

Emotional Intelligence and its Role in Enhancing Workplace Collaboration

Shumaila Atif^{1*} | Sarah Jehangir² | Dr Tahmeena Tabish Latifi³

^{1,2}College of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Ziauddin University, Karachi, Pakistan

³College of Speech Language and Hearing Sciences, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Ziauddin University, Karachi, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Background of the Study: Despite the growing emphasis on emotional intelligence (EI), much-existing research has focused on specific professional relationships, such as those between managers and subordinates, leaving a gap in understanding EI influences among peer-to-peer interactions. As organizational systems evolve, the need for high-functioning, collaborative teams becomes increasingly apparent.

Methodology: This study utilized a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the relationship between EI and workplace collaboration comprehensively. The research was conducted across various settings, including hospitals, financial industries, and IT sectors within Karachi. Employees from these diverse sectors provided a representative sample (n=384) using convenience sampling technique. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 26. Pearson correlation test was applied to assess the correlation between variables.

Results: The EI of the participants was determined, and the analyses revealed that in the domain of self-awareness, n=134 (34.89%) had strength, 156 (40.04%) were in the category of need attention, and n=94 (24.47%) were in development priority category. In managing emotions, strength was the result for n=105 (27.5%) of the participants, and need attention was the finding of n=116 (30.2%) and n=163 (42.44%) were in the development priority category.

Conclusion: EI can be integrated and developed systematically within organizational structures that foster collaboration, foundation, and performance. Despite recognizing its potential for encouraging successful navigation in the current organizational climate, more focused studies and interventions need to be developed and implemented to enhance EI usage and match it to specific context requirements of the workplace.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received October 2024

Accepted November 2024

Published December 2024

KEYWORDS

Emotional intelligence, workplace collaboration, leadership, performance, organizational climate, professional growth.

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined as the individual's capacity or the process of perceiving, recognizing, and distinguishing emotions in an appropriate context while applying this knowledge to decision-making (Bechter et al., 2023). Therefore, this phenomenon poses a significant factor in everyday interaction in different work-related contexts. Emotional intelligence is an intermediary that strengthens people's connections and develops communication pathways to help them collaborate in a cooperative environment (Harahap et al., 2023).

EI is slowly becoming necessary in every organization globally, and it needs constant

teamwork and social skills. They can implement it and manage their colleagues within the workplace and in changing circumstances. Such people can contribute to an increase in an organization's equal status and personal welfare, making social sensitivity and experience with diversity in social interactions possible (Kumar et al., 2022). To elaborate,

*Correspondence Author: Shumaila Atif

Email: shumaila.atif@zu.edu.pk

To cite this article: Atif, S., Jehangir, S., Latifi, T.T. (2024). Emotional Intelligence and its Role in Enhancing Workplace Collaboration. Archives of Management and Social Sciences, 1(4), 40-47.

Licensing: Creative Commons Attribution- 4.0 International (CC BY-4.0)

Publisher: Allied Nexus Publisher

there is a close connection between professional relationships and performance on the one hand and emotional intelligence on the other. As the workplace becomes more complicated and interconnected, and teamwork becomes very crucial to achieving an organization's goal and ensuring its prosperity, the role of EI is important for professional growth (Jena et al., 2022). According to research, EI helps to understand others' needs and adds value to the professional's supportive relationships, thereby leading to successful teamwork (Jena et al., 2022). This very ability depends on individual performance, as well as on supporting the success of groups, establishing the significance of this competence in the collaborative journey among diversified settings (Khassawneh et al., 2022).

There are five key domains based on which EI can be evaluated, each contributing to an individual's ability to navigate social and professional environments effectively. Self-awareness involves recognizing and understanding emotions and their impact on thoughts and behaviours (Bruluna et al., 2021). Managing emotions focuses on the ability to regulate emotions constructively, ensuring that they do not hinder decision-making or relationships. Motivating oneself emphasizes the importance of using emotional insights to stay driven and achieve personal or professional goals. Empathy relates to the capacity to understand and share the feelings of others, fostering deeper connections and effective communication (Ullah et al., 2024). Social skill encompasses the ability to easily manage relationships, build networks, and navigate social situations. These domains form the foundation of emotional intelligence, enabling individuals to collaborate effectively and succeed in diverse settings (Sultana et al., 2021).

Despite the growing emphasis on EI, much existing research has focused on specific professional relationships, such as those between managers and subordinates, leaving a gap in understanding EI influences among peer-to-peer interactions. As organizational systems evolve, the need for high-functioning, collaborative teams becomes increasingly apparent. Exploring the impact of emotional intelligence in fostering trust, communication, and mutual understanding among colleagues can provide valuable insights into building more cohesive and effective workplaces.

Literature Review

According to the literature, EI has become a source of interest in understanding workplace collaboration. This ability to recognize, understand, and control one's own and other people's emotions greatly influences interpersonal relationships, conflict management, and team performance (Vrontis et al., 2021). Social intelligence lays the foundation of EI, an ability to understand and manage human interactions. Earlier conceptualizations of EI considered it an ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotional experiences. Recently, it has focused on EI's impact on leadership and team processes. The three major models in the literature are as follows (Alheet et al., 2021). The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Ability Model deals with perceiving, facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions (Thapa et al., 2023, Singh et al., 2022). Goleman's Mixed Model includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Riaz et al., 2024, Naz et al., 2021). On the other hand, Bar-On classified his Mixed Model towards emotional intelligence as a combination of emotional and social competencies like adaptability and stress management (Al-Shamaileh, 2023, Alwali et al., 2022).

Workplace collaboration relies on effective communication, trust, and mutual respect among team members. EI helps build these components as people endowed with high EI are known to have a better approach towards handling human relationships, empathy and connection. People with a higher EI also

strengthen the teams by building discourses such as trust and mutual understanding, which are prerequisites for high-quality output (Dugue et al., 2021). EI manages emotions during conflict; this creates an atmosphere of discussion and joint problem-solving. EI could also promote active listening and emotional attunement, diffusing misunderstandings and upholding open and respectful communication (Kren et al., 2021). Research has provided significant evidence that all these contribute positively to bringing positive collaboration in the workplace. For example, research indicates that individuals with elevated EI are more likely to employ collaborative conflict resolution, such as integrating and compensating strategies. Other findings showed that emotionally intelligent employees understand team dynamics better and can respond to them, thus enabling higher engagement levels and productivity from both organizations and employees (Kumari et al., 2022).

Though it has been well established, the relationship between EI and workplace collaboration requires further investigation (Radha & Nirubarani et al., 2024). Many gaps and challenges remain in question. Such impact is well documented for EI in leadership; as for individual performance, the effects are under-explored in terms of team collaboration. The varying assessment tools for EI are unclear in the findings across various research (Sahoo et al., 2023). Research has revealed a significant gap in understanding EI effects, particularly in diverse and evolving organizational contexts. Future research should prioritize developing standardized methodologies to measure EI, exploring the interplay between EI and collaboration in culturally diverse teams, and investigating the role of EI in remote and hybrid work environments. Addressing these gaps will provide actionable insights for organizations seeking to leverage EI as a strategic tool to enhance collaboration and overall performance.

Research Methodology

The mixed-methods design, which includes both quantitative and qualitative data, was used in the current study to gain holistic insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace collaboration. The research was carried out in hospitals, financial industries, and the IT sector in Karachi, and representatives from the different sample sectors jointly presented to determine emotional intelligence's interdependency with collaboration in an organizational context. Sample size $n=384$ was determined after considering the population of 1 million and a 50% anticipated frequency at a confidence interval of 95% using open EPI software using convenience sampling technique. The recruited participants were in the age category of 25-50 years.

Data collection was carried out using two instruments. The first was an established Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire designed to assess participants' levels of emotional intelligence. The second instrument was a self-designed workplace collaboration questionnaire to measure various aspects of teamwork, communication, and collaborative outcomes. The questionnaire comprised five sections: communication, workplace relationships, conflict management, stress management, and productivity. Both questionnaires were administered to participants, and responses were analyzed to identify patterns and correlations between emotional intelligence and workplace collaboration. This methodology provided a robust foundation for addressing the research objectives and contributing meaningful insights to the literature. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics was represented as frequency and percentage. Further, Pearson correlation test was applied to assess the correlation between variables.

Results

Demographic information based on age and gender was analyzed, and the findings revealed that the average age of the participants was 35.63 ± 4.2 years with more males $n=213$ (55.46%) than females $n=171$ (44.53%). In addition to that, most of the participants were from the healthcare sector, $n=156$ (40.62%), followed by IT sectors, $n=143$ (37.23%) and 85 (22.13%) from the financial industries sectors (Table 01).

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age in Years	35.63	4.2
Gender Distribution		
Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Male	213	55.46%
Female	171	44.53%
Profession Distribution		
Health Care Sector	156	40.62%
IT industry	143	37.23%
Financial Industry	82	22.13%

Table 01: Demographic Information of the Participants

The EI of the participants was determined, and the analyses revealed that in the domain of self-awareness, $n=134$ (34.89%) had strength, 156 (40.04%) were in the category of need attention, and $n=94$ (24.47%) were in the development priority category. In managing emotions, strength was the result for $n=105$ (27.5%) of the participants, and need attention was the finding of $n=116$ (30.2%) and $n=163$ (42.44%) were in the development priority category. The description of the remaining section of the EI questionnaire is provided in Table 02.

Variables	Strength	Need Attention	Development Priority
Self-Awareness	134 (34.89%)	156 (40.04%)	94 (24.47%)
Managing Emotions	105 (27.5%)	116 (30.2%)	163 (42.44%)
Motivating oneself	95 (24.73%)	106 (27.60%)	183 (47.65%)
Empathy	118 (30.72%)	145 (37.76%)	121 (31.51%)
Social Skill	112 (29.16%)	119 (30.98%)	153 (39.84%)

Table 02: Emotional Intelligence Categories of Participants

Relationship between EI and workplace collaborating component were determined, and the findings revealed that the EI self-awareness component was directly correlated with communication ($r=0.73$), workplace relationship ($r=0.67$), managing conflict ($r=0.63$), stress management ($r=0.54$) and productivity ($r=0.46$). Similarly, a strong positive correlation was also observed between other EI components and the workplace collaborating component except for empathy, for which no significant correlation was observed $p>0.05$ (Table 03).

Variables	Communication	Work place Relationship	Managing Conflict	Stress Management	Productivity
Self-Awareness	r=0.73 P<0.001	r=0.67 p<0.001	r=0.63 p<0.001	r=0.54 p<0.05	r=0.46 p<0.05
Managing Emotions	r=0.54 P<0.05	r=0.42 p<0.05	r=0.33 p<0.05	r=0.45 p<0.05	r=0.52 p<0.05
Motivating Oneself	r=0.64 P<0.05	r=0.71 p<0.05	r=0.56 p<0.05	r=0.61 p<0.05	r=0.55 p<0.05
Empathy	r=0.2 P>0.05	r=0.01 p>0.05	r=0.11 p>0.05	r=0.209 p>0.05	r=0.321 p>0.05
Social Skill	r=0.54 P<0.05	r=0.69 p<0.05	r=0.66 p<0.05	r=0.56 p<0.05	r=0.54 p<0.05

Table 03: Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Work Place Collaboration

Discussion and Conclusion

The study revealed significant insights into the relationship between EI and workplace collaboration. EI assessment demonstrated varying levels of competency across its components, with self-awareness being a strength for a notable proportion of participants (34.89%), while managing emotions (42.44%) and motivating oneself (47.65%) emerged as areas requiring development. The analysis further identified strong positive correlations between EI components and workplace collaboration dimensions. For instance, self-awareness was significantly correlated with communication ($r=0.73$), workplace relationships ($r=0.67$), and managing conflict ($r=0.63$). They also observed a positive correlation between emotion/skills regulation and some aspects of collaboration, such as stress and production. Nevertheless, there was no statistically significant relationship between empathy and the collaboration dimensions ($p>0.05$).

EI is essential in determining organizational relations and interaction, cooperation, dispute, and performance. Evidence supports the assertion that people with high EI are generally in a better position than others to communicate their ideas, objectives, and intentions effectively. This ability to interact with others fosters enumeration and collaborative workplaces, making it easier for team members to achieve set goals for the team (Liao et al., 2022, Alsughayir et al., 2021). Interpersonal skills, which are part of EI, for example, impulse control and empathy, play pivotal roles in the development of teamwork. Self-aware people can easily manage relationship interactions, assess team members' competencies, and optimally utilize them for team improvement (Batool et al., 2024, Navas et al., 2022). In particular, such an ability to listen and meet other people's emotional needs can be invaluable for sustaining the smooth functioning of a team in conditions of stress and challenging difficulty.

The use of high EI can facilitate the stimulation of trust, enthusiasm, and optimism, which can influence individuals in a team. Understanding and regulating emotions can ensure coordinated teamwork and organizational goals and objectives, thus fostering employee commitment. They are also better at managing conflicts and other issues that may likely occur within and between employees or groups, and it eliminates issues to do with anger hitting productivity or team cohesion (Vargas et al., 2023). Also, EI is imperative for responding to stressors on the job and for the proper transition within an organization. A higher level of emotional intelligence enables employees to control their emotions and use positive ways of handling stress, thus enhancing commitment levels (Iftikhar et al., 2021). This also has an added benefit, i.e. employees are more likely to find problems at the workplace as opportunities than threats, making the workforce more tenacious and adaptable.

All parts of EI play a role in organizational effectiveness, but each component's significance differs depending on the organization. For instance, personal responsibility and interpersonal soaring can be more relevant to settings that involve many interactions. However, social skills could be important in positions requiring employees to work in groups. Such subtleties emphasize the necessity to address and build the zones of EI according to meaningful aspects of employment (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023). EI effects in the workplace reveal the factor as a key determinant of organizational performance. EI develops conditions within which organizational members and work teams can improve communication, interpersonal relationships, and stress-coping abilities. However, the variation of its utilization in the distinct organizational environment makes one conclude that nuance research is required to achieve a greater appreciation of its capabilities and identify how it may be employed in various professional disciplines for the best results (Mekhala et al., 2024). Therefore, applying and further developing emotional intelligence can improve collaboration, coping mechanisms, and the outcomes of organizational processes. The available literature highlights its innovation potential; however, a more profound analysis and the corresponding interventions should be conducted more comprehensively, and the requirements of different workplace contexts should be considered.

Limitations and Future Direction

This study provided valuable insights into EI and teamwork at work; nevertheless, the following limitations should be discussed. Firstly, the findings are based on self-reported data from the respondents, which may introduce response bias, potentially affecting the credibility and reliability of the results. However, the study sampled only selected sectors from Karachi, which may cause a limit to extending its findings. Future research needs to extend the survey to a larger population and geographically diverse workforce to make conclusions more robust. Other research methods, such as observational studies or peer assessment, can be used to increase the validity of the results. Further analysis of the sectoral affiliation of respondents and the specifics of the work of various sectors can contain more specific recommendations to promote cooperation at work.

Author's Contribution

Conception or Design: Shumaila Atif, Sara Jehangir

Data Collection and processing, Analysis or Interpretation of Data: Shumaila Atif, Sara Jehangir, Tehmina Tabish

Manuscript Writing & Approval: Shumaila Atif, Sara Jehangir, Tehmina Tabish

Acknowledgments: I sincerely acknowledge all my colleague that supported me in this research. Also, ethical issues, safeguarding, and respecting participants' rights were considered. The participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any given time and that their responses would be kept anonymous. The information collected was sensitive, especially regarding gender dynamics and work-related issues; the information in the final report was very sensitive and anonymous.

Disclosure Statement: The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

Funding: None

References

1. Alheet, A. F., & Hamdan, Y. (2021). Exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance: A study of Jordanian retail industry. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 25(3), 1-16.
2. Al-Shamaileh, N. (2023). The effect of a training program based on the bar-on model for emotional intelligence to improve body image in Jordan. *Dirasat: Educational Sciences*, 50(4), 455-469.
3. Alsughayir, A. (2021). The effect of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment: Understanding the mediating role of job satisfaction. *Management Science Letters*, 11(4), 1309-1316.

4. Alwali, J., & Alwali, W. (2022). The relationship between emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and performance: A test of the mediating role of job satisfaction. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 43(6), 928-952.
5. Batool, A., Ahmed, S., Naveed, S., Bilal, M. A., Khan, M. A., & Nawaz, S. (2024). The Effect of Leadership Qualities on Organizational Commitment Among Bureaucrats; Emotional Intelligence as a Moderator. *Migration Letters*, 21(S6), 146-160.
6. Bechter, B. E., Whipp, P. R., Dimmock, J. A., & Jackson, B. (2023). Emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship quality as predictors of high school physical education teachers' intrinsic motivation. *Current Psychology*, 42(9), 7457-7465.
7. Bru-Luna, L. M., Martí-Vilar, M., Merino-Soto, C., & Cervera-Santiago, J. L. (2021, December). Emotional intelligence measures: A systematic review. In *Healthcare* (Vol. 9, No. 12, p. 1696). MDPI.
8. Coronado-Maldonado, I., & Benítez-Márquez, M. D. (2023). Emotional intelligence, leadership, and work teams: A hybrid literature review. *Heliyon*.
9. DrSanthosh Kumar, V., & Basha, S. M. (2022). A study of Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Life among Doctors in PandemicCovid 19. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 14(02), 2080-2090.
10. Dugué, M., Sirost, O., & Dosseville, F. (2021). A literature review of emotional intelligence and nursing education. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 54, 103124.
11. Harahap, M. A. K., Sutrisno, S., Mahendika, D., Suherlan, S., & Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Effective Leadership: A Review of Contemporary Research. *Al-Buhuts*, 19(1), 354-369.
12. Iftikhar, M., Qureshi, M. I., Qayyum, S., Fatima, I., Sriyanto, S., Indrianti, Y., ... & Dana, L. P. (2021). Impact of multifaceted workplace bullying on the relationships between technology usage, organisational climate and employee physical and emotional health. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(6), 3207.
13. Jena, L. K. (2022). Does workplace spirituality lead to raising employee performance? The role of citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 30(6), 1309-1334.
14. Khassawneh, O., Mohammad, T., Ben-Abdallah, R., & Alabidi, S. (2022). The relationship between emotional intelligence and educators' performance in higher education sector. *Behavioral Sciences*, 12(12), 511.
15. Krén, H., & Séllei, B. (2021). The role of emotional intelligence in organizational performance. *Periodica Polytechnica Social and Management Sciences*, 29(1), 1-9.
16. Kumari, K., Abbas, J., Hwang, J., & Cioca, L. I. (2022). Does servant leadership promote emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior among employees? A structural analysis. *Sustainability*, 14(9), 5231.
17. Liao, S. H., Hu, D. C., & Huang, Y. C. (2022). Employee emotional intelligence, organizational citizen behavior and job performance: a moderated mediation model investigation. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*, 44(5), 1109-1126.
18. Mekhala, R. S. (2024). Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance. In *Emotional Intelligence Matters: A Machine-Generated Literature Overview* (pp. 33-99). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
19. Navas, S., Vijayakumar, M., & Sulthan, N. (2022). A review on employees emotional intelligence at the workplace. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(8), 5665-5672.
20. Naz, S., Ahmad, S., & Batool, A. (2021). Emotional intelligence and work-life balance: A study of

- working women teachers in public sector universities. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 9(2), 141-149.
21. Radha, P., & Nirubarani, J. (2024). The impact of emotional intelligence on the conflict resolution in banking sector. *Apex Journal of Business and Management*, 3(2), 131-142.
 22. Riaz, R. (2024). Exploring the influence of emotional intelligence in leaders decision-making within Company A: a qualitative analysis of Daniel Goleman's theory.
 23. Sahoo, B. C., Sia, S. K., Mishra, L. K., & Wilson, M. A. (2023). Workplace ostracism and organizational change cynicism: moderating role of emotional intelligence. *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, 17(3), 524-538.
 24. Singh, A., Prabhakar, R., & Kiran, J. S. (2022). Emotional intelligence: A literature review of its Concept, models, and measures. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(10), 2254-2275.
 25. Sultana, R., Islam, M. R., Islam, M. T., Jesmin, F., & Ferdous, S. (2021). The relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance: an exploratory study in Bangladesh. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(8), 513-524.
 26. Thapa, P., Bhattarai, H., Bharti, D. V., & Khanal, J. (2023). Impact of emotional intelligence on transformational leadership in selected academic institutions in the Kathmandu, Nepal. *Int Multidiscip Res J*, 4(4).
 27. Ullah, R., Khan, A., & Riaz, T. (2024). Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace: Strategies For Enhancing Employee Performance And Satisfaction. *Social Science Review Archives*, 2(2), 259-271.
 28. Vargas, R. H., Remigio, F. Q., La Riva, M. E. M., García, W. C. M., & Chavez, M. T. C. (2023). Workplace violence and emotional intelligence among nursing professionals at a national hospital in northern Peru. *Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología*, (3), 887.
 29. Vrontis, D., Chaarani, H. E., Nemar, S. E., & Dib, H. (2021). The relationship between managers' emotional intelligence and employees' performance. *Journal for International Business and Entrepreneurship Development*, 13(2), 177-196.