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Nexus of Affective Aptitude and Workplace Success: Investigating the Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Performance through the Lenses of Affective Events and Social Exchange Theories

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Abstract:

This investigation sought to explore the influence of emotional intelligence (EI), as conceptualized by Goleman through self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills, on employee performance (EP) and the mediating effect of job satisfaction. The research employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. Convenience sampling was utilized to obtain a sample of 397 employees, determined through Yamene's formula and G*Power 3.1 calculations, from a population of 46,408 commercial bank employees. Direct and indirect effects were analyzed using structural equation modeling. Findings revealed that self-motivation, empathy, and overall EI exerted a significant positive impact on EP. Conversely, self-awareness, self-regulation, and social skills demonstrated positive but non-significant influences on EP. Job satisfaction was not

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found to mediate the relationship between EI and EP. These results suggest that focusing on enhancing self-motivation, empathy, and overall EI may lead to improved EP. The study contributes novel insights into the factors driving EI and EP among Nepalese commercial bank employees, highlighting the importance of empathy and self-motivation in fostering a performance-enhancing environment. Additionally, the research underscores the significance of cultivating an organizational climate that balances various EI dimensions to optimize EP. While previous Nepalese studies have examined the relationship between EI and EP, this research investigates the drivers of EI and EP and the mediating role of job satisfaction in this context. The findings offer valuable insights for the banking sector in Nepal, providing guidance on strategies to enhance EI and EP. Future research directions include longitudinal studies and cross-cultural investigations to further elucidate the nuances of EI and EP concepts.

情感能力与职场成功的关系：从情感事件和社会交换理论的角度探讨情商对员工绩效的影响

摘要：

本研究旨在探索情商(EI)对员工绩效(EP)的影响，以及工作满意度的中介作用。情商由戈尔曼通过自我意识、自我调节、自我激励、同理心和社交技能概念化。研究采用了相关设计的定量方法。采用便利抽样，从46,408名商业银行员工中获取397名员工样本，这些员工是通过亚梅内公式和G*电源3.1计算确定的。使用结构方程模型分析直接和间接影响。研究结果表明，自我激励、同理心和整体EI对EP产生了显著的积极影响。相反，自我意识、自我调节和社交技能对EP表现出积极但不显著的影响。未发现工作满意度可以调节EI和EP之间的关系。这些结果表明，注重提高自我激励、同理心和整体EI可能会提高EP。这项研究对推动尼泊尔商业银行员工EI和EP的因素提供了新的见解，强调了同理心和自我激励在营造提高绩效的环境中的重要性。此外，该研究强调了培养平衡各种EI维度以优化EP的组织氛围的重要性。虽然以前的尼泊尔研究已经探讨了EI和EP之间的关系，但这项研究调查了EI和EP的驱动因素以及工作满意度在此背景下的中介作用。研究结果为尼泊尔的银行业提供了宝贵的见解，为提高EI和EP的战略提供了指导。未来的研究方向包括纵向研究和跨文化调查，以进一步阐明EI和EP概念的细微差别。

关键词：情商、情感事件理论、社会交换理论、商业银行、情境绩效

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical factor influencing employee performance (EP) in various organizational contexts. Due to the increasing value of EI in employees, the study of EI has gained prominence across various disciplines such as psychology, management, and leadership (Dogru, 2022). The escalating importance of EI in contemporary business landscapes cannot be denied. It also highlights how EI, surpassing traditional markers such as academic credentials or high IQ, profoundly affects job performance and leadership efficacy (Duygu et al., 2023). Success in both the personal and professional spheres depends heavily on EI (Goleman, 1995). EI has been defined as the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and understand those of others

(Goleman, 1995). It has been classified into five dimensions: self-awareness (SA), self-management, motivation, empathy (E), and social skills (SS) (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). These classifications have been widely used to study the EI in employees across organizations (Subhashini & Shaju, 2016; Purnama, 2017; Naz et al., 2019; Jafar, 2020; Azmy & Wanah, 2022; Duong & Nguyen, 2023; Kandu & Kautish, 2023; Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2023).

Additionally, EP, also known as individual work performance (IWP), refers to actions that are congruent with organizational objectives. These actions are classified into task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior (Koopmans et al., 2014). Hence, EP focuses on the behaviors or actions of employees and not the results of

those actions. While the studies have examined the relationship between EI and EP, their focus is on task performance. Furthermore, job satisfaction (JS) is the positive emotional response of an employee to their occupational role (Locke, 1976). It is a critical factor in management-employee relationships and the organizational climate (Ealias & George, 2012). The degree of JS is determined by employees' perceptions of how effectively their position fulfills aspects they consider significant (Cekmecelioglu et al., 2012). The role of JS as a mediator in the relationship between EI and EP was established by Naz et al. (2019) and Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023).

There have been several studies (Dhungana & Kautish, 2020; Kandu & Kautish, 2023) on the impact of EI on EP in the Nepalese context. They have not examined the mediating role of JS in the relationship between EI and EP (Naz et al., 2019; Azmy & Wanah, 2022; Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2023). EI is significantly associated with JS, which significantly affects EP (Naz et al., 2019; Azmy & Wanah, 2022; Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2023). However, Naz et al. (2019) and Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023) confirmed the role of JS as an indirect mediator in the relationship between EI and EP, while Azmy and Wanah (2022) found no mediating role of JS. Similarly, it is vital for workers to feel emotionally capable of handling their jobs in an organization. Employees who work in labor-intensive industries and service sectors experience tremendous physical, mental, and emotional stress due to constant interactions with consumers (Aykan, 2014). Hence, the main objective of this study is to examine the impact of each dimension of EI and the overall EI on EP and assess the role of JS as a mediator in the context of commercial banks in Nepal.

2. Literature Review

2.1. EP

EP is the extent to which an employee performs the assigned duties and responsibilities. Task performance, the capacity to carry out particular job responsibilities with efficiency, and contextual performance, contributions to the larger organizational and social environment that support organizational goals, are the two components of EP in an organizational setting. Both are critical to an employee's overall productivity and can impact choices regarding compensation, advancement, and employee retention within the company (Lakshmi & Sekhar Rao, 2018). In occupational studies, EP, also known as IWP, is a vital and frequently used metric. The causes and effects of IWP have been the subject of much research in the last few decades in disciplines such as industrial-organizational psychology, occupational health, and management. Nonetheless, more recent initiatives have aimed to improve the IWP's conceptualization and evaluation (Koopmans et al., 2014).

2.2. Contextual Performance

Borman and Motowidlo (1993) provided a precise definition of contextual performance. They categorized behaviors according to their own features, either task performance or contextual performance, and depicted that contextual performance behaviors include actions that exhibit self-control, perseverance, and willingness to put out effort. They are also linked to interactions with customers, supervisors and other employees. Similarly, Koopmans et al. (2014) pointed out that contextual performance relates to behaviors that contribute to fostering a positive organizational, social, and psychological environment in which the technical core functions are performed optimally. Aykan (2014) demonstrated that individuals with high emotional competence exhibited enhanced contextual performance, while Greenwood (1999) elucidated that the components of contextual performance encompass exceeding job requirements, voluntarily coordinating with colleagues, offering assistance, adhering to organizational policies, demonstrating commitment and engagement, aligning with organizational objectives, and providing support.

2.3. EI

Mayer and Salovey (1993) were the first to present academic findings in the field of EI (as cited in Yahaya et al., 2012). Similarly, Goleman's (1995) concept of EI has been widely used in various studies. Goleman's (1995) research is predicated on the notion that traditional measures of intelligence, exemplified by IQ tests, fail to fully account for the disparities in life outcomes observed among individuals. This foundational premise challenges the adequacy of conventional intelligence assessments in explaining why some people thrive while others face adversity. EI can be defined as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively use emotions in ourselves and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Goleman, 1995). EI factors are as follows:

2.3.1. SA and EP

SA involves recognizing and understanding one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, values, and beliefs. It involves the process of observing and identifying one's own emotions as they arise (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). People with high SA tend to have better job performance (Duong & Nguyen, 2023). Similarly, SA significantly and positively impacts job performance (Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2023).

2.3.2. Self-Regulation and Job Performance

Self-regulation (SR) refers to the ability to manage and control emotions, impulses, and behaviors. This involves adapting to changing circumstances and maintaining emotional composure in challenging situations. Self-regulated individuals are adept at

delaying gratification, managing stress, and maintaining a positive mindset (Goleman, 1995). Mayor and Salovey (1993) identified SR as emotional management, which entails recognizing the emotions that underlie behavior and handling them effectively. SR significantly and positively affects job performance (Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2023). People with high SR show higher job performance (Duong & Nguyen, 2023; Kandu & Kautish, 2023).

2.3.3. Self-Motivation and Job Performance

Motivation relates to drive and passion to achieve goals, persist in the face of obstacles, and continuously strive for improvement. Motivated individuals possess a high level of internal drive and are fueled by intrinsic factors such as personal growth, curiosity, and a sense of purpose. They set challenging goals and are resilient in the face of setbacks (Goleman, 1995). While a positive association is observed between employee motivation and job performance (Duong & Nguyen, 2023; Kandu & Kautish, 2023), Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023) demonstrated no significant impact of motivation on job performance.

2.4. E and Job Performance

Understanding and sharing other people's emotions are necessary components of E. This includes paying attention to the needs, feelings, and viewpoints of others. Individuals who exhibit compassion demonstrate active listening skills, proficiency in establishing and maintaining relationships, and the capacity for E. They can successfully negotiate social dynamics (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). No significant association was observed between E and job performance (Kandu & Kautish, 2023). Similarly, high E does not lead to high job performance (Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2023).

2.5. SS and Job Performance

SS refer to an individual's ability to build and maintain positive relationships with others. It also encompasses the capacity for effective communication and collaborative engagement with colleagues. Individuals possessing advanced social competencies demonstrate proficiency in conflict management, dispute resolution, and the capacity to motivate and exert influence on others. They excel in teamwork and networking and easily establish rapport (Goleman, 1995). Mayer and Salovey (1993) defined SS as interpersonal competencies that encompass the ability to modulate others' emotions, demonstrate social proficiency, and exhibit adept social capabilities. A significant positive association was observed between SS and job performance (Duong & Nguyen, 2023; Kandu & Kautish, 2023). In contrast, Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023) rejected the notion that SS positively impact job performance.

2.6. JS and Job Performance

A seminal conceptualization of JS was put forth by Locke (1976), who characterized JS as an individual's positive affective response resulting from the evaluation of their occupational circumstances or experiences. This definition underscores the emotional dimension of JS, positing that it encompasses a sense of fulfillment or positive affect derived from one's professional activities. JS can be defined as a state of satisfaction or positive emotional response resulting from the successful completion of a work-related task (Jorfi & Jorfi, 2011; Azmy & Wanah, 2022). Generally, it is accepted that employees with higher EI exhibit greater JS. This is attributed to the fact that individuals with higher EI can develop strategies to mitigate potential stress-related effects, whereas those with lower EI may struggle to manage stressful situations (Ealias & George, 2012) that significantly impact performance. Similarly, Cekmecelioglu et al. (2012) and Al-Hamami et al. (2015) posited that JS is more likely to be elevated among individuals who possess strong emotional recognition, and it contributes to enhanced performance.

2.7. Relationship between EI and EP

Kandu and Kautish (2023) investigated the relationship between EI and job performance among female employees in Nepal's service sector. This investigation utilized Goleman's (1995) EI framework. The findings revealed a significant and positive correlation between job performance and SR, job performance and self-motivation (SM), and SS and job performance. However, no significant association was observed between job performance and E. This study did not report the findings regarding the relationship between job performance and SA. Duong and Nguyen (2023) found a significant and positive impact of all the five dimensions of EI on employee job performance. Dogru (2022) utilized psychometric meta-analysis to investigate correlations between EI and several employee-related outcomes. The research meticulously delineated EI into three categories: ability-based, self-reported, and mixed EI, examining their respective impacts on organizational commitment, JS, performance, citizenship behavior, and stress. Results demonstrated a positive relationship between EI and the majority of these outcomes, with higher EI levels corresponding to enhanced commitment, satisfaction, performance, and citizenship behavior while mitigating job-related stress. Notably, self-reported EI emerged as the most significant predictor among the three EI types, albeit with marginal differences in effect sizes. These findings carry substantial implications for human resource management, suggesting the potential benefits of implementing EI-focused training initiatives and incentive structures to foster EP and well-being.

Alheet and Hamdan (2021) found a significant positive relationship between EI and job performance.

Notably, the study suggested that EI varied with employees' experience but did not exhibit significant variations with respect to gender or age. Dhungana and Kautish (2020) demonstrated a significant difference in the EI of employees in private and public banks, with public bank employees exhibiting higher levels of EI. The study elucidated a significant and positive correlation between EI and EP in both private- and public-sector banks. Jafar (2020) concluded that increasing the EI of an employee has a positive effect on his/her performance. Moreover, people with higher EI have a higher level of productivity than those with lower EI. Supriyanto et al. (2019) demonstrated both direct and indirect effects of EI on EP, indicating that EI can directly influence EP and indirectly affect EP, with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) serving as a mediator. Purnama (2017) reported that EI and occupational health collectively exerted a significant influence on EP. The EI and occupational health individually exerted partial effects on EP. These findings underscore the importance of considering EI and occupational health as integral components in the quest to enhance EP.

Subhashini and Shaju (2016) identified a significant correlation between EI and employees' job performance among both supervisors and workers within the organization. Supervisors demonstrated higher levels of EI than employees at the subordinate level. Additionally, employees with more job experience demonstrated higher EI levels than those with less job experience. This research emphasizes that higher positions in the organizational hierarchy are associated with a higher EI index. Emotionally intelligent employees performed better, indicating the positive impact of EI on job performance. Aykan (2014) demonstrated that individuals with high emotional competence exhibit elevated task and contextual performances. A significant and positive correlation was observed between emotional competence and the contextual performance of employees. Consequently, the review of these studies indicates that EI is a crucial factor in the job performance of employees.

2.8. Relationship between EI, JS, and EP

Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023) demonstrated that SA and SR significantly influenced EP. Conversely, SS, motivation, and E did not exhibit such an effect. To evaluate the mediating role of JS, this investigation employed the methodology by Baron and Kenny (1986) and established that JS positively influenced EP. Subsequent to the incorporation of JS as a mediator, the impact of EI on EP was diminished but remained significant, indicating that JS substantially mediated the relationship between EI and EP. This finding suggests that JS functions as a partial mediator. Azmy and Wanah (2022) find a significant positive effect of EI on EP, EI on JS, and JS on EP. However, this study showed no indirect effect of EI on EP, mediated by JS.

Thus, this study confirms that EP is only directly affected by EI. However, JS does not play a mediating role. Naz et al. (2019) found a significant and positive association between EI and EP, inferring that EI is a strong predictor of EP, with higher EI indicating higher EP. Similarly, the study also revealed a significant and positive relationship between EI and JS among the employees, suggesting that highly emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to be content with their job. This study confirmed the role of JS as a mediator in the relationship between EI and performance. Performance is influenced by EI, both directly and indirectly, through JS, suggesting that JS acts as a partial mediator in this relationship. Naz et al. (2019), Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023), and Azmy and Wanah (2022) present conflicting findings regarding the mediating role of JS. In Nepal, only a single study was undertaken by Dhungana and Kautish (2020), who found a positive impact of EI on job performance in private and public banks in Nepal; however, their study did not consider the mediating role of JS. Thus, these studies do not confirm the mediating role of JS in the relationship between EI and EP. Similarly, in the research landscape of Nepal, JS has not been considered a mediating variable. Thus, this study contributes to drawing conclusive results regarding the role of JS as a mediator. Furthermore, this research augments the existing literature in the Nepalese academic landscape by examining the mediating role of JS in the relationship between EI and job performance.

2.9. Theoretical Overview

2.9.1. Affective Events Theory

Affective events theory (AET) is a theory of human behavior that explains how emotions and moods influence job performance and JS. This theory contends that emotional incidents or experiences at work can affect worker performance and JS. People's perceptions and reactions to these events can be greatly influenced by their EI, which in turn can impact their performance and level of satisfaction. AET depicts that work events (e.g., receiving a promotion, getting a negative performance review, having a conflict with a coworker) trigger affective responses (e.g., happiness, anger, and sadness) in employees. These affective responses influence employee attitudes (e.g., JS and commitment to the organization) and behaviors (e.g., productivity, absenteeism, and turnover). EI may enhance positive emotional reactions to events and mitigate the impact of negative events, thereby improving JS. Similarly, this theory explains how emotional responses to workplace events impact EP (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Hence, this study focuses on AET.

2.9.2. Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory (SET) is a theory of human behavior that views social relationships as based on the

exchange of rewards and costs. According to this theory, people consider the benefits and drawbacks of a relationship before determining whether to start, continue, or end it. Social behavior is governed by the same principles of reinforcement and punishment that govern animal behavior. Individuals are more likely to engage in behaviors that are rewarded and less likely to engage in behaviors that are punished (Homans, 1958). Individuals are motivated to maximize rewards and

minimize costs in their relationships while comparing these relationships with other existing or potential relationships, subject to the perceived rewards and costs associated with each relationship. Employees have social exchanges at work, as measured by the SS dimension of EI, which may impact their performance (Kelley, 1979). Hence, this research also focuses on SET.

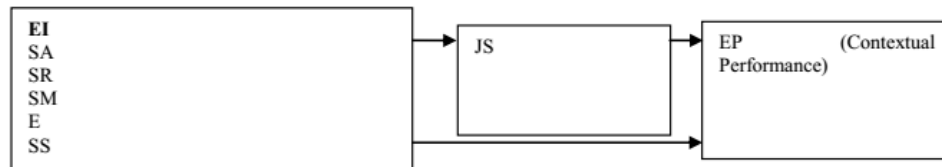


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study (Goleman, 1995; Koopmans et al., 2014; Naz et al., 2019; Azmy & Wanah, 2022; Naqvi & Siddiqui, 2023)

2.10. Hypotheses

H_1 : There is a positive relationship between SA and EP.

H_2 : There is a positive relationship between SR and EP.

H_3 : There is a positive relationship between SM and EP.

H_4 : There is a positive relationship between E and EP.

H_5 : There is a positive relationship between SS and EP.

H_6 : There is a positive relationship between EI and EP.

H_7 : There is a positive relationship between JS and EP.

H_8 : JS mediates the relationship between SA and EP.

H_9 : JS mediates the relationship between SR and EP.

H_{10} : JS mediates the relationship between SM and EP.

H_{11} : JS mediates the relationship between E and EP.

H_{12} : JS mediates the relationship between SS and EP.

H_{13} : JS mediates the relationship between EI and EP.

3. Methodology

This investigation examines the impact of EI on contextual performance among employees in Nepalese commercial banks, employing a correlational research design. The study adopts a quantitative approach to explore the mediating effect of JS on the relationship between EI and EP. Data collection involved employees' self-evaluations of EI dimensions, including SA, SR, SM, E, and SS, JS, and performance. The population size (N) was 46,408 (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021/2022). Thus, the sample size formula suggested by Yamane (1967) was used to calculate the minimum sample size in this study. The margin of error (e) was assumed to be 5%, and the confidence level was 95%. A power analysis using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009)

indicated that a minimum sample size of 384 was required to detect medium effect sizes ($f^2 = 0.15$) with 80% power at the 5% significance level, given the number of predictors in our model.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{46,408}{1 + 46408 * 0.05 * 0.05}$$

$$n = 396.58$$

$$n \sim 397$$

The data collection procedure incorporated a structured questionnaire administered physically and online through Google Forms. The questionnaire comprised items pertaining to EI, JS, and EP, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and was administered using non-probability convenience sampling techniques. Convenience sampling was used because all employees were equally important. MS Excel was used to sort and code the data, while the analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Version 26 and SmartPLS 4. The normality of the data was tested using both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Construct validity and reliability were investigated and verified using structural equation modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS software. The internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability calculations. An average variance extracted (AVE) calculation was performed to verify the convergent validity. The Fornell-Larker criterion, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio, and cross-loading were computed to assess the discriminant validity. The variation inflation factor (VIF) was calculated to identify multicollinearity in the data. Bootstrapping was used to test the hypotheses.

3.1. Measurement of Constructs

This investigation employed the questionnaire proposed by Craparo et al. (2014), who conducted an analysis of the psychometric properties of the Self-Report EI Test (SREIT) developed by Mayer and Salovey (1993). The SREIT statements have been

categorized into the five dimensions of EI: SA, SR, SM, E, and SS. The questionnaire developed by Koopmans et al. (2014) was administered to measure EP, and JS was measured using questionnaires adapted from Naqvi and Siddiqui (2023). The statements were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5.

4. Results

4.1. Normality Tests

Table 1 shows the results of the normality test for SA, SR, SM, E, SS, JS, and EP. Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests revealed $p \leq 0.05$, confirming that the data distribution was not normal.

Table 1. Normality test results (Developed by the authors)

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test			Shapiro-Wilk test		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
JS	0.111	397	0.000	0.977	397	0.009
SA	0.127	397	0.000	0.946	397	0.000
SR	0.078	397	0.021	0.982	397	0.036
SM	0.130	397	0.000	0.966	397	0.001
E	0.094	397	0.002	0.974	397	0.005
SS	0.163	397	0.000	0.963	397	0.000
EI	0.081	397	0.014	0.957	397	0.005
EP	0.099	397	0.001	0.961	397	0.000
Lilliefors Significance Correction						

4.2. Measurement Model

The measurement model, also known as the outer model in PLS-SEM, describes the relationship between concept and indicator variables and is used to evaluate construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Table 2 reveals that the values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for all the variables are higher than the minimum threshold of 0.7,

as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The Cronbach alpha values for all the variables, namely EP, JS, SA, SR, SM, E, SS, and EI (0.888, 0.901, 0.908, 0.883, 0.944, 0.842, 0.897, and 0.895, respectively), are greater than the minimum threshold, thereby confirming the constructs' reliability. Similarly, the values of AVE for all the variables are larger than 0.5, which confirms convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2. Reliability and convergent validity (Developed by the authors)

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
EP	EP1	0.792	0.888	0.916	0.912	0.602
	EP2	0.840				
	EP3	0.854				
	EP4	0.856				
	EP5	0.843				
	EP6	0.615				
	EP7	0.574				
JS	JS1	0.686	0.901	0.910	0.919	0.559
	JS2	0.645				
	JS3	0.827				
	JS4	0.788				
	JS5	0.677				
	JS6	0.744				
	JS7	0.762				
	JS8	0.730				
	JS9	0.845				
SA	SA1	0.897	0.908	0.915	0.931	0.731
	SA2	0.891				
	SA3	0.779				
	SA4	0.845				
	SA5	0.858				
SR	SR1	0.849	0.883	0.900	0.914	0.682
	SR2	0.857				
	SR3	0.732				
	SR4	0.848				
	SR5	0.836				
SM	SM1	0.898	0.944	0.953	0.957	0.818
	SM2	0.938				
	SM3	0.871				
	SM4	0.920				
	SM5	0.894				
E	E1	0.878	0.842	0.869	0.888	0.614
	E2	0.792				
	E3	0.771				

	E4	0.689				
	E5	0.776				
SS	SS1	0.787	0.897	0.911	0.924	0.708
	SS2	0.863				
	SS3	0.847				
	SS4	0.904				
	SS5	0.803				
EI	SA	0.808	0.895	0.899	0.923	0.708
	SR	0.885				
	SM	0.760				
	E	0.910				
	SS	0.835				

4.3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity, a key component of construct validity, assesses the extent to which a measure (e.g., a test or survey) is unrelated to other measures that theoretically represent different constructs. In more precise terms, it ensures that the measure captures the intended concept and does not inadvertently measure an unrelated construct (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix of the variables for lower-order constructs (LOCs). The diagonal values represent the square roots of AVE for E, EP, JS, SA, SM, SR, and SS (0.784, 0.776, 0.748, 0.855, 0.904, 0.826, and 0.842, respectively). Similarly, Table 4 presents the correlation matrix for higher-order constructs (HOCs). The diagonal values represent the square roots of the AVE for EI, which is 0.841. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs. Here, all diagonal values are higher than their respective correlations, confirming the discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker criterion for LOCs (Developed by the authors)

	E	EP	JS	SA	SM	SR	SS
E	0.784						
EP	0.505	0.776					
JS	0.153	0.349	0.748				
SA	0.750	0.424	0.197	0.855			
SM	0.566	0.484	0.110	0.479	0.904		
SR	0.780	0.467	0.070	0.620	0.634	0.826	
SS	0.726	0.415	0.063	0.628	0.523	0.707	0.842

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker criterion for HOCs (Developed by the authors)

	EI	EP	JS
EI	0.841		
EP	0.540	0.776	
JS	0.140	0.350	0.747

Tables 5 and 6 present the HTMT ratios, a measure used to assess discriminant validity calculated by dividing the average correlations between different constructs by the mean of the average correlations within the same construct (Hair et al., 2019); all HTMT ratio values in these tables are below 0.85, a threshold proposed by Kline (2011). This indicates that the constructs are distinct from each other as their correlations with items measuring different constructs

are consistently lower than those with items measuring the same construct.

Table 5. HTMT ratios for LOCs (Developed by the authors)

	E	EP	JS	SA	SM	SR	SS
E							
EP	0.544						
JS	0.178	0.383					
SA	0.844	0.440	0.209				
SM	0.628	0.498	0.130	0.5			
SR	0.848	0.492	0.090	0.678	0.686		
SS	0.828	0.435	0.122	0.675	0.565	0.798	

Table 6. HTMT ratios for HOCs (Developed by the authors)

	EI	EP	JS
EI			
EP	0.572		
JS	0.155	0.383	

4.4. Cross-Loadings

Tables 7 and 8 display the components with the highest loadings for their respective constructs. The highlighted values represent the highest loadings. Discriminant validity is confirmed as each component has a higher loading on its intended construct than the others. This ensures that the indicators are appropriate for their respective constructs because an indicator is deemed unsuitable if it exhibits higher loadings on constructs other than the one it is meant to measure. Therefore, the data demonstrate adequate discriminant validity.

Table 7. Cross-loadings for LOCs (Developed by the authors)

	E	EP	JS	SA	SM	SR	SS
E1	0.878	0.519	0.139	0.623	0.496	0.704	0.599
E2	0.792	0.391	0.183	0.583	0.426	0.570	0.584
E3	0.771	0.337	-0.011	0.482	0.557	0.651	0.521
E4	0.689	0.327	0.116	0.581	0.290	0.448	0.447
E5	0.776	0.359	0.139	0.664	0.456	0.624	0.687
EP1	0.402	0.792	0.207	0.389	0.376	0.415	0.315
EP2	0.497	0.840	0.299	0.396	0.383	0.391	0.426
EP3	0.455	0.854	0.294	0.401	0.421	0.382	0.341
EP4	0.422	0.856	0.318	0.365	0.524	0.393	0.365
EP5	0.451	0.843	0.301	0.346	0.417	0.493	0.387
EP6	0.200	0.615	0.273	0.193	0.192	0.172	0.151
EP7	0.179	0.574	0.191	0.084	0.182	0.167	0.145
JS1	-0.011	0.203	0.686	0.079	0.016	0.004	-0.036
JS2	0.074	0.260	0.645	0.053	0.061	0.007	-0.051
JS3	0.137	0.261	0.827	0.210	0.060	0.037	0.109
JS4	0.124	0.283	0.788	0.235	0.159	0.123	0.125
JS5	0.069	0.211	0.677	0.077	-0.074	0.041	0.009
JS6	0.143	0.251	0.744	0.156	0.154	0.039	0.072
JS7	0.046	0.246	0.762	0.097	0.092	-0.002	-0.016
JS8	0.214	0.321	0.730	0.195	0.150	0.161	0.111
JS9	0.145	0.273	0.845	0.151	0.033	0.010	0.028
SA1	0.679	0.373	0.179	0.897	0.453	0.584	0.475

Continuation of Table 7

SA2	0.653	0.322	0.121	0.891	0.353	0.535	0.558
SA3	0.545	0.288	0.215	0.779	0.247	0.330	0.319
SA4	0.627	0.373	0.174	0.845	0.475	0.543	0.613
SA5	0.684	0.432	0.154	0.858	0.478	0.619	0.678
SM1	0.614	0.515	0.148	0.523	0.898	0.641	0.514
SM2	0.508	0.436	0.082	0.391	0.938	0.554	0.445
SM3	0.579	0.416	0.093	0.456	0.871	0.632	0.466
SM4	0.465	0.412	0.109	0.407	0.920	0.532	0.495
SM5	0.355	0.388	0.050	0.360	0.894	0.482	0.429
SR1	0.656	0.389	0.076	0.534	0.539	0.849	0.602
SR2	0.737	0.461	0.084	0.555	0.554	0.857	0.512
SR3	0.519	0.270	0.037	0.436	0.471	0.732	0.541
SR4	0.613	0.402	0.059	0.526	0.562	0.848	0.674
SR5	0.680	0.368	0.020	0.492	0.483	0.836	0.610
SS1	0.511	0.305	0.048	0.428	0.390	0.507	0.787
SS2	0.565	0.324	0.140	0.505	0.382	0.575	0.863
SS3	0.639	0.397	0.052	0.557	0.452	0.637	0.847
SS4	0.731	0.402	0.073	0.656	0.496	0.638	0.904
SS5	0.580	0.293	-0.072	0.458	0.479	0.611	0.803

Table 8. Cross-loadings for HOCs (Developed by the authors)

	EP	JS	EI
EP1	0.794	0.212	0.445
EP2	0.843	0.301	0.494
EP3	0.853	0.295	0.470
EP4	0.854	0.318	0.487
EP5	0.844	0.302	0.490
EP6	0.614	0.272	0.213
EP7	0.571	0.191	0.177
JS1	0.203	0.687	0.010
JS2	0.259	0.640	0.033
JS3	0.261	0.824	0.129
JS4	0.283	0.797	0.181
JS5	0.211	0.683	0.027
JS6	0.250	0.737	0.129
JS7	0.245	0.755	0.047
JS8	0.321	0.741	0.197
JS9	0.273	0.839	0.085
SA	0.417	0.201	0.808
SM	0.477	0.107	0.760
SR	0.460	0.071	0.885
SS	0.408	0.058	0.835
E	0.495	0.145	0.910

4.5. Goodness-of-Fit Test

Table 9 provides the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) values of the LOCs for both the saturated and estimated models, which are 0.078. Similarly, Table 10 presents the model fit for the HOCs. The SRMR for both the saturated and estimated models is 0.069. According to Hair et al. (2017), an SRMR value less than 0.08 indicates an acceptable model fit. Because the saturated and estimated models have SRMR values below this threshold, the research model

is deemed acceptable in terms of fit.

Table 9. Model fit for LOCs (Developed by the authors)

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.078	0.078

Table 10. Model fit for HOCs (Developed by the authors)

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.069	0.069

4.6. Assessment of the Structural Model

After confirming the reliability and validity of the constructs, the study proceeded to assess the structural model. The initial step of this assessment involved examining the structural models for collinearity issues. Once no collinearity problems were established, the subsequent stage was to evaluate the significance and relevance of the relationships within the structural model. This two-step process ensured a thorough examination of the structural model, allowing a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between the variables.

Table 11 shows that all the VIF values are less than 3.3. If the VIF values are less than 3.3, multicollinearity does not exist (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006).

Table 11. Multicollinearity test (Developed by the authors)

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
JS	0.951	1.052
SA	0.428	2.334
SR	0.309	3.241
SM	0.587	1.705
E	0.308	3.240
SS	0.413	2.419
EI	1.000	1.000

4.7. Hypothesis Testing

The model was assessed using the bootstrapping approach with 5000 re-samples to evaluate the significance of the path coefficient and verify the validity of the hypotheses. Figure 2 shows the regression coefficients, p-values, and beta coefficients of the LOCs. The value of R square from each construct to EI is 0.389, which shows that 38.9 percent of the total variation in EP is explained by SA, SR, SM, E, and SS. Similarly, the value of R square for JS to EP is 0.055, which shows that 5.5% of the variation in EP is explained by JS.

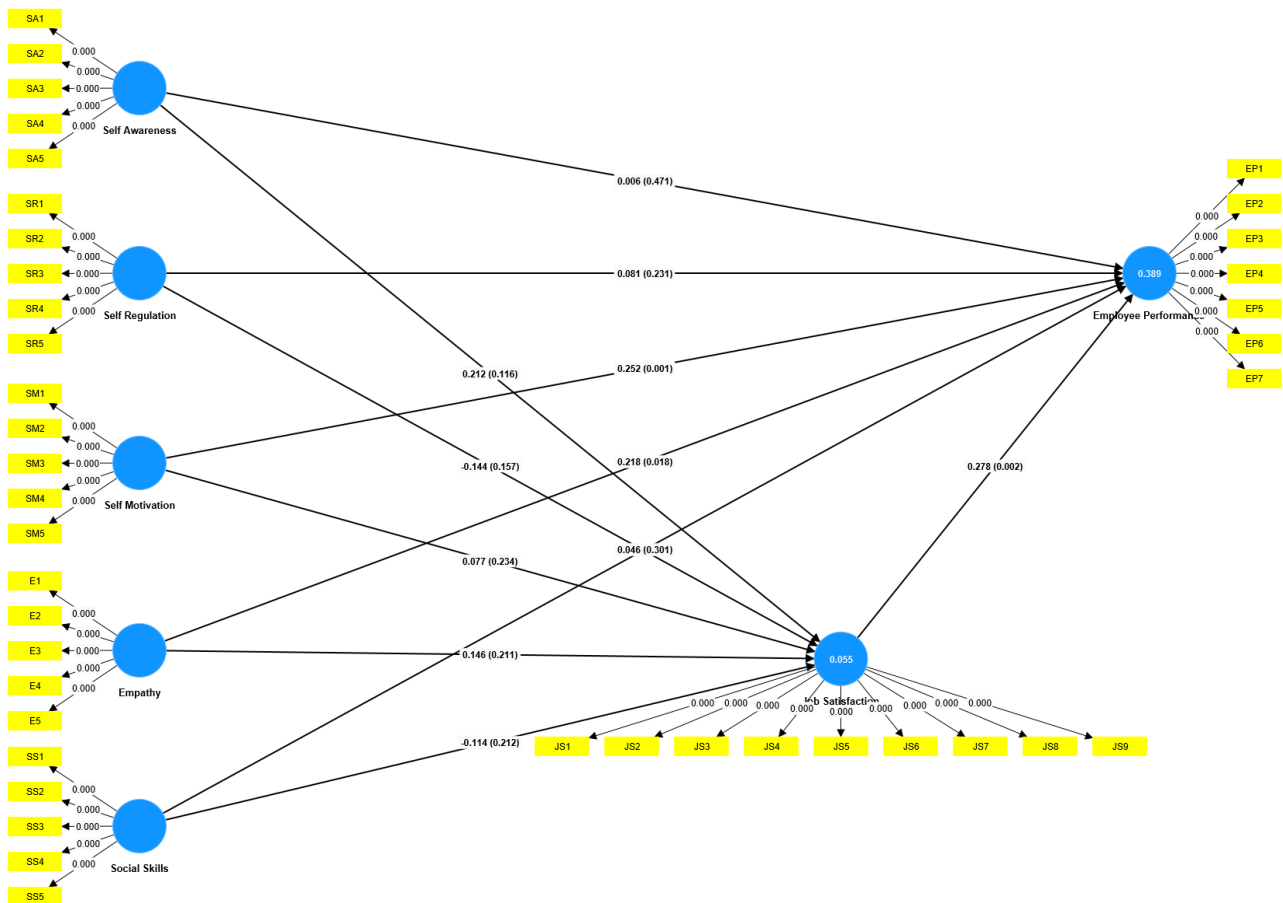


Figure 2. Bootstrapping results for LOCs (Developed by the authors)

Figure 3 shows the regression coefficients, p-values, and beta coefficients of the HOCs. The value of R square is 0.368, which shows that 36.8 percent of the

total variation in EP is explained by overall EI, while the remaining 63.2% variation is explained by other factors.

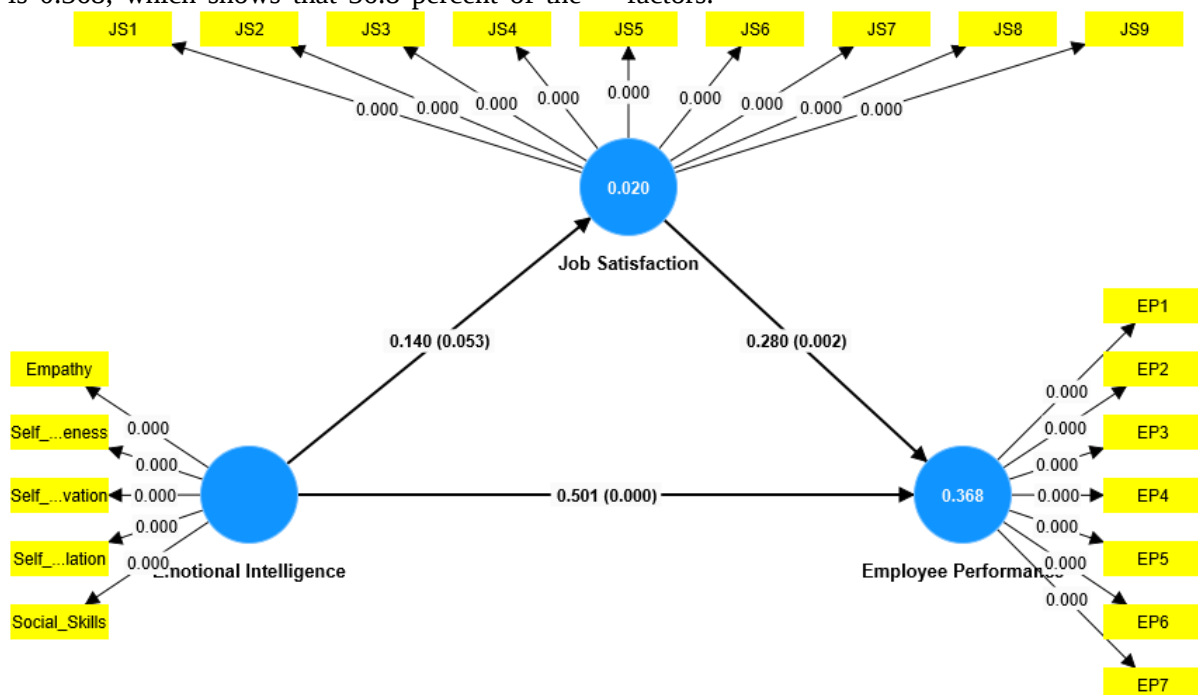


Figure 3. Bootstrapping results for HOCs (Developed by the authors)

H_1 : SA has a positive relationship with EP. Table 12 shows that the value of beta is 0.006 and the p-value is

0.471. The p-value is higher than 0.05. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

H_2 : SR has a positive relationship with EP. The table shows that the value of beta is 0.081 and the p-value is 0.231. As the p-value is higher than 0.05, Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

H_3 : A positive relationship exists between SM and EP. The table shows that the value of beta is 0.252 and the p-value is 0.001. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 and the beta coefficient is positive, they confirm a significant positive relationship between SM and EP. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

H_4 : E and EP have a positive relationship. The table shows that the value of beta is 0.218 and the p-value is 0.018. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 and the beta coefficient is positive, they confirm a significant positive relationship between E and EP. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

H_5 : A positive relationship exists between SS and EP. The table shows that the value of beta is 0.046 and the p-value is 0.301. As the p-value is higher than 0.05, Hypothesis 5 is rejected.

H_6 : There is a positive relationship between EI and EP. The table shows that the value of beta is 0.501 and the p-value is 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 and the beta coefficient is positive, they confirm a significant positive relationship between EI and EP. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is accepted.

H_7 : There is a positive relationship between JS and EP. The table shows that the value of beta is 0.278 and the p-value is 0.002. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 and the beta coefficient is positive, they confirm a significant positive relationship between JS and EP. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 is accepted.

Table 12. Hypothesis testing (Developed by the authors)

	Beta	SD	T	P-values
JS → EP	0.278	0.098	2.826	0.002
E → EP	0.218	0.104	2.096	0.018
SA → EP	0.006	0.086	0.073	0.471
SM → EP	0.252	0.078	3.218	0.001
SR → EP	0.081	0.110	0.737	0.231
SS → EP	0.046	0.088	0.522	0.301
EI → EP	0.501	0.087	5.763	0.000

H_8 : JS mediates the relationship between SA and EP. Table 13 shows that the p-value of the indirect effect is greater than 0.05. Since the indirect effect is not established, Hypothesis 8 is rejected.

H_9 : JS mediates the relationship between SR and EP. Table 13 shows that the p-value of the indirect effect is greater than 0.05. As the indirect effect is not established, Hypothesis 9 is rejected.

H_{10} : JS mediates the relationship between SM and EP. The p-value of the indirect effect is greater than 0.05. As the indirect effect is not established, Hypothesis 10 is rejected.

H_{11} : JS mediates the relationship between E and EP. The p-value of the indirect effect is greater than 0.05. As the indirect effect is not established, Hypothesis 11 is rejected.

H_{12} : JS mediates the relationship between SS and EP. The p-value of the indirect effect is greater than 0.05. Since the indirect effect is not established, Hypothesis 12 is rejected.

H_{13} : JS mediates the relationship between EI and EP. The p-value of the indirect effect is greater than 0.05. Since the indirect effect is not established, Hypothesis 13 is rejected.

Table 13. Hypothesis testing for mediation (Developed by the authors)

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	P-Value of Indirect Effect
SA → JS → EP	0.006	0.059	0.065	0.141
SM → JS → EP	0.252	0.021	0.273	0.243
SR → JS → EP	0.081	-0.040	0.041	0.170
SS → JS → EP	0.046	-0.032	0.014	0.242
E → JS → EP	0.218	0.041	0.259	0.226
EI → JS → EP	0.501	0.039	0.540	0.060

5. Discussion

The insignificant relationship between SA, SR, and SS and EP contradicts the findings by Kandu and Kautish (2023) and Duong and Nguyen (2023) but aligns with those by Kandu and Kautish (2023) in the case of SA. This may suggest that banking employees in Nepal do not prioritize the awareness of others' emotions, SR, social networking, and social relationships, but rather focus predominantly on their professional responsibilities. This contradiction might be due to differences in population as Kandu and Kautish (2023) focused only on female employees and Duong and Nguyen (2023) focused on the employees of the Telecom Joint Stock Company. The discrepancy might also be attributed to variations in the cultural context of work. Similarly, SM and E are consistent

with the findings of previous studies (Kandu & Kautish, 2023; Duong & Nguyen, 2023). This suggests that SM and thinking from others' perspectives may enhance EP. This study assessed the impact of overall EI on EP. The findings of this study reveal a significant and positive impact of EI on EP, which is consistent with the findings by Aykan (2014), Subhashini and Shaju (2016), Supriyanto et al. (2019), Naz et al. (2019), Dhungana and Kautish (2020), Alheet and Hamdan (2021), and Azmy and Wanah (2022). This means that employees who demonstrate proficiency in recognizing, managing, understanding, and utilizing emotions in themselves and others exhibit high performance in the banking sector. The findings related to the mediating role of JS in the relationship between different dimensions of EI and EP are consistent with those by Azmy and Wanah (2022). This study found no

moderating role of JS. This suggests that JS is not necessarily essential to leverage the performance of employees when EI is properly managed. The findings of this study hold significant theoretical implications within the frameworks of AET and SET. AET demonstrates that emotional incidents in the workplace influence EP and JS. The study revealed that while dimensions of EI, such as SM and E, positively impact EP, other dimensions, such as SA, SR, and SS, show insignificant relationships with EP. This understanding aligns with AET's premise that emotional responses to workplace events can vary, influencing employee attitudes and behaviors differently. In particular, the significant positive relationship between E and EP highlights the importance of understanding others' emotions in fostering workplace relationships and performance, reflecting AET's emphasis on affective responses that shape employee outcomes. Moreover, the findings also intersect with SET, which views social relationships as exchanges of rewards and costs. The significant positive impact of overall EI on EP suggests that employees with higher EI may engage in more beneficial social exchanges at work, leading to improved performance. However, the insignificant relationship between SS and EP contradicts this view, thereby contradicting SET. The lack of mediation by JS in the relationship between EI and EP indicates that the influence of EI on performance operates independently of JS, challenging SET's proposition that social behavior is solely driven by rewards and costs.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Main Findings of This Study

The study found an insignificant relationship between SA, SR, and SS and EP, which contradicts the findings by Kandu and Kautish (2023) and Duong and Nguyen (2023) but aligns with those by Kandu and Kautish (2023) in the case of SA. This may suggest that banking employees in Nepal do not prioritize the awareness of others' emotions, SR, social networking, and social relationships, but instead focus more on their professional responsibilities.

6.2. Comparison with Other Studies

The findings are contradictory due to differences in population as Kandu and Kautish (2023) focused exclusively on female employees, while Duong and Nguyen (2023) concentrated on employees of the Telecom Joint Stock Company. The discrepancy may also be attributed to variations in the cultural context of work environments. Similarly, the study findings reported SM and E's significant relationship with EP, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Kandu & Kautish, 2023; Duong & Nguyen, 2023). This suggests that SM and thinking from others' perspectives may enhance EP. This study assessed the impact of overall EI on EP. The findings of this study

reveal a significant and positive impact of EI on EP, which is consistent with the findings of Naz et al. (2019), Dhungana and Kautish (2020), and Azmy and Wanah (2022). This means that employees who are apt to recognize, manage, understand, and use emotions in themselves and in others are high performers in the banking sector. The findings related to the mediating role of JS in the relationship between different dimensions of EI and EP are consistent with those by Azmy and Wanah (2022). This study found no moderating role of JS. This suggests that JS is not necessarily essential to leverage the performance of employees when EI is properly managed. The findings of this study hold significant theoretical implications within the frameworks of AET and SET. AET demonstrates that emotional incidents in the workplace influence EP and JS. The study revealed that while dimensions of EI, such as SM and E, positively impact EP, other dimensions, such as SA, SR, and SS, show insignificant relationships with EP. This understanding aligns with AET's premise that emotional responses to workplace events can vary, influencing employee attitudes and behaviors differently. In particular, the significant positive relationship between E and EP highlights the importance of understanding others' emotions in fostering workplace relationships and performance, reflecting AET's emphasis on affective responses that shape employee outcomes. Moreover, the findings also intersect with SET, which views social relationships as exchanges of rewards and costs. The significant positive impact of overall EI on EP suggests that employees with higher EI may engage in more beneficial social exchanges at work, leading to improved performance. However, the insignificant relationship between SS and EP contradicts this view, thereby contradicting SET. The lack of mediation by JS in the relationship between EI and EP indicates that the influence of EI on performance operates independently of JS, challenging SET's proposition that social behavior is solely driven by rewards and costs.

6.3. Implications of the Study

The study provides novel insights into the drivers of EI and EP among employees of commercial banks in Nepal and the crucial mediating role of JS. The contribution of E and SM to the environment enhances the performance of employees, but not by SA, SR, and SS. In addition, creating an environment that balances the dimensions of EI enhances EP. However, JS was found to have no mediating effect on the relationship between EI and EP, suggesting that the influence of EI on performance is independent of JS in the banking sector.

6.4. Strengths and Limitations

The findings contribute to the literature on EI and practical guidelines for Nepal's commercial banking industry. By focusing on EI, companies can enhance

EP. The study's findings provide substantive insights for banking sector managers, informing policy formulation and human resource management strategies. This contributes to optimizing EP. This study focused solely on banking sector employees, and cross-sectional data were utilized for analysis. The investigation excluded other business sectors such as manufacturing, hotel, and hospitality. Longitudinal data, which may have yielded more rigorous results, were not collected.

6.5. Recommendations and Future Research

Future research should explore the relationship longitudinally and in other cultural contexts to further refine our understanding of EI and EP concepts. Similarly, further research can be conducted by expanding the sample size and incorporating additional performance dimensions, such as task performance and counterproductive work behavior, to more rigorously examine the study variables. Studies considering OCB as a mediating variable may provide new avenues for future researchers to explore alternative insights related to study dimensions.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Dhruva Lal Pandey, Nischal Risal and Benish Koirala; methodology, Dhruva Lal Pandey and Nischal Risal; software, Benish Koirala; validation, Nischal Risal; formal analysis, Dhruva Lal Pandey and Nischal Risal; investigation, Benish Koirala; resources, Nischal Risal, Benish Koirala and Benish Koirala; data curation, Benish Koirala; writing—original draft preparation, all authors contributed equally; writing—review and editing, Benish Koirala; visualization, Benish Koirala; supervision, Dhruva Lal Pandey; project administration, Nischal Risal. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The original contributions presented in this study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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