

# Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance ———

## Examining Mediation and Moderation Mechanisms

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### Abstract

The influence of emotional intelligence on employee job performance has been attracting increasingly more attention from various scholars and enterprises. Based on previous relevant literature in the fields of emotional intelligence, organizational management. This research proposes and verifies a model to examine the internal mechanism and boundary condition of the relationship between emotional intelligence, emotional labor, perceived organizational support, job performance. Specifically, this study introduces emotional labor as a mediator in the relationship between emotional labor and employee job performance and perceived organizational support as a moderator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor. Then, this research conducts questionnaire surveys on Chinese employees to collect the sample data. In total, 266 service employees were collected. The results suggest that emotional intelligence can promote employee job performance. Emotional labor can partly mediate the influence of emotional intelligence on employee job performance. Perceived organizational support can positively moderate the influence of emotional intelligence on emotional labor. The conclusions from the analyses above not only further verify and develop some previous points on emotional intelligence and employee job performance but also derive certain management implications for promoting employee job performance from the perspective of organizational support.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence; job performance; perceived organizational support; Moderating Effect.

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### 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the market economy, companies are facing various new changes and challenges. The dynamics and uncertainties of the business environment and the diversification and complexity of organizational tasks force companies to rely on internal employees to create better performance and to adapt to the new market environment.

Emotional labor was first put forward by Hochschild (1983). He defined emotional labor as a way of labor in which individuals are paid for the publicly visible expressions and actions established by the management of their own emotions and emotions. Emotional intelligence was first proposed by Salove and Mayer (1990). Since their proposal, emotional intelligence and emotional labor have been widely used in management, psychology and other fields, and they are related to the relationship between emotional intelligence, emotional labor, and job performance. Discussions are also beginning to rise. Many research scholars have found that employees' IQ does not have an absolute influence on their performance. On the contrary, employees' emotional intelligence has a certain predictive effect on job performance. Many scholars have conducted empirical research and analysis on employees or managers in different industries, and the results are not the same. However, the results of most scholars support that emotional intelligence has a certain influence on job performance.

The concept of perceived organizational support from the theory of social exchange. The sense of organizational support believes that the degree of employee engagement depends on the support and care provided by the organization that employees perceive. The sense of organizational support makes people get out of the misunderstanding of overemphasizing the contribution and loyalty of employees to the organization and neglecting respect for employees, which has important strategic guiding significance.

This research mainly studies employees in the service industry, focusing on the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance and the mediating role of emotional labor between emotional intelligence and job performance. In the high-interaction industry of the service industry, employee perceived organizational support has a moderating effect on emotional intelligence affecting emotional labor.

This research uses SPSS25.0 and applied Model 4 and Model 7 of macro program PROCESS to examine the mediation effect and moderated mediation effect by issuing electronic questionnaires and collecting data. The results show that emotional intelligence has a significant impact on job performance. Perceived organizational support plays a moderated role between emotional intelligence and emotional labor; emotional labor plays a mediating role between emotional intelligence and job performance.

## 2. Literature Review

### Emotional Intelligence

It is generally believed that the concept of emotional intelligence was born in the 1990s. In fact, as early as 1920 when Sandkyke proposed the concept of "social intelligence", the concept of emotional intelligence was conceived. He defined social intelligence as the ability to understand and manage all kinds of people and properly handle interpersonal relationships. This definition includes two aspects of content: understanding others and wise action in society (O'Neil, 1996). This is similar to the connotation of the concept of emotional intelligence that everyone talks about now. Until the end of 1990s, affected by Goleman's book "Working with Emotional Intelligence" and the paper "the What Makes A leader", emotional intelligence has been a lively discussion in the academic community. Many scholars gradually

have different opinion on understanding and definition of the concept of emotional intelligence, but there is a consensus on the definition of emotional intelligence, that is, emotional intelligence will be considered a person of emotional awareness and control as well as the ability to use.

At present, there are two main types of definitions that are relatively accepted in research on emotional intelligence. One of them is the ability emotional intelligence proposed by Mayer and Salovey. In 1990, Mayer & Salovey believed that emotional intelligence is a kind of ability for people to manage their own and others' emotions and feelings, and used this ability to guide their own behavior and understanding (J. D Mayer & Salovey, 1997) in 1997, Mayer & Salovey conducted further research on emotional intelligence and published the paper "what is emotional intelligence". The definition of emotional intelligence was updated in the paper, and it was proposed that emotional intelligence is an emotional ability and an emotion. The ability of regulation and intellectual development is a person's ability to accurately perceive, express and evaluate emotions. The other is the special emotional intelligence formed by Goleman and Bar-on. Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence in his book "emotional intelligence" as the behavior and ability to recognize other people's emotions, identify their own emotions, control their emotions and control interpersonal initiative. He proposed that emotional intelligence includes understanding one's own emotions, managing one's own emotions, knowing other people's emotions and interpersonal relationships (Perloff & Robert, 1997) in 1997, Bar-on believed that emotional intelligence is a person's potential ability. This ability will have an important role and influence on people's own needs satisfaction and stress management (Darek Dawda & Stephen D. Hart, 2000).

### **Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance**

Emotional intelligence is the most basic skills of individual emotional labor, emotional labor is the performance of this ability (Mastracci & Hsieh, 2016). Just as manual workers need physical work, employees in the service industry need emotional intelligence to work (Mastracci et. al., 2010). Employees with high emotional intelligence can manage their own emotions and perceive the emotions of others, while also encouraging themselves to show positive emotions and reduce the expression of negative emotions, notifying how to manage their behavior by controlling and managing their emotions (Brotheridge, Céleste, & M., 2002). Kidwell et al. (2011) studied sales personnel in the real estate industry and insurance industry and found that emotional intelligence is significantly correlated with sales performance. Employees with high emotional intelligence not only have higher incomes but are also better at retaining customers. In addition, emotional intelligence will affect customer orientation and regulate the relationship between customer orientation and sales performance. At the same time, it is pointed out that emotional intelligence has different effects on sales staff in different situations, especially in the real estate industry, understanding and managing emotions is very important. The positive impact of emotional intelligence on sales performance is generally recognized by academia.

The proposal of emotional labor has a close relationship with the economic transformation of western countries, the development of the service industry, and the rise of the people-oriented management concept. Under this background, Western scholars have begun to focus their research on the emotional perspective of service employees. In 1993, Ashporth and Humphrey

believed that for organizations, managing employees' emotional expressions in strict accordance with the prescribed methods can ensure improved work efficiency and service quality, and increased sales and continued business. Many scholars believe that emotional labor is closely related to job performance (Wang, Chen, Wang, Wang, & Chen, 2017).

Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented:

*H1: Emotional intelligence positively associate with emotionallabor*

### **The Mediating Role of Emotional labor**

Many scholars' studies have found that emotional intelligence has a positive predictive effect on performance. At the same time, it also has a positive predictive effect on performance. Empirical studies by many scholars have found that the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance may be regulated or mediated by certain factors. Tsai et al. (2007) found that interpersonal communication and self-efficacy play an intermediary role in emotional intelligence and job performance. Qiong et al. (2008) found that the leadership-subordinate exchange relationship felt by employees plays a part of the intermediary role in the process of emotional intelligence and employee performance. According to the theory of resource preservation, when individuals work in accordance with organizational rules, their own resources will be threatened, this threat can be regarded as a kind of work pressure. When individuals invest a lot of psychological resources in their work, continuous resource consumption will eventually lead to job burnout and decline in job performance. When emotional labor workers perform emotional labor, they must constantly show appropriate emotions in the process of interacting with customers. The higher the degree of emotional labor, the easier it is to produce burnout behavior. At this time, internal resources such as emotional intelligence are needed to control and manage one's inner emotional perception to reduce resource consumption and improve work performance. Law & Wong (2000) believes that employees with high emotional intelligence are more suitable for high-emotional labor. Compared with redesigning work or providing emotional intelligence training, they can complete their work more effectively and achieve good performance. Cano et al. (2009) conducted a survey of first-line service personnel and found that employees with high emotional intelligence can perform better emotional behaviors through the impact on emotional labor, and this will make employees experience less work pressure, which leads to job performance. Improvement. Thus, the following hypotheses are presented:

*H2: Emotionallabor mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance*

### **The Moderating Role of Perceived organizational support**

According to the resource preservation theory, the loss of resources in emotional labor by employees will increase the pressure. In order to alleviate the pressure, the individual needs to invest resources. The invested resources can be owned by the individual or other resources that can be used in the organizational environment. The sense of organizational support can be regarded as a resource from the organization. The sense of organizational support will cause employees to experience a series of positive emotional experiences due to the support, understanding, and affirmation of their ability from colleagues and leaders.

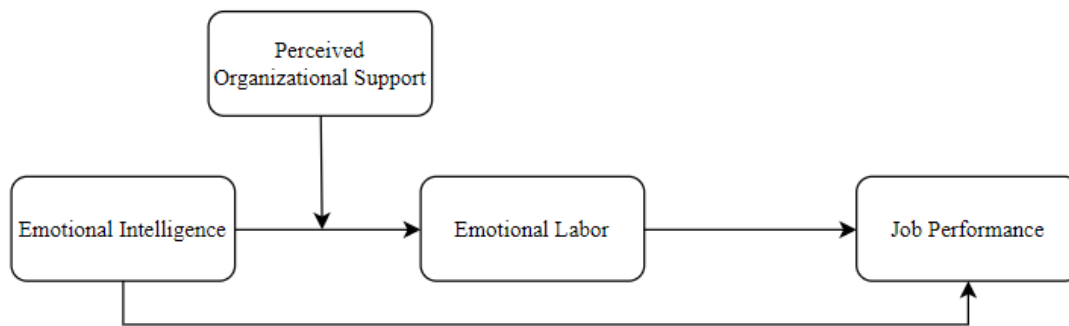
As a valuable resource valued by employees, organizational support can supplement the resource loss caused by employees' emotional labor. When employees of organizational support ratio are

high, employees will be able to get more resources, by regulating the use of integrated emotions and feelings, so that greater use of deep acting. When employees' organizational support is low, employees cannot obtain support from external resources, resulting in the loss of their emotional resources, and they tend to use surface play to reduce the loss of resources. Based on the resource preservation theory, employees will consume resources under the pressure of work requirements. If the intervention of organizational support meets employees' social and emotional needs and supplements the emotional and intellectual resources consumed by employees, the pressure felt by employees will be reduced, and willing to work hard to achieve organizational goals. The sense of organizational support plays a mediating role between emotional intelligence and emotional labor. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented:

*H3: Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor, such that this relationship would become stronger as perceived organizational support is obvious than when it is low.*

**Emotional labor as mediating variable**

**Figure 1** Research model depicting the proposed hypotheses as follows



**3. Research Methodology**

**Samples and data collection**

This research focuses on the sample of service employees in Xiamen, China. In order to obtain a diversity of samples from various organizations, a snowball sampling technique was used (Oh et al., 2014). In this research, graduate students were asked to distribute questionnaires to their workplace. Self-administered questionnaire survey was used to collect the data from respondents. Questionnaires distribution was voluntarily undertaken by students. The total of 350 questionnaires was taken by students and 266 completely filled surveys were returned back to the researcher, yielding 76 percent response rate. Demographic and job characteristics of the participants were reported in Table 1.

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics of the samples

Demographic factor	Descriptive statistics
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Age	Mean: 25.97 Standard deviation: 5.72
Gender	Male: 126 (47.36%) Female: 140 (52.64%)
Education	Below bachelor's degree: 39(14.66%) Bachelor's degree: 178(66.92%) Master's degree: 48(18.05%) Doctoral degree: 1(0.03%)
Job tenure	Mean=3.52 (s.d.=4.86)
Job salary	Less than 4000 RMB: 38(14.29%) 4001-6000 RMB:180(67.67%) 6001-8000 RMB:47(17.67%) More than 10000RMB:1(0.03%)

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### Measures

The scale of emotional intelligence developed by Wong & Law (2002), it has 14 measurement questions for service industry employees. This items will be measured using five-point Likert scales (1:strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree).

The emotional labor scale uses the emotional labor scale compiled by Grandey (2003) translated by Taiwan scholar Wu Peijun (2003). The scale includes 11 items. After Wu Peijun translated this emotional labor scale and verified it, he found that the a coefficient of superficial behavior is 0.82, and the a coefficient of deep behavior is 0.84, which has good reliability and validity.

This study uses perceived organizational support questionnaire developed by scholars Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli and Lynch (1997), with a total of 8 questions. The questionnaire points are scored with Likert 5 points. All questions are positive questions. The higher the score, the higher the sense of organizational support.

This study adopts the jobperformance proposed by Motowidle and Borman(1993), and divides performance into task performance and relationship performance, with a total of 7 questions. This items will be measured using five-point Likert scales (1:strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree).

### Data analysis

Thisresearch tested hypotheses using SPSS 25.0 software and its macro program PROCESS 2.12 (Hayes, 2013). Thisresearch applied Model 4 and Model 7 of macro program PROCESS in SPSS to examine the mediation effect and moderated mediation effect. In addition, the bootstrap test was conducted, and the resultant 95% confidence intervals were inspected to examine the

significance of mediating effect and moderated mediation effect (Erceg-Hurn and Mirosevich, 2008).

### 4. Research Results

#### Reliability Test

Before performing the regression analysis, a few steps need to be conducted. First, construct reliability of the concepts that are measured using multiple item scale were evaluated by using Cronbach alphas coefficient. The results, as reported in Table 1, shows that all Cronbach alphas coefficient exceed the widely suggested value of 0.7 (Fornell&Larcker, 1981). This indicates that the reliability of all constructs is satisfactory. Then, the scores of each multiple-item scale that belong to the same concept were averaged to create a summated scale that was subsequently used in the regression analysis.

**Table 1** Results from reliability test

Variables	Emotional intelligence	Emotional labor	Perceived organizational support	Job performance
Cronbach alphas (α) coefficient	0.953	0.972	0.873	0.924

Finally, bivariate correlations among variables are analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficients. This correlation analysis was performed in order to explore the one-on-one relationships between key variables. Results from correlation analysis are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**Correlation among variables

Correlations									
	EI	EL	POS	JP	Age	Gen	Edu	Tenure	Salary
EI	1	0.766**	0.714**	0.041**	0.044*	0.029**	0.054	0.064	0.016
EL		1	0.878**	0.033**	0.036*	0.023**	0.059	0.073	-0.029
POS			1	0.199**	0.024*	0.019**	0.049	0.054	-0.101
JP				1	0.080*	0.046**	0.088	0.061	-0.133*
Age					1	0.025**	0.126*	-0.106	-0.003

Gen	1	0.571**	0.550**	0.812**
Edu		1	0.853**	0.310**
Tenure			1	0.317**
Salary				1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Notes: EI=Emotional intelligence, EL=Emotional labor, POS=Perceived organizational support, JP=Job performance.

### Hypothesis Testing

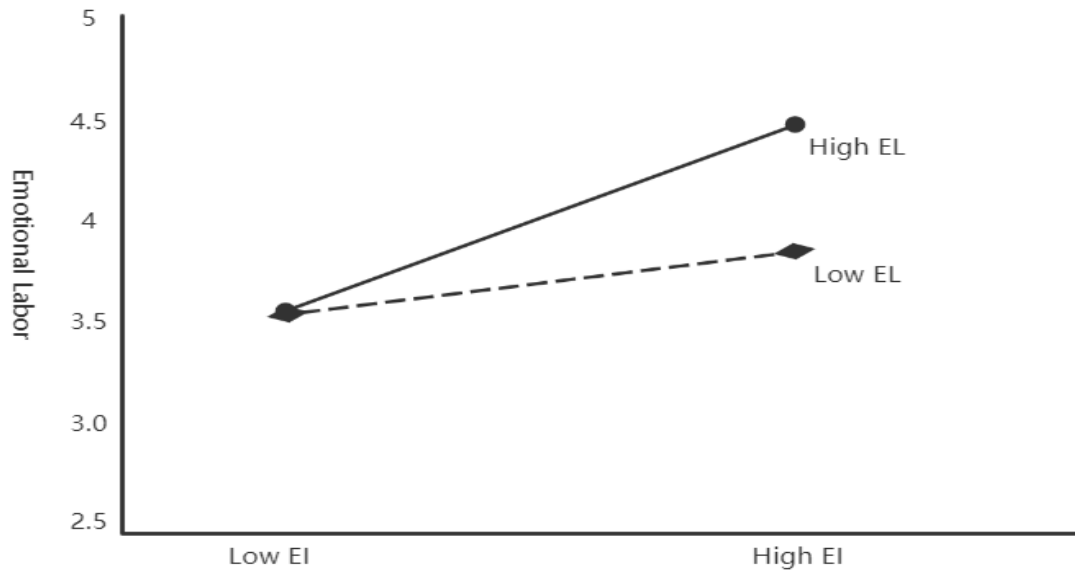
In order to test the hypotheses, this study implemented a hierarchical regression analysis with SPSS 25.0, as displayed in Table 3. After control over the employees’ gender, age, education, and work tenure, Model 5 indicates that emotional intelligence is positively related to employee job performance ( $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), so Hypothesis 1 is supported.

For the mediating effect of emotional labor, this study followed the procedures proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) to test the indirect influence of emotional intelligence on employee job performance via emotional labor. As shown by Models 4, 5, and 6, after control over the effects of gender, age, education, and work tenure, emotional intelligence was a significant direct predictor of employee job performance (Model 5:  $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). After added emotional labor to the hierarchical regression analysis model, emotional labor could also significantly predict employee job performance (Model 6:  $\beta = 0.114$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); meanwhile, the influence of emotional intelligence on employee job performance is still significant (Model 6:  $\beta = 0.079$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that emotional labor could partly mediate the influence of leader humor on employee job performance. In order to analyze the indirect effect that emotional intelligence has on employee job performance through emotional labor, this study used Bootstrap methods in virtue of PROCESS macros developed by Preacher et al. (2007) with Model 4. The results showed that the indirect influence of emotional intelligence on employee job performance through emotional labor is significant (indirect effect = 0.604, with a 95% CI of [0.0605, 0.1725]). Hypothesis 2 is therefore well supported.

For the moderating effect of perceived organizational support in the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor, this study adopted Hayes’s (2015) procedures for testing a moderating effect. After control over employees’ gender, age, education, and work tenure, salary, as Models 1, 2, and 3, EI also becomes a significant predictor of employee emotional labor (Model 2:  $\beta = 0.765$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Meanwhile, the interaction term of emotional intelligence and perceived organizational support is significant in predicting emotional labor (Model 3:  $\beta = 0.276$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Hayes’ macro program PROCESS in SPSS was adopted to test the moderated mediation effect. As shown in Table 4; at 1 SD above the mean of POS, the



conditional indirect effect was significant [ $\beta = 0.25$ , 95% CI (0.13, 0.32), excluding zero]. In contrast, at 1 SD below the mean, the conditional indirect effect was rather lower and not significant [ $\beta = 0.15$ , 95% CI (-0.03, 0.12), including zero]. Overall, these results supported Hypothesis 3. Hence, Hypothesis 3 is well supported.



**Figure 2** Interaction of EI and POS on job performance

**Table 3** Hierarchical regressions for main study variables.

Variables	Emotional labor			Job performance		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Age	0.084	0.099	0.010	0.064	0.064	0.075
Gender	0.045	0.005	0.008*	0.098	0.098	0.099
Education	-0.018	0.025	-0.016	0.156*	0.156	0.153*
Tenure	-0.119	-0.124	0.040	-0.225	-0.225	-0.239
Salary	0.084	0.030*	0.025	0.026	0.025*	-0.022
EI		.765***	0.276***		0.280***	0.079***
EL						0.114***
POS			0.684***			
EI*POS			0.486***			
R <sup>2</sup>	0.110	0.593	0.813	0.047	0.219	0.332
▲R		0.583	0.808		0.217	0.228
F	6.623*	32.852***	15.954***	2.560*	2.129***	4.635***

N=266; EI=Emotional intelligence; EL=Emotional labor; POS=perceived organizational support; JP=Job performance,  
 \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05.

## 5. Conclusion

In brief, the main objectives of this research are investigating the relationship among emotional intelligence, emotional labor, perceived organizational support, and job performance. The main research conclusions of this article have the following four points. First, there is no significant relationship between the control variable and the dependent variable. There is no significant relationship between the control variables such as age, gender, salary, working years and work performance. Second, there is a significant positive correlation between the emotional intelligence of service employees and work performance ( $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). From the results, it can be seen that those service employees who are good at regulating their negative emotions can actively learn from the surrounding environment. Feel the power of positive and upward, willing to continue learning, show adaptability to work, and be able to show positive emotions when facing difficulties and challenges, and improve work performance. Third, as for the intermediary variables of emotional labor, emotional labor plays a mediating role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and work performance. Emotional labor represents the behavior of employees at work to a certain extent. When having good emotional labor, the degree of emotional intelligence is not high, you will also have good work performance. Fourth, the sense of organizational support plays a significant regulatory role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor. According to the theory of social exchange, when employees think that they are treated well by the organization, they will show behaviors that are beneficial to the organization in exchange. As a kind of rewarding psychology or a sense of exchange, employees will have a sense of obligation and mission to pay attention to the organization's interests and help the organization achieve organizational goals, forming a psychological contract or emotional commitment between employees and the organization, which helps improve employees' emotional labor performance level.

Regarding the research results, this research puts forward the following suggestions. First, the emotional intelligence of employees in the service industry has varying degrees of impact on work performance. Improving employees' work performance is one of the main means to improve the competitiveness of a company. Therefore, for companies, recruiting employees externally or promoting employees internally At the time, the recruitment and selection should not only be based on indicators such as their academic qualifications. Evaluating their emotional intelligence is also a very important hurdle. Second, in the internal training of the company, employees can practice and exercise in learning, improve their ability to perceive, integrate, understand, and use emotions, and improve their emotional intelligence and emotional labor, as a comprehensive quality for training. Through this similar activity, employees can more correctly understand their own emotions, manage their own emotions, understand their own and the emotions of others, so that they can use their emotions to motivate themselves. At the same time, employees can also feel the organization's respect and respect for themselves. Acknowledgement, inspire employees' enthusiasm for work. Third, improving the sense of organizational support should also receive the organization's attention. The sense of organizational support will have a positive impact on the positive work behavior of employees. For example, relevant supportive measures can be taken to make employees feel the fairness of the organization, and the organization treats employees. Active care, rewards and promotion measures for employees.

This research has the following flaws in the research. Firstly, due to the limitation of conditions, the sample size is relatively small, and the distribution of the respondents is not ideal, resulting in certain flaws in the number and quality of the samples, which is useful for the analysis of data and the demonstration of the results. Had a big impact. In future research, we hope to expand the sample size, scale and scope, so that the research conclusions will be more credible and broader. Second, this thesis adopts the form of allowing employees to answer by themselves, so when answering, it is inevitable that there is a strong subjectivity and one-sidedness. Therefore, in the subsequent research, the employee performance column can be comprehensively answered by superiors, surrounding colleagues, subordinates, and human resources departments. Such conclusions will be more convincing and credible.

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