

Emotional Intelligence and Knowledge Sharing as Predictors of Employee Performance in the Commercial Banks of Guangdong province, China

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Abstract: In the competitive and rapidly evolving banking sector of Guangdong Province, China, employee performance is a critical determinant of organizational success. This study aims to explore the influence of emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing on employee performance in commercial banks, addressing a gap in understanding these factors' impact within this context. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 400 employees across 20 commercial banks and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings reveal that both emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing significantly and positively affect employee performance, with knowledge sharing also serving as a mediator in this relationship. The results suggest that emotional intelligence enhances employees' ability to engage in knowledge sharing, which in turn boosts employee performance. This study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the dual impact of emotional intelligence on performance, both directly and indirectly through knowledge sharing, and offers practical insights for bank managers to implement targeted training programs that integrate emotional intelligence development and knowledge-sharing initiatives for improved workforce productivity.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, employee performance, commercial banks, Guangdong province

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, employee performance has become a critical determinant of organizational success (Omachi & Ajewumi, 2024), particularly in the banking sector. In the context of China's economic landscape, Guangdong Province stands out as one of the most economically vibrant and commercially significant regions (Liao & Zhang, 2024). It serves as a central hub for various industries, including the financial sector (Liu, 2024). Commercial banks in Guangdong play a pivotal role in supporting the province's robust economic activities by providing essential financial services, credit facilities, and investment opportunities (He & Chen, 2020). As the financial sector becomes more competitive and dynamic, banks are compelled to enhance their organizational performance, which fundamentally depends on the individual and collective performance of their employees (Campanella et al., 2020).

One of the key factors that can enhance employee performance is emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to identify, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively, has been shown to significantly impact job satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, and overall productivity (Suleman et al., 2020). For employees in commercial banks, where customer interactions and relationship management are central to daily operations, high levels of emotional intelligence can facilitate better decision-making, improved communication, and enhanced conflict resolution (Akhter, 2021). Additionally, EI plays a vital role in creating a positive work environment, thereby boosting employee morale and reducing turnover rates (Laing-Hall, 2023).

Another crucial factor influencing employee performance is knowledge sharing (KS). Knowledge sharing refers to the process by which individuals exchange relevant information, skills, and expertise within an organization (Azeem et al., 2021). In the banking industry, the effective dissemination of knowledge can lead to better service delivery, increased innovation, and the ability to respond quickly to market changes (Abbasi et al., 2021). The financial sector's reliance on

up-to-date information and best practices makes knowledge sharing an indispensable component of organizational learning and performance enhancement. In commercial banks, where employees frequently collaborate on tasks such as risk assessment, credit analysis, and customer service, a strong culture of knowledge sharing can significantly boost efficiency and productivity (Parajuli et al., 2022).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing in organizational performance, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding of how these factors specifically influence employee performance within the context of commercial banks in Guangdong Province, China. The financial sector in this region faces unique challenges, including increased customer demands, regulatory changes, and heightened competition (Ji, 2021). Consequently, banks are under pressure to optimize their human capital to maintain a competitive edge. However, existing strategies often focus primarily on technical training and financial incentives, overlooking the potential impact of emotional and cognitive factors such as emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing.

In the context of commercial banks in Guangdong Province, understanding the interplay between emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance is particularly important due to the increasing competition and customer expectations. With the financial industry undergoing digital transformation, employees are required to not only possess technical skills but also demonstrate adaptability, emotional resilience, and a willingness to share and utilize knowledge. This complex interplay suggests that fostering a workforce with high emotional intelligence and encouraging robust knowledge-sharing practices could be a strategic pathway for banks to enhance their overall performance.

While previous research has established the positive effects of emotional intelligence on individual job performance and the role of knowledge sharing in enhancing organizational capabilities (Swanson et al., 2022), the specific relationship between these variables and employee performance in the context of commercial banks in Guangdong remains underexplored. There is a need to investigate whether employees who exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in knowledge sharing, and if so, how these behaviors collectively contribute to improved job performance.

Given the evolving landscape of the banking sector in Guangdong Province, this study seeks to address a critical gap by examining the direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing on employee performance. Understanding these relationships will provide valuable insights for bank managers and policymakers aiming to enhance workforce capabilities and foster a sustainable competitive advantage.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Studies on Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance

The positive relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and employee performance has been the subject of various empirical studies, consistently highlighting that employees who possess higher emotional intelligence are often more effective in their roles.

Febrina et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative analysis, examining the direct impact of emotional intelligence on their overall job performance. The study employed self-report measures for emotional intelligence, utilizing well-established tools like the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), and paired these with performance evaluations conducted by supervisors. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between high emotional intelligence and increased job performance ratings. Employees who scored higher in emotional intelligence were found to excel in areas requiring interpersonal skills, effective communication, and adaptive responses to workplace challenges. The study concluded that individuals with higher levels of emotional self-awareness, regulation, and motivation tend to outperform their counterparts, suggesting that emotional intelligence contributes directly to an employee's capacity to achieve their work goals and meet organizational expectations.

Rahmawaty et al. (2021) explored the extent to which emotional intelligence influences employee productivity and effectiveness. The study revealed that employees with higher emotional intelligence consistently exhibited superior performance, with notable improvements in task completion, decision-making quality, and teamwork. The study noted that emotionally intelligent employees often demonstrate better stress management and are more adept at navigating complex social dynamics in the workplace, which enhances their overall productivity. The study argued that emotional intelligence is a crucial predictor of employee success because it enables individuals to respond more effectively to workplace demands and maintain positive relationships with colleagues. The findings suggest that training programs aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence could be a valuable investment for organizations seeking to improve employee performance.

Edward & Purba (2020) reinforced the positive influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance through an experimental design. The study found a strong positive link between emotional intelligence and employee performance across various performance indicators, including creativity, leadership effectiveness, and problem-solving skills. The study highlighted that employees with higher emotional intelligence were more capable of managing emotions effectively, which in turn allowed them to maintain focus and exhibit higher levels of productivity. The findings further emphasized that emotional intelligence enhances employees' ability to handle conflicts, adapt to change, and work collaboratively with others. Based on these observations, the study suggested that emotional intelligence is a key factor that not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to a more cohesive and productive work environment.

In summary, these studies consistently demonstrate that emotional intelligence positively influences employee performance, highlighting that emotionally intelligent individuals tend to perform better due to their enhanced interpersonal skills, self-regulation abilities, and adaptability. These findings suggest that organizations may benefit from incorporating emotional intelligence development into employee training programs to foster higher performance levels across their workforce.

2.2 Studies on Emotional Intelligence and Knowledge Sharing

The relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and knowledge sharing has been a focus of several empirical studies, with a consensus emerging that higher levels of EI contribute positively to the willingness and ability of individuals to share knowledge.

Mura et al. (2021) conducted a study exploring the direct effects of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing behaviors, revealing a strong positive influence. The research highlighted that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence are more adept at recognizing the emotional states of others and responding appropriately, which fosters a trusting atmosphere conducive to knowledge sharing. In the study, emotional intelligence was identified as a significant predictor of an individual's propensity to share knowledge, as those with higher emotional awareness were better able to communicate and empathize with others. This empathetic understanding reduced barriers to communication, making it easier for individuals to offer insights and share valuable information. Moreover, the findings suggested that emotional intelligence helps mitigate interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings, further enhancing the willingness to share knowledge openly and effectively within groups. The positive relationship identified in this research underscores the role of emotional competencies in facilitating collaborative learning environments where information exchange is frequent and unrestricted.

Malik (2021) provided empirical evidence on the positive impact of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing through a comprehensive quantitative analysis. The study found that individuals with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated a greater tendency to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors, primarily due to their enhanced ability to manage their own emotions and effectively interpret the emotions of their peers. The study argued that emotional intelligence allows individuals to better navigate the social complexities of group dynamics, reducing potential tensions and misunderstandings that might otherwise hinder the flow of knowledge. By effectively regulating their own emotional responses, emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to maintain positive interactions, which in turn encourages the sharing of ideas, experiences, and expertise. The study further suggested that the ability to empathize with others and exhibit social awareness creates a supportive and inclusive environment where knowledge sharing is seen as a reciprocal and valued practice. This positive influence highlights the critical role of emotional intelligence in overcoming psychological barriers to knowledge sharing, such as fear of criticism or reluctance due to perceived power dynamics.

Jamshed & Majeed (2023) reinforced the notion that emotional intelligence positively influences knowledge sharing, focusing on the interpersonal aspects of knowledge exchange. The research demonstrated that individuals who score higher on emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in behaviors that promote the sharing of knowledge due to their enhanced interpersonal skills. The findings indicated that emotional intelligence helps individuals build stronger, more trusting relationships, which are crucial for facilitating open communication and knowledge dissemination. The study found that emotional intelligence contributes to an individual's ability to create a positive, collaborative atmosphere, which is essential for encouraging the free exchange of ideas. The study concluded that emotionally intelligent individuals are more adept at recognizing when others need information and are more likely to proactively offer assistance, making knowledge sharing a more natural and frequent occurrence. This research further supports the argument that emotional intelligence not only enhances individual capabilities but also serves as a catalyst for creating a culture of knowledge sharing, where information flows smoothly and freely across interpersonal networks.

These studies consistently point to the positive influence of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing, suggesting that emotional competencies are a vital asset in promoting collaborative behaviors. These studies highlight that the ability to manage emotions effectively enhances interpersonal interactions, reduces communication barriers, and fosters an environment of trust, all of which are critical for facilitating the sharing of knowledge. As emotional intelligence enhances the quality of social interactions, it directly supports a more open and willing exchange of knowledge, demonstrating its essential role in collective learning and information sharing practices.

2.3 Studies on Knowledge Sharing and Employee Performance

The concept of knowledge sharing has been a prominent focus in the field of organizational behavior, with many studies examining its impact on employee performance.

Meher & Mishra (2022) conducted a comprehensive quantitative study exploring the influence of knowledge sharing on employee performance. The findings highlighted a clear positive relationship between the two constructs, indicating that when employees actively share their knowledge with one another, their overall job performance tends to improve. The study suggested that the process of knowledge sharing allows employees to gain new insights and skills, which, in turn, leads to enhanced efficiency and better task execution. By sharing both explicit and tacit knowledge, employees were able to collaborate more effectively, resolve issues swiftly, and innovate within their roles. The study

concluded that promoting a culture of knowledge sharing within an organization not only increases individual performance metrics but also contributes to the overall productivity of the workforce. This positive influence was attributed to the improved access to information and the reduction of redundant efforts among employees, as they could build upon each other's expertise rather than working in isolation.

Sanosra et al. (2022) examined the direct impact of knowledge sharing on employee performance through a large-scale survey study. The research focused on the relationship between knowledge exchange practices among employees and their subsequent job outcomes. The results of the study underscored a significant positive correlation between the frequency of knowledge sharing activities and the level of employee performance. The study found that employees who were more engaged in sharing their expertise and information with colleagues reported higher levels of job satisfaction, which was closely linked to better performance outcomes. The study explained that when employees are encouraged to share what they know, it not only increases their own competence but also enhances the collective intelligence of the organization. The mutual exchange of knowledge was shown to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making processes, as employees were able to leverage a broader base of knowledge and experiences. The study highlighted that by fostering an environment where knowledge sharing is a regular practice, organizations can expect improved employee outcomes, such as increased productivity and higher-quality work outputs.

Sa'adah & Rijanti (2022) also confirmed the positive influence of knowledge sharing on employee performance, emphasizing the role of collaborative knowledge practices in boosting individual work effectiveness. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and in-depth interviews to gain insights into how knowledge sharing behaviors affect job performance. The findings revealed that employees who actively engaged in sharing their knowledge with peers were more likely to exhibit higher levels of task performance and job proficiency. According to the study, the act of sharing knowledge helps to bridge skill gaps among employees, enabling them to quickly acquire new competencies and apply them in their tasks. The study noted that knowledge sharing often leads to the creation of a more cohesive work environment, where employees feel supported and motivated to contribute their best efforts. Additionally, the positive reinforcement gained from successful knowledge exchanges was found to enhance employees' confidence in their abilities, further boosting their performance. The study concluded that the consistent practice of knowledge sharing within teams is a key driver of individual and organizational success, as it equips employees with the tools and information they need to excel in their roles.

These studies demonstrate a strong positive link between knowledge sharing and employee performance, underscoring the importance of fostering a culture where knowledge exchange is actively encouraged.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilizes a quantitative research method to empirically examine the relationships between emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance. The quantitative approach involves the systematic collection and statistical analysis of numerical data, allowing for the objective testing of hypotheses and the identification of patterns and relationships between variables. Given the nature of the research problem, which seeks to understand the extent and impact of specific factors (emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing) on employee performance, a quantitative approach is suitable. By employing structured data collection tools, this method enables the study to gather standardized information from a large sample, ensuring that the findings can be generalized to a broader population of employees in the commercial banking sector of Guangdong.

The choice of a quantitative research method is driven by several key considerations. Firstly, quantitative methods allow for a robust examination of the relationships between the variables using statistical techniques, providing clear evidence of the strength and significance of the observed effects. Unlike qualitative approaches, which focus on subjective interpretations, the quantitative approach offers a more precise measurement of constructs such as emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance. Additionally, the use of a quantitative method aligns well with the study's objective of testing hypotheses and making data-driven inferences about the commercial banking industry in Guangdong Province. The structured nature of quantitative data collection and analysis also facilitates the use of sophisticated statistical techniques like Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is essential for understanding the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on employee performance.

The study examines the impact of emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing on employee performance in the commercial banks of Guangdong province, China based on the flow of process presented in Fig. 1.

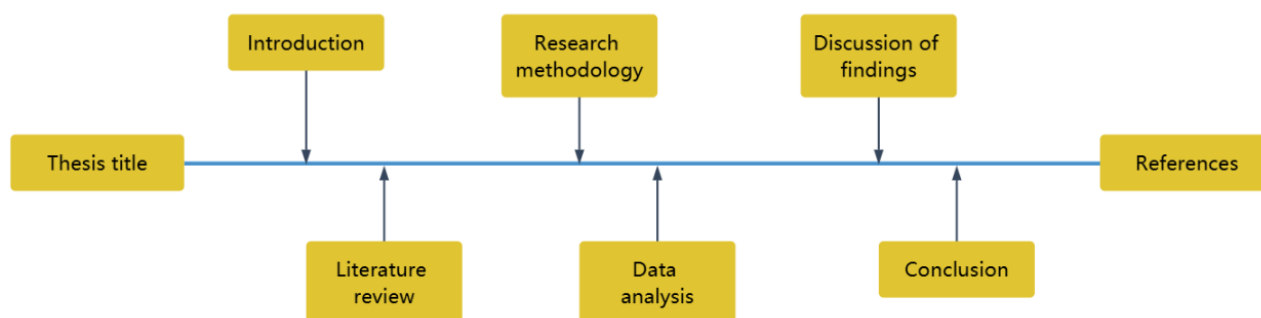


Figure 1. Flow of process

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study focuses on 20 selected commercial banks operating in Guangdong Province, which is a major financial hub in China known for its dynamic banking sector. According to the human resource data obtained from these selected banks in 2024, there are a total of 81,256 employees working across various departments. To ensure that the sample is representative of this population and to provide a reliable basis for statistical analysis, the study employs a random sampling technique. Random sampling is chosen to minimize selection bias and to increase the likelihood that the sample reflects the diverse characteristics of the broader employee population in these banks.

Based on statistical considerations and the sample size calculation results obtained from Calculator.net, the study determines that a sample size of 400 employees is appropriate. This sample size provides sufficient power for the analysis, ensuring that the findings are statistically significant and generalizable. The selection of 400 respondents is in line with common practices for empirical research in organizational settings and allows for a comprehensive examination of the research questions.

To facilitate the distribution of the survey, the study utilized the Wenjuanxing platform, a widely used online questionnaire design and distribution tool in China. Through this platform, a total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to the targeted participants for a month from November 6 to December 6, 2024 in 20 selected commercial banks operating in Guangdong Province, China. Upon collection, the data underwent an initial sorting process. Out of the 400 distributed questionnaires, 391 were collected. However, after careful review, it was determined that 3 of the questionnaires contained incomplete or inconsistent responses, which rendered them invalid for inclusion in the study. As a result, these three invalid questionnaires were discarded, leaving a total of 388 valid responses.

3.3 Instrument

The primary data for this study is collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of Likert-type scale items. The questionnaire is designed to measure three key constructs: emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance. The survey question items in the questionnaire are adapted and designed from previously validated scales developed by scholars in the fields of organizational behavior and psychology. Specifically, a 5-point Likert scale is employed, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), to capture the respondents' perceptions and attitudes regarding each of the variables under investigation. The use of the 5-point Likert scale is chosen for its simplicity and ease of interpretation, as well as its effectiveness in capturing the intensity of respondents' views on the factors being studied.

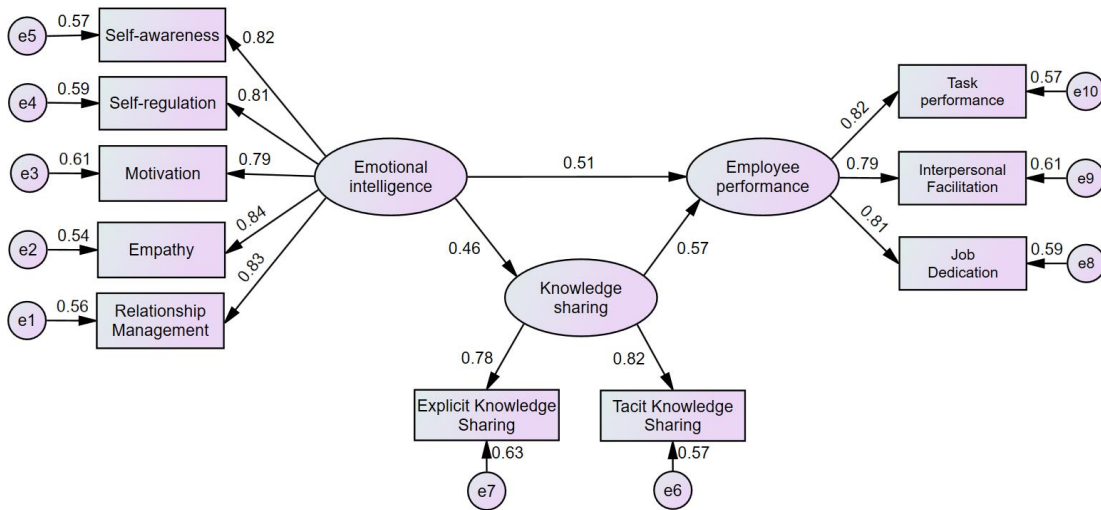
3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data is analyzed using a combination of descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Descriptive statistics are employed to provide an initial overview of the sample demographics and to summarize the responses to the Likert-scale items. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage distribution are calculated to understand the central tendencies and variability in the data.

For a more in-depth analysis of the relationships between emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance, the study uses SEM path analysis. SEM is a powerful statistical technique that allows for the simultaneous examination of multiple relationships between variables, making it well-suited for this study's complex model. SEM helps in assessing both direct and indirect effects, enabling the study to test the hypothesized causal pathways linking emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing to employee performance.

4. Data Analysis Results

In this study, SEM path analysis was adopted to check the relationship among three latent variables of the study, which comprises emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing and employee performance. The detailed SEM path analysis results are demonstrated in the Fig. 2. and Table 1.

**Figure 2.** Structural equation modelling**Table 1.** SEM path analysis results

Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Std Path coefficient
Emotional intelligence--->Employee performance	0.615	0.058	10.603	***	0.512
Emotional intelligence--->Knowledge sharing	0.567	0.057	9.947	***	0.463
Knowledge sharing --->Employee performance	0.674	0.063	10.698	***	0.572

The direct effects examined in this study focus on the relationships between three key variables: emotional intelligence, knowledge sharing, and employee performance. The results from the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) path analysis indicate significant direct relationships among these constructs, highlighting their crucial role in the context of employee performance within commercial banks in Guangdong Province.

The direct path from emotional intelligence to employee performance shows a significant positive effect, with an estimate of 0.615 and a standardized path coefficient of 0.512 ($p < 0.001$). This result suggests that higher levels of emotional intelligence among employees are directly associated with improved job performance. Employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle interpersonal interactions, manage stress effectively, and demonstrate empathy, all of which are vital in a customer-centric industry like banking. These capabilities enhance their ability to communicate with clients, resolve conflicts, and make better decisions, leading to higher overall job performance.

The direct effect of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing is also statistically significant, with an estimate of 0.567 and a standardized path coefficient of 0.463 ($p < 0.001$). Employees who possess higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to engage more actively in knowledge-sharing behaviors. This is likely because emotionally intelligent individuals can better understand and respond to the emotions of their colleagues, creating a trusting and open environment that facilitates the exchange of information. They are more empathetic, exhibit stronger interpersonal skills, and can effectively navigate the social complexities of the workplace, reducing barriers to knowledge sharing.

The direct path from knowledge sharing to employee performance reveals the strongest effect among the three examined relationships, with an estimate of 0.674 and a standardized path coefficient of 0.572 ($p < 0.001$). This result indicates that when employees actively share their knowledge and expertise, their job performance improves significantly. Knowledge sharing facilitates the dissemination of valuable information, best practices, and innovative ideas, leading to enhanced efficiency, faster problem-solving, and better decision-making. Employees who participate in knowledge sharing are likely to gain new insights and skills, which contribute to higher productivity and the quality of their work output.

In summary, the direct effects analysis confirms that both emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing significantly and positively influence employee performance in the commercial banking sector of Guangdong Province. Emotional intelligence not only contributes directly to improved performance but also facilitates a greater willingness to share knowledge among employees. In turn, knowledge sharing acts as a powerful driver of employee performance, suggesting that fostering a culture of emotional awareness and open communication can be a strategic pathway for enhancing workforce effectiveness in the banking industry. These findings underscore the importance of developing training programs that focus on both emotional intelligence and knowledge-sharing practices, as they have a complementary impact on employee performance.

Besides, the study also checks the mediating effect of knowledge sharing through the bootstrapping method, with the detailed mediating effect analysis results displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Mediating effect analysis results of knowledge sharing

Standard effect	Path	Effect coefficient	95% confidence interval		S.E.	P-value
			Lower	Upper		
Total effect	Emotional intelligence--->Employee performance	0.777	0.726	0.828	0.026	***
Direct effect	Emotional intelligence--->Employee performance	0.512	0.465	0.559	0.024	***
Indirect effect	Emotional intelligence--->Knowledge sharing--->Employee performance	0.265	0.226	0.304	0.020	***

The analysis of the mediating effect of knowledge sharing reveals important insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance in commercial banks in Guangdong Province. Using the bootstrapping method, the study examines the indirect effects of emotional intelligence on employee performance through the pathway of knowledge sharing. The results indicate that knowledge sharing plays a significant mediating role, enhancing the overall impact of emotional intelligence on job performance.

The total effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance is estimated at 0.777, suggesting a strong positive influence. This total effect encompasses both the direct influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance and its indirect influence through knowledge sharing. When examining the direct effect separately, the analysis shows an effect coefficient of 0.512 ($p < 0.001$). This direct effect highlights the considerable impact of emotional intelligence on job performance, underscoring its role in equipping employees with skills related to interpersonal communication, emotional regulation, and stress management, which are crucial in customer-focused industries like banking.

However, when the indirect effect through knowledge sharing is considered, it becomes evident that this pathway significantly contributes to the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. The indirect effect is quantified at 0.265 ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that a substantial portion of the impact of emotional intelligence on job performance is facilitated by enhanced knowledge-sharing behaviors among employees. This finding suggests that emotionally intelligent employees, who are more adept at recognizing and managing emotions, tend to create a trusting and collaborative work environment. Such an environment encourages the free exchange of knowledge, allowing employees to share insights, best practices, and problem-solving techniques more openly.

The mediating role of knowledge sharing indicates that emotional intelligence not only directly boosts performance but also enhances employees' willingness and ability to share knowledge, which in turn further improves their job outcomes. By effectively managing emotions and fostering positive interpersonal dynamics, emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to engage in productive knowledge-sharing practices. This leads to a ripple effect, where the benefits of emotional intelligence extend beyond individual performance improvements to collective gains in team and organizational performance.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide robust evidence for the significant influence of emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing on employee performance within the commercial banking sector of Guangdong Province, China. Utilizing a quantitative approach with a large sample size ($N = 400$) and employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, the study offers key insights into the direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing, as well as the mediating role of knowledge sharing in enhancing employee performance.

5.1 Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance

The SEM analysis reveals a significant direct positive effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance, with an estimated coefficient of 0.615 and a standardized path coefficient of 0.512 ($p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that employees who exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to perform better in their roles. In the context of commercial banks, where employees frequently engage in customer-facing interactions and complex decision-making tasks, emotional intelligence is a critical asset. Employees with high emotional intelligence can effectively manage their own emotions, understand and empathize with customers, and maintain composure under pressure. This capability is crucial for handling stress, resolving conflicts, and making sound judgments, all of which are essential in the banking industry.

These results align with the previous study by Munir & Azam (2017) that emphasize the positive impact of emotional intelligence on job performance. Employees with higher emotional intelligence scored better in performance evaluations, excelling in tasks requiring effective communication and interpersonal skills. Emotionally intelligent employees demonstrated superior productivity and task completion rates, largely due to their enhanced adaptability and stress management abilities. The consistency of these findings across different contexts underscores the universal importance of emotional intelligence as a predictor of job success, particularly in environments characterized by high customer interaction, such as the banking sector. The strong link between emotional intelligence and employee performance observed in this study suggests that commercial banks could benefit from incorporating emotional intelligence training into their employee development programs. Given the competitive nature of the financial industry in Guangdong Province, enhancing employees' emotional skills could lead to better customer service, higher job satisfaction, and reduced turnover, ultimately contributing to improved organizational performance.

5.2 Emotional Intelligence and Knowledge Sharing

In addition to its direct impact on performance, emotional intelligence also shows a significant positive relationship with knowledge sharing, as indicated by the SEM analysis results (estimate = 0.567, standardized path coefficient = 0.463, $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that employees with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors. The ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions enables individuals to build trust and establish positive interpersonal relationships, which are key drivers of knowledge sharing in organizational settings. Emotionally intelligent employees are typically more empathetic and socially aware, making them more effective in creating a supportive environment where information can be exchanged openly and constructively.

The positive influence of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing echoes the results of studies by Arakelian et al. (2013), who found that individuals with high emotional intelligence exhibited a greater willingness to share knowledge, primarily due to their ability to navigate social complexities and reduce interpersonal tensions. Emotionally intelligent employees were better at fostering trust and collaboration, which facilitated the free flow of information. The findings of this study reinforce these observations, highlighting the pivotal role of emotional competencies in promoting a culture of openness and collaboration within the workplace.

For commercial banks in Guangdong Province, where rapid decision-making and information dissemination are critical to operational success, fostering emotional intelligence can help break down barriers to knowledge sharing. By equipping employees with the skills to manage their emotions and engage in positive social interactions, banks can create an environment that encourages the exchange of valuable insights and expertise, thereby enhancing both individual and collective performance.

5.3 Knowledge Sharing and Employee Performance

The analysis results also demonstrate a strong direct positive effect of knowledge sharing on employee performance, with an estimated coefficient of 0.674 and a standardized path coefficient of 0.572 ($p < 0.001$). This result suggests that active engagement in knowledge-sharing practices leads to significant improvements in job performance. When employees share their knowledge, they contribute to a collective pool of information that can be leveraged to solve problems more effectively, innovate, and enhance service delivery. In the commercial banking sector, where complex tasks like risk assessment and credit analysis require comprehensive information, the ability to access and utilize shared knowledge is critical for achieving high performance.

These findings are consistent with the results of studies by Saeed (2016), which found a positive correlation between knowledge sharing and job performance. Knowledge sharing helped bridge skill gaps and fostered a more cohesive work environment, leading to better performance outcomes. The evidence from this study aligns with these observations, emphasizing that knowledge sharing is a key factor in enhancing employee capabilities and productivity.

In the context of Guangdong's commercial banking sector, where competition and customer expectations are high, promoting a culture of knowledge sharing could be a strategic advantage. By encouraging employees to share their expertise and experiences, banks can improve service quality, enhance problem-solving capabilities, and accelerate innovation. Implementing systems and processes that facilitate easy and open knowledge exchange, such as collaborative platforms and regular team meetings, could help embed knowledge-sharing practices into the organizational culture.

5.4 Mediating Role of Knowledge Sharing

The mediating analysis results provide insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance, revealing a significant indirect effect through knowledge sharing (effect coefficient = 0.265, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that knowledge sharing acts as a partial mediator between emotional intelligence and job performance. In other words, a portion of the positive impact of emotional intelligence on performance is explained by its effect on enhancing knowledge-sharing behaviors among employees.

This result is noteworthy because it suggests that emotional intelligence contributes to performance not only directly, through improved interpersonal skills and emotional regulation, but also indirectly, by fostering a collaborative environment that facilitates the exchange of knowledge. The mediating effect of knowledge sharing is consistent with

the theoretical framework proposed by Nonaka et al. (1996), which emphasizes the importance of knowledge exchange in driving organizational learning and performance.

For commercial banks in Guangdong Province, these findings imply that developing emotional intelligence among employees could have a dual impact: directly enhancing individual performance and indirectly boosting performance through increased knowledge sharing. As the banking industry continues to face digital transformation and evolving customer needs, integrating emotional intelligence training with knowledge management initiatives could be a powerful strategy for improving overall employee performance and maintaining a competitive edge.

6. Conclusion

This study provides significant insights into the influence of emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing on employee performance within the commercial banking sector of Guangdong Province, China. The findings underscore the critical role of emotional intelligence, demonstrating its direct positive impact on employee performance and its capacity to foster a collaborative work environment conducive to knowledge sharing. Employees who exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage interpersonal interactions, handle stress, and adapt to the dynamic demands of the banking industry. These capabilities translate into enhanced job performance, particularly in customer-facing roles that require empathy, effective communication, and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, the strong positive relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance highlights the importance of a culture that encourages the open exchange of information. Knowledge sharing serves as a vital mechanism for bridging skill gaps, promoting innovation, and improving task efficiency, all of which contribute to higher employee productivity. The mediation analysis reveals that knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance, indicating that emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to engage in behaviors that enhance knowledge dissemination. This dual impact suggests that banks could gain substantial competitive advantages by investing in training programs that enhance both emotional intelligence and knowledge-sharing practices. In summary, the study emphasizes the need for an integrated approach that leverages emotional competencies and collaborative knowledge behaviors to optimize employee performance and drive sustainable growth in the banking sector. By fostering emotional intelligence and encouraging knowledge sharing, commercial banks in Guangdong can effectively enhance workforce capabilities, boost service quality, and maintain a strategic edge in a rapidly evolving financial landscape.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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