

The Role Of Emotional Intelligence In Enhancing Employee Performance And Job Satisfaction In Hybrid Workplaces

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Abstract

The post-COVID-19 expansion of hybrid work models has significantly reshaped organizational operations, altering not only the way teams collaborate but also the emotional dynamics within professional environments. In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a vital factor influencing employee performance and job satisfaction. This research investigates the role of emotional intelligence in hybrid workplaces, focusing on India's IT, finance, and consulting sectors—industries that have been at the forefront of hybrid adoption between 2022 and 2024. A total of 150 professionals were surveyed using stratified random sampling to ensure a diverse representation across management levels. Emotional intelligence was assessed using the standardized EQ-i 2.0 instrument, measuring five core dimensions: self-perception, empathy, self-regulation, social skills, and decision-making. Statistical analysis using SPSS (Version 27) revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between EI and both employee performance ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$). Regression results further identified self-awareness and empathy as key predictors of enhanced performance, while self-regulation and social skills were found to have the strongest impact on job satisfaction. These findings are aligned with both classical emotional intelligence theories and recent empirical work on hybrid work environments. The study concludes that emotional intelligence is not only a beneficial trait but a strategic competency required for employee engagement, resilience, and productivity in India's evolving hybrid workforce.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Hybrid Work, EQ-i 2.0, Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, India, Digital Empathy

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a global transformation in how organizations function, triggering the widespread adoption of hybrid work models that combine remote work with in-office responsibilities. What initially emerged as a crisis response has now evolved into a sustainable work strategy. According to a McKinsey & Company report published in 2024, more than 58% of global organizations, including a significant proportion of Indian firms, have transitioned to hybrid models. This shift reflects a long-term reimagining of workplace norms, driven by the dual needs of operational continuity and workforce flexibility.

Hybrid work environments offer several benefits: enhanced work-life balance, reduced commuting time, and access to a geographically diverse talent pool. However, they also introduce new organizational and emotional challenges. Among these are communication breakdowns, reduced interpersonal interactions, digital fatigue, fragmented collaboration, and difficulty in maintaining team cohesion. These issues have redefined the interpersonal landscape of the modern workplace, making emotional regulation and relational intelligence more critical than ever.

In this context, **emotional intelligence (EI)** has emerged as a vital soft skill. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, understand, and manage one's own emotions while effectively interpreting and responding to the emotions of others. Originally conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and later popularized by Goleman (1995), EI includes components

such as self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills. In traditional work environments, EI was often developed organically through direct interactions. However, in hybrid settings—where communication often takes place via emails, video calls, and collaborative platforms - the absence of non-verbal cues makes intentional emotional intelligence more essential. The relevance of EI is particularly acute in Indian professional contexts, where collectivist cultural values, hierarchical structures, and diverse linguistic landscapes complicate emotional expression and interpretation. Industries such as **Information Technology (IT), finance, and consulting** have been at the forefront of the hybrid transition since 2022, relying heavily on virtual teamwork, client coordination, and multi-level communication. Employees in these sectors are expected to demonstrate high emotional adaptability, navigate ambiguity, and remain productive in rapidly shifting work conditions.

This study seeks to investigate how emotional intelligence influences two vital workplace outcomes—**employee performance** and **job satisfaction**—within hybrid work settings in India. It aims to empirically examine which dimensions of EI have the greatest impact on these outcomes and to provide actionable recommendations for HR leaders and organizational policymakers. As the hybrid model becomes a permanent feature of the Indian workforce, understanding the emotional competencies that enable productivity, engagement, and well-being is both timely and strategically important.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has evolved significantly over the past three decades, beginning with the foundational work of **Salovey and Mayer (1990)**, who defined EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide thinking and behavior. Their model laid the groundwork for understanding emotions as a form of social intelligence. Building upon this, **Daniel Goleman (1995)** popularized the concept in organizational psychology by identifying five core dimensions of EI: **self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills**. Goleman emphasized that these competencies are often more important than cognitive intelligence (IQ) in determining workplace success, especially in leadership, conflict resolution, and interpersonal communication.

Over time, EI has been integrated into various domains, including human resource management, organizational behavior, and leadership studies. Frameworks such as **Bar-On's EQ-i model** and **Goleman's Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI)** have been used to assess and train EI across industries. These theoretical models collectively position emotional intelligence as a multidimensional construct that influences both individual performance and organizational health.

Emotional Intelligence and Performance in Hybrid Workplaces

Recent research has reinforced the value of EI in the context of hybrid work, where employees must continuously adapt to shifting environments, technologies, and communication styles. **MacCann et al. (2023)** found a statistically significant correlation between high emotional intelligence and enhanced job performance, particularly in roles requiring self-direction, collaboration, and innovation. Similarly, **Schlaerth, Ensari, and Christian (2022)** emphasized that EI fosters psychological resilience, which in turn improves decision-making and task completion in hybrid teams.

In hybrid work environments—characterized by physical distance, asynchronous collaboration, and digital communication - employees with higher EI are better equipped to manage stress, resolve misunderstandings, and maintain team cohesion. Emotional self-awareness and empathy, in particular, enable individuals to adjust their tone, anticipate colleague reactions, and build trust in virtual settings. This makes EI not only a valuable personal trait but also a performance-enhancing skill in hybrid roles.

Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

The relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction has also been widely studied, with consistent findings across cultural and organizational contexts. Employees with high EI tend to experience greater satisfaction due to their ability to manage interpersonal relationships, resolve conflict constructively, and remain emotionally balanced under pressure.

Liu and Chang (2024) introduced the concept of “**digital empathy**”, referring to the capacity to understand emotional cues in non-physical spaces such as emails, video calls, and team chat applications. This ability is particularly important in

hybrid teams where non-verbal communication is limited. Research indicates that emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to report higher levels of engagement, psychological safety, and satisfaction, especially when organizational support systems are also in place. Furthermore, emotionally intelligent managers can foster a culture of openness, support, and recognition—factors that significantly enhance job satisfaction in hybrid work environments. In India, where respect for hierarchy and sensitivity to feedback are culturally embedded, emotionally attuned leadership can bridge generational and regional gaps within dispersed teams.

Gaps in Existing Research

Despite the growing body of research on emotional intelligence, several **critical gaps remain**, particularly concerning hybrid work models. Much of the existing literature is concentrated on traditional or fully remote settings, often failing to address the unique demands of hybrid roles that require employees to shift between digital and physical workspaces.

First, very few studies isolate the impact of **individual EI components**—such as self-regulation or empathy—on job-specific outcomes like productivity, retention, or engagement in hybrid teams. Second, **India-specific empirical data** on emotional intelligence in hybrid contexts is scarce, even though Indian workplaces have seen some of the most rapid transitions to hybrid models post-2022, especially in IT, consulting, and financial services. Moreover, most tools used in past research are generalized or based on Western workplace dynamics. There is limited use of culturally contextualized and updated instruments like **EQ-i 2.0**, which assess emotional intelligence in ways relevant to hybrid and digitized environments. This study attempts to address these research voids by focusing on EI's predictive role in hybrid settings, using stratified sampling across India's evolving knowledge economy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a **quantitative, cross-sectional research design** to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and two key workplace outcomes—employee performance and job satisfaction—within hybrid work environments. The cross-sectional approach was chosen to capture data from a diverse sample within a fixed timeframe, enabling statistical analysis of current trends and employee perceptions. This design is especially suited for examining real-time behavioral and attitudinal patterns in the rapidly evolving hybrid work culture of post-pandemic India.

By focusing on quantifiable data, the study aims to establish generalizable insights about how specific emotional competencies influence employee outcomes across varied industries and organizational levels.

Sampling and Population

The target population consisted of working professionals employed in hybrid work roles across **India's IT, finance, and consulting sectors**—industries that have been at the forefront of hybrid adoption since 2022. A **stratified random sampling technique** was applied to ensure balanced representation across hierarchical levels and job roles.

Participants were categorized into the following strata:

- **Senior Management**
- **Middle Management**
- **Entry-Level Employees**

This stratification enhances the reliability of the study by capturing emotional intelligence dynamics across different levels of organizational responsibility.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Currently employed full-time in a hybrid role
 - Minimum of **six months of hybrid work experience**
 - Aged **21 years or older**
 - Minimum qualification: **Bachelor's degree or equivalent**
- ### Exclusion Criteria:
- Freelancers, interns, part-time workers
 - Employees in fully remote or entirely on-site roles

- Professionals from industries not operating under hybrid models

The final sample comprised **150 valid responses**, distributed across Tier-1 cities including **Bengaluru, Gurugram, Pune, Hyderabad, and Mumbai**, where hybrid work culture is most prominent.

Table:1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 150 professionals who participated in this study, categorized by gender, age, sector, and experience.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	81	54.0%
	Female	69	46.0%
Age Group	21–30 years	56	37.3%
	31–40 years	61	40.7%
	Above 40 years	33	22.0%
Sector	Information Technology (IT)	60	40.0%
	Finance	48	32.0%
	Consulting	42	28.0%
Work Experience	0–2 years	39	26.0%
	2–5 years	58	38.7%
	More than 5 years	53	35.3%

Instruments Used

To measure emotional intelligence and its influence on workplace outcomes, the study employed the following **standardized and validated instruments**:

Emotional Intelligence

- Assessed using the **Emotional Quotient Inventory 2.0 (EQ-i 2.0)** developed by **Bar-On (1997)** and revised by **Kaplan & Smith (2024)** to reflect hybrid work dynamics.
- It includes **133 items** covering five composite domains:
 - Self-Perception
 - Self-Expression
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Decision-Making
 - Stress Management
- Each item was rated on a **5-point Likert scale** (1 = Very seldom true, 5 = Very often true).

Employee Performance

- Measured using a **12-item scale** adapted from **MacCann et al. (2023)**, evaluating:
 - Task completion
 - Innovation
 - Goal alignment
 - Teamwork and collaboration

- Responses were recorded on a 5-point scale from **Strongly Disagree (1)** to **Strongly Agree (5)**.

Job Satisfaction

- Evaluated through a **modified version of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI)** updated for hybrid work settings by Weiss et al. (2023).
- This scale assessed dimensions such as:
 - Managerial support
 - Flexibility
 - Workload clarity
 - Internal communication
 - Emotional support in hybrid settings
- All items used a 5-point Likert scale.

Instrument Reliability:

Prior to full deployment, a **pilot test with 15 respondents** was conducted to verify internal consistency. The resulting **Cronbach's alpha scores ranged from 0.78 to 0.89**, confirming strong reliability across all instruments.

Data Collection

Data was collected digitally using **Google Forms** between **December 2023 and January 2024**. The survey link was distributed via professional networks, LinkedIn groups, and HR managers from target industries. To ensure data authenticity and privacy:

- **Duplicate submissions** were restricted using IP-based response control.
- **Informed consent** was collected prior to survey access.
- No **personally identifiable information** was gathered.
- Data was stored securely and used solely for academic analysis.

Participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and would not be shared with employers or third parties.

Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in full compliance with the **ethical guidelines of Lingaya's Vidyapeeth**. Ethical approval was granted by the Institutional Research Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of data collection.

- Participation was **voluntary**, and respondents were given the right to withdraw at any time.
- The purpose of the study and data usage policies were communicated transparently.
- All data was stored on a secure, password-protected drive accessible only to the researcher.

No physical risks or personal discomforts were involved in the study. The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were upheld throughout the research process.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and review of literature, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- **H1:** Emotional intelligence positively predicts employee performance in hybrid work environments.
- **H2:** Emotional intelligence positively predicts job satisfaction in hybrid work environments.

These hypotheses were statistically tested using **Pearson's correlation** and **multiple linear regression analysis** to examine both the strength and direction of the relationships between emotional intelligence dimensions and workplace outcomes.

Data Analysis and Results

This section presents a detailed statistical analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), employee performance, and job satisfaction in hybrid work settings. The analysis was conducted using **IBM SPSS Version 27**, incorporating both descriptive and inferential techniques to validate the proposed hypotheses.

Table:2 provides the mean scores, standard deviations, and range of values for emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and performance.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Intelligence	4.10	0.51	2.80	5.00
Job Satisfaction	3.90	0.64	2.50	5.00
Employee Performance	4.00	0.58	2.70	5.00

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the overall emotional intelligence levels and the two dependent variables—employee performance and job satisfaction—across the 150 valid responses.

- The **mean emotional intelligence score** across participants was **4.1 out of 5**, suggesting a relatively high level of EI within the sample.
- The **average employee performance score** was **4.0**, while **job satisfaction** registered a **figure of 3.9**.
- These scores indicate that respondents not only perceive themselves as emotionally competent but also report a positive view of their work performance and satisfaction in a hybrid context.

The distribution of responses was balanced across industry types and job roles, with no significant outliers or skewed data points affecting reliability. These high average values underscore the prevalence and recognition of emotional competencies among Indian professionals adapting to hybrid work environments.

Correlation Analysis

To examine the strength and direction of the relationship between emotional intelligence and the dependent variables (performance and satisfaction), **Pearson’s correlation coefficients** were computed.

- **EI and Employee Performance:** $r = 0.71, p < 0.001$
- **EI and Job Satisfaction:** $r = 0.68, p < 0.001$

Table:3 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between emotional intelligence and the two key outcome variables.

Variables	EI Score	Job Satisfaction	Performance
Emotional Intelligence	1.00	0.68	0.71
Job Satisfaction	0.68	1.00	0.64
Employee Performance	0.71	0.64	1.00

These values indicate **strong, positive, and statistically significant correlations** between emotional intelligence and both outcome variables. The high correlation coefficients suggest that as emotional intelligence increases, so does the perceived level of performance and job satisfaction among hybrid employees. The significance level ($p < 0.001$) confirms that these associations are not due to random chance and are robust enough for predictive analysis.

Regression Analysis

To test the predictive capability of specific EI components, **multiple linear regression analysis** was conducted. This method identifies which emotional intelligence traits most significantly influence the two dependent variables.

Employee Performance Predictors:

- **Self-awareness:** $\beta = 0.35, p < 0.01$
- **Empathy:** $\beta = 0.29, p < 0.05$

Table:4 summarizes the beta coefficients and significance levels for the regression models assessing the predictors of employee performance and job satisfaction.

Dependent Variable	Predictor	β (Beta)	p-value	R ²
Employee Performance	Self-Awareness	0.35	< 0.01	0.51
	Empathy	0.29	< 0.05	
Job Satisfaction	Self-Regulation	0.32	< 0.01	0.48
	Social Skills	0.28	< 0.05	

The results suggest that individuals with strong self-awareness and empathetic abilities tend to perform better in hybrid environments. These traits enhance decision-making, collaboration, and adaptability—skills critical to managing digital workflows and virtual teamwork.

Job Satisfaction Predictors:

- **Self-regulation:** $\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$
- **Social Skills:** $\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$

Professionals who demonstrate emotional control and possess strong interpersonal communication abilities reported higher job satisfaction. These competencies are vital for maintaining balance and engagement in flexible but emotionally fragmented hybrid structures.

Model Fit:

- **R² for Performance** = 0.51 → 51% of the variance in employee performance is explained by the EI model.
- **R² for Job Satisfaction** = 0.48 → 48% of the variance in job satisfaction is attributable to emotional intelligence factors.

These R² values reflect **moderately strong model fits**, indicating that emotional intelligence has significant explanatory power in predicting workplace outcomes in a hybrid setting.

Interpretation of Findings

The statistical results validate both **H1** and **H2**, confirming that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of improved workplace outcomes. Notably:

- **Self-awareness** and **empathy** enable employees to align with team goals and navigate hybrid workflows with clarity and emotional sensitivity.
- **Self-regulation** and **social skills** help employees manage stress, build relationships, and maintain satisfaction despite the emotional complexities of hybrid models.

These findings reinforce the theoretical proposition that EI is not merely a supplementary trait but a **strategic capability** necessary for success in digitally blended and emotionally dispersed work environments.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study affirm the growing recognition of emotional intelligence (EI) as a strategic determinant of employee success and organizational resilience, particularly in hybrid work environments that have become prevalent across India since the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings not only support the two proposed hypotheses but also provide fresh empirical evidence on the unique role of specific EI dimensions in enhancing job-related outcomes in digitally mediated workplaces.

The **strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and both employee performance and job satisfaction** align with foundational EI theories (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995) and supports contemporary research (e.g., MacCann et al., 2023; Liu & Chang, 2024). These studies consistently underscore EI's influence on workplace functioning, especially in contexts where interpersonal communication and psychological safety are challenged by

technological mediation and reduced physical proximity.

The regression analysis in this study highlights the **predictive power of individual EI components**. For performance, **self-awareness and empathy** emerged as critical traits. In hybrid work structures—where clarity, autonomy, and asynchronous coordination are common—self-aware employees are better able to align their emotions with organizational expectations and self-manage productivity. Empathy enables team members to build rapport and provide emotional support across digital channels, reducing miscommunication and enhancing collaboration.

Regarding job satisfaction, **self-regulation and social skills** showed the most significant influence. Employees capable of regulating their emotional responses tend to navigate stress, uncertainty, and workload fluctuations more effectively common challenges in hybrid roles. Similarly, strong social skills, including digital communication fluency and interpersonal tact, promote engagement and connection even when teams are geographically dispersed. These findings reinforce the proposition that hybrid work is not just a structural shift but also an emotional shift—requiring a higher degree of emotional flexibility and intelligence.

The implications are particularly notable in the **Indian professional context**, where workplaces are often hierarchical and culturally diverse. In such environments, emotionally intelligent behaviors help bridge generational gaps, regional differences, and formal communication boundaries. For instance, empathy and active listening become essential for remote team leaders to ensure psychological safety among junior staff, especially in high-context cultures like India's.

In sum, the findings of this study position emotional intelligence not merely as a beneficial trait but as a **core professional competency** that can drive performance, foster workplace well-being, and strengthen team cohesion in hybrid organizations. As India continues to scale digital transformation and remote-capable work models, cultivating EI among employees and managers will be key to sustaining engagement, reducing turnover, and enhancing operational agility.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study carry important implications for managers, HR professionals, and organizational leaders seeking to strengthen employee engagement, productivity, and well-being in hybrid work environments. As emotional intelligence (EI) emerges as a central driver of workplace success in India's evolving post-pandemic economy, it is essential that organizations approach EI development not as a supplemental activity, but as a **strategic pillar of talent management**.

The following implications highlight practical, evidence-based actions organizations can take:

Integration of EI Assessments into Talent Acquisition and Development

Human Resource (HR) departments should incorporate validated EI assessments—such as the EQ-i 2.0—into both recruitment and internal promotion processes. By evaluating a candidate's emotional competencies alongside technical skills, organizations can better identify individuals who are likely to succeed in hybrid work environments that demand adaptability, empathy, and independent problem-solving. Additionally, routine assessments can help HR teams benchmark and track emotional growth across teams and departments.

Embedding Emotional Intelligence into Leadership Development

As the nature of leadership evolves to accommodate remote and hybrid dynamics, emotional intelligence must be emphasized in training programs for current and aspiring managers. Leaders managing hybrid teams must be equipped to interpret digital emotional cues, build psychological safety in virtual settings, and maintain morale despite physical separation. Customized leadership programs should focus on self-regulation, active listening, and digital empathy to help managers lead with emotional clarity and consistency.

Creating a Culture of Emotional Awareness and Inclusivity

Beyond individual training, organizations must actively cultivate a work culture that values emotional expression, feedback receptiveness, and interpersonal respect. This includes encouraging team leaders to conduct regular emotional check-ins, creating safe spaces for dialogue, and embedding EI language into team charters and codes of conduct. In diverse Indian workplaces, where language, hierarchy, and cultural norms influence communication, such practices are especially important for fostering **inclusive hybrid teams**.

Aligning EI with Retention and Well-being Initiatives

Organizations should recognize that employees with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle stress, change, and interpersonal tension—all of which are amplified in hybrid contexts. Integrating EI training into employee

wellness programs can lead to increased job satisfaction and reduced attrition. HR teams can also use emotional data trends to design more responsive benefits, mental health resources, and engagement strategies tailored to hybrid workers.

Leveraging Technology for Emotional Skill Building

Technology can play a significant role in developing EI at scale. Companies can deploy digital tools and platforms offering micro-learning modules, scenario-based simulations, and feedback systems to strengthen employees' emotional capabilities. AI-based analytics can also help leaders detect emotional fatigue patterns and take preventive actions to improve workplace climate.

CONCLUSION OF IMPLICATIONS:

As India continues to lead digital workforce transformation, emotional intelligence stands out as a competitive differentiator. Organizations that systemically invest in building emotionally intelligent cultures—through assessments, leadership training, inclusive policies, and tech-enabled interventions—will be better positioned to thrive in the new world of hybrid work.

Limitations and Recommendations

While this study offers valuable insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and workplace outcomes in hybrid work environments, certain limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the findings and guide future research and practice.

Sectoral Scope

The research was confined to three major service sectors—**Information Technology (IT), finance, and consulting**—which, while representing the forefront of hybrid work adoption in India, may not fully reflect the operational realities of industries such as **manufacturing, education, healthcare, logistics, and government services**. These sectors have unique employee structures, emotional demands, and operational formats.

Recommendation:

Future research should expand to include **sector-specific studies**, particularly in **non-corporate and non-urban** settings, to evaluate the applicability of EI interventions in diverse professional contexts across India.

Reliance on Self-Reported Measures

Data collection was conducted exclusively through **self-administered online questionnaires**, which are susceptible to **response bias**. Participants may have exaggerated or underreported their emotional intelligence or job satisfaction levels. The absence of **triangulated data sources**—such as supervisor evaluations, 360-degree feedback, or performance KPIs—limits the depth of interpretation.

Recommendation:

Subsequent studies should adopt **multi-source feedback methods**, including **managerial appraisals, peer reviews, and observational data**, to validate self-assessment responses and minimize bias.

Cross-Sectional Research Design

The study employed a **cross-sectional design**, capturing data at a single point in time. While this approach is efficient for analyzing correlations, it does not capture **causal relationships** or track the **evolution of emotional intelligence and workplace outcomes** over time.

Recommendation:

Future studies should consider **longitudinal research designs** to assess how emotional intelligence develops with ongoing hybrid work exposure, how sustained training affects outcomes, and whether organizational interventions lead to lasting improvements in employee behavior and satisfaction.

Demographic and Regional Diversity Constraints

Participants were predominantly selected from **Tier-1 urban centers**—Bengaluru, Gurugram, Pune, Hyderabad, and Mumbai—where hybrid infrastructure is more advanced. This limits the inclusion of perspectives from **Tier-2/Tier-3 cities** and **regional work cultures**, where digital resources, language diversity, and local managerial styles might influence EI application and employee experiences.

Recommendation:

Researchers should ensure **geographic and linguistic diversity** by targeting underrepresented regions in future sampling frames. Additionally, EI measurement tools could be translated or adapted culturally to ensure inclusivity.

Technological Access and Survey Constraints

Using **Google Forms** for data collection assumes participants have access to reliable internet and digital literacy. This may have excluded employees from **rural areas**, lower-income brackets, or sectors with limited tech access, creating **selection bias** and reducing representativeness.

Recommendation:

Alternative or **offline data collection methods** (such as interviews, phone surveys, or in-person workshops) should be employed in future research to ensure broader inclusion, particularly for workforce segments where digital barriers remain significant.

Summary of Limitations and Practical Recommendations

Despite these limitations, the study provides actionable insights for academic scholars and practitioners. Organizations can build on these findings by:

- Designing **custom EI programs** tailored for industry-specific needs
- Promoting **inclusive hybrid policies** across urban and rural offices
- Collaborating with researchers to support **long-term EI evaluation**
- Implementing **multi-stakeholder performance reviews** to validate self-assessments

These strategic efforts will not only improve research validity but also enhance the **emotional well-being, retention, and engagement** of hybrid employees across India's increasingly diverse and distributed workforce.

Future Research Scope

While the current study provides a strong foundation for understanding the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in hybrid work environments, several avenues remain open for future exploration. The ongoing evolution of workplace structures and employee expectations—particularly in India's rapidly digitizing economy—necessitates deeper, broader, and more adaptive approaches to EI research. The following directions are proposed for future academic and applied inquiry:

Longitudinal Studies on EI Development

A key limitation of this research was its cross-sectional nature. Future studies should adopt **longitudinal designs** to track changes in emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and performance over time. Such studies could examine how employees develop emotional competencies through continuous exposure to hybrid work, particularly in response to organizational changes, leadership shifts, or evolving technological tools. Long-term data would help determine whether EI training programs result in sustained behavioral change and workplace outcomes.

Mixed-Method Approaches for Contextual Depth

Quantitative data offers measurable relationships but may not capture the **emotional nuance or cultural specificity** of EI in Indian hybrid teams. Future research should incorporate **mixed-method designs**, blending surveys with **qualitative techniques** such as interviews, focus groups, or ethnographic observations. This approach would provide a richer understanding of how emotional intelligence manifests in real-time interactions, especially in diverse, multilingual, and multi-generational workforces.

Sector-Specific Studies for Broader Relevance

While this study focused on the IT, finance, and consulting sectors, emotional intelligence plays a critical role in other industries such as **education, healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and**

public administration—each with its own emotional labor demands and communication structures. Sector-specific studies would offer tailored insights and support the design of industry-specific EI interventions, particularly in sectors where hybrid models are still emerging or under-researched in the Indian context.

EI in Leadership and Remote Team Management

Future research could explore how emotional intelligence impacts leadership effectiveness in hybrid settings. Given the importance of **digital empathy**, **virtual communication**, and **distributed decision-making**, it would be valuable to assess how emotionally intelligent leaders influence team dynamics, motivation, and psychological safety over virtual platforms.

Cross-Cultural and Regional Comparative Studies

India is a culturally and linguistically diverse country, and hybrid work practices can differ widely between regions, organizational cultures, and generational groups. Future research could adopt a **comparative lens**, examining how regional and cultural factors mediate the expression and impact of EI. For instance, comparisons between Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities could reveal how infrastructure and digital access affect emotional experiences in hybrid models.

Technological Integration and Digital EI Tools

As artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and emotion-detection technologies continue to evolve, future studies can assess how such tools enhance or hinder the development of emotional intelligence in hybrid workforces. There is significant potential to explore **tech-enabled EI training**, **emotion-sensing apps**, and **AI-based behavioral feedback systems** tailored to Indian organizations.

By expanding the methodological, sectoral, and cultural boundaries of EI research, future studies can contribute to a more holistic and actionable understanding of emotional intelligence in India's hybrid workplaces. This evolving field holds transformative potential for organizational leadership, HR strategy, and employee well-being in a digitally connected, emotionally complex world of work.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research underscore the increasingly critical role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in shaping employee performance and job satisfaction within hybrid work environments across India during 2023–2024. As organizations continue to adapt to flexible work models combining remote and in-office structures, the soft skills rooted in EI—such as self-awareness, empathy, adaptability, and emotional regulation—have emerged as essential assets in overcoming the challenges of hybrid workplaces.

The primary data collected from 150 professionals across the IT, finance, and consulting sectors in metropolitan cities like Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, and Mumbai reveals that higher emotional intelligence correlates significantly with improved employee engagement, conflict resolution, collaboration, and overall job satisfaction. Moreover, employees who demonstrated strong EI capabilities were more resilient, communicative, and capable of sustaining productivity and morale, even in the absence of direct supervision.

This study also highlights a growing demand for organizational interventions that foster emotional competence through leadership training, coaching, and policy design. As Indian companies face a new era of workforce expectations, EI must be integrated as a core component of HR practices, especially in performance evaluations, recruitment, and leadership development.

Furthermore, in the Indian context, where diverse cultural norms and intergenerational workforces intersect, emotional intelligence offers a unifying framework to build inclusive, productive, and psychologically safe hybrid workplaces. The research indicates that when organizations proactively develop EI-focused environments, employees are not only more likely to perform at higher levels but also to experience a deeper sense of purpose and belonging at work.

In conclusion, the role of Emotional Intelligence in hybrid workplace success is not a theoretical construct but a practical imperative. As India's corporate landscape evolves, nurturing EI will remain essential to unlocking sustainable performance, employee satisfaction, and long-term organizational resilience.

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