



Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance: Moderating Role of Gender

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Research Article

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this study is to examine the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Employee Performance (EP) with the moderation effect of gender in the Bangladeshi service industry, with a specific focus on the banking sector. The study's theoretical basis is grounded in Goleman's (1995) theory of emotional intelligence.

Methods: The study used a structured questionnaire with a sample of 390 bank employees and analyzed the data using SPSS 25 and SmartPLS 4. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test direct and moderating effects.

Results: The findings revealed a significant impact of all EI dimensions on EP, accounting for 70.2% of the variance. Findings also showed that gender moderated the relationships between motivation and EP and between empathy and EP. However, gender did not moderate the relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, and EP.

Implications: The study underscores the importance of nurturing employees' emotional intelligence by providing appropriate care for both male and female staff, particularly to enhance their motivation and empathy. Besides, it extends Goleman's EI theory in the service-intensive context.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; employee performance; gender; banking industry, PLS-SEM

1. Introduction

Employee performance is a cornerstone of organizational success and innovation. Service organizations operate in knowledge-intensive, customer-focused environments, where employee behaviours directly affect client experiences (Yoopetch et al., 2021; Zulkifli et al., 2023). Thus, high employee performance is considered critical in the banking business for strengthening customer trust, supporting service excellence, and achieving sustainable growth in highly competitive, regulated environments (Asutay & Ubaidillah, 2024; Bhaskaran et al., 2023; Gonu et al., 2023; Imran et al., 2022). Due to the dynamic nature of service roles, banking companies increasingly rely on employees' ability to adapt, engage, and perform consistently (Asutay & Ubaidillah, 2024; Bhaskaran et al., 2023; Shrestha & Dahal, 2023). Banking employees, therefore, must have a high level of emotional intelligence to satisfy company demands (Shrestha & Dahal, 2023).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, regulate, and effectively utilize one's own and others' emotions (Maamari & Shouweiry, 2016; Matta & Alam, 2023; Rexhepi & Berisha, 2017). Goleman's (1995, 1998) theory of emotional intelligence argues that EI equips people to manage job demands by strengthening interpersonal relationships and sustaining high performance in complex, emotionally

demanding work environments. Meta-analytic evidence confirms EI as a significant predictor of employee performance (Doğru, 2022; Miao et al., 2021). Empirical research also indicates that people with higher EI demonstrate superior self-control, intrinsic motivation, adaptability, and interpersonal effectiveness (Grobelny et al., 2021; Matta & Alam, 2023; Nasir et al., 2023). They can mitigate occupational stress and turnover intentions and can demonstrate ethical conduct, emotional resilience, and prosocial behavior (Cheraghi et al., 2025; Weiss et al., 2025). These capabilities are especially important in service-intensive contexts, where employees engage in continuous emotional labor (Martí-Vilar et al., 2022; Özkan et al., 2024; Panda & Singh, 2025). Supramaniam and Singaravelloo (2021) found that EI enhances organizational effectiveness by reducing individuals' stress. Hence, EI seems to play a critical role in improving individual performance.

However, researchers indicate that emotional competencies are expressed and translated into performance outcomes differently across genders. For instance, in studies examining leadership effectiveness, team performance, and stress coping, researchers who used EI found that men's and women's EI responses differed (Nabih et al., 2023; Shafique & Naz, 2023; Zhang et al., 2024). Moreover, organizational processes such as mentoring structures and leadership dynamics can differentially shape EI development across genders (Prummer et al., 2024). These findings indicate that gender-based differences in emotional processing, social expectations, and organizational roles may influence both the strength and direction of the EI–employee performance relationship.

The above discussions have indicated the growing recognition of EI as a key driver of employee performance, with a moderating factor (gender). However, most empirical evidence has derived from several organizational contexts, leaving service-intensive sectors, such as banking, underexplored. Further, empirical research on EI outcomes in developing economies is scarce. To address these gaps, this study aims to investigate the impact of EI on individual performance in the Bangladeshi banking industry, while accounting for the moderating effect of gender. The findings will offer practical guidance for managerial interventions to enhance organizational productivity by nurturing employee EI. Moreover, exploring gender differences will support equitable talent development and leadership practices in service-intensive organizations in the developing economy and contribute to EI theory.

2. Literature Review

The literature review firstly presents the underpinning theory of emotional intelligence based on Goleman's framework. Afterward, it reviews prior empirical studies on emotional intelligence and employee performance and discusses each dimension of emotional intelligence in relation to performance outcomes, thereby informing the development of the main hypotheses. Finally, the section examines the moderating role of gender in the EI–EP relationship and formulates the corresponding moderation hypotheses. Through this structure, this study attempts to ensure a logical progression from theory to empirical evidence and hypothesis development.

2.1 Underpinning Theory

Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how EI shapes workplace behavior and performance. Goleman's (1995; 1998) five dimensions of EI (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) enable individuals to deal with their own and others' emotions. These competencies influence people's decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and response to job demands (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019; Kozlowski et al., 2017). Moreover, the theory posits that employees with strong EI are better able to deliver superior service and maintain professionalism even under pressure. Studies consistently show that EI enhances employee productivity, adaptability, and interpersonal functioning (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Matta & Alam, 2023). In the banking sector, where customer interaction, emotional labor, service quality, and trust-building are central, the EI theory provides a robust foundation for examining how each EI component contributes to improved

employee performance. Therefore, the present study employs Goleman's (1995) EI theory for its theoretical support.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance

Emotional intelligence enables individuals to perceive and understand, regulate, and use their own and others' emotions. EI enables them to adapt to workplace demands. It has thus become a key concept in organizational research. People with high EI can remain focused and resilient (Cheraghi et al., 2025; Weiss et al., 2025). They can show sustainable performance even under pressure (Matta & Alam, 2023; Weiss et al., 2025). Chen et al.'s (2025) meta-analysis finds that EI is positively associated with social support, organizational factors, and satisfaction, whereas it is negatively associated with stressors. Empirical evidence also identifies EI as one of the strongest predictors of individual and team effectiveness (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023; Maamari & Shouweiry, 2016; Michinov & Michinov, 2022; Zulfadil et al., 2020).

During team performance, EI shapes members' behaviors within collaborative work settings (Michinov & Michinov, 2022; Rechberg & Essig, 2025). They can accurately interpret colleagues' emotional cues, adjust their own behavior accordingly, build positive relationships with others, and enhance coordination and cooperation within the team (Deng, 2025; Michinov & Michinov, 2022). They can exhibit superior communication skills, stronger interpersonal trust, and greater capacity for conflict management (Deng, 2025). Teammates with higher emotional intelligence manage their stress and frustration more effectively, thereby reducing interpersonal tensions and preventing negative emotions from escalating into dysfunctional conflict (Davaei et al., 2022; Michinov & Michinov, 2022). This emotional regulation fosters a psychologically safe environment where members feel comfortable expressing ideas, taking initiative, and engaging in problem-solving. All these leads to better decision-making and improved task execution. When emotionally intelligent people act as leaders, they amplify these benefits by modelling empathy, motivating members, and aligning individual goals with team objectives (Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025; Vrontis et al., 2021). Through these mechanisms (improved and effective communication, emotional regulation, trust building, and psychological safety), EI strengthens collective efficacy and enables teams to achieve higher performance, particularly in dynamic, service-oriented work environments.

Researchers have also observed the impact of EI on individual outcomes. Matta and Alam (2023), for example, found that emotionally intelligent employees can communicate more clearly, exhibit empathy toward colleagues and customers, and manage workplace conflicts constructively; thus, they argued that EI genuinely strengthens interpersonal effectiveness. EI has also been found to predict employees' intrinsic motivation (Engidaw, 2021; Orhan et al., 2021). Motivated employees have found that aligning personal goals with organizational objectives leads to greater engagement, commitment, and discretionary effort. Individuals with emotional control can strongly reduce work-related stress, burnout, and counterproductive behaviours (Al Ghazo et al., 2019; Roczniowska & Bakker, 2021; Zhao et al., 2019). Consequently, EI functions as a vital personal resource that drives employee effectiveness and organizational success (Al-Majarafi & Elgeddawy, 2025; Mallin et al., 2025; Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025). Doñru (2022) and Grobelny et al. (2021) also confirm the predictive validity of EI for employee outcomes in their meta-analyses.

Numerous scholars have defined EI, a multi-dimensional construct, in different ways. Among them, Goleman's (1995, 1998) five-component framework has been used in several empirical studies (Shrestha & Dahal, 2023; Singh, 2004; Sun et al., 2025). The framework supports defining the employee EI in the service industry (de Oliveira & Sohn, 2025; Shrestha & Dahal, 2023; Sun et al., 2025). Therefore, this research has adopted Goleman's (1995, 1998) framework to define and empirically validate EI.

Self-awareness (SA), a core and first dimension of EI, enables individuals to recognize their emotions, behaviours, strengths, and limitations. Workers with awareness of internal states have been observed to regulate behaviour more effectively and achieve higher productivity (Abu Lebda et al., 2023; Carden et al., 2022; Kumari & Nandal, 2023; Sembiring et al., 2023). The second dimension, self-regulation (SR), influences the ability to manage emotional demands and maintain focus. In high-demand environments, strong self-regulatory capacity buffers stress, prevents exhaustion, reduces counterproductive behavior, improves engagement, and increases performance (Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Jennings et al., 2023; Park & Kim, 2022; Roczniowska & Bakker, 2021; Zeshan et al., 2024; Zhang & Geng, 2020).

The third dimension of EI, motivation (M), stimulates employee creativity, stronger engagement and job investment, and greater discretionary effort, thereby driving persistence and higher-quality work outcomes (AlKhalifa et al., 2024; Chien et al., 2020; Engidaw, 2021; Layek & Koodamara, 2024; Madzik et al., 2025; Ranjit, 2022; Shkoler & Kimura, 2020). Similarly, the fourth dimension of EI, empathy (E), qualifies employees with skills to understand, recognize, and appropriately respond to the emotions, needs, and perspectives of colleagues, supervisors, and customers. Empathetic communication supports organizational cultures, strengthens workplace relationships, fosters trust and customer orientation, and enhances performance (Choi et al., 2024; Kim & Jo, 2025; Prasetyo et al., 2023; Raza et al., 2023; Vallette d'Osia & Meier, 2024).

As the fifth EI dimension, social skills (SS) enrich communication and collaboration, facilitating knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement. Socially skilled people have been observed as more committed and enjoying well-being (Alshurideh et al., 2023; Ghahtarani et al., 2020; Sanwal & Sareen, 2023), thus performing better for organizational effectiveness (Heggstad et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023; Radogna et al., 2024; Ross et al., 2025; Sanwal & Sareen, 2023). The literature therefore confirms that self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are powerful determinants of employee performance across diverse work environments. Thus, the study develops the following hypotheses (H1-H5 in Figure 1):

H1: Self-awareness has a significant impact on employee performance.

H2: Self-regulation has a significant impact on employee performance.

H3: Motivation has a significant impact on employee performance.

H4: Empathy has a significant impact on employee performance.

H5: Social skills have a significant impact on employee performance.

2.3 Moderating Role of Gender

Researchers have increasingly examined gender as a boundary condition for emotional intelligence and employee and organizational outcomes. Nabih et al. (2023) demonstrate that gender moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, while Zhang et al. (2024) highlight gender differences in EI-related stress-coping strategies. In team contexts, gender influences how emotional intelligence operates through moderating mechanisms that affect performance (Shafique & Naz, 2023). Gender has also been shown to shape the development of emotional intelligence through mentoring processes and leadership structures (Meliá-Martí et al., 2024; Prummer et al., 2024). Despite these advancements, only a few empirical studies (e.g., Maamari & Shouweiry, 2016) have examined the moderating role of gender in the relationship between individual emotional intelligence and employee performance. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether gender can play a significant moderating role in the EI and EP relationship, thus hypothesizing the following hypotheses (H6-H10 in Figure 1) have been developed:

H6: Gender moderates the relationship between self-awareness and employee performance.

H7: Gender moderates the relationship between self-regulation and employee performance.

H8: Gender moderates the relationship between motivation and employee performance.

H9: Gender moderates the relationship between empathy and employee performance.

H10: Gender moderates the relationship between social skills and employee performance.

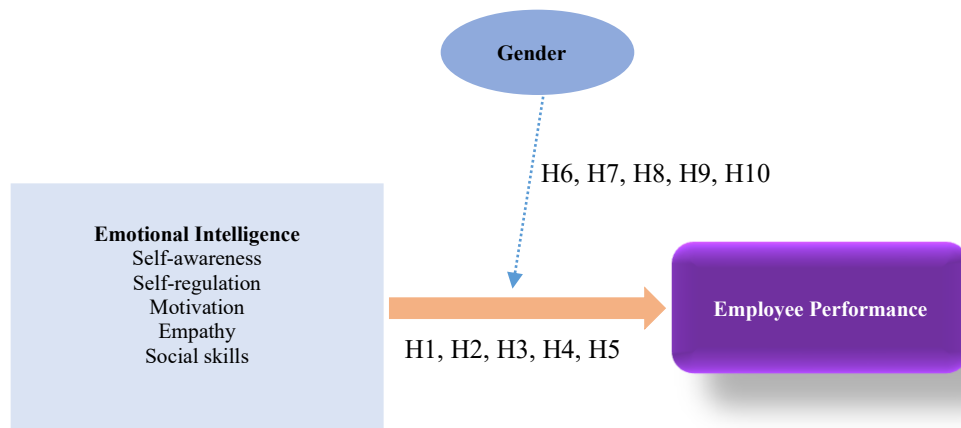


Fig.1. Research Framework

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design, Sampling, and Data Collection

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on employee performance, with gender as a moderating variable, in the Bangladeshi banking industry. A cross-sectional design allows data collection from a single large group of respondents, which is widely used in organizational and behavioral research to test theoretical relationships among constructs (Saunders et al., 2019). The data were collected from the employees of the scheduled banks in Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh Bank's (2024) annual report, the total number of employees working in scheduled banks across the country was 197,590. To determine an adequate sample size, this study followed the widely accepted sampling table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which suggests that for a population of approximately 200,000, a minimum sample of 384 respondents is sufficient to represent the population with 95% confidence. Based on this guideline, the researchers aimed to obtain at least 384 usable responses for data analysis.

A survey method was employed to collect primary data using a self-administered questionnaire (Appendix A). The study was conducted in five districts of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Gazipur, Tangail, Jamalpur, and Mymensingh) to ensure representation from diverse geographical and institutional contexts. Prior to data collection, official permission was obtained from the head offices and branch offices of the participating banks. A team of MBA research students, trained by the researchers, served as data collectors. These data collectors distributed printed questionnaires to bank employees at the selected branches and collected completed questionnaires from branch heads after 1 week. A total of 950 questionnaires were distributed, and 403 filled-in responses were received, yielding an effective response rate of approximately 42%. After preliminary data screening, 13 responses were excluded due to missing values and outliers, leaving 390 valid responses for statistical analysis.

Each questionnaire packet included a blank envelope for respondents to seal their completed questionnaire, along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research. The letter also stated that participants' involvement was entirely voluntary and that their privacy and confidentiality would be maintained with the utmost care. The survey instrument consisted of two main sections. The first section collected information on respondents' demographic and background characteristics, including gender, age, education, experience, and bank type. The second section included statements measuring the key study variables. To ensure the instrument was clearly understood and culturally appropriate, the entire questionnaire was translated into Bangla following the back-translation procedure recommended by Brislin (1980). All constructs were measured using multiple items on a five-point Likert scale.

3.2 Measurements

To measure emotional intelligence, this study adapted items from the Emotional Intelligence Test developed by Carepatron (n.d.), which was derived from Goleman's (1995; 1998) EI framework. The instrument comprises five dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, each represented by five items, resulting in a total of twenty-five items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the five dimensions ranged from 0.794 to 0.821, indicating acceptable consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A sample item for this construct is: "I am able to manage stress in healthy ways." Employee performance was measured using 12 items adapted from Koopmans et al. (2016) that assessed employees' self-perceived job performance with respect to their tasks and contexts. The original EP scale consisted of thirteen items. Following the content validity assessment and expert recommendations, item 12 was excluded to enhance contextual relevance for bank employees. A sample item for this construct is "I can finish my work on time." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this construct was 0.894, demonstrating good reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

3.3 Data Analysis

For data analysis and hypothesis testing, two statistical software tools were utilized: SPSS 25 and SmartPLS 4. Using SPSS, the dataset was examined for missing values and outliers. Using frequency analysis, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined. Additionally, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were computed to summarize the central tendencies and variability of the study variables, and correlation coefficients were computed to assess the associations among the variables. Afterwards, using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach in SmartPLS 4, the data were assessed for measurement validity and reliability, and the hypotheses were tested. This approach was chosen due to its suitability for analysing complexity with a moderating variable and relatively small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019).

4. Findings and Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Of the 390 participants, the majority were male (82.6%), whereas females accounted for 17.4%. Most respondents were married (77.9%), while 18.1% were unmarried, 2.6% were separated, and 1.4% were widowed. In terms of age distribution, half of the respondents (50%) were in the 26–35-year range, followed by 40% aged 36–45 years, 7.5% aged 46–55 years, 1.5% aged 56 years and above, and 1% aged below 26 years. Regarding educational qualifications, 70.5% of the respondents held a postgraduate degree, while 29.5% were graduates. Work experience data indicate that 49.7% had 1–5 years of experience, 27.7% had 11–15 years, 21.6% had 6–10 years, 7% had 16 years or more, and 3% had less than 1 year of experience. Finally, most participants (68.5%) were employed in private commercial banks, while 31.5% worked in state-owned commercial banks.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Coefficient of Study Variables

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients among the study variables. The mean values, ranging from 4.002 to 4.120, suggest that respondents generally reported high levels of agreement across all constructs, indicating strong emotional intelligence and favorable employee performance. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.519 to 0.590, indicate a moderate spread in responses, suggesting consistent perceptions among participants. All correlation coefficients (ranging from 0.513 to 0.717) are positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed), demonstrating that EI dimensions are closely interrelated and collectively contribute to employee performance.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Constructs	Mean	SD	Correlation Coefficient					
			SA	SR	M	E	SS	EP
Self-awareness	4.009	.562	1					
Self-regulation	4.025	.534	.516**	1				
Motivation	4.002	.590	.513**	.653**	1			
Empathy	4.064	.539	.574**	.554**	.670**	1		
Social skills	4.111	.536	.528**	.620**	.717**	.658**	1	
Employee performance	4.120	.519	.666**	.661**	.711**	.632**	.700**	1

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

4.3 Measurement Model Assessment

Table 2 (Figure 2) presents the measurement model results, which assess the reliability and validity of six key constructs. During the validation process, due to poor outer loadings, four items (SR5, EP1, EP2, and EP12) were removed to improve the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of their respective constructs.

Table 2. Outcomes of the Measurement Model

Construct	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Self-awareness	SA1	0.760	0.865	0.563
	SA2	0.844		
	SA3	0.760		
	SA4	0.722		
	SA5	0.654		
Self-regulation	SR1	0.734	0.809	0.516
	SR2	0.774		
	SR3	0.712		
	SR4	0.647		
Motivation	M1	0.786	0.861	0.555
	M2	0.648		
	M3	0.788		
	M4	0.792		
	M5	0.697		
Empathy	E1	0.735	0.875	0.583
	E2	0.797		
	E3	0.786		
	E4	0.784		
	E5	0.713		
Social skills	SS1	0.699	0.865	0.562
	SS2	0.739		
	SS3	0.801		
	SS4	0.797		
	SS5	0.706		
Employee performance	EP2	0.694	0.913	0.515
	EP3	0.801		
	EP4	0.797		
	EP5	0.702		
	EP6	0.669		
	EP7	0.743		
	EP8	0.743		
	EP9	0.701		
	EP10	0.681		
	EP11	0.624		

Note: CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted

The retained indicators, with factor loadings ranging from 0.624 to 0.844, confirm that the items loaded adequately on their respective constructs and contributed significantly to the measurement model (Hair et al., 2017). The Composite Reliability (CR) values (ranging from 0.809 to 0.913) for all constructs met the

recommended level of 0.70, indicating consistent measurement of the latent variables (Hair et al., 2017). Likewise, the AVE values for all constructs exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017).

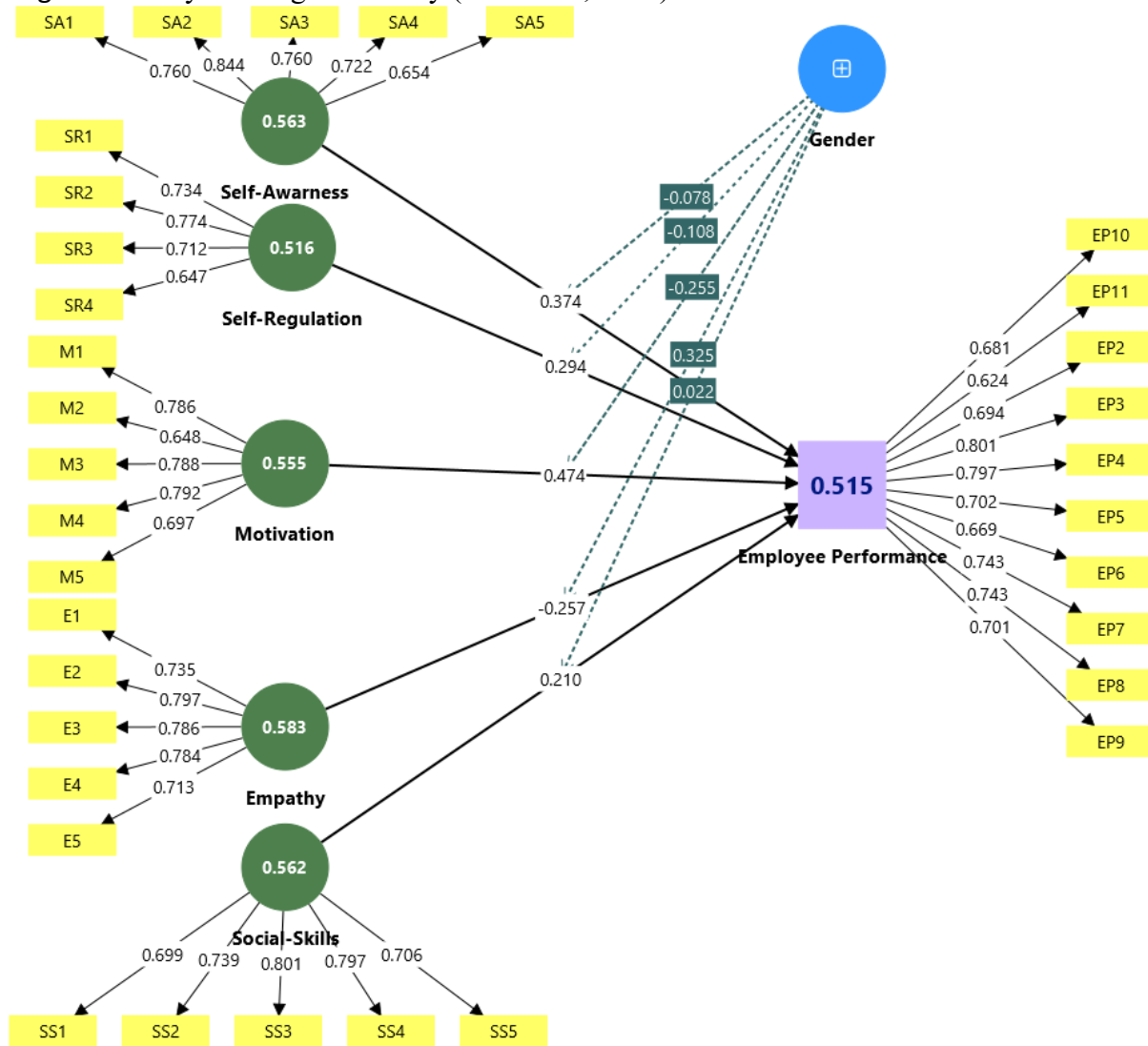


Fig. 2. Measurement Model

Further, the study tested the model's discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) criterion. Table 3 displays that all HTMT values range from 0.645 to 0.888, remaining below the 0.90 threshold, thereby confirming satisfactory discriminant validity among all constructs (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 3. Discriminant validity by HTMT

Constructs	Employee Empathy	Employee Performance	Motivation	Self-Awareness	Self-Regulation	Social-Skills
Employee Empathy						
Employee Performance	0.725					
Motivation	0.829	0.836				
Self-Awareness	0.704	0.783	0.648			
Self-Regulation	0.717	0.802	0.798	0.645		
Social-Skills	0.812	0.822	0.888	0.658	0.792	

Additionally, the study examined potential collinearity by assessing the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores. The VIF scores ranged from 1.486 to 2.700, which are below the cutoff value of 5, indicating no collinearity (Hair et al., 2017).

4.4 Structural Model Assessment

The study assessed the structural model to examine the effects of EI dimensions on employee performance, with gender as a moderating factor. Table 4 (referring to Figure 3) shows that all five EI components significantly influence employee performance, such as self-awareness ($\beta = 0.374$, $t = 3.921$), self-regulation ($\beta = 0.294$, $t = 1.967$), motivation ($\beta = 0.474$, $t = 4.556$), empathy ($\beta = -0.257$, $t = 1.860$), and social skills ($\beta = 0.210$, $t = 1.681$). Thus, H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are accepted. Regarding moderating effects, gender significantly moderates the relationship between motivation and employee performance ($\beta = -0.255$, $t = 2.292$) and between empathy and employee performance ($\beta = 0.325$, $t = 2.254$); thus, H8 and H9 are accepted. Other interaction terms were statistically insignificant, indicating rejection of H6, H7, and H10. In Table 4 (referring to Figure 3), the R^2 value for employee performance is 0.702, indicating that 70.2% of the variance in employee performance is explained by EI dimensions. Hence, the current model demonstrates a substantial explanatory power (Cohen, 1988). The f^2 values for motivation (0.060) and self-awareness (0.035) indicate small-to-moderate effects, while self-regulation (0.014), empathy (0.011), and social skill (0.007) indicate small effects, indicating meaningful yet varying contributions to employee performance (Cohen, 1988). The Q^2 value for employee performance is 0.679, indicating that the model performs very well in predicting employee performance (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4. Outcomes of the structural model

H	Paths	β	SE	t-value	Decision	R^2	f^2	Q^2
H1	SA→EP	0.374	0.095	3.921	Accepted	0.702	0.035	0.679
H2	SR→EP	0.294	0.150	1.967	Accepted		0.014	
H3	M→EP	0.474	0.104	4.556	Accepted		0.060	
H4	E→EP	-0.257	0.138	1.860	Accepted		0.011	
H5	SS→EP	0.210	0.125	1.681	Accepted		0.007	
H6	G×SA→EP	-0.078	0.106	0.737	Rejected			
H7	G×SR→EP	-0.108	0.155	0.697	Rejected			
H8	G×M→EP	-0.255	0.111	2.292	Accepted			
H9	G×E→EP	0.325	0.144	2.254	Accepted			
H10	G×SS→EP	0.022	0.134	0.161	Rejected			

Note: $t > 1.645$ at $p < 0.05$; (1-tailed). H = hypothesis, EP = Employee performance, SA = Self-Awareness, SR = Self-Regulation, M = Motivation, E = Empathy, SS = Social-Skills, G = Gender

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study found that all five dimensions of EI significantly impact EP, consistent with Goleman's (1995, 1998) EI theory, which emphasizes emotional competence as essential for managing job demands and sustaining performance in service-driven environments. Employees with a better understanding of their emotions perform better (Carden et al., 2022; Kumari & Nandal, 2023). In the banking business, a high level of self-awareness enhances employee performance by supporting error reduction, emotional control, and professional conduct. Banking employees in Bangladesh who maintained emotional control showed improved focus and service quality, even under regulatory pressure and performance targets. They can easily manage stress, regulate emotions, recover from setbacks, and exhibit greater effectiveness (Park & Kim, 2022). Furthermore, motivation-oriented EI helps employees achieve immediate task accomplishment and sustain performance in competitive banking environments. These employees use emotions constructively to pursue goals, remain optimistic, and persist through challenges (Madzik et al., 2025).

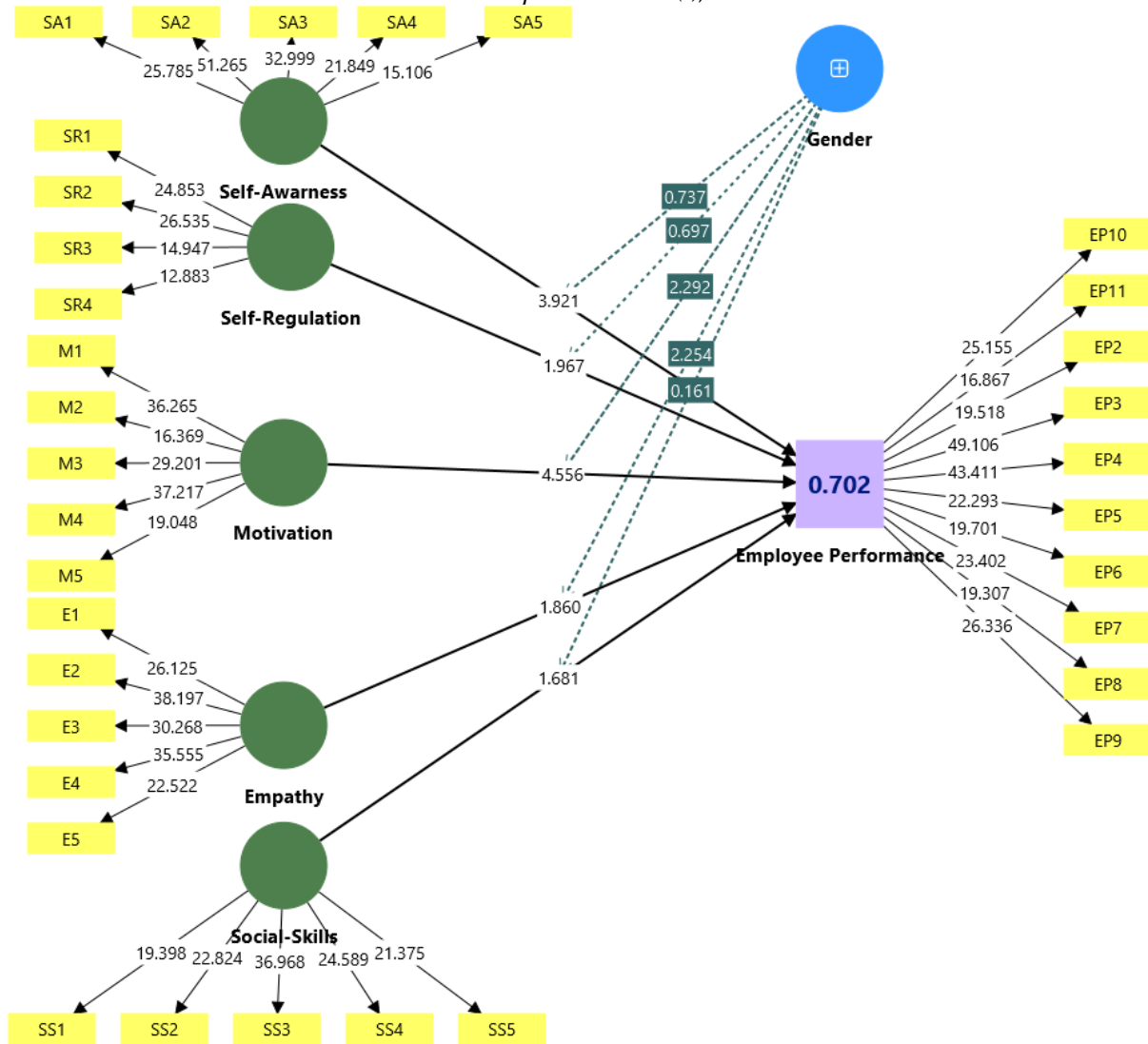


Fig. 3. Structural Model

Additionally, the trust-based nature of banking services requires employees to exhibit empathetic behavior to enhance relational and performance outcomes. These empathetic people can recognize emotional cues, adopt others' perspectives, build trust, and perform better in customer relationship management and internal collaboration (Choi et al., 2024; Prasetyo et al., 2023). Finally, socially skilled employees can be more effective in delivering services. These individuals possess effective communication, teamwork, and conflict-resolution abilities (Alshurideh et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023).

The findings regarding the significant moderating role in the M-EP relationship indicate that male and female employees differ in how they channel goal-driven behavior, persistence, and optimism into workplace outcomes. Similarly, the moderating effect of gender on the E-EP relationship indicates that men and women differ in how they understand, interpret, and respond to others' emotions. These results indicate gender-specific considerations in the design of motivational programs, training, performance management systems, and leadership development in the banking sector. However, the insignificant role of gender in the SA, SR, SS, and EP relationships indicates that these EI dimensions respond similarly for both male and female employees. In high-pressure, customer-driven banking environments, employees, regardless of gender, appear to benefit equally from awareness of their emotions, stress and impulse management, and effective interpersonal navigation. Therefore, in strengthening competencies across the workforce, EI development initiatives may adopt gender-sensitive approaches to improve employee motivation and empathy, and gender-neutral approaches for SA, SR, and SS.

6. Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several important theoretical contributions. First, it empirically validates Goleman's (1995, 1998) competency-based EI framework in the Bangladeshi banking industry. The study reinforces the theoretical proposition that emotional competencies are critical behavioral resources in service-oriented organizations, particularly in emerging economies. Second, the study contributes to the EI and EP literature by adding gender as a moderating variable in the EI-EP relationship, while prior research has largely focused on the direct effects of EI (Alonazi, 2020; Rexhepi & Berisha, 2017; Supramaniam & Singaravelloo, 2021). It thus demonstrates the importance of employing both gender-specific and gender-neutral mechanisms in EI and EP research. Finally, by situating the analysis in a non-Western service-sector context, the study enhances the cross-cultural generalizability of Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory and contributes to a more inclusive, context-sensitive understanding of emotional intelligence in organizational research.

7. Practical Implications

The study provides the banking industry with insights and strategies for improving employee performance by developing employees' EI, with gender considerations. At the organizational level, corporations should integrate different HR development programs, counselling and employee assistance programs, performance evaluations and coaching, and leadership programs as EI development initiatives (Iyanda et al., 2024; Van Oosten et al., 2019). Structured workshops can help people make attitudinal, behavioral, and psychological improvements to perform better at work.

At the individual level, an employee can improve EI by being more aware, regulated, motivated, and empathetic, and by adhering to social norms (Alonazi, 2020; Miao et al., 2021). Thus, they can recognize personal strengths and limitations, which will eventually support better decision-making (Jennings et al., 2023; Zeshan et al., 2024). If an employee feels angry and/or anxious, and lacks motivation and optimism, s/he should involve his/her immediate supervisor so that management can take initiative in time to help him/her manage his/her emotions.

At the strategic level, leaders in the banking industry should treat EI improvement initiatives as long-term investments in human capital. Company policies should be developed with consideration of the various nature of the workforce, and strategies should be crafted using gender-sensitive approaches. Corporations can adopt inclusive leadership, emotionally intelligent customer service models, resilience-building programs, and related practices (Ahsan & Tahir, 2025; Bataineh et al., 2025). Embedding EI into HR strategy and service excellence frameworks accelerates the acquisition of an unbeatable workforce, a key success factor in achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

8. Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

This study identifies its limitations and offers directions for future researchers. Firstly, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may introduce social desirability despite efforts to ensure anonymity. Future research may use multiple data sources, such as supervisor ratings or objective performance indicators, to enhance validity. Secondly, this investigation was conducted among employees in the Bangladeshi banking sector, which clearly limits generalizability. Replication of the study in other service sectors, in private–public sector comparisons, or across diverse national contexts would enhance external validity. Thirdly, future studies may explore the moderating and/or mediating roles of other individual and organizational factors (e.g., organizational support, job stress, and leadership style) to deepen understanding of the mechanisms linking emotional intelligence and performance. Finally, this study found that gender moderated only the effects of motivation and empathy, not those of self-awareness, self-regulation, or social

skills. Future research may investigate why some EI dimensions are gender-sensitive while others are gender-neutral, using qualitative methods or mixed-method designs.

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Appendix Questionnaire

[Instruction: Please put the tick (✓) mark in the appropriate box.]

SI No.	Questionnaire items Based on www.http://carepatron.com free version	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Self-awareness						
SA1	I am aware of my emotions as they arise					
SA2	I am aware of how my emotions impact my behavior and decision-making.					
SA3	I have a good sense of my own abilities and limitations.					
SA4	I am aware of my own emotional triggers.					
SA5	I am aware of how others perceive me.					
Self-regulation						
SR1	I am able to stay focused and think clearly even when experiencing powerful emotions.					
SR2	I manage stress in healthy ways.					
SR3	I am able to bounce back quickly after a setback.					
SR4	I can regulate my emotions when I feel anxious or upset.					
SR5	I am able to control my temper and avoid saying or doing things I later regret.					
Motivation						
M1	I can regulate my emotions to stay focused on my goals.					
M2	I can use my emotions to motivate myself towards my goals.					
M3	I stay motivated even when faced with obstacles and setbacks.					
M4	I am able to delay gratification in pursuit of my goals.					
M5	I remain optimistic in the face of challenges.					
Empathy						
E1	I am able to build trust with others.					
E2	I can express empathy in a way that feels genuine to others.					
E3	I can respond appropriately to others' emotions.					
E4	I understand others' perspectives.					
E5	I can sense others' emotions.					
Social Skills						
SS1	I can adapt to different social situations and contexts.					
SS2	I work effectively in a team.					
SS3	I can positively influence and inspire others.					
SS4	I handle conflicts and disagreements constructively.					
SS5	I can effectively communicate my emotions to others.					
Employee Performance						
EP1	I can plan my work so I finish on time.					
EP2	I keep in mind the work result I need to achieve.					
EP3	I can distinguish the main issues from the side issues.					
EP4	I can perform my work effectively with minimal time and effort.					
EP5	I plan my work optimally.					

EP6	On my own initiative, I begin new tasks once my previous tasks are completed.					
EP7	I take on challenging tasks when they are available.					
EP8	I work to keep my job-related knowledge current.					
EP9	I work to keep my skills up to date.					
EP10	I develop creative solutions for new problems.					
EP11	I take on extra responsibilities.					
EP12	I actively participate in meetings and/or consultations.					