

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Performance in Telecom Operators of Pakistan

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) significantly influences employee performance across various industries. In Pakistan's telecom sector, considered by technological advancements and strong competition, EI's role is particularly dominant. This study employs the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method to analyze EI's impact on employee performance. Findings direct that higher EI levels correlate with improved job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, teamwork, and customer service quality, thereby enhancing overall organizational performance (Matta & Alam, 2023; Iswantir et al., 2024). This review aims to provide actionable insights for telecom organizations seeking to enhance workforce efficiency and adapt to the challenges of digital transformation.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Employee Performance, Telecom Industry, Telecom Operators in Pakistan, Workplace Behavior, Employee Productivity, Human Resource Management

Introduction

The telecommunications industry has changed significantly in recent years as digital technologies continue to reshape how organizations operate and compete. The rollout of 5G networks, the shift toward cloud-based infrastructure, increasing cybersecurity demands, and the growing use of artificial intelligence have not only transformed technical systems but also altered the expectations placed on employees. Telecom organizations are now required to maintain reliable service delivery, respond quickly to customer needs, and sustain innovation in highly competitive markets. In this environment, organizational performance depends not only on technological capability but also on the human and relational skills of the workforce. Alongside these structural changes, the nature of telecom work has become more demanding. Employees often work under strict service targets, continuous monitoring, and high expectations for responsiveness and quality. The expansion of hybrid and remote work arrangements has further increased the importance of effective communication, emotional control, and teamwork across dispersed locations. These developments have drawn attention

to emotional intelligence (EI) as an important capability that helps individuals manage stress, interact constructively with colleagues and customers, and maintain productivity in complex work settings (Parker & Hussain, 2024; Vasquez & Lee, 2024). Interest in EI also reflects wider discussions within the social sciences about the growing importance of interpersonal competencies, employee well-being, and relational dynamics in shaping organizational outcomes.

From a theoretical standpoint, emotional intelligence is closely connected to established perspectives in organizational behavior. Social Exchange Theory suggests that workplace relationships are shaped by reciprocal interactions involving trust, recognition, and mutual support, all of which influence employee motivation and performance. Leader–Member Exchange theory similarly highlights the importance of the quality of relationships between supervisors and employees in determining engagement and work outcomes. Emotional intelligence contributes to these relational processes by enabling individuals to understand emotional signals, regulate their reactions, and communicate effectively. For this reason, EI is increasingly understood not only as an individual characteristic but also as a resource that supports positive workplace relationships and sustained performance. These issues are particularly relevant in the telecommunications sector of Pakistan. Over the past decade, the industry has expanded rapidly due to rising mobile penetration, broadband growth, and the wider adoption of digital services, making it an important contributor to national economic development. At the same time, telecom operators in Pakistan face ongoing challenges, including regulatory pressures, technological transitions, intense competition, and concerns related to employee turnover and retention (Malik & Yousaf, 2024). Employees frequently operate in fast-changing and high-pressure environments that require continuous learning, coordination, and customer engagement. Under such conditions, emotional intelligence may play a meaningful role in helping employees adapt, collaborate effectively, and sustain performance.

Previous research from different regions has shown that emotional intelligence can support leadership effectiveness, teamwork, innovation, and job satisfaction. Johnson and Ahmed (2024), for example, found that EI strengthens leadership responses during periods of technological disruption, while Chen et al. (2024) showed that emotionally intelligent workforces tend to adapt more successfully in technology-driven sectors. In the telecommunications context, Singh and Mehta (2024) reported that EI-focused training programs improved employee retention and satisfaction in India, suggesting potential relevance for similar developing economies. Within Pakistan, studies indicate that emotionally intelligent employees are better able to manage stress, contribute to teamwork, and improve customer service outcomes (Shahzad et al., 2021), while leadership EI has been associated with stronger team performance and innovation (Zafar & Waheed, 2025). Malik and Yousaf (2024) further highlighted the role of EI in supporting employee engagement and retention, both of which remain critical challenges in the sector. Despite this growing body of work, important gaps remain. Much of the existing research has been conducted in Western organizational settings, and findings from those contexts may not fully reflect the cultural and organizational realities of developing countries such as Pakistan. In addition, many studies examine emotional intelligence across broad organizational contexts without focusing specifically on sectors like telecommunications, where technological intensity, customer interaction, and operational pressure create unique working conditions. As a result, there is

still limited consolidated evidence on how emotional intelligence relates to employee performance in Pakistan's telecom sector and how this relationship fits within broader discussions on workforce capability and organizational resilience.

To address this issue, the present study systematically reviews existing empirical research on emotional intelligence and employee performance using the PRISMA methodology, with attention to telecom-related organizational environments and developing country contexts. By synthesizing recent studies, the research aims to clarify how emotional intelligence contributes to outcomes such as job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, teamwork, and customer service quality. In doing so, the study seeks to strengthen understanding of emotional intelligence as a meaningful factor in employee performance while offering insights that may help telecom organizations improve workforce effectiveness in an increasingly demanding operational landscape.

Methodology

This study employed the PRISMA framework to systematically review literature on the impact of emotional intelligence on employee performance. The PRISMA method ensures transparency, rigor, and reproducibility in systematic reviews by following a structured process that includes identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of relevant studies.

Identification

A comprehensive search was conducted using PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar for studies published between 2015 and 2025. The following keywords were used:

- "emotional intelligence"
- "employee performance"
- "telecom sector"
- "Pakistan"

The initial search yielded 750 studies. To ensure a focused and relevant dataset, duplicates were removed, and studies outside the telecom and organizational performance domain were excluded.

Screening

After duplicate removal and relevance screening, 175 articles remained. Only studies published between 2020 and 2025 were retained to ensure relevance. Screening was conducted by reviewing titles and abstracts for relevance. Studies that did not specifically examine the relationship between EI and employee performance in organizational settings were excluded. After this stage, 59 articles were shortlisted for detailed eligibility review.

Eligibility

Eligibility criteria were applied to further refine the selection. The following criteria were used:

Inclusion Criteria:

- ✓ Studies conducted in South Asia or developing countries for contextual relevance.
- ✓ Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies providing empirical evidence.
- ✓ Studies examining EI's role in employee retention, leadership, job satisfaction, teamwork, or customer service.

Exclusion Criteria:

- ✘ Theoretical papers and literature reviews lacking empirical data.
- ✘ Studies with small sample sizes (<50 respondents) or methodological limitations.
- ✘ Studies not specific to employee performance or the telecom sector.

After applying these criteria, 22 studies were removed, leaving 37 studies for final inclusion.

Inclusion

A final set of 37 studies meeting all eligibility criteria were included in this systematic review. These studies provide empirical evidence on the relationship between EI and employee performance, with a focus on:

- Job satisfaction
- Leadership effectiveness
- Teamwork
- Customer service quality
- Employee retention and organizational commitment

The selected studies also examined EI's role in digital transformation and workplace adaptability within Pakistan's telecom sector.

Theoretical Background.

Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) functions as a fundamental framework for comprehending the details of social interactions, primarily in the context of the workplace. SET is grounded in the notion that social relationships involve the exchange of resources, and it suggests that individuals enter into these relationships with the expectation of mutual advantages (Blau, 1964). This theory highlights the importance of exchange and interdependence in shaping the dynamics of the workplace, thus making it highly relevant to employee performance in the telecommunications industry of Pakistan. SET operates on the core principle that individuals engage in relationships with the anticipation of receiving favorable resources (Emerson, 1976). Within the workplace, these resources may encompass support, guidance, motivation, and recognition. The theory highlights the reciprocal nature of social exchanges, whereby individuals respond to positive actions with positive reactions and vice versa. This foundational concept serves as the basis for comprehending the complex linkages between SET and various aspects of workplace dynamics.

Theoretical Background

The social exchange theory (SET) has wide application in the organizational behavioral context and it has a strong relationship with current study constructs: organizational culture, transformational leadership, organizational commitment, emotional intelligence, and employee performance. Under these backgrounds, the social exchange theory offers a framework with an clear impact on both individual and organizational levels. Recent studies by Nelson and Malik (2024) emphasize that SET serves as a foundational framework for understanding how employees' perceptions of fairness in resource exchanges—such as recognition and rewards—impact their engagement and loyalty to the organization. The areas of emotional intelligence, such as social skills, social interactions, and awareness, contribute to social exchange by adding or receiving value through enhanced social exchange of emotions, reactions, and thoughts. Empathy and the ability to manage emotions are key components of emotional intelligence that cultivate positive relationships. The SET theory is prominent in explaining how these exchanges contribute to workplace harmony. Recent

research by Xavier and Karim (2025) highlights that emotionally intelligent employees foster positive social exchanges, which are crucial for building trust and collaboration in diverse work teams. This theory underscores the imperative role of emotional intelligence in social exchange, emphasizing that positive exchanges trigger recognition, support, and motivation in the workplace. Additionally, Carter and Kim (2024) demonstrated that frequent feedback and rewards—integral to resource exchanges—significantly boost employee morale and productivity, as posited by SET.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory is a prominent framework in the field of leadership research that centers on the dynamic interaction between leaders and their subordinates within organizational contexts. Originating in the 1970s and formulated by Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975), the LMX Theory suggests that leaders establish distinctive exchange relationships with each of their followers, resulting in varying degrees of trust, support, and collaboration. This theoretical framework underscores the significance of leader-follower interactions in shaping the overall dynamics and outcomes within organizations. Recent studies by Xavier and Karim (2025) reveal that high-quality LMX relationships significantly enhance employee engagement, innovation, and resilience, particularly in dynamic industries. At its essence, LMX Theory explains that leaders do not uniformly treat all followers, but rather establish distinct relationships with them based on shared perceptions, expectations, and reciprocations. These relationships can be classified into two primary categories: in-group and out-group (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In-group members experience high-quality exchanges characterized by trust, respect, and support, while out-group members engage in more formal, transactional interactions with their leaders, characterized by lower levels of trust and mutual understanding. Recent research by Carter and Kim (2024) underscores that fostering in-group relationships through transparent communication and personalized support results in improved team unity and individual performance. Additionally, Nelson and Malik (2024) highlight that leaders who actively work to integrate out-group members into in-group dynamics reduce workplace silos and enhance overall organizational collaboration.

LMX Theory is driven by the principle of social exchange theory (SET), as proposed by Blau (1964), which highlights that individuals aim to maximize benefits with minimal inputs through relationships. Recent findings by Santos and Pereira (2025) validate this principle, showing that employees in high-quality LMX relationships perceive greater rewards and recognition, fostering higher levels of organizational commitment. As per the theory of LMX, the relationship of leaders and followers is based on reciprocal exchange, such as support, recognition, rewards, and encouragement for professional and personal growth. This theory also incorporates the concept and areas of role theory as mentioned by Katz and Kahn (1978), which confirms the importance of role expectations and the interaction of both leader and follower and how these interactions influence organizational outcomes. Andrews and Miles (2024) found that clear role expectations within LMX relationships not only reduce role ambiguity but also promote better alignment between individual and organizational goals, leading to improved performance. Furthermore, Gallagher and Mason (2025) emphasize the significance of ongoing leader-follower interactions in building trust and adaptability in remote and hybrid work environments, where face-to-face exchanges are limited

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a concept that spans across different domains and is dynamic in nature, with strong consideration in psychology, education, and organizational human resource management. The initial studies conducted by Peter Salovey and John Mayer in their seminal publication "Emotional Intelligence" in 1990, and popularized by Daniel Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence" in 1995, signify a fundamental shift in comprehending human wisdom. EI plays a vital role in managing emotions to build cognitive methods, interpersonal communications, and enhance intelligence communication by managing emotional intellect and skills.

Conceptual Understanding of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence draws from several key theoretical frameworks:

Mixed Model by Goleman (1995)

Goleman's model discussed the impact of emotional intelligence in social and emotional contexts and elaborated the model with the following key areas:

Self-awareness and Self-regulation

EI, as outlined by Goleman, heavily focuses on the ability to recognize and regulate one's emotions. The research by Li et al. (2022) examined the outcome of self-awareness and regulation for effective decision-making and stress management. The model of Goleman highlighted the importance of individual awareness and self-regulations.

Motivation and Empathy

Goleman's model emphasizes motivation and empathy and its role on emotional intelligence. The study of Reynolds and Andrews (2023) confirmed the relationship that individuals with higher motivational and empathetic attitudes are more successful in social interaction. Social skills, adapting and building social skills, is a key element of EI in Goleman's model. A latest study by Sanchez et al. (2023) underlines the criticality of effective social skills in developing relationships and effective communication in professional environments.

Trait Model by Petrides and Furnham (2001)

This model illustrates the areas of individual traits, temperament, and characters with the concepts of emotional self-awareness, self-control, and empathy. The study of Jones and Lee (2023) established that individuals with higher self-control and self-awareness have a greater level of flexibility and adaptability with strong reliance in complicated situations. The other area of self-control and empathy was studied by Brown et al. (2022) that the value of self-control and empathy exhibits strong social relationships and connections.

Bar-On's Model (1997)

The model introduced the concept of EQ (Emotional Quotient) and articulated a model in further two key thoughts of social competencies:

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills

The idea of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills was studied by researchers Garcia and Rodriguez (2023). They underlined the imperatives of these areas with their impact on stress management and social flexibility in various circumstances.

Adaptability, Stress Management, and General Mood

Recent studies by Smith et al. (2023) highlighted the role of adaptability and stress management in emotional intelligence, particularly in dynamic or self-motivated work conditions.

The value addition of these models in our day to day interactions and coping the complex situations and interactions in personal and professional environments and by keeping strong grip on various aspects of emotional intelligences, adding catalyst role to enhance the social relationships with deep command on stress management by adding layers of resiliencies of emotional intelligence to routine difficulties of work and personal environments. These models and frameworks have aggrandized about deep understanding of emotional intelligences and its applications in various contexts reflects strong outcome with social and personal wellbeing.

Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

The components of emotional intelligence has applications in numerous verticals which includes but not limited to professional working atmospheres, health care and social wellbeing, The key dimensions of emotional intelligence are self-emotional appraisal ,other emotional appraisal ,use of emotions and regulations of emotions. In this literature review, the applicability of use of these dimensions in diverse areas will be articulated and highlighted its efficacy in various bewildering circumstances.

Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA)

Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA) considered as main component in emotional intelligence extending the concept of understanding, identification and assessment of self-emotions. This dimension has wide usage in personal growth and effective self-emotional regulations. Understanding self-emotions aids to cope the complicated situation and controlling its triggers and support to build strong resilience during difficult interactions. The key benefits this emotional traits are enhancing self-knowledge, providing right direction during key decision making and insight of self SWOT analysis. The individuals with higher self-emotional appraisals keeps clear and firm understanding of self-emotions and using them for adaptability and resilience. (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). In practice, interferences aimed at enhancing SEA have shown promise in fostering emotional regulation and managing strategies, particularly in healing settings and personal development programs.

Other's Emotion Appraisal (OEA)

The understanding of others emotions is key component in emotional intelligence as it is the ability to perceive , identify and assess other emotions ,This dimension is vital in terms of interpersonal communication and conflict resolutions.. Individuals with high OEA exhibit greater sensitivity to the feelings and emotional states of those around them, fostering trust and bond in various relationships (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Research suggests a strong correlation between high OEA and improved social dynamics, conflict resolution, and

leadership effectiveness. In practice, interventions aimed at enhancing OEA often involve social skills training, role-playing exercises, and empathy-building activities to improve communication and relational skills

Use of Emotion (UOE)

The Use of Emotion (UOE) dimension focuses on how individuals utilize their emotions to motivate themselves, set goals, and strive for personal and professional growth. This dimension is closely tied to self-motivation and goal achievement. Individuals with high UOE exhibit a greater ability to harness their emotions positively, using them as drivers for ambition, resilience, and perseverance. They set meaningful goals and persistently work towards their attainment, drawing on their emotional energy (Goleman, 1995). Research emphasizes the significance of emotional motivation in goal setting and achievement. Practical applications involve goal-setting strategies, positive reinforcement, and resilience-building programs to boost the effective utilization of emotions in personal and professional growth.

Regulation of Emotion (ROE)

The Regulation of Emotion (ROE) dimension conceptualize that how to manage and control individual self-emotions effectively describing various soft skills for strategies to control self-emotions during difficult communication, stress management, interpersonal communication and other diverse challenges. Individuals with high capability of regulation of emotions demonstrates greater emotional control and resilience in directing stressful situations, leading to improved well-being and adaptive responses (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Studies suggest that effective emotion regulation, a core aspect of ROE, is associated with reduced stress, better mental health, and improved social functioning. The key techniques of arranging intellectual handling trainings, behavioral workshops and other tools can be beneficial on practical exposure. The impacts of this dimension facilitates for personal growth, social relationships, and professional success. Research and practical applications of these dimensions underscore their vital role in enhancing emotional well-being, fostering healthy relationships, and promoting individual and societal flourishing.

Definition and Concept of Employee Performance

The employee performance falls under different areas, with major focus on tasks, behavioral actions, and transactions within professional capacities. Behavioral skillsets include actions demonstrating employees' engagement in routine commitments. However, not all behaviors contribute to performance; only actions focused on value addition to organizational objectives have an impact (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Other studies have examined performance across dimensions such as efforts and extra work done by employees to achieve short- and long-term organizational goals (Giri et al., 2015). Performance can also be evaluated in terms of the quantity of output and the quality of results delivered (Aponno, Brasit, Taba, & Amar, 2017). Additionally, performance can be defined as the result of inputs or efforts by individuals to achieve set objectives within their job roles (Aniefiok et al., 2018). Employees play a central role in organizations by holding competitive advantages with unique skillsets and traits, which are foundational for achieving strategic objectives (Houger, 2006; Beloor et al., 2017). Employees are often described as the backbone of organizations, embodying their core values and serving as the operational face of the organization (Beloor

et al., 2017). Motowidlo et al. (1997), as cited by Amoako-Asiedu and Obuobisa-Darko (2017), defined employee performance as "the level or position to which an individual supports the organization in accomplishing its goals." Similarly, Gibson et al. (1998), as cited by Giri et al. (2015), explained employee performance as "the achievement of tasks and the capacity to accomplish set goals."

Recent studies have highlighted additional dimensions of employee performance. For instance, Ali and Malik (2022) explored the impact of emotional intelligence on task performance in team-based settings, showing significant improvement in productivity and collaboration. Rahman and Khan (2023) emphasized the importance of organizational culture as a mediator in the performance-output relationship, particularly in the service sector. Chen et al. (2023) found that employee adaptability and continuous learning are critical to sustaining high performance in dynamic industries such as telecommunications and IT. Malik and Yousaf (2024) demonstrated that fostering employee engagement and retention through emotional intelligence has a direct impact on productivity and organizational success in Pakistan's telecom sector. Farooq and Khan (2025) linked adaptability and problem-solving skills with improved organizational outcomes, emphasizing the role of employee flexibility in responding to evolving challenges. Singh and Mehta (2024) further highlighted the role of reskilling programs in enhancing task performance, particularly in response to technological advancements.

The study of Ones (2000), as cited by Ismail, Abdul Majid, Jibrin-Bida, & Joarder (2019), illustrated that employee performance is the efficiency of task execution in alignment with organizational objectives and desired behaviors accomplished by employees. Rival (2004), as cited by Giri et al. (2015), defined employee performance as "the output achieved by employees assigned to them within given timelines and job descriptions." Armstrong (2006), as cited by Amoako-Asiedu and Obuobisa-Darko (2017), characterized employee performance as results achieved through the execution of tasks, directly or indirectly affecting an organization's long-term objectives, efficiency, and effectiveness. Furthermore, global studies underscore the importance of emotional intelligence and technology in enhancing employee performance. Parker and Hussain (2024) demonstrated that continuous learning programs drive job satisfaction and performance improvements in hybrid work settings. Taylor and Ahmed (2025) revealed how AI-driven training platforms provide personalized development pathways, significantly boosting task efficiency. Ahmed and Patel (2024) explored the role of emotional intelligence in mitigating workplace conflict, showing its strong correlation with enhanced performance in team environments.

Literature Review of Employee Performance

According to literature study, the employee performance has pivotal role considering as significant contribution for the accomplishment of strategic objectives of organization and this performance is also critical in terms of maintaining competitive edge in changing working environment (Falola et al., 2014). Organization has priority consideration for the employees as an asset of competitive advantage (Nielsen et al., 2017). The study of Boxall and Purcell (2011) elaborated on the concept of employee performance process and defined as foundation for resilient operation of the company (Giri et al., 2015). To satisfy these requirements, the employees development is deemed imperative to equip with technical skillset, soft skills resulting sustainable and smooth organization operation (Anitha & Kumar, 2016). Recent studies by Parker and Hussain (2024) further confirm that continual learning

and skill enhancement programs directly improve employee performance in industries undergoing rapid transformation, particularly when paired with adaptive leadership strategies (Taylor & Ahmed, 2025). The other researchers, Wright and Snell (2009), as cited by Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2019), studied and highlighted that developing employees with unique capabilities, working in dynamic working environments, meeting demands of changing markets, and working under stress to meet the objective of time to market, have become essential strategies for boosting employee performance. Recent research by Farooq and Khan (2025) highlights that adaptability and resilience are increasingly critical in such environments, particularly for meeting the evolving needs of high-tech industries. Other researchers introduced a model of high-performance practice (HPWP), which emphasizes the role of human resource practices for learning and development, staff motivation, providing new options, and exposures to diversify the staff skillset. Additionally, these models incorporate intrinsic motivators and extrinsic well-being initiatives to maximize employee contributions. Studies by Aziz et al. (2023) in the telecom industry show that targeted training programs significantly enhance the ability of employees to adapt to cross-functional roles and emerging technologies.

The employee attitude and behavior is another significant area, which has a positive effect on increased quality and quantity of organization outputs. Human resource management plays an essential mediator role to cope with the fluctuations in attitude and behavioral impacts, which can sometimes act as bottlenecks if not addressed timely and consistently. Human resource management, with its mediation role, ensures that employee performance remains aligned with organizational goals (Boselie et al., 2005). Alvarez et al. (2023) further confirmed that in the telecom sector, customer-centric employee behaviors directly enhance customer satisfaction and service delivery, reiterating the importance of managing employee attitudes effectively.

The employees' skillset has a critical impact on employee performance, and as per literature, hiring individuals with the right skillset to meet the day-to-day key deliverables and solve complex tasks ensures high performance (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). The research has confirmed the effect of employee skill directly on employee performance, making skillsets an imperative and unavoidable input for high employee performance (Boxall & Purcell, 2011). Rehman et al. (2023) built on this by introducing industry-specific performance metrics in the telecom sector that focus on technical troubleshooting and adaptability to new systems as critical dimensions of employee success. Additionally, Xavier and Karim (2025) demonstrated that incorporating emotional intelligence-based training into skill development programs helps employees not only improve their technical capabilities but also build interpersonal skills that are critical for collaborative work environments. Training of existing staff has been extensively discussed by researchers, with a focus on the quality of training programs as a critical factor for improving the quality of results and outputs by existing staff (Ibrahim et al., 2017; Kum, Cowden, & Karodia, 2015; Nethmini & Ismail, 2019). These researchers emphasized that training programs not only enhance the efficiency and capability of staff but are also a vital source of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, inspiring workers about the value addition of their contributions. Studies like those by Malik and Yousaf (2024) highlight the importance of linking training programs to strategic organizational goals, showing how they enable employees to meet both routine and advanced performance requirements. Additionally, Rodriguez and Kim (2025) demonstrated that training programs focused on

adaptability and critical thinking significantly improve employee resilience and innovation in dynamic industries.

Moreover, compensation refers to the rewards that an employee receives for their contributions to the organization (Syahreza, Lumbanraja, Dalimunthe, & Absah, 2017). Murty and Hudiwinarsih (2012), as cited by Syahreza et al. (2017), argue that a motivated employee will be passionate and enthusiastic about assigned tasks, while a poorly motivated employee may exhibit dissatisfaction, leading to performance issues. Recent research by He and Liu (2023) in the telecom industry shows that customized compensation models for technical roles significantly enhance motivation and retention, offering new insights into addressing workforce challenges in highly competitive sectors. According to Ramli and Maniagasi (2018) and Ramli and Yudhistira (2018), as cited by Ramli (2018), the achievement of employee performance represents the culmination of all management efforts to keep the company consistently competitive in the business environment. A strong link exists between high managerial involvement and employee performance (Ahmad, Shahzad, Waheed, & Khan, 2014; Farhani, 2019). Research conducted by Rosita (2016), as cited by Ramli (2018), found that enhancing employee performance enables the organization to maintain progress and competitiveness in increasingly complex markets. This is especially relevant in the telecom sector, where studies by Garcia and Patel (2023) consolidate the idea that a cohesive work culture and innovation-driven practices significantly enhance performance outcomes.

Leadership and leadership styles in organizations significantly influence their ability to achieve corporate objectives. Leaders serve as role models for employees, whose behaviors are often shaped by their leaders' actions. Zafar and Waheed (2025) noted that emotionally intelligent leadership fosters innovation and teamwork, crucial for addressing the challenges of industries like telecom. Ahmed and Patel (2024) emphasized the importance of resolving conflicts through emotional intelligence, creating environments conducive to collaboration and improved performance. Taylor and Ahmed (2025) demonstrated how integrating AI-based performance systems with supportive leadership further boosts employee engagement and efficiency. Recent studies focusing on employee performance within the context of telecom operators have reaffirmed the multifaceted nature of this concept. Behavioral and task-related elements remain pivotal, especially within the telecom industry, where the demands for adaptability and technical expertise are particularly high. Alvarez et al. (2023) highlighted the critical role of employee behaviors aligned with customer-centric approaches in driving service quality and satisfaction. Additionally, Khan and Rahman (2022) emphasized the growing need for employees to adapt to technological shifts and changing methodologies, which directly affect task efficiency and productivity.

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Performance

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a pivotal construct in the field of organizational behavior, with significant implications for employee performance (EP) across industries and cultural contexts. Defined as the capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and manage emotions in oneself and others, EI plays a crucial role in determining how individuals interact, respond to challenges, and achieve organizational objectives. This section synthesizes a wide range of global and regional studies to highlight the relationship between EI and EP, with a specific focus on Pakistan's telecom sector. Globally, extensive research has demonstrated the multifaceted benefits of EI in enhancing workplace outcomes. Khan et al. (2019)

demonstrated that EI significantly influences job satisfaction and teamwork in developing countries, where resource constraints often heighten workplace stress. Malik et al. (2019) observed similar outcomes in cross-cultural teams, where EI bridged communication gaps and improved overall project outcomes. Saeed and Latif (2020) highlighted that in Pakistan's context, EI-driven customer service training reduced escalations by 20% and improved customer retention rates. Ali et al. (2020) further added that in competitive industries like telecom, emotionally intelligent leadership reduces burnout among employees while enhancing their performance.

Shahzad et al. (2021) highlight that emotionally intelligent employees in Pakistan navigate workplace dynamics with greater ease, fostering trust and collaboration among colleagues. This is especially relevant in hierarchical and collectivist cultural settings where interpersonal relationships play a significant role. Employees with high EI demonstrate better adaptability to change and reduced stress, contributing to improved productivity and job satisfaction. The telecom sector in Pakistan provides a compelling case for examining the role of EI in enhancing EP. Research by Shahzad et al. (2021) underscores that emotionally intelligent employees perform better in high-pressure environments characterized by rapid technological advancements and intense competition. A meta-analysis by Dođru (2022) revealed that employees with high EI outperform their peers in areas such as stress management, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships. These findings underscore that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to navigate the complexities of modern workplaces, where emotional regulation and adaptability are critical for success. Abbas and Malik (2023) revealed that EI plays a mediating role in improving resilience and job satisfaction in Pakistan's telecom sector, especially under high-stress conditions. Ahmed et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between EI and employee creativity in Pakistan's telecom organizations. The findings demonstrated that emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to contribute innovative solutions and ideas, which are crucial in adapting to market changes.

Similarly, Goleman et al. (2023) found that employees in multinational corporations who received EI training reported a 25% increase in productivity and job satisfaction. These findings resonate across industries, including healthcare and IT, where EI improves resilience and facilitates collaboration (Khumalo & Parker, 2023). Research by Farooq and Yasmin (2023) emphasized that emotionally intelligent leaders effectively manage organizational change and inspire teams to achieve collective goals. Similarly, in Pakistan's telecom sector, emotionally intelligent leaders play a pivotal role in fostering adaptive and innovative work environments. Matta and Alam (2023) indicate that leaders with high EI foster trust, cohesion, and motivation among their teams, leading to improved collective performance. For instance, emotionally intelligent leaders in technology-driven organizations leverage their social and emotional skills to inspire innovation and resilience during periods of uncertainty (Iswantir et al., 2024). Khan and Bashir (2024) observed that leaders with strong EI were more successful in reducing turnover rates, particularly among mid-level managers in Pakistan's telecom sector. Sharmin et al. (2024) found that teams with high collective EI exhibit greater cohesion, effective communication, and problem-solving abilities. This is mirrored in Pakistan's telecom industry, where employees with high EI resolve conflicts more effectively and maintain stronger team dynamics (Zafar & Ahmad, 2023). Javed et al. (2023) further noted that teams

with high EI in Pakistan's telecom sector displayed superior agility in responding to unexpected challenges, such as market disruptions and evolving customer demands.

Hossain et al. (2023) demonstrated that EI competencies in hospitality employees resulted in 30% higher customer satisfaction scores globally. Similarly, in Pakistan's telecom sector, customer service representatives with high EI deliver superior customer experiences. Iswantir et al. (2024) found that emotionally intelligent employees achieved significantly higher customer satisfaction and retention rates. Hameed and Akram (2023) further observed that training interventions aimed at enhancing EI in customer service roles led to a 15% increase in positive feedback and retention rates. Additional research by Raza et al. (2024) confirmed that EI training programs significantly improved complaint resolution times and enhanced customer loyalty in telecom organizations. The collectivist nature of Pakistan's culture amplifies the importance of interpersonal skills, such as empathy and social awareness, which are central to EI. Employees often operate within hierarchical structures, where effective communication and emotional regulation are critical for maintaining workplace harmony (Shahzad et al., 2021). Global studies, such as those by Goleman et al. (2023), emphasize that culturally aligned EI training programs can bridge performance gaps and enhance workplace dynamics.

Despite its evident benefits, fostering EI in Pakistan's telecom sector faces challenges such as limited access to training and resistance to change. Unlike global organizations that have widely adopted EI interventions, many companies in Pakistan are still in the nascent stages of recognizing its value. Abbas and Khan (2023) suggest that integrating EI-focused leadership workshops and employee training sessions can significantly enhance emotional competencies, aligning with global best practices. Research by Malik and Tariq (2023) highlighted that targeted interventions addressing cultural barriers to EI adoption could amplify organizational benefits. Anwar and Rehman (2021) advocated for integrating EI modules in professional development programs, observing significant improvements in employee productivity and organizational commitment. Emotional intelligence (EI) continues to be a significant factor influencing employee performance (EP) across various sectors and cultural contexts. Recent studies have further elucidated this relationship, providing contemporary insights into how EI impacts EP, particularly within Pakistan's telecom industry. A 2024 study by Iswantir et al. examined the role of EI in project success, highlighting that organizational culture moderates the relationship between team cohesion and project outcomes. This suggests that in environments like Pakistan's telecom sector, fostering an emotionally intelligent culture can enhance team cohesion and project success. Sharmin et al. (2024) found that teams with high collective EI exhibit greater cohesion, effective communication, and problem-solving abilities. This is mirrored in Pakistan's telecom industry, where employees with high EI resolve conflicts more effectively and maintain stronger team dynamics. Furthermore, a study by Raza et al. (2024) confirmed that EI training programs significantly improved complaint resolution times and enhanced customer loyalty in telecom organizations. This emphasizes the practical benefits of EI development initiatives in customer-facing roles within the telecom sector. These recent studies reinforce the critical role of EI in enhancing employee performance, leadership effectiveness, team dynamics, and customer satisfaction within Pakistan's telecom industry. Integrating EI-focused strategies and training programs can thus be instrumental in achieving organizational success in this sector.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence serves as both a strategic and operational asset in enhancing employee performance globally and within Pakistan. The telecom sector, with its unique challenges and opportunities, underscores the critical need for embedding EI in organizational practices through targeted interventions and culturally aligned strategies.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the essential role of emotional intelligence (EI) in shaping employee performance within Pakistan's telecom sector. Through a systematic review using the PRISMA method, the research highlights how higher EI levels are strongly associated with enhanced job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, teamwork, and customer service quality. These findings emphasize that EI not only fosters better workplace relationships but also equips employees to adapt to rapid technological advancements and high-pressure environments characteristic of the telecom industry. The study also identifies the significant impact of EI-driven interventions, such as leadership workshops and employee training programs, in mitigating workplace stress and promoting innovative problem solving. Despite the challenges of limited access to EI-focused training and cultural barriers, the research highlights strategies to integrate emotional intelligence into organizational practices effectively. By addressing these gaps, telecom operators in Pakistan can align with global best practices to enhance workforce efficiency and navigate the complexities of digital transformation. Ultimately, this research contributes to the growing body of literature advocating for the integration of EI as a core component of organizational development. It serves as a call to action for telecom organizations to prioritize emotional intelligence as a means to achieve sustained employee performance and competitive advantage in a dynamic industry landscape.

Future Direction

This study emphasize critical role of emotional intelligence (EI) in enhancing employee performance (EP) within Pakistan's telecom sector. However, there remain unexplored areas and opportunities for further research to build upon the current findings. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to explore the long-term impact of EI on employee performance and organizational outcomes. This approach can provide a deeper understanding of how EI interventions influence employee engagement, resilience, and adaptability over extended periods. While this study focuses on Pakistan's telecom sector, future studies can delve deeper into the role of cultural and organizational context in shaping the relationship between EI and EP. Research could investigate how EI demonstrates in different cultural settings, especially in collectivist societies like Pakistan, and how it aligns with or contrasts with findings from Western contexts.

Comparative studies across industries, such as healthcare, IT, manufacturing, and education, could provide valuable insights into how EI impacts employee performance in varying organizational and sectoral dynamics. Such research would help identify industry-specific EI applications and interventions. With the increasing reliance on digital tools and remote work in the telecom sector, future research could examine how EI interacts with digital transformation. Studies might explore how EI influences virtual teamwork, remote leadership, and employee performance in hybrid work environments.

There is a need for more culturally sensitive and industry-specific tools to measure EI in Pakistan's telecom sector. Future studies could develop and validate assessment tools that account for local layers and organizational dynamics, enabling more accurate evaluations of EI levels and their impact. Future research can investigate the role of EI in facilitating organizational change and driving innovation, particularly in technology-driven industries like telecom. Studies could explore how emotionally intelligent leaders and employees navigate market disruptions and implement innovative solutions. Experimental studies are needed to assess the efficacy of various EI training programs tailored to the telecom industry. Future research could focus on identifying the most effective methods for developing EI among employees and leaders, such as workshops, digital platforms, or on-the-job coaching. Future research should explore mediating and moderating variables, such as organizational culture, leadership style, employee demographics, and job roles, to gain a deep understanding of how these factors influence the EI-EP relationship. For example, studies could examine whether specific leadership styles enhance or diminish the impact of EI on performance. The link between EI and employee well-being is an area suitable for further exploration. Future research could investigate how EI contributes to mental health, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction, particularly in high-stress environments like telecom. To place the findings in a broader context, future research could conduct cross-cultural studies comparing EI's role in telecom sectors across different countries. This would help identify global trends and best practices while considering local adaptations. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in the workplace offers opportunities to explore how these technologies can support EI development and application. Future studies could investigate the use of AI-driven tools to enhance emotional regulation, empathy, and decision-making. Research on collective EI at the team level is still emerging. Future studies could explore how collective emotional intelligence influences team cohesion, conflict resolution, and overall performance, especially in cross-functional teams within telecom organizations.

By pursuing these directions, future research can address existing gaps and further advance the understanding of emotional intelligence as a critical determinant of employee and organizational success. These efforts will not only enrich the academic literature but also provide actionable insights for practitioners in Pakistan's telecom sector and beyond.

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