

**RESEARCH PAPER****Managing Uncertainty: The Impact of Emotional Competence on Work Performance and Job Security in the Private Sector****<sup>1</sup>Zainab Abdul Khaliq\* <sup>2</sup>Dr. Muqarrab Akbar <sup>3</sup>Saima Kaniz**

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**\*Corresponding Author:** zainabch21@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This research explored the interplay between emotional competence and work performance among employees, focusing on the influence of job insecurities in an organizational setting. The study targeted private sector organizations and their workers in Pakistan, aiming to understand the impact of emotional competence on work performance and the moderating role of job insecurities. A web-based survey questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 300 respondents. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were conducted using SPSS v.20. The analysis revealed a significant positive association between emotional competence and work performance, indicating that performance may increase by up to 98% due to emotional competence. However, job insecurities had an insignificant negative relationship with both emotional competence and work performance. The study recommends reducing job insecurities to enhance emotional competence and work performance, thereby increasing organizational productivity. Future research should include variables like employee burnout and TQM practices.

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional Competence, Job Insecurities, Organizational Productivity, Pakistan, Private Sector, Work Performance**Introduction**

In the private sector, the interaction between emotional competence, work performance, and job insecurities holds a cardinal value in the larger organizational behavior. Emotional competence stands for the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others (Goleman et al., 1995). It covers skills like self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). These skills are indispensable for interpersonal interactions and are considered to create numerous affirmative organizational ramifications. Work performance is generally measured in the form of task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behavior (Tseng & Huang, 2011). Task performance is the ground form of accomplishing the duties and responsibilities of a job, whereas organizational citizenship behavior is a term used to describe a voluntary contribution to the productivity of the organization. Counterproductive work behavior refers to behavior that harms the organization or its members. Insecurities about the job are a kind of perceived threat of losing one's job (De Witte, 2000). It is a major stressor that might affect emotionally and psychologically the working ability of employees. In Pakistan, the private sector, at most times, evidences high job insecurities because of economic up and down, organizational restructuring, and competitive pressures in the market (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

## **Emotional Competence**

Emotional competence is useful for managing workplace relationships and enhancing the performance of work. A high level of emotional competence is linked to better work performance since they manage stress, collaborate in work, and deal with other everyday problems in the workplace (Goleman et al., 1995).

## **Work Performance**

Work performance is multidimensional and is composed of task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance. Factors such as emotional competence and job-related stressors influence work performance (Tseng & Huang, 2011).

## **Job Insecurities**

Job insecurities are highly prevalent in the private sector and can lead to negative outcomes, such as decreased job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, and poorer work performance (De Witte, 2000). The mere perception of job insecurity might lead to emotional responses that have a big impact on work behavior and work performance.

This study, therefore, tries to explore the inter-relationships that exist between these variables in the context of the Pakistani private sector. Through the understanding of these dynamics, organizations can develop strategies for enhancing the emotional competencies in their employees, reducing job insecurities, and improving work performance on the whole.

## **Literature Review**

In organizational behavior, the relationship between emotional competence, work performance, and job insecurities has been previously done. Emotional competence is the "capability of understanding and perceiving the management of emotions in oneself and others". A good chunk of the studies done under organizational behavior has related it to a couple of positive organizational outcomes such as enhanced work performance and reduced job insecurities. According to Goleman et al. (1995), a model by Mayer and Salovey (1997) of emotional intelligence, which includes emotional competence, lays emphasis on the ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions. According to Tseng & Huang, 2011, work performance is a multidimensional concept which includes but not limited to; task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behavior. Studies have shown that a positive effect of emotional competence has been found in relationship with respect to task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and counterproductive work behavior. For example, Goleman (1998) stated that people with high emotional competence tend to cope up with stress and cooperate and get along well with others and perform better. JI refers to a perceived threat that the employee has that they may lose their job, which could lead them to distress from the angle of the employees and adversely affect their emotional and psychological well-being, thereby affecting their work performance. Numerous recent studies have been done to further delve into these relationships and note the mediating and moderating roles of some important psychological factors. For example, a study developed by Wen et al., 2019, came to show that psychological capital mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance, thereby showing that high EI levels can boost performance by elevating psychological hardiness. At the same time, the work by Sanchez-Gomez and Bresó, 2020, came to show that work burnout mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance, with the highest levels of EI being related to lower

burnout and higher performance (IJERPH, 2020). Other, more recent work, the one by Năstasă and Fărcaș, 2015, once again proved the positive influence of emotional intelligence on job performance, taking particular notice that any intervention aimed at the increased EI of the employee would further result in a reduced level of job burnout and increased level of performance. This was in line with the work of Miao et al., 2017, who stated that higher EI related both to better job performance and job satisfaction.. A health care context research study by Stamouli (2021) reported emotional competence to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment between physicians and nurses. The buffering by high levels of EC against the highly negative impact of low job satisfaction on organizational commitment points toward the high importance of emotional skills in health care work environments (BMC Health Services Research, 2021).

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is a relationship between emotional competence and work performance.
2. There is a relationship between emotional competence and job insecurity
3. There is a relationship between job insecurity and work performance.

### **Material and Methods**

#### **Research Design**

This study is a quantitative research design adopted to determine the relationship of Emotional Competence (EC), Work Performance (WP), and Job Insecurities (JI) among the employees of the private sector in the Multan, Pakistan. A descriptive analysis and regression analysis were conducted to see through the relationships.

#### **Population of Study**

The population of this study consists of all the employees working in the private sector's various organizations in Multan, Pakistan. The particular geographic context will help in area-specific analysis, which has importance regarding the organizational behavior in the local context.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Data for the research were collected through a random sampling technique. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of private sector organizations. 320 were returned of them, and 300 were correctly filled in and usable for analysis. The number of samples has been chosen to make sure of the best representation and to achieve appropriate statistical power from the analysis conducted. Based on the statistical guidelines, it is sufficient to detect moderate effect sizes with a power of 0.80 in regression analysis when sample size=300, and hence, the study's findings can be considered robust and generalizable.

#### **Data Measurement Tools**

##### **Emotional Competence (EC1-EC15)**

Emotional competence is a crucial construct in the workplace, and to accurately assess it, we employed a well-established 15-item scale developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Their model defines emotional competence as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively. This scale has been widely used in research and demonstrates strong psychometric properties, including both reliability and validity.

### **Reliability**

Studies have shown the Salovey and Mayer (1990) scale to have high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically exceeding .80 (e.g., Schutte et al., 1998). This indicates that the items within the scale measure the same underlying construct (emotional competence) consistently.

### **Validity**

The scale demonstrates evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is established by showing the scale correlates positively with other measures of emotional intelligence (e.g., Lopes et al., 2004). Discriminant validity is shown when the scale does not correlate highly with measures of unrelated constructs (e.g., Bar-On, 2000). Overall, the Salovey and Mayer (1990) scale provides a reliable and valid measure of emotional competence for research purposes.

### **Work Performance (WP1-WP10)**

To assess work performance, we utilized a 10-item scale developed by Dulewicz and Higgs (2000). This scale focuses on various aspects of effective job performance, including task completion, quality of work, and meeting deadlines. Similar to the emotional competence scale, Dulewicz and Higgs' (2000) tool has been shown to be reliable in previous research.

### **Reliability**

Studies have reported good internal consistency for the Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) scale, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .75 to .85 (e.g., Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). This indicates that the items within the scale consistently measure the same underlying construct (work performance).

### **Validity**

The scale demonstrates evidence of content validity, meaning the items directly reflect the various dimensions of work performance (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000). Additionally, research suggests the scale has construct validity, as it correlates positively with supervisor ratings of performance (e.g., Burke & Day, 1986). Overall, the Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) scale provides a reliable and valid measure of work performance within a research context.

### **Job Insecurity (JI1-JI10)**

Job insecurity refers to the perception of job instability and the threat of potential job loss. To assess this construct, we employed a 10-item scale developed by De Witte (2000). This scale captures feelings of anxiety and uncertainty related to job security.

### **Reliability**

Studies have shown the De Witte (2000) scale to have good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically exceeding .80 (e.g., De Witte, 2010). This indicates that the items within the scale consistently measure the same underlying construct (job insecurity).

## **Validity**

The scale demonstrates evidence of content validity, as the items directly reflect the core aspects of job insecurity (De Witte, 2000). Additionally, research suggests the scale has construct validity, as it correlates positively with measures of stress and anxiety related to job security (e.g., Sonnentag & Richardsen, 2006). Overall, the De Witte (2000) scale provides a reliable and valid measure of job insecurity for research purposes.

By employing these reliable and validated instruments for emotional competence, work performance, and job insecurity, we ensured the accuracy and robustness of our findings in this study.

## **Data Analysis Tools**

Analysis was done on SPSS v.20. The following analyses were carried out:

Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the data. The mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage are part of a descriptive analysis. Reliability and Validity Tests this was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the scales used • Regression Analysis: This was conducted to determine how emotional competence relates to work performance and job insecurities. Tests were conducted on the correlation coefficient, regression coefficient Data Quality, Reliability, and Validity The scales were tested for their reliability. This was determined by the use of Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficient for all the items was above the threshold level of 0.70, showing high reliability. The validity of the scales was determined by peer review and pre-testing of the questionnaire.

## **Ethical Considerations**

This study adhered to ethical principles to ensure the well-being and privacy of participants. Here's how we addressed some key considerations:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants were provided with clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Informed consent was obtained before participation.
- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** All data was collected anonymously. Responses were coded to ensure participants couldn't be identified in the research report or any publications.
- **Data Security:** Measures were taken to maintain data security. Questionnaires were administered electronically or securely stored if paper-based. Participant data was kept confidential and accessed only by authorized researchers.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. No coercion or pressure was applied to participate. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.

## **Study Limitations**

A few limitations surround the current study the study is based on self-report questionnaires. Such data may suffer from a bias since the respondent may not report their actual feeling or behaviour. The sample was limited to a Multan, Pakistan sample of employees working in the private sector. The results may, therefore, not be generalized to other sectors or regions. • Variable Scope: The study has only selected a few variables

(EC, WP, JI). Other variables were not taken that may have had an impact on the study, such as employee burnout, total quality management practices, among others.

### **Results and Discussion**

This chapter presents the findings of the study investigating the relationships between emotional competence (EC), work performance (WP), and job insecurity (JI) among employees in the private sector of Multan, Pakistan.

### **Sample and Data Collection**

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to employees working in various private organizations within Multan. The data analysis is based on the 300 completed and valid questionnaires received from the respondents.

To understand the distribution of key factors and demographic characteristics, descriptive statistics were employed. Statistical software SPSS v.20 was used to analyze the collected data. While an initial overview included 330 participants, 30 data points were excluded due to incompleteness or inconsistencies.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

Various statistical tests were conducted to achieve comprehensive results. These analyses included:

**Descriptive Analysis:** This analysis aimed to assess data validity and reliability, explore demographic statistics, and provide an overview of the collected information. Subsections within this analysis include:

- Data Validity & Reliability Analysis
- Demographic Statistics Analysis

Following the descriptive analysis, a regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationships between the study variables. The specific regression analysis employed was:

- **Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Variables Regression analysis and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance):** This analysis helped identify the strength and direction of the relationships between emotional competence, work performance, and job insecurity.

The subsequent sections will delve deeper into the results of these analyses, starting with the data validity and reliability assessment for the emotional competence (EC) measure.

**Table 1**  
**Demographic Statistics of Respondents**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Gender	
Male	60
Female	40
Age	
20-30 years	20
31-40 years	50
Above 40 years	30
Educational Background	

Bachelor's Degree	40
Master's Degree	35
Other Qualifications	25
Years with Current Organization	
Less than 5 years	25
5-10 years	55
More than 10 years	20

The demographic analysis of the respondents shows that most of them were well represented in the population; 60% were males, and 40% were females. Majorities were found to be in the age group of 20-30 years (20%), 31-40 years (50%), and above 40 years (30%). In terms of educational background, 40% had a bachelor's degree, 35% had a master's degree, and 25% had other qualifications. Most of the respondents, 55%, had worked with the current organization for 5-10 years, while those with less than 5 years and those with more than 10 years were 25% and 20%, respectively.

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Emotional Competence	3.8	0.75
Work Performance	3.6	0.80
Job Insecurities	2.9	0.85

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the research variables. Notably, the average score for emotional competence is 3.8, 3.6 for work performance, and 2.9 for job insecurities, all ranging between 1 and 5. It describes the dispersion as moderately varied.

**Table 3**  
**Reliability of measures**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Emotional Competence	0.82
Work Performance	0.78
Job Insecurities	0.75

Reliability and Validity The scales showed Cronbach's alpha values for all variables indicating acceptable measurement properties, ranging from more than 0.70. The Cronbach's alpha for emotional competence was 0.82, for work performance, it was 0.78, and it was 0.75 for job insecurities. This goes to demonstrate that the scales had relatively high internal consistency. Peer review and pretesting of the questionnaire confirmed validity; that is to say, the items measured the intended constructs.

**Table 4**  
**Regression analysis of all variables**

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Beta	t-value	p-value
Emotional Competence	Work Performance	0.76	8.45	<0.001
Emotional Competence	Job Insecurities	-0.34	-3.22	0.001
Job Insecurities	Work Performance	-0.45	-4.56	<0.001

A regression analysis was run to determine the impact of emotional competence on work performance and job insecurities. The regression coefficient of emotional competence on work performance was significant,  $\beta = 0.76$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , where more emotional competence was associated with better work performance. In addition, the emotional competence regression coefficient on job insecurities was also significant,  $\beta = -0.34$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , which means that job insecurity goes down as emotional competence

goes up. The job insecurities regression coefficient on work performance was significant and negative,  $\beta = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , or, put differently, higher job insecurities are related to poor work performance. That is to say, the more an employee is emotionally competent, the better they are performing in their work. In the second relationship, that is, between emotional competence and job insecurities, it is a negative one, in the sense that emotionally competent employees feel more secure in their jobs. Conversely, it was also found that job insecurities negatively affected work performance significantly, which implies that job insecurity has the potential to adversely affect the productivity of an employee. Summary, these findings mean that the development of the emotional competence of the employees would result in the higher performance of work coupled with reduced job insecurities, and that is better organizational outcomes of those organizations. More organizational outcomes can be developed on account of the designing of organizational training programs designed to raise the emotional competence levels of the employees, which could have otherwise resulted in better work performance in the absence of job insecurity.

## **Discussion**

This study investigated the relationships between emotional competence (EC), work performance (WP), and job insecurity (JI) among employees in the private sector of Multan, Pakistan. The findings provide valuable insights into the interplay between these factors and offer implications for improving employee well-being and organizational outcomes.

## **Demographic Characteristics**

The demographic analysis revealed a relatively balanced representation of genders, with 60% male and 40% female participants. The age distribution also showed a good spread across three categories: 20-30 years (20%), 31-40 years (50%), and above 40 years (30%). Educational backgrounds were diverse, with 40% holding a bachelor's degree, 35% a master's degree, and 25% possessing other qualifications. The majority of respondents (55%) had worked with their current organization for 5-10 years, with 25% having less than 5 years and 20% having more than 10 years of tenure.

## **Measurement Properties and Descriptive Statistics**

The employed scales demonstrated acceptable reliability, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70 for all variables (emotional competence = 0.82, work performance = 0.78, job insecurities = 0.75) (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). This indicates that the measures possess internal consistency and reliably capture the intended constructs. The descriptive statistics (Table 2) provide an overview of the central tendency and dispersion for each variable. The mean scores for emotional competence (3.8) and work performance (3.6) suggest a moderate positive perception, while the mean for job insecurities (2.9) indicates a somewhat lower level of insecurity among the participants.

## **Relationships Between Emotional Competence, Work Performance, and Job Insecurity**

The regression analysis yielded significant results, supporting the hypothesized relationships between the study variables. As expected, emotional competence exhibited a positive and significant association with work performance ( $\beta = 0.76$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This aligns with previous research by Lopes et al. (2004) and Murphy & Cleveland (1995), who found that emotional intelligence (a broader construct encompassing emotional competence) positively impacts job performance. Employees with higher emotional



competence can leverage their abilities to manage emotions, build relationships, and navigate challenging situations, ultimately contributing to better performance outcomes.

Furthermore, emotional competence demonstrated a negative and significant relationship with job insecurities ( $\beta = -0.34$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This suggests that employees with stronger emotional competence skills experience lower levels of job insecurity. This finding is consistent with the work of Sonnentag and Richardsen (2006), who reported that emotional intelligence buffers against stress and anxiety related to job insecurity. Emotionally competent individuals may be better equipped to cope with organizational uncertainties and maintain a sense of security in their roles.

Finally, the analysis revealed a negative and significant association between job insecurity and work performance ( $\beta = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This confirms that higher levels of job insecurity are linked to poorer work performance. This finding is unsurprising, as employees who feel insecure about their jobs may experience decreased motivation, increased stress, and ultimately, diminished performance (De Witte, 2010).

### **Implications and Future Directions**

The results of this study highlight the importance of emotional competence for both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. By fostering emotional competence within their workforce, organizations can create a more positive and productive work environment. This can be achieved through targeted training programs that equip employees with skills in self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy, and social interaction (Schutte et al., 1998). Additionally, addressing factors that contribute to job insecurity, such as clear communication about job stability and opportunities for growth, can further enhance employee well-being and performance (Burke & Day, 1986).

This research opens doors for further investigation. Future studies could explore the mediating mechanisms through which emotional competence influences work performance and job insecurity. Additionally, research examining the influence of emotional competence on other organizational outcomes, such as employee turnover and customer satisfaction, could provide valuable insights for organizational development. Finally, studies conducted in different cultural contexts would enrich the understanding of the generalizability of these findings.

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