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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Beyond salary, emotional intelligence, and performance in hybrid environments

Más allá del salario, inteligencia emocional y desempeño en entornos híbridos

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Abstract This study analyzes the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance in hybrid contexts, characterized by a combination of in-person and remote learning modalities. Using a quantitative correlational approach and a cross-sectional design, validated scales were administered to a sample of 120 Latin American workers from various sectors, including technology, education, telecommunications, and public administration. The results showed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and task performance ($\rho = 0.65$) and contextual performance ($\rho = 0.56$), as well as a negative correlation with counterproductive behaviors. These associations support the literature that highlights the strategic value of emotional competencies in complex work environments. The study highlights the significance of recognizing emotional intelligence as a multifaceted resource that fosters adaptation, psychological well-being, and organizational effectiveness. It also highlights the need to integrate emotional development programs into human talent management, particularly in hybrid frameworks where autonomy, asynchronous collaboration, and emotional regulation are key factors. The study provides relevant empirical evidence for the formulation of organizational policies that aim to strengthen human capital beyond traditional economic incentives.

Keywords emotional intelligence, job performance, hybrid environments, human talent management, organizational psychology.

Resumen El presente estudio analiza la relación entre la inteligencia emocional y el desempeño laboral en contextos híbridos, caracterizados por la combinación de modalidades presenciales y remotas. A partir de un enfoque cuantitativo de tipo correlacional y diseño transversal, se aplicaron escalas validadas a una muestra de 120 trabajadores de América Latina pertenecientes a sectores como tecnología, educación, telecomunicaciones y administración pública. Los resultados evidenciaron una correlación positiva entre la inteligencia emocional y el desempeño en tareas ($\rho = 0.65$) y el desempeño contextual ($\rho = 0.56$), así como una correlación negativa con conductas contraproducentes. Estas asociaciones respaldan la literatura que destaca el valor estratégico de las competencias emocionales en entornos laborales complejos. Se discute la importancia de considerar la inteligencia emocional como un recurso transversal que favorece la adaptación, el bienestar psicológico y la eficacia organizacional. Asimismo, se plantea la necesidad de incorporar programas de desarrollo emocional en la gestión del talento humano, especialmente en esquemas híbridos donde la autonomía, la colaboración asincrónica y la regulación emocional adquieren un rol protagónico. El estudio aporta evidencia empírica relevante para la formulación de políticas organizacionales orientadas al fortalecimiento del capital humano más allá de los incentivos económicos tradicionales.

Palabras clave inteligencia emocional, desempeño laboral, entornos híbridos, gestión del talento humano, psicología organizacional.

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PUBLIS EDITORIAL

Introduction

In recent decades, the world of work has undergone significant transformations driven by digitalization, globalization, and automation. However, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that accelerated the transition to new forms of work organization, consolidating modalities such as teleworking and, more recently, hybrid work (Choudhury et al., 2021). This modality combines in-person work with remote tasks, providing greater flexibility but also posing new challenges in terms of management, supervision, communication, and performance.

Hybrid work has ceased to be a temporary solution and has become a structural component of modern organizational strategies. According to Allen et al. (2015), this model offers advantages such as increased autonomy, reduced operating costs, and improved work-life balance. However, it also generates risks associated with emotional disconnection, a lack of group cohesion, and a weakened sense of belonging, all of which can impact individual and collective performance.

Traditionally, performance management has been closely tied to financial incentives and hierarchical structures that rely on direct supervision. However, Bloom et al. (2015) argue that in flexible work environments, intrinsic motivational elements and personal competencies become more relevant than external incentives. In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) is viewed as a crucial competency for maintaining employee performance and well-being in hybrid work environments.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) conceptualized EI as the ability to perceive, assimilate, understand, and regulate one's own and others' emotions. Goleman (1995) later expanded the concept to five key dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In organizational contexts, these dimensions have been linked to improvements in decision-making, conflict resolution, transformational leadership, and job satisfaction (Carmeli, 2003; Cherniss, 2010).

In the hybrid environment, EI assumes an even more significant role. Spatial fragmentation, communication asynchrony, and constant uncertainty require sophisticated emotional management. Li et al. (2022) found that workers with high levels of EI have a greater capacity for adaptation, better stress management, and greater resilience in flexible work scenarios. In turn, Côté and Miners (2006) demonstrated that EI can compensate for low levels of cognitive intelligence in predicting job performance.

These new dynamics also impact leadership. Leaders must no longer only manage tasks, but also emotions, bonds, and collective moods, particularly when teams operate in different locations and at various times. Boyatzis et al. (2017) propose the concept of resonant leadership, based on EI as a key element of group commitment and effectiveness. Clarke (2010) notes that emotionally competent leadership enhances the quality of work relationships and serves as a buffer against organizational stress.

However, not all individuals and organizations are equally prepared to operate in hybrid environments. According to Fernández and Galiana (2022), the lack of emotional skills leads to disconnection, low productivity, and psychological exhaustion. On the contrary, those with developed emotional skills tend to show higher levels of engagement, creativity, and cooperation, even in adverse conditions.

Despite the growing body of literature, significant gaps persist. Many studies on EI have focused on in-person or exclusively virtual contexts, without considering the specific nature of hybrid environments. Furthermore, most research does not delve into how different dimensions of EI differentially influence performance, nor does it consider variations across sectors, gender, age, or organizational cultures (Lunde et al., 2023).

This study aims to address these gaps through an empirical analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance in hybrid environments. The overall objective is to determine the extent to which EI predicts employee performance in hybrid settings and which EI dimensions have the most significant explanatory weight depending on the employee's profile and organizational environment.

Considering emotional intelligence as a strategic variable in talent management involves not only an individual perspective but also an organizational one. Companies that recognize the role of EI in productivity tend to generate more collaborative, inclusive, and change-resilient work environments. In this sense, incorporating EI into selection, training, and evaluation processes can improve not only individual results but also the organizational climate and the long-term sustainability of performance (Shoss et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in contexts where face-to-face meetings are limited and informal interactions are reduced, emotional skills can compensate for the loss of direct human contact. Empathy, active listening, and the ability to assertively express emotions become essential to sustaining team cohesion and effective communication (Brunetto et al., 2021). In this scenario, EI is not a complementary accessory, but a cross-cutting resource that directly affects the quality of work and the well-being of employees.

Therefore, advancing empirical knowledge of how EI operates within the framework of hybrid work is essential for designing more adaptive, equitable, and people-centered human resource management policies. This study aims to contribute to this goal by providing a comprehensive examination of the role of emotions in job performance during periods of digital and cultural transformation.

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) emerged as a response to the reductionist approach to traditional intelligence quotient (IQ), which measured human intelligence primarily through logical and verbal means. Salovey and Mayer (1990) introduced the notion of EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, discriminate between them, and use this information to guide thought and behavior." This integrative perspective broadened the understanding of intelligence to include affective aspects fundamental to social, personal, and professional life.

Later, Goleman (1995) popularized the term with a proposal applied to the organizational context. According to this author, EI is composed of five dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. His model argues that EI is more important than IQ in predicting professional success, particularly in environments where teamwork, leadership, and conflict management are important.

Bar-On (1997) proposed a mixed model that combines emotional and social skills with personality traits. His approach gave rise to the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), one of the most widely used instruments for assessing EI in work and clinical settings.

More recently, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) revived a model of pure skills, organized hierarchically into four branches: emotional perception, facilitation of thought through emotions, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation. This model is assessed using the MSCEIT (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test). Intelligence Test), widely validated in diverse cultures and contexts.

Each of these models has contributed to enriching the study of EI, and its practical usefulness has been confirmed by multiple empirical studies that relate this competence to job performance, satisfaction, and mental health (Cherniss, 2010; Carmeli, 2003).

The application of the concept of EI to the organizational sphere has gained increasing relevance in recent decades. In work environments characterized by complexity, uncertainty, and constant interaction, emotional competencies are essential for individual and collective performance. According to Boyatzis et al. (2017), EI allows individuals to appropriately perceive and manage their emotions, facilitating processes such as decision-making, conflict resolution, and transformational leadership.

Various studies have shown that emotionally competent workers exhibit higher levels of productivity, commitment, and adaptability. For example, Côté and Miners (2006) found that EI can compensate for low levels of cognitive intelligence in predicting job performance. Similarly, longitudinal studies of multicultural teams reveal that EI fosters effective collaboration and reduces staff turnover (Fernández & Galiana, 2022).

Leadership is another area where EI shows a substantial impact. Leaders who exhibit high emotional skills tend to establish stronger bonds with their teams, create psychologically safe environments, and promote a favorable organizational climate (Clarke, 2010). Goleman (2013) refers to this approach as "resonant leadership," as opposed to authoritarian leadership, and considers it most effective in contexts that require sustained motivation, autonomy, and emotional alignment.

Furthermore, EI plays a protective role against psychosocial risks such as stress, burnout, and workplace bullying. The ability to regulate negative emotions, recognize one's limitations, and ask for help in critical moments is associated with greater psychological well-being and lower absenteeism (Shoss et al., 2021).

The measurement of EI has been a subject of ongoing discussion in the specialized literature. Two major approaches are distinguished: the ability model (which assesses objective emotional capacities) and the trait model (which measures subjective perceptions of emotional competence).

Among the most widely used instruments is the MSCEIT (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test), which evaluates emotional abilities according to the four-branch model. It is considered the most rigorous from a psychometric perspective (Mayer et al., 2004). Additionally, the SSEIT (Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test) is a 33-item self-report questionnaire that assesses individuals' perception of their emotional skills. It is widely used for its reliability and ease of application (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006). Another was the EQ-i (Emotional Quotient Inventory), based on the Bar-On model, which assesses five emotional dimensions and 15 subscales. It has applications in selection processes, organizational development, and executive coaching.

In hybrid environments, where human contact is mediated by technology, assessing EI takes on particular importance. It allows us to anticipate the level of emotional adaptation, predict resilient behaviors, and select appropriate profiles to

lead distributed teams. Salas-Vallina et al. (2021) note that incorporating EI into performance management systems enhances organizational effectiveness and reduces voluntary turnover rates.

Job performance has traditionally been understood as the set of behaviors, attitudes, and achievements that contribute to the fulfillment of organizational objectives (Campbell, 1990). In face-to-face environments, this construct is relatively easily assessed through observable indicators, such as punctuality, efficiency, and direct interaction. However, the emergence of remote work and the consolidation of hybrid models have made its measurement and understanding more complex.

Hybrid work introduces new elements into performance evaluation, such as autonomy, time management, self-discipline, and the ability to collaborate asynchronously. According to Pulido-Martínez and Reyes-Bossio (2021), performance in these environments depends not only on technical skills but also on socio-emotional competencies that facilitate self-management and adaptation to change. Furthermore, information technologies mediate many work processes, which require practical digital and communication skills.

In this new scenario, mutual trust between leaders and collaborators becomes crucial. Unlike in a face-to-face environment, where supervision can be direct, the hybrid model requires a redefinition of performance indicators. Recent studies have demonstrated that clear goals, timely feedback, and a sense of autonomy have a significant influence on engagement and performance (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021).

Several studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance in traditional organizational settings. However, in hybrid settings, this relationship is intensified due to the additional challenges posed by physical distance and technology-mediated communication.

A study by Li et al. (2022) showed that workers with high EI reported higher levels of productivity, lower stress, and improved virtual collaboration compared to those with low levels of emotional competence. EI enables them to manage ambiguity, maintain intrinsic motivation, and form meaningful bonds, even in the absence of physical interaction.

Côté (2014) states that emotional regulation is crucial for sustaining attention and performance in uncertain situations. This skill becomes essential when the worker must operate autonomously and in less structured contexts. Furthermore, empathy and social skills facilitate mutual understanding and reduce the misunderstandings that arise in asynchronous communication.

In the case of leadership, EI acts as a catalyst for group performance. Emotionally intelligent leaders can inspire, motivate, and connect emotionally with their teams, even through digital platforms (Boyatzis et al., 2017). This has a direct impact on group cohesion, innovation, and job satisfaction.

Therefore, integrating EI as a variable into hybrid performance evaluation models is not only relevant but also necessary. Its inclusion enables a more comprehensive understanding of performance and provides tools to enhance human talent management in a constantly evolving environment.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative, non-experimental, correlational, and cross-sectional approach. The main objective justifies this methodological choice: to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and job performance in hybrid contexts, without direct intervention on the variables analyzed. In the field of social and organizational sciences, correlational designs are suitable for identifying significant associations between latent variables that cannot be experimentally manipulated (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014). The cross-sectional nature of the research addresses the need to capture data at a specific point in time, enabling a synchronous interpretation of the constantly evolving hybrid work reality. While longitudinal studies offer greater robustness in temporal inference, the present design is appropriate for an initial exploration that can serve as a basis for more complex subsequent studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The target population consisted of employees from public and private organizations in Latin America that have adopted hybrid work as part of their regular operational dynamics. Participants came from the technology, higher education, professional services, telecommunications, and public administration sectors—fields characterized by high exposure to work digitalization processes and a results-oriented organizational culture. Non-probability convenience sampling was applied, a criterion accepted in exploratory studies where accessibility and feasibility determine the scope of the sample (Otzen & Manterola, 2017). The final sample consisted of 120 workers, aged between 23 and 58 years (M = 36.4; SD = 8.5), with an even distribution between men (52%) and women (48%). Eighty-five percent had a university degree, and 100% had worked in a hybrid modality for at least six consecutive months, which was established as a key inclusion criterion to ensure real experience in mixed work environments.

Data collection was conducted through a structured,

self-administered digital questionnaire composed of three sections. The first covered sociodemographic and employment data (age, gender, country of residence, education level, type of organization, employment sector, length of work experience, and implementation of the hybrid scheme). The second section included the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), developed by Wong and Law (2002) and validated in Spanish by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2006), which assesses four dimensions: emotional self-awareness, emotional regulation, use of emotion, and perception of others' emotions, with items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The third section employed an adaptation of the Koopmans et al. (2014) questionnaire to assess perceived job performance, encompassing three dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive behaviors. These instruments were selected for their conceptual validity, psychometric soundness, and frequent use in similar organizational studies (Carmeli, 2003; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). In the analyzed sample, Cronbach's alpha was 0.87 for the WLEIS and 0.84 for the job performance instrument, indicating high internal reliability (George & Mallery, 2003).

The questionnaire was administered between January and March 2025 via Google Forms, which facilitated international participation and ensured anonymity of responses. Invitations were distributed via email and professional networks, accompanied by an informed consent form by the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) for research involving human subjects. Participation was voluntary, without financial incentives, and data confidentiality was ensured under current personal data protection regulations in Latin America (Peruvian Law 29733, Brazilian LGPD, Argentine Law 25.326, among others). Before analysis, data were cleaned to remove incomplete records, and response uniqueness was verified using IP addresses and timestamps. Additionally, three experts in organizational psychology and applied statistics validated the semantic clarity and structural coherence of the questionnaire.

Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics v.27. First, a univariate descriptive analysis was conducted, including means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages. The Shapiro-Wilk normality test indicated a non-normal distribution in several variables, necessitating the use of non-parametric tests. For relational analysis, Spearman's correlation coefficient (ρ) was employed, as it is suitable for measuring the strength and direction of relationships between ordinal or non-normally distributed variables (Field, 2018). A multiple linear regression model was also applied to determine the predictive weight of EI dimensions on overall performance, controlling for sociodemographic variables such as age, gender, and education level. A statistical significance level of $p < .05$ was assumed, and assumptions of linearity, multicollinearity, and independence of residuals were verified. Finally, Cronbach's alpha was estimated as a measure of internal consistency, with values above 0.70 considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Results and discussion

This section presents the study's findings regarding the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance in hybrid environments. The results obtained from the statistical analysis allow us to identify significant association patterns and trends that complement the theoretical contributions discussed in the introduction.

Initially, a descriptive analysis of the variables evaluated was conducted. The emotional intelligence dimensions presented mean values ranging from 3.5 to 4.0 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating a moderate to high level of perceived emotional skills. The job performance dimensions, meanwhile, showed high averages for task performance ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.4$) and contextual performance ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.4$). In contrast, counterproductive behaviors showed a lower mean ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 0.6$), suggesting a low prevalence of negative work behaviors.

To explore the relationships between emotional intelligence and performance, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used, since the data did not present a normal distribution according to the Shapiro-Wilk test. The results showed that task performance was significantly correlated with total performance ($\rho = 0.65$), followed by contextual performance ($\rho = 0.56$). In contrast, counterproductive behaviors showed a negative correlation ($\rho = -0.16$), while EI dimensions, such as empathy, self-regulation, and emotional use, presented weak or non-significant associations with overall performance.

Figure 1 displays a heat map illustrating Spearman correlations between each dimension of emotional intelligence and overall performance, enabling the most relevant relationships to be visualized.

These findings support the classic theories of Salovey and Mayer (1990), who proposed that EI is a set of emotional skills that affect information processing and social behavior. However, it is observed that not all dimensions of EI directly impact perceived job performance, which could be mediated by contextual factors such as task type, organizational culture, or the demands of the hybrid environment.

Authors such as Goleman (1995) and Côté (2014) have argued that EI is primarily manifested in the way people manage interpersonal relationships, resolve conflicts, and handle stress at work. In line with this, the high correlational value of contextual performance suggests that emotionally compe-

tent workers tend to contribute to a positive work environment and group collaboration, reinforcing Carmeli (2003) findings on the influence of EI on organizational citizenship behaviors.

On the other hand, the low or non-existent correlation between specific dimensions, such as self-regulation or emotional use, may be due to the subjective perception of these skills or the limited capacity of the instruments to capture them in digital environments accurately. Boyatzis (2018) warns that the development of emotional competencies requires specific learning and feedback contexts, which could

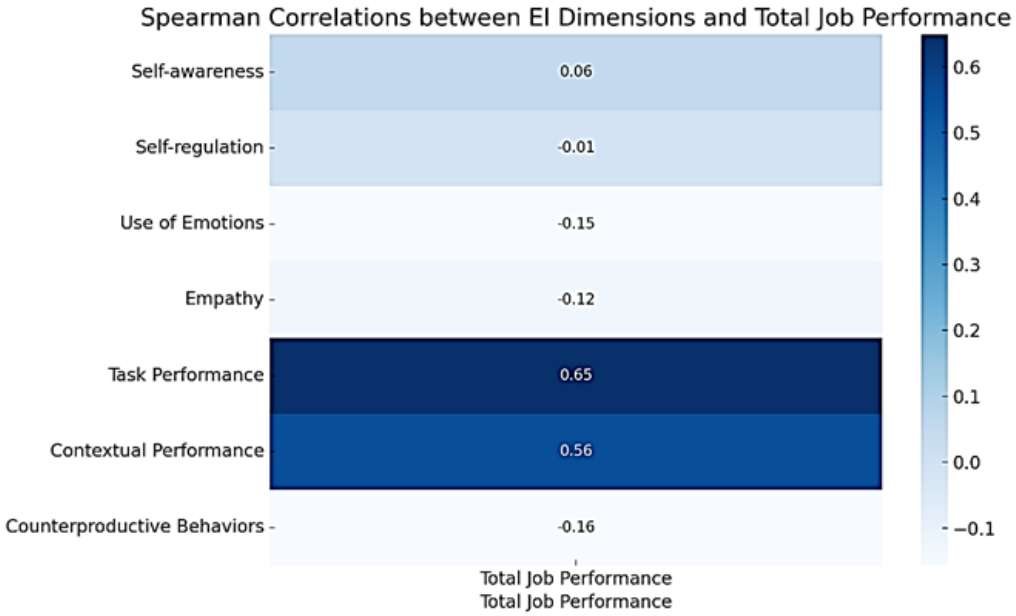

Figure 1. Spearman Correlations between Emotional Intelligence Dimensions and Total Job Performance

be absent in hybrid work schemes where operational autonomy and asynchronous communication prevail.

Furthermore, the results partially align with those of Salas-Vallina et al. (2021), who found that emotional well-being and transformational leadership enhance engagement and productivity in organizations that adopt teleworking as their primary model. The key difference is that this study analyzes a hybrid modality, where the demands for emotional adaptation may be more dynamic and heterogeneous.

Finally, the negative correlation with counterproductive behaviors is consistent with studies linking EI with a lower incidence of conflict, absenteeism, and dysfunctional behaviors (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006). These results suggest that emotional intelligence does not act as a unique predictor of performance, but rather as a modulator of certain behavioral expressions in workers in contexts where autonomy, self-regulation, and collaboration are essential.

In summary, the results obtained reinforce the need to consider EI as a transversal competency within human talent development processes, especially in hybrid work structures where communication, empathy, and emotional management play a leading role in achieving organizational objectives. Organizations that aspire to improve employee performance should not limit themselves to material incentives but also foster emotionally intelligent environments that enhance adaptation, resilience, and team cohesion.

Conclusions

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and job performance in hybrid work settings, revealing that task performance ($\rho = 0.65$) and contextual performance ($\rho = 0.56$) are strongly and positively correlated with overall performance. In contrast, counterproductive behaviors are negatively related to EI. Using a quantitative correlational design with validated tools such as WLEIS and the Koopmans et al. questionnaire, the findings suggest that emotional skills facilitate effective work behaviors, help regulate stress, and promote group cohesion, especially in complex organizational contexts where employees alternate between in-person and remote work. Not all EI dimensions showed equal impact, highlighting the need for further research on the contextual factors that influence the expression of EI and its interplay with leadership, culture, and communication. The results underscore the value of incorporating emotional training programs into talent management strategies as a means to enhance team sustainability and competitiveness in hybrid environments.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that she has no conflicts of interest.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: González, D. **Data curation:** González, D. **Formal analysis:** González, D. **Research:** González, D. **Methodology:** González, D. **Supervision:** González, D. **Validation:** González, D. **Visualization:** González, D. **Writing the original draft:** González, D. **Writing, review and editing:** González, D.

Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

The author acknowledges the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to improve the readability and clarity of the article.

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