

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK PERFORMANCE AMONG OFFICE EMPLOYEES: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY IN PAKISTAN

Nimra Mushtaq^{*1}, Amna Haider²

²Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore, Pakistan

¹nimramushtaq318@gmail.com, ²amna.haider@vu.edu.pk

²0000-0001-7546-2160

Corresponding Author: *

Nimra Mushtaq

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ABSTRACT

Background: Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical factor influencing workplace effectiveness, yet research on general office employees in Pakistan remains limited.

Objective: This study examined the relationship between EI and work performance among office employees and explored gender differences in both variables.

Method: A cross-sectional correlational design was employed with 150 office employees (85 males, 56.7%; 65 females, 43.3%) recruited from private and public organizations in Multan, Vehari, and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Participants completed the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and independent sample t-tests.

Results: A significant positive correlation was found between EI and work performance ($r = 0.58$, $p < .01$), indicating that employees with higher EI demonstrated better performance. No significant gender differences emerged for EI ($p = 0.141$) or work performance ($p = 0.405$), with small effect sizes (Cohen's $d = 0.08$ and 0.15).

Conclusion: Emotional intelligence is positively associated with workplace performance. Gender does not meaningfully influence these variables. Organizations may benefit from implementing EI training programs to enhance employee productivity and well-being.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work Performance, Office Employees, Gender Differences, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive work environment, employees face constant pressure to perform well, meet deadlines, and maintain professional relationships. This persistent stress can lead to psychological difficulties that negatively impact both personal well-being and organizational productivity (Karim et al., 2024). Emotional intelligence (EI)—the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and manage emotions in

oneself and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997)—has emerged as a critical factor in helping employees navigate workplace challenges effectively.

Goleman (1995) expanded the concept by identifying five key components of EI relevant to workplace settings: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Employees with higher EI are better equipped to control emotional reactions, manage stress, resolve conflicts, and maintain professional relationships

under pressure (Joseph & Newman, 2010).

Work performance, a multidimensional construct encompassing task proficiency, effort, teamwork, discipline, and communication effectiveness (Campbell, 1990), represents the extent to which employees fulfill organizational expectations. While technical competence is important, employees who struggle with emotional regulation may experience reduced motivation and productivity.

The relationship between EI and work performance has received substantial empirical support. Meta-analyses consistently report positive associations between EI and job performance (Doru, 2022; Joseph & Newman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011). Research in South Asian contexts, including Bangladesh (Karim et al., 2024) and Pakistan (Naz et al., 2022), has similarly demonstrated that emotionally intelligent employees demonstrate better workplace effectiveness.

Despite this evidence, several gaps remain. First, existing Pakistani research has focused on specialized professional groups while general office employees remain understudied.

Second, gender differences in EI and work performance have yielded inconsistent findings. Third, previous research has primarily been conducted in major cities with limited attention to commercial hubs such as Rawalpindi.

Objectives

To examine the relationship between EI and work performance among office employees.

To identify gender differences in EI among office employees.

To identify gender differences in work performance among office employees.

Hypotheses

H1: There will be a significant positive relationship between EI and work performance.

H2: There will be a significant gender difference in terms of emotional intelligence among office employees.

H3: There will be a significant gender difference in terms of work performance among office employees.

METHOD

Research Design

A cross-sectional correlational research design was employed.

Sample

A convenience sample of 150 office employees (85 males, 56.7%; 65 females, 43.3%) was recruited from private and public organizations in Multan, Vehari, and Rawalpindi.

Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 59 years ($M = 27.84$, $SD = 8.31$). Inclusion criteria required at least one year of work experience and voluntary participation.

Instruments

Demographic Information Sheet: Collected information on age, gender, marital status, education, job position, work experience, and organization type.

Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale

(WLEIS): A 16-item self-report measure assessing four dimensions of EI: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion (Wong & Law, 2002). Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The scale has demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .87$).

Individual Work Performance Questionnaire

(IWPQ): An 18-item self-report measure assessing task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior (Koopmans et al., 2014). Items are rated on a 5-point scale. The questionnaire has shown strong psychometric properties.

Procedure

Formal permission was obtained from organizational managers. Participants were approached through online and physical means, provided with study information, and asked to provide informed consent. Questionnaires were completed during non-working hours.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, confidentiality was maintained,

and participants had the right to withdraw at any stage. Data were used only for academic purposes.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Pearson correlation tested H1. Independent sample t-tests examined H2 and H3, with Cohen's d reported as effect size.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 presents demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics (N = 150)

Variable	Category	n	%	
Gender	Male	85	56.7	
	Female	65	43.3	
Variable	Category	n	%	
Marital Status	Single	92	61.3	
		58	38.7	
Qualification	Intermediate	28	18.7	
	Undergraduate/Bachelor	74	49.3	
	Master's Degree	41	27.3	
	MPhil/MS	7	4.7	
Organization Type	Private	102	68.0	
	Public	31	20.7	
	Semi-Government	13	8.7	
	Self-employed	4	2.6	

Note. Age M = 27.84, SD = 8.31.

Interpretation of Table 1

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the 150 participants. Most participants were male (56.7%) and single (61.3%). Nearly half had a bachelor's degree (49.3%), and the majority worked in private organizations (68.0%). The average age of the participants was 27.84 years

(SD = 8.31)

H1: Correlation between EI and Work Performance

Pearson correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between EI and work performance, $r(148) = 0.58$, $p < .01$. H1 was supported.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Matrix (N = 150)

Variable	1	2	M	SD
1. Emotional Intelligence	—	.58**	64.82	8.41
2. Work Performance	.58**	—	41.26	6.37

Note. ** $p < .01$.

H2 & H3: Gender Differences

Independent sample t-tests revealed no significant gender differences in EI, $t(148) = 0.94$, $p = 0.141$, Cohen's d = 0.08, or work performance, $t(148) =$

0.51, $p = 0.405$, Cohen's d = 0.15. H2 and H3 were not supported.

Interpretation of Table 2

Table 2 shows a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance ($r = .58$, $p < .01$). This means that employees with higher emotional intelligence

tend to have better work performance. The results support the first hypothesis (H1), while no significant gender differences were found in emotional intelligence or work performance.

Table 3

Independent Sample t-Test Comparing Men and Women (N = 150)

Variable	Men (n = 85) M (SD)	Women (n = 65) M (SD)	t	p	95% CI	Cohen's d
Emotional Intelligence	20.27 (2.91)	19.73 (3.25)	0.94	.141	[-4.50, 1.27]	0.08
Work Performance	47.33 (7.13)	46.26 (7.14)	0.51	.405	[-3.10, 5.24]	0.15

Note. CI = Confidence Interval.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between EI and work performance among office employees and explored gender differences in both variables.

First, results revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.58$, $p < .01$) between EI and work performance, supporting H1. This finding aligns with previous meta-analyses (Doru, 2022; Joseph & Newman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011) and South Asian research (Karim et al., 2024; Naz et al., 2022). Employees with higher EI demonstrate better workplace effectiveness because they regulate negative emotions, build effective relationships, cope with stressors, and maintain motivation.

Second, no significant gender differences emerged in EI or work performance. These findings are consistent with Naz et al. (2022) and Karim et al. (2024), who similarly found no gender differences in South Asian samples. Effect sizes were small (Cohen's $d = 0.08$ and 0.15),

confirming that gender has minimal practical significance for these variables.

Theoretical Implications

Findings support Goleman's (1995) EI model and Campbell's (1990) performance framework in a Pakistani office context, extending their relevance beyond Western samples.

Practical Implications

Organizations should consider implementing EI training programs including workshops on self-awareness, stress management, communication, and conflict resolution. HR departments may include EI assessments in recruitment and selection processes.

Limitations

The cross-sectional design precludes causal conclusions. Self-report measures may introduce response bias. The sample was limited to office employees in three Pakistani cities, limiting

generalizability.

Future Research

Longitudinal designs should establish causality. Objective performance measures and diverse samples across professions and regions would strengthen generalizability.

Mediating mechanisms such as job satisfaction and burnout should be examined.

CONCLUSION

This study confirmed that emotional intelligence is positively associated with workplace performance among office employees in Pakistan. Gender does not meaningfully influence EI or work performance. Organizations may benefit from implementing EI training programs to enhance employee productivity and well-being. These findings contribute to the limited research on Pakistani office employees and provide a foundation for future investigations.

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