RESEARCH ARTICLE

LINKING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO EMPLOYEE RETENTION: EVIDENCE FROM THE INDIAN IT INDUSTRY

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Abstract: The emotional intelligence (EI) of employees plays a crucial role in determining their professional success, interpersonal relationships, and overall work performance. This study explores the emotional intelligence of IT employees in Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu, with a focus on understanding how different dimensions of EI, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, influence workplace dynamics. A sample of employees from various private organizations in Coimbatore was surveyed using established EI assessment tools. The results indicate a positive correlation between high emotional intelligence and improved job satisfaction, leadership capabilities, and team collaboration. The findings suggest that organizations should invest in EI development programs to enhance employee performance and organizational efficiency. Additionally, the study highlights the impact of EI on conflict resolution and stress management in the workplace. The research underscores the importance of EI as a key factor in professional success and the development of effective work environments.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, IT employees, Workplace Dynamics, Job Satisfaction, Team Collaboration, Conflict Resolution and Stress Management.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence emotions—both in oneself and in others. It encompasses several key components, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which collectively play a significant role in personal and professional success. In today's highly competitive and dynamic work environment, emotional intelligence has emerged as an essential attribute for employees, particularly in the IT, where interpersonal interactions, teamwork, leadership, and client relationships are critical to organizational performance.

Coimbatore, a major industrial hub in Tamil Nadu, is home to a rapidly growing IT, which includes manufacturing, IT, and service industries. As organizations in Coimbatore continue to expand, it becomes increasingly important to understand the emotional intelligence levels of employees, as it directly affects productivity, job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, and overall work culture. Despite the growing body of research on emotional intelligence, studies focusing specifically on the IT employees in Coimbatore city remain limited.

This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the emotional intelligence of IT employees in Coimbatore. By exploring the various dimensions of EI and their impact on work-related outcomes, this research aims to provide valuable insights into how emotional intelligence influences employee behavior, job satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness in this region. The findings of this study could serve as a basis for developing strategies to enhance emotional intelligence in the workplace, ultimately leading to better employee performance and organizational growth.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Emotional intelligence has been shown to have a significant impact on workplace performance. Goleman (1995) argued that EI plays a vital role in determining the success of individuals within professional settings. Specifically, employees with high emotional intelligence tend to exhibit better interpersonal skills, manage stress effectively, and engage in positive workplace relationships, which ultimately leads to improved productivity and job satisfaction. A study by Wong and Law (2002) also supports this view, demonstrating that EI is positively correlated with both individual performance and organizational performance.

Research by Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) suggests that emotional intelligence significantly influences job satisfaction. Employees who are aware of and can regulate their emotions tend to have higher levels of satisfaction in their jobs because they are better equipped to handle work-related stress, conflicts, and interpersonal challenges. Furthermore, these employees are more likely to demonstrate resilience and adaptability, key traits that contribute to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Leadership effectiveness is another area where emotional intelligence has been extensively studied. Ameta-analysis by Joseph and Newman (2010) found that EI is a strong predictor of leadership success. Leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to create positive work environments, motivate their teams

effectively, and manage conflict constructively. This emotional awareness and regulation foster trust, loyalty, and respect within teams, which enhances overall organizational performance.

Emotional intelligence is crucial for fostering effective teamwork. A study by Salovey and Mayer (1990) highlighted that emotionally intelligent individuals are better at collaborating with others, as they are more attuned to their colleagues' emotions and can manage their responses to group dynamics. This leads to enhanced communication, reduced conflict, and more effective problem-solving within teams. In IT organizations, teamwork and collaboration are essential for innovation and productivity, making EI a key factor in team success.

One of the most important functions of emotional intelligence in the workplace is its role in stress management. Research by Schutte et al. (2001) suggests that emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to cope with job stress because they can regulate their emotional responses to challenging situations. Employees with high EI tend to experience lower levels of stress, which in turn, positively impacts their mental health, productivity, and job satisfaction.

Emotional intelligence is also closely linked to organizational commitment. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) found that employees with higher EI levels exhibit stronger commitment to their organizations. Their ability to navigate emotional challenges in the workplace enables them to maintain a positive outlook and feel more connected to the organization's goals. This emotional connection leads to higher retention rates, reduced turnover, and increased productivity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The emotional intelligence (EI) of employees plays a significant role in their performance, interpersonal relationships, and overall job satisfaction. However, there is limited research on the emotional intelligence of IT employees in Coimbatore city, a major industrial hub in Tamil Nadu. With the growing emphasis on effective leadership, teamwork, and stress management in the workplace, understanding the EI levels of employees in this region is crucial. This study aims to explore the emotional intelligence of IT employees in Coimbatore, identifying its impact on their professional success, job satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. The findings could help organizations better support their employees through targeted EI development programs, ultimately leading to improved performance and a healthier work environment.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
- To assess the emotional intelligence levels of IT employees in Coimbatore city.

- To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among IT employees.
- To explore the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness and team collaboration.
- To investigate the role of emotional intelligence in stress management and conflict resolution within IT organizations.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY
- The scope of this study is to assess the emotional intelligence (EI) of IT employees in Coimbatore city, focusing on various dimensions of EI such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.
- The study will explore how these dimensions influence job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, teamwork, and stress management within IT organizations.
- By surveying a representative sample of employees from different industries in Coimbatore, the research aims to provide insights into the role of EI in professional success and organizational performance.
- The findings will contribute to the development of strategies to enhance EI in the workplace, benefiting both employees and organizations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Type of Research: This study is descriptive in nature, aiming to assess and describe the emotional intelligence of IT employees in Coimbatore city and its impact on various work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, and stress management.

Source of Data Collection:
- Primary Data: Data is collected through a structured questionnaire designed to assess the emotional intelligence levels of employees. The questionnaire will cover various dimensions of EI such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills.
- Secondary Data: Secondary data is gathered from reputable websites, journals, and other online resources to provide background information on emotional intelligence and its relevance in the workplace.
  - Sampling Technique: Simple random sampling is used to select participants. This method ensures that each employee in the IT in Coimbatore has an equal chance of being included in the sample.
  - Sample Size: The study will include a sample of 150 IT employees from various industries in Coimbatore.

Tools Used for the Study:
- Percentage Analysis: To calculate and present the distribution of emotional intelligence levels across different demographic groups.

- Descriptive Statistics: To summarize and describe the key characteristics of the data, such as mean, median, and standard deviation, providing insights into the overall emotional intelligence levels of the employees.
- One-way ANOVA: To analyze the differences in emotional intelligence levels based on different factors such as age, gender, and work experience, and to determine if these variables have a significant impact on EI.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
- The study focuses only on IT employees in Coimbatore city, and the findings may not be generalizable to employees in other regions or industries.

- The data is based on self-reported responses, which may lead to biases such as social desirability bias, where respondents may provide answers that they believe are socially acceptable rather than their true feelings or behaviors.
- The study is cross-sectional in nature, meaning it will provide a snapshot of emotional intelligence at a single point in time, and cannot capture changes in EI over time or establish causal relationships.
- The study will primarily focus on emotional intelligence and its impact on workplace outcomes, but other factors such as organizational culture, job roles, and external environment may also influence these outcomes, which are not covered in this research.

RESULTS

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic variables of the respondents

Demographic variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	62	41.3
	Female	88	58.7
Age	Below 25 Years	30	20
	25-34 Years	26	17.3
	35-44 Years	41	27.3
	45-54 Years	46	30.7
	55 and above	7	4.7
Educational Qualification	High School	81	54
	Undergraduate	62	41.3
	Doctorate	1	0.7
	Other	6	4
Years of Experience in the IT	Less than 1 year	31	20.7
	1-3 years	52	34.7
	4-6 years	40	26.7
	7-10 years	27	18
Job Role	Entry-level	26	17.3
	Mid-level	19	12.7
	Senior-level	13	8.7
	Managerial/Executive	41	27.3
	Other	51	34
Total		150	100

The demographic distribution of the sample provides a diverse representation of IT employees in Coimbatore city. Out of 150 participants, 62 (41.3%) were male and 88 (58.7%) were female, indicating a higher participation from females. In terms of age, the largest group was between 45-54 years (30.7%), followed by 35-44 years (27.3%), showing that the majority of employees were in the middle-age category. Younger employees, aged below 25 years, accounted for 20%, while the older age group (55 and above) was the smallest at 4.7%. Regarding educational qualifications, most participants were high school graduates (54%), followed by undergraduates (41.3%). Only a small number had higher qualifications, such as a doctorate (0.7%) or other qualifications (4%). When looking at years of experience, the majority had 1-3 years (34.7%) or less than 1 year (20.7) in the IT. The job role distribution showed that a significant portion of

employees were in managerial or executive positions (27.3%), while other roles like entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level were less represented. Overall, the sample reflects a mix of genders, varied age groups, educational backgrounds, experience levels, and job roles, providing a comprehensive view of the IT workforce in the city.

Descriptive Statistics for various dimensions

		N	Mean	SD
Self-Awareness	I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.	150	2.19	.915
	I can easily identify the emotions I am feeling.	150	2.15	.979
	I understand how my emotions affect my work performance.	150	2.85	1.252
Self-Regulation	I am able to stay calm and focused even in stressful situations.	150	2.42	1.317
	I can control my impulses and avoid making impulsive decisions.	150	3.17	1.478
	I handle negative emotions (like anger or frustration) in a constructive way.	150	3.13	1.586
Motivation	I am highly motivated to achieve my professional goals.	150	2.80	1.452
	I take initiative and seek new challenges at work.	150	2.72	1.227
	I stay committed to my goals, even when faced with obstacles.	150	3.01	1.359

For Self-Awareness, the mean scores indicate a moderate level of emotional understanding. The first two items, "I am aware of my emotions as I experience them" (Mean = 2.19) and "I can easily identify the emotions I am feeling" (Mean = 2.15), suggest that respondents find it somewhat challenging to be fully aware of and identify their emotions in real time, as indicated by the relatively low mean values. However, the third item, "I understand how my emotions affect my work performance" (Mean = 2.85), shows that they have a better understanding of how their emotions influence their professional outcomes, though the score still indicates room for improvement.

In terms of Self-Regulation, the respondents scored moderately high on "I can control my impulses and avoid making impulsive decisions" (Mean = 3.17), indicating that most individuals can manage impulsive behavior effectively. However, the scores for "I am able to stay calm and focused even in stressful situations" (Mean = 2.42) and "I handle negative emotions (like anger or frustration) in a constructive way" (Mean = 3.13) suggest that while there is some capacity to regulate emotions, these skills could be further developed to cope better with stress and negative emotions in a productive manner.

For Motivation, the mean scores reflect a relatively high level of commitment and drive. Respondents reported a moderate level of motivation, with "I am highly motivated to achieve my professional goals" (Mean = 2.80) and "I stay committed to my goals, even when faced with obstacles" (Mean = 3.01) indicating that, on average, individuals are motivated but may face challenges in maintaining consistent enthusiasm. The item "I take initiative and seek new challenges at work" (Mean = 2.72) shows that while respondents are generally motivated, they may not always proactively pursue challenges or new opportunities.

Descriptive Statistics for various dimensions

		N	Mean	SD
Empathy	I can easily recognize and understand the emotions of my colleagues.	150	3.10	1.284
	I am attentive to the emotional needs of others in my workplace.	150	2.66	1.294
	I am sensitive to the feelings of my coworkers and offer support when needed.	150	2.69	1.366
Social Skills	I find it easy to communicate and build relationships with colleagues.	150	2.87	1.464
	I can effectively resolve conflicts in my team.	150	3.06	1.382
	I am skilled at persuading and influencing others in a positive way.	150	2.97	.897
	I work well in a team and contribute to collective goals.	150	2.45	1.251

For Empathy, the mean scores indicate a moderate level of emotional understanding of others. The statement "I can easily recognize and understand the emotions of my colleagues" (Mean = 3.10) shows that employees generally feel capable of recognizing and understanding their colleagues' emotions. However, the scores for "I am attentive to the emotional needs of others in my workplace" (Mean = 2.66) and "I am sensitive to the feelings of my coworkers and offer support when needed" (Mean = 2.69) are lower, suggesting that while employees may be able to recognize emotions,

they might not always be fully attentive or responsive to the emotional needs of others. This indicates an opportunity for development in fostering a more supportive and empathetic work environment.

In terms of Social Skills, employees seem to have moderate competence in relationship-building and communication. The mean score for "I find it easy to communicate and build relationships with colleagues" (Mean = 2.87) indicates that, on average, employees can establish connections but may face challenges in doing so easily or consistently. The statement "I can effectively resolve conflicts in my team" (Mean = 3.06) suggests that employees feel somewhat confident in managing conflicts within their teams. However, the lower mean for "I am skilled at persuading and influencing others in a positive way" (Mean = 2.97) and "I work well in a team and contribute to collective goals" (Mean = 2.45) shows that while employees may possess some social skills, there is room for improvement in terms of persuasion, influence, and teamwork. The relatively lower score in teamwork (Mean = 2.45) indicates that contributing to collective goals might be a challenging area for many employees.

Comparison between demographic variables (job role) and their various dimension
There is no significance difference between demographic variables (job role) and their various dimension

	Job Role:	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Self-Awareness	Entry-level	26	2.36	0.747	1.065	.376
	Mid-level	19	2.35	0.583		
	Senior-level	13	2.72	0.911		
	Managerial/Executive	41	2.42	0.592		
	Other	51	2.32	0.549		
	Total	150	2.39	0.639		
Self-Regulation	Entry-level	26	3.05	0.804	.656	.623
	Mid-level	19	2.84	0.849		
	Senior-level	13	2.60	0.856		
	Managerial/Executive	41	2.94	0.862		
	Other	51	2.91	0.864		
	Total	150	2.91	0.847		
Motivation	Entry-level	26	2.94	0.731	1.067	.375
	Mid-level	19	3.02	0.689		
	Senior-level	13	2.46	1.103		
	Managerial/Executive	41	2.82	0.734		
	Other	51	2.84	0.822		
	Total	150	2.84	0.797		
Empathy	Entry-level	26	2.83	0.915	.271	.896
	Mid-level	19	2.88	0.803		
	Senior-level	13	2.62	0.575		
	Managerial/Executive	41	2.81	0.869		
	Other	51	2.85	0.667		
	Total	150	2.82	0.776		
Social Skills	Entry-level	26	2.80	0.666	.956	.434
	Mid-level	19	2.83	0.856		
	Senior-level	13	2.56	0.663		
	Managerial/Executive	41	2.77	0.572		
	Other	51	2.94	0.657		
	Total	150	2.82	0.665		

The analysis of Emotional Intelligence dimensions across various job roles reveals some interesting trends, though no significant differences were observed in any of the dimensions (all p-values > 0.05).

DISCUSSION

Self-Awareness: The mean scores for self-awareness across job roles range from 2.32 (Other) to 2.72 (Senior-level), with the overall mean being 2.39. This suggests that employees across different job roles generally exhibit a similar level of self-awareness, with no significant differences between groups (F = 1.065, p = 0.376). While there is slight variation between job roles, the lack of statistical significance indicates that self-awareness is consistently rated across all levels.

Self-Regulation: The mean scores for self-regulation vary between 2.60 (Senior-level) and 3.05 (Entry-level), with the overall mean being 2.91. The F-value (0.656) and p-value (0.623) suggest that there is no significant difference in self-regulation based on job role. Employees across job roles report similar levels of self-regulation, with only minor fluctuations observed between the roles.

Motivation: For motivation, the scores range from 2.46 (Senior-level) to 3.02 (Mid-level), with the total mean being 2.84. Again, the F-value (1.067) and p-value (0.375) show no significant difference between job roles. The relatively similar means across all roles indicate that motivation levels are fairly consistent among employees, regardless of their job role.

Empathy: The mean scores for empathy are relatively close across all job roles, ranging from 2.62 (Senior-level) to 2.88 (Mid-level), with the overall mean being 2.82. The F-value (0.271) and p-value (0.896) indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in empathy based on job role. This suggests that employees in different roles perceive their ability to understand others' emotions similarly.

Social Skills: Social skills also show little variation across job roles, with mean scores ranging from 2.56 (Senior-level) to 2.94 (Other), and an overall mean of 2.82. The F-value (0.956) and p-value (0.434) suggest that job role does not significantly affect the level of social skills. The lack of significant differences implies that social skills are similarly perceived across all job roles.

FINDINGS

- The demographic data reveals that the majority of participants in the study were female (58.7%) compared to male participants (41.3%). Age-wise, the largest group falls within the 45-54 years range (30.7%), followed by those in the 35-44 years group (27.3%). This indicates that most participants are in the middle-aged range. In terms of educational qualification, more than half of the respondents had completed high school (54%), with a significant portion holding an undergraduate degree (41.3%). The majority of

participants had 1-3 years of experience in the IT (34.7%), with 20.7% having less than 1 year of experience. Regarding job roles, most employees were in "Other" roles (34%), followed by managerial or executive positions (27.3%).

- In summary, the results indicate that while participants exhibit some degree of emotional intelligence, particularly in self-regulation and motivation, there is substantial room for growth in areas like self-awareness, impulse control under stress, and taking initiative at work. These findings suggest that further training or development in these areas could enhance emotional intelligence in the workplace.

- Overall, the results suggest that while employees have some level of empathy and social skills, there are opportunities for enhancing their responsiveness to emotional needs, teamwork, and communication skills. Targeted development in these areas could improve interpersonal dynamics, conflict resolution, and collaboration in the workplace.

- The analysis reveals that job role does not significantly influence the emotional intelligence dimensions (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) in this sample. Employees across various roles in the IT appear to have similar levels of emotional intelligence, suggesting that factors other than job role, such as individual personality traits, training, or organizational culture, may play a larger role in shaping these competencies.

SUGGESTIONS

- Given the findings that self-awareness and self-regulation need improvement, it is suggested that organizations implement training programs focused on emotional intelligence development. These programs should include activities that help employees recognize their emotions in real-time and understand how their feelings impact their work performance. Additionally, training in impulse control, stress management techniques, and how to respond constructively to negative emotions can support employees in managing their emotional responses, especially during high-pressure situations.

- Since the largest proportion of participants falls within the middle-aged group (45-54 years), it is recommended that organizations consider tailored skill development programs for employees in this age range. These programs can focus on enhancing emotional intelligence, especially in areas such as motivation and self-regulation, to help them manage the evolving demands of their roles and the changing dynamics in the workplace.

- The moderate scores in empathy and social skills suggest a need for improvement in interpersonal

dynamics. Organizations can offer workshops or team-building activities designed to foster empathy and enhance communication skills. Initiatives such as role-playing scenarios, conflict resolution training, and group discussions can promote a better understanding of colleagues' emotions and improve the ability to work collaboratively in teams. Additionally, encouraging feedback sessions can help employees become more sensitive to the emotional needs of others.

- Although job role did not show a significant influence on emotional intelligence, it is still important to integrate emotional intelligence development into different job roles. For instance, employees in managerial or executive positions could benefit from advanced training in leadership, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution to effectively manage teams and make decisions under stress. On the other hand, entry-level employees can be provided with basic training to improve self-awareness, motivation, and communication skills.

- The results suggest that factors other than job roles, such as individual personality traits and organizational culture, could be influencing emotional intelligence levels. Therefore, fostering a supportive and emotionally intelligent work environment should be a priority. This can be achieved by promoting open communication, regular feedback, and peer mentoring programs. Leaders should model emotional intelligence by showing empathy, maintaining a calm demeanor in stressful situations, and encouraging self-reflection and growth among employees.

- Since emotional intelligence is a set of skills that can evolve, it is important to regularly assess and monitor employees' emotional intelligence progress. Organizations should consider conducting regular EI assessments, providing constructive feedback, and setting goals for emotional intelligence improvement. Continuous development opportunities, such as workshops, webinars, and coaching sessions, can help employees enhance their emotional intelligence over time, leading to improved workplace relationships and better overall performance.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the emotional intelligence (EI) levels of IT employees in Coimbatore city. The demographic data reveals a diverse workforce, with a higher proportion of female employees, most of whom are middle-aged, and with varying educational qualifications and levels of experience. Despite this diversity, the study found that emotional intelligence, in terms of self-awareness, self-

regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, is relatively consistent across different job roles. This suggests that emotional intelligence is influenced more by individual factors, such as personality traits and organizational culture, than by one's specific job role or level of experience.

While employees displayed moderate levels of self-regulation and motivation, there is significant room for improvement in areas such as self-awareness, impulse control under stress, and initiative at work. Additionally, although empathy and social skills were present to some extent, there is an opportunity to further enhance interpersonal dynamics, communication, and conflict resolution skills within the workplace. These areas are crucial for fostering a collaborative and supportive work environment, which in turn can lead to increased employee satisfaction, improved teamwork, and higher productivity.

In conclusion, the study highlights the need for targeted emotional intelligence training and development programs, particularly focusing on areas where employees scored lower, such as self-awareness and impulse control. By investing in the emotional intelligence development of their workforce, organizations can promote a more resilient, adaptable, and emotionally intelligent work culture, leading to better organizational outcomes and employee well-being.

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