

At the Crossroads of Work-Stress and Satisfaction: The Decisive Role of Leadership and Emotional Intelligence in Balochistan's HEIs

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ABSTRACT

The study examines how leadership and emotional intelligence affect the happiness and performance of higher education staff in Balochistan. 360 public and private higher education faculty in Balochistan were surveyed using a standardized questionnaire. This partial least squares structural equation modeling study examines how leadership and emotional intelligence boost work happiness and performance. The study analyzes how work stress moderates and job satisfaction mediates the performance-satisfaction relationship. Strong leadership and emotional intelligence improve job happiness. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between these leadership traits and employee performance, underscoring the need to translate leadership into outcomes. Modifying work stress reduced job satisfaction-performance. Thus, stress reduces this favorable relationship. Educational institutions seeking to improve human resource management through leadership and emotional intelligence should consider the findings. The paper proposes reducing work stress to improve job satisfaction and performance.

Keywords: Leadership Effectiveness, Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Work Stress, HEIs, PLS-SEM, Balochistan.

INTRODUCTION

To ensure professional growth, leaders, executives, officers, and managers must enrich the organization and secure and enhance labor quality in aggressive, dynamic, rigid, complex, progressive, and curious firm models. New corporate concepts and inventive approaches are overpowering the old. These disagreements involve consumer intent, relationships, conduct, commitment, social and economic impact, economic values, business culture and environment, business qualities, services, innovations, development, governmental issues, laws and regulations, policies, and administrative techniques. Company practices and climate revolutions aim to transform productivity and hierarchy (Alade et al., 2020). Companies require better, more engaging leadership training to lead and recruit high-performing organizational leaders. Any organization needs managers and leaders. Leaders rebuild and reinvent the team and organization while managers assess success. Managers and leaders can enter any organization at different times and with diverse skills to build it. These initiatives reflect a trend of organizations reacting to market and client changes. According to Birasnav and Bienstock (2019), CEOs who can innovate and

transform workplace culture may help their companies succeed. Hogan and Kaiser (2005) claimed that a company model needs strong, competitive leadership to grow in this challenging, adversarial, dynamic, and multidimensional environment. A failing company can be saved by talented leadership. Any company needs strong leadership. The leader's significant obligations are to understand, appreciate, stimulate, manage, rule, and sustain his own and his employees' emotions. Company executives must encourage innovation and resilience (Chakar & Adiguzel, 2020). It helps their companies overcome these challenges and prosper. Strong leaders who motivate people are needed in today's fast-changing company environment (Puccio et al., 2020). Effective leaders motivate and empower workers to achieve strategic goals. Teamwork and accountability encourage workers (Hajiali et al., 2022). Firms must prioritize dynamic leadership more than ever to solve complex problems and grow (Saputra & Mahaputra, 2022). Management and leadership are complementary but distinct. Managers oversee operations to ensure smoothness (Pancasila et al., 2020). Innovative leaders inspire and change organizations. Organizational growth stage and context affect role needs. Successful leaders are adaptive and encourage worker inventiveness (Saha et al., 2023).

Job stress involves several workplace difficulties that might harm employees' physical, behavioral, and mental health. Individual and organizational pressures can be harmful. Some harmless stresses cause stress. This issue often uses "occupational stress," "job stress," and "work-related stress" interchangeably. Many factors cause workplace stress, called "work stressors." Workplace social interactions, especially conflict, are psychosocial pressures (Hauke et al., 2020). Pressures include interpersonal concerns. Hindrance stresses hinder goal achievement (Cavanaugh et al., 2020). Workplace stress hurts people and companies. Companies, people, and productivity suffer (Maqsood et al., 2021). Effects are indirect. In 2021, 22.4% of UK public officials had job-related stress, up from 10.8% in 2020. Stress-related illness has caused many workers to miss more than 20 days of work, while others work while sick (French, 2021). It matches ILO 2020 research. Workplace stress causes numerous missed workdays, the survey said. Employee well-being and organizational effectiveness depend on workplace stress management. Stress reduction involves therapy and guidance. Though technology and employment rates have improved, occupational stress continues. Technology increases occupational stress (Coovert & Thompson, 2020). Mobile technology and virtual workstations have connected workers to their jobs like never before (International Labour Organization, 2020; Tarafdar & Ragu-Nathan, 2020). A June 2020 study of 4,025 email users aged 13+ found that 83% checked email regularly while away. Available email affected 40% of visits.

Statement of Problem

In the fast-changing economy, firms strive to increase employee performance, a critical determinant in their success and competitiveness. Despite efforts, many firms fail to understand and leverage leaders' emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, which affect the work environment and employee results. Leadership characteristics and employee work satisfaction interact in complex ways and affect employee performance, yet little is known about how.

Job happiness mediates because happy workers are more motivated, engaged, and productive. Work stress can affect job happiness and performance, which are complicated. Stress in modern workplaces may undermine job happiness's performance benefits. Effective stress management, employee well-being, and performance require understanding how job stress moderates this relationship.

This study addresses this gap by examining leaders' emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, employee job satisfaction, and performance, with a focus on work stress as a moderating factor. This study examines these factors to improve leadership and stress management and boost employee performance. Academics will learn about these relationships, and business leaders and managers will improve workplace support and productivity.

Research Questions

1. Does the emotional intelligence of leaders affect employee job satisfaction?
2. What is the impact of leadership effectiveness on employee job satisfaction?
3. Does employee job satisfaction influence employee performance?
4. Does work stress moderate the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee performance?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee job satisfaction.
2. To evaluate the influence of leadership effectiveness on employee job satisfaction.
3. To analyze the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee performance.
4. To investigate the moderating effect of work stress on the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee performance.

Significance of the Study

The study completely illustrates how work stress affects leadership, job satisfaction, and performance. These dynamics are essential for employee and organizational success. The findings may help executives and staff succeed in a competitive business environment that demands adaptability and innovation. Second, it fills a gap in academic study on how leaders' emotional intelligence influences leadership effectiveness and employee job satisfaction. Previous studies conducted this research piecemeal, but this integrated strategy provides a fuller picture. The study shows that leaders' emotional intelligence and efficacy affect job happiness and performance. **Literature Review**

Emotional Intelligence of Leaders

Leaders' emotions are increasingly important in staff development and organizational well-being. Successfully managing these emotionally charged situations requires emotional intelligence (EI). Hourani et al. (2021) define emotional intelligence as an individual's ability and capacity to observe, appraise, evaluate, and understand the situation; empathize with their own and others' feelings; and use these insights to guide their behavior and motivate them to work efficiently for the organization's benefit. One of the most important aspects of emotional intelligence, according to Lee et al. (2022), is the leader's ability to control and recognize one's own feelings and emotions in every situation, acknowledge the needs of others working around him/her, and facilitate one's own intellectual progressions while using feelings. Emotional intelligence boosts job happiness, according to Gómez-Leal et al. (2022). Research suggests that emotional intelligence increases job happiness. This association was found in individual and meta-analyses. Researchers such as Krén & Séllei (2020) and Hu et al. (2022) have shown that leader–follower emotional intelligence affects job satisfaction. Despite the number of studies, few have examined this problem. Understanding this relationship can influence future research and real-world applications.

Leadership Effectiveness

According to Saha et al. (2023), practical and moral leadership is crucial to a company's success. However, Hourani et al. (2021) note that poor leadership negatively impacts work satisfaction, staff engagement, attrition rates, productivity, financial performance, and institute performance. The Blue Ocean Strategy (Hu et al., 2022) helps us understand organization performance. The Blue Ocean Strategy aims to create value, promote low-cost corporate growth, and give a competitive edge. Blue Ocean Leadership is the successful use of this concept in leadership jobs. This method develops frameworks to help executives implement initiatives and access latent resources quickly and cost-effectively.

Employee Job Satisfaction

According to studies, people are more likely to recall unfavorable professional encounters when they feel negatively about them, which, in turn, indirectly affects the institute's performance. Intrinsic and extrinsic mechanisms explain job satisfaction differently. Job satisfaction has two main components. The first is extrinsic job satisfaction, which includes factors that affect job satisfaction without directly affecting it. These elements include compensation, grants, allowances, management style, behavior, and organizational culture. The second part, intrinsic job satisfaction, encompasses autonomy, expertise, and variety and is related to emotional responses. Research by Mwesigwa et al. (2020) indicates that internal work satisfaction, which involves employee contentment and job description congruence, can also be the case (Mwesigwa et al., 2020).

Emotional Intelligence of Leaders and Job Satisfaction

Leaders' emotional intelligence affects a company's emotional life, according to the Affective Events Theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Saha et al., 2023). Leaders can shape followers' behaviors and attitudes through regular communication (Hourani et al., 2021). CEOs control subordinates by controlling time and resources. The emotions and experiences of subordinates affect leaders. Amundsen and Martinsen (2015) found that leaders' emotions affect followers.

Leaders' emotions affect the company, and employees can feel like peers. Leaders' emotional control can inspire or depress subordinates (Hu et al., 2022). Group dynamics, interpersonal interactions, and individual differences are affected by leader-subordinate interactions.

Organizational leadership, citizenship, and work performance improve with emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent workers handle stress and pressure well. They work well under pressure and tension. Emotionally intelligent people can handle stress and negotiate complex relationships, helping the organization prosper. Emotional intelligence improves employee well-being and burnout. Higher EI people are more resilient, satisfied, and mentally healthy, helping the company prosper. Employee engagement, positive work environments, and teamwork improve with emotionally aware leaders.

Organizational psychology holds that job satisfaction promotes crucial behaviors. Job satisfaction affects job performance, organizational citizenship, unproductive work, physical and psychological health, withdrawal intentions, and withdrawal behaviors. The way leaders' emotional intelligence affects subordinates' job satisfaction may also affect other organizational outcomes. These control variables reflect best practices in prior emotional intelligence (EI) meta-analyses to promote scientific rigor (Martins et al., 2020). A theoretical model relating leaders' and followers' emotional intelligence was developed by Kaur and Hirudayaraj (2021) using organizational culture research and emotional intelligence literature. We utilize this approach to determine if subordinates' emotional intelligence moderates leaders' and subordinates' work satisfaction. The theoretical, practical, and future research implications of the findings will follow.

H1: Leaders with high emotional intelligence positively influence employee job satisfaction.

Leadership Effectiveness and Job Satisfaction

Medical professionals use evidence-based guidelines to determine successful therapies. Pfeffer and Sutton (2020) suggest that more research is needed to establish a competence-based leadership model. Employees would deliver results that meet key performance standards, thereby enhancing organizational effectiveness. To address these issues, modern research examines the dynamic relationships among emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, and organizational success. Studies on how leaders use emotional intelligence to create an engaged and satisfied workforce can help us understand corporate

performance. Transformational, transactional, charismatic, and laissez-faire leadership styles have been extensively examined in relation to employee motivation and job satisfaction (Crandall & Perrewé, 2020). Workplace happiness enhances productivity, efficiency, and functioning, making transformational leadership crucial (Thornton & Harrison, 1975). Transformational leadership promotes job satisfaction and staff motivation (Elgelal & Noermijati, 2021). Educational administrators should embrace transformational leadership to keep personnel happy (Bajracharya, 2023). Transformational leaders provide employees with meaning and engagement by fostering a supportive, engaging environment. Job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness improve. Leadership styles and faculty job satisfaction have been investigated in Nepal's education system (Bajracharya, 2023). The corporate production department (Maya et al., 2020) and university economics and business faculty (Elgelal & Noermijati, 2021) have also been researched. Both US studies. Leadership styles, incentives, and work settings affect employee job satisfaction, according to a study (Maya, 2020; Sembiring, 2022). Putra (2021) says situational leadership, work environment, competency, and motivation boost job happiness.

Good leadership affects job happiness, according to Lo et al. (2020). These two factors are crucial to organizational performance. Kelidbari et al. (2021) revealed that ethical leadership impacts employee performance. Awosusi and Fasanmi (2021) found that leadership affects hotel employee performance through innovation and distinction. Skeepers and Mbohwa (2021) found that leadership visibility and behavior affected construction worker safety. Kalkavan and Katrinli (2021) found that job satisfaction influences performance. However, Hajiali et al. (2022) demonstrated that employment satisfaction boosts performance. This research finds that effective leadership improves employee satisfaction and performance across many organizational settings. Transformational leaders captivate and challenge. They can inspire, provoke, and motivate followers to exceed group goals, increase awareness, and reframe old issues. Saputra & Mahaputra (2022) say that transformational leaders stimulate the mind, provide guidance, customize thought, foster strategic vision, use metaphors and framing, demonstrate honesty, model the goal, and inspire dedication. Walumbwa et al. (2020) found that leadership effectiveness enhances organizational commitment and job satisfaction across both cultures. These studies show how effective leadership affects work satisfaction and organizational commitment. Using the correct leadership styles and building a welcoming workplace can boost employee well-being and corporate success.

H2: Effective leadership enhances employee job satisfaction.

Mediating Role of Employee Job Satisfaction

Since job satisfaction is linked to corporate citizenship, employee behavior may improve as job satisfaction increases. Work psychology and organizational behavior must be studied in depth. Albrecht (2020) contrasts two psychological research evaluative perspectives: utilitarian, which holds that employee satisfaction enhances organizational functioning (Spies, 2020), and humanitarian, which emphasizes fair and courteous treatment of employees. A desire to work for a company that offers learning, progress, and career advancement might increase job satisfaction, according to Tnay et al. (2021). A deep connection to their employer is necessary for employee satisfaction.

According to research, those who regret professional events remember them more. Job satisfaction is intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic elements like salary and management style affect job satisfaction, but intrinsic factors like autonomy, knowledge, and variety affect it emotionally. Alignment between work descriptions and employee contentment indicates internal work satisfaction (Yurchisin & Park, 2020). Since job satisfaction is linked to corporate citizenship, employee behavior may improve as job satisfaction increases. Underperformance is mainly due to people's effectiveness. Motivation and job satisfaction improve employee performance, according to Al-Khalifa and Peterson (2020). Organizational psychology emphasizes employee satisfaction and performance. Many industry studies have studied this

link, proving its importance (Judge et al., 2020). They show the intriguing link between workplace attitudes and employee behavior (Harrison et al., 2020; Schleicher, 2020). Mitchell et al. (2021) name job satisfaction organizational psychology's "Holy Grail." They say this to honor their friendship. Job satisfaction is an employee's attitude toward their work environment, as defined by Smith (1969). Recent interpretations include occupational satisfaction. According to Brief and Weiss (2020), work-related sentiments can indicate job satisfaction.

Campbell et al. (1993) define work performance as employee efforts to achieve organizational goals. Huffcutt and Arthur (2021) say companies focus on employee performance to succeed. Employee activities, not company results, should measure performance. Campbell et al. (1990) define performance as workplace behavior. Job satisfaction improves performance (Gosselin, 2020; Yvonne et al., 2021).

H3: Emotional intelligence of the leader and effective leadership are positively related to employee performance, due to the intervening effect of job satisfaction.

Moderating Role of Work Stress

Job satisfaction and performance are highly influenced by workplace stress. Studies suggest that occupational stress mediates the effects of burden on performance, leading to poorer performance under stress. Employee performance is affected by workplace conflict, stress, and job satisfaction, stressing the importance of stress. Bandung Generation Z workers' job satisfaction is affected by workplace stress. These studies show that stress management improves job satisfaction, well-being, and performance.

Even though office stress may not affect performance, job satisfaction can. Stress reduction is essential for performance. Workplace psychological and physical stress can cause health problems. Pragholaapati et al. (2020) found that adverse office interactions and sedentary desk-based employment increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. This underscores the need to help workers recognize and manage workplace stress. Organizations must use stress-reduction strategies and establish policies for staff. Reduced anxiety and unfavorable workplace attitudes may reduce stress, cardiovascular disease, and absenteeism while enhancing job performance, according to Akdere & Egan (2020). The ILO also advises on managing barrier stressors and negative workplace stressors. These methods lessen work stress. Preventive risk assessments, stress management, clear corporate communication, employee decision-making, and workplace social support networks are recommended.

Stress at work mediates job satisfaction and performance. This stress substantially impacts the connection. Research reveals that extreme workplace stress can harm performance, especially as workloads climb. Conflict, stress, and job satisfaction affect employee performance, emphasizing the role of stress. Stress management improves job happiness, well-being, and performance (Smith & Flores, 2020) despite data suggesting that job stress may not affect performance. Stress reduction boosts performance (Saputra & Mahaputra, 2022). Current working conditions may harm mental and physical health. Siegrist (2023) links cardiovascular diseases to desk job stress and inactivity. The foregoing arguments demonstrate the importance of helping employees recognize and manage the workplace. Organizations must also adopt policies to help employees address these challenges and reduce pressure.

Stress can lead to absenteeism and poor work performance (Siegrist, 2023). Workplace anxiety and negative attitudes can be reduced to reduce stress and health risks. Work stress is the unpleasant psychological and physiological responses to employment expectations and pressures. Pandemics have raised employment expectations, increased uncertainty, and heightened concerns about health and job security. Adjusting to new work requirements increases stress. Study: Work-related stress severely affects employees' mental and physical health during the pandemic. The quick shift to remote work and the juggling of personal and professional obligations during a global health crisis have increased stress. The

blurring of work and home, more digital communication, and pressure to be productive in unexpected circumstances have caused psychological stress. Stress hurts employees' mental health, organizational performance, and customer interactions. The study also reveals how workplace stress affects organizational performance. Stress can hinder employees' corporate citizenship, which involves volunteering to promote organizational productivity outside of work. Job stress can also diminish employee customer identification, affecting service quality and satisfaction. According to the findings, organizational support systems reduce work-related stress. Mental health resources, flexible work arrangements, and excellent communication can make workplaces friendlier. Addressing the root causes of workplace stress enhances employee well-being, organizational performance, and customer service. Job design and organizational factors affect work stress, according to industrial and organizational psychology. Interventions should target psychological and workplace socio-technical issues. Lewin's (1936) paradigm asserts that the environment affects mental health and behavior, supporting the premise that job stress results from this interaction. Hierarchy, atmosphere, resources, and management structure strongly impact employees' mental health and behavior. Working conditions refer to the physical environment and interpersonal interactions, whereas job design refers to the tasks assigned to employees. Understand these principles to reduce workplace stress and boost employee happiness and performance.

H4: Work stress moderates the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee performance, where high levels of work stress can weaken this positive relationship.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative study examines leader emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, employee job satisfaction and performance, and work stress as a moderator. A planned, standardized questionnaire enabled reliable data collection. The questionnaire included proven organizational behavior scales to assess emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, work stress, and employee performance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The survey was emailed to 400 employees, and 360 valid responses were collected, a high response rate for statistical analysis.

The investigation uses SmartPLS Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. Hair et al. (2017) advocate PLS-SEM for the current study because it can handle complex models and facilitate exploratory research with smaller samples. This research focuses on higher education employees in Balochistan. Worker happiness and performance are affected by bureaucracy, resource restrictions, and policy implementation (Siddiqui, 2019). This survey delivered 400 questionnaires to staff at higher education institutes in Balochistan. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommended 300 samples for generalization. The primary study tool was a questionnaire for workers at Balochistan higher education institutes. The questionnaire measured leaders' emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, job satisfaction, work stress, and employee performance. It includes demographic questions and Likert-scale items on many

topics to capture respondents' ideas and experiences. Verified literature measures informed the study scales. Leaders' emotional intelligence was measured using the 08-item Emotional Intelligence Scale (Wong & Law, 2002). As "My supervisor can recognize and understand the emotions of others." Q: "My supervisor articulates an appealing vision." Avolio, Bass, 2004. The 5-item Job Satisfaction Questionnaire examined job satisfaction: "I am satisfied with the recognition I get for the work I do." 1967 (Weiss et al.). The 6-item Life Stress Scale was used to assess work stress. Ask, "In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?" Cohen et al. (1983). Individual performance was rated using 06 task, contextual, and counterproductive work behavior items. "I adequately complete assigned duties." Classic measures allow the construction of correlation assessments due to reliability and validity (Koopmans et al., 2014).

The measurement model evaluation tested construct reliability and convergent and discriminant validity. Strong internal consistency was indicated by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability ratings above 0.70. All constructs have AVEs above 0.50, confirming convergent validity.

DATA ANALYSIS

Summary Statistics

Table 1 presents respondents' educational backgrounds. Specifically, 46.1% of respondents (n = 166) had a master's degree, indicating that almost half of this sample has achieved a postgraduate level. The respondents' substantial academic achievement may alter their perspectives on leadership, job happiness, and workplace performance. In addition to the master's degree holders, 23.6% (n=85) of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, bringing the sample's educational level to 69.7%.

Table 1: Summary (Education)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Metric	18	5.0	5.0
F.Sc/Intermediate	66	18.3	23.3
B. A/B.sc	85	23.6	46.9
Masters	166	46.1	93.1
Others	25	6.9	100.0

This indicates the respondents' academic bent; 18.3% (n=66) have completed F.Sc./Intermediate, whereas 5.0% have completed Metric. Finally, 6.9% (n=25) of the sample is 'Others', which includes most non-school-leaving professional or technical awards. At the 'Masters' level, 93.1% of the sample is represented, demonstrating the prevalence of postsecondary education. Table 2 indicates respondent ages. Most participants (41.9%, n=151) were 36–45 years old. Many may be mid-career with substantial work experience and organizational responsibilities. The next largest group is 26-35 (36.9%, 133). This group may have included early- to mid-career professionals.

Table 2: Summary (Age)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less Than 25	3	.8	.8
26 to 35	133	36.9	37.8
36 to 45	151	41.9	79.7
46 to 55	66	18.3	98.1
More than 55	7	1.9	100.0

Most answers are 26–45. These two categories comprise 79.7% of the sample. 18.3% (n=66) of 46–55-year-olds, including retiring managers. Just 1.9% (n=7) of responders are over 55, and 0.8% (n=3) are under 25. At number 88 in the '46 to 55' age category, 98.1% of responses suggest that most of the sample is 26–55. The gender breakdown of respondents is shown in Table 3. The sample was 85.6% male (n=308) and 14.4% female (n=52). The gender difference in Balochistan's employment, especially higher education, may explain this significant gap. Male dominance may affect the study's conclusions if gender affects leadership, work satisfaction, or performance.

Table 3: Summary (Gender)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	308	85.6	85.6
Female	52	14.4	100.0
Total	360	100.0	

The sample's low female representation may indicate workforce issues or cultural or societal restrictions that prevent women from working in that region. By the time the cumulative percentage reaches the female category, the entire sample is accounted for, confirming that all respondents fit into the binary gender categories of male and female as defined in this study.

Measurement Model

Internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are assessed by measurement model checking. The reliability and validity of leader emotional intelligence, successful leadership, employee performance, job satisfaction, and work stress were described and evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE).

The individual-item loading for all emotional intelligence items for leaders ranges from 0.803 to 0.954, indicating good association. Each item correctly indicates leaders' emotional intelligence, as evidenced by significant loadings. Leadership Emotional Intelligence has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.966, suggesting high internal consistency. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) found that an internal consistency of 0.966 is an ideal reliability measure, indicating that the construct's parts are consistent with the measurement and that homogeneity captures emotional intelligence. The construct composite reliability score of 0.972 exceeds 0.70, showing internal consistency and dependability (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 4: Reliability and Validity

Individual Items	Outer Loadings	CA	CR	(AVE)
Emotional Intelligence of Leaders		0.966	0.972	0.834
EIL1	0.937			
EIL2	0.954			
EIL3	0.950			
EIL4	0.929			
EIL5	0.933			
EIL6	0.803			
EIL7	0.876			
Effective Leadership		0.937	0.948	0.697
EL1	0.862			
EL2	0.874			
EL3	0.863			
EL4	0.786			
EL5	0.827			

EL6	0.886			
EL7	0.813			
EL8	0.758			
Employee Performance		0.819	0.874	0.582
EP1	0.657			
EP2	0.763			
EP3	0.801			
EP4	0.847			
EP5	0.735			
Job Satisfaction		0.917	0.939	0.755
JS1	0.754			
JS2	0.911			
JS3	0.894			
JS4	0.902			
JS5	0.874			
Work Stress		0.911	0.931	0.694
WS1	0.729			
WS2	0.868			
WS3	0.872			
WS4	0.870			
WS5	0.867			
WS6	0.784			

The average variance for this construct is 0.834, exceeding the 0.50 cut-off (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). High AVE suggests the latent notion can explain many EIL1–EIL7 differences. Convergent validity is met. From 0.758 to 0.886, all aspects affect leadership. Uniformity confirms its validity. Good leadership has an alpha of 0.937, indicating internal consistency. This makes this scale's leadership effectiveness items reliable. The composite dependability for this construct is 0.948, indicating good item internal consistency. The concept may explain much of the variance in the observable variables, as the AVE is 0.697, well above the acceptable level. Employee performance item loadings ranged from 0.657 to 0.847, with EP1 being the lowest. EP1 was included, although its lower loading may indicate that it is less strongly associated with employee performance than the other variables. Employee performance has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.819, indicating strong internal consistency. Though lower than others, this score is acceptable. Their composite reliability of 0.874 exceeds the threshold, making them reliable employee performance metrics (Hair et al., 2021). This construct is convergent, as its AVE is 0.582, exceeding the minimum of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

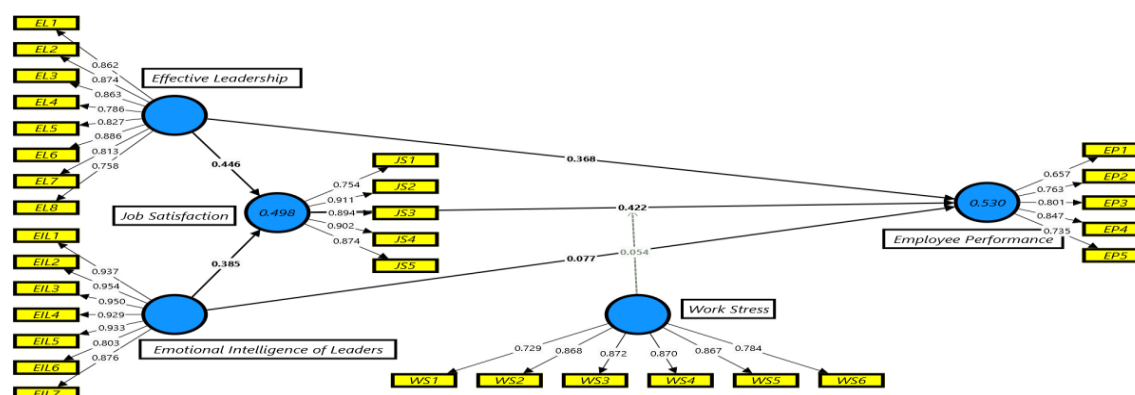
Table 5: Discriminant Validity

HTMT	Effective Leadership	Emotional Intelligence Leaders	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction	Work Stress
Effective Leadership					
Emotional Intelligence Leaders	0.459				
Employee Performance	0.716	0.517			
Job Satisfaction	0.658	0.616	0.757		

Work Stress	0.732	0.540	0.596	0.751	
Fornell & Larcker	Effective Leadership	Emotional Intelligence Leaders	Employee Performance	Job Satisfaction	Work Stress
Effective Leadership	0.835				
Emotional Intelligence Leaders	0.442	0.913			
Employee Performance	0.632	0.468	0.763		
Job Satisfaction	0.615	0.581	0.663	0.869	
Work Stress	0.679	0.522	0.535	0.697	0.833

The job satisfaction elements have construct loadings ranging from 0.754 to 0.911. This strong correlation across all items validates the construct. The job satisfaction items' Cronbach's alpha of 0.917 indicates strong internal consistency. Composite reliability is 0.939, indicating construct reliability. AVE is 0.755, well above the threshold, indicating that the construct explains substantial variance in the observable variables. The heading loadings (WS1–WS6) range from 0.729 to 0.872. These all contribute to work stress. All can indicate work stress. Work Stress's Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.911 suggests internal consistency and measurement reliability. Composite reliability was 0.931; construct internal consistency and dependability were 0.7. The concept captures much of the observed variables' variance, as the AVE is 0.694, much above the acceptable level (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Structural equation modelling's construct validity depends on the experimental distinction provided by discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Construct separation was indicated by HTMT values far below 0.85. An HTMT range of 0.459-0.757 was observed. The concept measures do not overlap with the Fornell-Larcker endorsed construct, demonstrating discriminant validity. The square root of each construct's average variance extracted should exceed its correlation with others. This study demonstrated higher AVEs for each concept than for inter-construct interactions. Effective leadership had an AVE of 0.835, greater than those for leader emotional intelligence (0.442), employee performance (0.632), job satisfaction (0.615), and work stress (0.679). This shows that each construct is distinct, as its indicators vary more than those of other model constructs.

Figure 2: Outer Loading Conceptual Model



Structural Model Analysis

Hypothesis testing supports this study's correlations. The study found that effective leadership increases job satisfaction ($\beta = .446$, $t = 10.574$, $p < .000$). This shows that effective leadership boosts job satisfaction. Supported hypothesis. Leaders' EI was positively associated with JS ($\beta = .385$, $t = 9.132$, $p < .000$). H2 is supported: emotionally intelligent leaders increase employee work satisfaction.

Table 6: Hypostudy Results

	Beta	STDE	T stat	P values
EL → JS	0.446***	0.042	10.574	0.000
EIL → JS	0.385***	0.042	9.132	0.000
EL → JS→EP	0.188***	0.031	5.995	0.000
EIL → JS→EP	0.162***	0.027	6.104	0.000
WS x JS→ EP	0.054**	0.026	2.111	0.017

Note. *, **, *** represents 10%, 5%, and 1%, respectively.

Job satisfaction also moderated the relationships among effective leadership, leader emotional intelligence, and employee performance. Job satisfaction mediated the indirect impact of effective leadership on employee performance ($\beta = .188$, $t = 5.995$, $p < .000$). Significant indirect impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee performance through job satisfaction ($\beta = .162$, $t = 6.104$, $p < .000$). These findings complement H3a & H3b by showing that job happiness mediates leadership attributes' positive effect on employee performance. The study found that work stress moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and performance. The interaction between work stress and job satisfaction significantly affects employee performance ($\beta = 0.054$, $t(1, 1) = 2.111$, $p = 0.017$). Work stress would reduce the favorable relationship between job happiness and performance, suggesting that even happy workers may struggle under stress. Good leadership and emotional intelligence boost job satisfaction and performance, whereas work stress is complex.

Multicollinearity among regression model independent variables is tested using VIF values. Multicollinearity develops when independent variables are highly correlated. Coefficient standard errors and the impact of predictors may increase. In models without significant multicollinearity, VIF values below 5 are acceptable (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 7: Multicollinearity

	VIF
Employee Performance	
Job Satisfaction	2.363
Effective Leadership	2.013
Emotional Intelligence of Leaders	1.602
Work Stress	2.483

Job Satisfaction, Effective Leadership, Leader Emotional Intelligence, and Work Stress had VIF values below 5 (2.363, 2.013, 1.602, and 2.483). The predictors are primarily independent, and the model exhibits no multicollinearity. Job Satisfaction's VIF (2.363) is the highest but falls within the acceptable range, indicating that it shares significant variation with the other predictors and is not multicollinear. To

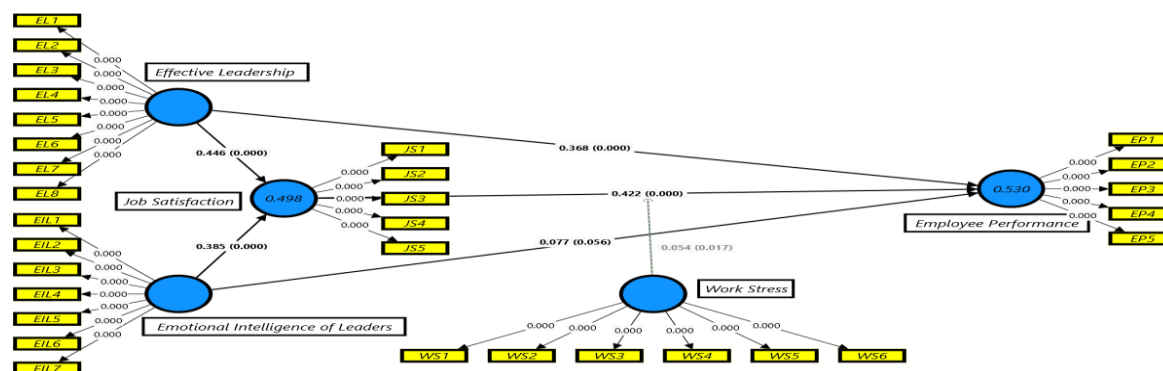
confirm this, Effective Leadership, Leader Emotional Intelligence, and Work Stress VIF values reveal no overconnection. An R-squared score of 0.530 indicates that the model's independent variables explain 53% of the variance in employee performance. The adjusted R-squared is 0.523, slightly lower than the model predictor-controlled R-squared. The predictors explain much of the performance variability; therefore, the model captures the significant factors affecting employee performance. Effective leadership and leaders' emotional intelligence explain 49.8% of the 'Mediator' variable's R-square (0.498). Job satisfaction's adjusted R-square is 0.495, similar to the R-square, indicating that it retains much of its predictive ability after covariate correction. Leadership accounts for half of the variation in job satisfaction. An f^2 effect size measure shows how each predictor affects employees' job satisfaction and performance. Cohen (1988) suggests f^2 thresholds of 0.02 for minor effects, 0.15 for medium effects, and 0.35 for significant effects.

Table 8: Coefficient of Determination & Effect Size

	R-square	R-square adjusted	Employee Performance f^2	Job Satisfaction f^2
Employee Performance	0.530	0.523		
Job Satisfaction	0.498	0.495	0.160	
Effective Leadership			0.143	0.318
Emotional Intelligence of Leaders			0.008	0.237
Work Stress			0.003	

The medium-to-moderate effect size for Effective Leadership (f^2) was 0.318. Thus, good leadership substantially predicts job satisfaction. Thus, the attribute significantly explains variance in Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was moderately affected by leader emotional intelligence ($f^2 = 0.237$). This reveals that leaders' emotional intelligence significantly affects job satisfaction.

Figure 2: Structural Models



Work stress has a small direct effect on job satisfaction ($f^2 = .003$). The data suggest that work stress moderates job satisfaction but has a limited direct influence on workplace outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Effective leadership and emotional intelligence were evaluated to determine their effects on job satisfaction, employee performance, and work stress in higher education institutions in Balochistan, Pakistan. The study suggests that leadership may affect employee results in Balochistan, a challenging

and diverse environment. Leadership development improves organizational performance, as shown by these correlations. The study concluded that emotionally intelligent leadership improves job happiness and performance. This study's initial finding is that good leadership boosts job happiness. Leaders who give clear directions, provide regular support, and are honest motivate staff. Transformational leadership believes leaders must act this way to increase employee satisfaction and engagement. The high impact of effective leadership on job satisfaction in Balochistan supports the assumption that leadership effectiveness is universal.

A study highlighted the crucial role of emotional intelligence in leadership (Siddiqui et al., 2024). High-EQ leaders notice, analyze, and manage their own and others' emotions, fostering productive workplace interactions and a supportive environment. Leader emotional intelligence and job satisfaction are positively correlated, indicating that emotional intelligence is desirable and necessary for effective leadership. Balochistan's social and economic challenges may require leaders to manage stress, conflict, and morale. Job satisfaction also mediates the relationship between employee performance, effective leadership, and emotional intelligence. Leadership affects staff performance and work satisfaction through mediation. Happy workers are more motivated, engaged, and devoted; thus, they perform better. Job satisfaction is crucial to effective leadership and performance results. A pleasant workplace improves employee performance. Another finding is that work stress impacted job satisfaction and performance. Job satisfaction boosts performance, whereas stress harms relationships. Once individuals satisfy job standards, intense demands might hinder performance. The findings emphasize the importance of managing work stress to enhance job satisfaction and performance. Organizations in Balochistan and elsewhere should implement stress management programs to mitigate the adverse effects of stress on employee performance.

The paper provides context by focusing on Balochistan, an understudied region in organizational behavior research. The research adds to the regionally specialized human resource management literature on leadership, work happiness, and employee performance in this setting, with implications for other growing countries confronting similar challenges. It improves leadership and organizational behavior research and debate worldwide.

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