

# Role of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance in IT Sector

**Himanshu Gandhi,**

Research Scholar , Department of  
Management Studies J. C. Bose University  
of Science and Technology, YMCA  
Faridabad, Haryana, India.

**Dr. Manisha Goel,**

Research Scholar , Department of  
Management Studies J. C. Bose University  
of Science and Technology, YMCA  
Faridabad, Haryana, India.

**Dr. Chavi Bhargava**

Co-supervisor, MRIU,  
Faridabad, Haryana, India.

## Abstract

Emotional Intelligence among individuals has been defined as the ability to process emotional information and use it accurately for navigating through the social environment. Varying among individuals, the presence of EI helps provide the capacity to use emotional information for guiding various thinking processes and behavioural patterns, in all spheres of life. Job performance is a single variable which determines how a person performs in his or her workplace and is related to the productivity of the employee and his effectiveness in accomplishing a work assigned to him. The present study is aimed to understand the presence of Emotional Intelligence, and its influence on Job Performance as perceived by the respondents and determine the relationship between these variables. Based on the primary data analysis, it has been found that Emotional Intelligence variables such as organizational awareness, accurate self-assessment, conscientiousness, self-confidence and service orientation and teamwork and collaboration contributed positively towards job performance.

**Key Words:** Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Life Satisfaction, IT/ITeS sector, Employees, Leadership Strategies,

## Introduction

Emotional Intelligence directly influences job performance positive attitude, self-regulating capabilities, positive behavior, agreeableness, cognitive abilities and organizational commitment. Differences in emotional intelligence levels of individuals along with their respective cognitive capabilities in perceiving the source of pressure at workplace that causes stress directly impacts the handling of the job related stress.

Emotional intelligence varies from person to person. There are individual differences between people and in their ability to connect thought processes to emotions. As a consequence, people with better EI have better capabilities of connecting thoughts with feelings. Eventually, they are in a better position than others where they are able to understand the emotions of others from what they utter. Differences between the emotional intelligence of different individuals play a crucial role in determining their positions as organizational leaders. The people who are able to recognize and manage moods and emotions of themselves as well as that of others are able to perform as effective leaders.

Petrides (2001) defined EI as a conglomerate of behavioral dispositions and self-distinguished capabilities that can be measured through self-reports. Mayor et al (2004) suggest that emotional intelligence is the ability to process emotional information and use it accurately for navigating through the social environment. Thus, an individual with improved EI is able to perceive all the emotions properly, access them accurately and generate emotions that are capable of assisting various thought processes, understand others' emotions and emotional information, and regulate them so that intellectual and emotional growth are achieved. Coleman (2008) defines EI as the ability of an individual to be familiar with their own emotions as well as that of others, along with the ability to distinguish between different feelings and label them correctly. Further, EI also provides the capacity to use emotional information for guiding various thinking processes and behavioral patterns.

### **Literature Review:**

In pursuit of understanding the role of Emotional Intelligence in organizational behavior, several researchers have derived tests for accurate measurement and assessment of Emotional Intelligence among employees and leaders, including MSCEIT, Diagnostic Analysis of Non-Verbal Accuracy, Goleman's model of ECI, ESCI and ESCI-U, TEIQue, EQ-I, SUETI and Schutte EI Model, each measuring different dimensions of emotions in individuals.

Several researches have been made by eminent scholars for understanding the correlation between emotional intelligence and job performances. For instance, Wong and Law (2002) made a research on the link between emotional intelligence and job performance by focusing upon the leader as well as the followers in an organization. While this study agrees with the conventional idea that emotional intelligence is a core variable which determines the level of performance of leaders in an organization, it also emphasizes that in order to experience positive job performance it is essential to link positive emotional intelligence of leaders and followers with their work. This is established by means of the finding that emotional labour of the leaders and the followers regarding the work has an influencing effect on the correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance. When the emotional intelligence of the followers is positive, it has positive effect on their job performance and job satisfaction, and vice versa. On the other hand, when the emotional intelligence of the leaders of the group is positive, it has positive influence on their job satisfaction and commitment to serve extra roles for their organization.

Carmeli (2003) conducts study on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance in order to find out how these factors determine success of senior managers in an organization. Through research, the scholar suggests that relationship exists between emotional intelligence and job performance in the manner that the emotional intelligence augments positive attitude among the employees about the work. This has a correspondingly positive impact on their behaviour and attitude towards the work and the responsibility vested upon them by their organization. Eventually, the outcome of their performance also turns out to be positive.

Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) conduct a similar study in order to understand the correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance in order to find out how cognitive abilities affect leadership effectiveness of different people in individualistic manner. The findings of this study agree with that of Carmeli in suggesting that there is a direct connection between the cognitive ability of an individual with that of his respective job performance. The researcher further suggests that people with higher emotional intelligence make better and more efficient leaders.

The research conducted by on the link between emotional abilities and workplace performance Shaffer and Shaffer (2005) conducted a practical test on managers in Hong Kong based organizations. While affirming that there is a connection between the cognitive and emotional abilities of individuals and their workplace performance, the researchers emphasized on two specific components of emotional intelligence, namely, agreeableness and conscientiousness. It has been established through this research that agreeableness of the employees has a positive link with their contextual performance at the workplace. Similarly, conscientiousness of the employees has been related to their task based performance.

The linkage between emotional intelligence and job performance has been further affirmed by the study of Thomas et al (2006). The researchers found out that there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. However, the research explored a completely new angle of this correlation. Simultaneously with affirming that there is a direct link between emotional intelligence of an individual employee with his job performance, it also presents that the level of emotional intelligence of the leader of a group or manager of an organization also impacts upon the quality of performance of the employees. Specifically speaking, there is noticeable improvement in the quality of job performance of the employees with lower emotional intelligence who operate under managers or leaders with high emotional

intelligence. Thus, through this research the scholars not only present the traditional relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance, but simultaneously pin point towards cognitive ability leader as an important factor that determines the performance of the employees under him as well.

However, a study on emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence and job performance conducted by Cote and Miners (2006) present contradictory information. The research conducted by these two scholars on the topic confirms that emotional intelligence of an individual and his job performance are correlated. Nonetheless, they suggest that this correlation is purely hypothetical. Moreover, they become further critical in suggesting that when the cognitive abilities of the individual is an essentially dominant factor. This single factor influences both emotional intelligence and job performance and can lead to unexpected outcomes that defy the traditional notion about the link between emotional intelligence and performance at work. Through research the scholars establish that when cognitive abilities of some employees are found to be lower than others, it correspondingly leads to their outstanding job performance.

Carmeli and Josman (2006) conducted a study on the same topic in order to find out whether there is really a correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance. While beginning the study, the scholarly commentary agrees the opinion of Cote and Miners in suggesting that this correlation is purely theoretical. But they suggest that the primary reason behind it is lack of adequate research on the topic to establish a practical connection between emotional intelligence and job outcome. Therefore, the scholars conducted further empirical study to examine the link between emotional intelligence and two aspects of work outcome, namely job performance and organizational citizenship behaviour of the employees. The findings confirm that there practically assessable relationship exists between emotional intelligence and work outcome of the employees. Thus, when the emotional intelligence of the employees and their leaders are higher, it is bound to result in positive outcome in case of their job performance and their belongingness to their organization.

In order to examine the practical utility of the correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance, Law et al (2008) conducted research on research and development scientists of China. The research findings of the scholar not only establish that the relationship between these two components are quantifiable, but simultaneously present a new perspective on this relationship. According to these scholars, scales for measuring emotional

intelligence of the employees of an organization serves as an efficient predictor of their respective job performances. They further comment that this quantifiable scale serves even more effectively when self-reported EI scales are developed instead of using generic EI scales.

The positive and measurable relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance have been further established by Güleriyüz et al (2008) who additionally indicate job satisfaction as a mediator between emotional intelligence of the employees and their commitment towards their work that influences their job performance. Job satisfaction also serves as a mediator that determines the self-regulating capability of individuals regarding their emotions, cognitive abilities and organizational commitment.

Research has been conducted by O'Boyle et al (2011) in order to make an estimate on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance by referring to latest meta-analytical studies. The purpose of this research has been to find out if cognitive abilities of different individuals have any impact on their respective performances at the workplace. The findings of the research correlate with that of Carmeli in suggesting that emotional abilities of individuals have different impact upon their corresponding job performances. However, the research findings further suggest that since cognitive abilities of different people correlate differently with individual attributes of people such as neuroticism, openness, flexibility, agreeableness and meticulousness so it results in differences in their performances at the workplace.

While researching on the link between emotional intelligence and job performance, Wu (2011) also emphasizes upon the individual cognitive abilities of different people. The scholar suggests that work performance of individuals depend to a great extent upon the job stress that they encounter at workplace and the manner in which they implement their cognitive abilities in handling it. Here, the scholar hints towards the differences in emotional intelligence of different individuals and their respective cognitive capabilities in perceiving the source of pressure at workplace that causes stress and handling them effectively. Thus, employees with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of reducing or transforming the potential negative consequences of job stress on their work performance as compared to employees with low emotional intelligence. The study further affirm components of emotional intelligence such as cognitive abilities, personality traits, emotional labour demands and job complexity as factors that determine the stress handling capabilities and relative job performance. Thus, employees

with higher degree of overall emotional intelligence and emotional perception abilities exhibit better performance even in case of works that feature high work demands.

In many of the studies, Emotional Intelligence has been found to have an impact on Job Performance and Life Satisfaction. There is still a need to understand the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance and finally affecting Life Satisfaction.

#### **Research Methodology:**

The present study is an exploratory research to understand and establish a cause and effect relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance. The major objective of the study is to explore the impact of Emotional Intelligence on the job performance of employees. The study takes into consideration the IT service industry in India. The study aims to understand the relationship between different aspects of emotional intelligence such as relationship management, social awareness, self-awareness and self-management with job performance.

For this purpose of the study, 300 employees from five IT/ITeS organizations based in New Delhi-NCR of five IT

companies i.e. Google, Computer Science Corporation (CSC), HCL, Ericson and Cognizant. with the help of structured questionnaire. Brief Mood Introspection Scale (BMIS) has been used to know pleasant-unpleasant mood of employees through the conversion of 4-point version of Meddis for all 16 adjectives i.e., XX, X, V, VV for definitely do not feel, do not feel, slightly feel and definitely feel. The pleasant-unpleasant mood was calculated using sum of responses scale to numbers and reverse scoring the unpleasant adjectives as shown in the table 1.

**Table 1**  
**BMIS after conversion of Meddis response scale to number**

	XX	X	V	VV
Lively	1	2	3	4
Happy	1	2	3	4
Peppy	1	2	3	4
Loving	1	2	3	4
Active	1	2	3	4
Caring	1	2	3	4

Content	1	2	3	4
Calm	1	2	3	4
Sad	4	3	2	1
Tired	4	3	2	1
Gloomy	4	3	2	1
Jittery	4	3	2	1
Drowsy	4	3	2	1
Nervous	4	3	2	1
Fed up	4	3	2	1
Grouchy	4	3	2	1

### BMIS scale analysis

The Brief Mood Introspection Scale (BMIS)[13] is a freeware mood scale that determines the moods of the respondent on the basis of their response to 16-mood adjectives set. This scale is based on 4 dimensions,

Pleasant-Unpleasant, Arousal-Calm, Positive-Tired and Negative-Relaxed. BMIS score and mood values of the survey respondents have been reflected in table 2.

**Table 2**  
**BMIS Score and Mood values of the Survey Respondents**

		Overall Score	Overall Mood
N	Valid	300	300
Average		41.199	5.493
Mean		2.53	5.49
Std. Error of Mean		.043	.143
Median		3.00	6.00
Mode		2	6
Std. Deviation		.734	2.469
Variance		.539	6.097

Skewness		.114	-1.665
Std. Error of Skewness		.141	.141
Kurtosis		-.304	4.521
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.281	.281
Range		3	15
Minimum		1	-5
Maximum		4	10
Percentiles	25	2.00	6.00
	50	3.00	6.00
	75	3.00	6.00

The BMIS scale, the mood adjective scale, that analyses the short term moods of respondents, consisted of 2 adjectives from eight mood states as well as the overall mood at the Pleasant-Unpleasant scale. In the present study, the Pleasant-Unpleasant scale was used and the 'reverse scoring' method, as given in the questionnaire instructions, was used for calculating the final score. As seen from the table, the average BMIS score was 41 (above average in the 16-64 score range) suggesting that the respondents of the survey were in a 'Mildly Pleasant' mood. Moreover, the Mean of the BMIS scoring was at 2.53, with a Standard Deviation of 0.734. Also, Variance for the BMIS score was found to be at 0.539, showing very little variation in the values and hence moods of the survey respondents. When

observed further, the BMIS scale scores was divided into four ranges, 16-27, 28-40, 41-52 and 53-64 and the frequency of the respondent scores within these ranges was determined by frequency analysis. As seen from the table, the highest frequency was found in the 28-40 BMIS score range (44%), followed by the 41-53 BMIS score range (41.3), suggesting that the dominant mood among the survey respondents was between Mildly Unpleasant to Mildly Pleasant. However, when compared with the average scores value derived 'Mildly Pleasant', it can be concluded that there were a significant number of respondents in a 'Very Pleasant' mood. Frequency and percentage of overall scores and mood of the survey respondents has been depicted in table 3 below;

**Table 3**

**Frequency and Percentage of Overall Scores and Mood of the Survey Respondents**

Variables	Categories/Range	Frequency	Percent
Overall BMIS Score	16-27	17	5.7
	28-40	131	44.0
	41-52	124	41.6
	53-64	26	8.7
	Total	300	100.0
Overall Mood	-5	4	1.3



-2	4	1.3
0	14	4.7
2	9	3.0
3	9	3.0
4	17	5.7
5	15	5.0
6	180	60.0
7	9	3.0
8	15	5.0
9	15	5.0
10	9	3.0
Total	300	100.0

Besides the Overall BMIS score, the 'Overall Mood' values as given by the respondent was analysed. As seen from the Table, the Average Overall Mood of the survey respondents was 5.5, which signifies that the average respondent in the present survey felt 'Mildly Pleasant'. Comparing these self-reported mood scores of respondents with the calculated overall BMIS scores, it can be seen that both reflected the moods accurately, suggesting that the scale results were valid for the survey. The importance of employee moods in service sector is of high significance, since they have to routinely deal with customers and clients and are hence under constant pressure to create a positive vibe, which along with the work pressure can take a toll on the employee. Organizational behaviour studies have revealed that when customers are exposed to hostile employees or employees in unpleasant mood, they experience a higher rate of dissatisfaction as compared to pleasant moods of employees, irrespective of the quality of the task performed by the employee. Frequency analysis of individual self-reported mood scores showed that the highest frequency was found for the score of '6' among the survey respondents at 60% suggesting that a dominant section of the respondents felt 'Mildly Pleasant' during the survey. This value again corroborates the initial findings of feeling 'Mildly Pleasant' among the survey respondents. The mildly pleasant mood of the survey respondents has significant implication in understanding the extent of importance Emotional Intelligence has on the Job performance and Life Satisfaction perception.

### Inferential Analysis

The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance of employees has been established with the help of correlation and regression. As seen from Table 4, there is high correlation between Service Orientation dimensions, Conscientiousness, Organizational Awareness, Accurate Self-Assessment, Self-Confidence and their job performance. Since the p value is less than 0.05, it shows significant relationships between these variables. Organizational awareness ( $\alpha = 0.952$ ,  $p = .000$ ), being aware of the different aspects of the organization, showed the highest correlation with Job performance, followed by Self-Awareness dimension of Emotional Intelligence, the Accurate Self-Assessment ( $\alpha = .926$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Organizational awareness, the ability to read a group/team's emotional trends and power relationship, as well as the decision networks at the organizational level, enables the individuals to take part in the team activities and hence perform better in their jobs.

**Table 4**  
**Correlation Coefficients of dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance**

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional self-awareness	.730 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Accurate self-assessment	.926 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Self-confidence	.850 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Empathy	.798 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Service Orientation	.896 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Organizational Awareness	.952 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Self-Control	.750 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Trustworthiness	.704 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Conscientiousness	.945 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Adaptability	.640 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Achievement drive	.793 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Initiative	.671 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Developing others	.761 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Influence	.692 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Communication	.706 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Conflict management	.553 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Leadership	.503 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Change catalyst	.829 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Building bonds	.807 <sup>**</sup>	.000
Teamwork & collaboration	.840 <sup>**</sup>	.000

<sup>\*\*</sup>. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



In case of Conscientiousness ( $\alpha = 0.945$ ,  $p = .000$ ), a Self-Management dimension of Emotional Intelligence pertaining to responsible behaviour and careful planning showed a significant positive relationship with Job performance. Service Orientation ( $\alpha = .896$ ,  $p = .000$ ), another Social awareness dimension, related to being responsible towards meeting clients/customers' needs, showed a significantly strong relationship with Job performance for employees. Moreover, Self-confidence ( $\alpha = .850$ ,  $p = .000$ ) also showed significant strong relationship with Job performance, suggesting that confidence within self can reflect positively on the job. Self-confidence not only leads to job satisfaction, but employees with high levels of self-confidence are able to adapt well to their work, tackle problems better and can even facilitate participation of members for tasks/activities/decisions.

Besides these highly correlated Emotional Intelligence dimensions, few variables have been seen to show low correlation, especially Leadership ( $\alpha = .503$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and Conflict Management ( $\alpha = .553$ ,  $p = .000$ ), both under the Relationship Management dimension. It can hence be seen that, out of the four main dimensions of Emotional Intelligence, Relationship Management has the weakest relationship with Job Performance for the employees. In spite of the low significance of leadership variable as an emotional intelligence for efficient Job Performance, it has

been known that while high emotional intelligence among leaders can lead to their better job performance, employees who are self-aware and hence capable of empathy can efficiently influence and lead their peers either in decision making process or completion of a task.

Moreover, the four dimensions of emotional intelligence are highly interlinked, since self-awareness in an employee aids in self-management, and the combination of the two in turn, leads to effective relationship management. Following correlation, regression studies, specifically the coefficients have been also performed in order to understand the effect of dimensions of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance. The results of regression have been depicted in table 5. As seen from the Table 5, several variables of Emotional Intelligence have been found to contribute more significantly towards job performance than others, including Conscientiousness, Self-Confidence, Service Orientation, Teamwork and Collaboration and Accurate Self-assessment. These variables have been found to have high significance ( $p = .000$ ) with respect to their relationship with job performance for employees. Collaboration and teamwork ability of individuals is highly advantageous within teams, since it can lead to individual and team creativity, which further contributes to organizational performance, this ability is also known to be aided by trustworthiness of the employee leading to enhanced job and team performance.

**Table 5**

**Regression Coefficients of dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance**

Variables	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)		-9.302	.000
Emotional self-awareness	-.014	-1.168	.244
Accurate self-assessment	.159	5.866	.000
Self-confidence	.140	7.270	.000
Empathy	.025	1.762	.079
Service Orientation	.123	6.513	.000
Organizational Awareness	.152	5.743	.000
Self-Control	.060	4.057	.000

Trustworthiness	-.019	-1.275	.203
Conscientiousness	.213	8.714	.000
Adaptability	-.034	-1.932	.054
Achievement drive	-.006	-.328	.743
Initiative	.039	2.559	.011
Influence	.072	4.667	.000
Communication	-.042	-2.379	.018
Conflict management	.020	1.610	.108
Leadership	-.005	-.349	.727
Change catalyst	.051	3.380	.001
Building bonds	.072	4.481	.000
Teamwork & collaboration	.105	5.895	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

In case of Service orientation, the ability of employees to analysing and meeting customers' and clients' needs, the presence of high service orientation in employees makes them highly responsible in meeting deadlines and demands, as well as use lesser energy for self-regulation and self-control that is required while dealing with clients/customers, thereby making them highly suitable for services related job. At the organizational level, higher service orientation in employees is highly advantageous, since service orientation in service related organizations directly leads to customer satisfaction and hence improved financial performance of the organization.

Consequently, service orientation ability plays a significant role in the present research, since the service industry's principle focus is meeting the needs of their clients and customers. Also, the remaining variables that individually contributed significantly towards Job Performance have also been shown to have a strong significant correlation with the dependent variable, thereby stressing on the importance of these variables in the study. A unique observation however has been the significantly negative influence of the variable

Communication towards Job performance, since previous literature has shown the opposite relationship. Communication skills and effective interpersonal communication among employees can contribute significantly towards job satisfaction, which in turn can lead to productivity and hence improved job performance. However, the contradictory observation in the present study needs to be understood, in terms of contributing factors that has led to poor job performance in spite of superior communication skills of employees.

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