
**AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
FACTORS INFLUENCING MANAGERIAL PERFORMANCE IN
LOGISTICS ORGANISATIONS**

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Abstract:

This study examines the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Overall Managerial Performance (OPM) among middle-level managers employed in logistics and operations organizations. A comprehensive conceptual model was developed to analyse the influence of key Emotional Intelligence dimensions—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management on managerial performance. Primary data were collected from 357 middle-level managers working in shipping and logistics companies located in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, India. The findings reveal that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to managerial performance, with relationship management emerging as the most influential EI dimension. The results underscore the critical role of emotional intelligence in enhancing managerial effectiveness within high-pressure and culturally diverse logistics environments. This study offers valuable theoretical contributions to the emotional intelligence literature and provides practical implications for leadership development, training programs, and organizational policy formulation in the logistics and shipping sector.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, managerial performance, middle-level-managers, logistics, high-stress work environment.*

Introduction

Emotional intelligence is the capacity to understand one's own and others' emotions and to know how to respond appropriately to different social situations. It functions by recognizing emotional cues and reacting accordingly. This factor is critical for individuals, whose responsibilities include managing daily operations, organizing a team, adhering to organizational norms, and achieving targets to meet the required performance standards as a team. A combination of emotional and social skills can positively influence employees' thinking and behaviour within organizational environments, especially in today's volatile and dynamic work environments.

Post-pandemic work environments are characterized by high stress, diverse situations, and highly complex human relationships, including increased workload, employee stress, and shifts in performance expectations. This may be due to AI interventions, competition from a skilled workforce replacing jobs, and the fear of losing socioeconomic status. This resulted in additional emotional burdens for managers and employees, affecting their job satisfaction levels and organizational performance.

These challenges highlight the importance of developing managers' emotional intelligence and social skills among managers. Such competencies enable managers to handle complex interpersonal dynamics effectively, leading to improved resilience, greater adaptability, and creation of a harmonious work environment. Emotional intelligence (EI) dimensions, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management, are critical for empowering managers to maintain calmness during crises, communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and cultivate positive team dynamics. Thus, emotional intelligence is essential for managers today, as it transforms emotional challenges into opportunities for improved leadership, collaboration, and organizational success.

Emotional intelligence is especially critical in culturally nuanced and operationally intensive sectors, such as Indian port-based logistics. Middle-level managers in this sector must handle cultural factors such as hierarchy, group focus, and power differences while dealing with work stress. Developing EI as a strategic capability helps managers sustain performance under pressure, enhances organizational resilience, and leads teams effectively through uncertainty and change. Structured EI development in managers may offer guidance on how to handle emotional overload, good communication, strengthen teamwork, and compromise decision-making.

This underscores the need for targeted EI development initiatives, particularly in high-stress, culturally complex sectors, such as Indian port-based logistics, to enhance managerial performance and sustain organizational success.

Logistics and shipping companies in Thoothukudi, one of the major port-based hubs in India, operate in highly complex environments characterized by high operational demands, strict safety regulations, culturally influenced hierarchical structures, and subordinates are less likely to challenge authority. This significantly affects managers' behaviour and emotional intelligence skills in balancing operational pressures and cultural expectations.

Although emotional intelligence is very important, there are very few experience-based studies focus on the emotional intelligence of middle-level managers working in India's shipping and logistics sectors. The Tuticorin port in Tamil Nadu is a major logistics hub with many activities, such as ship agents, freight forwarding, customs, and transport coordination. Middle-level managers face unique challenges because of their fast-paced work and cultural environment. They frequently experience high emotional stress owing to the constant pressure to coordinate, meet customer expectations, and manage human resources.

Despite good organizational systems and infrastructure, problems such as less emotional control, a lack of empathy, and weak relationship management can harm the entire process. Mismanagement of emotional intelligence among middle-level managers in sectors such as Indian port-based logistics can lead to weakened interpersonal bonds and deteriorating business relationships. Poor emotional regulation, lack of empathy, and ineffective relationship management reduce trust and collaboration within organizations and with external stakeholders, such as partners, clients, and regulatory bodies. This erosion of trust can disrupt coordination, delay operations, and increase conflict, ultimately impairing the service quality and reliability.

At a broader level, these can negatively impact the reputation and competitiveness of logistics companies, leading to the loss of contracts and strained partnerships, and affecting economic stability and international trade relations. This practical impact underscores the critical need to develop emotional intelligence competencies among middle-level managers to sustain strong, resilient business networks essential for economic growth and global cooperation in high-stress, culturally complex environments, such as Indian port logistics.

Research Questions:

1. What is the level of Emotional Intelligence among middle-level managers in the logistics sector?
2. Does Emotional Intelligence significantly influence managerial performance outcomes?
3. Which Emotional Intelligence dimensions most strongly predict managerial performance?
4. Do Emotional Intelligence factors significantly influence managerial performance when demographic factors are controlled?

Understanding these patterns can inform targeted interventions to build EI capabilities that enhance managerial effectiveness in high-pressure, complex logistics environments. This study addresses this gap by examining EI levels and group differences among middle-level managers of shipping and logistics companies located in Thoothukudi (Tuticorin), Tamil Nadu, a strategically significant logistics hub in India.

Additionally, this study contributes to the limited empirical literature on EI in Indian port-based logistics contexts, offering insights into how EI varies among middle managers, and highlighting the need for structured, competency-based development aligned with the sector's unique demands.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of Emotional Intelligence among middle-level managers working in the logistics and operations sector.
2. To examine the influence of Emotional Intelligence on the managerial performance outcomes of middle-level managers in logistics and operations organizations.

3. To identify the Emotional Intelligence dimensions that most strongly predict managerial performance outcomes among middle-level managers.
4. This study analyzes the influence of Emotional Intelligence on managerial performance after controlling for demographic factors, such as age, gender, education, managerial experience, and organizational tenure.

2.Literature Review

The review of literature examines the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence related to emotional intelligence (EI) and managerial performance. It begins with the conceptualization of EI and key theoretical models, followed by a discussion of its core dimensions—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The review then synthesizes studies linking EI with individual and managerial performance. Special emphasis is placed on emotional intelligence among middle-level managers and its relevance in high-pressure sectors such as logistics and shipping. The influence of demographic factors and existing research gaps were also highlighted to justify the need for the present study.

2.1 Conceptualization of EI

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been conceptualized through various theoretical frameworks, with two major theories emphasizing the understanding of EI. The first is Mayer and Salovey's (1997) ability model, which defines EI as the capacity to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions. This model focuses on EI as a set of cognitive abilities that are related to emotional processing and regulation. The second influential framework is Daniel Goleman's mixed model, which expands the concept beyond cognitive abilities to include a broader range of emotional and social competencies (Goleman, 1995). (Mayer et al., 2000) This model identifies five key domains of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These domains collectively underscore the role of EI in personal and professional success by highlighting how individuals recognize and manage their emotions while effectively navigating social interactions.

Originally conceptualized as an individual psychological trait, the application of EI has expanded into organizational contexts, linking emotional competencies to leadership performance and organizational outcomes (Mayer et al., 2000). Contemporary theories have incorporated social and contextual factors, emphasizing the role of emotional labour—the process by which employees manage their feelings to meet job requirements—in managerial roles. Over the years, EI theories have evolved to incorporate social and contextual factors, highlighting emotional labour and regulation in managerial roles. This evolution showed how EI enhances employee motivation, teamwork, and conflict resolution, thereby improving the organizational climate and productivity in various sectors. Consequently, management theories have integrated EI as a critical component of effective leadership, employee engagement, and adaptive organizational behaviour.

Theoretical frameworks underpinning EI, such as Mayer and Salovey's ability model and Goleman's mixed model, provide a foundation for understanding how these competencies function in managerial roles. However, Goleman's mixed model is theoretically appropriate, contextually relevant, and methodologically aligned with the objectives, population, and measurement strategy of this study. Middle-level managers in logistics are required to manage both their own emotions and those of their teams to meet organizational performance expectations, making emotional labour an embedded function in their managerial role. The mixed model's holistic treatment of emotional regulation and social functioning provides a robust theoretical basis for examining how emotional intelligence operates as a strategic managerial capability in these environments.

2.2 Goleman's Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence

Self awareness:

Self-awareness has consistently been recognized as the foundational dimension of emotional intelligence. It is not attention that becomes overwhelmed by emotions, leading to overreactions or amplifying perceived states. Instead, it is a neutral mode that maintains self-reflection, even in challenging situations. Self-awareness can be defined as the capacity to recognize and comprehend one's own emotions, motivations, triggers, and values, and to observe how these internal states influence behavior and interactions with others (McGrory & Rodney, 2025; Neumann et al., 2025). This attribute enhances emotional regulation, diminishes alexithymia (difficulty in identifying and describing emotions), and supports resilience and psychological well-being (Neumann et al., 2025). It also enables individuals to accurately perceive their emotions, strengths, limitations, and behavioral tendencies. Without self-awareness, regulation of emotions and effective management of interpersonal relationships become significantly constrained. Previous studies have claimed that self-awareness nurtures authenticity, emotional intelligence, and openness, thereby enhancing team trust, well-being, and professional growth in nursing contexts (McGrory & Rodney, 2025). Thus, a self-aware manager recognizes how these influence their decisions and leadership behaviour. They reflect on feedback, act authentically, and remain attuned to how their actions impact team morale and interpersonal dynamics to attain organizational performance standards. (McGrory & Rodney, 2025). In the context of middle-level managers working in the logistics sector, particularly in Indian port-based hubs such as Thoothukudi Port, self-awareness is important for analysing one's strengths and weaknesses and managing the complex interplay of operational demands and culturally nuanced hierarchical structures. These findings suggest that self-awareness play a critical role in enhancing managerial effectiveness.

Self-Regulation:

Self-regulation refers to an individual's ability to manage emotional impulses and maintain behavioral control under pressure. "Managing oneself is something of a full-time job. This is an attempt to manage mood. People who have strong episodes of anger or depression can still feel a sense of well-being if they have a countervailing set of equally joyous or happy times". Self-regulation, also known as self-management, is the ability to flexibly manage one's

actions, thoughts, and emotions. It is also important to constructively alter to achieve the desired outcomes. Saikia et al. (2025) asserted that effective self-regulation in managers enhances overall well-being, fosters a sense of self-efficacy or confidence, and promotes healthy social connectedness. Importantly, self-management is built on self-awareness. Self-regulation is not just a beneficial skill; it is an indispensable cornerstone for mastering the art of managing and regulating thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. This essential capability empowers individuals to achieve self-determined goals with precision and effectiveness. Zimmerman and Schunk (2008) posited that self-regulation is the key to unlocking personal success, enabling individuals to navigate challenges and seize opportunities with confidence and control. Self-regulation is the driving force behind personal achievements and transformations. High self-regulation in managers strongly enhances leadership performance and promote constructive behaviour, emotional control, and effective goal attainment. In contrast, low self-regulation leads to destructive leadership and reduced performance. Furthermore, Mezuk et al. (2016) demonstrated that effective self-regulation is crucial for alleviating stress and managing conflict. Their study revealed a consistent link between elevated stress levels and heightened dependence on self-regulatory coping behaviors, particularly maladaptive ones, in those lacking adaptability (Mezuk et al., 2016). Based on the above studies, it is clear that self-regulation can play a critical role among middle-level managers in the logistics sector by enabling effective control over emotions, thoughts, and behaviours to achieve goals. In addition, higher self-regulation and emotional stability can enhance stress management capabilities and increase performance in high-pressure work environments.

Motivation

Motivation is a psychological drive that energizes and directs behaviour towards goals. It is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors, including biology, psychology, social and cultural factors, economics, the environment, and external stressors. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are optimistic, motivated, and action-oriented. They overcome obstacles, postpone impulses, and are committed to achieving long-term goals. Studies suggest that emotionally intelligent managers and leaders enhance workplace behavior, motivation, and overall organizational outcomes. In the managerial context, motivation refers to the internal and external forces that drive managers to initiate, direct, and sustain efforts to achieve organizational and personal goals (Robbins & Judge, 2017). This influences how managers lead teams, make decisions, handle challenges, and prevail under pressure. Highly motivated managers exhibit greater commitment, proactive behavior, and resilience, which directly translates into improved team performance and organizational effectiveness. Research further implies that emotional intelligence (EI) has a positive influence on team cohesion, communication, conflict resolution, and both individual and collective performance. Motivation compels managers to establish clear objectives, maintain efforts, and guide their teams toward achieve high performance. The establishment of specific and challenging goals enhances focus, persistence, and productivity (Locke and Latham, 2002). Feedback, self-belief, and self-efficacy reinforce the commitment to these goals. Consequently, this dimension of motivation enables middle-level managers in logistics and shipping companies to sustain persistence while addressing anticipated and unforeseen operational goals and challenges.

Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to understand another person's perspective, particularly by placing oneself in their shoes. Goleman described it as the skill to interpret the emotions and thoughts of others. It builds on self-awareness; the more open we are to our own emotions. The more skilled we are at reading feelings. This is the capacity to understand how another person feels. People's emotions are rarely put towards; instead, they are often expressed through cues. Scott, Colquitt, Paddock, and Judge (2010) conducted a daily diary study of 60 employees under 13 managers to examine how manager empathy affects employee well-being. The results showed that empathic managers reduced employees' somatic complaints and strengthened the positive relationship between daily goal progress and positive affect. This study highlights the role of managers in shaping group emotions and enhancing overall employee well-being. Managers are expected to get work with employees. When empathetic managers understand and share the emotions of employees, they strengthen workplace relationships, which is paramount for effective management. In crisis contexts, empathetic leadership helps employees navigate stress and uncertainty, thereby enhancing their overall performance. Evidence from Lebanon's turbulent economic environment shows empathy as a significant predictor of employee effectiveness (Salameh-Ayanian, Tamer & Jabbour Al Maalouf, 2025). Empathetic leadership positively influences employees' innovative behaviour by providing emotional support and fostering trust. It further enhances career adaptability through concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, which mediate its effect on innovation. (Muss et al., 2025). Research shows that leaders' empathy fosters equity, well-being, and job satisfaction, while inspiring empathy in followers and improving interpersonal relationships. Decety, J.M.et.al. (2014). In his paper, he explained that empathy, when cognitively regulated, supports moral judgment and adaptive decision-making, even in emotionally charged or high-pressure situations. Hence, studies have claimed that empathy enhances workplace relationships and organizational performance in various sectors, highlighting its importance in contemporary management practices. Hence, it is important to study the level of empathy among middle-level managers and its effect on performance, as it enhances workplace relationships by effectively understanding subordinates and handling conflicts.

Social Skills

Social skills especially in leadership and management are at the heart of how we connect with others. They form a key part of emotional intelligence, helping leaders and managers not only understand their own emotions but also build meaningful relationships with those around them. According to Goleman (2004), social skills involve managing relationships, nurturing networks, finding common ground, and building a rapport. These abilities are crucial for influencing others, communicating effectively, and working well in teams, which are essential in any organization. Tian Xianjun's (2022) research highlighted that social skills are not just nice-to-have; they are core to emotional intelligence, sitting alongside self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy. Leaders with strong social skills tend to create healthier, and more collaborative work environments. This not only makes teams happier but also boosts their performance. Del Prette and Del Prette (2017) remind us that social skills are not purely innate traits; they are learnable behaviours valued across cultures. This implies that

organizations can assist their leaders in developing these skills through appropriate training and development. Peixoto and Muniz (2022) further emphasized how social skills are becoming central to emotional intelligence frameworks, reflecting a shift towards leadership styles that focus more on people. For instance, Tian showed that principals with strong social skills excel at resolving conflicts, building trust with teachers and stakeholders, and leading more effectively. Overall, social skills act as a bridge between a leader's internal emotional intelligence and real-world actions that drive organizational success. This is particularly essential for middle-level managers of logistics companies, where clear communication, effective coordination, and strong stakeholder relationships are crucial to success.

2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Performance

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in enhancing individual and organizational performance across various professional contexts. Mitevaska and Tsvetkova (2024) found that higher emotional intelligence contributes significantly to emotional regulation and psychological well-being, which, in turn, improves performance outcomes in demanding work environments. Similarly, Abouhasera et al. (2023) reported that emotionally intelligent individuals exhibit superior self-control and adaptability, enabling them to maintain consistent performance under pressure. Pérez-Díaz et al. (2022) emphasized that emotional intelligence strengthens interpersonal effectiveness and emotional awareness, leading to improved task execution and collaborative performance. In an earlier study, Hemalatha (2014) observed that individuals with higher EI demonstrated better stress management and emotional balance, which positively influenced their overall job performance. Supporting these findings, Harrod et al. (2005) highlight that emotional intelligence is associated with better coping mechanisms and emotional adjustment, indirectly contributing to improved performance. Collectively, these studies establish emotional intelligence as a key psychological resource that enhances performance by enabling individuals to manage their emotions effectively, particularly in high-pressure work settings.

2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Managerial Performance

The relationship between emotional intelligence and managerial performance has received growing attention in the management literature, with strong evidence supporting EI as a critical leadership competency. Rosh et al. (2012) found that managers with higher emotional intelligence, particularly in self-awareness and social skills, demonstrated superior managerial effectiveness, including better decision-making and team coordination. Somuah et al. (2025) further reported that senior- and middle-level managers with higher EI exhibited stronger relationship management and social awareness, which directly enhanced leadership effectiveness and performance. Garcia and Maniago (2018) emphasized that emotionally intelligent managers are more effective in motivating teams, managing conflicts, and sustaining productivity, especially in dynamic organizational environments. Dhilsathbegam (2014) observed that emotional intelligence significantly improves managerial efficiency by strengthening interpersonal relationships and emotional control among middle-level managers. In operations-intensive sectors, Hoek et al. (2002) highlighted that emotional intelligence enables managers to integrate technical expertise with people management, thereby improving operational coordination and performance. These

studies indicate that emotional intelligence is a decisive factor in enhancing managerial performance by target achievement, people management, and stress-handling capabilities and operational efficiency.

Overall managerial performance in this study is grounded in Campbell's managerial effectiveness framework, which conceptualizes performance as comprising task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance—dimensions that closely align with target achievement, people management, operational efficiency, and stress-handling capability.

2.5 Emotional Intelligence and middle level managers

Empirical research has repeatedly highlighted that emotional intelligence (EI) play as a pivotal role in influencing managerial performance across organizational levels. Managers with high emotional intelligence show an enhanced capacity to align emotional awareness with goal-directed behaviour. This facilitates improved judgment, sustained motivation, and persistence under pressure, eventually contributing to superior target achievement (Rosh et al., 2012; Somuah et al., 2025). EI strengthens people's management by building trust, effective communication, and employee engagement, thereby creating team cohesion and leadership (Somuah et al., 2025). This ability to regulate emotions, helps managers to respond constructively to interpersonal tensions and enables them to effectively manage stress and conflict within their teams (Rosh et al., 2012). These emotional competencies greatly supported the operational coordination. Managers with high social awareness and relationship management skills are well equipped to integrate cross-functional activities and ensure the smooth execution of organizational processes (Rosh et al., 2012).

The influence of emotional intelligence is particularly significant among middle-level managers, who serve as a crucial links between strategic intent and operational execution. Research indicates that emotionally intelligent middle managers are more adept at sustaining motivation, prioritizing tasks, and adapting to dynamic operational demands, thereby enhancing their performance (Dhilsathbegam, 2014; Garcia & Maniago, 2018). EI boosts the effective management of human resources by enabling managers to understand employee emotions, manage diverse teams, and deal with interpersonal challenges arising from workload pressure and role ambiguity (Dhilsathbegam, 2014). In addition, emotional regulation skills equip middle managers to handle stress and conflict efficiently, balancing pressures from both higher management and subordinate teams (Garcia & Maniago, 2018). Through empathy and relationship management, emotionally intelligent middle managers also improve operational coordination by translating strategic directives into effective daily operations across departments (Dhilsathbegam, 2014). Thus, these studies prove that emotional intelligence among middle-level managers in port-based, highly volatile work environment can greatly influence performance.

2.6 Emotional Intelligence in High-Pressure Sectors(Logistics):

In high-pressure sectors, such as logistics, supply chain management, and operations, emotional intelligence is a vital capability that complements technical expertise. EI plays a crucial role in managing human resources in the logistics environment by facilitating effective communication and collaboration between cross-functional teams and external stakeholders, which is essential for

operational continuity in logistics networks (Thai et al., 2012). Research indicates that emotionally intelligent managers achieve performance targets in a consistent manner by maintaining emotional control during time-sensitive and difficult at decision-making situations (Hoek et al., 2002; Thai et al., 2012). Simultaneously, emotional intelligence improves managers' capacity to handle stress and conflicts, particularly during disruptions, delays, and resource constraints that are inherent in logistics operations (Hoek et al., 2002). Strong relationship management and empathy further enable emotionally intelligent managers to improve operational coordination, supply chain visibility, and proactive risk management across complex logistics systems (Haider 2023). In high-pressure technical domains, such as logistics management, EI mediates the relationship between technical expertise and effective leadership in managers. Hoek et al., (2002) and Thai et al., (2012), underscores that logistics managers require a blend of technical, managerial, and emotional competencies, with EI facilitating critical interpersonal interactions and decision-making processes. The literature also highlights cultural influences on EI expression and leadership effectiveness in logistics, necessitating context-aware EI models. Ali et al. (2025), Haider, (2023) further connected EI with supply chain visibility and risk management, positing that relationship management capabilities enhance operational transparency and proactive risk mitigation. However, geographic biases in research—focusing on regions such as Vietnam, Pakistan, and Africa limit the external validity of these findings in global logistics contexts (Haider, 2023). A notable gap across these studies is the absence of standardized EI development frameworks tailored specifically to logistics managers (Midgley & Bak, 2021).

2.7 Emotional Intelligence and Demographics

Research has indicated that these factors such as age, education and experience can significantly affect EI levels and their implications in various contexts. For instance, as people age, they generally develop better emotional regulation and well-being, which boosts EI, especially evident in educational contexts (Mitevaska & Tsvetkova, 2024). Similarly Abouhasera et al. (2023) emphasized age as a significant determinant of EI, noting increased emotional regulation and well-being in older adults, which could be beneficial for middle managers facing logistical pressure. Gender differences often show women scoring higher in EI, but cultural influences can change how this plays out, highlighting the importance of context (Hemalatha, 2014), (Pérez-Díaz et al., 2022). They also insisted that education and job experience enhance EI by improving interpersonal skills and practical understanding; however, this effect can vary depending on the nature of the work and cultural background. Training programs can effectively raise EI levels when tailored to cultural specifics, although long-term success depends on factors such as engagement and design. As culture acts as a key moderator influencing how all these demographic factors interact with EI, this explains why the findings sometimes conflict across studies. Understanding these dynamics in the high-pressure logistics work sector is important. The literature on emotional intelligence (EI) across different managerial levels reveals nuanced interactions between EI dimensions, managerial hierarchy, demographic factors, and specific high-pressure work environments such as logistics. In an academic setting, senior executives consistently demonstrate higher EI, particularly in social awareness and relationship management, than entry-level managers (Somuah et al., 2025). This aligns with findings from the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization, where higher-level managers exhibit greater social-skills and self-awareness, although empathy and self-motivation

remain relatively stable across levels (Rosh et al.,2012). These results collectively suggest that certain EI components, especially those facilitating external interpersonal interactions, develop with ascending managerial responsibility, highlighting EI has been a critical leadership competency at senior levels. Middle-level managers present a slightly different profile. Studies focusing on this cohort, such as Dhilsathbegam, (2014) and Garcia & Maniago, (2018), emphasize the influence of demographic variables, notably gender and managerial experience, on EI. Female middle managers consistently showed higher EI scores than their male counterparts, and EI tended to improve with accumulated managerial experience. Contrastingly, Kaifi & Noori (2010) reported no significant demographic differences in EI among middle managers, but noted an increase in EI with age, suggesting that maturity rather than gender or tenure may be a more salient factor in some contexts. This divergence points to the complex interplay between demographic factors and EI development, which may be moderated by cultural and organizational environments. Shrestha (2022) found that demographic factors such as age, education, service year, designation, and income significantly influenced emotional intelligence among university faculty, while gender and marital status showed no effect. This supports the broader view that emotional intelligence is not uniformly distributed across workforce demographics, but develops with experience and career progression. Harrod et al. (2005) examined adolescent emotional intelligence in relation to key demographic variables and found that female sex, higher parental education, and greater household income were positively associated with higher EI levels. This study reported no significant differences in EI based on age or residential location, highlighting the selective influence of socioeconomic factors. These findings underscore the importance of the demographic context in understanding emotional intelligence development among youth. Rosh et al. (2012) examined emotional intelligence across different managerial levels and found that EI is not uniformly distributed within organizational hierarchies. Their results indicated that higher-level managers scored significantly better on dimensions such as social skills and self-awareness, where empathy and motivation showed no major differences. This study highlights the role of managerial positions in shaping the specific emotional competencies relevant to leadership effectiveness.

Despite the recognized importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in enhancing managerial effectiveness, there is a distinct lack of focused research on EI development specifically tailored to middle-level logistics managers. Existing studies often overlook the unique challenges faced by this managerial tier, which plays a crucial role in managing cross-functional teams, high-pressure decision-making, and navigating cultural diversity. This gap highlights the urgent need for empirical investigations of EI levels and the development of standardized EI frameworks that address the specific emotional and technical competencies required by middle managers in the sector. Addressing this need will not only help improve individual managerial performance, but also contribute to organizational agility and resilience in a sector characterized by rapid change and complexity. Future research should focus on integrating demographic considerations and cultural contexts into EI training programs, especially for middle-level managers operating in complex global logistics environments.

2.8 Hypotheses Development

Based on the emotional intelligence theory and prior empirical findings, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H1: Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on overall managerial performance.

H1a: Self-awareness positively influences overall managerial performance.

H1b: Self-regulation positively influences overall managerial performance.

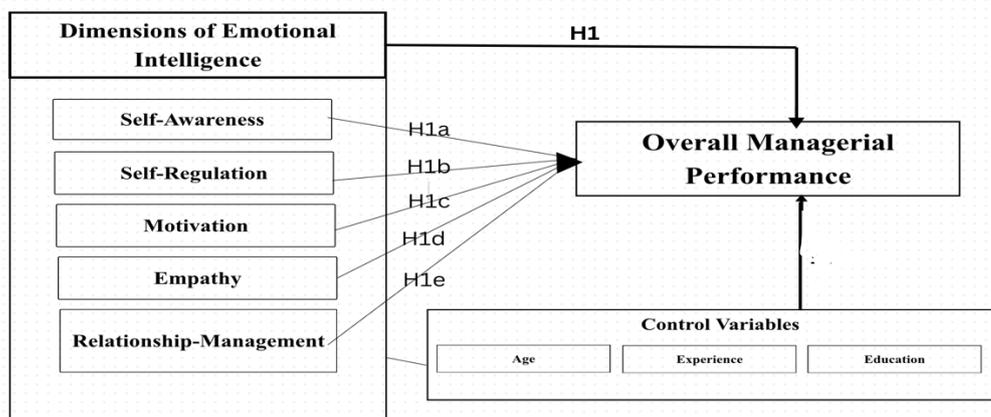
H1c: Motivation positively influences overall managerial performance.

H1d: Empathy positively influences overall managerial performance.

H1e: Relationship management positively influences overall managerial performance.

H2: Emotional intelligence significantly predicts overall managerial performance after controlling for demographic variables.

2.9 Conceptual framework



Method

3.1. Research Design and Sample

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Overall Managerial Performance (OPM) among middle-level managers in the logistics and operations sectors. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to managers in logistics- and operations-intensive organizations. After data screening, 357 valid responses were retained for analysis.

3.2. Measures

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional intelligence was measured as a multidimensional construct comprising self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management, consistent with Goleman's mixed model of emotional intelligence. Measurement items were adapted from established EI literature and refined to suit the logistics and shipping context. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale captured managers' ability to understand and regulate their emotions, motivate themselves and others, demonstrate empathy, and manage interpersonal relationships effectively in a high-pressure operational environment.

Overall Managerial Performance (OPM)

Overall managerial performance was measured using four reflective items capturing (i) achievement of performance targets, (ii) operational efficiency in task execution, (iii) people management and coordination, and (iv) ability to perform effectively under work pressure. These dimensions align with managerial effectiveness theory and reflect the multifaceted nature of performance among middle-level managers in logistics and shipping organizations.

Demographics:

Age, education, and work experience were included as control variables, as prior studies suggest that demographic characteristics may influence managerial performance.

3.3. Data Analysis Strategy

The data analysis was conducted in three stages. First, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to examine the distributional properties and relationships between the study variables. Second, (Cohen et al., 2003) hierarchical multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the incremental explanatory power of Emotional Intelligence and its dimensions beyond demographic variables (age, education, and experience). Reliability, validity, collinearity, and model explanatory power were evaluated using established criteria.

3.4. Measurement Model Evaluation Criteria

The measurement model was assessed for internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), Fornell–Larcker criterion, and cross-loadings. Multicollinearity was examined using variance inflation factor (VIF) statistics (Hair et al., 2019).

4. Results

4.1. Sample Characteristics

Table 1 Demographic profile of respondents

Category	Profile	Total Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	345	96.64
	Female	12	3.36
Age	Below 30	5	1.4
	31-40	93	26.1
	41-50	205	57.4
	Above 50	54	15.1
Educational Qualification	Diploma	15	4.2
	UnderGraduate	157	43.98
	PostGraduate	184	51.54
	Others	1	0.28
Experience	Below 5 years	15	4.2
	5-10 Yrs	57	15.97
	10-20 Yrs	71	19.89
	Above 20 Yrs	214	59.94

As shown in Table 1, the respondents were predominantly male ($n = 345$, 96.64%), with only 3.36% being female ($n = 12$). In terms of age, the majority were in the 41–50 years group ($n = 205$, 57.4%), followed by those aged 31–40 years ($n = 93$, 26.1%), while 15.1% were above 50 years ($n = 54$) and only 1.4% were below 30 years ($n = 5$). Regarding educational qualification, most participants held a postgraduate degree ($n = 184$, 51.54%) and a substantial proportion were undergraduates ($n = 157$, 43.98%), whereas diploma holders accounted for 4.2% ($n = 15$) and others were negligible ($n = 1$, 0.28%). With respect to work experience, the sample was largely highly experienced, with above 20 years constituting the largest share ($n = 214$, 59.94%), followed by 10–20 years ($n = 71$, 19.89%) and 5–10 years ($n = 57$, 15.97%), while respondents with below 5 years of experience represented 4.2% ($n = 15$).

4.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Table 2: Descriptives statistics; means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	Chronbach alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
1.Self_Awareness	4.2388	0.43489	0.80						0.788	0.828	0.869	0.637
2.Self_Regulation	4.2703	0.35421	0.435	0.74					0.722	0.752	0.824	0.543
3.Motivation	4.2808	0.40202	0.332	0.483	0.76				0.736	0.799	0.835	0.571
4.Empathy	4.2969	0.38529	0.399	0.458	0.545	0.72			0.771	0.797	0.845	0.527
5.Relationship_Management	4.2078	0.41482	0.464	0.521	0.526	0.556	0.75		0.797	0.86	0.856	0.555
6.Performance_Outcome	4.1982	0.42907	0.305	0.395	0.414	0.429	0.437	0.74	0.724	0.727	0.828	0.546

Numbers in diagonls (bold) represent the square root of AVE

As presented in Table 2, the descriptive statistics indicate that respondents reported generally high levels across all constructs, with mean scores ranging from 4.1982 for Performance-Outcome (SD = 0.42907) to 4.2969 for Empathy (SD = 0.38529), suggesting overall favourable perceptions and relatively low variability in responses. The reliability analysis demonstrates satisfactory internal consistency, as Cronbach's alpha values exceed the recommended 0.70 threshold for all constructs, ranging from 0.722 (Self-Regulation) to 0.797 (Relationship-Management). Consistently, composite reliability estimates were adequate, with rho-a values between 0.727 and 0.860 and rho-c values between 0.824 and 0.869, confirming strong construct reliability. Convergent validity is also supported because the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above the minimum criterion of 0.50, ranging from 0.527 (Empathy) to 0.637 (Self-Awareness), indicating that each construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators. The correlation matrix further shows positive and moderate associations among the constructs, with correlations among the emotional intelligence dimensions ranging from 0.332 to 0.556, while Performance-Outcome is positively correlated with all emotional intelligence dimensions ($r = 0.305-0.437$), implying that higher emotional intelligence is associated with improved performance outcomes; importantly, the absence of excessively high inter-construct correlations suggests that the constructs are related yet empirically distinct, providing additional support for discriminant validity.

4.3. Discriminant Validity

Construct	E	M	OPM	RM	SA	SR
E						
M	0.729					
OPM	0.579	0.570				
RM	0.712	0.688	0.581			
SA	0.516	0.444	0.405	0.588		
SR	0.612	0.660	0.543	0.684	0.574	

Table 3 reports discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the diagonal values represent the square root of AVE for each construct and the off-diagonal values represent correlations between constructs. Discriminant validity is established when, for each construct, the square root of its AVE is higher than its correlations with any other construct, indicating the construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs.

Based on the matrix, the diagonal (\sqrt{AVE}) values are shown for M = 0.729, RM = 0.712, SR = 0.612, OPM = 0.579, and SA = 0.516. Comparing these against the corresponding inter-construct correlations, the correlations are generally moderate, such as E–RM = 0.712, M–RM = 0.688, M–SR = 0.660, RM–SR = 0.684, and RM–SA = 0.588, indicating the constructs are related in a theoretically consistent way but not excessively overlapping overall.

However, one important point from the table is that the correlation between E and RM (0.712) is *as high as* the diagonal value shown for RM (0.712). Under a strict Fornell–Larcker interpretation, the diagonal should be greater than (not equal to) the correlations, so this suggests a potential borderline discriminant validity issue between Empathy (E) and Relationship Management (RM), meaning these two constructs may be very closely related in the sample.

4.4. Collinearity Assessment

Table 4: Outer VIF values

	VIF		VIF
SA1	1.886	M1	3.775
SA2	1.627	M2	1.219
SA3	1.097	M3	1.166
SA4	1.031	M4	4.816
SR1	1.261	RM1	4.043
SR2	1.397	RM2	1.343
SR3	1.536	RM3	1.331
SR4	1.347	RM4	1.409
		RM5	4.008
E1	3.097		
E2	1.256	OPM1	1.373
E3	1.281	OPM2	1.381
E4	1.34	OPM3	1.35
E5	3.108	OPM4	1.385

Table 4 shows VIF values mostly between ~1.03 and 1.89, indicating *very low collinearity* for most indicators. A few items are moderately higher (M1 = 3.775, M4 = 4.816, RM1 = 4.043, RM5 = 4.008), but all remain below 5.0, suggesting *no critical multicollinearity*. Thus, consistent with Hair et al. (PLS-SEM) thresholds, the indicators demonstrate acceptable collinearity and are suitable for further model estimation.

4.5. Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Table 5: Hierarchical Regression Results

Variables	Column 1 OPM Step 1	Column 2 OPM Step 2
Control variables		
Constant	4.114*** (0.149)	0.946** (0.320)
Age	0.099(1.836; 0.067)	0.035(0.744; 0.458)
Education	-0.125*(-2.374;0.018)	-0.038(-0.816; 0.415)
Experience	0.083(1.523; 0.129)	0.106*(2.234; 0.026)
Main variables (EI dimensions)		
Self-Awareness	—	0.042(0.781; 0.435)
Self-Regulation	—	0.132*(2.296; 0.022)
Motivation	—	0.173** (2.932; 0.004)
Empathy	—	0.168** (2.811;0.005))
Relationship Management	—	0.147** (2.369; 0.018)
Model statistics		
R ²	0.036	0.291
Adjusted R ²	0.027	0.275
ΔR ²	—	0.256
F	4.322**	17.843***
ΔF	—	25.069***
df	(3, 196)	(5, 347))

Notes:

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

The hierarchical regression analysis revealed that control variables in Step 1 explained 3.6% of the variance in performance outcomes ($R^2 = 0.036$, $F = 4.322$, $p < 0.01$). In Step 2, the inclusion of emotional intelligence dimensions significantly improved the model, explaining an additional 25.6% of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.256$, $\Delta F = 25.069$, $p < 0.001$). Among the EI dimensions, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management were significant positive predictors, whereas self-awareness was not significant.

Hypothesis	Assumptions	Results
H1	Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on overall managerial performance.	Supported
H1a	Self-awareness positively influences overall managerial performance.	Not Supported
H1b	Self-regulation positively influences overall managerial performance.	Supported
H1c	Motivation positively influences overall managerial performance.	Supported
H1d	Empathy positively influences overall managerial performance.	Supported
H1e	Relationship management positively influences overall managerial performance.	Supported
H2	Emotional intelligence significantly predicts overall managerial performance after controlling for demographic variables.	Supported

5. Discussions:

The findings of the study clearly indicate that beyond traditional determinants such as age, education and experience, emotional intelligence plays a decisive role in shaping managerial performance in the logistics and shipping sector. While demographic variables explained only a limited proportion of variance in performance, the inclusion of emotional intelligence dimensions substantially improved the explanatory power of the model. This highlights that managerial effectiveness in this sector cannot be understood solely through technical competence or tenure but must also account for emotional and interpersonal capabilities.

Among the emotional intelligence dimensions examined, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management emerged as significant predictors of managerial performance. These results suggest that managers who are able to regulate their emotions, remain motivated under pressure, empathize with others, and maintain strong interpersonal relationships are more likely to perform effectively in the demanding operational environment of logistics and shipping. In contrast, self-awareness did not show a direct effect on performance, indicating that while awareness of one's emotions may be foundational, it is the active regulation and application of emotional skills that translate into observable performance outcomes.

The context of Thoothukudi, provides an important lens for interpreting these findings. Logistics and shipping operations in port-based environments involve constant interaction with multiple stakeholders, including clients, customs officials, workers, and senior management, often under time pressure and uncertainty. It is also observed that managers in this setting rely heavily on relationship-based approaches to resolve conflicts, coordinate activities, and sustain trust. As a result, it is evident that managers who possess higher emotional intelligence naturally develop stronger bonds with their teams and clients, enabling them to navigate challenges more effectively. It also helps to sustain performance despite operational and emotional demands.

Importantly, the findings also indicate that emotional intelligence appears to strengthen as managers progress in their roles. Continuous exposure to interpersonal negotiations, customer handling, and team management seems to cultivate emotional competencies over time, particularly relationship management and empathy. These emotional skills, in turn, become critical assets that support both task execution and long-term business development in the logistics sector.

Theoretical Implications:

This study extends emotional intelligence theory, particularly Goleman's mixed model, by empirically establishing a clear relationship between emotional intelligence and managerial performance in the underexplored context of port-based logistics. The findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence functions as a multi-dimensional and context-sensitive capability, with self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management emerging as direct drivers of managerial performance, while self-awareness plays a more indirect role. By controlling for education, experience, and age, the study confirms that emotional intelligence contributes uniquely to performance, reinforcing its conceptualization as a developable managerial competence rather than a static demographic attribute. Overall, the study advances organizational behaviour literature by positioning emotional intelligence as a critical capability for middle-level managers operating in high-pressure, relationship-intensive logistics environments.

Practical Implications

The findings suggest that logistics and shipping organizations should recognize emotional intelligence as a core managerial competency alongside technical expertise. Since experience and education alone explain limited variance in performance, organizations should incorporate emotional intelligence assessments into recruitment, appraisal, and promotion systems. Targeted training programs focusing on self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management

can better equip managers to handle interpersonal complexity and emotional stress inherent in port-based operations. At a broader level, port authorities and professional bodies may integrate emotional intelligence development into managerial certification programs, enhancing both performance sustainability and emotional well-being in high-stress logistics environments such as Thoothukudi.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations that offer directions for future research. The analysis was confined to a single port-based logistics hub, Thoothukudi, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regional or international logistics contexts. Future studies could adopt comparative approaches across multiple ports and countries. In addition, the cross-sectional design restricts causal interpretation; longitudinal studies would provide clearer insights into how emotional intelligence develops over time and influences managerial performance across career stages. Although key demographic variables were controlled, other contextual factors such as organizational culture, leadership style, and technological intensity were not examined and may be incorporated as mediators or moderators in future research. Further studies may also explore additional emotional and social competencies, examine indirect pathways of self-awareness, assess gender-based and role-specific EI differences, and evaluate the effectiveness of structured emotional intelligence training interventions in logistics and supply chain environments.

Conclusion

This study confirms that emotional intelligence is a meaningful driver of overall managerial performance, beyond what can be explained by basic demographics such as age, education, and experience. The measurement results show that the emotional intelligence dimensions and performance outcomes were assessed with acceptable reliability and validity, indicating that the constructs were measured consistently and accurately. In the hierarchical regression, demographic factors explained only a small portion of performance, but adding emotional intelligence substantially improved the model, demonstrating that EI provides strong incremental explanatory power. Importantly, not all EI components contribute equally. The findings highlight that action-oriented emotional competencies—self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management—significantly enhance managerial performance because they reflect the ability to control emotions, remain driven, understand others, and manage relationships effectively. In contrast, *self-awareness alone* did not show a direct performance effect, implying that awareness must translate into regulation and interpersonal behaviour to improve outcomes.

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