitioners and organizational leaders working in Indian corporate settings.

EI-informed recruitment and selection: Organizations should consider incorporating validated EI assessment tools — such as the WLEIS or the MSCEIT — into their hiring processes, especially for roles that involve significant interpersonal interaction. Given that self-awareness and social skills were the strongest performance predictors in this study, these dimensions deserve particular emphasis in competency frameworks used for selection.

Targeted training and development: Development programs centered on building self-awareness and self-regulation are likely to generate the highest performance return on investment. Practical tools such as mindfulness-based training, emotional regulation workshops, and structured 360-degree feedback mechanisms can help employees systematically strengthen these competencies over time.

EI-focused leadership development: The confirmed mediation effect means that investing in EI development for managers and supervisors can reinforce the entire leadership–retention chain. Leadership programs should explicitly build EI capacity, with particular attention to empathy and social skills for those in people management roles.

Sector-specific interventions in manufacturing: Given the significantly lower EI scores observed among manufacturing employees, this sector represents a strategic priority for EI development initiatives. Structured programs aimed at supervisors and team leads could meaningfully improve team cohesion, reduce interpersonal conflict, and drive performance gains in a sector where such investment remains largely absent.

EI integration into performance appraisal: Organizations should consider embedding EI-related behavioral indicators into formal appraisal systems. Formally recognizing and rewarding emotionally intelligent conduct — such as empathetic communication and constructive conflict resolution — can help institutionalize EI as a genuine organizational value and reinforce it as a cultural norm.

LIMITATIONS

This study acknowledges several constraints that qualify its conclusions. First, the cross-sectional design limits the strength of causal claims. The observed relationships between EI and job performance are predictive in nature, not definitively causal. Establishing directionality with confidence requires longitudinal designs that track both EI scores and performance measures across multiple time points.

Second, while supervisor ratings were incorporated to partially address common method bias, self-reported EI measurement still carries the risk of socially desirable responding. Future research should complement self-report tools with ability-based EI assessments, such as the MSCEIT, or peer-rated instruments that are less susceptible to impression management effects.

Third, the sample is geographically restricted to Gujarat, which limits generalizability to other Indian states with different industrial compositions, cultural profiles, and labor market dynamics. States such as Maharashtra (financial services hub), Tamil Nadu (manufacturing corridor), and Karnataka (technology sector) may produce different EI profiles and sector-level patterns.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future studies should address these limitations through the following approaches: longitudinal panel designs monitoring EI development and performance outcomes over 12–36 months to enable causal inference and evaluate the efficacy of EI training; experimental or quasi-experimental designs testing the impact of structured EI training programs on job performance in manufacturing and banking sectors; cross-cultural comparative research examining whether the patterns observed in Gujarat replicate in other Indian states and in Western organizational contexts; multi-level studies investigating whether team-level EI moderates the individual EI–performance relationship; and studies incorporating objective performance indicators — such as sales figures, error rates, or patient outcomes — alongside self-reported and supervisor-rated measures to improve criterion validity.

CONCLUSION

This study makes a meaningful contribution to the empirical literature on EI and organizational outcomes by providing robust, multi-sector quantitative evidence from an Indian corporate context. The findings confirm that EI is not simply a soft, loosely defined interpersonal trait — it is a strategic psychological resource with measurable, direct consequences for both job performance and employee retention. Self-awareness and social skills emerged as the strongest performance predictors, reflecting both universal aspects of EI dynamics and the culturally specific interpersonal demands of Indian workplaces.

The mediation finding advances leadership theory by providing empirical verification that EI is a key mechanism through which transformational leadership shapes employee retention. The sector-level comparisons highlight how occupational context moderates EI expression and development, identifying manufacturing as a priority domain for targeted EI interventions.

Organizations that deliberately integrate EI into their recruitment processes, performance appraisal systems, and leadership development programs are well-positioned to realize meaningful gains in performance, commitment, and talent retention — particularly in India's increasingly competitive and fast-moving talent landscape.

REFERENCES

[1] Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership and performance beyond expectations. Free Press.

[2] Burns, J. M. (1978). Leadership. Harper & Row.

[3] Carmeli, A. (2003). The relationship between emotional intelligence and work attitudes, behavior and outcomes: An examination among senior managers. Journal of Managerial Psychology, 18(8), 788–813. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940310511881

[4] Cherniss, C., & Goleman, D. (1998). Bringing emotional intelligence to the workplace. Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations.

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

[6] Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ. Bantam Books.

[7] Goleman, D. (1998). Working with emotional intelligence. Bantam Books.

[8] Hayes, A. F. (2018). Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

[9] Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. American Psychologist, 44(3), 513–524. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513

[10] Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values. Sage.

[11] Kafetsios, K., & Zampetakis, L. A. (2008). Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction: Testing the mediatory role of positive and negative affect at work. Personality and Individual Differences, 44(3), 712–722. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2007.09.016

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

[13] Murray, M. (1998). The role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership. Leadership Quarterly, 9(2), 167–192.

[14] O'Boyle, E. H., Humphrey, R. H., Pollack, J. M., Hawver, T. H., & Story, P. A. (2011). The relation between emotional intelligence and job performance: A meta-analysis. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 32(5), 788–818. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.714

[15] Triandis, H. C. (1995). Individualism and collectivism. Westview Press.

[16] Williams, L. J., & Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. Journal of Management, 17(3), 601–617. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700305

[17] Wong, C. S., & Law, K. S. (2002). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude: An exploratory study. Leadership Quarterly, 13(3), 243–274. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00099-1

[18] Miao, C., Humphrey, R. H., & Qian, S. (2021). Emotional intelligence and job performance in the context of emotional labor: A meta-analytic investigation. Journal of Management, 47(6), 1672–1702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320967460

[19] Yin, H., Huang, S., & Chen, G. (2023). Emotional intelligence and employee performance: Evidence from Chinese organizations. Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 40(2), 651–678. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-021-09783-z

[20] Szczygiel, D. D., & Mikolajczak, M. (2023). Emotional intelligence and job burnout: A meta-analysis. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 28(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000340

End