

A Proposed Framework for the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employee's Performance: Mediating Role of Job Demand

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Abstract: In the realm of employee performance, emotional intelligence (EI) plays a pivotal role. Research has consistently shown that EI is positively correlated with employee performance. It acts as a critical predictor, influencing how well employees perform in their roles. Emotional intelligence encompasses one's ability to perceive, express, understand, and manage emotions. When employees possess high EI, they are better equipped to navigate the challenges and dynamics of the workplace. As there are scarcity of research that explains the mechanism describing the EI-Employee's Performance relationship, this study proposed the potential role of job demands as an important mediator in this relationship. Job demands include factors like workload, stress, and time pressures. Employees with high EI tend to handle these demands more effectively, leading to reduced stress and burnout consequently increasing job performance. In summary, emotional intelligence serves as a reliable predictor of employee performance and is crucial for maintaining a motivated and high-performing workforce, ultimately benefiting the organization as a whole.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Employee's Performance, Job Demand, Self-Awareness, Self-Management.*

1. Introduction

The performance of employees is of great importance in a firm. Employee performance is a complex notion that encompasses the anticipated organizational results arising from an employee's behavior that further classified into three categories which are task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance (Sonnentag et al., 2016). While several elements may impact an employee's performance, recent studies have highlighted the significance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a crucial indicator of workers' success. According to Davis (2019), EI in the workplace has a favorable impact on employee performance, retention, and occupational stress. Companies that prioritize the development of EI in their workplace are enjoying higher levels of profitability, as stated by Khalili (2012). Due to its significant impact on organizational outcomes, employee performance has garnered considerable attention from academics focusing on factors that enhance organizational performance.

Prior research has shown a strong correlation between an employee's performance and their positive emotional intelligence. In the current dynamic and volatile job market, exacerbated by the economic downturn, employees are not only required to maintain a satisfactory level of work performance but also to actively seek opportunities to increase their worth inside a company. As a result, employees are anticipated to work more hours, managing impractical deadlines and other bureaucratic processes in their endeavor to contribute to the achievement of the organization's strategy to maintain competitiveness and survival in its respective sectors. Nevertheless, the persistent demand placed on workers has a substantial effect on their emotional well-being, leading to a continuous rise in work-related depression (Krishnan et al., 2018; Mokhtar et al., 2022).

Based on the National Health Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2019, the prevalence of depression among adults in Malaysia is statistically estimated to be 2.3 percent. This translates to almost half a million individuals, or 1 in every 3 Malaysians, experiencing mental health problems. According to statistics, the rate of Malaysians experiencing mental health problems has increased thrice from 10.7 percent in 2005 to 29.8 percent in 2015 (S.N.Chua, 2020). According to the 2020 research by Relate Malaysia, around 29 percent of employees in businesses suffer from mental health issues. This means that in a medium-sized firm with 200 workers, around 60 employees are likely to experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress. An identified stressor that has been extensively researched is the apprehension of job loss, which therefore leads to a reduction in income (Tusl et al., 2020).

This alarming data reveals that the majority of employees are working in conditions that subject them to mental stress caused by work-related demands, which may lead to numerous performance issues within a company. This has been substantiated by previous research, which identified two primary challenges encountered by the hotel industry: extensive working hours (Arnieyantie et al., 2022) and inadequate remuneration (Scott-Halsell et al., 2008), resulting in elevated rates of employee turnover and absenteeism. Additionally, the Malaysian hotel business has the greatest turnover rate, as published by the Ministry of Human Resources. The performance of hotel frontline personnel is increasingly crucial as it sets a standard for the hotel business to thrive in terms of service quality. Therefore, employees must be able to function optimally. While several studies have examined the direct correlation between different EI variables and various organizational outcome factors, few studies have concentrated on comprehending the underlying mechanism that explains this association. Therefore, the objective of this study was to comprehend the mediating functions of job demand in the correlation between EI and employee performance.

2. Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence: Researchers have spent decades investigating why a high intelligence quotient (IQ) alone does not guarantee academic or professional success. The term emotional intelligence (EI) was introduced by Mayer and Salovey in 1990. This notion gained significant popularity as it provided an explanation and proof for the phenomenon where individuals with high IQ often fail, while others with lower intellects excel in their respective industries. Initially, EI was described as the capacity to observe and differentiate one's own and others' emotions, and to use this knowledge to direct one's thoughts and behaviors (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). Mayer and Salovey developed a paradigm that encompasses three key abilities for effectively managing and harnessing emotions; appraisal and regulation of emotion, regulation of emotion and utilization of emotion. Nevertheless, as a result of disregarding the aspect of cognitive processing in relation to emotions, Mayer and Salovey modified the theory to encompass the capacity to accurately and effectively perceive and express emotions, comprehend emotions and possess emotional knowledge, utilize emotions to enhance cognitive processes, and regulate emotions in oneself and others (Mayer et al., 2008; Mayer & Salovey, 1990; Salovey & Pizarro, 2003). The four branches of the ability model are described as perceiving emotions, using emotions to enhance cognitive processes, comprehending emotions, and regulating emotions (Mayer et al., 2004).

The Goleman's competence model was derived from the influence of Salovey and Mayer's work. In 1995, Goleman gained widespread recognition for his four-branch model of Emotional Intelligence (EI), which he later expanded into twenty emotional competencies in his book "Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ." Goleman introduced many personality qualities such as trustworthiness, teamwork, and collaboration, among others. He firmly believed that these emotional skills are not innate abilities, but rather can be cultivated and improved through time (Goleman, 1995). In addition, Goleman's suggested competence model illustrates how an individual's capacity to develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management abilities directly correlates with their successful performance in the workplace (Goleman, 1998). The thorough description of his model consists of four branches:

- a) **Self-Awareness:** Emotional self-awareness, accurate self-awareness, Self-confidence.
- b) **Self-Management:** Self-control, Trustworthiness, Conscientiousness, Adaptability, Achievement drive, Initiative.
- c) **Social Awareness:** Empathy, Service orientation, Organizational awareness.
- d) **Relationship Management:** Developing others, Influence, Communication, Conflict Management, Leadership, change catalyst, Building bonds, Teamwork & collaboration.

Goleman (1998) proposed a model of Emotional Intelligence (EI) that illustrates how an individual's capacity to develop and use EI skills directly impacts their performance in the workplace. The contention posits that emotional competence, such as customer service or conflict management, is an acquired aptitude rooted in emotional intelligence, which yields exceptional job performance. For instance, an employee who is very emphatic does not guarantee effective customer service if they do not possess the necessary customer service abilities. The twenty competencies mentioned above have been identified as contributing to performance improvement. These competencies are generated from distinct neurological processes and stem from the cognitive domain of ability.

Emotional Self-Awareness, the first element of EI, refers to the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, strengths, shortcomings, and values. Emotional Self-Management, the second component of EI, refers to an individual's capacity to regulate challenging emotions such as worry and anger to minimize impulsive emotional reactions. This talent enables individuals to efficiently manage and control their emotions, impulses, and actions. The third component of EI is Social Awareness, which pertains to an individual's ability to empathize with others, comprehend their feelings, and demonstrate sensitivity toward social dynamics. The last element of EI is Relationship Management, which refers to the ability to establish and sustain positive relationships, effectively address problems, and inspire and influence others.

The idea of performance based on EI examines the qualities that differentiate exceptional performers from those who are ordinary. For example, research has shown that a large number of managers who possess Accurate Self-Assessment tend to excel in their performance because they have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. They tend to actively seek criticism and derive valuable lessons from their mistakes. Star performers acknowledge their weaknesses and actively seek opportunities to collaborate with individuals who possess complementary skills to develop in those areas (Boyatzis, 1982). Moreover, research conducted among small company owners and workers has shown that those possessing a heightened level of self-discipline and a better understanding of the circumstances occurring in their lives are less prone to experiencing anger or depression when confronted with work-related stress, and are also less inclined to resign from their positions. Research has shown that optimism plays a vital role in achieving sales growth, along with other accomplishments (Schulman et al., 1995).

3. Employee's Performance

The performance of employees is crucial for organizations to maintain high levels of performance and a competitive edge. Job performance encompasses the specific behaviors and activities of an employee that contribute to the organization's success in attaining its objectives (Carpini et al., 2017; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). Employee performance refers to the level of work effort that individuals devote to their jobs, and it is a crucial aspect of a workplace as it directly impacts the success of a company. Motowidlo et al. (1997) introduced two essential categories of employee behavior that are crucial for the success of an organization which are task performance and contextual performance. Task performance refers to the specific behaviors that directly contribute to the production of products or services or actions that offer support to an organization's technological core. Contextual performance refers to individual behaviors that are not directly linked to the primary task functions. These behaviors may include volunteering for additional task activities that are not formally part of the job or demonstrating extra enthusiasm when necessary to successfully complete one's own tasks (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). Notably, the demands of organizations to succeed in this rapidly evolving and competitive market have shifted their attention toward the notion of sustainable performance. Sustainable performance encompasses the interplay between an organization's commercial performance and its environmental, economic, and social performance (Al-Abbadi & Abu Rumman, 2023).

The performance of employees is a vital component in determining the success of any firm. Gaining insight into the determinants that impact it may result in enhanced efficiency, job satisfaction and overall organizational efficacy. Antecedents are the circumstances or situations that came before and have an impact on a certain result, such as the performance of employees in their jobs. For example, workers who are driven and engaged tend to achieve higher performance levels in their jobs. Motivation may arise from internal variables such as job satisfaction or external ones like as rewards and recognition (Kundi et al., 2020). Furthermore, job satisfaction significantly impacts employee job performance. Satisfied employees are more inclined to exhibit productivity and commitment towards their work (Alegre et al., 2016).

Moreover, the degree of employee adaptability in shifting circumstances also has an impact on their work performance. Adaptable employees who possess the ability to acclimate to changing situations and acquire new proficiencies often thrive in their positions. This adaptive performance according to (Park & Park, 2019) is contingent upon several elements such as training and support. Moreover, the psychological well-being of employees might have a substantial influence on their job performance. Kundi et al. (2020) further asserted that variables such as stress levels, work-life balance, and mental wellness might impact performance results. Furthermore, the research also discloses that the level of commitment shown by employees towards their

firm is directly correlated with their work performance. Employees who have a strong emotional connection to their employment are more inclined to exert additional effort and exhibit high levels of performance. The interconnectedness of these factors might collectively influence an employee's work performance. For instance, a person who is driven and content is more inclined to embrace new challenges and maintain a strong commitment to their career. Prior research has shown a correlation between employee performance and a range of organizational outcomes.

In addition to comprehending distinct factors that influence work performance, prior research also examines the consequences of employee performance. Latif et al. (2013) found that high employee performance has the potential to enhance employee morale and engagement, resulting in a favorable work atmosphere that promotes teamwork and collaboration. To summarize, the performance of employees has extensive implications for the success of a business, including factors such as productivity, customer satisfaction, innovation, and overall growth and competitiveness. It is important for an organization's long-term success to ensure that employees are motivated, satisfied, and competent in carrying out their responsibilities.

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance: Empirical research has consistently shown that EI has a considerable impact on employee performance (Dhani et al., 2016; Krishnan et al., 2018; Zainal et al., 2018). According to Davis (2019), EI in the workplace may significantly enhance employee performance, increase retention rates, and reduce occupational stress. Research has also shown that there is a positive correlation between ability EI and employee performance (Grobelny et al., 2021). The results are in line with the study conducted by Mohamad & Jais, (2016) and Yoke & Panatik, (2015), which both showed a substantial correlation between EI and teacher's job performance. As stated by Carrillo (2019), employees who exhibit high EI abilities are more capable of effectively fulfilling their job responsibilities. Othman & Syed Muhsin, (2020) corroborate this assertion, as their research demonstrates a positive correlation between EI and employee performance. Specifically, their study reveals that those with greater emotional intelligence tend to exhibit higher levels of performance, while those with lower emotional intelligence tend to exhibit lower levels of performance. This indicates that if a company does not observe adequate EI among its employees, it may result in work-related stress, which in turn affects individuals' intentions to leave their jobs and their satisfaction in their work (Panatik et al., 2012). Hence, it is essential for organizations to acknowledge the crucial impact of EI in cultivating human capital, which ultimately results in a workforce that excels in performance (Mohamad & Jais, 2016).

Job Demand: In the ever-changing environment of the modern workplace, both workers and employers need to comprehend the aspects that impact employee performance. The Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) Theory is a well-known theoretical framework that provides insights into how different job demands and resources might affect employee's well-being and job performance. The Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) Theory, formulated by Bakker and Demerouti, provides vital insights toward comprehending the correlation among job demands, resources, and employee's well-being. The JD-R Theory proposes that each work is distinguished by distinct demands and resources, and the manner in which people perceive and engage with these elements impacts their well-being and performance (Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, 2016). The hypothesis emphasized that an abundance of job demand might result in pressure and unfavorable consequences, such as burnout, fatigue, and diminished job satisfaction, if not offset by sufficient resources. However, this proposed study will concentrate on work demand as the mediator capable of explaining the association between EI and employee performance.

Job demands include the physical, psychological, social, and organizational elements of a job that need continuous exertion and energy consumption. Job demands include several factors such as workload, time pressure, emotional demands, and cognitive demands. When people have enough resources to handle them, moderate levels of job demands may operate as motivating elements, promoting growth and development (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Nevertheless, an overwhelming workload, if not addressed, may result in burnout, diminished focus and decreased productivity. Furthermore, there exists an intricate correlation between job demand and employee engagement. Optimal levels of job demand may enhance engagement by offering people a feeling of challenge and growth. However, overly high levels of demand can overpower employees and result in disengagement (Bakker et al., 2014).

In the hospitality industry, employees are often known as emotional labor workers due to the distinct and challenging nature of their jobs. This word refers to those who are required to manage their emotions and expressions as an essential aspect of their employment. Employees in this field must continually demonstrate warmth, understanding, and friendliness, even in difficult circumstances. Their responsibilities include generating favorable visitor experiences, managing complaints with tact, and maintaining a pleasant disposition. The act of managing and regulating one's emotions may be both gratifying and challenging. It entails repressing authentic feelings while displaying the intended ones, which may result in tension and exhaustion. Nevertheless, when conducted proficiently, emotional labor increases client satisfaction and loyalty. Hospitality employees are classified as emotional labor workers because of the inherent emotional requirements of their positions. They are not only offering services; they are creating unforgettable experiences by emotionally connecting with visitors. Although this position may provide satisfaction, it also comes with distinct difficulties that need support from employers and a prioritization of employee wellbeing. EI enables employees to effectively manage their emotions and exhibit appropriate emotional responses, hence enhancing the ability of hospitality professionals to provide exceptional service. Therefore, by acknowledging the need to offer sufficient resources and effectively handling excessive demands, firms may establish a healthier and more efficient work environment.

The Mediating Role of Job Demand in the Workplace: Job demand acts as a mediator by intervening in the relationship between independent variables (factors that influence outcomes) and dependent variables (the desired outcomes). Several studies have investigated the function of job demand as a mediator in different study situations. Huang et al. (2022) investigated the role of job demand in mediating the connection between job resources and career calling, which ultimately impacts job satisfaction in the healthcare industry. The results suggest that job demands have a detrimental impact on job satisfaction, which diminishes as work-family conflict and emotional work needs grow. In a similar vein, Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, (2020) found that the connection between an employee's perception of high-performance work systems and emotional exhaustion is positively influenced by job demands, such as excessive workload and conflicts between work-family conflicts. On the other hand, the study results also showed that job demands might have a negative effect on the link between both categories since high-performance work systems have been shown to decrease job demands. Empirical study has substantiated the importance of job demands as a mediator in the relationship between empowerment-focused Human Resource Management (HRM) and work engagement, as shown by (Van De Voorde et al., 2016). Studies have shown that job demands have a role in the link between HPWS and burnout (Kilroy et al., 2016) as well as emotional exhaustion (Oppenauer & Van De Voorde, 2016).

Similarly, EI has garnered much attention in the workplace because of its potential influence on employee performance. A recent study has specifically aimed to comprehend the function of job demand as a mediator in the correlation between EI and employee performance. Weinzimmer et al., (2017) conducted research to examine how work-family balances (job demand) mediate the relationship between EI and employee performance. Research has shown that the balance between work-family responsibilities acts as a mediator in the connection between EI and the performance of employees. This implies that job demand is a critical factor in converting EI into improved performance results. Employees who possess a high level of EI are able to efficiently handle the job demands, which leads to improved performance. To summarize, while the role of job demand as a mediating factor in the association between emotional intelligence and employee performance is not clearly stated, more research is necessary to investigate the precise function of job demand as a mechanism that explains this relationship.

Proposition Development: Empirical evidence demonstrates that Emotional Intelligence (EI) has a substantial impact on the performance of employees in many organizational contexts. Nevertheless, the level of job demand, including workload and work-family conflicts, may significantly impact employee performance. Given the theoretical explanation provided above, it is proposed that further study be conducted among employees in the hospitality industry:

Proposition A: Emotional Intelligence is positively related to employee's job performance in the hospitality industry.

Proposition B: Job demand mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee job performance in the hospitality industry.

Figure 1: Proposed Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Job Demand and Employee's Performance

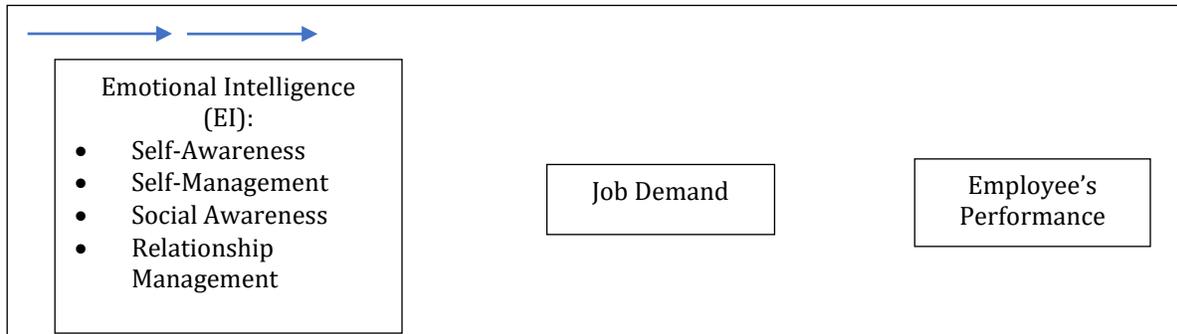


Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized link between the constructs that have been investigated. This is a conceptual framework that demonstrates the impact of EI on employee performance. Furthermore, the mediating role of job demand on the relationship between both dimensions is also carried out in this proposition.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The impact of EI on employee performance is significant in the hospitality sector. EI and employee performance are positively correlated among hospitality professionals, according to many research. A meta-analysis of these studies found a substantial association between the two variables. Beyond only examining the direct link between the two variables, there has been recent interest in examining the function of work demands as a mechanism that explains the relationship between EI and employee performance. In this connection, job demand operates as a mediator, influencing the way that EI affects performance. EI for example, may improve employee's ability to handle the emotional labor needed in hospitality positions. In conclusion, the proposed research must be conducted to determine conclusively how emotional intelligence, with work demands acting as a mediator in this connection, may have a substantial influence on employees' performance in the hospitality business. Therefore, this study proposed a framework for the role of Job Demand act as a potential mediator in the EI-Employee's Performance relationship. Without a doubt, the results may provide the organization with specific guidelines for fostering and advancing EI abilities in its employees, which will eventually boost customer service, satisfaction, and overall organizational performance.

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