



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A CORRELATE OF OCCUPATIONAL BURNOUT AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG WOMEN IT PROFESSIONALS

Sapna V. P.

PhD scholar at Arunodaya University, India.

ABSTRACT :

Emotional intelligence and occupational burnout are important psychological factors that may be associated with employee well-being and job performance in demanding professional environments. The present study examined the relationships between emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour among women IT professionals. A correlational research design was employed, and data were collected from 70 women IT professionals aged 25 to 46 years ($M = 34.63$, $SD = 5.46$). Descriptive statistics and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed a strong negative correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational burnout, $r(68) = -.740$, $p < .001$. Emotional intelligence was positively correlated with task performance, $r(68) = .742$, $p < .001$, contextual performance, $r(68) = .770$, $p < .001$, and counterproductive work behaviour, $r(68) = .662$, $p < .001$. Occupational burnout was negatively correlated with task performance, $r(68) = -.622$, $p < .001$, contextual performance, $r(68) = -.731$, $p < .001$, and counterproductive work behaviour, $r(68) = -.630$, $p < .001$. Overall, the findings indicate that emotional intelligence and occupational burnout are significantly associated with different dimensions of job performance among women IT professionals. The results highlight the potential value of emotional intelligence development and workplace well-being initiatives. However, the unexpected directions of the correlations involving counterproductive work behaviour warrant verification of the scoring procedures and further investigation. Given the correlational design, the findings indicate associations rather than causal relationships.



KEYWORDS: Emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, task performance, contextual performance, counterproductive work behaviour, women IT professionals.

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of an employee cannot always be understood by examining how much work is completed or how well professional responsibilities are fulfilled. Behind everyday workplace behaviour are personal experiences, emotional responses, and psychological processes that influence how individuals approach their work. An employee may possess strong technical knowledge and relevant professional skills yet find it difficult to remain motivated when faced with persistent pressure, interpersonal conflicts, or unrealistic expectations. Another employee facing similar challenges may respond with greater emotional balance and adaptability. Such differences highlight the importance of understanding the psychological factors that shape employees' experiences and functioning in the

workplace. Emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, and job performance are particularly relevant in this regard because they represent different but potentially related aspects of professional life.

The Information Technology (IT) sector provides an important setting for examining these relationships. Working in this field often involves continuous learning, frequent technological updates, demanding project schedules, and the need to deliver solutions within specified time frames. Beyond these technical responsibilities, IT professionals must communicate effectively, coordinate with team members, respond to client concerns, and adjust to changing organisational priorities. These demands can make the working day mentally and emotionally challenging. The job demands–resources model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) offers a useful framework for understanding these experiences, suggesting that demanding working conditions may contribute to strain, whereas adequate job resources can support employee motivation and functioning. Although some pressure may encourage employees to remain focused and productive, prolonged exposure to demanding work conditions can gradually affect their energy, motivation, and overall well-being.

One factor that may help explain individual differences in these experiences is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has gained considerable attention in psychology because emotions influence how people think, make decisions, and interact with others. Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced the concept as the ability to recognise and understand one's own emotions and those of others and use this information to guide behaviour. Mayer and Salovey (1997) further explained emotional intelligence through four abilities: perceiving, using, understanding, and regulating emotions. Goleman (1995) also highlighted its practical importance by emphasising self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. Together, these perspectives offer different ways of understanding how emotional abilities may shape everyday experiences and professional relationships.

In the workplace, emotional intelligence may influence how employees handle difficult situations, respond to feedback, and maintain relationships with colleagues. For example, an employee who recognises feelings of frustration during a demanding project may be better able to pause, consider the situation, and respond constructively. Such abilities can be particularly useful in the IT sector, where employees often face deadlines, changing project requirements, and the need for continuous collaboration. Supporting this perspective, Joseph and Newman (2010) explained how emotional abilities may contribute to work-related outcomes, while O'Boyle et al. (2011) found a positive association between emotional intelligence and job performance. Emotional intelligence may also help employees recognise and manage their emotional responses to workplace pressure. However, even individuals who manage their emotions effectively can experience stress and exhaustion when faced with excessive workloads, limited resources, or inadequate organisational support. As Bakker and Demerouti (2007) explained, employee well-being is also shaped by the demands of the job and the resources available to meet them. Therefore, understanding emotional intelligence alongside occupational burnout and job performance may provide a more balanced picture of employees' experiences and functioning at work.

Occupational burnout is an increasing concern in modern workplaces, particularly when employees experience prolonged work-related stress without adequate opportunities for recovery. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) recognises burnout as an occupational phenomenon characterised by exhaustion, mental distance or cynicism towards work, and reduced professional efficacy. Unlike temporary tiredness, burnout develops through persistent workplace stress and may gradually affect employees' motivation, emotional well-being, and professional functioning (Maslach et al., 2001). The IT sector presents several challenges that may contribute to burnout, including tight deadlines, continuous technological changes, demanding workloads, and client expectations. Over time, employees may feel emotionally drained, lose enthusiasm for their responsibilities, or begin to doubt their professional effectiveness. The Job Demands–Resources model suggests that burnout becomes more likely when sustained job demands exceed the resources available to manage them (Demerouti et al., 2001). Supportive supervision, reasonable workloads, and greater job autonomy may therefore play an important role in employee well-being. Emotional intelligence may be relevant to how employees recognise and manage their emotional responses to workplace pressure. Chen et al. (2024) reported a significant negative association between emotional intelligence and job burnout, suggesting that

emotional abilities may be relevant to occupational well-being. However, emotional intelligence cannot eliminate the effects of excessive workloads or inadequate organisational support. Employees' experiences also depend on their working conditions and available resources. Among women IT professionals, burnout should be understood in relation to individual circumstances and workplace environments rather than gender alone. Examining its relationship with emotional intelligence and job performance may help clarify how emotional functioning relates to occupational well-being and professional effectiveness. Accordingly, the present study investigates these associations without assuming that emotional intelligence directly causes or prevents burnout.

Job performance, meanwhile, concerns how effectively individuals carry out their work responsibilities and contribute to organisational objectives. It encompasses more than the completion of assigned tasks, as employees may also contribute through cooperation, initiative, adaptability, and behaviours that support the wider work environment. Emotional intelligence may be relevant to these aspects of professional functioning because workplace performance frequently involves managing emotions, responding to feedback, and maintaining productive relationships. Supporting this possibility, O'Boyle et al. (2011) reported a positive association between emotional intelligence and job performance in their meta-analysis. However, the strength and interpretation of this relationship may depend on how emotional intelligence is conceptualised and measured, as well as the criteria used to assess performance (Joseph et al., 2015). Examining emotional intelligence alongside occupational burnout and job performance can consequently provide a broader understanding of the psychological factors associated with employees' occupational experiences.

These issues warrant particular consideration among women IT professionals. Their workplace experiences may be shaped by a combination of professional responsibilities, organisational expectations, career aspirations, and individual circumstances. However, women in the technology sector should not be viewed as a uniform group, and their occupational experiences cannot be explained through gender alone. Their well-being and performance must also be understood in relation to their specific job roles, working conditions, available resources, and organisational environments. Investigating emotional intelligence, burnout, and job performance within this population may help clarify how these variables are associated in a professional context characterised by substantial technical and interpersonal demands.

Against this background, the present study, "Emotional Intelligence as a Correlate of Occupational Burnout and Job Performance among Women IT Professionals," examines the relationships between emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, and job performance. Adopting a correlational approach, the study seeks to determine whether emotional intelligence is significantly associated with occupational burnout and job performance among women working in the IT sector. It also considers the importance of examining employee well-being and professional functioning together rather than treating them as entirely separate concerns. As the study is correlational, the findings may establish associations among the variables but cannot demonstrate causal relationships. By investigating these connections, the study may contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the psychological experiences of women IT professionals and offer insights relevant to organisational psychology, employee assistance programmes, and workplace well-being initiatives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Emotional intelligence is increasingly relevant to understanding how employees manage the emotional and interpersonal demands of professional life. In the workplace, employees must often balance technical responsibilities with communication, teamwork, and the ability to respond calmly to challenging situations. Joseph and Newman (2010) explained the connection between emotional abilities and job performance through a model involving emotional perception, understanding, and regulation. Extending this line of research, O'Boyle et al. (2011), in a meta-analysis, found positive associations between emotional intelligence and job performance across different approaches to measuring the construct. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence may be associated with how effectively employees carry out their responsibilities, although performance also depends on other personal and organisational factors.

Research focusing on women employed in the Indian software industry offers a more direct connection to the present study. Gunavathy and Ayswarya (2011) examined emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and job performance among 150 women working in this sector. They reported significant positive relationships among the three variables. Their findings provide a useful starting point for understanding the role of emotional intelligence in the professional experiences of women in technology-related occupations. However, the study's focus on job satisfaction and performance leaves scope for examining occupational burnout alongside these outcomes.

Burnout represents another important aspect of employees' working lives, particularly when job-related pressure continues without sufficient opportunities for recovery. Chen et al. (2024), in a meta-analysis and structural equation modelling study, reported a significant negative association between emotional intelligence and job burnout. This finding indicates that higher emotional intelligence tends to be associated with lower burnout, although it does not establish a direct causal relationship. Employees' experiences may also be shaped by workload, organisational support, job security, and the resources available to manage professional demands.

The relationship among emotional intelligence, burnout, and performance was also examined by Cárdenas et al. (2020) among 1,197 Spanish professionals, including women and men from different occupational backgrounds. The researchers reported a positive association between emotional intelligence and work performance and a negative association between emotional intelligence and burnout. Their findings highlight the value of considering employees' psychological well-being alongside their professional effectiveness. Nevertheless, findings from a broad professional sample may not fully reflect the experiences of women working specifically in the Indian IT sector.

Taken together, the available literature provides a foundation for investigating emotional intelligence in relation to both occupational burnout and job performance. However, further research focused specifically on women IT professionals is warranted to establish whether these relationships are evident within this occupational group. In particular, examining all three variables within the same study may provide a clearer understanding of how emotional intelligence, work-related strain, and professional effectiveness are associated. Therefore, the present study, *Emotional Intelligence as a Correlate of Occupational Burnout and Job Performance among Women IT Professionals*, aims to examine the relationships among these variables. By adopting a correlational approach, the study seeks to contribute population-specific evidence without assuming that emotional intelligence directly causes lower burnout or better job performance.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the level of emotional intelligence among women IT professionals.
- To assess the level of occupational burnout among women IT professionals.
- To assess the level of job performance among women IT professionals.
- To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational burnout among women IT professionals.
- To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance among women IT professionals.
- To examine the relationship between occupational burnout and job performance among women IT professionals.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational burnout among women IT professionals.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and task performance among women IT professionals.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and contextual performance among women IT professionals.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviour among women IT professionals.

H₀₅: There is no significant relationship between occupational burnout and task performance among women IT professionals.

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between occupational burnout and contextual performance among women IT professionals.

H₀₇: There is no significant relationship between occupational burnout and counterproductive work behaviour among women IT professionals.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present investigation used a quantitative correlational approach to explore the associations between emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, and job performance among women employed in the Information Technology sector. This approach was suitable because the study focused on identifying relationships between naturally occurring psychological and occupational characteristics rather than introducing an intervention or manipulating any variable. Job performance was examined through three separate components: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. The study therefore sought to understand how emotional intelligence and burnout were related to each component of work performance.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The study involved 70 women IT professionals between 25 and 50 years of age. The participants had a mean age of 34.62 years. A convenience sampling method was adopted to recruit individuals who were accessible to the researcher, met the eligibility requirements, and were willing to take part in the investigation. This method provided a practical means of reaching the target population within the scope of the study. However, because participants were not selected through random sampling, the findings should be generalised to other groups of women IT professionals with appropriate caution. The standard deviation of participants' ages will be reported after it has been calculated from the individual age records.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Participation was restricted to women aged 25–50 years who were currently employed in the IT sector and could understand and complete the questionnaires independently. Participants were required to agree voluntarily to take part in the research and provide informed consent before accessing the survey. Individuals who did not satisfy the age or employment requirements, declined consent, or submitted responses that could not be scored reliably were excluded from the final dataset. Duplicate submissions and responses with substantial missing information were also considered during data screening, in accordance with the procedures followed by the researcher.

Variables of the Study

1. Emotional intelligence: Assessed using the Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10).
2. Occupational burnout: Assessed using the Burnout Assessment Tool–Short Version (BAT-12).
3. Job performance: Assessed using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ), comprising task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour.

MEASURES USED IN THE STUDY

The Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS-10) was administered to assess participants' perceptions of their emotional abilities. Davies et al. (2010) developed this 10-item instrument as a shorter measure derived from the Emotional Intelligence Scale introduced by Schutte et al. (1998). It covers five aspects of emotional intelligence: recognising one's own emotions, understanding the emotions of others, managing one's own emotional responses, influencing or managing others' emotional states, and using emotions to support thinking and problem-solving. The instrument produces a total raw score between 10 and 50. Higher scores indicate higher self-perceived emotional

intelligence. The total score was used in the correlation analyses, and the items were scored according to the instrument's prescribed instructions.

Occupational burnout was measured using the Burnout Assessment Tool–Short Version (BAT-12). The development of this 12-item version was described by Hadžibajramović et al. (2022), while guidance on the Burnout Assessment Tool is provided in the manual by Schaufeli et al. (2020). The instrument assesses four aspects of burnout: exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive impairment, and emotional impairment. Exhaustion concerns the experience of depleted physical and mental energy. Mental distance reflects detachment or negative attitudes towards work. Cognitive impairment concerns difficulties with concentration, attention, and memory, while emotional impairment involves problems managing emotional responses. The responses were scored according to the instrument's guidelines, and the mean score was used to represent burnout symptoms, with higher scores indicating more pronounced symptoms. Any risk classification was interpreted according to the applicable manual rather than treated as a clinical diagnosis.

The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) was used to examine participants' work-related behaviours. The instrument, associated with Koopmans et al. (2014), contains 18 items and assesses performance over a three-month reference period. Its first dimension, task performance, comprises five items relating to the completion of core job responsibilities. The second dimension, contextual performance, contains eight items concerning behaviours that support the work environment, including initiative, cooperation, and assistance to colleagues. The third dimension, counterproductive work behaviour, consists of five items relating to actions that may interfere with productive work or negatively affect the organisation. Responses are scored on a five-point scale ranging from 0 to 4, using the response options specified for the respective dimensions. A separate mean score is obtained for each dimension by dividing its total item score by the number of items it contains. Consequently, task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour each produce a score ranging from 0 to 4. Higher scores on the first two dimensions reflect more frequent desirable behaviours, whereas higher counterproductive work behaviour scores indicate more frequent undesirable behaviours. Because these dimensions represent distinct aspects of work behaviour, they were retained as separate variables rather than combined into a single overall job performance score.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The information required for the study was gathered through an online questionnaire created using Google Forms. The survey incorporated the relevant demographic questions and the three psychological and occupational measures. Participants received information about the purpose of the research and were asked to provide informed consent before completing the questionnaire. They were encouraged to respond according to their own experiences and perceptions. Participation was voluntary, and appropriate steps were taken to maintain the confidentiality of the information collected. After the survey responses had been obtained, the dataset was examined to identify missing entries, duplicate submissions, and responses unsuitable for scoring. The usable data were coded, scored, cleaned, and organised before statistical analysis. These preparatory steps helped ensure that the variables were appropriately structured for analysis in accordance with the scoring instructions of the respective instruments.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 25. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarise the participants' demographic characteristics and scores on the study variables. Correlation analysis was undertaken to examine the associations between emotional intelligence and occupational burnout, emotional intelligence and each dimension of job performance, and occupational burnout and each dimension of job performance. Pearson's product-moment correlation was used when the relevant assumptions, including linearity and the absence of influential outliers, were adequately satisfied. Where these assumptions were not met, Spearman's rank-order correlation was considered as an alternative. Statistical significance was

evaluated using two-tailed tests at the .05 level. The resulting coefficients were interpreted in terms of their direction, magnitude, and statistical significance. Separate analyses were conducted for task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour, and no composite job performance score was calculated. The correlational findings were interpreted as evidence of association rather than proof of causation.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed relevant ethical principles for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before respondents completed the questionnaire. Participants were informed about the purpose of the investigation and their right to decline participation. Confidentiality was maintained during data handling and reporting, and the collected information was used for the stated research purpose. Details of institutional ethical approval, if obtained, should be included in the final report.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the age distribution of the participants and the central tendency and variability of the principal study variables: emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. The analysis included 70 participants, and the results are presented in a consolidated format in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Age and Principal Study Variables (N = 70)

Variable	N	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age (years)	70	34.63	5.46	25	46
Emotional intelligence	70	30.74	10.14	10.00	49.00
Occupational burnout	70	2.90	1.09	1.08	4.92
Task performance	70	2.09	1.09	0.00	4.00
Contextual performance	70	2.08	1.14	0.00	4.00
Counterproductive work behaviour	70	2.29	1.09	0.00	4.00

The descriptive findings indicated that the participants had a mean age of 34.63 years (SD = 5.46), with ages ranging from 25 to 46 years. Emotional intelligence had a mean score of 30.74 (SD = 10.14), with observed scores ranging from 10.00 to 49.00, indicating variability in emotional intelligence across the participants. Occupational burnout yielded a mean score of 2.90 (SD = 1.09), with scores ranging from 1.08 to 4.92. Regarding the performance-related variables, task performance had a mean of 2.09 (SD = 1.09), whereas contextual performance had a mean of 2.08 (SD = 1.14). Both variables demonstrated similar average scores, although contextual performance showed slightly greater variability. Counterproductive work behaviour recorded a mean of 2.29 (SD = 1.09), which was comparatively higher than the mean scores for task and contextual performance.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behaviour among women IT professionals. The results for all seven hypotheses are consolidated in Table 3.

Table 3
Pearson Correlations Between Emotional Intelligence, Occupational Burnout, and Job Performance Among Women IT Professionals (N = 70)

Hypothesis	Variables correlated	r	p	Decision
H ₀₁	Emotional intelligence and occupational burnout	-.740	< .001	Rejected
H ₀₂	Emotional intelligence and task performance	.742	< .001	Rejected
H ₀₃	Emotional intelligence and contextual performance	.770	< .001	Rejected
H ₀₄	Emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviour	.662	< .001	Rejected
H ₀₅	Occupational burnout and task performance	-.622	< .001	Rejected
H ₀₆	Occupational burnout and contextual performance	-.731	< .001	Rejected
H ₀₇	Occupational burnout and counterproductive work behaviour	-.630	< .001	Rejected

Note. r = Pearson's correlation coefficient. All correlations are statistically significant at $p < .001$. Each null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 significance level.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed statistically significant relationships between emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, and the three dimensions of job performance. Emotional intelligence was strongly and negatively correlated with occupational burnout, $r(68) = -.740$, $p < .001$, indicating that higher emotional intelligence scores were associated with lower burnout scores. Therefore, H₀₁ was rejected. Emotional intelligence demonstrated a strong positive correlation with task performance, $r(68) = .742$, $p < .001$, and contextual performance, $r(68) = .770$, $p < .001$. These findings indicate that higher emotional intelligence scores were associated with higher scores on both performance dimensions. The relationship with contextual performance was slightly stronger than that with task performance. Accordingly, H₀₂ and H₀₃ were rejected. A statistically significant positive correlation was also observed between emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviour, $r(68) = .662$, $p < .001$. Thus, H₀₄ was rejected. This positive association should be interpreted cautiously because the meaning of higher scores depends on the scoring direction of the counterproductive work behaviour measure. If higher scores indicate more frequent counterproductive behaviour, the result suggests that higher emotional intelligence was associated with more such behaviour, an unexpected finding that warrants further examination.

Regarding occupational burnout, the analysis revealed significant negative correlations with task performance, $r(68) = -.622$, $p < .001$, and contextual performance, $r(68) = -.731$, $p < .001$. These findings suggest that higher burnout scores were associated with lower task and contextual performance scores. The association between burnout and contextual performance was stronger than that between burnout and task performance. Therefore, H₀₅ and H₀₆ were rejected. Finally, occupational burnout was significantly negatively correlated with counterproductive work behaviour, $r(68) = -.630$, $p < .001$, leading to the rejection of H₀₇. As with the correlation involving emotional intelligence, the interpretation depends on whether higher scores represent greater counterproductive behaviour or a more favourable score direction. All seven null hypotheses were rejected because the observed correlations were statistically significant at the .05 level. The findings establish significant associations among the study variables but do not demonstrate causation. The directions of the relationships involving counterproductive work behaviour should be verified against the scoring and interpretation guidelines of the instrument used.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored how emotional intelligence and occupational burnout relate to different aspects of work functioning among women IT professionals. The findings suggest that employees' emotional experiences and their ability to manage workplace demands are closely associated with both their performance and their broader contribution to the organisation. However, the results also revealed unexpected relationships that require careful interpretation. Emotional intelligence showed a strong negative correlation with occupational burnout, $r(68) = -.740$, $p < .001$, indicating that participants with higher emotional intelligence tended to report lower burnout. In a

demanding IT environment, where deadlines, changing responsibilities, and interpersonal expectations can create sustained pressure, the ability to recognise and regulate emotions may be a valuable psychological resource. This interpretation is consistent with the job demands-resources model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007). Similarly, the meta-analysis by Miao et al. (2017) found meaningful relationships between emotional intelligence and employee outcomes, supporting its relevance to workplace well-being. Nevertheless, emotional intelligence alone cannot compensate for excessive workloads or inadequate organisational support.

Emotional intelligence was also positively associated with task performance, $r(68) = .742$, $p < .001$, and contextual performance, $r(68) = .770$, $p < .001$. These findings suggest that emotionally intelligent employees may be better positioned to manage work-related challenges while maintaining constructive relationships with colleagues. Task performance concerns the completion of assigned responsibilities, whereas contextual performance involves behaviours such as cooperation, initiative, and helping others (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). The results are broadly consistent with O'Boyle et al. (2011), whose meta-analysis identified positive associations between emotional intelligence and job performance. However, Joseph et al. (2015) cautioned that the relationship can be influenced by overlap between self-reported emotional intelligence, personality characteristics, and self-perceived performance. Therefore, the relatively strong correlations observed in the present study should be interpreted in relation to the measures used and the characteristics of the sample.

The relationship between burnout and performance further supports the importance of occupational well-being. Burnout was negatively correlated with task performance, $r(68) = -.622$, $p < .001$, and contextual performance, $r(68) = -.731$, $p < .001$. Employees experiencing greater exhaustion may find it more difficult to concentrate on complex assignments or maintain the energy needed for collaboration and additional workplace contributions. Maslach and Leiter (2016) emphasised that burnout develops in relation to work experiences and organisational conditions, making it important to consider workload, recovery opportunities, and workplace support alongside individual characteristics. These findings therefore suggest that employee performance should not be understood solely in terms of individual ability; the psychological conditions under which people work also matter.

Two findings require particular caution. Emotional intelligence was positively correlated with counterproductive work behaviour, $r(68) = .662$, $p < .001$, whereas burnout was negatively correlated with it, $r(68) = -.630$, $p < .001$. These directions are noteworthy because a meta-analysis by Miao et al. (2017) found an overall negative relationship between emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviour. The scoring direction of the present measure should therefore be verified before interpreting these results. If higher scores genuinely indicate more frequent counterproductive behaviour, the unexpected associations should be reported transparently and investigated rather than explained through speculation. Taken together, the findings highlight the relevance of emotional intelligence and burnout to work functioning among women IT professionals. Organisations may benefit from combining emotional intelligence development and accessible employee support with practical measures to manage workload and prevent prolonged occupational strain.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings have several practical implications for organisations employing women IT professionals. First, organisations may consider incorporating emotional intelligence development into employee training through emotional awareness, emotion regulation, constructive communication, and conflict-management activities. Such initiatives should complement, rather than replace, improvements in working conditions. Second, the strong negative association between emotional intelligence and burnout highlights the potential value of workplace well-being initiatives. Access to counselling, supportive supervision, manageable workloads, adequate recovery time, and psychologically safe communication channels may help employees navigate occupational demands more effectively. Third, the findings concerning task and contextual performance suggest that employee development programmes should address both work-related competencies and interpersonal functioning. Team collaboration, peer support, respectful communication, and effective feedback may be relevant components of organisational development. Finally, the results highlight the importance of examining

burnout as part of broader workforce well-being strategies. Organisations should not place sole responsibility for managing occupational stress on individual employees. Workload distribution, job autonomy, leadership quality, and organisational support should also be considered. The unexpected correlations involving counterproductive work behaviour further emphasise the need for accurate measurement and careful interpretation before developing behaviour-focused interventions.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study has several limitations. First, the correlational research design does not establish causal relationships among emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, and job performance. Second, the sample comprised 70 women IT professionals, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other occupational groups, regions, or employee populations. Third, information about the sampling procedure and measurement sources is insufficient to determine the extent to which selection bias or common-method bias may have influenced the results. Fourth, the study examined associations without controlling for potential confounding variables, such as workload, organisational support, job experience, and working hours. Finally, the negative correlations involving counterproductive work behaviour require verification of the instrument's scoring direction before meaningful conclusions can be drawn. Future studies could use larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, multiple sources of performance assessment, and appropriate statistical controls.

CONCLUSION

The present study identified statistically significant relationships between emotional intelligence, occupational burnout, and job performance among women IT professionals. Emotional intelligence was negatively associated with burnout and positively associated with task and contextual performance. Occupational burnout was negatively associated with both dimensions of performance. These findings highlight the relevance of emotional competencies and occupational well-being to employees' work experiences. However, the correlations involving counterproductive work behaviour require further examination, particularly regarding measurement and scoring. Given the cross-sectional correlational design, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of association rather than causation. Future research should investigate these relationships in larger samples and across different organisational contexts to develop a more comprehensive understanding of psychological resources, burnout, and employee functioning.

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