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Conflict of Interest

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The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance with a Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Despite their contribution toward the economy and employment generation, SMEs in Pakistan suffer due to low productivity and poor job performance. Thus we examined factors affecting job performance and the “mediating impact of job satisfaction on emotional intelligence and job performance.” We collected a sample of 382 local SME employees and used Smart PLS for data analysis. The study found “self-awareness, self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction positively affect job performance.” Emotional intelligence “affects job satisfaction,” and job satisfaction mediates “emotional intelligence and job performance.” However, “social skills, motivation, and empathy” insignificantly affect job performance. Emotional intelligence helps understand and manage others’ emotions and solve problematic issues. Therefore firms must arrange seminars and workshops on emotional intelligence for their employees regularly. Although we did not find a significant effect of social skills and empathy on job performance, they still are important precursors to job-related outcomes, and firms must focus on these aspects as well.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, job performance, small and medium enterprises (SMEs).*

Introduction

Employee performance, in general, is a critical outcome variable in every

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organizational setup (Narayanan, Rajithakumar, & Menon, 2019). Many studies have examined the antecedents of job satisfaction and performance, but few have examined the serial mediating role of job satisfaction (Han, Yin, Wang, & Zhang, 2020; Dodanwala, Santoso, & Yukongdi, 2022). Employees' quality of work performance is critical in determining the organization's efficiency and output (Leitão, Pereira, & Gonçalves, 2019). Antecedents, including "self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, motivation, and empathy," influence employee performance, which this study has included in its conceptual framework.

Organizational performance depends on the employees' emotional intelligence (Edward & Purba, 2020). Emotional intelligence is a crucial and powerful tool for any organization to compete in the market. Employees with high emotional intelligence are more efficient and effective as they control their emotions and anticipate how others react (Sembiring et al., 2020). Managers and top management must understand and learn to regulate and manipulate emotions according to their requirements (Alonazi, 2020). Jena (2022) asserts that for the sustainability and growth of an organization, the management must identify the factors that promote employee job satisfaction and performance. Given its importance, the study has examined the effect of "self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and emotional intelligence on job performance. The effect of job satisfaction on job performance. And the "mediating role job-satisfaction on emotional intelligence and job performance."

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Emotional Intelligence

Studies found a relationship between intelligence and emotional intelligence in the literature published 2000 years ago (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). Initially, between 1900-1960 the literature separately discussed intelligence and emotions. The researchers first used emotional intelligence in the 1960s (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). In early 1970, researchers frequently examined the association between emotions and cognitive processes. Mayer and Salovey coined emotional intelligence in the early 1990s, which Daniel Goleman popularized in 1995 (Beck, 2013). The new concept gave a different perspective on the association between emotion and intelligence. It assumes that individuals can "understand and express and control their emotions and others' behaviors," resulting in positive outcomes (MacCann et al., 2020). O'Connor et al. (2019) assert that individuals with high emotional intelligence have better social interaction with their employees. Emotional intelligence has several positive implications for individuals' daily life and work. Recent literature suggests emotional intelligence affects

organizational citizenship behavior (Turnipseed & Vandewaa, 2012), job commitment (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002), job performance (Chong, Falahat, & Lee, 2020), and job satisfaction (Wen, Huang, & Hou, 2019).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is important for the sustainability and growth of an organization (Stamolampros et al., 2019). Most employees spend considerable time at work, and their satisfaction level affects their outcomes and actions (Rajamohan, Porock, & Chang, 2019). Despite abundant studies on this phenomenon, researchers spend considerable time improving employees' job satisfaction and outcomes. Researchers have conceptualized job satisfaction differently and from different perspectives. Most researchers agree it is "a positive or pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke et al., 1976; Specchia et al., 2021). Employee satisfaction depends on their jobs' nature and expected outcomes (Chandrasekara, 2019). These outcomes depend on employees' "needs, beliefs, values, and desires" (Lu, Zhao, & While, 2019). Specchia et al. (2021) believe alignment in employees' "personal factors" and expectations of what a job offers reflect job satisfaction.

Job Performance

Job performance refers to "the individuals' job-related activities at work" (Malureanu, Panisoara, & Lazar, 2021). It also refers to how employees efficiently and effectively convert raw materials into finished goods (Guo et al., 2020). Besides other factors, high job performance depends on individuals' leadership traits, knowledge, and skills. Individuals with predefined goals are higher achievers than others (MacCann et al., 2020). "Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations" are precursors of "job performance and satisfaction" (Yusuf, 2021). If firms withdraw extrinsic motivators, the performance of the employees may decrease in the long run. A good leader induces intrinsic motivation in the employees, which significantly contributes to employees' productivity and the organization's success and sustainability (Zeng et al., 2022).

Self Awareness and Job Performance (H1)

Self-awareness is a broad concept, and it has different notions. It consists of "self-comparison introspection, self-evaluation, and recurring behavior" (Huggins et al., 2021). Individuals distinguish and adjust themselves through internalized qualities known as situational self-awareness, which promotes stability and regularity (Carden, Jones, & Passmore, 2022). Individuals tend to look inwards to reflect them through a process known as dispositional self-awareness. This process has negative and positive connotations (Adil & Kamal, 2020). Individuals with negative self-perception focus on "negative emotions, depression, mood, weakness." Consequently, it becomes a hurdle

in solving social problems (Gopinath, 2020). At the same time, positive self-awareness promotes “in-depth self-awareness and desire for self-improvement” (Newman & Nezlek, 2019). Carden, Jones, and Passmore (2022) assert that both affect job performance. Extant literature documents that self-awareness positively correlates with workplace and employees’ health and well-being (Hall, Garabiles, & Latkin, 2019). Many past studies document that job performance and satisfaction outcomes have stemmed from self-awareness (Kim, Schuh, & Cai, 2020; Budworth and Chummar, 2022).

H1: Self-awareness positively affects job performance.

Social Skills and Job Performance (H2)

Social skills are “competencies regulating human relationships.” Such skills are important for increasing productivity and job performance (Yu et al., 2022). Researchers assert that social skill is critical to managing and regulating employees apart from emotional intelligence (Idris et al. 2022). Zaman et al. (2019) asserts that managers lacking social skills may be unable to collaborate with the workers and may not manage the team effectively. Researchers believe social skills include “survival and interpersonal skills” necessary for conflict resolution (Spade, 2020). Survival skills relate to acquiring basic skills necessary for human survival. With this skill, business managers learn to manage employees efficiently in the business environment (Gentina, Chen & Yang, 2021). Managers in a business environment face different types of problems, which they can resolve if they possess problems solving skills. It also helps managers achieve organizational goals by managing and controlling employees efficiently (Sakellariou et al., 2021).

H2: Social skill positively affects job performance.

Motivation and Job Performance (H3)

Besides other factors, employees motivation promotes job performance and organizational sustainability (Andreas, 2022). In the present era of globalization, businesses have to deal with internal and external challenges (Arif, Zainudin, & Hamid, 2019). Businesses can only survive on their ability to integrate employees’ motivation and production factors, such as machines and materials (Riyanto, Endri, & Herlisha, 2021). Pancasila, Haryono, and Sulistyo (2020) assert that firms with a team of highly motivated employees will be more productive in contributing toward profit and increased market share. Adetola et al. (2022) assert leaders inspire and help individuals to achieve their goals. Motivation has stemmed from the word motive, which relates to “needs, desires, wants and drives of persons” (Hajiali et al., 2022). Highly motivated employees are happier, more satisfied, and more productive and efficient (Luqman et al., 2020).

H3: Motivation positively affects job performance.

Empathy and Employees Performance (H4)

Leaders with an empathic relationship with employees motivate them and enhance their job performance (Raina, 202; Chong et al., 2021). Good managers understand the attitudes and behaviors of the employees. This understanding allows managers to manage and monitor employees' performance (Nowac & Zak, 2020; Arghode et al., 2022). Empathy stems from psychology which means "controlling one's behavior and thought." Empathic leaders focus on the employee's emotional reactions and help solve problems at work (Raina, 2022).

Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) theory, developed in 1975, explains the interactions between leaders and subordinates (Jian, 2022). The theory postulates that employees with a low perception of the leaders will perform poorly (Arghode et al., 2022). At the same time, leaders with empathic behavior will command respect from their subordinates. Employees reciprocate such leaders by developing positive attitudes and behaviors towards work (Haynie et al., 2019). Lanier (2021) asserts that empathic leaders do not adopt aggressive behavior despite receiving negative feedback. Such leaders understand the emotions and feelings of the employees and listen to their problems. Good leaders have high ethical values that inspire and motivate employees to give good job performance (Tufail & Sandhu, 2022).

H4: Empathy positively affects job performance.

Self-Regulation and Job Performance (H5)

Individuals, through self-regulation, manage and control their behavior at the workplace. Organizations' success and sustainability depend on creating an environment that enhances employees' self-regulation traits, a critical precursor of job performance (Bakker & de-Vries 2021). Bakker and Oerlemans (2019) suggest that firms can improve employees' self-regulation traits by communicating their expectations regarding dress codes, language, and other behaviors. Firms must encourage employees to take initiative and responsibility (Wolters & Brady, 2021). Mitchell et al. (2019) assert that firms must promote a conducive environment for employees to communicate freely without fear and criticism. Such an environment correlates with employees' self-regulation and job performance. Additionally, providing employees with the required resources for development and positive feedback can enhance their self-regulation traits and job performance. Apart from motivation, rewards and recognition enhance employees' self-regulatory behaviors (Van-Hooft et. al., 2021).

Marques-Quinteiro et al. (2019) assert that self-regulation is important at work, enabling employees to stay focused and productive. Self-regulation helps employees to control their thoughts and feeling to achieve desired outcomes. Precursors of the self-regulation process are the “ability to recognize and manage emotions, set goals, delay gratification when necessary” (Robson, Allen, & Howard, 2020).

H5: Self-regulation positively affects job performance.

Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance (H6)

Many past studies in different domains found that emotional intelligence enhances job performance (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2021). Researchers believe that individuals with high emotional intelligence are high achievers than others. Such individuals perpetually focus on learning and acquiring new knowledge (Gopinath & Chitra, 2020). Contrarily, individuals who lack open-mindedness are less resilient when facing problems (Suleman et al., 2020).

Two broad types of emotional intelligence models exist: “the ability-based emotional intelligence model and the trait-based emotional intelligence model.” Both models individually and collectively affect job performance (Wen, Huang, & Hou, 2019). Emotional intelligent leaders encourage individuals to communicate freely and without fear (Javed, Hock, & Asif, 2020). Such an environment is a precursor of productivity and job performance. Researchers assert that it promotes innovativeness in employees, positively affecting their job performance (Aqqad et al., 2020; Wong and Law 2002). Managers with high emotional intelligence delegate jobs based on employees’ capacity and capability, which enhances employees’ motivation and job performance.

H6: Emotional intelligence positively affects job performance.

Emotional Leadership and Job Satisfaction (H7)

Alismail et al. (2022) assert that individuals with high emotional intelligence can regulate their and employees’ emotions. Such emotional regulation traits help leaders to instill positive attitudes toward work. Researchers assert that emotional intelligence helps leaders predict and manage work-related outcomes such as “productivity, job performance, and job satisfaction” (Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Rogowska & Meres, 2022). Despite the importance of the discussed relationship, limited literature is available. Given this gap, this study has included this relationship in its conceptual framework.

Jufrizen, Nadia, and Muslih (2022) stress that emotionally intelligent individuals are more resilient as they can identify the root cause of stress and develop strategies to

reduce it. Emotional intelligent leaders have the knack for assessing and regulating employees' "feelings, frustration, and stress," resulting in positive job satisfaction (Mérida-López et al., 2022). At the same time, individuals with low emotional intelligence lack awareness of their own and other emotions, so they cannot reduce stress and increase job satisfaction.

H7: Emotional intelligence positively affects job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Performance Relationship (H8)

Past studies examined the "association between job satisfaction and performance" in different domains and sectors and found inconclusive results (Jufrizen, Nadia, & Muslih, 2022). Researchers believe job satisfaction and performance have bidirectional relationships. That is, job satisfaction affects performance, and performance stimulates job satisfaction (Winton, 2022).

Many studies in the SME sector have documented that highly satisfied employees are more efficient, highly productive, and have low turnover intention (Sun et al., 2022). Amin (2022) examined the "association between job satisfaction and job performance," and he found a significant association between these two variables, while a few found an insignificant association between these two variables (Hajiali et al., 2022). Winton (2022) believes that satisfaction increases workers' attitudes toward work, leading to increased job performance.

H8: Job satisfaction positively affects job performance.

Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance (H9)

Many factors, including "personal life to organization culture, job content, and tasks, manager's attitude financial reward," contributes towards job performance (Hwang & Park, 2022). Schlaegel, Engle, and Lang (2022) assert that promotions, salary, and growth affect job satisfaction leading to increased performance. However, employees' job performance levels may change due to their psychological state and mood (Kessi et al., 2022). Many studies document that "job satisfaction mediates emotional intelligence and performance" (Rogowska & Meres, .2022). O'Boyle & Ernst (2011), based on meta-analysis, documents that emotional intelligence significantly affects job performance. Researchers believe job satisfaction aligns with "withdrawal behavior, intention to quit, turnover, and organizational commitment." Emotional intelligence is directly and indirectly associated with job satisfaction and performance (Hwang & Park, 2022).

H9: Satisfaction mediates emotional intelligence and job performance.

Methodology

This part of the paper discusses the methodology it used. It includes the “nature of the study, population, sample size, sampling method, research instruments, instruments’ reliability & validity.” The section also discusses the methods used for data collection and analyses. This study has been based on the causal (explanatory) research design as it enables the researcher to evaluate the variables and assess the statistical relationship among them. We adopted a cross-sectional design in which data is collected during a set period (Levin, 2008).

Research Type and Data Collection Tool

The study used quantitative research as we explained the interrelated impacts and mechanisms of the selected constructs. Quantitative research also aspires the researchers to evaluate the relationships between the selected variables and explains the nature of those relationships, i.e., “causal, comparable, or correlational” (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Considering the associated advantages, established recognition, and wide usage, we have used a questionnaire to “collect the data by conducting a survey.” The survey included collecting data online and personally visiting the target population.

The Population and Sample Size

The study focused on SMEs in Karachi. We targeted educated, well-informed employees who could independently comprehend and complete the questionnaires. The study used a convenience sampling technique to collect the data from the targeted population. After obtaining the respondents’ consent and briefing them about the study’s motives, we collected the data. We distributed 600 questionnaires and received 382 usable questionnaires.

Respondent Profile

Of 382 respondents, 43.98% (n = 168) were males, and 56.02% (n = 214) were females. In terms of education, 62.83% (n = 240) respondents had a high school level qualification, whereas 14.66% (n = 56) had bachelor’s degrees, 21.47% (n = 82) had master’s degrees, and 1.05% (n = 4) were Ph.D. Respondents with 1-5 years of job experience were 65.45% (n = 250), whereas 12.57% (n = 48) had 6-10 years of job experience. Respondents in the category of 11-15 years and 15+ years of job experience were 14.14% (n = 54) and 7.85% (n = 30), respectively.

Scale and Measure

The study has adopted the questionnaire from past studies. In Table 1, we have presented a summary containing constructs, sources, and items.

Table 1: Scale and Measures

Variable		Items
Self-Awareness	Sutton (2016)	18
Self-Regulation	Carey, Neal, and Collins (2004)	15
Motivation	Kanwal and Syed (2017)	6
Empathy	Spreng et al. (2009)	16
Social Skills	Mota, Matos, and Lemos, (2011)	9
Job Satisfaction	Freund (2015)	10
Job Performance	Kanwal and Syed (2017)	5

Note: we have measured emotional intelligence based on “self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills”

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is the systematic synthesizing and organizing of data. It rationalizes and reduces the size of aggregated facts for statistical analysis (Creswell & Plano, 2010). Researchers can use Smart PLS for statistical analysis (Sebjan & Tominc, 2015). For data analysis, the study has used: “Correlations, Assessment of Measurement Model, Assessment of Structural Model and Sobel’s Test for mediation.”

We used structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS) in Smart PLS 3 to analyze the data (Ringle et al., 2012). PLS-SEM is “robust on data noise and missing values, skewness, or multi-collinearity of the indicators with a small sample size compared to covariance-based SEM” (Cassel et al., 2000). It can also use “formative and reflective” indicators together (Bollen, 2011). The study analysis used a two-stage approach, i.e., measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. This approach has advantages over the one-step approach. The measurement model measures the association “between indicators and latent variables.” And the structural model measures “the relationship between latent variables” (Hair et al., 2017).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

In Table 2, we have depicted a summary related to descriptive analysis, as it helps in understanding the distribution of data. The results show the highest mean is for empathy (M=4.03, SD=0.44) and the lowest for job satisfaction (M=3.82, SD=0.63). Correlation values show the strength and direction of the relationship and tell how similar the two constructs are. We found the highest correlation is between empathy and motivation (R=0.690<.05), and the lowest between job satisfaction and self-awareness (R= 0.316<0.05).

Table 2: Mean, SD, and Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-Awareness	3.99	.62	1						
Self-Regulation	3.83	.45	.546	1					
Motivation	3.87	.48	.500	.598	1				
Empathy	4.03	.44	.519	.518	.690	1			
Social Skills	3.99	.44	.487	.523	.674	.754	1		
Job Satisfaction	3.82	.63	.316	.425	.471	.406	.442	1	
Job Performance	3.93	.58	.360	.525	.412	.411	.404	.513	1

Common Method Bias

Before examining the measurement model, we generated VIF values of the job performance and found that all the values were less than 3.75 suggesting the constructs have no issue related to common method bias and multi-collinearity. Refer to Table 3 for results (Tehseen et al., 2017).

Table 3: Common Method Bias

Variables	VIF
Empathy	3.601
Job Satisfaction	1.522
Motivation	3.051
Self-Awareness	2.156
Self-Regulation	2.242
Social-Skills	3.029
Emotional Intelligence	1.516
Job Performance	2.087

Factor Loadings

Factor loading explains the association between constructs and indicator variables. Table 4 shows the factor loadings of the items are greater than 0.70. And Table 5 depicts factor loading HOC.

Table4: Factor Loadings – LOC

Empathy		JP		JS		Motivation		SA		SR		SS	
Item	FL	Item	FL	Item	FL	Item	FL	Item	FL	Item	FL	Item	FL
EIE1	0.744	JP1	0.777	JS1	0.690	EIM1	0.604	EISA1	0.720	EISR10	0.757	EISS1	0.611
EIE10	0.665	JP2	0.693	JS2	0.647	EIM2	0.820	EISA10	0.688	EISR11	0.811	EISS10	0.863
EIE11	0.774	JP3	0.776	JS3	0.769	EIM3	0.737	EISA11	0.787	EISR12	0.740	EISS11	0.833
EIE12	0.885	JP4	0.719	JS4	0.763	EIM4	0.708	EISA2	0.728	EISR13	0.672	EISS12	0.740

EIE2	0.486	JP5	0.696	JS5	0.730	EIM5	0.605	EISA3	0.681	EISR14	0.671	EISS13	0.624
EIE3	0.571					EIM6	0.633	EISA4	0.731	EISR15	0.719	EISS2	0.697
EIE4	0.862					EIM7	0.797	EISA5	0.855	EISR1	0.712	EISS3	0.790
EIE5	0.801					EIM8	0.820	EISA6	0.871	EISR2	0.757	EISS4	0.773
EIE6	0.726					EIM9	0.738	EISA7	0.953	EISR3	0.680	EISS5	0.685
EIE7	0.721							EISA8	0.719	EISR4	0.798	EISS6	0.713
EIE8	0.665							EISA9	0.709	EISR5	0.675	EISS7	0.932
EIE9	0.527									EISR6	0.723	EISS8	0.564
										EISR7	0.639	EISS9	0.569
										EISR8	0.627		
										EISR9	0.662		

Table 5: Factor Loadings – HOC

Emotional Intelligence		Job Performance		Job Satisfaction	
Item	FL	Item	FL	Item	FL
Empathy	0.762	JP1	0.750	JS1	0.641
Self-Awareness	0.688	JP2	0.670	JS2	0.607
Self-Regulation	0.854	JP3	0.798	JS3	0.766
Social Skills	0.764	JP4	0.737	JS4	0.798
Motivation	0.801	JP5	0.705	JS5	0.777

Reliability and Validity

In Table 6, we have presented the summary of the reliability and convergent validity results. The results suggest that the constructs have good internal consistency since all Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.800. We also found that all composite reliability values are at least 0.800, and AVE values are greater than 0.500, suggesting the constructs fulfill the requirement of convergent validity (Wong, 2013)

Table 6: Reliability and Validity of Measurement Model

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Empathy	0.929	0.923	0.507
Job Performance	0.852	0.853	0.538
Job Satisfaction	0.843	0.844	0.520
Motivation	0.909	0.907	0.522
Self-Awareness	0.943	0.941	0.596
Self-Regulation	0.939	0.939	0.506
Social Skills	0.939	0.936	0.534
Emotional Intelligence	0.883	0.882	0.601

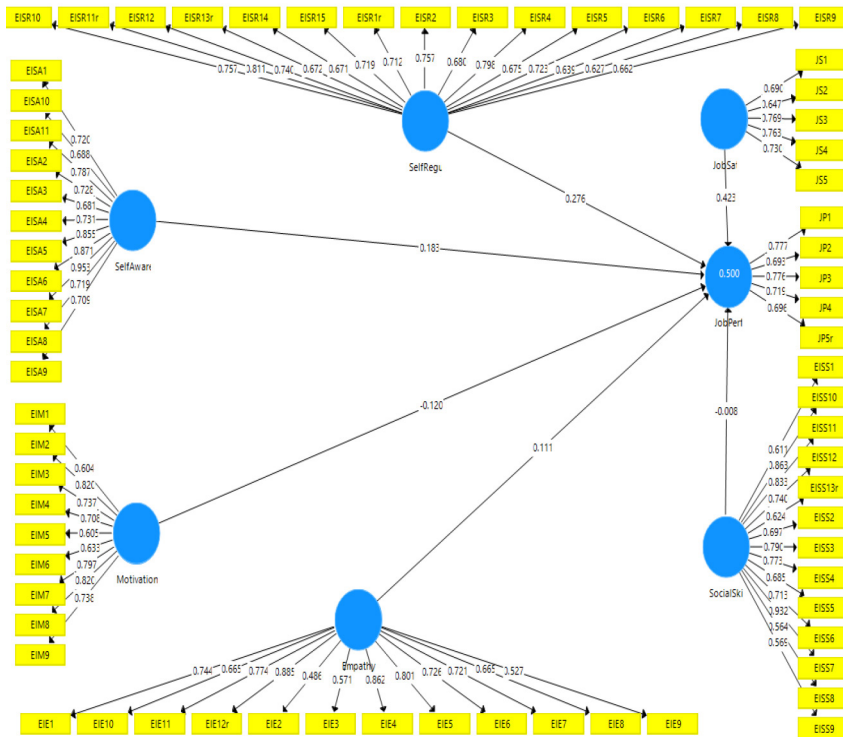


Figure 1: Measurement Model – LOC

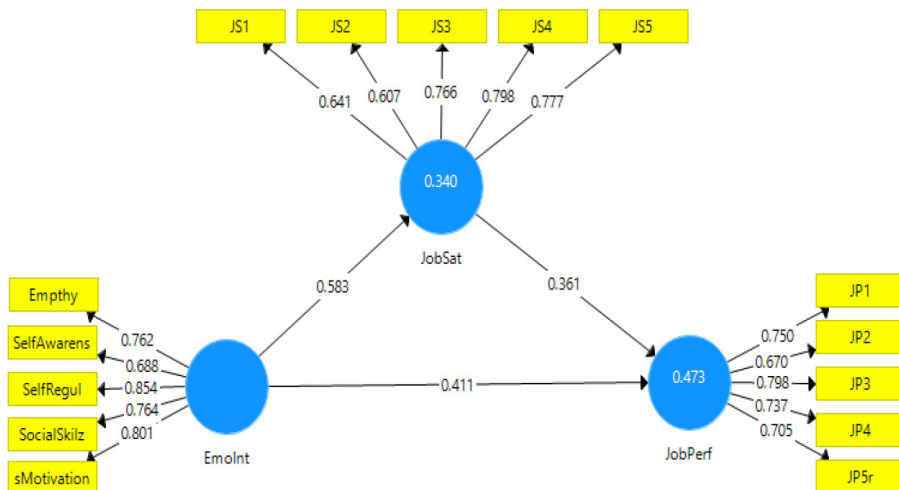


Figure 2: Measurement Model – HOC

Discriminant Validity

The study has examined the discriminant validity based on Fornell Larcher Criteria (1981) and cross-loading. The results presented in Table 7 show that “AVE square root values are greater than Pearson correlation values.” And Table 8 shows the measured cross-loading exceeds other variables, suggesting the latent variables are “unique and distinct” (Fornell & Larcher, 1981).

Table 7: Discriminant Validity

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-Awareness	.772						
Self-Regulation	.546	.711					
Motivation	.500	.598	.722				
Empathy	.519	.518	.690	.713			
Social Skills	.487	.523	.674	.707	.731		
Job Satisfaction	.316	.425	.471	.406	.442	.721	
Job Performance	.360	.525	.412	.411	.404	.513	.733

Table 8: Cross Loadings – HOC

	Emotional Intelligence	Job Performance	Job Satisfaction
Empathy	0.762	0.466	0.452
Self-Awareness	0.688	0.490	0.334
Self-Regulation	0.854	0.561	0.465
Social-Skills	0.764	0.442	0.480
Motivation	0.801	0.450	0.518
JP1	0.498	0.750	0.416
JP2	0.442	0.670	0.375
JP3	0.472	0.798	0.505
JP4	0.439	0.737	0.464
JP5	0.428	0.705	0.435
JS1	0.343	0.416	0.641
JS2	0.329	0.389	0.607
JS3	0.443	0.464	0.766
JS4	0.485	0.459	0.798
JS5	0.481	0.438	0.777

Discriminant Validity (HTMT) Ratio

Many researchers suggest examining discriminant validity with the HTMT ratio, as Fornell and Larcher’s (1981) criterion has certain weaknesses. We have presented the results in Table 9, which shows that all the HTMT ratios are lesser than 0.85, reestablishing

discriminant validity (Risher & Hair, 2017).

Table 9: HTMT Ratios for Discriminant Validity – LOC & HOC

	EM	JP	JS	MT	SA	SR	SS	EI
Empathy								
Job Performance	0.470							
Job Satisfaction	0.457	0.601						
Motivation	0.751	0.469	0.535					
Self Awareness	0.629	0.500	0.338	0.584				
Self Regulation	0.556	0.579	0.474	0.643	0.654			
Social Skill	0.801	0.446	0.492	0.721	0.559	0.549		
Emotional Intelligence		0.622	0.575					

Quality of the Measurement Model

We measured the predictive power of the measurement model using “values of communality (Q^2). Results presented in Table 10 show that they are positive for all blocks, suggesting the measurement model has adequate predictive power (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 10: Quality Assessment of Measurement Model

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Empathy	4584.000	2366.368	0.484
Job Performance	1910.000	1067.813	0.441
Job Satisfaction	1910.000	1110.642	0.419
Motivation	3438.000	1824.985	0.469
Self-Awareness	4202.000	1846.123	0.561
Self-Regulation	5730.000	2949.851	0.485
Social Skills	4966.000	2445.958	0.507
Emotional Intelligence	1910.000	920.414	0.518

Structural Model Assessment

After examining the measurement model, the present study examined the structural model to underline the significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2017). Smart PLS uses algorithms to evaluate the inner model and hypotheses, e.g., “PLS algorithm, bootstrapping, and blindfolding.” We have discussed the hypotheses results in the following sections.

Hypotheses Results

In Table 11, we have summarized the results related to the articulated hypotheses.

Table 11: Hypotheses Results

Path	Estimate	T Value	P Value	Results
SA→JP (H1)	0.182	2.371	0.018	Accepted
SS →JP (H2)	-0.007	0.079	0.937	Rejected
Motivation→ JP(H3)	0.120	1.343	0.160	Rejected
Empathy → JP(H4)	0.111	1.126	0.255	Rejected
SR → JP (H5)	0.276	3.397	0.001	Accepted
EI → JP (H6)	0.411	5.065	0.000	Accepted
EI → JS (H7)	0.583	11.032	0.000	Accepted
JS → JP (H8)	0.361	4.261	0.000	Accepted
EI → JS → JP(H9)	0.210	4.397	0.000	Accepted

We accepted Hypothesis 1, which states: “self-awareness positively affects job performance” ($\beta = 0.182$, $t=2.371$, $p < .05$). The study rejected Hypothesis 2, stating “social skill positively affects job performance” ($\beta = -0.007$, $t=0.079$, $p > .05$). We rejected Hypothesis 3, stating “motivation positively affects job performance” ($\beta = 0.120$, $t=1.343$, $p > .05$). The study rejected Hypothesis 4, stating “empathy positively affects job satisfaction” ($\beta = 0.111$, $t=1.126$, $p > .05$). The study accepted Hypothesis 5, stating “self-regulation positively affects performance” ($\beta = 0.276$, $t=3.397$, $p < .05$). The study accepted Hypothesis 6, stating “emotional intelligence positively affects job performance” ($\beta = 0.411$, $t=5.065$, $p < .05$). The study accepted Hypothesis 7 stating “emotional intelligence positively affects job performance” ($\beta = 0.583$, $t=11.032$, $p < .05$). The study accepted Hypothesis 8, stating “job satisfaction positively affects job performance” ($\beta = 0.361$, $t=4.261$, $p < .05$). The study accepted hypothesis 9, stating “job satisfaction mediates emotional intelligence and job performance” ($\beta = 0.210$, $t=4.397$, $p < .05$).

Mediation Analysis

We followed Baron and Kenny (1986) to test our mediation analysis. As shown in Table 11, all paths were significant, yet after the addition of mediator, the impact of emotional intelligence on job performance ($\beta = .412$) was significantly reduced ($\beta = .210$). Such a reduction in the impact of the independent variable is a sufficient condition for the occurrence of mediation. The total impact of emotional intelligence on job performance was .622, suggesting that job satisfaction mediates 62.20% of the total effect (Baron & Kenny, 1980).

To further confirm our mediation, we utilized Sobel’s (1982) test, which showed that JS significantly mediated the path between EI and JP ($z = 3.97$, $p < .001$). Hence hypothesis 9 was also approved (Sobel, 1982)

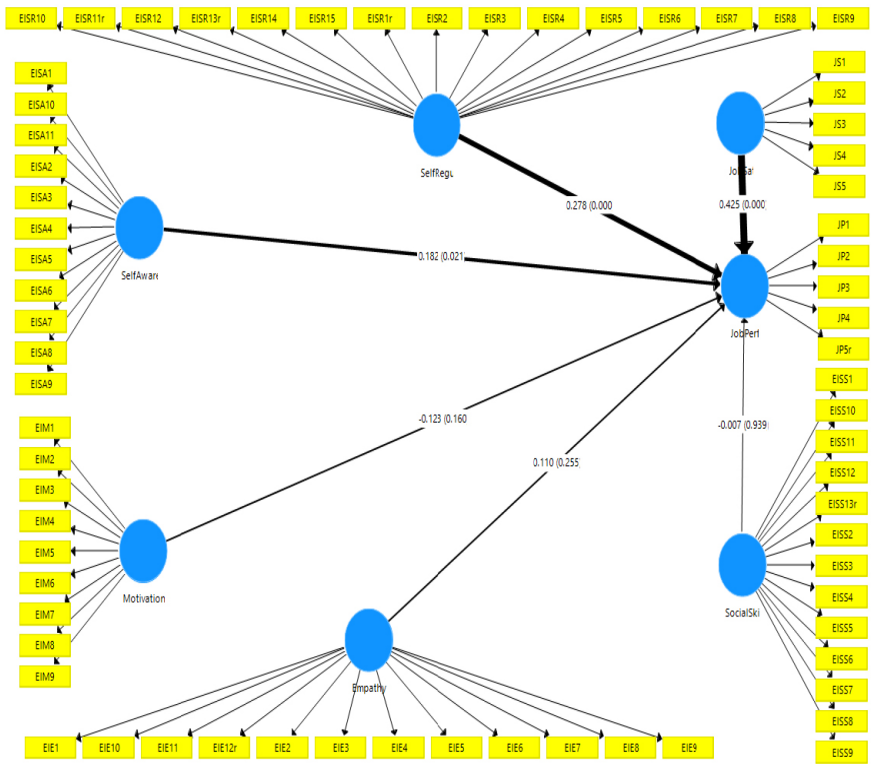


Figure 3. Structural Model – LOC

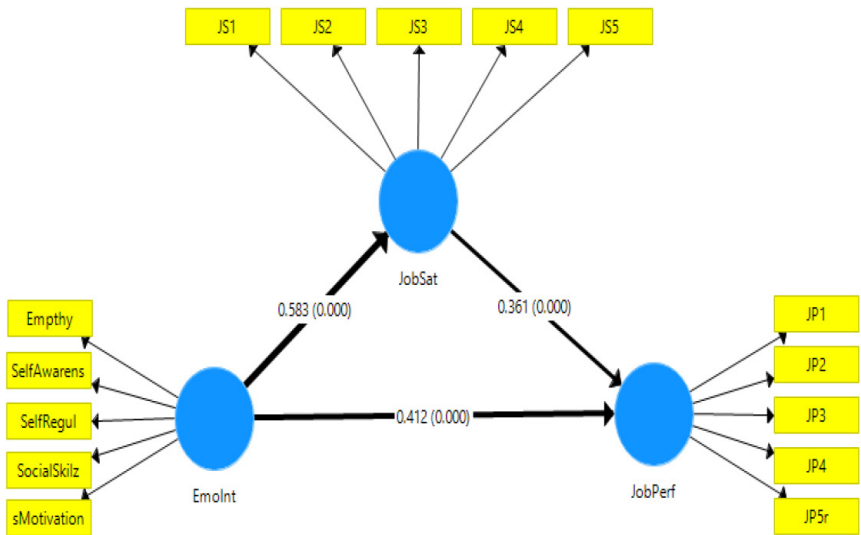


Figure 4. Structural Model – HOC

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

This study examined the effect of “self-awareness, social skills, motivation, empathy, self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction” on job performance. It also examined the mediating role of “job satisfaction on emotional intelligence and job performance.” We achieve the study’s objectives by developing and empirically testing the articulated hypotheses.

The study found “self-awareness positively affects job performance.” Huggins et al. (2021) argue that self-aware individuals are more stable and regular, which promotes positive attitudes toward work and other job-related outcomes. Extant literature documents that self-awareness positively correlates with workplace and employees’ health and well-being (Hall, Garabiles, & Latkin, 2019). Self-awareness has negative and positive connotations (Adil & Kamal, 2020). Individuals with negative self-perception focus on “negative emotions, depression, mood, weakness.” Consequently, it becomes a hurdle in solving social problems (Gopinath, 2020). At the same time, positive self-awareness promotes “in-depth self-awareness and desire for self-improvement.” Carden, Jones, and Passmore (2022) assert that both affect job performance. Many past studies document that job performance and satisfaction outcomes stem from self-awareness (Kim, Schuh, & Cai, 2020; Budworth and Chummar, 2022).

Contrary to past studies, the study found that “social skills insignificantly affect job performance.” Researchers assert that social skill is critical to managing and regulating employees apart from emotional intelligence (Idris et al. 2022). Zaman et al. (2019) assert that managers lacking social skills may be unable to collaborate with the workers and may not manage the team effectively. Researchers believe social skills include “survival and interpersonal skills” necessary for conflict resolution (Spade, 2020). Survival skills relate to acquiring basic skills necessary for human survival. With this skill, business managers learn to manage employees efficiently in the business environment (Gentina, Chen & Yang, 2021). Managers in a business environment face different types of problems, which they can resolve if they possess problems solving skills. It also helps managers achieve organizational goals by managing and controlling employees efficiently (Sakellariou et al., 2021).

Motivation has stemmed from the word motive, which relates to “needs, desires, wants or drives within the persons” (Hajiali et al., 2022). The study documents that motivation insignificantly affects job performance, which is inconsistent with past studies. In the present era of globalization, businesses have to deal with internal and external

operating factors (Arif, Zainudin, & Hamid, 2019). Businesses can only survive on their ability to integrate employees' motivation and production factors, such as machines and materials (Riyanto, Endri, & Herlisha, 2021). Pancasila, Haryono, and Sulisty (2020) assert that firms with a team of highly motivated employees will be more productive in contributing toward profit and increased market share. Adetola et al. (2022) assert leaders inspire and help individuals to achieve their goals. Highly motivated employees are happier, more satisfied, and more productive and efficient (Luqman et al., 2020).

Contrary to past studies, we found "empathy insignificantly affects job performance." Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) theory, developed in 1975, explains the interactions between leaders and subordinates (Jian, 2022). The theory postulates that employees with a low perception of the leaders will perform poorly (Arghode et al., 2022). At the same time, leaders with empathic behavior will command respect from their subordinates. Employees reciprocate such leaders by developing positive attitudes and behaviors towards work (Haynie et al., 2019). Lanier (2021) asserts that empathic leaders have positive emotions despite receiving negative feedback. Such leaders understand the emotions and feelings of the employees and listen to their problems. Good leaders have high ethical values that inspire and motivate employees to give good job performance (Tufail & Sandhu, 2022).

The study documents that "self-regulation positively affects job performance." Individuals, through self-regulation, manage and control their behavior at the workplace. Organizations' success and sustainability depend on creating an environment that enhances employees' self-regulation traits (Bakker & de-Vries, 2021). Bakker and Oerlemans, (2019) suggest that firms can improve employees' self-regulation by communicating their expectations regarding dress codes, language, and other behaviors. Employees must be encouraged to take initiative and responsibility (Wolters & Brady, 2021). Mitchell et al. (2019) assert that firms must promote a conducive environment for employees to communicate freely without fear and criticism. Such an environment correlates with self-regulation and job performance.

We found "emotional intelligence positively affects job performance," which aligns with past studies. Many past studies in different domains found that emotional intelligence enhances job performance (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, (2021). Researchers believe that individuals with high emotional intelligence are higher achievers than others. Such individuals perpetually focus on learning and acquiring new knowledge (Gopinath & Chitra, 2020). Contrarily, individuals who lack open-mindedness are less resilient when facing problems (Suleman et al., 2020). Managers with high emotional intelligence delegate jobs based on individual capacity and capability, which enhances

employees' motivation and job performance.

Our results support the hypothesis stating "emotional intelligence positively affects job satisfaction." Emotional intelligent individuals have the knack for assessing and regulating employees' "feelings, frustration, and stress," resulting in positive job satisfaction (Mérida-López et al. (2022). Jufrizen, Nadia, and Muslih (2022) stress that emotionally intelligent individuals are more resilient as they can identify the root cause of stress and develop strategies to reduce it. At the same time, individuals with low emotional intelligence lack awareness of their own and other emotions, so they cannot reduce stress and increase job satisfaction.

The study found "job satisfaction promotes job performance." Past studies examined the association between job satisfaction and performance in different domains and sectors and found inconclusive results (Jufrizen, Nadia, & Muslih, 2022). Researchers believe job satisfaction and performance have bidirectional relationships. That is, job satisfaction affects performance, and performance stimulates job satisfaction (Winton, 2022). It thus has a direct and indirect association with job satisfaction and performance (Hwang & Park, 2022).

The study has validated the "mediating effect of job satisfaction between emotional intelligence and job performance." Many factors, including "personal life to organization culture, job content, and tasks, manager's attitude financial reward," contributes towards job performance (Hwang & Park, 2022). Schlaegel, Engle, and Lang (2022) assert that promotions, salary, and growth affect job satisfaction leading to increased performance. However, employees' job performance levels may change due to their psychological state and mood (Kessi et al., 2022). O'Boyle & Ernst (2011), based on meta-analysis, found that emotional intelligence significantly affects job performance. Researchers believe job satisfaction aligns with "withdrawal behavior, intention to quit, turnover, and organizational commitment" (Rogowska & Meres, 2022).

Conclusion

The study examined the impact of "self-awareness, social skills, motivation, empathy, self-regulation, and job satisfaction on job performance" in SMEs in Karachi. The study non-randomly collected a sample of 382. The study found "self-awareness, self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction positively affect job performance." The study also found "emotional intelligence affects job satisfaction, and job satisfaction mediates emotional intelligence and job performance." However, "social skills, motivation, and empathy" insignificantly affect job performance.

Limitations of the Study

This study has used a cross-sectional design that has a certain inherent limitation. Therefore we advise others to use a cross-sectional design as it brings more insight into the phenomenon. The study has focused on SMEs in Karachi. Future researchers can extend their studies to other cities and other domains. The study has examined the mediating effect of job satisfaction, and other researchers may use variables such as work-life balance and emotional labor as mediators. Cultural values affect attitudes toward work, which other studies may incorporate in their studies. Income levels, experience, and age affect job-related outcomes differently, which other studies can use as moderators.

Practical Recommendations

The results suggest that emotional intelligence and job satisfaction affect job performance in SMEs in Karachi. Thus, firms must offer intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to enhance employee satisfaction. Such measure is necessary for the growth and sustainability of the organization. Emotional intelligence helps understand and manage others' emotions and solve problematic issues. Therefore, firms must arrange seminars and workshops on emotional intelligence for their employees regularly. Although we did not find a significant effect of social skills and empathy on job performance, they still are an important precursor to job-related outcomes, and firms must focus on these aspects as well.

Annexure 1

Constructs and Items Used in the Questionnaire

Motivation

1. The relations with colleagues affect motivation.
2. Authority/responsibility and dependence in the workplace affect motivation.
3. Participation in the decision-making process affects motivation.
4. The match between overtime hours and lifestyles affects motivation.
5. The holiday, off-day, and resting periods and their match with the lifestyle affect motivation.
6. Working period affects motivation.

Job Performance

1. I efficiently complete assigned duties.
2. I responsively complete assignments related to my job description.
3. I complete all tasks beyond the supervisor's expectations.
4. I always volunteer for challenging assignments.
5. I engage in activities that affect my performance.

Social Skills

1. I ask my supervisor for help when other employees push me around.
2. I listen to my supervisor when they are talking with me.
3. I ask for permission before touching other people's things.
4. I keep my desk clean and neat.
5. I ignore employees who are clowning around.
6. When I'm interested in someone, I invite him (her) for a date.
7. I use my free time in a good way.
8. I use a nice tone of voice in discussions.
9. I ask my friends for help with my problems.

Empathy

1. When someone else is feeling excited, I tend to get excited too.
2. Other people's misfortunes do not disturb me a great deal.
3. It upsets me to see someone being treated disrespectfully.
4. I remain unaffected when someone close to me is happy.
5. I enjoy making other people feel better.
6. I have sympathy for people less fortunate than me.
7. When a friend starts to talk about his/her problems, I try to steer the conversation toward something else
8. I can tell when others are sad, even when they say nothing.
9. I am "in tune" with other people's moods.
10. I do not feel sympathy for people who cause serious illnesses.

11. I become irritated when someone cries.
12. I am not interested in how other people feel.
13. I get a strong urge to help when I see someone upset.
14. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I do not feel very much pity for them.
15. I find it silly for people to cry out of happiness.
16. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel protective towards him/her.

Job Satisfaction

1. I receive recognition for a job well done.
2. I feel close to the people at work.
3. I feel good about working at this company.
4. I feel secure about my job.
5. I believe management is concerned about me.
6. On the whole, I believe work is good for my physical health.
7. My wages are good.
8. All my talents and skills are used at work.
9. I get along with my supervisors.
10. I feel good about my job.

Self-Regulation

1. Once I have a goal, I can usually plan how to reach it.
2. I set goals for myself and keep track of my progress.
3. When I'm trying to change something, I pay attention to how I'm doing.
4. I have personal standards and try to live up to them.
5. I have a lot of willpower.
6. I'm able to accomplish the goals I set for myself.
7. If I resolve to change something, I pay much attention to how I'm doing.
8. If I wanted to change, I was confident I could do it.
9. I usually keep track of my progress toward my goals.
10. I usually think before I act.
11. I start looking for possible solutions when I see a problem or challenge.
12. When deciding about a change, I feel overwhelmed by the choices.
13. I learn from my mistakes.
14. I can resist temptation.
15. I can stick to a plan that is working well.

Self-Awareness

1. I generally feel positive about self-awareness.
2. I reassess my own and others' responsibilities.
3. I'm aware of my abilities and limitations.
4. I am reflective.

- 5. I am realistic about myself.
 - 6. I have a good self-image
 - 7. I feel comfortable the way I am.
 - 8. I have fun.
 - 9. I am consistent in different situations or with different people.
 - 10. I have compassion and acceptance for others.
 - 11. I interact well with colleagues or peers.
 - 12. I understand myself well.
 - 13. I am confident.
 - 14. I stop and think before judging.
 - 15. I understand my emotions.
 - 16. I am objective.
 - 17. I see my work life as something I have the power to affect.
 - 18. I can "take a step back" from situations to understand them better.
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