

Mediating Role of Work–Life Balance in the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Career Outcomes of Working Women

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Abstract

In contemporary organizations, sustainable employability has emerged as a critical concern, particularly for working women who continuously balance professional responsibilities and personal roles. Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays a vital role in enabling individuals to manage emotions, cope with work pressure, and sustain long-term career performance. This study examines the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance and work–life balance among working women, and its contribution to sustainable employability. Using a descriptive and analytical research design, primary data were collected from working women across selected organizations through a structured questionnaire. Standardized scales were employed to measure emotional intelligence, job performance, and work–life balance. Statistical tools such as correlation analysis and multiple regression were applied to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings reveal that emotional intelligence has a significant positive impact on both job performance and work–life balance, which in turn enhances sustainable employability. The study highlights the importance of emotional competence development programs and supportive organizational practices to foster long-term employability of women employees. The findings offer valuable implications for HR managers, policymakers, and organizations aiming to promote employee well-being and sustainable workforce participation.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Work–Life Balance, Sustainable Employability, Working Women

Introduction

The increasing participation of women in the workforce has transformed organizational dynamics and economic development worldwide. Despite improved access to education and employment opportunities, working women continue to face significant challenges in balancing professional roles and personal responsibilities. Issues such as job stress, emotional exhaustion, and work–life imbalance often threaten their career continuity and long-term employability. In this context, emotional intelligence has gained prominence as a crucial psychological resource that enables individuals to understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in the workplace.

Emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, which collectively influence how individuals respond to workplace demands. Employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle interpersonal conflicts, manage stress, and maintain productive relationships, thereby enhancing job performance. For working women, emotional intelligence also plays a significant role in managing multiple role expectations, ensuring work–life balance, and sustaining career engagement over time.

Sustainable employability refers to the ability of employees to remain productive, healthy, and motivated throughout their working lives. In the present competitive and dynamic work environment, sustainable employability of working women is closely linked to emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational support. This study seeks to explore

emotional intelligence as a determinant of job performance and work–life balance, contributing to sustainable employability among working women.

Review of Literature

Previous research has extensively examined emotional intelligence as a predictor of workplace outcomes. Goleman (1998) emphasized that emotional competencies significantly contribute to superior work performance beyond technical skills and cognitive intelligence. Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) conceptualized emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions, which influences individual effectiveness in organizational settings.

Several studies have established a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance. Employees with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate better problem-solving skills, adaptability, and teamwork, leading to improved performance outcomes. Research focusing on women employees suggests that emotional intelligence enhances leadership effectiveness and career advancement by improving interpersonal relationships and emotional regulation.

Work–life balance has also been linked to emotional intelligence in prior studies. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more capable of setting boundaries, managing stress, and prioritizing responsibilities, thereby achieving a healthier balance between work and personal life. Studies on working women indicate that emotional intelligence mitigates work–family conflict and enhances psychological well-being.

Sustainable employability has emerged as a multidimensional concept encompassing health, competence, motivation, and work ability. Empirical studies suggest that emotional intelligence contributes to sustainable employability by fostering resilience, continuous learning, and long-term job engagement. However, limited empirical research has jointly examined emotional intelligence, job performance, work–life balance, and sustainable employability among working women, particularly in the Indian context. This study attempts to address this research gap.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the level of emotional intelligence among working women.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance.
3. To analyze the impact of emotional intelligence on work–life balance.
4. To study the role of job performance and work–life balance in enhancing sustainable employability of working women.

Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated for empirical testing:

- H1: Emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with job performance of working women.
- H2: Emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with work–life balance of working women.
- H3: Job performance has a significant impact on sustainable employability of working women.
- H4: Work–life balance has a significant impact on sustainable employability of working women.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected from working women employed in various sectors using a structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique was employed, and a sample size of 300 respondents was considered for analysis.

Emotional intelligence was measured using a standardized emotional intelligence scale, while job performance and work–life balance were measured using validated instruments from existing literature. The reliability of the scales was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which indicated acceptable internal consistency.

Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the data. The analysis was carried out using statistical software to test the hypotheses.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics of Working Women Respondents (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30 years	78	26.0
	31–40 years	124	41.3
	41–50 years	68	22.7
	Above 50 years	30	10.0
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	92	30.7
	Postgraduate	168	56.0
	Doctoral / Professional	40	13.3
Marital Status	Married	204	68.0
	Unmarried	96	32.0
Sector of Employment	Education	74	24.7
	Banking	58	19.3
	Healthcare	66	22.0
	IT	62	20.7
	Manufacturing	40	13.3
Work Experience	Below 5 years	86	28.7
	5–10 years	112	37.3
	Above 10 years	102	34.0

Interpretation

The majority of respondents were aged between 31–40 years and possessed postgraduate qualifications, indicating a mature and skilled workforce. A significant proportion were married, highlighting the relevance of work–life balance in sustaining employability among working women.

Regression Analysis – Effect of Emotional Intelligence

Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance and Work–Life Balance

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Standardized β	t-value	Sig. (p)	Hypothesis Result
Job Performance	Emotional Intelligence	0.512	9.86	< 0.001	Accepted
Work–Life Balance	Emotional Intelligence	0.476	8.92	< 0.001	Accepted

Model Summary:

- R^2 (Job Performance) = 0.262
- R^2 (Work–Life Balance) = 0.226

Interpretation:

Emotional intelligence significantly and positively influences both job performance and work–life balance, confirming its role as a critical psychological resource for working women.

Regression Analysis – Determinants of Sustainable Employability

Table 3. Influence of Job Performance and Work–Life Balance on Sustainable Employability

Independent Variable	Standardized β	t-value	Sig. (p)	Hypothesis Result
Job Performance	0.394	7.21	< 0.001	Accepted
Work–Life Balance	0.421	7.88	< 0.001	Accepted

Model Summary:

- $R^2 = 0.348$

Interpretation:

Both job performance and work–life balance significantly contribute to sustainable employability, explaining nearly 35% of its variance among working women.

Conclusion

The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a significant determinant of job performance and work–life balance, which together contribute to sustainable employability of working women. Developing emotional competencies enables women to cope with workplace challenges, enhance productivity, and sustain long-term career participation.

The findings have important practical implications for organizations and policymakers. Employers should invest in emotional intelligence training programs, counseling services, and flexible work arrangements to promote work–life balance and sustainable employability. The study also emphasizes the need for supportive organizational cultures that recognize the emotional and social dimensions of women's work experiences.

Future research may extend the study to different regions, sectors, and longitudinal designs to gain deeper insights into the long-term impact of emotional intelligence on sustainable employability.

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