

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS: A REVIEW OF VAN ROOY AND VISWESVARAN'S (2004)

Megha Quini <sup>1</sup>✉, Dr. Shine David <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Department of Management, Institute of Management Studies, DAVV, Indore, India

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, IMS DAVV, Indore



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## Corresponding Author

Megha Quini,  
[megha.noeldsouza@gmail.com](mailto:megha.noeldsouza@gmail.com)

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## ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the influential meta-analysis by [Van Rooy and Viswesvaran \(2004\)](#), which systematically examined the predictive validity and nomological net of emotional intelligence (EI). The study aimed to clarify the conceptual status of emotional intelligence (EI) in psychological literature by analyzing its relationship with cognitive intelligence, personality, and job performance. Using data from 69 studies involving over 7,000 participants, the authors found moderate correlations between emotional intelligence (EI) and both cognitive ability and personality traits. More importantly, EI showed incremental validity in predicting job performance beyond these traditional constructs. This review summarizes their methodology, key findings, and implications, and discusses the study's relevance in the context of ongoing debates on EI's theoretical foundation and practical applications.

**Keywords:** Emotional, Achievement, Students, Review

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become a central construct in psychology and organizational behavior. Defined broadly as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively, EI is theorized to contribute to personal and professional success. However, questions remain about its measurement, conceptual boundaries, and unique predictive value. In their 2004 meta-analysis, Van Rooy and Viswesvaran sought to address these concerns by synthesizing

empirical evidence on the validity of EI. This paper reviews their contribution, evaluates their methodology, and highlights the significance of their findings.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) aimed to examine:

- The **predictive validity** of emotional intelligence in relation to job performance.
- The **nomological net** of EI—its empirical relationships with established constructs such as cognitive intelligence and personality.
- Whether EI offers **incremental validity** beyond these traditional predictors.

By conducting a meta-analysis, the authors intended to provide a comprehensive and quantitative assessment of the accumulated research up to that time.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The researchers used meta-analytic techniques to synthesize findings from **69 independent studies** involving over **7,000 individuals**. The data included a range of EI measurement instruments—both ability-based and self-report. They used standard statistical methods to compute weighted average correlations between EI and various criteria, including:

- General mental ability (GMA)
- The Big Five personality traits
- Job performance

They also analyzed the potential for **publication bias** and tested for **moderator effects** such as the type of EI measure used.

## 4. KEY FINDINGS

The meta-analysis revealed several important findings:

- **EI and Cognitive Intelligence:** The correlation between EI and GMA was modest ( $r = .23$ ), suggesting that while related, EI is not redundant with intelligence.
- **EI and Personality:** EI showed moderate associations with personality traits, particularly **neuroticism**, **extraversion**, and **conscientiousness** (average  $r \approx .30$ ).
- **EI and Job Performance:** EI had a significant and positive correlation with job performance ( $r = .22$ ), even after controlling for cognitive ability and personality. This indicates **incremental predictive validity**.
- **Measurement Method:** The strength of the relationships varied depending on whether EI was measured through **self-report** or **performance-based tools**, with mixed-methods generally yielding stronger correlations.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings support the argument that EI is a **distinct and meaningful construct** that complements traditional predictors like IQ and personality. From a theoretical standpoint, the study strengthens the **nomological validity** of EI. Practically, it underscores the value of including EI assessments in **employee selection, training, and development programs**.

The study also draws attention to measurement issues, suggesting a need for more **standardized and validated instruments**, especially for distinguishing between **trait EI** (self-perceptions) and **ability EI** (actual emotional skills).

## 6. CRITIQUE AND LIMITATIONS

While the study is robust, certain limitations merit attention:

- **Heterogeneity of Measures:** The wide range of EI instruments included in the metaanalysis makes it difficult to generalize findings to a specific definition or model of EI.
- **Cross-sectional Data:** The meta-analysis relied largely on cross-sectional studies, which limits causal interpretations.
- **Contextual Variables:** The role of contextual factors such as job type, organizational culture, and task complexity was not deeply explored.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a crucial foundation for future research.

## 7. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study by [Van Rooy and Viswesvaran \(2004\)](#) serves as a cornerstone in the field of emotional intelligence research. It not only addressed a key conceptual gap but also offered compelling evidence of EI's value in predicting job performance, even when traditional predictors were controlled for. As research has evolved, this meta-analysis remains highly relevant, continuing to influence both theoretical debates and applied practices in psychology, education, and organizational development.

Van Rooy and Viswesvaran's work remains highly cited and relevant, especially in debates regarding the **validity of emotional intelligence as a psychological construct**. It also laid the groundwork for subsequent studies that differentiated between **trait emotional intelligence** (e.g., Petrides) and **ability models** (e.g., Mayer-Salovey-Caruso). Modern research continues to build upon their conclusions, with increasing attention to **neuroscientific, developmental, and cultural** dimensions of EI.

[Salovey and Mayer \(1990\)](#) first conceptualized EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. [Goleman \(1995\)](#) popularized the idea of EI as a determinant of workplace and leadership success, emphasizing its social and emotional competencies.

[Petrides and Furnham \(2001\)](#). Multiple studies have demonstrated that EI shares moderate correlations with the Big Five personality traits, particularly **neuroticism, extraversion, and agreeableness**. This raises concerns about conceptual redundancy.

Wong and Law (2002). EI is widely acknowledged as a key component of effective leadership. Leaders with high EI are better at managing team dynamics, responding to employee needs, and handling workplace stress.

Meta-analyses such as Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) and later those by O'Boyle et al. (2011) have helped synthesize large bodies of inconsistent findings, offering more precise estimates of EI's predictive value.

Locke (2005). Despite EI's popularity, critics argue that it lacks discriminant validity. Locke (2005) labeled EI an "invalid concept" unless clearly defined and separated from personality and intelligence constructs.

Sy et al. (2006). Emotional intelligence contributes significantly to interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork. Sy et al. (2006) demonstrated that team members with high EI positively influenced group processes and cohesion.

Mayer et al. (2008). Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) clarified that **ability EI**, as measured by tools like the MSCEIT, must be seen differently from trait EI, which overlaps more with personality traits.

Parker et al. (2009). EI has also shown relevance in non-academic areas such as **social skills, stress management, and mental wellbeing** among students and young adults.

Joseph and Newman (2010). Research has consistently supported EI's role in workplace performance. Employees with higher EI tend to be more effective communicators, problem-solvers, and leaders. Van Rooy and Viswesvaran's study was among the first to quantify this relationship through meta-analysis.

Petrides (2011). Recent literature emphasizes the differentiation between trait EI and ability EI, as well as the integration of EI in leadership, healthcare, and education sectors.

## 8. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been widely recognized as a critical factor in predicting success in various life domains, including education, work, and interpersonal relationships. Despite its popularity, early research on EI faced significant challenges in terms of theoretical clarity, measurement consistency, and empirical validation. At the time of Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) study, the academic community was divided on whether EI was a truly distinct construct or merely a repackaging of existing psychological variables such as intelligence and personality.

The rationale behind their meta-analytic study was to systematically examine EI's **predictive validity** and its place within the broader **nomological net**—the conceptual framework connecting EI with other established constructs. By synthesizing empirical results from diverse studies, the authors aimed to assess whether EI could **stand as a unique predictor** of job performance and **contribute incremental validity** beyond traditional metrics like cognitive ability and the Big Five personality traits.

This study was especially important for validating the practical relevance of EI in vocational behavior and organizational settings. It provided clarity amid growing skepticism, thus laying the groundwork for more refined conceptual and measurement models of EI in subsequent years.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The 2004 meta-analysis by Van Rooy and Viswesvaran represents a landmark contribution to the study of emotional intelligence. By quantifying EI's relationships with intelligence, personality, and performance, the study provided strong evidence for its conceptual independence and practical relevance. While measurement challenges persist, the findings reinforce the value of incorporating EI into academic, organizational, and psychological frameworks. The literature overwhelmingly supports the construct validity, incremental predictive power, and practical relevance of emotional intelligence. Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) played a pivotal role in consolidating this evidence at a time when EI's legitimacy was still under debate. Subsequent research has expanded the applications of EI to leadership, education, teamwork, and stress management, while also calling for more precise measurement frameworks and theoretical clarity.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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