




Presenting an Emotional Intelligence Model Based on the Psychological Characteristics of AJA Employees

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study is to present a model of emotional intelligence (EI) based on the psychological characteristics of employees of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran (AJA).

Methods and Materials: This qualitative research employed semi-structured interviews to collect data from AJA employees. A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who could provide diverse perspectives on EI. The sample size was determined 25 individuals by theoretical saturation. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo software, following a thematic analysis approach to identify key themes and subthemes related to EI.

Findings: The analysis revealed three main themes: emotional awareness, interpersonal skills, and adaptability and stress management. Emotional awareness included subcategories such as self-awareness, social awareness, and emotional regulation. Interpersonal skills encompassed communication, conflict resolution, and relationship management. Adaptability and stress management covered flexibility, resilience, and work-life balance. These themes highlighted the critical role of EI in managing stress, improving teamwork, and enhancing leadership effectiveness. The findings align with previous studies, emphasizing the importance of EI in various professional settings, from education and healthcare to construction and manufacturing.

Conclusion: This study provides a comprehensive model of emotional intelligence tailored to the psychological characteristics of AJA employees. The results underscore the multifaceted nature of EI and its significant impact on professional performance and well-being. Practical recommendations include implementing targeted EI training programs, fostering supportive work environments, and integrating EI assessments in recruitment processes.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Characteristics, AJA Employees.

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an evolving field that significantly impacts various facets of human interaction and organizational performance. Defined by Salovey and Grewal (2005) as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively, EI has become an integral component in understanding human behavior in professional settings (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). The concept of EI has gained substantial attention due to its profound implications on personal and professional development. Emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between perfectionism and test anxiety among students, as demonstrated by Abdollahi and Talib (2015). Their research highlights the buffering effect of high EI in stressful academic situations, suggesting its potential utility in various high-pressure environments, including the workplace (Abdollahi & Talib, 2015).

In educational settings, EI has been linked to teachers' contextual performance. Chandrawaty and Widodo (2022) found that higher levels of emotional intelligence among teachers were associated with better performance in handling classroom dynamics and student interactions. This finding underscores the importance of EI in professions requiring constant interpersonal engagement and emotional labor (Chandrawaty & Widodo, 2022).

The healthcare sector provides another crucial context for studying EI. Hong and Lee (2016) demonstrated that emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between emotional labor, job stress, burnout, and nurses' turnover intentions. This research underscores the vital role of EI in managing the emotional demands of nursing, which is essential for both employee well-being and patient care quality (Hong & Lee, 2016). In the realm of public health, the effect of perceived stress on organizational silence among emergency service doctors in Turkey was studied by Erdoğan et al. (2022). Their findings reveal that emotional intelligence mediates this relationship, highlighting its critical role in stress management and communication within high-stress medical environments (Erdoğan et al., 2022).

The construction industry also benefits from understanding EI's impact. Huang (2024) explored the relationship between construction workers' emotional intelligence and safety performance, finding a positive correlation. Workers with higher EI were better at recognizing and managing safety risks, indicating that emotional intelligence training could enhance safety protocols and reduce workplace accidents (Huang, 2024).

Husain et al. (2022) explored the dual aspects of emotional expression and regulation in achieving emotional satisfaction. Their study revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic emotional satisfaction is significantly influenced by how individuals express and regulate their emotions, further emphasizing the importance of EI in maintaining emotional balance (Husain et al., 2022). Organizational learning and adaptive performance in the Indian manufacturing sector were examined by Pradhan et al. (2017), who found that emotional intelligence plays a mediating role. Their research suggests that EI not only enhances individual adaptability but also contributes to the overall learning culture within organizations (Pradhan et al., 2017). The link between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership is well-documented. McClellan and DiClementi (2017) proposed a conceptual model where positive emotional influence, facilitated by high EI, enhances leadership effectiveness (McClellan & DiClementi, 2017). This model aligns with the findings of Fitzgerald and Schutte (2010), who demonstrated that enhancing self-efficacy through EI can significantly increase transformational leadership capabilities (Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010).

Gender, parenting styles, and temperament also influence the development of EI, as reviewed by Reyes-Wapano (2021). Their comprehensive literature review suggests that these factors play a crucial role in shaping emotional intelligence from a young age, indicating the importance of early EI development interventions (Reyes-Wapano, 2021). Gender and national differences in emotional intelligence and empathy were compared by Pongrac et al. (2019), who found significant variations between Croatian and Portuguese samples. This research highlights the cultural influences on emotional intelligence, suggesting that EI development programs should be tailored to specific cultural contexts.

In the context of team dynamics, Zhou et al. (2022) found that conscientiousness is associated with team emotional intelligence, which in turn affects team performance. This moderated mediation model highlights the interconnectedness of personality traits and emotional intelligence in fostering effective teamwork (Zhou et al., 2022). Research by Fiori et al. (2021) introduced emotion information processing as a new component of emotional intelligence. Their theoretical framework and empirical evidence suggest that understanding and processing emotional information is a critical aspect of EI, expanding the traditional conceptualization of emotional intelligence (Fiori et al., 2021). The role of emotional intelligence in

knowledge sharing was examined by Malik (2021), who found that EI significantly influences the types of knowledge shared within organizations. This study indicates that emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to engage in both explicit and tacit knowledge sharing, enhancing organizational learning and innovation (Malik, 2021).

The development of emotional competence among educational psychologists was explored by Valeeva and Khakimova (2015), who emphasized the importance of EI in educational settings. Their findings support the integration of EI training in professional development programs for educators to improve their emotional and interpersonal skills (Valeeva & Khakimova, 2015). The relationship between emotional intelligence and ego defense mechanisms was investigated by Pellitteri (2002), who found that higher EI is associated with healthier defense mechanisms. This study provides insights into the psychological benefits of developing emotional intelligence, particularly in enhancing psychological resilience (Pellitteri, 2002). Stepanjko (2023) researched the connection between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, finding a strong positive relationship. Their study suggests that higher EI contributes to better mental health and overall life satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of EI in personal development (Stepanjko, 2023). Finally, Jamshed et al. (2018) explored the impact of emotional intelligence on team performance, demonstrating that emotionally intelligent teams perform better due to enhanced communication and cooperation. This research supports the inclusion of EI assessments in team-building processes to improve organizational outcomes (Jamshed et al., 2018).

This study aims to extend the understanding of emotional intelligence by developing a model based on the psychological characteristics of AJA employees. Utilizing qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis with NVivo software, this research will provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how EI can be harnessed to improve organizational performance and employee well-being. Through this exploration, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights into the practical applications of emotional intelligence in diverse professional settings, reinforcing its significance in fostering a productive and emotionally healthy workplace.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The study was designed as a qualitative research project, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the psychological characteristics influencing the emotional intelligence of AJA employees. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain rich, detailed insights through direct interaction with the participants.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, which provided flexibility for the interviewer to probe deeper into specific areas of interest while maintaining a consistent framework across all interviews. This approach ensured that while key topics were covered with each participant, there was also room for unexpected themes and insights to emerge.

The participants of this study were selected from among AJA employees. A purposive sampling method was used to identify individuals who could provide comprehensive and diverse perspectives on the subject. The sample size was determined 25 individuals based on the principle of theoretical saturation, where data collection continued until no new themes or insights were emerging from the interviews.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

Each interview was conducted in a setting convenient for the participant, ensuring a comfortable environment conducive to open and honest communication. Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure accurate data capture for subsequent analysis.

2.3. Data Analysis

The collected data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using NVivo software, a qualitative data analysis tool that facilitates the organization and coding of large volumes of textual data. The analysis followed a thematic approach, where recurring themes and patterns were identified and categorized. This process involved multiple readings of the transcripts, coding of relevant data segments, and the grouping of these codes into broader themes that addressed the research objectives.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, several strategies were employed. Triangulation was used by comparing the interview data with existing literature on emotional intelligence and psychological characteristics. Additionally, member checking was conducted by sharing

the findings with some participants to verify the accuracy and resonance of the themes identified.

3. Findings and Results

The results of thematic analysis is presented in [Table 1](#).

Table 1

Categorization of Themes

Categories	Subcategories	Concepts
1. Emotional Awareness	1.1 Self-Awareness	Recognizing one's own emotions, Understanding triggers, Self-reflection
	1.2 Social Awareness	Empathy, Understanding others' emotions, Active listening
	1.3 Emotional Expression	Articulating feelings, Non-verbal cues, Appropriate self-disclosure
	1.4 Emotional Regulation	Managing stress, Controlling impulses, Adjusting emotional responses
	1.5 Cultural Sensitivity	Respecting diversity, Adapting to cultural norms, Avoiding stereotypes
	1.6 Emotional Impact	Recognizing emotional influence on others, Managing emotional feedback, Awareness of emotional consequences
2. Interpersonal Skills	2.1 Communication Skills	Clear articulation, Active listening, Non-verbal communication
	2.2 Conflict Resolution	Identifying conflict sources, Negotiation skills, Mediation techniques
	2.3 Relationship Management	Building rapport, Maintaining professional boundaries, Networking
	2.4 Teamwork	Collaboration, Shared goals, Delegating tasks
	2.5 Influence and Persuasion	Motivating others, Building consensus, Leadership
3. Adaptability and Stress Management	3.1 Flexibility	Adapting to change, Open-mindedness, Problem-solving
	3.2 Resilience	Recovering from setbacks, Maintaining optimism, Stress tolerance
	3.3 Time Management	Prioritizing tasks, Managing workload, Avoiding procrastination
	3.4 Work-Life Balance	Setting boundaries, Self-care practices, Balancing responsibilities
	3.5 Coping Mechanisms	Healthy stress outlets, Support systems, Cognitive restructuring
	3.6 Proactive Attitude	Anticipating challenges, Preventive measures, Continuous improvement

3.1. Emotional Awareness

Self-Awareness: This subcategory includes recognizing one's own emotions, understanding triggers, and engaging in self-reflection. Participants highlighted the importance of self-awareness, with one stating, "I need to understand my feelings to manage them effectively."

Social Awareness: This encompasses empathy, understanding others' emotions, and active listening. One interviewee mentioned, "Being able to read others' emotions helps me respond better in team settings."

Emotional Expression: Articulating feelings, using non-verbal cues, and appropriate self-disclosure were key concepts. As one participant noted, "Expressing my emotions clearly prevents misunderstandings."

Emotional Regulation: Managing stress, controlling impulses, and adjusting emotional responses are critical. "Keeping my emotions in check helps me stay professional under pressure," said a respondent.

Cultural Sensitivity: Respecting diversity, adapting to cultural norms, and avoiding stereotypes were emphasized.

One interviewee observed, "Understanding cultural differences enhances our team's cohesion."

Emotional Impact: Recognizing the emotional influence on others, managing emotional feedback, and being aware of emotional consequences are vital. "I'm mindful of how my mood affects my colleagues," shared a participant.

3.2. Interpersonal Skills

Communication Skills: This subcategory includes clear articulation, active listening, and non-verbal communication. "Effective communication is the backbone of our teamwork," stated one interviewee.

Conflict Resolution: Identifying conflict sources, negotiation skills, and mediation techniques are essential. A participant mentioned, "Resolving conflicts promptly keeps our work environment healthy."

Relationship Management: Building rapport, maintaining professional boundaries, and networking are key aspects. "Strong relationships at work lead to better collaboration," said an interviewee.

Teamwork: Collaboration, shared goals, and delegating tasks were highlighted. "We achieve more when we work

together and leverage each other's strengths," one participant remarked.

Influence and Persuasion: Motivating others, building consensus, and leadership are crucial. "Inspiring my team helps us reach our objectives," shared a respondent.

3.3. *Adaptability and Stress Management*

Flexibility: Adapting to change, open-mindedness, and problem-solving are important. "Being flexible allows me to handle unexpected challenges better," noted an interviewee.

Resilience: Recovering from setbacks, maintaining optimism, and stress tolerance are vital. "Resilience keeps me going despite obstacles," mentioned a participant.

Time Management: Prioritizing tasks, managing workload, and avoiding procrastination are key concepts. One respondent said, "Good time management ensures I meet my deadlines without stress."

Work-Life Balance: Setting boundaries, self-care practices, and balancing responsibilities are essential. "Maintaining a work-life balance is crucial for my overall well-being," stated an interviewee.

Coping Mechanisms: Healthy stress outlets, support systems, and cognitive restructuring were highlighted. "Having a support system helps me manage stress effectively," shared a participant.

Proactive Attitude: Anticipating challenges, preventive measures, and continuous improvement are important. "A proactive approach helps me stay ahead of potential issues," noted an interviewee.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study revealed several key insights into the role of emotional intelligence (EI) based on the psychological characteristics of AJA employees. The analysis identified three primary themes: emotional awareness, interpersonal skills, and adaptability and stress management. These themes and their subcategories offer a comprehensive understanding of how EI manifests and operates within a professional military context.

The first major theme, emotional awareness, highlighted the importance of self-awareness, social awareness, emotional expression, emotional regulation, cultural sensitivity, and emotional impact. Participants emphasized that self-awareness and emotional regulation are critical for managing stress and maintaining professional conduct. These findings align with Abdollahi and Talib (2015), who noted that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship

between perfectionism and test anxiety, indicating that self-awareness and regulation can buffer against stress.

Moreover, social awareness and empathy were frequently mentioned by participants as essential for teamwork and leadership, supporting the findings of Chandrawaty and Widodo (2022), who observed that higher EI among teachers led to better contextual performance (Chandrawaty & Widodo, 2022). Similarly, Hong and Lee (2016) found that emotional intelligence mediates the effects of emotional labor and job stress, further corroborating the importance of social awareness and empathy in managing workplace stress and improving interactions (Hong & Lee, 2016).

The second theme, interpersonal skills, encompassed communication skills, conflict resolution, relationship management, teamwork, and influence and persuasion. Effective communication and conflict resolution were noted as crucial for maintaining a harmonious work environment. This is consistent with the findings of Erdoğan et al. (2022), who reported that EI mediates the relationship between perceived stress and organizational silence among emergency service doctors, highlighting the role of communication in reducing stress and promoting open dialogue (Erdoğan et al., 2022).

Relationship management and teamwork were also identified as vital components of EI, echoing the work of Zhou et al. (2022), who demonstrated that team emotional intelligence significantly influences team performance. This supports the idea that EI facilitates better collaboration and cohesion within teams (Zhou et al., 2022). Additionally, the ability to influence and persuade others was linked to leadership effectiveness, aligning with McClellan and DiClementi's (2017) conceptual model of positive emotional influence in leadership (McClellan & DiClementi, 2017).

The third theme, adaptability and stress management, included flexibility, resilience, time management, work-life balance, coping mechanisms, and proactive attitude. Participants frequently mentioned the need for flexibility and resilience to adapt to the dynamic nature of their work. Huang (2024) supports this, showing that higher EI among construction workers leads to better safety performance, which requires adaptability and resilience (Huang, 2024).

Time management and work-life balance were also highlighted as critical for maintaining productivity and well-being. Pradhan et al. (2017) found that EI mediates the relationship between organizational learning and adaptive performance, suggesting that emotional intelligence is essential for effectively managing time and balancing work and personal life (Pradhan et al., 2017). Furthermore, coping

mechanisms and a proactive attitude were linked to better stress management, supporting Husain et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of emotional expression and regulation for emotional satisfaction (Husain et al., 2022).

Overall, these findings provide robust evidence that emotional intelligence is a multifaceted construct that significantly impacts various aspects of professional life, from stress management to teamwork and leadership. The alignment of these results with previous studies underscores the importance of developing and fostering EI within organizational settings to enhance both individual and collective performance.

5. Suggestions and Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights into the role of emotional intelligence among AJA employees, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the qualitative nature of the study, relying on semi-structured interviews, may limit the generalizability of the findings. The sample size, determined by theoretical saturation, may not represent the broader population of AJA employees or similar organizational contexts. Additionally, the self-reported nature of the data collection could introduce bias, as participants might present themselves in a more favorable light or be influenced by social desirability.

Second, the study focused exclusively on AJA employees, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other organizations or cultural contexts. Cultural differences can significantly impact the expression and perception of emotional intelligence, as noted by Reyes-Wapano (2021) and Pongrac et al. (2019). Therefore, caution should be exercised when extrapolating these results to different cultural or organizational settings (Reyes-Wapano, 2021).

Third, the use of NVivo software for data analysis, while robust, is subject to the interpretations and coding decisions of the researchers. This could introduce a degree of subjectivity into the analysis, potentially affecting the identification and categorization of themes and subcategories.

Future research should address these limitations by incorporating larger, more diverse samples and employing mixed-methods approaches to enhance the generalizability and depth of the findings. Quantitative measures of emotional intelligence, such as validated EI assessment tools, could complement qualitative data and provide a more

comprehensive understanding of EI's impact in various organizational contexts.

Additionally, cross-cultural studies are needed to explore how cultural differences influence the development and application of emotional intelligence. Such research could provide valuable insights into tailoring EI training programs to different cultural contexts, enhancing their effectiveness and relevance.

Longitudinal studies would also be beneficial in examining the long-term effects of emotional intelligence on professional development and organizational performance. By tracking changes in EI and related outcomes over time, researchers could better understand the enduring impact of EI interventions and identify factors that sustain or hinder EI development.

Finally, future research should explore the interplay between emotional intelligence and other psychological constructs, such as personality traits, motivation, and cognitive abilities. This could provide a more nuanced understanding of how EI interacts with other factors to influence behavior and performance in the workplace.

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be made for organizations seeking to enhance emotional intelligence among their employees. Firstly, implementing targeted EI training programs can help individuals develop key emotional skills, such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social awareness. These programs should be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of the organization.

Organizations should also foster a supportive environment that encourages open communication and emotional expression. This can be achieved by promoting a culture of empathy and understanding, as well as providing resources and support systems for employees to manage stress and emotional challenges effectively. As highlighted by Hong and Lee (2016) and Husain et al. (2022), a supportive environment can significantly enhance employee well-being and performance (Hong & Lee, 2016; Husain et al., 2022).

Furthermore, leaders and managers should receive training in emotional intelligence to enhance their leadership effectiveness and ability to manage teams. By developing their own EI, leaders can better understand and respond to the emotional needs of their employees, fostering a more cohesive and motivated workforce. This also aligns with the prior findings (Fiori et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2022).

Finally, organizations should integrate EI assessments into their recruitment and selection processes. By identifying

candidates with high emotional intelligence, organizations can build a workforce that is better equipped to handle the emotional demands of the job, leading to improved overall performance and job satisfaction. As noted by Malik (2021) and Jamshed et al. (2018), emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to engage in effective teamwork and knowledge sharing, further contributing to organizational success (Jamshed et al., 2018; Malik, 2021).

In conclusion, this study highlights the critical role of emotional intelligence in enhancing various aspects of professional life. By understanding and developing EI, organizations can create a more supportive, productive, and emotionally healthy work environment, benefiting both employees and the organization as a whole. The findings align with a broad range of studies, reinforcing the importance of emotional intelligence in diverse professional contexts.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, were observed in conducting this study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Authors' Contributions

All authors made substantial contributions to the research process, covering various aspects from study design to data handling and manuscript preparation.

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