



# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE IN THE WORKPLACE: INSIGHTS FROM A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

Mankind is driven by intelligence. Cognitive intelligence is presumed to be more significant than the emotional quotient. However, the latter concept has been explored substantially by various researchers in the past showcasing its omnipresence in human life. Despite this, no piece of existing literature has been able to present the contexts under which emotional intelligence has been studied globally. The present study strives to understand the deeper concepts surrounding emotional intelligence and its association with various job-related aspects. The study employs a systematic comprehensive literature review methodology based on inclusive and exclusive standards, ensuring an exhaustive analysis of existing research, leading to a nuanced understanding of EI's role in the workplace. The findings suggest that EI often acts as an intervening variable, reinforcing its critical importance in the professional environment. Barring a few shortcomings, the article leaves further scope for analysis to completely comprehend the concept empirically.

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Employee Engagement, and Job Satisfaction.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Emotional Intelligence

The word "Emotional Intelligence" is formed of two words: emotions and intelligence. The Latin phrase "motere", which means "move," and the preposition "e," which together implies "move away," are the origins of the word emotion, implying that all individuals are subconsciously motivated to do something while experiencing a thought. Emotions are behavioral impulses, the instinctive strategies for coping with events that time has ingrained in humanity. skills include self-motivation and perseverance in dealing with the reality of setbacks, regulating impulses and postponing desires, emotional regulation, and preventing anxiety from overpowering reasoning, empathy, and optimism (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence (EI) is a clear apparent capacity that links a person's ability to comprehend information to their sense of emotions. It is essentially a collection of traits related to the psychological side of everyday life, such as generating and managing one's sentiments, perceiving others' feelings, and forming effective and skillful relationships. In other words, it is the set of competencies to sense own and the thoughts and feelings of others, to distinguish amongst various sensations and label them appropriately, and to use psychological information for analyzing actions and understanding (Alferaih, 2021).

The relevance of emotional intelligence (EI) in intellectual capacity, enables an individual to take impulses to heart and use emotional feelings wisely to develop sound reasoning and thinking competency. People's perceptions of emotions and what they mean are reshaped in part by this concept. The concept hinges on the notion that people who are highly skilled

at understanding, identifying, and managing their own emotions will also be more adept at understanding the mental states of others. Thus, facilitating the development of an enhanced mutually beneficial process, which will enhance individual as well as organizational efficiency (Zahra and Kee, 2019). An individual's success in an organization can be influenced by their level of ability to handle emotions, making it a crucial aspect. Work procedures and behavioral management inside the organization would benefit from someone with a high degree of emotional intelligence. When it comes to navigating evolution, also it is equally crucial for members of a business (Sahmuddin et al., 2022).

Subsequently, it could potentially be worthwhile to investigate the advantages of this construct concerning its association with job engagement and, consequently, job performance, as emotionally intelligent individuals have a greater tendency to cope with their reactions properly, form profound connections with others, and exhibit beneficial consequences as well as positive outlook (Jackson, 2014). The current study strives to present a systematic review of the existing literature on the concept of emotional intelligence and its association with various aspects related to human resources in different contexts globally.

### Job Performance

The achievement and progress of the business are greatly influenced by its workforce. Each step taken to advance the overall development of the organization is considered a performance. So, "performance can be defined as an expression of an employee's capacity to readily embrace professional aims, the extent of fulfillment of objectives and relationships among



objectives and talents of employees" (Afwindra et al., 2022). The performance of each needs to have brought both physiological and intangible worth for an entity to effectively utilize resources. Employee performance is the outcome of employment in both quantity and quality accomplished by an employee executing his duties following the obligations allocated to him/her. Thus, job performance refers to the amount and quality of work employees produce while performing their tasks and duties to meet the organization's primary objectives (Sujila et al., 2023). Also, Performance is a summary of the outcomes from specific job duties throughout a given time frame.

### Employee Engagement

It is a sustained and enduring affective–cognitive attitude. It's possible for engaged employees to feel more joyful, fulfilled, and more impassioned. Three components make up work engagement: energy, tenacity, and immersion (Gong et al., 2020). Intense cognitive and psychological ties with one's job, business, supervisor, or teammates can be referred to as employee engagement, which motivates people to put in more effort voluntarily. It describes the state in which workers are motivated, truly invested in their work, and are prepared to put in the necessary time and effort to complete tasks to the finest level possible. Additionally, highly engaged employees can achieve an edge over others that becomes hard for rivals to imitate (Sudibjo and Sutarji, 2020). When team members feel involved, they know their role in achieving the organization's goals and work together to attain them. A favorable emotional relationship between an employee and his or her job is typically shown by their enthusiastic attitude towards their workplace and its system of ethics. When fully engaged workers go above their obligations to perform their assigned tasks to the best of their ability (Alferaih, 2021).

### Employee Satisfaction

The term "job satisfaction" describes a set of beliefs that employees have regarding their occupations. An individual's level of job satisfaction can be contingent upon factors, including monetary benefits, additional remuneration, their role as supervisors and interpersonal connections, the state of the workplace, and the sense of neutrality of the organization's promotion policies (Ghoniem et al., 2012). Psychological, cognitive, and behavioral components all play a role in satisfaction among employees. The term "emotional variable" describes how one feels about their work, such as happiness, stress, or exhaustion. The cognitive element represents beliefs about one's line of work, such as the perception that one's work is logically difficult and demanding. In the end, employees' behaviorally changeable work practices included things like arriving late, working late for work, calling in unwell, and the list goes on (Suleman et al., 2020). It truly signifies how much a person enjoys their work, or it could be understood as the psychological bond that a person has with their profession.

### Research Questions

- To get a deeper understanding of the concept of emotional intelligence.
- To study various employee-related contexts in which emotional intelligence has been dealt with.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ghoniem et al. (2011) examined the phenomenon whereby gender and emotional intelligence (EI) affected workers' job satisfaction in the Egyptian government industry. The study used a survey approach to collect information from 48 workers in three different companies. The results showed that while gender did not significantly affect job satisfaction, a strong correlation existed between greater emotional intelligence and higher job satisfaction. Nonetheless, job satisfaction was impacted by the interplay between gender and emotional intelligence. The study emphasized the value of emotional intelligence (EI) in jobs and demonstrated that emotional intelligence training may improve worker happiness and performance. Dekoulou and Trivellas (2014) investigated the idea of a learning organization and how it affected personal success and work happiness in Greek advertising businesses. Subsequently, it was discovered that a learning-based approach highly anticipates individual performance and work satisfaction among employees. The investigation demonstrated how job satisfaction functions as a bridge between job performance and learning enterprises. The study used an online survey to collect data from 251 employees representing 49 ad agencies. The findings revealed that important characteristics of a learning company that are closely correlated with job satisfaction include managerial strategy, empowerment, exploration, and discussion. Furthermore, it was determined that embedded systems and system connections substantially impacted job performance. The results indicate that to improve employee happiness and productivity, Greek marketers must deploy a learning-based methodology. Haq et al. (2017) discovered how instructors' job performance at Pakistan's higher learning institutions is affected by their emotional intelligence (EI). Using the EI concepts of Salovey and Mayer as a structure the study discovered a substantial positive association between job performance and emotional intelligence. The research conducted emphasized how important it is for academic institutions to prioritize EI to address job-related problems and enhance student performance. Bibliographic citations outlined the wider framework for emotional intelligence's function in business conduct and management, highlighting its association with favorable employment-related consequences. 166 teachers made up the sample for the study, and the evaluation framework of PLS-SEM was used to assess the accuracy and reliability of the covariates. The findings supported the predicted relationships, adding to knowledge of the impact of culture and the appraisal paradigm of emotions. Li et al. (2018) offered a thorough investigation of the connection between the emotional intelligence (EI) attribute of teachers and their work performance, emphasizing the impact of organizational trust and the intermediary function of job satisfaction. The study, which involved educators and principals in Chinese elementary schools, found that the beneficial correlation between teachers' attribute EI and job performance was partly modulated by educators' job satisfaction. Remarkably, the study discovered that the indirect influence of educators' attribute emotional intelligence on work efficiency via job fulfillment was larger in schools with a reduced degree of organizational trust. The results highlighted the intricacy of the profession of education, wherein emotional intelligence is essential for both achieving



individual targets and creating a safe and secure learning atmosphere. **Zahra and Kee (2019)** emphasized the significance of separate elements such as psychological capital, emotional intelligence, and proactive personality in improving worker performance, particularly in light of the banking system in Pakistan. The study put out a comprehensive paradigm that uses the workplace as a facilitator to link these factors to professional success. It has been established through the findings that enhanced job efficiency is largely influenced by psychological capital, proactive personality, and emotional intelligence. The ultimate objective of the research effort was to plug loopholes in the existing literature while offering organizations suggestions on raising worker efficiency. **Gong et al. (2020)** examined the complex link involving innate emotional intelligence (EI) characteristics and employment satisfaction, emphasizing the roles that mental autonomy and professional engagement play as influencing variables. It became apparent that the relationship between the personality trait emotional intelligence and employment satisfaction was influenced in part by work engagement. Additionally, the researchers discovered an iterative bridging effect, in which mental autonomy and professional engagement have a sequential impact on the disposition of emotional intelligence, which in turn improves job satisfaction. A greater grasp of the emotional benefits of elevated emotional intelligence traits for workplace wellness was gained from this investigation. **Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020)** investigated the effects of emotional intelligence, well-being, and job satisfaction on professors' employee engagement. The study used an empirical approach, analyzing data with the SmartPLS 3.0 application and the PLS-SEM method. Analysis showed that employee engagement benefited every single one of them. The most important element was found to be job satisfaction, indicating that enthusiastic teachers are inclined to be involved and add to the advancement of the organization. Additionally, the investigations supported the notion that mental health and emotional intelligence have a beneficial connection, showing that educators who report greater states of well-being also have higher emotional intelligence. **Wijayati et al. (2020)** assessed the effects of workplace fulfillment, conflict between work and family obligations, and social skills on secondary school educators' accomplishments in the Indonesian city of Surabaya. The study used SEM analytical methods and exploratory studies with a statistical method to find major connections. Strong fulfillment with work led to favorable diligence, which subsequently had a beneficial effect on the degree of emotional intelligence. On the other hand, family-associated obligations harmed Job Execution, suggesting that domestic matters may take a backseat to educators' successful careers. The study acknowledged the difficulties caused by work-family conflict while emphasizing the worth of psychological skills in promoting female educator's dedication to their careers and sense of fulfillment at work. According to the conclusion, resolving domestic problems may improve the efficiency of educators, highlighting the necessity of enabling regulations in learning environments. **Alferaih (2021)** assessed whether employee engagement (EE) functions as a facilitator in Saudi Arabian privately owned businesses while examining the relationship between individual job satisfaction, performance (EJSP), and emotional intelligence (EI). The article employed a

correlational approach and an analytical approach to collect information concerning 537 workers across prominent Saudi Arabian cities. The results demonstrated that EE acts as the intermediary in the link between EI and EJSP and that EI beneficially impacts EJSP. Furthermore, it was discovered that these effects were differentially modulated by the variables of gender, experience, and age. **Nurjanah and Indawati (2021)** studied the functions of work-life balance as a facilitator factor in the relationship between emotional intelligence, worker participation, and job satisfaction among Surabaya's younger generations. The research project included 100 young adults as participants from Surabaya City through the use of an internet-based survey, and SmartPLS 3.3 was employed for analysis. Research findings showed that while emotional intelligence had no immediate effect on job satisfaction, it greatly improved worker participation. The linkage between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction was found to be perfectly mediated by work-life balance, suggesting that emotional intelligence may affect job satisfaction by employing a balance between work and personal life. **Semiring et al. (2021)** examined using job satisfaction as an intermediary variable, the effects of emotional intelligence, leadership, and social support on worker performance at PT XYZ Banking Corporation Provincial Credit Card Medan. All 57 of the bank's staff members underwent interviews as part of the statistical descriptive technique used in the study. The results showed that while emotional intelligence had no discernible impact on job happiness or performance, social support and leadership had a beneficial effect on both. Job satisfaction was shown to be the most important element influencing worker performance. The research emphasized the significance of proficient leadership and a nurturing workplace setting in augmenting worker productivity by elevating job contentment. **Afwindra et al. (2022)** investigated, at the Batam, Indonesia Exclusive KSOP Office, the effects of work discipline, emotional intelligence, and the quality of human resources on staff productivity. Job satisfaction was included as a controlling factor. It turned out that while the level of excellence of human resources had a small but detrimental impact, work discipline and emotional intelligence had a favorable effect on job satisfaction. Furthermore, performance among workers was enhanced by emotional intelligence, but negatively by the caliber of human resources. Despite their favorable aspects, workplace conduct and job happiness had little bearing on employee performance. The study emphasized the value of work discipline and emotional intelligence in raising staff productivity and satisfaction with their job. **Sahmuddin et al. (2022)** researched the influence of professional engagement, fulfillment at work, and emotional intelligence on worker efficiency at the Division of Sports, Youth, Tourism, and Culture of the Labuhanbatu Province. Seventy employees participated in the study, which collected data via questionnaires. The results showed that work engagement, job happiness, and emotional intelligence all profoundly and positively impacted employee performance on both an individual and group level. The study ultimately reached an agreement that improving these factors might boost worker productivity in the division. **Sudiro et al. (2023)** studied to what extent workplace attitudes moderate the relationship between psychological intelligence and QWL (quality of work life). The study employed an exploratory design and included



workers from a range of Indonesian sectors. The results showed that there is an increased association between emotional intelligence and quality of work life when job involvement, job satisfaction perceived organizational support are considered as important moderators. Organizational loyalty and staff participation, however, failed to function as intermediates. Even with its narrow focus, the study provided fascinating details about the relationship between work attitudes, emotional intelligence, and quality of work-life. **Sujila et al. (2023)** researched the effects of emotional intelligence, discipline, and work environment on the productivity of University of Nusa Nipa Indonesian employees. Rigorous work discipline and an ideal working atmosphere were found to greatly improve worker output. It was also shown that emotional intelligence was a crucial component, not solely affecting performance but additionally acting as an intermediary between the impacts of the employment atmosphere and discipline on work. The sixtysix university employees' responses were evaluated using methodical methods in the form of questionnaires, T-Sobel, and SPSS for data analysis. **Ertio et al. (2024)** focused on the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and technological management in the framework of reducing employee technological distress amid the digital shift. The article emphasized how digitization has accelerated, especially after the COVID-19 outbreak, and how this has led to employee technological stress. Emotional intelligence, according to the researchers, is a critical quality for digital leaders to help their people efficiently and lessen technological stress. They offered tactics on how digital leaders can build emotional intelligence capabilities by being open, interactive, and trustworthy. The study recommended more investigation into the function of leaders in responding to strategy development and employee technological stress management. All things taken into account, the paper advanced knowledge on digital managerial abilities and the significance of emotional intelligence in overcoming the obstacles associated with the digital shift.

### Conceptual Framework of Emotional Intelligence

When Thorndike in the year 1920 initially divided emotional intelligence into three categories—abstract intelligence, mechanical intelligence, and social intelligence—the idea of emotional intelligence (EI) was born (**Goleman, 1995**). Subsequently, in the course of the 1980s, many academics added to the idea of emotional intelligence. In 1993, Gardner for example, proposed the concepts of intra- and inter-emotional intelligence. The concept of emotional intelligence was developed by Steiner (1984). These researchers' contributions led to the creation and advancement of the term "emotional intelligence" through Salovey and Mayer in the year 1990. In the decades that ensued a great deal of research was

done on emotional intelligence in leadership, personnel management, corporate culture, and many more (**Haq et al., 2017**).

The Ability Model, Trait Model, and Mixed Model are the three major approaches governing the attributes of emotional intelligence. The foremost theory, the ability model, given by Salovey, Mayer, and Caruso defines emotional intelligence (EI) as the capacity of an individual to process and apply emotional data to investigate their social context. Emotional intelligence is viewed in this approach as a skill that can be developed, built, and enhanced. The concept assumes how a truly discerning person uses this skill to constructively de-stress in any challenging situation. It focuses on emotional articulation, comprehension, management, and regulation. According to the Trait Model, emotional intelligence is a personality trait that includes behavioral tendencies. According to the Mixed Model endorsed by Goleman and Baron in varied hues, emotional intelligence is both a characteristic and an ability. EI is defined under the model as a range of skills and attributes. The major elements include self-awareness, regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills (**Alferaih, 2021**).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

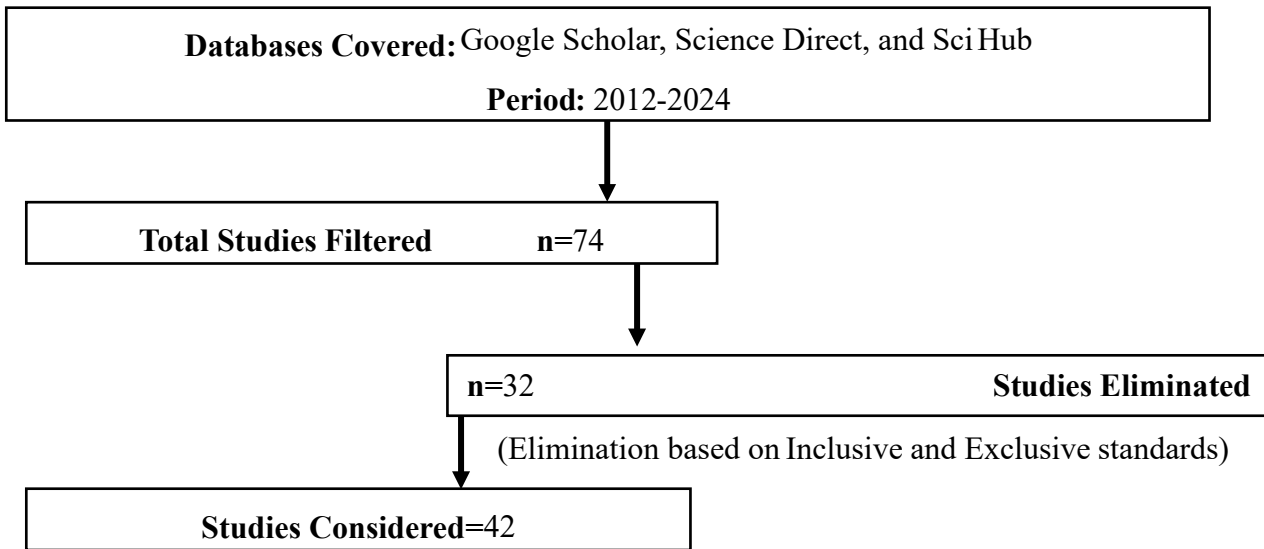
This research study followed a comprehensive systematic literature appraisal technique that involved creating inclusive and exclusive specifications, finding and choosing pertinent research papers, and categorizing the articles that were chosen. Following these actions, an evaluation and findings have been drawn. A survey of the existing literature on the selected keywords was conducted and addressed in the context of the study's objectives.

#### Inclusive and Exclusive Standards

As per this selection criteria, the search for the literature was restricted to the chosen keywords, namely emotional intelligence, job performance, employee engagement, and job satisfaction. The data was searched from the major databases covering Google Scholar, Science Direct, and Sci-Hub between 2012-2024. The investigation effort was facilitated by the use of Boolean operators, i.e., "And", and "Or". The search excluded the available abstracts and conference papers and included only the review articles and research papers with open-access options. Also, research literature related to subject areas governing Business, Management, Accounting, and Psychology were considered for the study.



**Fig.1 Systematic Literature Review Analysis**



Source : Compiled by the authors.

#### 4. Findings

Authors	Methodology used	Context	Findings
<b>Ghoniem et al. (2011)</b>	The study used a survey approach to collect information from 48 workers in three different companies.	Egyptian government industry	The results showed that while gender did not significantly affect job satisfaction, a strong correlation existed between greater emotional intelligence and higher job satisfaction.
<b>Dekoulou and Trivellas (2014)</b>	The study used an online survey to collect data from 251 employees representing 49 ad agencies.	Greek advertising businesses	The findings revealed that important characteristics of a learning company that are closely correlated with job satisfaction include managerial strategy, empowerment, exploration, and discussion.
<b>Haq et al. (2017)</b>	The evaluation framework of PLSSEM was used to assess the accuracy and reliability of the covariates	Pakistan's higher learning institutions	The findings supported the predicted relationships, adding to knowledge of the impact of culture and the appraisal paradigm of emotions.
<b>Li et al. (2018)</b>	Qualitative tools	Chinese elementary schools	The study found that educators' job satisfaction partly modulated the beneficial correlation between teachers' attribute EI and job performance.
<b>Zahra and Kee (2019)</b>	Literature review	Pakistan's Banking sector	The findings established that enhanced job efficiency is largely influenced by psychological capital, proactive personality, and emotional intelligence.



<b>Gong et al. (2020)</b>	Chi-square test	The nursing staff of a Chinese hospital	It revealed that the relationship between the personality trait emotional intelligence and employment satisfaction was influenced in part by work engagement.
<b>Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020)</b>	The study used an empirical approach, analyzing data with the SmartPLS 3.0 application and the PLS-SEM method	The teaching staff of SDS Pelangi, Jakarta.	The investigations supported the notion that mental health and emotional intelligence have a beneficial connection.
<b>Wijayati et al. (2020)</b>	The study used SEM analytical methods and exploratory studies with a statistical method to find major connections.	Secondary schools of Surabaya (Indonesia)	It found that resolving domestic problems may improve the efficiency of educators, highlighting the necessity of enabling regulations in learning environments.
<b>Alferaih (2021)</b>	The article employed a correlational approach and an analytical approach to collecting information.	Saudi Arabian private-sector enterprises	The results demonstrated that EE (Employee engagement) acts as the intermediary in the link between EI (Emotional intelligence) and EJSP (Employee job satisfaction, performance) and that EI beneficially impacts EJSP.
<b>Nurjanah and Indawati (2021)</b>	SmartPLS 3.3 was employed for analysis.	Surabaya's younger generations	Research findings showed that while emotional intelligence had no immediate effect on job satisfaction, it greatly improved worker participation.
<b>Sembiring et al. (2021)</b>	Statistical descriptive technique	PT XYZ Banking Corporation	The results showed that while emotional intelligence had no discernible impact on job happiness or performance, social support and leadership had a beneficial effect on both.
<b>Afwindra et al. (2022)</b>	Online surveys	Batam, Indonesia Exclusive KSOP Office	It turned out that while the level of excellence of human resources had a small but detrimental impact, work discipline and emotional intelligence had a favorable effect on job satisfaction.
<b>Sahmuddin et al. (2022)</b>	Questionnaires	Division of Sports, Youth, Tourism, and Culture of the Labuhanbatu Province.	The results showed that work engagement, job happiness, and emotional intelligence all profoundly and positively impacted employee performance on both an individual and group level.



<p><b>Sudiro et al. (2023)</b></p>	<p>Exploratory research design</p>	<p>Multiple Indonesian sectors</p>	<p>The results showed that there is an increased association between emotional intelligence and quality of work life when job involvement, job satisfaction perceived organizational support are considered as important moderators.</p>
<p><b>Sujila et al. (2023)</b></p>	<p>Questionnaires, T-Sobel, and SPSS</p>	<p>The University of Nusa Nipa Indonesian employees</p>	<p>The results exhibited that emotional intelligence was a crucial component, not solely affecting performance but additionally acting as an intermediary between the impacts of the employment atmosphere and discipline on work.</p>

Source: Compiled by the authors.

The above-mentioned description of studies gives a nuanced view of the association between emotional intelligence and job-related aspects globally. It highlights the contexts under which an individual's emotional and mental state has been studied concerning other employee-associated domains such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, work performance, leadership, and discipline. The review also highlights several sectors that have been majorly covered for evaluating the current topic including banking, education, hospitality, medicine, and both public and private entities. Largely barring a few instances, the investigations studied so far depict a sound working relationship between elements of emotional intelligence and key employment variables. In some cases, the former has acted as an intervening variable, showcasing the enlightening significance of emotional intelligence in the workplace.

**CONCLUSION**

The current study presented a comprehensive review of emotional intelligence (EI) and its impact on various human resource aspects across different global contexts. The research delved into the conceptual framework of emotional intelligence encompassing its evolution and the theoretical base behind its formation. It highlighted the significant role of EI in enhancing job performance, employee engagement, and job satisfaction. The research underscored the importance of EI in forming effective relationships and its influence on individual and organizational efficiency. The systematic literature review method employed in the study ensured an exhaustive analysis of the existing literature, leading to a nuanced understanding of EI's role in the workplace. The findings suggested that EI often acts as an intervening variable, reinforcing its critical importance in the professional environment. Overall, the study contributed to the existing body of knowledge by elucidating the multifaceted benefits of emotional intelligence in the workplace.

**LIMITATIONS**

Although it offered a thorough examination, this study on emotional intelligence (EI) and how it affected job-related factors has downsides. These limitations comprise the

possibility of selection prejudice in the literature review technique, the use of self-reported data that may not accurately represent real actions or results, and the variations in the approaches and settings of the studies examined. Furthermore, the study's results were constrained by the duration of the literature search, and this might have excluded more recent research or newly developing EI patterns. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the study presented insightful information about the function of emotional intelligence (EI) in the workplace and how it affected productivity, engagement, and job satisfaction. The paper recommended more investigation to close these gaps and investigate the multifaceted nature of emotional intelligence in varied organisational contexts.

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