



Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Performance: The Mediating Roles of Employee Motivation and Conflict Management with the Moderating Effect of Organizational Support

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational performance, examining the mediating roles of employee motivation and conflict management and the moderating effect of organizational support. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the research seeks to clarify both direct and indirect pathways through which emotional competencies translate into enhanced organizational outcomes. Data were collected from managers and employees working in the manufacturing sector, using validated scales. Structural equation modeling was conducted with SmartPLS to test the hypothesized relationships. The results demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on organizational performance, both directly and indirectly. Specifically, employee motivation emerged as a strong mediator, highlighting how emotionally intelligent employees are better able to regulate themselves, remain engaged, and sustain performance. Conflict management also mediated the relationship, albeit to a smaller degree, suggesting that EI contributes to performance by facilitating constructive resolution of workplace disputes. In contrast, organizational support did not moderate the links between EI and either employee motivation or conflict management, indicating that support in this context may function as a baseline resource rather than an amplifying condition. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the centrality of emotional intelligence for organizational effectiveness, while also challenging assumptions about the conditional role of support.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Organizational Performance, Employee Motivation, Conflict Management and Organizational Support



Introduction

Organizations today operate in environments characterized by volatility, uncertainty, and constant change. In such conditions, performance is not only shaped by structural efficiencies but also by human dynamics. Employees are increasingly expected to engage in complex problem-solving, demonstrate adaptability, and collaborate effectively across diverse teams. Traditional approaches that emphasize technical efficiency alone are no longer sufficient for sustaining competitive advantage. Instead, scholars and practitioners highlight the importance of intangible capabilities that enhance workforce effectiveness and organizational adaptability (Núñez et al., 2023). The discourse in management research has shifted toward understanding how psychological and behavioral competencies contribute to organizational outcomes, recognizing that people represent both a strategic resource and a critical driver of performance (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anwar, 2022). In particular, emphasis has grown on the ways interpersonal dynamics, workplace support, and conflict handling shape the climate in which organizations pursue their goals. This shift highlights the recognition that organizational outcomes are the product of a broader ecosystem of relational, motivational, and contextual forces. Current debates in organizational behavior thus revolve around how these factors jointly determine performance, and how organizations can strategically align them to maximize resilience, productivity, and sustainability in an increasingly demanding global economy.

Recent literature consistently acknowledges the role of emotional capacities in improving workplace outcomes. Research shows that individuals who can manage emotions effectively enhance collaboration, reduce stress, and improve decision-making, leading to stronger organizational performance (Akhtar et al., 2022). Similarly, workplace motivation has long been identified as a critical factor that explains variations in employee engagement, discretionary effort, and long-term retention (Wadood, 2023). Conflict, while inevitable, can either harm or enhance organizational outcomes depending on how it is managed; integrative approaches to conflict resolution often contribute positively to innovation and performance (Kitusa et al., 2025). Moreover, perceptions of organizational support are linked to greater employee commitment and willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization (Younas et al., 2023). Despite these findings, most studies investigate these elements separately. Few attempts have been made to integrate them into a comprehensive framework, leaving gaps in understanding how they jointly shape performance outcomes.

The significance of this topic extends to global, national, and organizational contexts. At the global level, organizations face increased workforce diversity, cross-cultural collaboration, and rising mental health challenges. Surveys suggest that nearly 60% of employees worldwide report stress as a barrier to motivation and performance, which highlights the need to better understand emotional and relational dynamics at work (Frontiers, 2025). In emerging economies such as Pakistan, where organizational systems often struggle with resource constraints, bureaucracy, and talent retention, the challenge is even more acute. Studies highlight that employee disengagement, poor conflict resolution, and lack of support are recurring problems that hinder organizational productivity and innovation (Irwan, 2024). With local firms striving to compete globally, sustaining high levels of performance requires not only technical competence but also human-centered strategies. Moreover, workplace conflict remains a persistent challenge in many organizations, often exacerbated by inadequate managerial support and limited



emotional resources among employees. These realities call for more robust models that explain how motivational, emotional, and supportive mechanisms contribute to organizational performance. By addressing these concerns, research in this area can provide evidence-based insights to help organizations create healthier environments that foster resilience, commitment, and sustainable performance outcomes.

Although the roles of emotional intelligence, employee motivation, conflict management, and organizational support have been studied independently, their interrelationships remain insufficiently explored. For example, while evidence suggests that emotional intelligence enhances decision-making and teamwork, its direct effects on performance are often inconsistent across contexts (Iyer, 2025). This inconsistency indicates the possibility of indirect pathways, such as increased motivation or effective conflict resolution, which may explain the relationship more comprehensively. Similarly, conflict management has been studied as an isolated variable, with some findings suggesting positive effects on innovation and others reporting minimal or even negative impacts depending on context (Kitusa et al., 2025). This contradiction highlights the need to investigate mediating mechanisms.

Moreover, the moderating role of organizational support remains underexamined in integrated models. While perceived organizational support has been linked to performance and commitment, it is less clear whether and how it strengthens the pathways from emotional competencies and conflict-handling skills to performance outcomes (Younas et al., 2023). Most prior studies are also geographically concentrated in Western contexts or highly specialized sectors, which limits their applicability in emerging economies. This leaves a contextual gap, particularly in countries like Pakistan, where organizational challenges differ due to resource constraints, structural rigidities, and socio-cultural dynamics. Therefore, there is a need for research that not only integrates these constructs into a unified framework but also tests the model in contexts where organizational performance is especially vulnerable to human and relational factors. This study aims to fill this critical gap.

This research is important on several levels. From an academic perspective, it advances organizational behavior theory by integrating multiple constructs into a single model, thereby moving beyond fragmented approaches. By identifying both mediating and moderating mechanisms, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how emotional and relational factors impact performance. From a managerial standpoint, the findings can guide organizations in designing interventions that are not only targeted but also holistic. For instance, investing in emotional intelligence training without providing organizational support may yield limited results, but aligning support systems with employee development could generate stronger outcomes. Policymakers can also benefit from these insights, especially in emerging economies where institutional support for employees often lags behind global standards. On a broader scale, the research aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 8, which emphasizes decent work and economic growth. Enhancing organizational performance through better motivation, conflict management, and supportive environments ultimately contributes to more sustainable and equitable workplaces. Thus, the problem addressed in this study is not only academic but also practical and policy-relevant, making the research timely and necessary.

The value of this research lies in its integrative approach. Unlike prior studies that examine emotional intelligence, motivation, or conflict management separately, this



study develops and empirically tests a comprehensive framework. By considering mediating and moderating mechanisms together, it clarifies how organizational performance can be strengthened through interconnected processes. The study is also valuable because it is conducted in an emerging economy, adding contextual diversity to a literature heavily dominated by Western perspectives (Akhtar et al., 2022). Ultimately, this research provides insights with both theoretical depth and practical relevance, making it beneficial for scholars, managers, and policymakers. This study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory, which posits that employees reciprocate supportive organizational practices with positive behaviors and outcomes (Cropanzano et al., 2023). Emotional competencies, motivation, and conflict handling can be understood as resources exchanged in this process, while organizational support shapes the strength of these exchanges. Theoretically, the study extends social exchange logic to explain how emotional intelligence translates into organizational outcomes through mediators and moderators. Practically, the findings are expected to inform leadership development, HR practices, and policy frameworks that aim to foster sustainable organizational performance in dynamic and resource-constrained environments.

Theoretical Foundation

The main intellectual base of this work is the Social Exchange Theory (SET). Having its foundation in the seminal work of Blau (1964) SET has its roots in the larger sociological tradition of interpreting human behavior as a part of a system of interrelations. In its most basic form, the theory assumes that social interactions are regulated by an exchange process whereby individuals consider both costs and benefits of their action and tend to act in a manner that yields maximum rewards at minimum losses. As opposed to simple economic exchange, SET emphasizes the relational and intangible aspects of interaction, including trust, obligation and reciprocity that defines continued interactions in social and organizational settings.

The theory has been developed over the years to cater to the intricacies of the contemporary workplaces. Modern researchers point out that not all relationships are fixed transactions but the development of an exchange over time, by perceiving fairness, mutual respect and organizational support (Cropanzano et al., 2023). This development shows how early formulations which were mainly structural have evolved to be more subtle to incorporate both psychological and contextual elements. Recent discussions broaden the boundaries of the theory to the effects of the emotional, leadership, and support systems to form climates of reciprocity, and hence, affect individual and group outcomes (Wong and Tschan, 2022). Within the organizational context, SET offers a good explanation of how the actions of employees are influenced by their impressions of the working environment. Employees tend to pay back with increased motivation, co-operation and commitment when they feel that organizations care about their well-being, either by providing support systems, developmental opportunities, or by treating them fairly. On the other hand, the lack of this support can interfere with the state of reciprocity, undermining the engagement or performance (Younas et al., 2023). This study is thus directly based on this theory that the organizational environment mediates the routes between personal competencies and behaviors and their performance outcomes.

Recent empirical research confirms the applicability of SET to modern research. An instance of this is the more recent studies on the role in supportive climates and positive interactions that support employees in rising above volatile conditions and organizational



performance (Islam et al., 2024; Li et al., 2022). Similarly, the application of the theory in explaining the transformation of conflict resolution strategies and emotional capacities into organizational performance has been made through the mediation by trust and reciprocity (Ahmad et al., 2023). These applications highlight the all-inclusiveness and strength of SET in helping to overcome the current organizational issues. In this research, SET will offer the conceptual framework to relate the emotional, motivational, and relational processes with the organizational outcomes. Placing the research within the logic of exchange, it is possible to provide the explanation of not only whether these constructs are important but also why and how they are important in the overall context of reciprocal relationships. Therefore, SET may be considered the intellectual basis to bring the constructs of the study together in one model and to allow both theoretical and practical understanding.

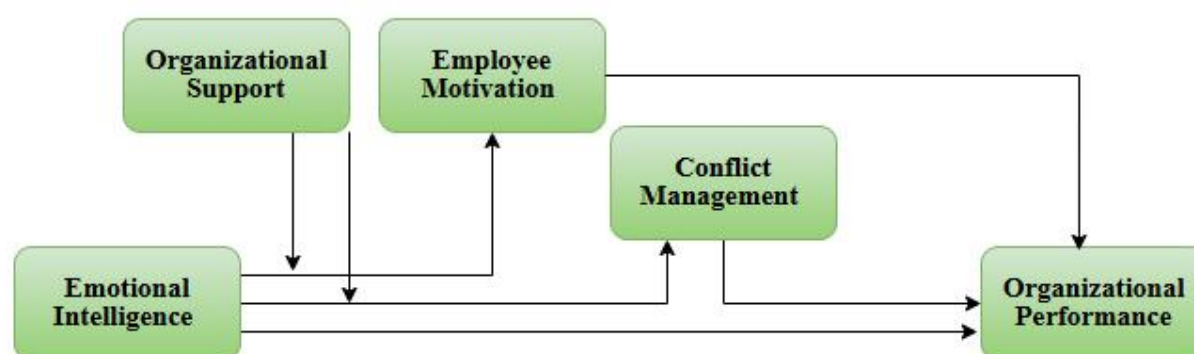


Figure 1: Research Model

Hypotheses Development

The skill of people to comprehend and control emotions has been singled out as a key ingredient of organizational achievement in a challenging and volatile setting. According to the recent studies, the workers who exhibit greater emotional abilities are more likely to be able to overcome interpersonal challenges, develop trust, and create healthier workplace environments that enable performance (Akhtar et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022). According to Social Exchange Theory, these abilities reinforced the degree of interactions between workers and their companies building up the reciprocity, trust, and esteem (Cropanzano et al., 2023). When people feel that their emotional skills can make them work together and eliminate friction, they will tend to put efforts, creativity, and dedication in their jobs, which will consequently empower group performances. However, the available literature also reveals the differences in the magnitude of these effects in different situations, which implies that the connection between emotional resources and organizational performance is widely recognized, but additional empirical studies are required to define its consistency and magnitude (Ahmad et al., 2023).

It is based on this premise that it is valid to posit that emotional capacities can be viewed as a type of intangible resource that is both directly and indirectly involved in organizational performance as a result of exchange processes. By being able to control their emotions and those of other employees, they create conditions in which cooperation, problem-solving, and resilience can occur. This is consistent with the principle of reciprocity inherent in Social Exchange Theory where organizations reap when individuals invest in the broader objectives in a positive manner, and employees feel that



their investment has been returned in performance rewards and encouragement. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Emotional intelligence has a positive effect on organizational performance.

The skill of controlling emotions in the workplace is becoming more and more recognized as a tool that helps build better relationships, be more adaptive, and collaborative. Research has shown that employees who have a greater level of emotional ability are more inclined to work and remain focused and persist in achieving the organizational objectives, which intensifies their motivation levels (Akhtar et al., 2022; Iyer, 2025). Under the concept of the Social Exchange Theory, emotional intelligence promotes good exchanges by giving a feeling of justice and support, which are returned by the employees in the form of increased motivation and commitment (Cropanzano et al., 2023). In this context, motivation is a psychological process that converts emotional awareness to focused behavior that is advantageous to the organization. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Employee motivation mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance.

Workplace conflict is an inevitable fact but what it produces varies greatly depending on the manner of handling it. It has been shown that emotionally competent employees can more effectively de-escalate tensions, engage in disagreements positively, and use conflicts to learn and become innovative (Wong and Tschan, 2022). With the application of the Social Exchange Theory, these abilities can be explained as the resources that minimize the perceived cost of exchange and maximize the probability of cooperative reciprocity. Conflict management, in its turn, is a channel in which emotional intelligence can have its voice since employees who can manage conflicts effectively help to make interactions smoother, increase trust and achieve better organizational outcomes (Ahmad et al., 2023). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

H3: Conflict management mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance.

Emotional capacities do not operate in isolation but are shaped by the organizational context in which employees work. While employees with high emotional intelligence are generally more motivated, the strength of this link depends on whether the organization provides recognition, fairness, and supportive structures. Recent research demonstrates that when employees perceive strong organizational support, they are more likely to translate their emotional competencies into motivation because they trust that their efforts will be reciprocated (Younas et al., 2023). From the lens of Social Exchange Theory, organizational support strengthens the reciprocity cycle, whereby employees' emotional regulation and empathy are rewarded with organizational care, fostering deeper motivation. Conversely, in unsupportive environments, even emotionally intelligent employees may hesitate to fully invest effort, as the perceived imbalance in exchange discourages sustained motivation (Islam et al., 2024). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Organizational support positively moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee motivation

Similarly, the effectiveness of emotionally intelligent employees in handling conflict is shaped by organizational backing. Employees who can regulate emotions and approach disagreements constructively are more likely to succeed when they perceive that the organization provides a supportive climate, fair conflict resolution mechanisms, and



trust-based relationships. Studies show that organizational support enhances the application of emotional competencies by encouraging open communication and providing resources for collaborative conflict resolution (Ahmad et al., 2023; Wong & Tschan, 2022). Within Social Exchange Theory, this reflects a reciprocal dynamic in which supportive organizations reduce the risks associated with engaging in conflict resolution, thereby enabling emotionally intelligent employees to apply their skills more confidently. Without such support, employees may avoid conflicts altogether or fail to leverage their emotional skills effectively. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Organizational support positively moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and conflict management

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, which is particularly well suited to examining complex relationships among psychological and organizational constructs within a defined timeframe. A quantitative approach allows for the systematic measurement and statistical testing of hypothesized associations, ensuring objectivity and generalizability of findings. The cross-sectional design was chosen because it facilitates the simultaneous collection of data on emotional intelligence, employee motivation, conflict management, organizational support, and organizational performance, making it both resource-efficient and aligned with prior organizational behavior studies (Queirós et al., 2022). This design has been widely applied in management and human resource research for capturing behavioral and attitudinal variables that do not require longitudinal tracking, thereby ensuring methodological rigor in organizational contexts (Apuke, 2023).

The target population for this study comprised middle- and senior-level employees working in the manufacturing sector of Pakistan, particularly in textile and apparel firms. This sector was chosen because it is labor-intensive, requires high levels of coordination and conflict management, and contributes significantly to the national economy, making it a critical setting for evaluating the role of emotional intelligence in performance outcomes (Khalid & Ali, 2023). Employees in this sector frequently encounter challenges that demand emotional regulation, effective motivation, and supportive organizational climates, thus offering an appropriate context for testing the proposed framework. The sample was determined using a proportionate stratified random sampling method to ensure representation across firms of varying sizes. Based on Item Response Theory, with 25 observed items across all constructs and the recommended 10 responses per item, the minimum required sample size was 250. To strengthen reliability and reduce the risk of non-response bias, 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 350 valid responses were retained for analysis, which exceeds the recommended threshold for structural equation modeling (Kline, 2023).

The constructs in this study were measured using validated instruments from prior research. Emotional intelligence was assessed using Wong and Law's (2002) Emotional Intelligence Scale, consisting of 16 items. Employee motivation was measured through the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) developed by Tremblay et al. (2009), comprising 18 items. Conflict management was captured using Rahim's (2002) Organizational Conflict Inventory-II, with 10 items, while organizational support was measured with Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) Survey of Perceived Organizational Support, using 8 items. Organizational performance was assessed through a 7-item scale adapted



from Delaney and Huselid (1996). All items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 29 for descriptive and inferential statistics and SmartPLS 4 for structural equation modeling, path analysis, and hypothesis testing. The combination of these tools ensured methodological robustness by addressing issues of measurement validity, structural relationships, and predictive accuracy (Hair et al., 2022). This multi-tool strategy enhanced the credibility and transparency of the findings.

Data analysis

Table 1: Regression weights

	Items	CM	EI	EM	OP	OS
Conflict Management	CM2	0.788				
	CM3	0.771				
	CM4	0.811				
	CM5	0.868				
	CM6	0.794				
	CM7	0.813				
Emotional intelligence	EI1		0.887			
	EI2		0.868			
	EI3		0.850			
	EI4		0.824			
	EI5		0.867			
	EI6		0.891			
	EI7		0.820			
	EI8		0.912			
Employee Motivation	EM1			0.808		
	EM2			0.813		
	EM3			0.809		
	EM4			0.864		
	EM5			0.855		
	EM6			0.798		
Organizational Performance	OP1				0.863	
	OP2				0.910	
	OP3				0.872	
	OP4				0.910	
	OP5				0.851	
	OP6				0.865	
Organizational Support	OS1					0.865
	OS2					0.887
	OS3					0.867
	OS4					0.895
	OS5					0.911
	OS6					0.935



OS7	0.890
OS8	0.915

The loading of the factors provided to all constructs has high convergent validity because all items have a high loading that exceeds the recommended value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). The scores of conflict management and emotional intelligence vary between 0.771 and 0.868 and 0.820 to 0.912 respectively, which means that the indicators effectively measure the underlying latent constructs. On the same note, the motivation items of employees score between 0.798 and 0.864 items, which indicates internal consistency, and organizational performance items score between 0.851 and 0.910, indicating strong measurement quality. Organizational support is the most reliable with loadings of 0.865-0.935 indicating its high construct representation. These findings confirm the fact that the measurement model has a good indicator reliability that is vital in establishing the validity of subsequent structural analysis (Kline, 2023).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Conflict Management	0.894	0.918	0.653
Emotional Intelligence	0.952	0.960	0.749
Employee Motivation	0.906	0.927	0.681
Organizational Performance	0.941	0.953	0.772
Organizational Support	0.966	0.970	0.802

All the constructs in the model have good psychometrics as indicated by their reliability and validity statistics. The alpha values are greater than 0.70 with a range of 0.894 in conflict management to 0.966 in organizational support and indicate high internal consistency (Hair et al., 2022). The composite reliability values are also beyond the recommended cutoff of 0.70 and the scores are in the range of 0.918 to 0.970, which also reflects the consistent and stable measurement of the constructs. Moreover, the average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs is over the 0.50 threshold, with the values of 0.653 to 0.802, which proves convergent validity and makes sure that a construct in question explains a significant percentage of variance in its indicators (Kline, 2023).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

Variables	CM	EI	EM	OP	OS
Conflict Management					
Emotional Intelligence	0.438				
Employee Motivation	0.481	0.617			
Organizational Performance	0.475	0.578	0.608		
Organizational Support	0.130	0.136	0.048	0.077	



The values of the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) show that discriminant validity is high among the constructs with all correlations lower than the conservative value of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2022). The maximum HTMT is attained between emotional intelligence and employee motivation (0.617), then emotional intelligence and organizational performance (0.578), both at acceptable levels implying that emotional intelligence and organizational performance are different constructs but have empirical correlation. Reduced HTMT values, including organizational support to other constructs (0.048 to 0.136) are additional supports to distinctiveness. This evidence shows that the constructs are reliable as well as sufficiently discriminant, which guarantees the soundness of the measurement model to be used in further structural analysis.

Table 4: Model Fitness

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.055	0.064
d_ULS	1.770	2.450
d_G	1.009	1.025
Chi-square	1906.963	1911.835
NFI	0.833	0.832

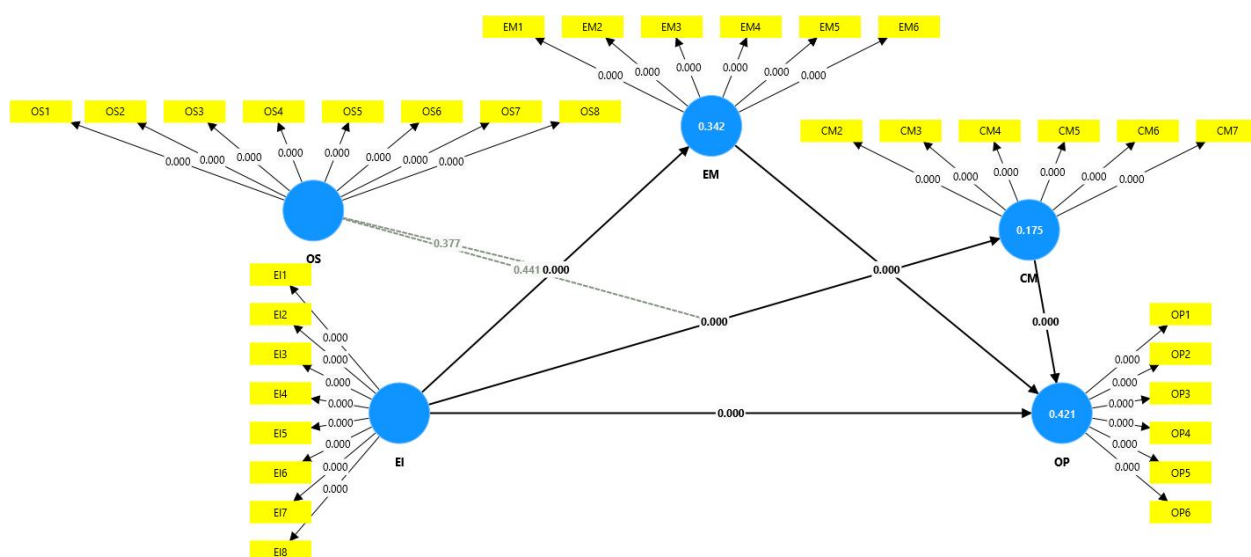


Figure 2: Structural Equation Modelling

The model fit indices demonstrate that the measurement model meets acceptable standards for structural equation modeling. The SRMR values of 0.055 for the saturated model and 0.064 for the estimated model fall below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a good model fit (Hair et al., 2022). Similarly, the d_ULS and d_G values are close between the saturated and estimated models, suggesting minimal discrepancy and supporting the model's reliability. The chi-square values, while relatively high (1906.963 and 1911.835), are expected in large-sample SEM applications, as chi-square is highly sensitive to sample size (Kline, 2023). The NFI values of 0.833 and 0.832 exceed the minimum acceptable cutoff of 0.80, further confirming adequate fit.



Table 5: Findings

Hypotheses	Original sample	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Emotional Intelligence -> Organizational Performance	0.294	0.053	5.563	0.000
Emotional Intelligence -> Employee Motivation	0.183	0.036	5.139	0.000
Emotional Intelligence -> Conflict Management	0.077	0.023	3.359	0.001
Organizational Support x Emotional Intelligence -> Conflict Management	0.056	0.073	0.771	0.441
Organizational Support x Emotional Intelligence -> Employee Motivation	0.038	0.043	0.884	0.377

The hypothesis testing results provide strong support for most of the proposed relationships, while the moderating effects are not statistically significant. Emotional intelligence shows a significant positive direct effect on organizational performance ($\beta = 0.294$, $t = 5.563$, $p < 0.001$), affirming its critical role in driving organizational outcomes. Moreover, employee motivation mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational performance ($\beta = 0.183$, $t = 5.139$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that emotionally intelligent employees are more motivated, which enhances performance. Conflict management also acts as a significant mediator ($\beta = 0.077$, $t = 3.359$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that emotional intelligence contributes to improved performance by fostering effective conflict resolution. However, the moderating role of organizational support in strengthening the links between emotional intelligence and conflict management ($\beta = 0.056$, $t = 0.771$, $p = 0.441$) and between emotional intelligence and employee motivation ($\beta = 0.038$, $t = 0.884$, $p = 0.377$) is statistically insignificant. These findings imply that while emotional intelligence directly and indirectly enhances organizational performance, organizational support does not significantly alter these relationships in this context.

Discussion

The pattern of results yields a coherent story: emotional intelligence (EI) exerts a meaningful influence on organizational performance both directly and indirectly via employee motivation and conflict management, while the anticipated strengthening role of perceived organizational support (OS) on EI's effects was not observed. Interpreting these hypothesis-wise clarifies how the findings align with Social Exchange Theory (SET) and with contemporary empirical work, and it points to theory-refining and methodological considerations for future research.

The significant direct effect of EI on organizational performance is consistent with SET's core insight that individual resources and relational competencies create reciprocal benefits for organizations: emotionally competent employees contribute to smoother interactions, better decision-making, and proactive problem solving, which management rewards through recognition and responsibility (Cropanzano et al., 2023). Empirical studies similarly report positive links between EI and organizational outcomes in diverse contexts, suggesting that EI functions as a form of human capital that translates into measurable performance gains (Akhtar et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022). The moderate



magnitude of the direct effect observed here indicates that while EI has an independent role, it likely operates alongside other psychological and contextual mechanisms consistent with a view of EI as both a direct antecedent and an enabler of downstream processes.

The mediation of EI employee motivation organizational performance provides clear support for motivation as a primary psychological mechanism. The result accords with theoretical expectations that EI fosters self-regulation, goal-focus, and intrinsic engagement, which translate into sustained effort and higher-quality task performance (Wadood, 2023). From an exchange perspective, emotionally aware employees are more likely to perceive fair treatment and to invest discretionary effort when motivated, producing a reciprocated organizational benefit (Cropanzano et al., 2023). The relatively larger mediated effect through motivation compared with the conflict-management pathway suggests that motivational processes are a principal conduit for EI's impact on performance in the present sample, mirroring prior empirical findings that emphasize motivational mediators in EI-performance linkages (Akhtar et al., 2022).

Conflict management also functions as a significant, albeit smaller, mediator, indicating that EI contributes to performance by enabling more constructive handling of disagreements. This aligns with research showing that emotionally skilled employees de-escalate tensions, facilitate collaboration, and turn conflict into constructive debate, thereby protecting team functioning and productivity (Wong & Tschan, 2022; Ahmad et al., 2023). The smaller effect size is theoretically plausible: conflict-management benefits may be episodic (dependent on the frequency and intensity of disputes) and more salient at the team level than at the individual-performance level. Contextual factors in manufacturing environments where standardized processes and task interdependence vary may also limit the incremental performance gains attributable to conflict resolution relative to the broader, continuous effect of motivation (Irwan, 2024).

The nonsignificant moderating effects of organizational support on the EI, conflict-management and EI, motivation paths warrant careful interpretation. SET and prior studies led us to expect that higher perceived support would amplify the returns on emotional competencies (Younas et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2024). However, several plausible explanations can account for the null findings. Methodologically, tests of interaction effects demand greater statistical power and sufficient variation in the moderator; although the sample met conventional SEM thresholds, interaction detection in PLS-SEM can be underpowered without very large samples or precise product-indicator approaches (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2023). Empirically, the data suggested organizational support was reliably measured but exhibited low covariation with other constructs in HTMT results, which may reflect range restriction or a uniformly experienced level of support across firms' conditions that attenuate observable moderation. Substantively, it is possible that in the sampled manufacturing context, formal organizational support operates as a baseline expectation or functions through different mechanisms (for example, as a direct antecedent to performance or as a mediator), rather than as a conditional amplifier of EI's effects; this would be consistent with studies that find context-dependent boundary conditions for POS effects (Islam et al., 2024). Cultural or sectoral norms around support and reciprocity may alter how support interacts with individual competencies, suggesting refinement in applying SET to specific national or industry settings.



Limitations and Future Directions

Although the present study provides valuable insights into the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing organizational performance through employee motivation and conflict management, several limitations must be acknowledged. One notable limitation relates to the scope of organizational support as a moderating variable. While organizational support was expected to strengthen the relationship between emotional intelligence and the mediating mechanisms, the findings did not provide empirical support for this assumption. This may suggest that support, as measured in this study, did not fully capture its multidimensional nature, such as distinguishing between instrumental support (resources, training) and socio-emotional support (recognition, fairness). The use of a unidimensional measure might have restricted the explanatory power of the construct, limiting insights into how different forms of support may condition the influence of emotional competencies on workplace outcomes. Another limitation is the concentration of data collection within the manufacturing sector, which may constrain the generalizability of findings to service-based or knowledge-intensive industries where emotional intelligence and support systems are likely to play a different role in shaping performance outcomes. Furthermore, while validated scales were used for each construct, reliance on self-reported survey data raises the potential for response biases, such as social desirability, which could inflate associations among constructs.

Based on these limitations, there are a number of avenues of future research worth considering. To begin with, future research must be more subtle in its approach towards organizational support, including different aspects of organizational support, including supervisory support, peer support, and organizational justice, which can moderate the pathways investigated in the current research in different ways (Islam et al., 2024). It may also be interesting to investigate moderators like the leadership style, psychological safety, or organizational culture that may add more information about conditions of the boundary that shape the EI-performance relationship (Ahmad et al., 2023). Second, the model could be expanded in the future with a focus on other mediators, such as job satisfaction, resilience, or innovative behavior, which might become the mechanisms of how the employees with high emotional intelligence can play a role in organizational results (Wong and Tschan, 2022). Third, the comparisons should be made across sectors and cultures to determine the extent to which the observed relationships are specific to the context or can be found in other industries and national contexts. As an example, the benefits of behaviors of emotional intelligence might be more powerful in service oriented or collectivist culture where interpersonal relationships are especially relevant. Lastly, the future work should be based on the role of digital transformation and technology adoption as the situational factors, which can interact with the competencies of employees, their motivation, and conflict management to affect the organizational performance (Irwan, 2024). These extensions would not only fill the gaps in the current research but would also contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge on the operation of emotional intelligence in the complex organizational contexts.

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