



PRIMARY RESEARCH

Emotional intelligence and employee outcomes: The dual role of teamwork and the influence of stress and resistance

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Keywords

Emotional intelligence
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Received: 17 March 2025**Accepted:** 01 July 2025**Published:** 21 August 2025**Abstract**

This study investigated the extent to which emotional intelligence has significant impact on employee productivity and turnover intention. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory, teamwork was examined as a mediator and perceived job stress and resistance to change were examined as moderator among public sector workers from the audit service and local government employees in Ghana, Africa. A sample of 463 public sector employees from the audit service and local government employees in Ghana, Africa, was used for study. Path analysis was employed for both direct and indirect paths in data analysis. The direct relationship between emotional intelligence to teamwork ($\beta = 0.614$). Teamwork then serves as mediator, significantly influencing the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and employee productivity ($\beta = 0.269$) and lower turnover intention ($\beta = 0.197$). However, resistance to change as moderator had a significant relationship between teamwork and employee productivity ($\beta = -0.099$) and turnover intention ($\beta = -0.240$). Lastly, perceived job stress as moderator significant relationship on teamwork with employee productivity ($\beta = 0.080$) and turnover intention ($\beta = 0.154$). This study is limited by social desirability bias and common method bias, as is the case with many social science studies. Nonetheless, the researchers have taken adequate steps to reduce these biases. This research has a number of theoretical and practical implications.

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INTRODUCTION

The modern public sector, particularly in developing economies in Africa, is adjusting to rapid changes, resulting in unprecedented expectations of organizational efficiency, service delivery, and employee performance not seen before (Afadzinu et al., 2024). At the center of successful institutional performance are employee, whose ability to deal with interpersonal dynamics and manage workplace stress ultimately leads to organizational effectiveness (Saud & Rice, 2024). The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI), defined as the ability to notice, understand, manage, and utilize one's emotions, has come to the forefront as an individual competency that differentiates high-performing employees regardless of industry (Woime & Shato, 2025). Although earlier performance models emphasized only cognitive ability but decades of organizational research have shown that EI is a likely predictor of

success in roles that require extensive social interaction and teamwork. Employers and human resource management frequently require employee cooperation and collaboration in work teams (Shaik et al., 2025). A team member's emotional intelligence can have an impact on cooperation and team collaboration (Lopes et al., 2025). Increasing productivity may reside in work-teams that display the right behavior and have a balanced emotional intelligence quotient (Amissah-Wilson & Segbenya, 2025). A firm's productivity is directly related to its performance. Increased productivity leads to economic growth, increased profitability, and social advancement (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024; Setyaningrum & Maharani, 2024). As a result, organization should recruit and develop emotionally intelligent employees who are highly skilled in teams of two or more to increase productivity in the workplace (Galanis et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023).

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Turnover intention is a significant concern for organizations because it can lead to reduced productivity, low motivation, poor discipline, decreased morale, and workplace accidents (Lopes et al., 2025). Organizations often fear turnover intention more than actual turnover because employees with turnover intention indicates that employees are psychologically disengaged, physically present but mentally withdrawn, which results in poor performance. Considering the costs associated with turnover and the assumption that it is necessary to enhance high-quality teaching and learning while limiting the costs related to turnover, the researcher should explore turnover intention (Galanis et al., 2024). Turnover intention is a global phenomenon and is cause for concern for researchers and academicians and psychologists in African nations (Wang et al., 2023). Turnover intention captures the inclination of an employee to leave their current employer soon. Turnover can be classified as voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary turnover is a critical indicator of an organization's performance. An organization's growth and productivity are influenced by teamwork, productivity, and emotional intelligence. When these elements functions dysfunctionally, the organization may face serious challenges. Raji and Ismail (2023) define emotional intelligence as the ability to identify and understand one's own emotions as well as those of others. It also refers to the capacity to use this understanding to control one's own behavior and relationships with others. Studies show that just 36% of respondents could recognize their emotions while they were occurring, and that emotional intelligence accounts for 58% of performance across all occupational categories (Lopes et al., 2025; Sajuyigbe et al., 2022). Furthermore, it was discovered that the best indicator of leadership, personal brilliance, and career success was emotional intelligence.

Job stress refers to a person's ability to adapt and respond to external expectations, which create physiological and psychological reactions (Khan et al., 2024). On the other hand, an employee's endpoint health changes perceptions and evaluations of structural factors (processes and protocols), and the interaction of people and physical environments (infrastructure and work variables) relate to work or organizational climate (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024). Job stress, one of the difficulties in public financial audit and policy decisions, is expected to alter effectiveness through the working of teams. Similarly, the public sector is frequently exposed to continuing institutional reform and changes in policy, making resistance to change a real variable. Even though implementing changes is a logical process, every change that managers start will contain emotional element (Sadiq, 2022). Controlling and regulating these emotions is essential to successfully

implementing changes and contributing to organizational performance, as change initiatives frequently result in changes in one's own and others' moods and emotional makeup (Saud & Rice, 2024). Workers only support change initiatives and display pro-social and change-related behavior when they recognize that their job needs, and role expectations should adapt to the changing environment (Akgunduz et al., 2023). Because of this, workers are more likely to adopt changes (such as new procedures, technology, rules, and routines) and to successfully coordinate manager-initiated change-related initiatives. The process of change involves both management and employees, often resulting in tension between change agents and recipients, with employees typically opposing change initiatives started by upper management (Evans & Britt, 2023). Negative terms with an emphasis on rejection and discord have been used to characterize resistance in both overt and covert forms, such as disputes, absenteeism, deliberate negligence, false compliance, sabotage, and foot dragging (Green, 2024). Tensions and conflicts of interest with the current situation or managerial actions are implied by resistance. Employee resistance is seen as opposition (Akella & Houry, 2022; Shaik et al., 2025), a dysfunctional process that impedes organisational learning and change initiatives. The entire focus is on how to persuade change beneficiaries, overcome objections, and prevent or minimize resistance (Rosenberg, 2023; Zhu et al., 2023).

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides the theoretical foundation for this study. According to SET, employees connect through social exchanges Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), and interpersonal interaction processes have an impact on how they behave towards one another. According to SET, stress can arise in one or more of three circumstances: when resources are in danger of being lost or threatened, or when resources are scarce despite significant investment (Cook et al., 2013). However, SET offers a helpful theoretical framework for investigating the psychological processes behind how emotional intelligence affects performance and productivity. SET highlights the transferable nature of emotions in various contexts, such as work and family life. In other words, when an employee feels good at work, their family life benefits as well, or vice versa (Ahmad et al., 2023).

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. By analyzing the nature of the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee productivity, it first supports previous research findings Amissah-Wilson and Segbenya (2025) and offers proof that emotional intelligence boosts employee productivity and decreases turnover intention. It offers implications especially, the study provides broader knowledge about

organizational behavior by testing a mediation and moderation model simultaneously in a single model; thus, providing a more precise and clearer causal sequence from the individual level to the collective level. Also, this study examines public sector workers in the context of the audit service and Local Government to address an important knowledge gap that underscores the call for research in context-specific organizations that play critical roles in governance and accountability. Since the research suggests that enhancing teamwork can alleviate the negative effects of job stress and resistance to change, it will ultimately provide evidence-based recommendations that inform human resource policy, leadership development, and EI and team-building training programs aimed at decreasing turnover, which is too costly to sustain improvement efforts in key public institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence and Team work

Workers with strong emotional self-awareness, social skills, and the ability to effectively manage their emotions are better able to overcome challenges at work, collaborate with colleagues, and maintain a positive work environment, noted by Woime and Shato (2025). These emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate higher task completion rates, better problem-solving abilities, and greater adaptability to changing job requirements. Research on the association between emotional intelligence and performance has shown that it is essential for increased profitability and teamwork (Costin et al., 2023; Ehigie et al., 2023; Galanis et al., 2024). Businesses can use intellectual capital to increase efficiency and gain a competitive advantage through improved emotional intelligence (Sajuyigbe et al., 2022). High Emotional Intelligence (EI) includes skills related to self-awareness, social awareness, and managing relationships (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024). These are fundamentally relational skills; when individuals can perceive and regulate their own emotions, while simultaneously empathizing with others, they are natural contributors to a stronger and more productive group context (Sangadji, 2023).

Research shows that when emotional intelligence is high in a team, team members are better able to communicate their needs, listen, and add to the group's expectations of 'how to work together' (Matta & Alam, 2023; Raji & Ismail, 2023). This relationship is consistently found to be positive. Wang et al. (2023) report that that team EI, which is often an aggregation of individual EIs, is a strong predictor of team cohesion and performance. Social awareness then, along with empathy, helps team members anticipate and mitigate inter-

personal conflict before it happens, contributing to the bonding of team members, and ultimately their psychological safety (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024). When emotional conflict effectively managed, more team effort can be directed toward organization goals, instead of dealing with unnecessary internal conflict. Overall, these findings reinforce the importance of emotional intelligence for effective teamwork. The public service context is relatively intensive in social interactions amongst public servants and citizens alike under pressure which places high social competencies at the forefront of public service effectiveness (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024; Sangadji, 2023). For the employees involved in cross sectoral efforts for public accountability and public service delivery, having high individual EI is needed to foster the trust, open communication and emotional climate that support high team output (Lopes et al., 2025; Shaik et al., 2025; Woime & Shato, 2025). Thus, it is hypothesized that individual EI has a direct relation to effectiveness in teamwork.

H1: Emotional intelligence has a direct impact on teamwork.

Teamwork as Mediator

The relational aspect of teamwork makes it a broad, cross-cutting talent. It is described as the ability to collaborate effectively and communicate with coworkers while working towards shared objectives (Nguyen, 2022). According to Woime and Shato (2025), teamwork is a skill that combines an understanding of the tasks and efficient group performance with a set of individual abilities or behaviours required to act effectively within the group, as well as the attitudes that each member must exhibit to contribute to the proper functioning of the team. Saud and Rice (2024) maintain that personal attitudes and behaviours are part of teamwork competency when seen from an individual rather than team perspective. These attitudes include how much importance is placed on teamwork, how much value is placed on other people's efforts, and how one feels about a team.

Teamwork acts as the conduit for integrating individual emotional capabilities as they become part of a team's collective task performance. Without effective team processes, an employee's strong individual EI skills (e.g. motivation & self-regulation) may not translate into organizational output (Romero-Díaz de la Guardia et al., 2022). The mediation path of EI and productivity starts with the EI of employees being reflected in effective team processes. When the team process is effective, the team is more effective, more coordinated, and exhibits more synergistic problem-solving, which is directly related to productivity (Ehigie et al., 2023). For instance, teams whose members have strong relational skills from having high

EI may be more adept at dealing with unforeseen challenges (i.e. sudden policy changes or audit complexities) and thus be less prone to production blocking due to unmanaged interpersonal tension. High-EI employees alone does not maximize productivity; there must be a functional team structure to leverage their capabilities and obtain productivity as a result (Sangadji, 2023). A cohesive and emotionally balanced team guarantees fair distribution of the workload, is efficient in meeting deadlines, and maximizes the shared knowledge of the team, while accomplishing results that are superior to a group of individual, high performers working in isolation. Prior research on knowledge-intensive teams supports the notion that social capital generated from cohesive teams is the key mediating factor between individual-level emotions and sustained high levels of productivity for employees and organizations (Ehigie et al., 2023; Romero-Díaz de la Guardia et al., 2022; Woime & Shato, 2025).

Intention to turnover (the conscious and intentional plan to leave one's organization) is a serious public sector concern due to the costs associated with recruitment, training, and loss of institutional memory (Galanis et al., 2024). Social Exchange Theory suggests that employees are more committed to an organization when they feel supported by immediate coworkers and managers. Teamwork creates a supportive social climate that can build trust and open discussion facilitated by emotional skill, which improves employee satisfaction (Raji & Ismail, 2023). Well-functioning teams offer emotional scaffolding that helps members manage work demands and offers assistance to those most stressed during high demand times and essentially turning stressful work experiences into workable job experiences. This feeling of connection and tragically shared experience serves as a 'golden handcuff' for the employee's emotional connection to the group, which ultimately represents an emotional commitment to the organization (Wang et al., 2023). Due to the bureaucratic nature of the work or public expectation of employees, a high level of team functioning is critical to an employee's psychological well-being. Public administration research often finds that weak workplace relationships or lack of support are better predictors of turnover than salary (Galanis et al., 2024). Higher EI allows for higher functioning teamwork and therefore contributes to a desirable work experience by mitigating loneliness and dissatisfaction that employees often feel prior to departure intention (Lopes et al., 2025). Thus;

H2: Teamwork as significant mediator between emotional intelligence and employee productivity.

H3: Teamwork as significant mediator between emotional intelligence and turnover intention

Perceived Job Stress as Moderator

Stress is commonly defined as a form of psychological strain (Adamopoulos & Syrou, 2022). According to Saud and Rice (2024), job stress is a detrimental form of stress that has negative effects on workers' physical, psychological, behavioural, and social well-being, including anxiety and depression. Failure to meet job criteria, failure to fulfil role requirements, inability to make the necessary career progress, and communication hurdles are among the problems that lead to job stress (Khan et al., 2024). When an employee is under stress, their anxiety levels rise and they have trouble interacting with coworkers and customers. According to Akgunduz et al. (2023), this lowers service quality and makes the employee unhappy. Stress is also influenced by an employee's function, which is the culmination of all the acts that are expected of them. Because task contents also incorporate the organization's goals, an employee's job may not always be their own. Role ambiguity and/or role conflict may result in role stress (Costin et al., 2023). Position pressure is caused by organisational circumstances and position expectations, which can lead to conflict and confusion about the impact of personal traits and interactions with coworkers. When hotel staff members' goals, authority, and tasks are unclear, role ambiguity arises. Contradictions in an employee's positions inside the company lead to role conflict (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024).

Although collaboration is often beneficial, excessive stress may exhaust cognitive resources and invite emotional dysregulation, essentially impairing the team's collective coping ability (Martin et al., 2022). Research argues that job demand theories believe a great deal of strain can contribute to burnout, which can lead to a decrease in individual effort and reduced synergy of collaboration. In a low-stress situation, teamwork can provide a stepwise pooling of resources and expertise, creating high levels of productivity and efficiency. Sadiq (2022), under conditions of perceived high job stress (i.e., unrealistic deadlines, heavy workloads, constant performance monitoring), the internal emotional labor required to work effectively as a team may outweigh the productivity gains (Martin et al., 2022). High levels of stress can lead to defensive behaviors, poor communicate, and a shift in focus from task completion to emotional survival, resulting in team dysfunctional. In stressful situations, even highly effective, established teams may have difficulty translating that cohesiveness into high-quality products (Adamopoulos & Syrou, 2022).

Although stress is a leading predictor of turnover intention, we anticipate that strong teamwork will buffer the impact of stress on turnover intention (Sadiq, 2022). Hence, the neg-

ative relationship between teamwork and turnover intention should be more pronounced when the employee experiences high levels of perceived job strain. Employees in high-stress jobs tend to be more likely to burn out and leave (Khan et al., 2024). High-quality teamwork furnishes employees with both the social support and collective coping strategies, along with resources (like task assistance and stress relief through emotional venting) to navigate a stressful job. This collective resiliency will be instrumental in buffering the negative psychological impact of stress on turnover intentions. When stress is low, teamwork adds to overall satisfaction but the marginal decrease in turnover intention for high-performing, cohesive employee will be minimal because they are satisfied regardless of teamwork (Costin et al., 2023; García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024). When stress is high, however, the high-performing, cohesive team will become the employee's primary anchor, drastically reducing the intention to quit. Research in the organization support literature shows that coworkers and supervisors function as resources in helping employees cope with demanding work, (Akgunduz et al., 2023; Saud & Rice, 2024). For public service employees who work in high-stress, high-stakes environments, an effective team will be a significant factor in retention.

H4: Perceived job stress as significant moderator on teamwork and employee productivity.

H5: Perceived job stress as significant moderator on teamwork and turnover intention.

Resistance to Change as Moderator

Resistance to change refers to behavioral response resisting organizational change efforts, often stemming from fear of the unknown, distrust, or low tolerance for disruption (Brandes & Lai, 2022). Teamwork relies on common goals, open communication, and trust to drive productivity. If a team or organization is facing high levels of resistance to an enacted change (which can be common when public sector professionals reform processes), then those mechanisms break down (Shaik et al., 2025). High RC brings about subverting new processes, deliberate non-cooperation, and people directing their energy away from productive tasks to internal political dynamics or arriving to complain (Green, 2024). Even a highly coordinated team, diligently pursuing tasks, will find their productivity waning when faced with widespread resistance, as high as teamwork can be. If the resistance is high, then the individual resistance to cooperatively master the new system and work together will draw down ongoing productivity; the team would be severely limits its productive capacity (Rahmadani et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Rahmadani et al. (2024) shown that collaboration and teamwork are important mediators in this relationship, suggesting that enhanced team dynamics are a significant way that EI's positive effects on productivity are realized. Shaik et al. (2025) also noted that in developing nations, where public sector employees often face resource constraints and bureaucratic roadblocks, fostering cooperation can significantly increase the benefits of emotional intelligence. Evans and Britt (2023) indicate that emotionally intelligent employees contribute to the development of a pleasant team environment that boosts morale and generally promotes productivity. Zhu et al. (2023) highlights how important it is for public sector organisations to provide funding for emotional intelligence training since it can promote better teamwork and ultimately boost productivity. When considered collectively, these research show how crucial collaboration is in transforming emotional intelligence into measurable productivity gains in the public sectors of developing countries (Matta & Alam, 2023).

In other words, employees may still decide to leave even when teams operate well together if resistance to change is high. When workers regard a change as threatening and highly resist it, their basic commitment to the organization may be severed altogether, leading directly to a high quit intention (Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023). In this environment, teamwork may evolve from a source of support into a remedial source of frustration and shared cynicism (Bijalwan et al., 2024). The team may become a safe outlet to build negative feelings together and encourage each other to leave the organization since the decision to leave results from a general sense of dissatisfaction with the organization's overall direction that outweighs the social ties and bonds with their immediate team (Amissah-Wilson & Segbenya, 2025). Therefore, high resistance to change could remain a potent precursor to leaving while strong teams generally inhibit turnover intention (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024). For employees experiencing mandated changes to their professional role, resistance to change creates a climate of organizational instability and dissatisfaction.

H6: Resistance to change as significant moderator on teamwork and employee productivity.

H7: Resistance to change as significant moderator on teamwork and turnover intention

METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy and Design

The study is positioned within the positivist paradigm, which posits that reality is objective, observable, and external to the

researcher, and relationships between observable phenomena can be tested empirically through structured approaches. Consequently, a quantitative research methodology, specifically an explanatory research design utilizing a cross-sectional survey, was adopted for this study. The explanatory design is best suited to examining complex causal relations, including the proposed mediation (H2, H3) and moderation (H4, H5, H6, H7) effects among emotional intelligence, teamwork, employee outcomes, perceived job stress, and resistance to change.

Target Population and Setting

The target population for this study comprised public sector workers within a developing economy, with a focus on two institutions in Ghana. These institutions included the audit service and selected local government institutions (metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies). These institutions are critical components of public accountability and public service delivery, making their employees particularly appropriate for understanding the impact of emotional traits, teamwork and contextual stressors. The study was implemented in a variety of geographical locations across Ghana to access a diverse representation of the public sector workforce.

Response Rate and Non-Response Bias

Of the total number of surveys distributed (approximately 673 questionnaires were distributed, accounting for anticipated non-response), a total of 463 completed surveys were received, providing an acceptable response rate of approximately 68.8%. Due to the digital data collection method (i.e. respondents were required to complete all items before proceedings), all surveys received were complete. To test for possible non-response bias, the first seventy-five respondents were compared to the last seventy-five respondents received, typically labeled as 'early' and 'late' respondents. A series of independent samples t-tests were computed that measured mean scores of all key variables in the study to assess the same variables in the means of the 'early' respondents and 'late' respondents. No statistically significant differences were found, suggesting that non-response bias was not a major concern in the data collected.

Measures

All constructs used in this explanatory study were operationalized based on prior scales developed in the literature and validated. The indicators for all constructs were assessed with a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly

agree), where higher scores indicate a higher level of the measured construct.

Emotional intelligence was measured with four items developed by Woime and Shato (2025). The teamwork scale was adapted from Woime and Shato (2025). Perceived job stress was assessed with a five-item scale designed for (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024). Resistance to change was measured with four items based on Shaik et al. (2025). Employee productivity was measured with four items adapted from Shaik et al. (2025). Turnover intention was measured using a three-item scale, adapted from Lopes et al. (2025).

RESULTS

Descriptive analysis was conducted to summarize respondents' characteristics and key variables without making inferential generalizations. Structural Equation Modelling, (SEM), was employed as the primary data analysis technique (Hair et al., 2024). Partial Least Square (PLS), often known as soft modelling, was the method employed in this study. Because it doesn't require many assumptions, can be used to various data scales, and doesn't require a huge sample size, PLS is a potent analytical technique. Structural modelling using reflective or formative indicators is another application for PLS.

Assessment of Measurement Model

Validity, reliability and AVE

Each construct is measured according to the measurement model, which may be verified by evaluating convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and item indicator. The consistency with which an item measures a particular construct is known as an indicator's reliability. According to Hair et al. (2024), an outer loading indicator's threshold value should be 0.5. Construct reliability, also known as internal consistency reliability, evaluates how scores relate to items that measure related constructs. Typically, reliability is assessed using CA and CR. Hair et al. (2024) state that 0.7 is the lowest number for both CA and CR. The CR and CA values in this study exceed the cut-off of 0.7. Consequently, consistency reliability has been verified. Evaluating convergent validity is also crucial. According to Hair et al. (2024), convergent validity is the extent to which a measure exhibits a positive relationship with other measures of the same construct and may be verified by evaluating AVE. Hair et al. (2024) set the minimal value for AVE at 0.5. AVE values are higher than the necessary value of 0.5, as Table 1 illustrates. This thus validates the study's convergent validity.

TABLE 1. Assessment of measurement model

Variables	Items	Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Emotional Intelligence	EI1	0.867	0.815	0.878	0.644
	EI2	0.757			
	EI3	0.761			
	EI4	0.820			
Teamwork	TW1	0.857	0.899	0.926	0.714
	TW2	0.842			
	TW3	0.865			
	TW4	0.881			
	TW5	0.775			
Perceived Job Stress	PJS1	0.723	0.781	0.855	0.550
	PJS2	0.785			
	PJS3	0.762			
	PJS4	0.800			
	PJS5	0.842			
Resistance to Change	RTC1	0.925	0.935	0.954	0.837
	RTC2	0.910			
	RTC3	0.914			
	RTC4	0.911			
Employee Productivity	EP1	0.857	0.927	0.948	0.821
	EP2	0.918			
	EP3	0.924			
	EP4	0.923			
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.905	0.851	0.909	0.770
	TI2	0.841			
	TI3	0.885			

Discriminant validity

It is necessary to assess discriminant validity to complete the evaluation of the measurement model. Based on empirical criteria, it describes how much a construct differs from another set of constructs. Recent studies suggest that the Fornell–Larcker criterion may not adequately detect discriminant validity issues. Therefore, in addition to the Fornell-Larcker crite-

ron, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), HTMT is the ratio of within-trait correlations to between-trait correlations. All construct pairs in the matrix as displayed in Table 2 have HTMT values below the recommended threshold of 0.90, thereby confirming adequate discriminant validity.

TABLE 2. Discriminant validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Emotional Intelligence	0.803					
Employee Productivity	0.441	0.906				
Perceived Job Stress	0.399	0.546	0.741			
Resistance to Change	0.378	0.756	0.714	0.915		
Turnover Intention	0.442	0.755	0.650	0.725	0.877	
Teamwork	0.614	0.724	0.477	0.668	0.539	0.845

TABLE 3. HTMT

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Emotional Intelligence						
Employee Productivity	0.506					
Perceived Job Stress	0.505	0.649				
Resistance to Change	0.426	0.806	0.848			
Turnover Intention	0.530	0.850	0.793	0.801		
Teamwork	0.714	0.792	0.578	0.725	0.610	

Structural Model Assessment

Evaluation of R^2

The determination coefficient (R^2) can also be obtained through PLS-SEM. The coefficient of determination is an indicator of the explained variance of endogenous variables produced by exogenous influences Hair et al. (2024), as shown

in Table 4. Model fit was assessed using Standardized Root Means Squared Residual (SRMR). The SRMR value of the model is deemed fit if it is less than 0.08 (Hair et al., 2024). The obtained SRMR value of 0.076 indicates that the model meets the recommended fit criteria.

TABLE 4. R-Square values

	<i>R Square</i>
Employee Productivity	0.658
Turnover Intention	0.567
Teamwork	0.378

TABLE 5. Hypothesis testing

	Beta Values	T Values	p Values
Direct Effect			
Emotional Intelligence -> Teamwork	0.614	19.507	0.000
Mediating Effect			
Emotional Intelligence -> Teamwork -> Employee Productivity	0.269	8.123	0.000
Emotional Intelligence -> Teamwork -> Turnover Intention	0.197	5.280	0.000
Moderating Effect			
Perceived Job Stress * Teamwork -> Employee Productivity	0.080	3.540	0.000
Perceived Job Stress * Teamwork -> Turnover Intention	0.154	2.717	0.007
Resistance to Change * Teamwork -> Employee Productivity	-0.099	3.179	0.002
Resistance to Change * Teamwork -> Turnover Intention	-0.240	6.305	0.000

Hypothesis Testing

The bootstrapping strategy, which uses the original sample, t -statistics, and p -value as core measures of hypotheses testing, provides a robust approach for assessing the significance of relationships in this study. In evaluating relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables, the t -statistic should exceed 1.96 to indicate statistical significance at the 5% level. Following conventional significance thresholds, p -values must be less than .05 to determine whether the hypotheses are supported (Hair et al., 2024).

The statistical analysis demonstrates strong, consistent support for the entire conceptual model and validates that all

seven hypothesised relationships are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The premise of the model is supported with a robust direct relationship from emotional intelligence to teamwork (beta = 0.614). Teamwork then serves as an important mediator, significantly transferring the effect of EI into higher employee productivity (beta = 0.269) and lower turnover intention (beta = 0.197). Importantly, the effects of teamwork were contingent upon contextual factors: resistance to change served as a negative moderator that significantly diminished the positive relationship between teamwork and employee productivity (beta = -0.099) and the negative relationship between teamwork and turnover intention (beta=-0.240). In con-

trast, perceived job stress was a positive moderator, where high stress significantly strengthened the relationship between teamwork and both employee productivity ($\beta = 0.080$) and turnover intention ($\beta = 0.154$), indicating that the impact of teamwork is stronger under highly stressful situations in the public sector, but is more complex.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigates how emotional intelligence has significant impact on employee productivity and turnover intention through mediating role of teamwork and moderating role of perceived job stress and resistance to change among public sector workers from the audit service and local government workers in Africa.

H1 confirms a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and teamwork. This suggests that individual emotional competence is a strong precursor to group collaboration, communication, and group cohesiveness. This finding aligns and is consistent with earlier research that suggested that emotional intelligence (or the domains of social awareness and relationship management) provides the psychological and interpersonal resources required to simultaneously build trust while managing conflict within a team context (Amisshah-Wilson & Segbenya, 2025; Woime & Shato, 2025). In the serious and critical environment of local government and the Ghanaian (African) audit service, where collaboration with departments of specialization matters, the findings suggest we should develop and recruit staff with emotional intelligence to create high-functioning and supportive teams.

H2 demonstrates that teamwork is a significant mediator for the positive association between EI and employee productivity. This finding supports the claim that while high EI is a good thing, the benefit is not direct as it relates to observable productivity levels, but is mainly indirect through the efficiencies and synergy that come from a team environment. Individuals with high levels of EI help create better team processes (i.e., communication, coordination), and it is that optimized process that actually manifests as higher output and impacts performance – “team performance is a shared function of team processes” (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024; Shaik et al., 2025). For public sector organizations, this implies that developing teamwork structures may be more impactful than focusing solely on individual EI development. H3 illustrates that teamwork significantly mediates the negative correlation between EI and turnover intention. The positive beta value for the indirect path supports that EI lowers TI by supporting a strong teamwork experience. Effective teams create the space for a warm social atmosphere and psychological safety which

acts as an emotional anchor, increasing an employee’s job embeddedness and sense of belonging to the organization (García del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024; Raji & Ismail, 2023). Employees in arduous roles in the public service remember that they may be more willing to commit to the organization for an extended period of time when they feel they are supported by their immediate colleagues. An explanation for this is that the social capital gained from teamwork is a significant retention factor to reduce turnover and/or an employee’s desire to seek employment outside the organization.

H4, indicates that perceived job stress positively moderates the relationship between teamwork and employee productivity. This is an important finding: the positive effect of teamwork on productivity is enhanced when job stress is higher. In short, this demonstrates an impressive buffering and mobilizing effect of performance, specific to the public service context. Strong teams do not simply blow apart under pressure; rather, the collective pressure serves to mobilize greater reliance on team-based resources, shared coping strategies, and levels of coordinated effort, confirming that team support services are most effective when job demands (and collective pressures) are highest (Costin et al., 2023; Saud & Rice, 2024). H5 reveals that perceived job stress positively moderating the association between teamwork and turnover intention. Interpreted in the context of the negative relationship between teamwork and TI, this means that perceived job stress strengthens the capacity of teamwork to reduce TI. In short, when public sector jobs become highly stressful, a strong team provides an unparalleled source of emotional and instrumental support, thereby preventing employees from leaving. The team becomes a protective factor that stabilizes commitment in times of significant strain (Akgunduz et al., 2023; Sadiq, 2022).

H6 presents evidence that Resistance to Change negatively moderated the positive relationship between teamwork and employee productivity. Negative moderation shows that the positive effect that strong teamwork had on productivity would be significantly impaired anytime there was widespread organizational RC to new policies and/or systems. Furthermore, if the collaborative efforts of a highly cohesive team are undermined by colleagues or departmental units that are trying very hard to undermine the change process, then the highly valued productivity we would expect will not be realized, because RTC acts as a significant friction point organizationally that diffuses team synergy and focus, agreeing with (Evans & Britt, 2023; Rahmadani et al., 2024). H7 indicates that Resistance to Change (RTC) negatively moderated the relationship between teamwork and turnover intention. This indicates that higher RC weakens the negative effect of teamwork rel-

ative to employee turnover intention. Further, RC combined with organizational change is perceived to result in a more perilous and poorly executed change management process. As a result, while teammates' affective ties and emotional bonding might be strong, when the change process is managed poorly, the dissatisfaction with the organizational direction supersedes the effects of teamwork, leading each employee to believe they desire to exit the organization and reduce their individual work commitments on team assignment (Rosenberg, 2023; Zhu et al., 2023). This indicates that while teamwork is what binds members of a team together, systemic organizational factors such as poor change management will negate even the strongest inter-personal bonds.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The research introduces emotional intelligence, which is first conceptualized through Social Exchange Theory (SET). Previous models have suggested that EI is directly related to individual performance; however these findings demonstrate that teamwork is the important exchange mechanism through which EI impacts employee productivity and turnover intention. SET posits that employees act from a motivation to receive reciprocation in their social environment. Findings indicate that high individual EI is the current currency with which employees engage a team (e.g., emotional labor and trust-building), and teamwork is the subsequent organizational reward for maintaining strong emotional currency (e.g., social support, shared workload, team cohesion) and resulting in satisfaction of exchange, heightened effort (productivity), and commitment (lower turnover intention). This extends the theory of EI beyond individual characteristics to explain a relational context in which EI can translate to collective value (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Finally, resistance to change should be viewed as a dominating systemic cost that strong social rewards, even if they are team-based rewards, cannot counterbalance, and which can severely undermine the team's ability to maintain productivity and retain staff. Future research using SET in change management will need to account for this strong dampening effect.

Managers operating in any organization like the audit service and local government should adjust their uptake of recruits to consider emotional intelligence and not just technical competence. High emotional intelligence will affect the quality of team interaction, which in itself is the engine for productivity. Human resource managers should incorporate emotional intelligence dimensions for example empathy and relationship management into their selection criteria and with particular prominence in the recital of supervisory functions or for team

leadership functions. Alongside this, any continual assessment of their performance should incorporate an emotional intelligence aspect to identify any emotional deficiencies and address them through training programs to ensure more learned capacities for social skills; for example, it supports progression around effective interpersonal work, improving relationships, resolving conflicts, and emotional management as well as fostering teams that are less fluid in working across a number of functions during a considerable challenge in time and complexity (for example overdue audits or implementation of new policy) and committing the resources for the same to initiate stability. It is crucial to appreciate the alignment of simplified functional team dynamic, a low cost point of psychology, is intertwined to be an effective psychological safeguard against turnover caused by workload and stress. Therefore, managers should focus on the antecedents to resistance first transparency, opportunity for participation, and communications as to the merits of the first place; as these are the consequential outcomes for consideration when making or proposing policy changes. There is an extensively high probability the amount of work spent high emotional intelligence and creating engaged teams will be neutralized if resistant is not managed or addressed at the organizational level.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This research established a comprehensive model that explains the relationship among emotional intelligence, teamwork, and productivity of employee outcomes in the African public service. The results decisively confirmed the mediating role of teamwork, finding that high emotional intelligence significantly improves employee productivity and retention (lower turnover intention), through enhanced social exchange processes. Perceived job stress is an intensifier, because teamwork's ability to influence performance and leave is greatest when pressure is high. While resistance to change is a systemic inhibitor because it undermines teamwork efforts and increases employees' intention to leave. The applied contribution of the research is important for both theory and practice; it provides a theoretically grounded evidence-based model to inform an emphasis on emotional and collaborative abilities that will encourage relationship-building, resilient engaged and high-performing public sector organizations in a developing economy.

While this study provides strong support for the proposed model, it has some limitations. First, employing a cross-sectional research design meant that all variables were measured at a single time frame. A descriptive design can confirm the strength and direction of the relationships, but it inherently

limits the capacity to establish a fully indications of causality - particularly, how the effects of the mediating and moderating variable change over time. Second, like all survey-based research utilizing self-report instruments, the data was subject to potential biases like Common Method Bias (CMB), and social desirability bias. While some statically approaches were applied, they cannot completely control for these biases. Finally, the study was limited to public sector employees in only two institutions (in Ghana, Africa). Although the specificity of this context provides depth, it necessarily limits generalization of these results to any broader context in the African private sector, or in public servant work environments in developed economies where organizational structures and expectations of employees may vary.

The constraints of the present study create several interesting opportunities for future research. To address the causality question, future studies should utilize longitudinal studies to assess the directionality of the relationships how changes

in emotional intelligence result in later changes in teamwork quality, and how the moderating effects of perceived job stress and resistance to change will differ across reform cycles. Secondly, to improve generalizability, researchers could do comparative research in other settings, such as comparing the public sector to the private sector, or contrasting findings from developing economies with developed economies. These comparisons would rigorously test how robust the model's boundary conditions are within the sample, especially with job stress being an intensifying factor and resistance to change having a negative effect. Finally, even though the model accounts for a sizeable amount of variance in employee outcomes, future studies should consider including more variables in line with Social Exchange Theory (for example: Perceived Organizational Support (POS) or organizational justice), which may further bolster our understanding of the interplay between employees' emotional resources and the reciprocal organizational rewards received.

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