



Boosting Sports Success: How Administrators' Emotional Intelligence Drives Organizational Performance

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Abstract

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The main goal of this research was to explore how emotional intelligence influences organizational performance in Ethiopian national sports federations, addressing gaps in the literature on sports organizations and developing countries like Ethiopia. The researchers employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. Data were gathered from 296 administrators using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale and Kaplan's scale to measure organizational performance. Data analysis was conducted with SPSS version 28 using quantile regression, revealing a positive correlation between overall emotional intelligence and organizational performance ($r = 0.621$, $p < 0.05$). Emotional awareness ($\beta = 0.120$, $p = 0.012$) and emotional management ($\beta = 0.114$, $p = 0.018$) had a positive effect on organizational performance. In contrast, social emotional intelligence ($\beta = -0.106$, $p = 0.025$) and relationship management ($\beta = -0.104$, $p = 0.035$) negatively impacted organizational performance. These results emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence in improving governance, fostering resilience, and nurturing athletes, especially when resources are limited, though caution should be exercised in relying on social skills. Practically, we recommend customized emotional intelligence training to help these sports federations stay competitive internationally.



Introduction

Emotional intelligence, also known as emotional quotient, refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as to recognize and influence the emotions of others ([Sharma, 2024](#)). Integrating EI into organizational strategies can significantly affect financial outcomes and overall effectiveness. ([Kiishi, 2024](#)). It is essential for effective leadership and organizational success, as it improves team dynamics, employee engagement, decision-making, and financial results ([Singh et al., 2022](#)).

Existing research highlights several key gaps that this study addresses. First, most studies on EI and organizational performance have focused on Western organizational contexts ([Ferranco, 2025](#)). According to [Lonati and Van Vugt \(2024\)](#); [Md. Isa et al. \(2024\)](#), leadership at the global level is heavily shaped by environmental contexts, including cultural and economic factors. This Western-centric emphasis overlooks how administrators' EI impacts organizational performance in diverse global settings. This oversight is particularly evident in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa—such as Ethiopia—with its unique socio-cultural, economic, and institutional landscape, represents a compelling yet under-researched context. Thus, further research is needed in Ethiopia and other developing countries to explore these dynamics.

Second, existing research on emotional intelligence (EI) and organizational performance in sports is limited, emerging studies have begun to explore related

leadership dynamics in Ethiopian contexts, providing a foundation that underscores the need for more targeted investigations ([Liu et al., 2024](#); [Takele, 2024](#)). For instance, recent work has examined diverse leadership styles and their impacts on employee performance within Ethiopian sports organizations, as well as the role of transformational leadership in enhancing outcomes in selected Ethiopian sports federations ([Tadesse, Haddera, et al., 2024](#); [Takele, 2024](#)). However, direct empirical studies specifically linking administrators' EI to organizational performance in Ethiopian national sports federations remain scarce, highlighting a critical gap that this research addresses by focusing on EI's unique contributions in this under-explored setting ([Liu et al., 2024](#); [Tadesse, Haddera, et al., 2024](#)).

Ethiopian National Sports Federations face persistent challenges that undermine their success, including leadership deficiencies, high employee turnover, and governance conflicts ([Liu et al., 2024](#)). These issues contribute to a suboptimal organizational culture, reduced job satisfaction, and diminished performance ([Andargie et al., 2025](#)). Such problems are exacerbated by inadequate EI among administrators, leading to ineffective conflict resolution, poor human resource management, and overall suboptimal organizational performance.

The Ethiopian National Sports Federations are crucial for nurturing talent, promoting sports culture, and building national pride through competitive achievements ([Tadesse, Haddera, et al., 2024](#)).



However, their success depends on robust leadership and well-structured organizations. As the global sports landscape evolves, effective leadership in sports federations becomes increasingly vital for enhancing performance and fostering sustainable growth in Ethiopian sports ([Tadesse, Asgedom, et al., 2024](#)).

As stated by [Garmamo et al. \(2024\)](#), despite Ethiopia's storied athletics legacy, many national sports federations face challenges in governance, resource allocation, and This study addresses a significant research gap by offering practical insights into how EI influences organizational performance in the sports sector. The findings could inform training programs for administrators in national sports federations to boost their EI, leading to improved governance and athlete development. Ultimately, this research aims to support sports organizations in applying emotionally intelligent leadership to attain success on national and international stages.

This study focused on 35 Ethiopian national sports federations. While emotional intelligence is important in different sports settings, this study focused on these organizations to maintain a concentrated analysis of the data. Hence, this study aimed to offer a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the emotional intelligence of administrators and organizational performance. Considering the above-mentioned gaps in research, this study developed the following hypotheses.

Ha1: Emotional awareness intelligence significantly impacts organizational performance.

Ha2: Emotional management intelligence significantly impacts organizational performance.

athlete development. Furthermore, administrators in these federations often require improved EI to motivate teams, foster collaboration, and manage conflicts effectively. As [Kiishi \(2024\)](#) reported, leadership lacking EI can lead to inefficiencies, reduced athlete motivation, and hampered federation performance. Understanding the impact of administrators' EI on the performance of Ethiopian national sports federations is therefore critical for multiple reasons.

Ha3: Social awareness significantly impacts organizational performance.

Ha4: Relationship management intelligence significantly impacts organizational performance.

Methods and Materials

Study design

This study utilized a quantitative approach, specifically a correlational research design, to explore the connections between the emotional intelligence of administrators and the performance of organizations within the Ethiopian National Sports Federations. This study examined the aspects of emotional intelligence, including emotional awareness, emotional management, social emotional intelligence, and relationship management, alongside organizational performance across thirty-five Ethiopian national sports federations. Through this design, the influence of administrators' emotional intelligence on organizational performance was evaluated.



Population and Samples

To enable the generalizability of the study's findings, the research targeted a comprehensive population and employed systematic sampling

and lower-level positions based on the organizational structure of the federations. Stratified sampling was utilized to select a representative sample. In this study, the strata were defined by the administrative levels within the federations. The sample size was calculated using Cochran's sample size determination formula. Using this formula, 296 participants were selected.

Data Collection Tools

To evaluate the effect of emotional intelligence on organizational performance in these sports federations, this study employed a quantitative approach with standardized questions designed to confirm reliability and validity.

The administrators' emotional intelligence survey, developed by Wong focused on four dimensions: social emotional intelligence (social awareness), emotional awareness (self-awareness), emotional management (self-regulation), and relationship management with Likert scale ratings ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A standardized scale of organizational performance with 20 items was developed by [Kaplan \(1992\)](#). Minor changes were made after a

techniques. The study encompassed all 35 Ethiopian National Sports Federations, which collectively included 1,273 administrators categorized into top-level, middle-level,

pilot test with 30 administrators confirmed that the questions were understandable and appropriate for the participants. To maintain accuracy, each item was translated into Amharic and then back into English.

Data Analysis Method

To determine the impact of administrators' emotional intelligence on organizational performance in Ethiopian National Sports Federations, this study employed a rigorous statistical analysis framework. Data collected from the standardized questionnaires were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical methods to confirm comprehensive assessment and reliable findings. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 28 was used for all statistical calculations.

Before the analysis, the collected data underwent intensive cleaning and preparation to confirm their accuracy and consistency. Missing values were addressed using mean imputation for variables with less than 1% of missing data, as suggested by [Kosova et al. \(2024\)](#). Outliers were differentiated using boxplot analysis and treated by



capping extreme values at the 1st and 99th percentiles to minimize their effect while retaining data integrity. The Likert scale responses from the emotional intelligence survey by [Ng et al. \(2008\)](#), and the organizational performance standardized questionnaire Wong were coded numerically (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to enable the quantitative analysis.

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the sample features and variables under investigation. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each dimension of emotional intelligence (emotional awareness, emotional management, social emotional intelligence, and relationship management) and for organizational performance. Frequency distributions were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the administrators, with their administrative levels (top-level, middle-level, and lower-level), to provide background for the samples. Cronbach's alpha was computed for both the emotional

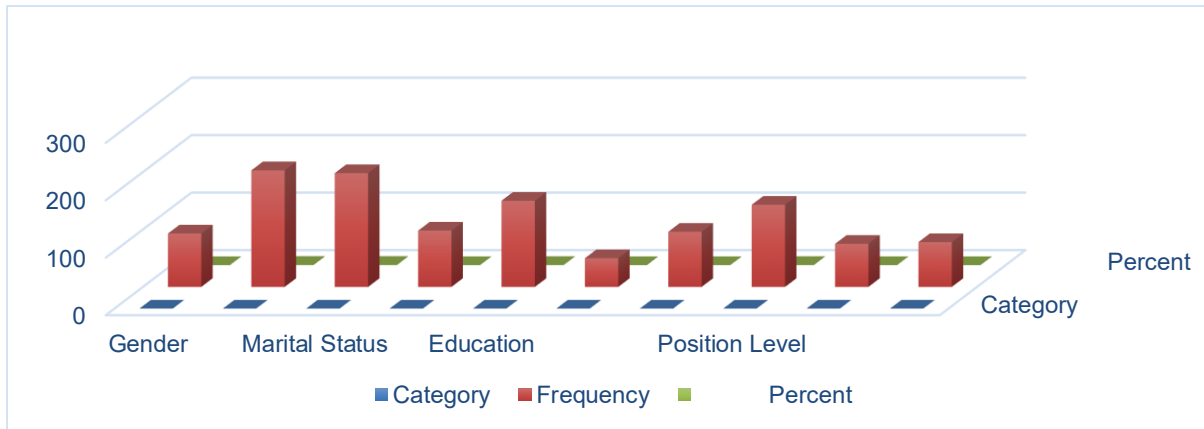
intelligence survey and the organizational performance scale to confirm the reliability of the measurement tools. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable, as per [Khanal and Chhetri \(2024\)](#).

Results

The demographic details of the 296 participants are shown in Graph 1. Each participant signed a voluntary consent form after being informed about the study. Most of them were men (68.6%), with women making up 31.4%. 33.1% of participants were unmarried, while 66.9% were married. About one-third (32.4%) held postgraduate degrees, 16.9% had diplomas, and 50.7% had bachelor's degrees. Regarding job levels, 48.3% were in low-level positions, 25.3% in middle-level roles, and 26.4% in top-level management. All administrators (100.0%) surprisingly stated that they had worked for at least six months.

**Graph 1.**

The demographic characteristics of participants.



In the present dataset of 296 participants (Table 1), social emotional intelligence shows $W = 0.983$ ($p = 0.002$), emotional awareness $W = 0.981$ ($p < 0.05$), emotional management $W = 0.979$ ($p < 0.05$), relationship management $W = 0.980$ ($p < 0.05$), and organizational performance $W = 0.989$ ($p = 0.023$), with all results indicating non-

normality. This suggests the need to consider alternative analytical methods, such as non-parametric tests, to preserve the validity of inferences when examining the links between emotional intelligence and organizational performance.

Table 1.

Normality analysis of emotional intelligence (including social emotional intelligence, emotional awareness, emotional management, and relationship management) and organizational performance data.

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
social emotional intelligence	.095	295	.000	.983	295	.002
emotional awareness	.101	295	.000	.981	295	.000
emotional management	.117	295	.000	.979	295	.000
Relationship management	.091	295	.000	.980	295	.000
Organizational	.084	295	.000	.989	295	.023

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The impact of emotional intelligence dimensions on organizational performance is explained by the quantile regression analysis shown in Table 2, assuming all variables are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and there is strong support for hypotheses Ha1 through Ha4. Clearly, self-awareness ($\beta = 0.120$, $t = 2.518$, $p = 0.012$) and self-management ($\beta = 0.114$, $t = 2.366$, $p = 0.018$) have positive coefficients, indicating that greater abilities to understand and regulate one's emotions enhance organizational performance. This aligns with previous research emphasizing self-focused emotional intelligence as a key driver of efficiency and employee engagement. Conversely, social awareness ($\beta = -0.106$, $t = -2.241$, $p = 0.025$) and relationship management ($\beta = -0.104$, $t = -2.116$, $p = 0.035$) show negative relationships, suggesting that, in some cases, an excessive focus on social dynamics or interpersonal relationship management

may hinder performance. This may be due to increased sensitivity to group dynamics or relational conflicts, consistent with research highlighting the contextual challenges of social emotional intelligence. With a sample size of 290 degrees of freedom and confidence intervals that exclude zero, these findings underscore the complex role of emotional intelligence in organizations, prompting leaders to strategically balance self-related and social abilities to improve performance.

Table 2.

Summary of quantile regression analysis on how emotional intelligence (social emotional intelligence, emotional awareness, emotional management, and relationship management) influences organizational performance.

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Intercept)	3.186	0.3419	9.319	290	0.000	2.513	3.859
Self-awareness	0.120	0.0478	2.518	290	0.012	0.026	0.214
Self-management	0.114	0.0481	2.366	290	0.018	0.019	0.209
Social awareness	-0.106	0.0474	-2.241	290	0.025	-0.199	-0.013
Relationship management	-0.104	0.0490	-2.116	290	0.035	-0.200	-0.008



Note: Dependent variable: Organizational performance

The 31-item emotional intelligence 0.823, indicating good internal consistency. The questionnaire (covering social emotional consistent standardized alpha value shows that all intelligence, emotional awareness, emotional items significantly contribute to measuring the management, and relationship management) latent variable (emotional intelligence), with stable achieved a reliable scale with a Cronbach's alpha of measurement qualities unaffected by item variance

Table 3.

The reliability test (internal consistency) of the administrators' emotional intelligence data

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.823	0.791	31

Table 4 indicates that the organizational performance scale, which includes 20 items, has high to excellent internal consistency, as shown by a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.821 (non-standardized) and 0.897 (standardized). These results demonstrate that the scale is a dependable tool for assessing organizational performance, with cohesive items. Overall, this is a strong and consistent measurement for evaluating organizational performance.

Table 4.

The reliability (internal consistency) test of the organizational performance data

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.821	.897	20

Table 5 showed a strong positive correlation emotional intelligence are closely linked to ($r = .621$, $p < .05$) between emotional intelligence improved organizational performance, explaining and organizational performance, based on data about 38.6% of the variance in performance ($r^2 = .386$). While the results confirm emotional relationship indicates that higher levels of intelligence as a key predictor of organizational

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performance, the strength of this correlation suggests the need for further research into the discriminant validity of these constructs, as their high interdependence ($r > .60$) hints at a potential

direct connection. These findings highlight the strategic importance of developing emotional intelligence within the workforce to boost organizational performance.

Table 5.

Discriminant validity of emotional intelligence and organizational performance data

Correlations			
		Organizational performance	Emotional intelligence
Organizational performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.621**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	296	296
Emotional intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.621**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	296	296

** $p > .05$

The convergent validity of the emotional intelligence data shown in Table 6 demonstrates Pearson correlations between the four core dimensions of the composite score of emotional intelligence—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—based on responses from 296 participants. There are moderately strong positive relationships between the composite score of emotional intelligence and social awareness (.533; $p < .05$), self-awareness (.493; $p < .05$), self-management (.437; $p < .05$), and relationship management (.434; $p < .05$). The reliability of the measure in assessing how people recognize and manage their emotional landscapes in interpersonal and personal contexts is supported

by these statistically significant associations, which highlight the internal consistency of the emotional intelligence construct and indicate that the composite score as a whole effectively captures the essence of its core dimensions.

Furthermore, the correlation analysis using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistics between the transformed composite score of organizational performance (TCOP) items and all items of organizational performance (Op1 to Op20) shows good convergent validity for the organizational performance scale. This is evidenced by significant positive correlations between the TCOP data and all individual items (Op1 to Op20), which range from 0.357 to 0.722 (all $p < 0.05$),



indicating mostly high alignment with the total score.

Table 6

Convergent validity of emotional intelligence data

		Correlations				
		CSEI	Self-awareness	Self-management	Social awareness	Relationship management
CSEI	Pearson	1	.493**	.437**	.533**	.434**
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	295	295	295	295	295

Note: CSEI-Composite Score of Emotional Intelligence Data

In addition to emotional intelligence's convergent validity data, the correlation analysis using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between the transformed composite score of organizational performance (TCOP) items and all organizational performance items (Op1 to Op20) shows good convergent validity for the scale. This is evidenced by significant positive correlations between TCOP data and each item (Op1 to Op20), ranging from 0.357 to 0.722 (all $p < 0.05$), indicating mostly high alignment with the total score.

Discussion

This research revealed the significant influence of emotional intelligence on organizational performance within Ethiopian National Sports

Federations. The strong correlation ($r = .621$, $p < .05$) between combined scores of emotional intelligence and organizational success indicated that administrators with high emotional intelligence have a unique ability to foster enthusiasm, improve decision-making, and support governance despite resource limitations. These insights align with global research that recognizes emotional intelligence as a foundation for leadership and organizational effectiveness, but they also highlight the unique pressures faced by Ethiopian national sports federations, where national pride and international competition influence leadership challenges ([Garmamo et al., 2024](#); [Tadesse, Asgedom, et al., 2024](#)).

Important findings are based on the effects of emotional intelligence dimensions. As key performance drivers, emotional awareness ($\beta =$



0.120, $p = 0.012$) and emotional management ($\beta = 0.114$, $p = 0.018$), which support Ha1 and Ha2, emphasize the importance of self-focused skills. Administrators who develop self-awareness and self-regulation demonstrate lasting resilience, effectively navigating governance challenges and resource shortages with clarity and agility ([Isa et al., 2024](#)). These intrapersonal strengths support organizational constancy and productivity, resonating with a study that highlights self-regulation's serious role in high-stakes, dynamic situations ([Goleman & Cherniss, 2024](#); [Mustafa et al., 2022](#)). In Ethiopia's national sports federations, where administrators face strong public inquiry and limited resources, these skills improve strategic emphasis and stimulate employee engagement and resilient organizational performance ([Duan et al., 2022](#)).

So far, the negative relationships of social emotional intelligence ($\beta = -0.106$, $p = 0.025$) and relationship management ($\beta = -0.104$, $p = 0.035$), challenging Ha3 and Ha4, reveal a contradiction. In Ethiopia's hierarchical, collectivist culture, an overemphasis on social sensitivity or relational agreement might unintentionally increase conflicts or divert attention from important tasks like athlete development and resource allocation ([Cox et al., 2021](#); [Lonati & Van Vugt, 2024](#)). This differs from Western research, where social emotional

intelligence consistently boosts productivity ([Singh et al., 2022](#)), necessitating emotionally intelligent frameworks sensitive to cultural differences ([Watanabe et al., 2024](#)). Administrators overly focused on interpersonal agreement may struggle to make key, performance-based decisions, especially given Ethiopia's governance complexities and political details ([Mustafa et al., 2022](#); [Watanabe et al., 2024](#)).

This research advocates for leadership development programs that prioritize emotional awareness and management while carefully emphasizing social and relational skills to align with Ethiopia's cultural and operational realities ([Nkeobuna Nnah Ugoani, 2021](#); [Ramli et al., 2022](#)).

Finally, this research champions a context-sensitive method to emotional intelligence-driven leadership, positioning emotional intelligence as essential for increased governance, developing athletes, and ensuring long-term sustainability in Ethiopian national sports federations. By cultivating emotional intelligence in administrators, these organizations can transform challenges into opportunities, boosting Ethiopia's athletic legacy on the global stage ([Tadesse, Asgedom, et al., 2024](#)).

Conclusion

This empirical study highlights the significant



impact of emotional intelligence as a key factor in boosting organizational performance within Ethiopian National Sports Federations. The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between administrators' emotional intelligence and the overall performance of their national sports federations, reinforcing the essential idea that emotional intelligence is a vital leadership skill in this context.

Particularly, the dimensions of emotional awareness and emotional management emerged as positive predictors of organizational performance, enhancing decision-making, resilience, and employee engagement, especially in resource-limited settings. However, the negative relationships observed with social emotional intelligence and relationship management highlight the culturally and contextually nuanced nature of emotional intelligence. These findings suggest that in Ethiopia's hierarchical and collectivist cultural

environment, an overemphasis on social and interactive skills may sometimes hinder functioning and effectiveness.

The research bridges an important gap in the literature by exploring emotional intelligence in non-Western and sport-specific administrative contexts, offering both practical insights and theoretical improvements to emotional models. It promotes culturally sensitive leadership development strategies that integrate social and relationship skills tailored to local legitimacy, while also emphasizing self-awareness and self-management.

In the long term, cultivating emotional intelligence in national sports federation leaders can significantly enhance governance, athlete development, and organizational sustainability, helping Ethiopian national sports federations succeed both at home and abroad.



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