

# Emotional Intelligence And Employees' Performance With Mediating Role Of Psychological Empowerment: Evidence From Bankers

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to investigate how employee performance at private banks in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa area is impacted by emotional intelligence (EI). The study further examines the mediating effects of Psychological Empowerment on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and employee performance. Data for the study<sup>1</sup> was collected from both employees and managerial personnel in private banking institutions using structured questionnaires. The data has been examined with many statistical techniques, and they were including descriptive, correlation, and mediation analyses. The results indicated a substantial positive correlation between emotional intelligence and both employee performance and psychological empowerment in the current research case. Psychological empowerment considerably mediates the previous relationship. The current study's findings indicate that emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment are key traits that employees in private sector banks in KP, Pakistan, positively impact their performance.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Empowerment, Employees' Performance, Private Banks, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

## INTRODUCTION

The performance of organizations, particularly in the private banking sector, is fundamentally dependent on several factors, including infrastructure, facilities, personnel, and emotional intelligence. Private Banks in Pakistan have resource availability issues; yet, the existing resources are neglected due to a lack of suitable emotional intelligence among employees. According to Wahyuningrat, and Rusmawan (2022), Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to effectively use or regulate their emotions, both inwardly and during social interactions, including using emotions to encourage oneself, handle pressure, and maintain self-discipline to achieve a certain goal.

The ability to encourage oneself and others while identifying and controlling one's own and others' emotions is referred to as emotional intelligence. To succeed in all areas of life, it is a skill that can be taught, learned, and practiced (Al-Haziazi, & Hussainy, 2023). The affective events hypothesis states that both performance and job satisfaction are influenced by the emotional responses both positive and negative that are brought on by the fundamental

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elements of the work environment and work events. Current and historical events, in particular, are the sources of altering job satisfaction, whereas emotional swings in the workplace and work events can produce differences in job performance. Positive and negative emotions can both distract workers and negatively impair job performance. Positive emotions can help people make better judgments and boost organizational efficiency. Customer service and relationships are impacted by negative emotions (Radha, & Aithal, 2023).

According to Bradberry and Greaves (2009) and Yadav (2015), self-management (including self-control), social awareness (empathy), self-awareness, and relationship management (social skills) are four basic elements of emotional intelligence. Several scholars have expanded on this idea by recognizing motivation as the fifth dimension (Plessis, Douangphichit, & Dodd, 2015), and self-confidence as the sixth domain, as shown by Yadav (2015). Emotional intelligence has always been related to important life outcomes such as improved psychological well-being strong social connections and increased employees' performance (Schutte, Malouff & Rooke, 2007). Previous research has shown that Emotional Intelligence is a reliable indicator of employees' performance in the workplace, engagement in professional tasks, and commitment to one's profession (Carmeli, 2003).

Employee performance and stress reduction are connected to Emotional Intelligence (Por et al., 2011), and the supportive role of healthcare workers' emotions positively impacts patient comfort (Pejner et al., 2012). Positive physical and emotional well-being among healthcare professionals has been associated with an improvement in the quality of patient care (Prezerakos, 2018). Alonazi (2020) highlighted that cultivating empathy among healthcare professionals positively influences job performance. Emotional Intelligence serves as a predictor of job performance (Chong et al., 2020). Karimi et al. (2020) propose further research to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance in the aged care industry. Emotional Intelligence training enhances employees' capacity to manage and regulate their emotions (Joseph & Newman, 2010).

Emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment, which includes cognitive resources like hope, effectiveness, resilience, and optimism, are complex and nuanced (Luthans et al., 2007). Both psychological categories function as flexible tools for individuals to tackle diverse professional issues, while they possess unique properties. Cognitive coping skills are an essential component of psychological capital; however, emotional intelligence includes additional attributes such as motivation, mood, self-evaluation, and self-worth (Rahimnia et al., 2013). Emotional intelligence may be classified as either a fixed personality trait or a collection of cognitive skills, whereas psychological capital is regarded as a more adaptable mental condition that can be further cultivated (Gomes da Costa et al., 2021).

Psychological empowerment is a multifaceted and continuous process shaped by the interplay between an individual's personality and the work environment. Empowerment involves giving people complete responsibility for their activities, which requires leaders to give up control. Employees should cultivate the ability to assume responsibility for their tasks and use discernment in making judgments (Andika & Darmanto, 2020).

In Pakistan, the banking sector is experiencing challenges related to employee performance due to various organizational issues such as resource constraints, policy inefficiencies, and leadership dynamics. These challenges necessitate a thorough examination to identify effective solutions. This study proposes to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance while examining the mediating effect of psychological empowerment among employees in the private banking industry of Zone-4, KP, Pakistan. By providing tailored solutions, this research intends to offer valuable models to enhance leadership and employee performance in the banking sector, ultimately contributing to a more effective and efficient working environment.

### **Research Questions**

- RQ-1 Is emotional intelligence positively correlated with employee performance among individuals employed in the private banking industry in Zone-4, KP, Pakistan?
- RQ-2 Is Emotional Intelligence positively correlated with Psychological Empowerment among employees in the private banking sector of Zone-4, KP, Pakistan?
- RQ-3 Is Psychological Empowerment Positively Associated with Employee Performance in the Private Banking Sector, Zone-4, KP, Pakistan?
- RQ-4 Does Psychological Empowerment serve as a mediator between Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance among Employees in the Private Banking Sector, Zone-4, KP, Pakistan?

### **Objectives of the Research**

The researcher describes the following objectives to make the study logical and orderly.

1. To examine the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance among employees in the Private banking sector, Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.
2. To examine the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Empowerment among employees in the private banking sector of Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.
3. To examine the correlation between Psychological Empowerment and employee performance within the Private banking sector in Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.
4. To examine the mediating effect of psychological empowerment on the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance among employees in the private banking sector of Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Performance**

Emotional Intelligence is the foundation of positive attributes in employee performance and organizational performance (Krén & Séllei, 2021). Effective management pivots on Emotional Intelligence, encompassing understanding behavior, facilitating decision-making, nurturing relationships, fostering constructive thinking, and driving innovation and organizational growth (Chopra & Kanji, 2010). Recognizing the significance of Emotional Intelligence is pivotal for human development, job satisfaction, and relationship-building (Shooshtarian et al., 2013). According to Shooshtarian et al. (2013), people with high emotional intelligence can successfully navigate and regulate emotional circumstances. Goleman's claim in "What Makes a Great Leader" underscores the critical importance of Emotional Intelligence in leadership, irrespective of an individual's leadership proficiency (Goleman, 2003). Brown's (2014) quantitative research, based on Goleman's (1998) notion of Emotional Intelligence, confirms that leaders possessing elevated levels of Emotional Intelligence exhibit greater productivity in the workplace owing to their sensitivity to employees' emotions. Higgs's 2004 study in UK contact centers further illustrates the strong correlation between leaders' Emotional Intelligence and staff effectiveness (Lam & O'Higgins, 2012).

According to Jaeger's (2003) significant correlation between emotional intelligence and employee performance. Now, there is insufficient research specifically examining the influence of Emotional Intelligence on the performance and job satisfaction of persons in the banking sector. Also previous research has investigated the advantageous impact of Emotional Intelligence on leadership; however, it has not specifically evaluated the effects of a leader's Emotional Intelligence on subordinates (Carmeli, 2003; Brown, 2014; Dabke, 2016).

H1: Emotional Intelligence is positively associated with employee performance among employees working in the Private banking sector, Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Empowerment**

Bar-On (2007), recognized for formulating and refining a system for assessing emotional intelligence, characterizes EQ as a synthesis of emotional, social, and personal abilities, competencies, and behaviors that affect intelligent conduct (Uslu, 2016). Mayer and Salovey (1990) explain emotional intelligence as the capacity to understand and handle one's own emotions and those of others to affect thoughts and behaviors. Bussin and van Rooy (2014) emphasize the growing need to improve corporate incentive systems, claiming that hiring individuals with enhanced emotional intelligence and offering emotional intelligence training can provide favorable financial results in the private sector. Even in difficult circumstances, employees with high EQ are better able to solve issues, overcome barriers, and feel more devoted to their jobs (Carmeli, 2003). Lopes et al. (2006) found that individuals with a high emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) often obtained more merit raises and occupied more senior positions within organizations. The research indicates that possessing robust self-efficacy contributes to doing tasks effectively and experiencing a sense of empowerment in the workplace. Self-efficacy pertains to an individual's conviction in their abilities, which in turn affects the degree of empowerment felt by an employee (Weierter, 1997).

Gkorezis and Petridou (2012) argue that psychological empowerment is a viable answer for companies dealing with competitiveness in the current volatile business landscape, particularly in sectors where workers have direct interactions with customers. Cook (1994) endorses this concept, asserting that individuals who are empowered and possess extensive knowledge about their jobs are capable of recognizing and resolving hurdles that impede performance. Conversely, there is a lack of research investigating the lasting effects of incentives on an employee's psychological empowerment, as highlighted by Gkorezis and Petridou (2012). Investigators of psychological empowerment have shown that genuine empowerment arises from certain psychological elements that engender a sense of empowerment among workers (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). Several studies have highlighted the risk of job loss for employees, particularly in organizations heavily prioritizing competition and profits, which may lead to job insecurity (Abu-Rub, 2010).

Mayer and Salovey (1997) state that elevated emotional intelligence (EQ) positively influences physical and mental health, cognitive engagement, and personal growth. Additionally, it improves prospects for professional progression, particularly when dealing with long-term workplace pressures. Additionally, Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) suggest in their research that elevated levels of EQ may facilitate employees' adaptation to their environment and enhance their competencies.

Emotionally intelligent people who strive to improve their skills in the workplace often have increased emotions of empowerment. This is associated with a proactive attitude to job responsibilities, management, and the organization as a whole (Crant, 2000). Moreover, persons with a high emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) exhibit enhanced proficiency in guiding and directing others, while also cultivating a work atmosphere conducive to achieving exceptional results and generating financial benefits for an organization (Bashir, 2017).

H<sub>2</sub>: Emotional Intelligence is positively associated with Psychological Empowerment among employees working in the Private banking sector, Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.

### **Psychological Empowerment and Employees' Performance**

Psychological empowerment influences employee attitudes and behaviors, including job satisfaction, work engagement, organizational commitment, and desire to quit (Khany, R.; Tazik, K., 2016). Psychological Empowerment is an internal motivator that promotes the development of personal values, professional confidence, and competencies, also enhancing work satisfaction and total self-contentment (Spreitzer et al., 1997). Spreitzer (1995) explains four dimensions of psychological empowerment: meaning, the significance a task holds within the employee's value system; impact, reflecting the employee's perception of how their actions influence the organization; competence, associated with self-efficacy and the employee's confidence in their ability to execute tasks proficiently; and self-determination, indicative of one's autonomy in initiating and sustaining work processes. The findings revealed that those who had a higher sense of psychological empowerment had greater work satisfaction (Amor, A.M.; Xanthopoulou, D.; Calvo, N.; Vázquez, J.P.A. 2021). Employee evaluations of their immediate supervisors and work-related results are influenced by the four elements of psychological empowerment: competence, meaning, self-determination, and effect (Bharadwaja, M.; Tripathi, N., 2021). Research by Lv et al. (2021) examined the link between trust in corporate organizations and employee engagement, demonstrating that psychological empowerment plays a key role in this correlation. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that employees with reduced feelings of psychological empowerment had a larger favorable link with job performance (Chenji & Raghavendra, 2021).

H<sub>3</sub>: Psychological Empowerment is positively associated with Employees' Performance among employees working in the Private banking sector, Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.

### **The Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Empowerment, and Employees' Performance**

The significance of psychological empowerment has been highlighted by researchers and policymakers (ÖLÇER, 2015). Several firms embrace workplace autonomy as a powerful tool for their workers (Imam & Hassan, 2015; & Randolph, 1995). Employees who possess this authority experience enhanced creativity (Nawaz, Hassan, Shaukat, & Assadullah, 2014), demonstrate greater adaptability to changes in their surroundings (Dess & Picken, 2000), and exhibit improved performance (Degago, 2014), thereby making valuable contributions to the growth of both their organization and themselves (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012).

Samuel and Chen (2006) investigated the mediating role of authorization in the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and work results, namely job satisfaction, task performance, and psychological interaction behavior, in the context of China. Zheng and Liu (2016) initiate that psychological empowerment mediated the association between interaction equity and employee happiness, whereas power distance negatively moderated this impact (Zheng & Liu, 2016). The empirical results show that psychological empowerment is an essential element in elucidating the internal mechanisms of certain variables (such as emotional intelligence and LMX) and is a significant mediating factor for these variables in influencing relevant outcome variables.

Goleman (1995) stated that emotional intelligence constitutes 80% of an employee success in life. Wong and Law (2002) assert that teams managed by leaders with strong emotional intelligence demonstrate enhanced performance among team members. Sy et al. (2006) established that a team leader's emotional intelligence favorably affects workers' job satisfaction. Patra (2004) said that the emotional intelligence of an individual team member might affect the work happiness of other team members, hence favorably affecting management growth.

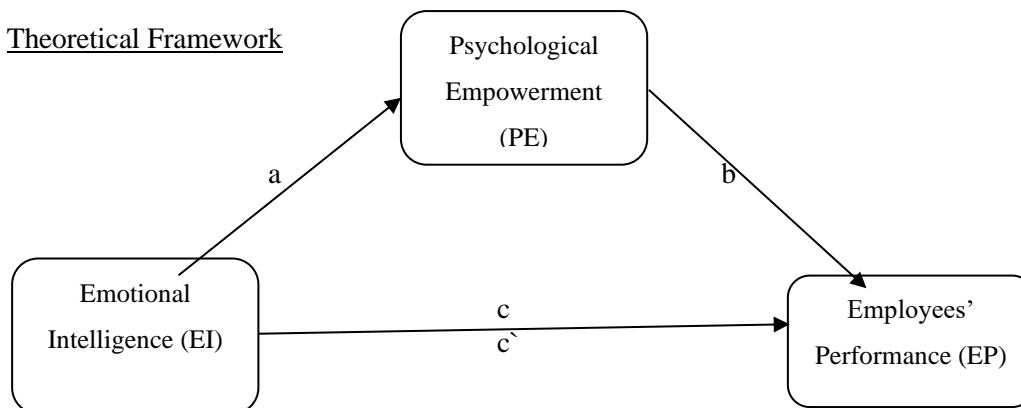
According to Thomas and Welthouse (1990), psychological empowerment encompasses four concepts: meaningfulness, competence, choice, and influence. Spreitzer (1995) characterized

psychological empowerment as a constellation of four attitudes that individual has on their job position, influenced by their employment environment. Competency, impact, purpose, and self-determination are the elements that are covered. An employee's impression of their degree of autonomy, self-competence, capacity to impact the workplace, and sense of purpose in their work is known as psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment was shown to have an impact on performance both directly and indirectly by Tuuli and Rowlinson (2009), with opportunity, performance ability, and motivation acting as mediators. According to Indradevi's (2011) research, job performance was strongly predicted by several psychological empowerment factors, such as competence, autonomy, meaningful work, and influence.

H<sub>4</sub>: Psychological Empowerment mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Performance among employees in the Private banking sector in Zone-4, KP, Pakistan.

The following theoretical framework may be obtained by combining all the above hypotheses drawn from previous literature.

**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Methods and Materials

Quantitative research approach is adopted for the conduct of current study where empirical results are generated through statistical analysis from a chosen sample (Nawaz, Rehman & Javed, 2020) and then generalized to total population (Malebana & Swanepoel, 2015). The population of interest of the current study consists of employees working in private sector banks based in Zone-4, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The convenient sampling is employed for choosing respondents out of the target population. The main advantages of this sample method are its simplicity, accessibility, and affordability (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Furthermore, the present study employed a questionnaire method to gather primary data and given that the research questions necessitate a statistical analysis of the population's characteristics, convenience sampling is pragmatically appropriate (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). At the time of data collection, a total of 1886 employees were working in the target population zone (Source; State Bank of Pakistan). By employing Yamani's (1969) formula of sample extraction, 356 sample sizes were derived. In this study total of 356 questionnaires were distributed, resulting in 339 replies and a response rate of 95%.

### Instrument and Measures

Closed-ended questionnaires having Likert-type questions were used as data collection instruments. Scales, measuring current study constructs, were adopted from existing literature.

Emotional intelligence has been measured using a scale created by Jordan and Lawrence (2009) consisting of sixteen items. Psychological empowerment was measured using the scale presented by Spreitzer (1995) having a total of twelve items whereas for measuring employees' performance, a scale developed by Uphoff and Muharir (1994) was employed.

## Results and Analysis

The gathered data was examined using many statistical methods, first with reliability analysis and subsequently progressing via descriptive, correlation, and mediation analyses.

To evaluate the proposed model, the reliability coefficient was initially calculated to check the dependability of the scales. Secondly, a descriptive analysis was conducted, yielding means and standard deviation data. Thirdly, a correlation matrix was created utilizing the Pearson correlation test to determine the relationships among research variables, and ultimately, mediation analysis was performed to evaluate the mediating function of intermediary factors employing PROCESS macros by Hayes (2013).

The selection of these statistical methods is dependent on the research questions established for this study. Data analysis is conducted using SPSS version 22.

**Table 1: Summary of Descriptive, Reliability, and Correlation Coefficients**

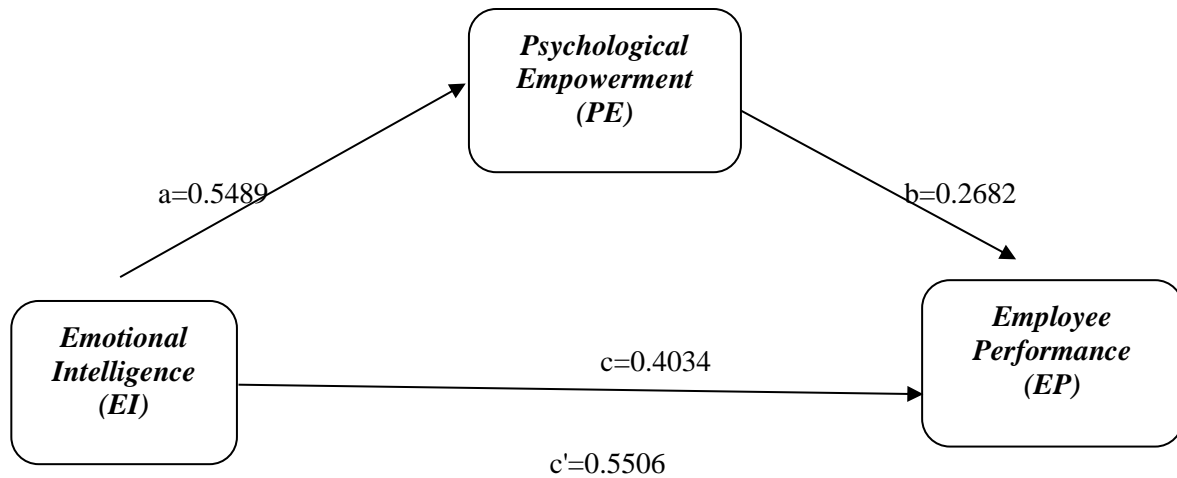
Construct	Mean	SD	A	EI	PE	EP
Emotional Intelligence(EI)	3.8335	.49442	0.845	1		
Psychological Empowerment(PE)	3.7389	.50472	0.836	.538**	1	
Employees' Performance(EP)	3.6755	.49328	0.973	.552**	.357**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level, N=339, EI=Emotional Intelligence, PE=Psychological Empowerment, EP=Employees' Performance, SD=Standard Deviation

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, reliability measures, and correlation coefficients for the research variables. Emotional intelligence ( $\beta=.552$ ,  $p=.000$ ) and psychological empowerment ( $\beta=.357$ ,  $p=.000$ ) are found significantly associated with employees' performance in the current study context. Emotional intelligence is also found significantly associated with psychological empowerment ( $\beta=.538$ ,  $p=.000$ ) in the correlation analysis. Hence hypotheses 1 to 3, all are accepted.

## Mediation Analysis

This study explores psychological empowerment as a mediating factor in the association between emotional intelligence and employee performance. The PROCESS macro model #4, as proposed by Hayes (2013), is utilized for the mediation analysis.



This framework considers emotional intelligence and psychological empowerment as mediators in the relationship between employee performances. The table below presents the stated results.

**Table 2: Summary of Mediation Analysis**

Psychological Empowerment n=339						
R	R <sup>2</sup>	Se	F	Df1	Df2	P
0.5984	0.3581	0.1571	93.7188	2.000	336.000	0.0000
Paths			Coefficients		p-value	
EI → PE (a)			0.5489		0.0000	
PE → EP (b)			0.2682		0.0000	
EI → EP (c)			0.4034		0.0000	
EI → EP→EP (c')			0.5506		0.0000	
			Effect		95%CI	
					LLCI	ULCI
Total			0.5506		0.4614	0.6397
Direct			0.4034		0.4569	0.7027
Indirect			0.1472		0.0869	0.2157

Through psychological empowerment, emotional intelligence has a significant impact on employee performance concluded both direct (0.4034) and indirect effects (0.1472). The model's strong relationships are confirmed by the statistical significance of all paths ( $p < 0.0001$ ) and the strong overall effect of EI on EP (0.5506).

## Discussion

The study utilized a quantitative research approach, selecting private sector bank employees in Zone-4 of KP, Pakistan, as its target population to examine how emotional intelligence (EI), psychological empowerment (PE), and employees' performance (EP) relate to each other. Using convenience sampling, 356 questionnaires were distributed, with 339 responses received, yielding a high response rate of 95%. The data collection tool comprised a closed-ended questionnaire with Likert scale items, measuring constructs adopted from established



scales. The study variables were analyzed through SPSS, starting with reliability checks, followed by descriptive and correlation analysis, and finally mediation analysis using PROCESS macros by Hayes (2013). Reliability scores were high for each construct ( $\alpha$  values  $> 0.8$ ), confirming the robustness of the measures. The correlation analysis showed significant positive correlations between emotional intelligence (EI) and employee performance (EP) ( $\beta = 0.552$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), perceived efficacy (PE) and EP ( $\beta = 0.357$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), and EI and PE ( $\beta = 0.538$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), hence supporting hypotheses 1 to 3.

In testing mediation, the model confirmed PE as a mediator in the EI-EP relationship. As Table 2 demonstrates, EI has both direct ( $\beta = 0.4034$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) and indirect effects ( $\beta = 0.1472$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) on EP through PE, with a significant total effect of 0.5506. The R-squared value ( $R^2 = 0.3581$ ) indicates that EI and PE together explain approximately 36% of the variance in EP. The significance of all paths ( $p < 0.0001$ ) underscores the strength of the relationships within the model. These results imply that EI influences EP not only directly but also through fostering PE, which acts as a mediator, enhancing employees' sense of control and motivation and, consequently, their performance. This underscores the role of both emotional intelligence and empowerment in fostering a productive work environment where employees feel confident and capable.

### **Implications for Practice and Theory**

The results of this study contain implications for the administration of private banks and other entities. Managers can enhance employee performance by emphasizing the enhancement of emotional intelligence and empowerment initiatives. Emotional intelligence (EI) training programs that emphasize social skills, empathy, and emotional control may boost EI and empower participants, which might result in better performance. Moreover, organizational policies that promote autonomy, recognize employees' competencies, and align roles with personal values can enhance psychological empowerment, further supporting employee well-being and productivity. This study theoretically enhances the literature by identifying the mediating function of psychological empowerment in the association between emotional intelligence and employee performance, particularly within the banking sector of Pakistan. It clarifies the understanding of how emotional intelligence indirectly affects performance through the psychological state of empowerment, emphasizing the importance of psychological empowerment as a mediator in organizational behavior frameworks.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study presents significant findings currently contains obvious limitations. The sample was confined to private banks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zone 4, Pakistan, perhaps restricting the generalizability of the findings to other industries or locations. Future studies could expand the sample to other sectors or regions, enabling comparative analysis. Additionally, exploring longitudinal designs would allow researchers to examine the stability of the relationships over time and assess causal pathways between the variables. Future studies might enhance knowledge by incorporating other mediators or moderators, such as organizational justice or work happiness, to elucidate the interplay between emotional intelligence, empowerment, and performance.

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