



# Influence of Emotional Intelligence for Mitigation of Employee Alienation in Indian Higher Education Institutions-With Special Reference to Bengaluru

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**Citation:** Nisha Francis, K M Sharath Kumar (2023), Influence of Emotional Intelligence for Mitigation of Employee Alienation in Indian Higher Education Institutions-With Special Reference to Bengaluru, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 29(4), 1642-1655

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v29i4.6561

## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

In today's world, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are challenged to confront the impact of global accreditation, and policy changes by the Government. In this scenario, Emotional Intelligence and Employee Alienation are critical components to measure employee job performance. This study examines the influence of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Alienation and Job Performance in Indian HEIs. Further, the mediating effect of Negative and Positive Emotions along with moderating effect of Employment Type (Teaching and Non-Teaching) are investigated.

The proposed cross-sectional study collected data from 288 employees of eight Indian HEIs in Bengaluru using a stratified sampling technique. Structural Equation Modelling was used to analyse the interrelationships. Results revealed a negative association between Emotional Intelligence and Employee Alienation, as well as Employee Alienation and Job Performance. The findings revealed the moderating effect of employment type on these relationships with a higher impact on non-teaching staff. Further, Negative Emotions found partially mediating the Emotional Intelligence-Employee Alienation relationship with significant direct ( $\beta$ : -0.33) and indirect ( $\beta$ : -0.09) effects.

Findings revealed that enhancement of Emotional Intelligence reduces Employee Alienation and improves Job Performance. The results have multi-fold implications for senior management in terms of nurturing an emotionally intelligent workforce for the success of Indian HEIs.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Employee Alienation, Emotions, Higher Education Institutions, Job Performance

## Introduction

Higher education systems (HEIs) were originally designed to meet the demands and development of nation-states (Grano & Prieto, 2020). However, HEIs are challenged to confront the impact of global accreditation and rankings, apart from those occurring within their countries. Rankings help to accelerate the globalisation of higher education, leading to increased growth in the mobility of university students. However, it is also utilised as a point of reference for critical decisions and sometimes institutions are bullied by international rankings (Pavel, 2015). Moreover, HEIs have to face challenges for the implementation of new education policies by the Government, new reforms in the HEI sector, fulfilling accreditation criteria, outgrowing needs of its stakeholders, competition from similar institutions, industry engagements etc. (McCowan, 2019). Such environments create psychological distress, discontentment and emotional outburst among teaching and non-teaching staff leading to deviant workplace behaviours (Hjalmarsson & Daderman, 2020). Therefore, a positive emotional state of employees is critical for enhanced employee performance and the success of HEIs.

Further, teachers are change agents in the context of knowledge creation through extensive research in many domains (Podolsky et al., 2019). However, the rate of teachers changing careers has increased. Recently, the number of people transitioning to teaching jobs has also decreased with work unhappiness being a prominent contributor (Podolsky, Kini & Hammond, 2019). According to research conducted in different cultures,

teachers are among the professionals who experience the highest occupational stress (Aeshah, 2021; Corcoran & Tormey, 2012). Teachers who are adept at assessing their own emotions can communicate their needs well and manage their feelings to attain their goals (Kaur et al., 2019). Interestingly, Kamboj & Garg (2021) discovered that Emotional Intelligence (EI) has a favourable impact on the teaching role. Employees' EI can predict work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance (Dirican & Erdil, 2020; Liu et al., 2021).

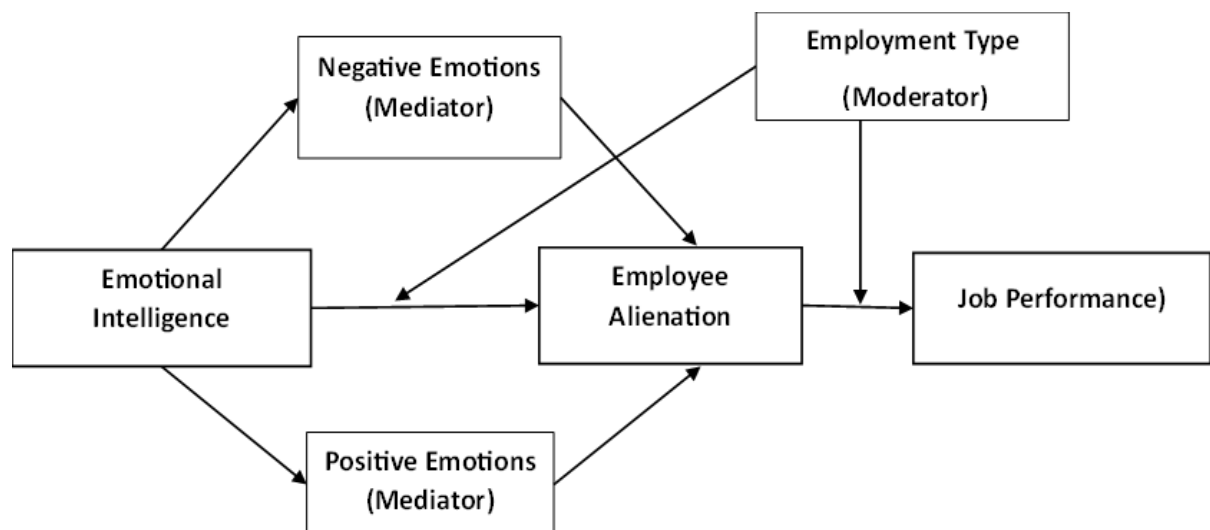
EI is a multi-dimensional concept that connects emotion and cognition to improve human intercommunication (Jena & Goyal, 2022; Mayer et al., 2008). Emotions are the action signals for a particular feeling or situation which usually develops in response to a specific case, either internal or external. Emotions can be positive or negative based on individual perceptions (Behnke et al., 2022). Negative Emotions like anger, fear and jealousy etc. are unpleasant emotions, elicited in individuals to express a negative effect towards a situation or individual (Prayag & Del, 2021). At the same time, Positive Emotions such as joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love appear to have a complementary effect, widening people's momentary thought-action repertoires (Behnke et al., 2022; Fredrickson, 2013).

When the EI level of employees is low, unpleasant work situations can develop negative emotions leading to various deviant workplace behaviours including Employee Alienation (EA) (Meisler, 2021). EA is a serious issue where the employee gets separated from the work and their co-workers, resulting in undesirable outcomes for organisations (Mohamed, 2022; Vinokurov & Kozhina, 2020). There is no doubt that the situation becomes severe for Institutions like HEIs where employees include teachers from Assistant Professor cadre to Professor cadre. Teachers are entrusted with a vital task for all societies: education and generational upbringing. As a result, teacher alienation is not restricted to them alone. Instead, it affects the outcomes of educational work and extends to students and society (Akar, 2018; Dirican & Erdil, 2020). The current study is based on the premise that an emotionally competent workforce can manage their emotions to reduce EA, resulting in improved job performance.

In general, EI and EA are regarded as critical components of employee performance. However, there is limited literature on EI and EA to evaluate job performance from the perspective of Indian HEIs, providing scope for further research in this direction. The proposed research addresses this gap and focuses on analysing the impact of EI on EA. The study proposes measures to mitigate EA through enhanced EI to improve job performance in Indian HEIs. The Research Questions formulated for the study with respect to Indian HEIs are as follows:

1. How are employee EI and EA related?
2. Is there any relationship between EA and Job Performance?
3. Can employment type (Teaching/Non-Teaching) moderate the EI-EA relationship?
4. Are Positive and Negative Emotions mediate the EI-EA relationship?

Figure 1 reports the conceptual framework for enhancing EI and mitigating EA by exploring the relationships between Negative Emotions, Positive Emotions and Job Performance.



**Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Study**

EA is a serious issue, resulting in undesirable outcomes for Organisations (Durrar, 2021). Past studies demonstrate EA as a critical workplace situation impacting its overall functioning and thereby organisational failure. Especially in HEIs, where most of the Employees are teachers and administrative staff, it is imperative to mitigate EA as the teachers mold the students' future. Emotions influence decision-making, creativity, interpersonal interactions, employee contentment and job satisfaction (Dubreuil et al., 2020). Anger typically

results in aggression toward co-workers, whilst depression results in job dissatisfaction. An emotion, such as anger, interest, or trust, is not instantaneous or long-lasting. Instead, emotion is a brief event of coordinated changes in the mind and body that has a direct impact on the employee's performance (Prayag & Del Chiappa, 2021). Thus, understanding the Influence and mediation effects of negative emotions and positive emotions on the EI-EA relationship, and its impact on job performance is critical in a work context. Further, the moderating effect of Employment type in EI-EA and EA-Job Performance helps to explore the difference in the impact of these relationships among teaching and non-teaching staff. Exploring the primary reasons that cause EA and analysing the impact of EI dimensions on EA with the mediating effect of negative emotions and positive emotions can assist HEIs in mitigating EA.

### Scope of the Study

Bengaluru is renowned as India's Silicon Valley, a technology powerhouse that attracts the top domestic and international companies. Further, Bengaluru emerged as the '*Unicorn Hub*' with the highest number of start-ups in India (Prasad & Jahan, 2021). Moreover, Bengaluru has the presence of well-known HEIs comprising of IISc, IIM-B, IIIT-B, etc. The city benefits from a rich heritage, cosmopolitan culture, pleasant climate and a multi-lingual environment. Given this, Bengaluru attracts people from all around India comprising of people with heterogenous cultures, who are looking to advance their education and careers. Therefore, Bengaluru is deemed as one of the suitable locations for this study.

### Literature Review

A literature review is an essential step in research because it assists in understanding and defining the research problem and the underlying theories. Apart from different EI and EA theories, the Affective Events Theory to understand the emotional factors and Work Adjustment Theory to interpret job performance were comprehended as the guiding theories to interpret the relationships.

### Emotional Intelligence

EI refers to a set of abilities to identify and understand the emotional patterns for dealing with situations that include an emotional context (Parker et al., 2021; Villagran & Martin, 2022). Significant research is conducted to investigate and evaluate the adaptive role of EI as well as its impact on beneficial outcomes. Salovey & Mayer (1989) first looked into the concept of EI as a sub-set of social intelligence. The ability model theorized EI as the ability to '*understand and express their own emotions, recognize emotions in others, regulate affect, and use moods and emotions to motivate adaptive behaviors*' (Salovey & Mayer, 1989. P. 200). Goleman (1995), a psychologist at Harvard, extended Salovey and Mayer's work by introducing EI's importance at work. Goleman's bestselling book '*Emotional Intelligence*' explored EI as the ability to appraise self and others' emotions, and control emotions well in oneself and in our social relationships by motivating oneself (Villagran & Martin, 2022). Further, Bar-On's (1997) theoretical model characterises EI as an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures.

When it comes to the work context, a strong positive relationship exists between EI and interpersonal relations at the workplace (Meisler, 2021; Parker et al., 2021). The literature also reveals that EI, employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment are positively related (Sony & Mekoth, 2016). In addition, Hjalmarsson & Daderman (2020) discovered that improved EI aids in the regulation and management of one's emotions, drives, resilience, and encourages higher levels of work engagement. EI is also linked to improved workplace behaviour, especially team behaviour and team performance (Villagran & Martin, 2022; Whiteoak & Manning, 2012). EI facilitates the development of positive attitudes towards diversity which leads to improved social interactions among diverse groups in the organisation (Parker et al., 2021). Moreover, team members with a higher level of EI exhibit teamwork and undertake informal leadership roles (Paik et al., 2019). Emerging managers must be emotionally intelligent to help and guide their subordinates in achieving organisational goals by reducing employee turnover (Rezvani et al., 2016). Transformational leaders emotionally connect well with their followers, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction (Meisler, 2021). Thus, enhancing EI can result in higher employee performance and reduced work stress, burnout, turnover intention, and other negative feelings that evolve from different work contexts (Kim & Qu, 2019; Teachers et al., 2021).

### Outcomes of Negative and Positive Emotions

Emotions are the action signals for a particular feeling or situation, which usually develop in response to a specific case, either internal or external. Ekman (1999) identified six initial basic emotions - anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. An emotion such as anger is not immediate or long-lasting in comparison with mood. Emotion is a quick event of synchronized changes in mind and body that directly impacts an individual's performance (Behnke et al., 2022; Resnik & Dewaele, 2020). Emotions can be positive or negative based on individual perceptions (Dubreuil et al., 2020; Pekaar, 2018). Positive emotions, according to organisational psychology research, are connected with increased creativity, cognitive flexibility, labour

productivity, and the availability of communication and negotiation skills (Prayag & Del Chiappa, 2021). Conversely, negative emotions lead to unpleasant repercussions such as limiting one's thinking capacity, work unhappiness, poor emotional engagement leading to leaving the organisation etc. (Dubreuil et al., 2020). Hatred, wrath, and hopelessness are negative emotions that have performance and motivational repercussions (Resnik & Dewaele, 2020; Rispens & Demerouti, 2016). Thus, managing emotions is an important aspect of increasing employee productivity in organisations.

### **Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Alienation**

Alienation is a psychological state where an individual becomes physically and mentally estranged from the aspects of social connections (Durrah, 2020). Work alienation is a state of psychological perception that separates employee from their job, as their aspirations do not meet their expectations (Mohamed, 2022; O'Donohue & Nelson, 2014).

The concept of labour alienation was influenced by Karl Marx's writings (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844). According to Marx (2016), alienation is the detachment of an individual from the product of his work due to the impact of the capitalist labour process (Marx, 1844, 2016). Further, Seeman (1959) explained alienation from the socio-psychological point of view. Alienation is proposed as a multi-dimensional construct composed of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Seeman, 1959). Even though many empirical studies have adopted this definition of alienation, the majority have articulated it as a uni-dimensional instead of multi-dimensional concept, with a focus on self-estrangement (Blauner, 1964; Durrah, 2020; Nair & Vohra 2010).

Powerlessness and meaninglessness are the critical dimensions of EA which impact organisational commitment work engagement and performance, organisational health etc. (Kartal, 2018; Tan, 2016; Zoghbi et al., 2018). Close supervision, routine work without substantive differences or complexities, hierarchical ownership, injustice perception, division of labour etc., can result in EA in organisations (Durrah, 2020). EA affects employee efficiency as well as performance and is negatively associated with sociability, and positively with reactive aggressiveness (Vinokurov & Kozhina, 2021) leading to attrition, burnout, poor job satisfaction etc. (Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Enhancing EI can result in higher employee performance and reduced work stress, burnout, turnover intention, absenteeism, and other negative feelings that evolve from different work contexts (Kim & Qu, 2019; Teachers et al., 2021). According to Dubreuil et al. (2020), positive perspectives and attitudes are required for individuals to properly work and cope while confronting challenges as well as adversities at work. Further, the EI and EA level among teaching and non-teaching staff can vary in HEIs due to differences in their intellectual maturity, emotional competency etc. Enhanced emotional competency and intellectual maturity among teaching staff can result in higher level of EI, thereby, a lower level of EA among teaching staff. Based on the ability model theory, Goleman's theory of EI and Seeman's theory of EA, the alternate hypotheses are framed as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>-EI varies among teaching and non-teaching in Indian HEIs

H<sub>2</sub>-Employee EI is negatively related to EA in Indian HEIs

H<sub>3</sub>-Employment type such as teaching and non-teaching, moderates the EI-EA relationship in Indian HEIs

### **Mediating Effect of Negative and Positive Emotions**

No organisation is immune to hardship whether caused by poor judgments, tragedy or personnel issues. While positive emotions can avoid deviant workplace behaviours, negative emotions drain our energy and make people inefficient as well as less successful (Resnik & Dewaele, 2020). According to the affective events theory, negative emotions have a significant influence on people's attitudes and behaviour compared to positive emotions (Behnke et al., 2022). Passive negative emotions such as sadness and guilt activate withdrawal as well as disengagement when feeling low resulting in alienation. This can affect fairness judgments and predict deviant behaviours at the workplace (Damar & CeilK, 2017; Dirican & Erdil, 2020). Thus, the employees' perceptions of their feelings and ways of expressing their emotions have a substantial impact on their workplace behaviour (Stawicki et al., 2022). However, EI helps to regulate these emotions to avoid deviant workplace behaviours. Based on the foregoing arguments, and the affective events theory, the alternate hypothesis on emotion in the EA-EI relationship is as follows:

H<sub>4</sub>- Positive Emotions and Negative Emotions independently mediate the EI-EA relationship in Indian HEIs

### **Employee Alienation and its Impact on Job Performance**

Job performance (JP) is defined as the way by which workers perform tasks by linking the behaviour of workers with the norms of the company itself (Bashir et al., 2020; Kanungo, 1982). Job performance is organized around many factors that reflect different types of behaviour, including in-role and discretionary extra-role behaviour (Stawicki et al., 2022). It also plays a key part in the personnel decisions, such as merit-based compensation, promotion and employee retention, by allowing workers to cultivate strong work connections, collaborate effectively, and generate social capital (Yozgat et al., 2013). Further, performance depends on ability, motivation, appreciation, support, existence of work, relationship with the organisation etc. (Mustafa & Ali, 2019).

According to work adjustment theory, autonomy and plasticity in the job motivate the employees for enhanced participation, thereby, enhancing job performance (Dahling & Librizzi, 2014). Effective employer-employee communication, timely distribution of tasks, a sense of gratitude, fair compensation, and competence are essential factors in increasing job performance (Kartal, 2018). Further, time flexibility and human capital investment significantly impact labour productivity (Bashir et al., 2020; Manzoor et al., 2019). Low employee EI in organisations can lead to different conflicts in relationships, job and work contexts leading to EA (Villagran & Martin, 2022).

A hostile work environment is unquestionably one of the top causes of EA and originates due to the perception of negative workplace contexts, unethical policies and practices at the workplace, corrupt leadership etc. (Awang, 2018; Damar & Celik, 2017). EA can lead to attrition, burnout, poor job satisfaction etc. (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Furthermore, EA is a direct driver of low job performance (Aeshah, 2021). Hence, mitigating EA is vital to improve employee performance. In light of the above arguments and the work adjustment theory, the below alternate hypothesis is generated:

H<sub>5</sub>- Employee EA is negatively related to Job Performance in Indian HEIs

H<sub>6</sub>- Employment type such as teaching and non-teaching, moderates the EA-Job Performance relationship in Indian HEIs

## Methods

### Research Design

This research is conceptual as well as empirical in nature. It relied on the theoretical background and analysis of primary data. Employees from eight Indian HEIs of different specializations participated in the study. A cross-sectional study was adopted to understand the current EI level. Based on the attained EI an attempt is made to assimilate the structural relationship with EA. With the cross-sectional data, the attained results can be utilised to mitigate EA instantaneously. Whereas, in the longitudinal study, the time factor plays an important role which requires significant time and effort to complete the study.

### Measurement Scale to Measure the Constructs

An online questionnaire survey was the research instrument. EI scale contained 36 items from *Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI 2.0)* under four constructs: self-management, self-awareness, relationship management, and organisational awareness to measure EI of HEI employees (Boyatzis et al., 2000). Mottaz's (1981) EA scale which included 21 items was used to assess EA under three constructs – powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement. Negative Emotions and Positive Emotions have 5 items under each construct obtained from the Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) (Li et al., 2013). Further, Job Performance construct also has 5 items acquired from the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Villagrasa et al., 2019). To fit the backdrop of Indian HEIs, few of the original scale items were changed or removed. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 5-strongly agree to 1-strongly disagree, was employed to rank the responses.

### Data Collection and Sampling

To collect the data, the questionnaire was validated using Q-Sort technique (Nahm et al., 2002). Q-Sort indicated a good construct validity with Raw Agreement-93%, Cohen's Kappa-0.92 and Hit Ratio-82.70. A pilot study was conducted prior to data gathering to ensure the reliability of the validated questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha extracted for the constructs were 0.92, 0.92, 0.76, 0.80 and 0.85 for EI, EA, Job Performance, Negative Emotions and Positive Emotions respectively, confirming the reliability of the measurement scales.

After arriving at the final questionnaire, it was floated among eight HEIs of different specializations in Bengaluru. Stratified sampling was adopted as the whole population was divided into two strata based on Teaching and Non-teaching staff. The reason for this stratification was that employees in HEIs are primarily teachers and administrative staff. Both must complement and supplement one another to improve the performance of HEIs. However, the intellectual maturity and emotional competency of teaching and non-teaching staff can vary, affecting their EI level and, as a result, EA and Job Performance. The required sample size calculated by estimating mean for finite population with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level was 232. Formula used to derive the sample size is as below:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \times \sigma p^2 \times N}{(N - 1) \times e^2 + z^2 \times \sigma p^2}$$

Where;

n- required sample size

Z- Standard variate at a given confidence level

σp- Population Standard deviation

e- Margin of error



Sample from each stratum was computed using the proportionate allocation method (Kothari, 2004). The study employed a minimum sample size of 166 for teaching staff and 76 for non-teaching staff. In total, 288 responses were obtained, including 206 from teaching staff and 82 from non-teaching staff.

Exclusion criteria was adopted in this study. Non-teaching staff of below administrative categories like drivers, attenders were excluded from the study. Moreover, a UG degree is deemed as the basic criterion to fill out the questionnaire. The distribution of male and female among the respondents were almost equal with male 50.35% and female 49.65%. Most respondents were married and aged between 30-40 years. When analysed the educational qualification, postgraduates constituted the highest percentage of respondents across both the teaching and the non-teaching staff, 67.47% and 62.20%, respectively. Also, respondents with 5-10 years' experience constituted the higher percentage among teaching staff. Teaching staff was in the income group of INR 06-10 lakhs per annum and non-teaching staff was below INR 03 lakhs income group.

### Statistical Analyses

To determine the prospective factors, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted. EFA is a data reduction approach that reduces large data set into small constructs on the underlying theoretical concept. The validity of the measurement model was established through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). All hypothesised relationships between EI, EA, Job Performance, Negative Emotions, and Positive Emotions were analysed using Structural Equation Modeling in Amos 23. Structural Equation Modelling is used to analyse the structural relationship between measured variables and latent constructs. Multiple and interrelated dependence can be analysed in a single analysis in Structural Equation Modelling. The structural model can represent the theory that explains how the constructs are related to each other (Kline, 2011). The guidelines proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) were followed to test the mediation effect of Negative and Positive Emotions on the EI-EA relationship. Analysing the strength of the mediator variable's interactions with the other constructs enables the validation of the underlying mechanism that leads to the cause-effect link between an exogenous and an endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2017). Further, the categorical moderation analysed the moderating effect of Employment type on EI-EA relationship in Indian HEIs. In a meta-analysis, the analysis of categorical moderation is usually referred to as 'Subgroup Analyses' and compares the effect of different study subgroups (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

## Results

### Data Screening

Collected data was examined for missing values as well as outliers and corrections were made. Common Method Variance (CMV) was assessed by deriving a single factor through EFA, which was 25.46%, less than the threshold limit of 50%, indicating the absence of CMV (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Further, a KMO value of above 0.80 and a critical tail value of Bartlett's test, at a significance level  $< 0.05$ , determined the suitability of data for factor analysis.

### Descriptive Analysis of the Study Variables

Employees had greater EI levels, with a mean score of 4.01. Furthermore, among EI aspects, the highest mean value represented self-management (4.09), and the lowest inferred relationship management (3.94). This revealed employees' ability to manage emotions at work to a certain level. However, the employees in HEIs were comparatively lacking in building healthy relationships, having the lowest mean across all EI dimensions. EA found moderate among the HEI employees with a mean value of 2.57. Further, powerlessness was identified as the primary cause of EA, with a mean value of 2.73. The mean values of Job Performance, Negative Emotions and Positive Emotions were 3.94, 3.25 and 3.82 respectively, above the average among the HEI employees.

### Difference in EI Level Among Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

When analysed the EI level of teaching and non-teaching staff separately, the result revealed a higher EI (4.03) among teaching staff compared to non-teaching staff (3.93). The statistical significance of this variation was analysed by conducting Independent Sample t-test. The P-value was below the level of significance 0.05 as well as the t-calculated value (2.00) was above the t-critical value ( $\pm 1.96$ ) to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, a significant variation in EI levels among teaching and non-teaching staff is established in Indian HEIs. This difference may be due to the higher educational level, intellect and emotional maturity of the teaching staff. The results set forth an empirical validation for the difference in EI level among teaching and non-teaching staff in Indian HEIs, closing the literature gap. This would help the management to have a varied treatment during performance appraisal and training based on Employment type.

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

EFA derived the EI and EA factors pertaining to HEIs. According to EFA results, 68.49% of the employee EI was explained by eight factors, and four factors explained EA of employees up to 63.52%. The latent were extracted based on the method principal component analysis using varimax rotation, which produces maximum uncorrelated factors. All factors with an eigenvalue of more than one were considered significant (Kaiser, 1958).

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

CFA measures how well the variables measure each construct. CFA evaluated the derived EI and EA factors as well as Job Performance, Negative Emotions, and Positive Emotions to bring validity of the outer model, In CFA, several fit indices measure model fit. The CMIN/df, Goodness of Fit (GFI), Comparative Fit index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Parsimony Normed Fir Index (PNFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) are the most commonly used fit indices. A low Chi-square value to its degree of freedom (CMIN/df) indicates a good fit. The derived GFI satisfied the thresholds with CMIN/Df, RMSEA, GFI, CFI, TLI, IFI, PNFI, PCFI values as 1.65, 0.04, 0.92, 0.96, 0.96, 0.96, 0.76, 0.82 respectively indicating the model fit (Kline, 2011). Further, internal reliability was checked through Composite Reliability (CR), with a threshold limit  $\geq 0.70$  (Hair et al., 2017). The convergent validity was established with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) score, which should be above the threshold value of 0.50. The study further investigated Discriminant Validity (DV) with Fornell & Larcker’s (1981) criterion whereby the square root of AVEs of the diagonal constructs were higher than their inter-item correlation values. All calculated values satisfied the thresholds as recorded in table 1 to validate the measurement model.

**Table 1. CR, AVE and DV of all Factors Including EI and EA Sub-Constructs**

Factors	CR	AVE	DV- (Fornell and Larker, 1981)										
			JP	SP	SA	CN	MO	RM	MLS	SEM	NEM	PLS	
NEM	0.76	0.52											
JP	0.79	0.56	<b>0.75</b>										
PEM	0.86	0.66	0.31	<b>0.73</b>									
SP	0.89	0.61	0.29	0.29	<b>0.73</b>								
RM	0.84	0.52	0.17	0.19	0.17	<b>0.76</b>							
SA	0.77	0.53	0.10	0.44	0.18	0.33	<b>0.77</b>						
CN	0.80	0.57	0.43	0.48	0.53	0.35	0.48	<b>0.71</b>					
MO	0.75	0.60	-0.18	-0.21	-0.16	-0.18	-0.02	-0.25	<b>0.76</b>				
PLS	0.84	0.58	-0.18	-0.18	-0.20	-0.17	-0.01	-0.28	0.75	<b>0.77</b>			
MLS	0.83	0.56	0.07	-0.11	-0.04	-0.13	-0.09	-0.17	0.40	0.37	<b>0.72</b>		
SEM	0.85	0.59	-0.02	-0.27	-0.22	-0.16	-0.05	-0.32	0.64	0.58	0.38	<b>0.76</b>	

Source: Authors’ Calculation-Excel Stats Tool Package

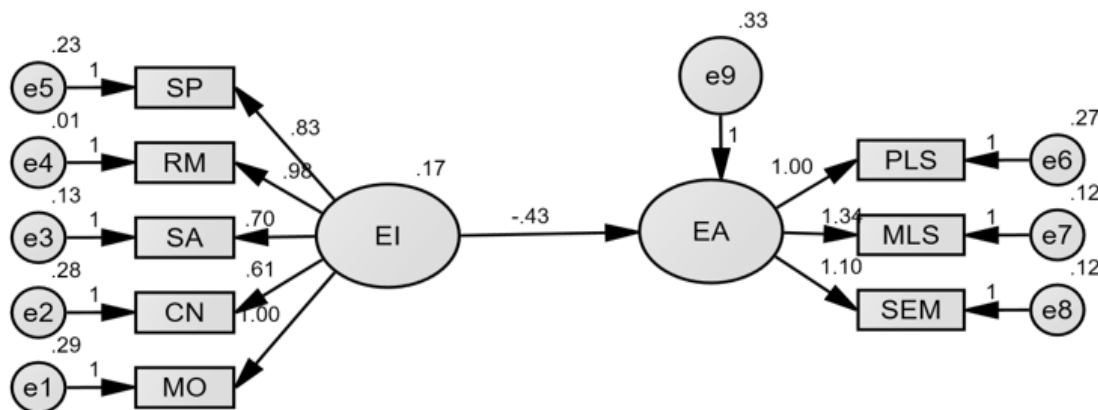
The final model included a five-factor EI construct with 19 variables (Self-Management with Positive Outlook (SP), Self-Awareness (SA), Relationship Management (RM), Consideration (CN), Motivation (MO)), a three-factor EA construct with 12 variables (Powerlessness (PLS), Meaninglessness (MLS), Self-Estrangement (SEM)) and Negative Emotions (NEM), Positive Emotions (PEM), Job Performance (JP) constructs with three variables each.

**Structural Model Assessments**

The multiple hypothesised relationships between EI, EA, Negative Emotions, Positive Emotions and Job Performance and their predictive relevance were simultaneously analysed by conducting Structural Equation Modelling.

**EI-EA Direct Relationship**

First, the non-mediating EI-EA model was analysed. The path analysis explored a significant negative EI-EA association among the HEI employees ( $\beta = -0.43$  P=0.00) as displayed in figure 2.



**Figure 2: EI-EA Non-Mediating Direct Model**

Source: SPSS Amos





hinder development of EA. Analysing the strength of these mediator variables' interaction with EI and EA constructs enable the validation of the underlying mechanism that leads to the cause-effect link between EI and EA (Hair et al., 2017). Earlier, a negative impact of EI on EA was proved, which was a necessary condition to check for mediation effect (Hair et al., 2017). Direct, indirect and total effects of mediation analysis are reported in table 2.

**Table 2. Mediation Effect of Negative Emotions and Positive Emotions on EI-EA Relationship**

		Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Lower Bounds	Upper Bounds	Mediation
<b>NEM</b>	EI-EA	-0.33	-0.09	-0.42	<b>-0.18</b>	<b>-0.03</b>	<b>Partial Mediation</b>
	P-Value	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.02</b>			
<b>PEM</b>	EI-EA	-0.33	0.01	-0.34	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>No Mediation</b>
	P-Value	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.00</b>			

Source: Authors' Calculation, SPSS Amos 23

Both direct and indirect effects were statistically significant and the indirect effect was lower than the direct effect, depicting a partial mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Moreover, the Variance Accounted Factor (VAF) calculated derived the amount of partial mediation of Negative Emotions on EI and EA.

VAF= Indirect Effect/Total Effect (Hair et al., 2010)

Indirect Effect=-0.09; Total Effect= -0.42; VAF= -0.09/-0.42= 0.22

The VAF value of 0.22, which is greater than 20%, validated the partial mediation of Negative Emotions on EI-EA relationship.

Further, when analysed the mediating effect of Positive Emotions on EI-EA relationship, the indirect effect was not statistically significant with P-value of 0.54 as reported in table 2. The results demonstrated that Positive Emotions had no mediating influence in the EI-EA relationship. Thus, the existing gaps in the literature on the mediating effect of Negative Emotions and Positive Emotions in EI-EA relationship are addressed and contributed to. Furthermore, the findings established that a higher level of EI is critical for workplace performance. Individuals with high EI can be skilled at assessing and controlling their emotions, giving them a greater sense of confidence and control. The findings are consistent with previous research that demonstrates EI's role in job performance in any unfavourable organisational condition (Dirican & Erdil, 2020).

### **Moderating Effect of Employment Type on EI-EA Relationship**

The categorical moderation analysed the moderating effect of Employment Type on EI-EA and EA-Job Performance relationships in HEIs. Employment Type is used as a dichotomous moderator variable in this study to understand the difference in EI-EA and EA- Job Performance relationships between teaching and non-teaching staff. The rationale for using Employment Type as a moderator variable is that both teaching and non-teaching staff must complement and supplement each other to improve HEI performance. However, the intellectual maturity and emotional competency of teaching and non-teaching staff can differ, affecting their EI level and hence EA and Job Performance.

The results of the moderating effect of Employment Type on EI-EA relationship indicated that the P-values were significant for both the groups, and 27% variation in the influence of EI on EA derived among teaching ( $\beta = -0.20$ ,  $P = 0.01$ ) and non-teaching staff ( $\beta = -0.47$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ). Furthermore, the calculated critical ratio of difference (2.24) was higher than the threshold value of  $\pm 1.96$ . However, the critical ratio of difference derived (0.33) was below the threshold value for EA-Job Performance relationship, indicating that the impact of EA on Job Performance is more or less the same across Teaching and Non-teaching staff.

Thus, the results of categorical moderation established that non-teaching staff were prone to EA due to low EI levels than teaching staff. The findings further added to the limited research on the moderating effect of Employment Type in the EI-EA and EA-Job Performance relationship in HEIs. Moreover, it provides a line of sight for the HEI management to conduct training and development sessions with a focused approach on non-teaching staff.

## **Discussions**

The present study is novel in exploring the direct and indirect effect of EI on EA in Indian HEIs. An empirical substantiation of a significant negative association between EI-EA and EA-Job Performance are put forward in an Indian HEI context.

According to the findings, teaching staff had a higher level of EI (4.03) than non-teaching staff (3.93), demonstrating their intellectual maturity and competency. The explored inverse relationship between EI and EA highlighted the significance of improving employee EI in HEIs. In a similar study, Teachers et al. (2021)

demonstrated that increased EI can lead to better social relationships, less burnout, less work stress, higher job satisfaction, and so on. Furthermore, the 27% greater influence of EI on the development of EA among non-teaching staff emphasises the importance of varied treatments for non-teaching staff during training and development. The established negative relationship between EA and Job Performance demonstrates that mitigating EA is critical in improving job performance in HEIs. The findings are consistent with previous research and show that job loneliness and alienation influence job performance and employees' intentions to leave an organisation (Aeshah, 2021; Awang, 2018).

The derived positive relationship between negative emotions and EA is consistent with previous research indicating the adverse effects of negative emotions. Thus, negative emotions limit individual thinking capacity, difficulty in processing negative information, work unhappiness, poor emotional engagement leading to leaving the organisation etc. (Dubreuil et al., 2020). However, Positive Emotions-EA relationship, was statistically insignificant demonstrating that Positive Emotions do not influence the development of EA in Indian HEIs. However, the positive relationship between EI and Positive Emotions suggests that EI always guides employees to maintain positive emotions even under adverse conditions. Furthermore, the inverse relationship between EI and Negative Emotions shows that negative emotions are caused by unpleasant work situations or obstacles in employees with low EI levels. The derived negative relationship between EI and Negative Emotions emphasizes the significance of higher EI levels among employees in Indian HEIs to combat negative emotions (Resnik & Dewaele, 2020). The partial mediation of Negative Emotions on EI-EA relationship further established the criticality of EI to control negative emotions at the workplace to avoid undesirable outcomes. Therefore, higher EI implies excellent emotional regulation and adjustment skills, which can help to reduce the presence of unpleasant emotions (Kamboj & Garg, 2021) in Indian HEIs. Negative emotions in the workplace can have a wide range of consequences such as employee turnover, burnout, alienation, and so on. According to affective events theory, negative emotions have a greater influence on people's attitudes and behaviour than positive emotions (Behnke et al., 2022)

The findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating the role of EI in improving job performance by eliminating undesirable outcomes in organisations (Dirican & Erdil, 2020). The research is critical for higher education institutions to understand employee behaviour when confronted with unfavourable and demanding work environments. Individuals with high EI can be proficient at appraising and regulating their emotions, resulting in a greater sense of confidence and control.

Furthermore, the results can be applied to HEIs of other South Asian Countries to focus on employee EI to mitigate EA. India as a part of south Asia is hosting HEIs who are looking to catch up with developed countries in the west. To attain this objective, many of the institutes of national importance in India are planning to set up campuses outside India and South Asia to attract faculty members as well as students across the globe. In today's digital transformation era, the gap between HEIs across the World is closing due to the stronger inclusion culture of HEIs. As a result, this study assists the Leadership group of HEIs in South Asia in taking steps to mentally prepare their employees for confronting teaching, research and service challenges without negatively influencing their performance.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The study encompasses research on empirical testing of the association between EI and EA in Indian HEIs. It contributes to the existing literature establishing an empirical substantiation of a robust negative association between EI and EA as well as EA and Job Performance in Indian HEIs. Further, Negative Emotions as a mediator in the EI-EA relationship is explored, contributing to the current knowledge addressing the literature gap on EI-Negative Emotions-EA relationship from HEI context. Further, the existing gap on EI-EA relationship was addressed by including the Employment Type-Teaching/Non-teaching- to derive its moderation effect. Teaching is a profession with an intensive use of emotional labour (Kaur et al., 2019). The results have multi-fold implications for the senior management in terms of nurturing an emotionally intelligent workforce for the success of Indian HEIs. As a result, management and policymakers should focus on the development of an emotionally intelligent workforce for Indian HEIs. This shall facilitate understanding their employees' strengths and weaknesses. By virtue of this situation, the HEIs can expect multitasking as well as responsive faculty members and staff. The autonomy bestowed to the faculty members shall lead to knowledge creation and promotes cooperative working behaviour with peers and other stakeholders. Further, this behaviour supplements the implementation of accreditation and ranking processes. In summary, the proposed framework facilitates the management and the leadership group to attain the Vision and the Mission of the HEI through the flexible workforce. Therefore, emphasis to eliminate the factors that lead to the evolution of negative emotions and EA are warranted by providing autonomy in work, acknowledging and rewarding the work, resulting in the elimination of an unpleasant work environment.

Previous studies proved that EI can be improved through better training and education (Hodzic et al., 2018). Identifying and planning suitable EI interventions could significantly improve employee performance in Indian HEIs. Moreover, the explored moderating effect of Employment Type on EI-EA relationship helps the management to consider teaching and non-teaching staff differently during training and other career development programs.

### Limitations and Future Scope

The results should be used within its constraints, which also provide opportunities for future research. In this study, only the occupational dimensions of alienation are discussed, and the study design is cross-sectional. Furthermore, only employees from eight HEIs in Bengaluru were considered for this study. The majority of respondents had a technical background, where the work environment and obstacles may differ from other specialisations. The study can be replicated in other parts of India, broadening the model's scope. Furthermore, the research is purely quantitative in nature. Future researchers can address these issues, and thus an attempt to investigate the EI-EA relationship in the context of Indian HEIs has added new dimensions for future research.

Future research could include HEIs with various specialisations, as well as a comparable number of respondents from each specialisation. Furthermore, comparative analysis based on different specialisations on relationships can be performed, and a mixed-method approach can yield powerful results. Concurrently, future studies should include HEIs from other Indian states, thereby expanding the model to other Indian HEIs. A longitudinal study for this behavioural study can produce stronger outcome to improve the generalizability of the EI-EA relationship in HEI context.

### Conclusions

Human resource is a valuable asset for any organisation to achieve its objectives. Employees who are psychologically resilient, enthusiastic, motivated, and focused always lead the organisation to success. The proposed study demonstrated the importance of improving employee EI in Indian HEIs to reduce EA. In addition, HEIs can see EI as a critical success factor in reducing EA and improving employee job performance. Furthermore, the identified EI and EA parameters aid in prioritising the critical EI dimensions and training employees with a focus on Employment type. Focusing on the significant EI factors in an Indian HEI context can provide a line of sight to guide employees in managing their emotions while also addressing their EA behaviour. Hence, an attempt to build sustainable relationships with the key stakeholders of HEIs is put forward.

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