

THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF WORK ENGAGEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND POLICE OFFICERS' WORK PERFORMANCE IN THE UAE.

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Abstract: This study investigates the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI), work engagement (WE), and work performance (WP) of police officers in a developing country such as the UAE. The literature review showed that there is still ambiguity about the personal resources and abilities that may mediate the EI-WP relationship. Thereby, this study also examines the mediating effect of WE on the EI-WP relationship among the UAE's police officers. The theoretical framework is established based on extant literature to accomplish these objectives, utilizing the Conservation of Resources (COR) and Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) as foundational theories. To fulfill the study objectives, a quantitative cross-sectional survey method was employed. Questionnaires were distributed to 300 front-line police officers in the UAE's Federal Authority for Identity and Nationality, Customs and Ports Security (ICP) selected through simple random sampling, yielding 253 usable responses. The collected data were analyzed using PLS-SEM to assess the study's hypotheses. The results indicate a significant and positive influence of EI and WE on police officers' WP. Furthermore, EI ability was found to positively and significantly impact police officers' WE. Crucially, the findings reveal that WE partially mediates the EI-WP correlation. These findings contribute to the literature by highlighting the relevance of EI and WE as personal resources and abilities, in enhancing police officers' WP. Understanding these components enables police institutions' decision-makers to optimize police officers' work engagement to enhance their work performance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Work Engagement; Work Performance; Conservation of Resources Theory; Job Demand-Resource Theory; Police Officers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The UAE prioritizes the security of citizens, residents, ports, borders, and free zones, alongside managing customs work, especially given that foreign residents make up 89% of its population (UAE, 2022). Aiming to lead globally in personal security and cybersecurity readiness by 2031 and 2071 (UAE, 2020), the UAE established the Federal Authority for Identity and Nationality, Customs, and Ports Security (ICP) through Federal Law No. (14) of 2021 to manage

nationality, residency, and port security in compliance with international standards (ICP, 2023). Despite ranking sixth globally for personal safety perceptions in Gallup (2022), studies show that enhancing police performance is crucial for public safety (FAHR, 2022; Khassawneh et al., 2022). As part of the Emirates Vision 2021 and the UAE Centennial 2071, the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources (FAHR) has revised and improved the performance management system for federal government employees. FAHR's review highlighted the urgent need to enhance work performance, particularly in the police sector, where public complaints about ICP officers reached 3,833 in 2022 (FAHR, 2022). Consequently, FAHR emphasized the necessity of identifying factors that could improve the performance of ICP police officers. Therefore, this investigation aims to address the work performance of police officers in the UAE's ICP, focusing on the personal resources and capabilities that can enhance their work performance (2024, الشمري).

In addition, work performance extends beyond mere task completion (Sembiring et al., 2020); it encompasses the behaviors and actions taken by employees that align with organizational goals and are within their control, rather than just the results of these actions (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023; Bozionelos & Singh, 2017; Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022). Recognized as a multidimensional concept, work performance includes aspects such as task performance and contextual performance (Bozionelos & Singh, 2017; Hosie et al., 2019; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024; Zaw & Takahashi, 2022). Task performance pertains to how well individuals execute the core responsibilities outlined in their job descriptions or contracts (Hosie et al., 2019; Zaw & Takahashi, 2022). Conversely, contextual performance evaluates how individuals perform within the wider organizational setting (Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022). For police officers, performance is defined by their success in carrying out their duties, measuring both their level of achievement and their effectiveness in fulfilling their roles (Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024). Hence, the performance of police officers is intimately tied to their proficiency in executing their assigned tasks.

Emotional intelligence (EI) stands out as a highly sought-after skill in today's global job market. This significance was highlighted in the World Economic Forum's (2020) Future of Employment reports, where EI ranked among the top ten talents needed for 2020 and the top fifteen skills required for 2025 (Gutiérrez-Carrasco et al., 2022). EI involves the ability to perceive, understand, and effectively manage both personal emotions and the emotions of others (Wong & Law, 2002). It includes accurately recognizing and interpreting one's own emotional states (self-emotion appraisal) and empathetically understanding the emotions of others (others' emotional appraisal) (Sembiring et al., 2020). EI also entails using emotions adeptly to enhance problem-solving, decision-making, and motivation (Sembiring et al., 2020; Wong & Law, 2002). The regulation of emotions is crucial for managing emotional responses, maintaining balance, and fostering resilience across different situations (Al Ali et al., 2012; Wong & Law, 2002). In this regard, EI has been recognized as a critical factor in both individual and organizational performance, significantly impacting the effectiveness of work teams (Hori & Chao, 2022; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a; Van Gelderen et al., 2017). Teams with high EI are noted for their innovation, success, and creativity because their members and leaders possess strong self-awareness and the ability to empathize with others (Bal & Kökalan, 2022). They are adaptable, positive, and excel in adjusting to new circumstances. Therefore, enhancing EI skills not only improves personal effectiveness and success but also enhances the performance of others, thereby boosting overall work performance (Alkandari, n.d.; Alshemmari, 2024).

Despite the essential role of EI in policing, a field that demands exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, research suggests that law enforcement requires the highest levels of EI

among public services (Lan et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2023; Sembiring et al., 2020). This necessity stems from regular interactions with diverse individuals and daily encounters with high-pressure situations involving danger, uncertainty, stress, and unpredictability. Nonetheless, a significant research gap exists regarding the link between EI and police officer performance, especially in developing countries (Cox et al., 2022; Kozial, 2021; Magny & Todak, 2021). Some studies have shown that EI has both direct and indirect effects on work performance (e.g., Hori & Chao, 2022; Maharvi & Tabussam, 2022; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a), however, scholars indicated that there remains uncertainty about how personal resources and abilities, such as work engagement (WE), which may mediate the correlation between EI and employee performance (e.g., Alferaih, 2021; Bhatti et al., 2018; Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021).

Work engagement (WE) has emerged as a key approach to mitigating employee burnout and disengagement, encouraging positive and ethical workplace behavior (Liu et al., 2023; Rasool et al., 2021). According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), WE describes employees who display enthusiasm, commitment, and deep immersion in their jobs. Vigor denotes individuals' high mental resilience and sustained energy at work, showing a willingness to tackle challenges (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Stefanidis et al., 2023). Dedication is characterized by a strong sense of purpose, pride, and inspiration derived from one's job (Gutiérrez-Carrasco et al., 2022; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Absorption is when individuals are completely engrossed in their tasks, losing track of time and finding it hard to detach from work (Liu et al., 2023; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Moreover, WE is critically important, as previous research consistently links it to better performance, organizational citizenship behavior, productivity, and overall employee satisfaction (Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024; Phan et al., 2023; Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022).

In this regard, the 2021 Gallup report highlighted that the work engagement (WE) rate in the UAE was 25%. Despite this, the increase in WE from 2019 to 2021 was only 3 percentage points compared to the previous years (2018-2020). Moreover, the UAE's WE rate lagged behind that of several developing nations, such as the Brazil (29%), Thailand (26%), India (26%), and Philippines (31%), (Gallup, 2022). According to the UAE's FAHR, the WE rate in the police force was notably lower than in other government sectors. In 2022, 5% of government employees left their positions, and among these, 63.1% were police personnel (FAHR, 2022). Additionally, the UAE's ICP reported that 33 police officers resigned over the last three years, contributing to a noticeable decline in police performance within the ICP (ICP, 2023).

Although scholars, researchers, and practitioners have underscored the importance of WE and highlighted its critical role in organizational growth and development across sectors, the persistently low rates of WE pose a significant global challenge that demands further research and exploration (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024; Liu et al., 2023; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023b). Previous research on the predictors of work engagement (WE) has largely concentrated on organizational and job-related factors, often neglecting the personal traits of employees. These individual characteristics and abilities are vital resources that can greatly enhance WE among employees (George et al., 2022; Marseno & Muafi, 2021; Mérida-López et al., 2023). As a result, there is a growing call among academics and researchers to investigate individual resources and abilities for employees that can bolster WE such as EI (e.g., George et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2023; Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021), thereby improving overall performance in various sectors, notably in demanding fields like the police sector.

Thriving in demanding work environments over prolonged periods necessitates a high level of EI, which aids in timely task completion and the nurturing of robust relationships (Aronen et

al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2022). Evidence indicates that employees with elevated EI are generally more engaged in their work (e.g., Barreiro & Treglown, 2020; George et al., 2022; Mérida-López et al., 2023), and this engagement correlates with increased productivity and superior job performance compared to those who are less engaged (e.g., Boccoli et al., 2023; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024; Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022). According to the JD-R model, employees with strong EI are better equipped to sustain higher levels of work engagement (WE), thereby enhancing their overall performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024). Consequently, WE is proposed as a mediator in the EI-work performance (WP) link, following the criteria established by Baron and Kenny (1986) as well as the JD-R model. However, the mediating effect of WE in the EI-WP relationship remains underexplored, particularly within police sectors in both developed and developing contexts. This research is among the first to apply COR theory in conjunction with the JD-R model to conceptualize and evaluate whether work engagement serves as a mediator between EI and work performance among police officers in the UAE's ICP context. The research seeks to answer key questions are: RQ1. Does EI influence police officers' work performance in UAE's ICP? RQ2. Does EI influence police officers' work engagement in UAE's ICP? RQ3. Does work engagement influence police officers' work performance in UAE's ICP? RQ4. Does work engagement mediate the relationship between EI and police officers' work performance in the UAE's ICP?

This article is structured as follows: the forthcoming sections provide an in-depth analysis of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, laying the theoretical groundwork for the study. Afterward, the hypotheses are formulated and the research framework is established. The discussion then moves on to a comprehensive examination of the methodology and results. The article concludes with insights into managerial implications and recommendations for future research (2022, الشمري & محمد).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS BUILDING

2.1. *Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory*

For the past 30 years, Hobfoll's (1989) COR theory has been a key component in organizational psychology, helping to explain various dimensions of the stress experience, such as burnout, EI, WE, and both task-related and contextual performance (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021; Liu et al., 2023; Miao et al., 2021). According to this theory, individuals are driven to acquire, maintain, and shield their precious resources, which can include material sources, favorable circumstances, personal attributes, and energy levels (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Malik & Garg, 2020). Hobfoll et al. (2018) highlight that the COR theory is grounded in the basic concepts of preserving and accumulating resources. This theory explains the underlying motivations that lead individuals to protect their assets and actively pursue further resources. The theory's foundational assumptions about the prevalence of resource loss and the need for resource investment arise from these core ideas (Ojo et al., 2021). Additionally, the theory outlines three key reasons for investing in resources: primarily, individuals invest in personal resources as a preventative strategy to avoid potential resource loss; second, they invest to offset previous losses; and third, they invest to accumulate more resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Wen et al. (2019) and Miao et al. (2021) underscore the robustness of the COR theory by demonstrating that it provides a profound understanding of the motivations behind people's capacity to handle demanding situations, surpassing simple predictions of stress and strain.

Elaborating on the COR theory's fundamental tenets and assumptions, this research elucidates the relationship between EI ability, work engagement (WE), and work performance (WP) among

police officers. In the challenging and high-stress environment of police work, these factors are critical resources that officers aim to acquire, sustain, and protect. COR theory posits that EI-ability is a prestigious personal resource that officers strive to obtain and enhance, making up for any losses and fearing its diminishment, to improve their WE (Dåderman et al., 2022; Dilawar et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2023) and WP (Everett, 2018; Magny & Todak, 2021; Sembiring et al., 2020; Van Gelderen et al., 2017). Additionally, police officers seek to acquire new resources, such as increased work engagement, along with their emotional intelligence, to enhance their work performance. This perspective is consistent with Hobfoll et al. (2018) and Phan et al. (2023), who highlight that beyond protecting their own resources, individuals are motivated to acquire new psychological resources. In this context, EI-ability and WE are seen as desirable resources that police officers can develop to a high standard, significantly influencing their work performance (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021; Ojo et al., 2021). Therefore, this study proposes that police officers with high EI are more engaged at work and exhibit higher work performance. Likewise, it suggests that officers with high WE demonstrate superior work performance, corroborating the theory's claims about the motivations behind individuals' abilities to cope with demanding situations.

2.2. Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) Theory

Drawing on the JD-R theory, this framework offers valuable insights into how job demands and resources shape essential employee outcomes like engagement and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024). The theory views job demands as elements requiring continuous effort, which can result in both physical and mental strain, encompassing factors like high work pressure, emotional exhaustion, and uncertainty in roles (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Lee & Kim, 2020). Conversely, job resources are considered to help achieve objectives, reduce the burden of job demands, and support individual development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018). According to the JD-R Theory, job resources can buffer the harmful impact of job demands on employee well-being, thereby promoting higher motivation and engagement, which in turn, enhances performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024). The model has proven effective in predicting various organizational outcomes, such as burnout, engagement levels, job performance, and the connection between engagement and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024). The JD-R model has gained recognition as a strong theoretical foundation, supported by a wealth of research, innovative insights, and comprehensive meta-analyses over the years. Through this lens, the current study seeks to understand how work engagement (WE) acts as a mediator between EI and job performance in the context of police officers.

The JD-R Theory offers a valuable framework for examining the impact of EI on police job performance, with work engagement serving as a mediating factor. Policing is a high-demand profession, often involving exposure to traumatic situations, extreme stress, and the need for rapid decision-making (Magny & Todak, 2021; Sembiring et al., 2020). In this regard, EI—which encompasses the ability to perceive, apply, comprehend, and regulate emotions—is considered a vital personal resource (Hu et al., 2016; Song, 2019; Lee & Kim, 2020). Within the JD-R model, work engagement (WE)—which is marked by energy, commitment, and full immersion in work tasks—is shaped by the interplay between job demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Garza, 2018; Solaqua, 2022). Officers with heightened emotional intelligence are more likely to manage the emotional and psychological challenges of their work, leading to higher engagement levels (Oliveira et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2023). Engaged officers tend to be more energized, devoted, and absorbed in their duties, resulting in enhanced job performance (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021; Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021). As a result, within the JD-R theory, WE serves as a mediator

in the EI-WP correlation. Police officers with elevated EI are prone to achieving higher levels of work engagement, as their emotional intelligence enables them to effectively manage job demands and leverage job resources. This increased engagement subsequently enhances work performance, as engaged officers are more motivated, concentrated, and resilient (الشمري & محمد, 2024). Therefore, the JD-R Theory provides valuable insights into how personal resources like EI can enhance performance outcomes by promoting work engagement, even in high-stress professions such as policing.

2.3. Hypothesis Building

2.3.1 The Effect of Emotional Intelligence (EI) Ability on Police Officers' Work Performance

Researchers consider emotional intelligence to be a distinct form of intelligence or ability that significantly contributes to more positive work attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes (Luong et al., 2021; Nasir et al., 2023). Goleman (1998) expanded on emotional intelligence by developing it into a theory of performance. He proposed that emotional intelligence competencies reflect the degree to which individuals have mastered certain talents and abilities, enhancing their effectiveness in the workplace. Goleman provided comprehensive explanations for the relationship between an individual's success in a corporate environment and their level of emotional intelligence. Notably, Salovey and Mayer were pioneers in defining emotional intelligence 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 action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). This definition was later refined to "the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions, and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). Goleman (2006) further contended that the management of emotions can influence positive attitudes such as dedication, trust, and commitment. Consequently, this emotional management leads to favorable outcomes, including enhanced productivity, innovation, and achievements for individuals, teams, and organizations (Eshet & Harpaz, 2021; Khassawneh et al., 2022; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a).

Earlier research indicates that individuals with high EI possess the ability to recognize, comprehend, and manage the emotions of others. Consequently, EI is considered a vital factor in cultivating successful interpersonal relationships in the workplace (Bozionelos & Singh, 2017; Everett, 2018; Nasir et al., 2023; Van Gelderen et al., 2017). Studies have shown that EI ability can enhance interpersonal interactions, leading to improved understanding and communication among colleagues (Amar & Arrhioui, 2022; Luong et al., 2021). Dilawar et al. (2021) and Oliveira et al. (2022) found that emotionally intelligent individuals are more adept at forming trusting relationships at work and tend to engage in extra-role behaviors, such as providing support and advice to coworkers. Such positive interpersonal relationships can boost employee productivity and performance. Additionally, employees with high EI are better at regulating their emotions to perform their tasks more effectively, as they are more conscious of how their emotions influence their workplace behavior (Alam et al., 2021; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a; Wong & Law, 2002). These emotionally intelligent employees are also skilled at aligning their emotional responses with the demands and nature of their work (George et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2022). Alam et al. (2021), Nasir et al. (2023), Mahmoud (2023), and Sharma and Tiwari, (2023a) explored the relationship between ability-based EI facets and performance, discovering that individuals with high EI are likely to foster challenge appraisals and demonstrate superior performance, while those with low EI tend to view situations as threats and exhibit poorer performance.

Although limited empirical research connects EI and police work performance, theoretical and practical evidence suggests EI is crucial for roles requiring extensive interpersonal interaction

(e.g., Cox et al., 2022; Dilawar et al., 2021; Magny & Todak, 2021; Oliveira et al., 2023; Rajan et al., 2021; Sembiring et al., 2020). A meta-analysis by Miao et al. (2021) found a positive correlation between EI and job performance, particularly in emotionally demanding roles. Al Ali et al. (2012) observed significant links between EI and police performance among Abu Dhabi officers, even when controlling for personality and mental abilities. Similarly, Everett (2018) found a strong correlation between EI and police performance in the U.S., with EI accounting for 77.4% of performance variability. Sembiring et al. (2020) confirmed EI's positive impact on performance, job satisfaction, and a caring climate among Indonesian criminal investigation officers. Lastly, Mahmoud (2023) found that higher EI fosters empathy, boosting contextual performance and organizational citizenship behavior in challenging settings.

In summary, reflecting on the aforementioned discussion and the core principles of the COR theory, this study suggests that EI is a vital resource and capability that police officers strive to attain and utilize to counteract resource depletion and mitigate their concerns in the challenging and high-stress context of police work. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: EI-ability positively influences police officers' work performance in UAE's ICP.

2.3.2. The Effect of Emotional Intelligence (EI) Ability on Police Officers' Work Engagement

Work engagement (WE), along with the resources and abilities that predict it, has been a primary focus for both researchers and practitioners over the past two decades. WE is recognized as an effective strategy to combat burnout, foster employee commitment, and encourage positive emotions and ethical behavior in the workplace (Liu et al., 2023; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a; Stefanidis et al., 2023). Contemporary research underscores the numerous positive outcomes associated with employee engagement, though individual differences in employees' propensity for WE are evident (Boccoli et al., 2023; Rabiul et al., 2023). Additionally, emerging research suggests a positive correlation among higher EI-ability and elevated levels of WE (George et al., 2022; Mérida-López et al., 2023; Widowati & Satrya, 2023). For instance, Barreiro and Treglown (2020), D'Amico et al. (2020), and Pérez-Fuentes et al. (2018) found that employees' EI was positively associated with the dimensions of WE: "vigor, dedication, and absorption".

Police officers embody a dual role: safeguarding the public by enforcing laws—such as preventing crime and maintaining peace—and aiding citizens by offering various services (Oliveira et al., 2023; van Gelderen et al., 2011, 2017). Consequently, police work is multifaceted, strenuous, demanding, and perilous. Beyond courage and physical prowess, success in law enforcement necessitates strong communication skills and the ability to build rapport with others (Sembiring et al., 2020). Hence, police work is arguably the most emotionally intelligence-intensive role within public services, not only due to the extensive daily interpersonal interactions but also because officers frequently face high-risk, hazardous, uncertain, stressful, and unpredictable situations (Choi & Guy, 2020; Lan et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2023; Sembiring et al., 2020). Accordingly, prior research indicates that employees' WE can be significantly influenced by their level of emotional intelligence, particularly in high-pressure environments (e.g., Mérida-López et al., 2023; Widowati & Satrya, 2023; Zheng et al., 2022).

In this context, Oliveira et al. (2022) identified a correlation between emotional demands—such as the need to express positive emotions and suppress negative ones—and work engagement among 924 Portuguese police officers. Similarly, Oliveira et al. (2023) revealed connections between the demands of emotional labor (like managing negative emotions and expressing positive ones) and different strategies (such as deep and surface acting) with both work engagement and occupational identity among 924 officers from the Portuguese Public Security Police (PSP).

To sum up, reflecting on the discussion and COR theory, individuals use their personal resources to limit losses and enhance gains. Emotional resources are key as they promote positive attitudes and improve WE (Anwar et al., 2022; Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021; Miao et al., 2021). Those with high emotional intelligence are generally better at building successful relationships with their peers, resulting in a greater accumulation of emotional resources. This accumulation drives them to invest more effort into their work to achieve better results, such as higher WE, as per COR theory (Dåderman et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2023). Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: *EI-ability positively influences police officers' work engagement in UAE's ICP.*

2.3.3. The Effect of Work Engagement on Police officers' Work Performance

The Work Engagement (WE) Model (Bakker, 2011), the COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), and the JD-R theory (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013) all propose that high levels of WE lead to superior outcomes. Empirical evidence supports this view, demonstrating that WE is a strong predictor of various organizational results, including task or in-role performance (Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024; Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022), and "organizational citizenship behavior", also referred to as contextual or extra-role performance (Bhatti et al., 2018; Bhardwaj & Kalia, 2021; Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022). Furthermore, Gallup's analysis (2022) of 112,312 business units across 96 countries found a robust link between work engagement and key performance metrics such as employee retention, productivity, safety, and profitability.

To elucidate the mechanism through which police officers' work engagement impacts their performance, van Gelderen and Bik (2016) and Li et al. (2022) highlighted that engaged officers integrate various aspects of their emotional and cognitive selves to transform their tasks and activities into meaningful accomplishments. Similarly, Chavez et al. (2022) observed that individuals personally engaged in their work channel positive emotional and cognitive energy into their role performance. Compared to their disengaged counterparts, highly engaged employees exhibit a passion for their work, a deep understanding of their role's significance, and a strong loyalty to their organization. The work-engagement model proposed by Bakker (2011) suggests that improving work performance necessitates an employee demonstrating vigor (exhibiting high levels of energy and mental resilience at work), dedication (being deeply involved in work, feeling enthusiastic, important, and challenged), and absorption (being fully concentrated and engrossed in one's job). In this context, Chavez et al., (2022), Li et al. (2022), and van Gelderen and Bik (2016), found that police officers' WE has both direct and indirect significant positive effects on their performance.

In summary, building on the preceding discussion and the core principles of COR theory, this study posits that work engagement is a crucial resource and capability that police officers seek to acquire, preserve, and replenish. In the challenging and stressful environment of police work, maintaining and enhancing work engagement becomes essential for optimizing performance (Ahmad et al., 2021; Chavez et al., 2022; Chen & Fellenz, 2020; Li et al., 2022; van Gelderen & Bik, 2016). Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: *Work engagement positively affects police officers' work performance in UAE's ICP.*

2.3.4. The Mediating Effect of Work Engagement on the Relationship between EI-Ability and Police Officers' Work Performance

A review of previous studies has identified EI and work engagement (WE) as two of the most vital assets and skills an employee must possess. This is particularly true for roles requiring emotional labor, where employees can perform more efficiently, productively, and with greater motivation if they can recognize and appropriately manage their own emotions. Consequently, they become more engaged in their work (George et al., 2022; Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021; Widowati & Satrya, 2023; Zheng et al., 2022), leading to improved performance (Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024; Khaerunnisa & Kadir, 2022; Khassawneh et al., 2022). Moreover, by the conceptual model, Ahmed et al. (2022) indicated that work engagement serves as a mediator between personal resources (such as individual traits and self-efficacy), job resources (like job features, support from supervisors and colleagues, involvement in decision-making, and job security), and job performance. Additionally, Ali et al. (2021) investigated the role of work engagement—specifically "vigor, dedication, and absorption"—as a mediator between emotional intelligence and job performance in healthcare professionals across Spain. Their study, which surveyed 1,549 healthcare workers (62.1% women; average age: 36.51 years) from multiple hospitals, found that work engagement mediates the effect of emotional intelligence on job performance, even when adjusting for sociodemographic variables.

Extensive research indicates that WE partially mediates the link between work performance (WP) and its antecedents. For instance, Mohamud Shire (2021) found that WE partially mediates the connection between the JD-R model and WP in Somaliland's telecommunications industry. Likewise, Amalia et al. (2021) revealed that WE serves as a partial mediator between "work motivation, the physical work environment, and WP" within the Indonesian healthcare sector. Kusuma (2021) showed that WE partially mediates the link between the quality of work life and WP in Indonesia's banking sector. In the Peruvian healthcare sector, Bernales-Turpo et al. (2022) found that WE partially mediates the correlation between "professional self-efficacy, life satisfaction, exhaustion, and WP". Similarly, Isah Leontes and Hoole (2024) discovered that WE partially mediates the correlation between "human capital management practices and various performance dimensions—including task, adaptive, and contextual performance"—in South African hotels. Finally, in the police sector, Chavez et al. (2022) found that WE partially mediates the link between resilience and WP among police officers in the Philippines.

In conclusion, drawing from the discussion and the JD-R theory—which posits that WE mediates the link between job resources/demands and work performance (WP) in challenging work settings—it is clear that EI has both direct and indirect impacts on WP (Bozionelos & Singh, 2017; Maharvi & Tabussam, 2022; Miao et al., 2021; Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a). Prior research indicates that EI significantly boosts WE (e.g., George et al., 2022; Mérida-López et al., 2023; Widowati & Satrya, 2023; Zheng et al., 2022), which subsequently improves WP (e.g., Boccoli et al., 2023; Phan et al., 2023; Waheed et al., 2023; Isah Leontes & Hoole, 2024). Thus, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H4: *Work engagement mediates the correlation between EI-ability and police officers' work performance in UAE's ICP.*

Following the earlier analysis, this study sets out to investigate the links between emotional intelligence ability (EI), work engagement (WE), and work performance (WP) among the UAE ICP's police officers. Moreover, it examines the mediating role of WE in the EI-WP relationship among the UAE ICP's police officers. The framework for this study is presented in Figure 1.

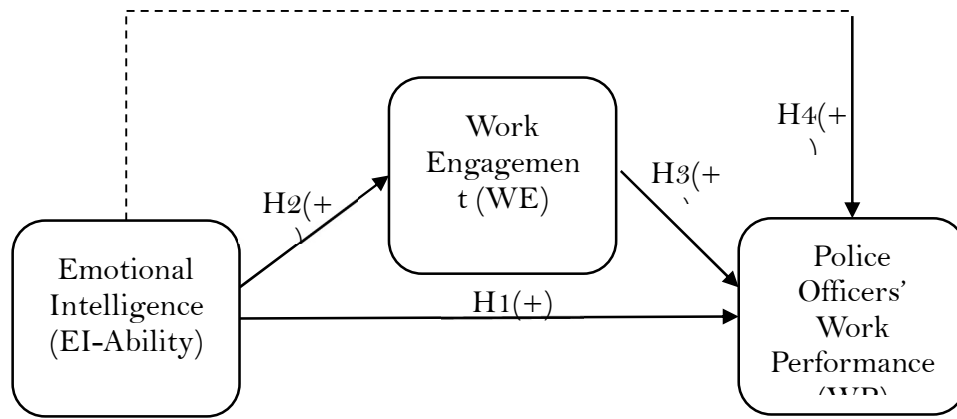


Figure 1. Research Framework.

3. METHODS

3.1. Samples

To fulfill the objectives of this study, data were collected from police officers within the UAE's ICP, which includes divisions such as identity and nationality, customs port security, and public administration. After receiving ethical clearance from UUM, 300 questionnaires were distributed among the police officers, resulting in 253 valid responses for the final analysis. The participants were approximately two-thirds men, with ages ranging from 25 to 50 years. Over two-thirds of the participants held a bachelor's degree and higher, and the majority had six or more years of experience, primarily working at the non-executive level. This indicates that the respondents had substantial expertise and qualifications, making them well-suited to provide insightful responses to the study questionnaire. The respondents' demographic profile is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents Profile (n= 253).

Item	Category	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender	Male	191	75.5
	Female	62	24.5
	Total	253	100
Age Group	25-30 Year	42	16.6
	31-35 Year	66	26.1
	36-40 Year	56	22.1
	41-45 Year	47	18.6
	46-50 Year	35	13.8
	Over 50 Year	7	2.8
	Total	253	100
Education Level	Diploma	28	11.1
	Bachelor	143	56.5
	Master	64	25.3
	Doctorate	18	7.1
	Total	253	100

The length of work in the police sector	3-5 years	38	15.0
	6-10 years	84	33.2
	11-15 years	80	31.6
	More than 15 years	51	20.2
	Total	253	100
The work sector in the Authority of ICP	Identity and Nationality	90	35.6
	The Customs	75	29.6
	Port Security	62	24.5
	Public Administration	26	10.3
	Total	253	100
The Current Position	Non-Executive Level	184	72.7
	Executive Level	69	27.3
	Total	253	100

3.2. Measures

This study utilized measurement instruments from previous research to evaluate the constructs in question. Assessments were carried out using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Specifically, Wong and Law's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), developed in 2002, was employed to measure EI-ability across its four dimensions: "self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion." This 16-item scale includes statements such as "I really understand what I feel," "I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others," "I am a self-motivated person," and "I am capable of controlling my emotions." Similarly, the "Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)," created by Schaufeli et al. (2002), was used to measure the three dimensions of WE: vigor, commitment, and absorption. This 17-item scale includes items like "In my job, I feel strong and vigorous," "My job inspires me," and "Time flies when I am working." Lastly, the "Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ)," developed by Koopmans et al. (2016), was used to assess the two dimensions of WP: task performance and contextual performance. This 13-item scale includes items such as "I can perform my duties efficiently" and "I accepted additional responsibilities."

3.3. Procedure

Due to the predictive nature of this research, the study conducted an investigation and tested its hypotheses using SSEM-PLS analysis via Smart-PLS 3.3.3 software. PLS-SEM is acknowledged as a suitable method for predictive research and the statistical analysis of complex models (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022), offering greater statistical power than covariance-based SEM in predictive modeling (Henseler & Schuberth, 2023). This is particularly relevant in the current study, where EI ability and work engagement (WE) are considered potential influences on police officers' work performance, with WE also being examined as a mediator. The analysis within the PLS model encompasses both the "measurement model and the structural model." The measurement model assesses the reliability and validity of the constructs, while the structural

model tests the hypotheses, evaluates the explained variance, and examines the model's predictive relevance (Q^2).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Measurement Model Results

To ensure the reliability of a measurement, it is crucial to evaluate both its consistency and stability. This study adopted the criteria set by Hair et al. (2019) to scrutinize the measurement model, with a focus on construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. As noted by Ali et al. (2021), reliability pertains to how accurately an item measures the intended latent construct. Internal reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which reflects the average correlation among items within a construct (Meeker et al., 2022; Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). In contrast, composite reliability (CR) gauges the overall reliability and internal consistency of a latent variable, requiring a CR value above 0.70 for the construct to be deemed reliable (Hair et al., 2021; Lai, 2021). In this study, Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.73 to 0.84, and CR values ranged from 0.83 to 0.88, all of which are within acceptable limits, confirming the scale's consistency and stability (see Table 2).

Additionally, item loading, which reflects the reliability level, denotes the correlation between each measured indicator and the reflective construct (Hair et al., 2021). The PLS Algorithm was used to evaluate these loadings. Items WP-CP5, WP-CP6, WE-V1, and UOE, with loadings below 0.50, were excluded, ensuring that each construct maintained at least three items, as recommended by Hair et al. (2021) and Sarstedt et al. (2022). According to Table 2, the remaining item loadings exceed the 0.50 threshold, demonstrating convergent validity at the construct level.

Furthermore, "Average Variance Extracted (AVE)" is a widely used metric to confirm convergent validity at the conceptual level. It is calculated as the mean of the squared loadings of indicators associated with the construct, divided by the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler & Schuberth, 2023). An AVE value of 0.50 or higher is considered satisfactory (Hair et al., 2021). Table 2 shows that all AVE values surpass 0.50, validating the convergent validity of the model. This confirms that the model meets the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity (Outer Loading and AVE)

Construct	Dimension	Item	Loading (≥ 0.60)	Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.70)	CR (≥ 0.70)	AVE (> 0.50)
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Self-Emotion Appraisal (SEA)	SEA1	0.75	0.732	0.833	0.562
		SEA2	0.83			
		SEA3	0.84			
		SEA4	0.53			
	Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA)	OEA1	0.71	0.734	0.834	0.558
		OEA2	0.80			
		OEA3	0.79			
		OEA4	0.67			
		UOE2	0.64			
		UOE3	0.86			
UOE4	0.88	0.795	0.857	0.548		
ROE1	0.69					
		ROE2	0.76			

Work Engagement (WE)	Regulation of Emotion (ROE)	ROE3	0.77			
		ROE4	0.82			
		ROE5	0.66			
	Vigour (WE- V)	WE_V2	0.60			
		WE_V3	0.82			
		WE_V4	0.78	0.764	0.842	0.520
		WE_V5	0.76			
		WE_V6	0.63			
		WE_D1	0.76			
	Dedication (WE_D)	WE_D2	0.76			
		WE_D3	0.82	0.843	0.888	0.615
		WE_D4	0.85			
		WE_D5	0.73			
	Absorption (WE_A)	WE_A1	0.70			
WE_A2		0.75				
WE_A3		0.64	0.817	0.867	0.522	
WE_A4		0.72				
WE_A5		0.78				
WE_A6		0.75				
Work Performance (WP)	Task Performance (WP_TP)	WP_TP1	0.81			
		WP_TP2	0.88			
		WP_TP3	0.70	0.820	0.872	0.580
	Contextual Performance (WP_CP)	WP_TP4	0.73			
		WP_TP5	0.67			
		WP_CP1	0.70			
		WP_CP2	0.81			
		WP_CP3	0.55	0.807	0.861	0.512
WP_CP4	0.73					
WP_CP7	0.76					
WP_CP8	0.72					

Following the assessment of convergent validity, the researchers undertook a discriminant validity test using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) method, which evaluates correlations both within and across constructs (Henseler & Schubert, 2023). The HTMT method is applied to validate discriminant validity, where discriminant validity is considered compromised if the HTMT value exceeds 0.90 (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019; Hair et al., 2021). As illustrated in Table 3, all HTMT values remain below 0.90, thereby confirming the model's discriminant validity.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity: Outcomes of Cross-Loading

Construct	OEA	ROE	SEA	UOE	WE-A	WE-D	WE-V	WP-CP	WP-TP
OEA									
ROE	0.114								
SEA	0.859	0.156							
UOE	0.73	0.127	0.628						
WE-A	0.283	0.308	0.178	0.211					
WE-D	0.191	0.116	0.185	0.211	0.202				
WE-V	0.822	0.128	0.657	0.729	0.284	0.198			
WP-CP	0.791	0.134	0.645	0.724	0.239	0.296	0.762		
WP-TP	0.562	0.152	0.497	0.437	0.143	0.136	0.532	0.652	

*Key: EI= Emotional Intelligence, WE= Work Engagement, Work Performance, EI_SEA= Self-Emotion Appraisal, EI_OEA= Others' Emotion Appraisal, EI_UOE= Use of Emotion, EI_ROE= Regulation of Emotion, WE-V= Vigour, WE_D= Dedication, WE_A= Absorption, WP_TP= Task Performance, and WP_CP= Contextual Performance.

After thorough testing of the measurement model using item loading, "convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted, AVE), and discriminant validity (including the square root of AVE, and HTMT)", this study concludes that the employed measures demonstrate robust levels of both convergent and discriminant validity. Figure 2 presents a comprehensive overview of the overall measurement model as analyzed by the PLS Algorithm, highlighting Path Coefficients, Item Loadings, and R² Values.

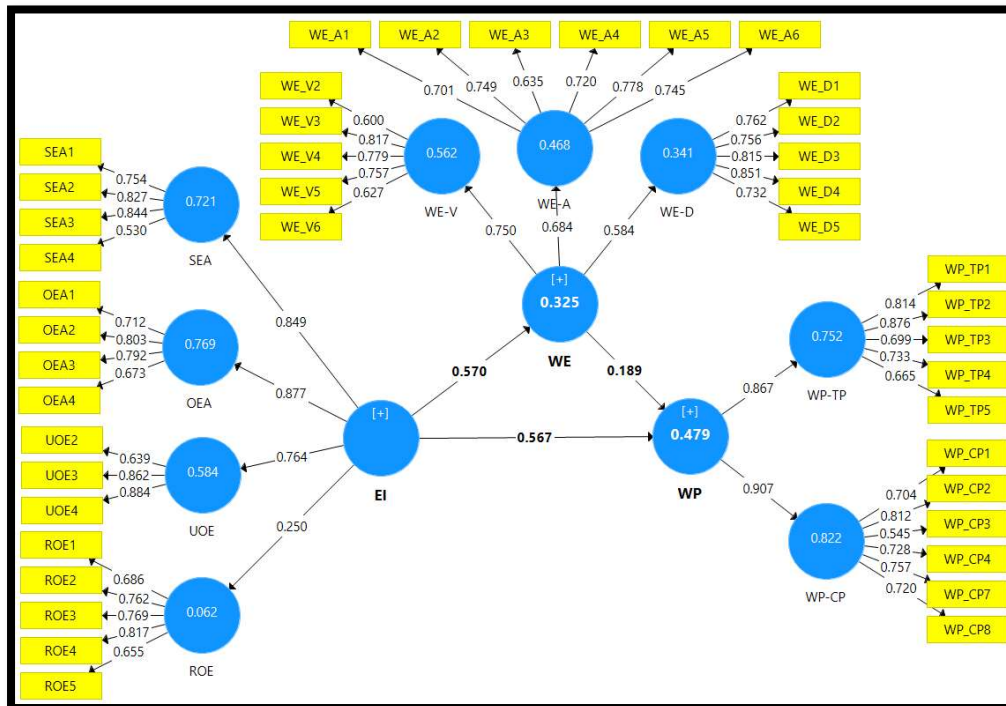


Figure 2. The Overall Measurement Model (Path Coefficient, Items Loadings, and R² Values)

4.2. Structural Model Evaluation

In this section, we examine the validity of the hypotheses and the predictive relevance of the proposed model by employing bootstrapping with 5,000 sub-samples and the blindfolding method technique with one-tailed using Smart-PLS 3.3.3. Path coefficients (β values), t-statistics, and p-values are used to identify the statistical significance of the links between constructs in the model—emotional intelligence (EI), work engagement (WE), and work performance (WP)—among UAE police officers, with significance thresholds at $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, or $p < 0.001$. Table 5 presents the results of direct hypotheses testing. The hypothesis test results displayed in Table 4 and Figure 3 clearly demonstrate that EI-ability has a positive and statistically significant effect on both police officers' WP and WE in UAE's ICP ($\beta = 0.570$, $t = 9.918$, $p < 0.001$ and $\beta = 0.567$, $t = 9.346$, $p < 0.001$, respectively). Additionally, WE has a positive and statistically significant impact on WP ($\beta = 0.189$, $t = 3.065$, $p < 0.001$). These findings strongly support hypotheses H1, H2, and H3.

Table 4. Summary of the Direct Effect

Hypo-NO.	Direct Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P-Values	Decision
H1	EI -> WP	0.570	0.057	9.918	0.000	Supported
H2	EI -> WE	0.567	0.061	9.346	0.000	Supported
H3	WE -> WP	0.189	0.062	3.065	0.001	Supported

In addition, the R^2 value indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is jointly explained by the independent variables. Models with low R^2 values lack meaningful explanatory power; typically, R^2 values below 0.10 are deemed insufficient in capturing the variance of an endogenous component (Falk & Miller, 1992; Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). According to Cohen (1988), an R^2 value above 0.26 signifies substantial explanatory power. As illustrated in Figure 2 and Table 5, the R^2 results from this study indicate that the two independent constructs (EI and WE) together explain about 48 percent of the overall variance in police officers' WP in the UAE's ICP, and EI-ability explains 33 percent of the variance in police officers' WE in ICP. This demonstrates the strong explanatory power of the study model. Moreover, the influence of latent-variables on the dependent variable was assessed using f^2 analysis, complementing the R^2 values (Chin, 2010). Cohen (2013) explains that while p-values indicate the presence of an effect, they do not convey the effect's magnitude. Consequently, f^2 values were utilized to represent effect sizes, categorized as small (0.02 to 0.15), medium (0.15 to 0.35), and large (above 0.35). As shown in Table 6, the effect sizes for EI-Ability and WE on police officers' work performance (WP) in the ICP are 0.42 (large) and 0.05 (small), respectively, whereas the effect size for EI-Ability on police officers' WE in the ICP is 0.48 (large). Additionally, Q^2 values were examined using the blindfolding technique. The Q^2 values presented in Table 6 reflect the model's robust predictive capability, as the Q^2 value exceeds the 0.0000 threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2021).

Table 5. Impact Size f^2

Construct	R ²	Effect Size (f^2)	Result
Police Officers' Work Performance			
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	0.479	0.42	Large
Work Engagement (WE)	0.479	0.05	Small
Work Engagement (WE)			
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	0.325	0.48	Large

Table 6. Predictive Relevance (Blindfolding) Q^2

Endogenous Construct	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1 - SSE/SSO)$	Predictive Relevance
Police Officers' Work Performance	2849	2287.957	0.197	Moderate
Work Engagement (WE)	4144	3860.447	0.068	Small

To test for mediation, we employed the bootstrapping method with 5,000 samples and a 95% confidence level, known for its superior effectiveness and accuracy compared to other methods (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2021) and Zhao et al. (2010), we determined the nature of the mediation—whether full or partial. Specifically, we investigated the expected mediating effect of work engagement (WE) on the relationship between EI ability and police officers' work performance (WP) in UAE's ICP. The findings, presented in Table 7, unequivocally show the significant mediating role of WE in the relationship between EI-ability and police officers' WP in ICP. The bootstrapping results indicate that the confidence intervals for the indirect effect of WE on the EI-Ability and WP relationship in UAE's ICP ($\beta = 0.108$, $t = 2.679$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI = 0.047 to 0.177) do not cross zero, thereby confirming support for H4. Moreover, as indicated in Table 5, the direct effect of EI on police officers' WP in ICP was significant, suggesting that WE partially mediates the EI-WP relationship. Figure 3 offers the output of PLS Bootstrapping.

Table 7. Mediating Effect

No	Hypothesis	Std Beta	Std Error	T Values	P Values	BCILL 5%	BCIUL 95%	Decision
H4	EI -> WE -> WP	0.108	0.029	2.679	0.004	0.047	0.177	Supported

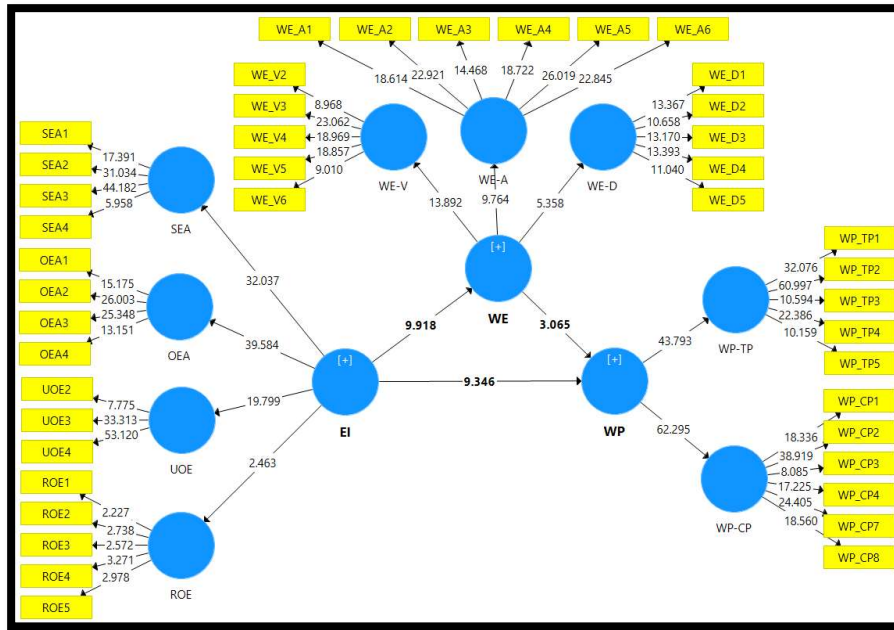


Figure 3. PLS Bootstrapping for Direct Effect (T Statistics)

5. DISCUSSION

Despite extensive research on the relationship between EI and work performance (WP) (e.g., Gong et al., 2019; Hori & Chao, 2022; Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a), there remains a significant gap in studies focusing on police officers in developing countries such as the UAE (Al Ali et al., 2012; Sembiring et al., 2020). Furthermore, there is still uncertainty regarding the personal resources and abilities enhanced by EI that impact work performance. To address these gaps and explore potential mediators like work engagement (WE), this study sought to answer four key research questions about the correlation between EI ability, work engagement (WE), and work performance among the UAE's police officers, as well as WE as a mediator. Firstly, our study demonstrated a statistically significant positive effect of EI-ability on police officers' WP in UAE's ICP, indicating that possessing EI abilities—such as self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others' emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE)—enhances work performance by approximately 57 percent. These findings are consistent with previous studies on police officers by Al Ali et al. (2012) in the UAE, Everett (2018) in the United States, and Sembiring et al. (2020) in Indonesia. However, this study differs from prior research by examining EI-ability as a second-order construct through its four dimensions and utilizing task and contextual performance measures for police officers in the UAE's ICP.

Secondly, the study revealed a significant positive effect of EI ability on police officers' WE in UAE's ICP, suggesting that the ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and those of others, and effectively use these emotions, increases WE by nearly 57 percent. These results align with studies on the correlation between EI and police officers' WE by Oliveira et al. (2022, 2023) in Portugal, as well as research in other sectors, including multiple international organizations in the UK by Barreiro and Treglown (2020), the education and health sectors in Egypt by Awad and Ashour (2020), the health sector in KSA by Alotaibi et al. (2020), and the banking sector in Indonesia by Widowati and Satrya (2023). However, this study is among the first to investigate the context of police work within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Thirdly, our study identified a statistically significant positive impact of WE on police officers'

WP in UAE's ICP. This suggests that the ability of ICP's police officers to exhibit vigour (WE_V), dedication (WE_D), and absorption (WE_A) in their roles enhances their work performance by approximately 19 percent. These findings are consistent with research on the correlation between WE and WP in the police sector in the Netherlands by van Gelderen and Bik (2016), in the Philippines by Chavez et al. (2022), and in Hong Kong by Li et al. (2022). They also align with studies in other sectors, including the UAE's public health service by Al Badi et al. (2023) and Hasan et al. (2023), and in KSA's public and private sectors by Abdelwahed and Doghan (2023). However, this study is among the pioneering research in the context of the police within the GCC countries.

Furthermore, the findings of this study align with the core principles of the COR theory, providing tangible support for its relevance in the police sector of a developing country like the UAE. Specifically, the results suggest that EI and WE are crucial resources and capabilities that police officers strive to acquire and preserve, particularly to mitigate their loss and enhance work performance in a demanding and stressful environment. This aligns with the observations of Chen and Fellenz (2020), Dåderman et al. (2022), Dilawar et al. (2021), and Oliveira et al. (2023). Consequently, these findings reinforce the COR Theory, particularly regarding the relationships between EI, WE, and WP in the police sector of developing economies.

Finally, our study uncovered a significant and partial mediating effect of WE on the EI-WP correlation among police officers in UAE's ICP. These findings align with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, which suggests that possessing EI alone may not be sufficient for achieving optimal work performance (Khaerunnisa & Kadir, 2022; Maharvi & Tabussam, 2022; Sharma & Tiwari, 2023a). The results also underscore the importance of integrating employees' personal resources and abilities, such as EI and WE, particularly in roles that involve emotional labor. Where police officers who can effectively recognize and manage their emotions are more likely to be engaged in their work, leading to improved performance. Moreover, these findings provide practical evidence that EI ability and WE are closely intertwined and crucial for enhancing WP. Our study also aimed to clarify the personal resources and abilities that could amplify the indirect effect of EI on WP by providing empirical evidence for the mediation of WE in the EI-WP relationship. Overall, our results offer empirical support for the notion that organizations should focus on developing their employees' personal resources and capabilities (e.g., EI ability) to enhance their engagement with work, which in turn improves their WP. This is especially pertinent for those operating in challenging and stressful work environments, such as the police sector. Therefore, organizations can boost their employees' work performance by fostering their personal resources and capabilities, such as EI and WE.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This study delves into an underexplored issue and introduces a new model that expands our understanding of the relationship between EI, work engagement (WE), and work performance (WP) for police officers in developing countries. The findings indicate that EI positively affects police officers' WP, both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, EI significantly enhances their WE. Crucially, this research elucidates the mediating role of WE in the EI-WP relationship for police officers. Consequently, EI and WE emerge as the two fundamental pillars for enhancing WP among police officers.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study offers valuable theoretical insights into the fields of organizational behavior (OB), human resource management (HRM), and performance management by exploring how EI and

work engagement (WE) collaboratively influence work performance (WP). It introduces a model that integrates EI, WE, and WP specifically in the police sector of a developing country, bridging gaps in existing literature. A key theoretical contribution lies in exploring the mediating role of WE in the EI-WP relationship, a dimension largely unexplored until now. The findings underscore that both EI and WE exert direct effects on police officers' WP, with EI also influencing WP indirectly through WE. Moreover, this study addresses how organizations can harness employees' personal resources and capabilities to navigate the challenges of demanding work environments, particularly in policing. Unlike previous research that often focuses solely on individual constructs' direct impacts on performance (e.g., Al Ali et al., 2012; Alam et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022; Magny & Todak, 2021; Nasir et al., 2023), this study emphasizes their combined effect. This comprehensive approach enhances our understanding of the intricate relationships among EI, WE, and WP, shedding light on the mechanisms through which EI influences WP, such as WE. These insights are pivotal for refining theoretical models and frameworks in OB and HRM, particularly in the unique context of policing in developing countries. Moreover, the current study bolsters the COR and J-D R theories, particularly concerning the correlations between EI, WE, and police officers' WP in developing economies.

6.2. Practical Implications

The study's findings hold considerable practical implications for researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers within police institutions, as well as for security policymakers in developing nations, particularly in areas such as identity, nationality, customs, and port security, like the UAE's ICP. By elucidating the direct relationships between EI, WE, and police officers' WP, this research offers valuable insights into enhancing performance within the police sector. Police institution decision-makers can leverage and augment the personal resources and capabilities of their officers, such as EI and WE, to achieve significant improvements in WP. Moreover, the study addresses the needs of researchers and stakeholders in police institutions by highlighting the mediating role of employees' personal resources and abilities, such as WE, in the relationship between EI and WP. Recognizing work engagement as an ongoing process, managers and decision-makers must acknowledge the crucial motivational role of personal resources and abilities in enhancing WE, thereby positively impacting performance outcomes (Chavez et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2023). It is imperative for managers to proactively provide training programs that help employees understand and regulate their own emotions and those of others. Such programs can mitigate work-related stress and foster a sense of commitment, leading to higher levels of WE and WP. Specifically, policymakers can utilize these findings to develop more targeted and effective support strategies for advancing police institutions in developing nations. By recognizing the critical importance of dynamic personal resources and abilities, like EI and WE, policymakers can design policies and initiatives aimed at cultivating WE and WP among police officers. This could include offering training opportunities, mentorship programs, and dedicated resources focused on EI abilities for enhancing WE and WP.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations that warrant exploration in future research. Firstly, the results are derived from the UAE ICP's police officers, thus their applicability is mainly confined to the UAE ICP's police sector. To generalize these findings, future studies should expand the participant pool to include various sectors or regions, enhancing the understanding of the EI, WE, and WP relationship in diverse settings. Secondly, the study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of data at one point in time, restricting the ability

to observe long-term relationships among EI, WE, and WP. A longitudinal approach is recommended to track changes in behavior over time and to establish causal links between these variables. Thirdly, the study model should be applied in different contexts within both developing and developed countries, or a comparative analysis could be conducted using data from both. Lastly, while this research identifies WE as a mediator in the EI-WP relationship, future studies might explore other mediators, such as employee resilience, to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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