

Investigating the Mediating Role of Employee Engagement on Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Effectiveness: An Empirical Study



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Although there are few studies available on studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness of firms in general, literature is scant about systematically analyzing the mediating role of employee engagement on the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness of firms in specific. Following the theory of JDR, the present study develops conceptual framework which provides valuable insights. First, the employee engagement of IT employees mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness of the same. Next, this mediated relationship is moderated by gender. Third, emotional intelligence is significantly related to the organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Organizational Intelligence, Employee Engagement, Mediation

1. Introduction

According to Association of Professional Executives of the Public Services of Canada, respectfulness and kind environment have the potential of influencing productivity of business drastically. In such environment employees were 26% more energetic, 30% more motivated to upgrade their skill-set with 36% more satisfaction and showed 44% more commitment to work. Several researchers have also explored the role of environment kindness in increasing employees involvement in their job in highly stressful and burnout working environment, (Jazwiec, 2009). Under atrociously disastrous, distressing and once in a century situation like COVID 19 maintaining an environment which is conducive for growth is ridiculously strenuous for management as it has definitely endangered our personal capacity of balancing ourselves and as a result it has led to inward state of stress and has also aroused an emotion of fear and anxiety, (Moreno et al., 2020).

According to the article published in Business line (SIMHAN, 2020) stated that covid-19 will significantly impact the \$180-billion Indian IT sector, and the impact may be worse than that of the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC). In some or the other way this fear is justified considering the US and Europe, which together account for more than two-thirds of India's IT exports, are among the worst affected geographies by the pandemic. All chains got loosened between work, worker and the workplace in the IT sector when India went into massive lockdown in March 2020, (Gupta et al., 2022) Delhi NCR was among the six worst hit states by covid-19. In the article published in Forbes, , *Entrepreneurs and Suicide, A New Perspective On Entrapment Gives Hope*, (Gourguechon, 2020) has pointed that social isolation is a risk factor for suicide – which is something that employees frequently report. Further she added that impact of covid is not only limited to physical and psychological health but also that how enterprise would perform and produce respective positive organizational outcomes. Therefore this paper is a humble attempt from the researchers to analyze and report the role of emotional intelligence on organizational effectiveness among the corporates of Delhi NCR region as maintaining it under acceptable levels was a big challenge and learning experience for both management and academicians at large. Current study also analyses the mediating role of employee engagement. Mediation of employee engagement is supported by JDR model. Out of the two psychological aspects of JDR model, i.e. stress and motivational process, current study takes into account the motivational process which states that job (personal resource) leads to positive organizational outcomes via engagement, (Schaufeli, 2017) and it could also be very evidently said that due to its flexible nature, JDR model is not only suitable for academic researcher but also quite useful in organizational context, (Schaufeli, 2017). In the present study emotional intelligence is taken as a personal resource as posited by job-demand resource model and few literatures (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009a); (Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021) that emotional intelligence as a personal resource is still under exploration and aforementioned theory also posits that Emotional intelligence as a personal resource may enhance the engagement which in turn would provide positive organizational outcomes that would mitigate the aftermaths of covid-19. It has been noticed that research on employee engagement is at its peak over the decade and engagement in turn leads to many positive organizational outcomes. (Harter et al., 2002); (Saks & Gruman, 2014); (Xanthopoulou et al., 2008).

2. Literature Review & Hypothesis Development

2.1 Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Effectiveness

According to (Cherniss, 2001), the concept of emotional intelligence was not coined in 1981 in fact, James Dozier who was an US army brigadier, during the first few days of his captivity by Italian terrorist depicted a live example that how a single person

can balance out the emotional intelligence of a group just by working upon it. His story not only depicts an example of EI but also made clear that timely handling and management of emotions could lead people to work effectively and could create a conducive work environment at workplace. Although there are not much studies which has specifically focused on organizational effectiveness, but still it can be evidently said that term affect is an umbrella term for emotions and mood of employees (Barsade & Gibson, 2007) do put impact on individual as well as group level outcomes, (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011);(Barsade & Knight, 2015). (Mathur, 2000) has posited that emotional intelligence plays a prominent role in managing people effectively over high intelligence, as (Goleman, 2017) has also recognizes four emotional intelligence skills at work, i.e. self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill, and out of this skills, self-awareness is the most important factor which contributes to organizational effectiveness.(Rajagopal & Rekha, 2004). Emotional intelligence at its best is described as, “the ability to monitor one’s own and other people’s emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior” (Mayer et al., 2004). Application of EI in organizational context gained its prominence when Goleman in 2004 pointed that EI has a important role in organization and suggested that there should be increasing attention towards EI.

Various dimension of organizational effectiveness has been taken in different studies, as (Pedaprolu & Rao, 2020) has tested the relationship between emotional intelligence and 3 dimension of organizational effectiveness, i.e. teamwork effectiveness, conflict handling modes and leadership competencies to which it was concluded that EI significantly contributed towards teamwork effectiveness followed by leadership competencies, similiarly (Ahghar et al., 2014) also studies the relationship between EI and OE, but with other dimension of OE, i.e. innovation, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and organizational health, to which it was deduced that EI and OE are inextricably related. On the basis of above documented literatures, the first hypothesis framed is:

H1: Emotional intelligence of employees has direct and positive relationship with organizational effectiveness of their respective entities.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence, Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness

As suggested by (Baron & Kenny, 1986), mediating variable has to be related to independent variable and criterion variable, therefore current section of literature review includes studies regarding emotional intelligence and employee engagement; and employee engagement and organizational effectiveness of organization in general and employees in specific.

Studies has revealed that worldwide only 15% of employees are actually engaged (Harter et al., 2013) and in US companies the cost of such huge disengagement is valued at \$350 billion, (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Amidst above evidences there is a dire need to understand the reason of such disengagement and carving out the ways that how an individual can be kept engaged at workplace which would lead to organizational outcomes. Originally the concept of employee engagement was given by ,(Kahn, 1990) who opined that engagement is the manifestations among the individual to express themselves cognitively and emotionally through their actions at jobs and it also leads to the outcomes at both, at individual as well as organizational level,(Kahn, 1992). Emotional connotations of employee engagement deals with feelings and beliefs of employees, (Baumruk, 2004); (Richman, 2006) which plays an imperative role in shaping the commitment and loyalty , (Rhoades et al., 2001). Evidences are there which asserts a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement as according to (Sarangi & Vats, 2015) emotional intelligence augments high level of employee engagement as employees who are more involved in their work give keen attention to their feelings. (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020) has adopted facet level approach of EI in predicting employee engagement, and has been concluded that among the three facets, happiness, emotion management and emotion regulation, emotion management highly predicted employee engagement.

Although there is no universally accepted definition of organizational effectiveness,(Eydi, 2015); (Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016), goal oriented approach of the same has been widely accepted, (Daft, 2015) and in terms of this said approach,(Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008); (Jeung, 2011) has defined employee engagement as, “Engagement is identified as employees behavior which is positive towards the attainment of organizational goals.” In the current scenario, amongst some of the present positive organizational concepts, eg. Optimism, trust and engagement,(Koyuncu et al., 2006) executives has accepted engagement as universal concept which would foster organizational effectiveness,(Welch, 2011). Employee engagement has been studied in connection with other organizational aspects like performance, (Kazimoto, 2016); (AbuKhalifeh & Som, 2013);(Nasomboon, 2014); (Teimouri et al., 2016); (Juevesa & Castino, 2020), productivity,(Gruman & Saks, 2011) but the widely used factors of organizational effectiveness i.e. adaptability, flexibility and productivity is yet to be explored, (Jha et al., 2019).Therefore current study has used the instrument which would measure OE in these three aspects. Employee engagement is the determinant of organizational effectiveness, (Kataria, Rastogi, et al., 2013) despite the fact, studies are in dearth which would establish a relationship between the two variables, (Kataria et al., 2012); (Jha et al., 2019); (Kataria, Garg, et al., 2013); (Teimouri et al., 2016) and also in a survey by (Hewitt, 2017) only 24% of the global workforce is actually engaged, therefore studying both together and confirming that whether really engagement drives effectiveness is the demand of the hour.

On the basis of above documented two sections of literature it could be said that if employees are aware of their feelings at their work they would posit positive behaviors in the form of engagement and engagement in turn would manifest positive organizational effectiveness. The statement of the problem is that is engagement really a mediator between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness because EE is found mediating between EI and job satisfaction,(Nurjanah & Indawati, 2021);(Aulia, 2016) EI and commitment,(Aulia, 2016) , personality and job performance but we could find no established evidence which would have claimed EE as a mediating variable between EI and OE. Idea behind taking engagement as mediator between these two variable is supported by JDR approach explained in above section (theoretical framework) of

the paper. According to (Dalal et al., 2012), employee engagement is the newest job attitude. AET theory claims that if employee would experience an effective environment in their organization would manifest positive job attitude (employee engagement), (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) which in turn would foster organizational effectiveness. On the basis of the above well documented literatures, the second hypothesis which has been framed is:

H2: Employee engagement of employees mediates the direct and positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness.

2.3 Gender as Moderating Variable

According to Eagly's social role theory of gender, gender influence behavior through a biosocial set of process that regulate role performance,(Eagly & Wood, 2012) and emotional intelligence has the ability to foster that behavior and enhance outcome in an individual,(Schutte et al., 2002) i.e. we can say that gender might influence one's way of expressing and understanding emotions which in turn might impact their performance and involvement in the form of engagement. Talking about the importance of gender (Brackett et al., 2006) states that emotional intelligence should incorporate gender into the theoretical framework and research design. (Pena et al., 2012a) has mentioned that gender plays an important role in influencing emotional skills and that in turn influence employee engagement. Women shows greater emotional management skills and more vigor and absorption in their jobs than men according to the existing literatures,(Pena et al., 2012a)Traditionally, women are more emotional and more clear in expressing their emotions.(Brody & Hall, 2008) and evidences has proven that women perform better in affective aspect, (Pena et al., 2012b)

Needles to mention that employee engagement is one of the crucial factor to maintain effectiveness of organization but very little attention has been given on the level of engagement in context of gender,(Reissova et al., 2017).There are very few evidences available which would depict impact of gender on employee engagement,(George & Ben, 2017);(Khodakarami & Dirani, 2020);(Karamustafa & Kunday, 2018) . Although there are studies which revealed that females show more employee engagement than male, (Avery et al., 2007) but contrary reports could also be evident(Schaufeli et al., 2006a). Therefore it can be evidently said that studies related to gender and employee engagement are still inconclusive,(Shukla et al., 2015). Therefore on the basis of above documented literature the third hypothesis is:

H3: Gender is likely to moderate positively the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement of employees.

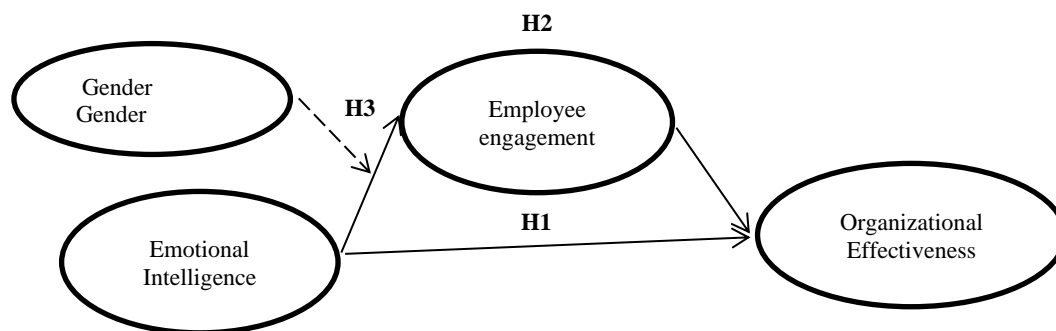


Figure1 Conceptual Framework

3. Conceptual Framework

Therefore concluding from the preceding hypotheses, fig1. depicts the conceptual framework of the study which shows the moderated mediation model incorporating emotional intelligence as independent variable, employee engagement as mediating variable, organizational effectiveness as criterion variable and gender as moderating variable.

4. Theoretical Framework

Current study is based on the concept of job demand resource model, which was introduced fifteen years ago to understand burnout, i.e, feeling emotionally drained and used up and reduced personal efficacy but after some years the model was supplemented to engagement concept, i.e. positively fulfilling psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. The theory asserts that every job consist of some conditions in the form of demand, e.g. effort which is in the form of obligations and task interruptions, (Siegrist, 1996) and also some job resource in the form of support from others, performance feedback etc.(Demerouti et al., 2001) and interaction of job demand and job resource produces positive organizational outcomes via engagement.

Job demand resource model has undergone two extensions in recent times i.e., (a) personal resource (b) leadership. Personal resource is taken into account in the current academic exercise. According to (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009b) personal resource are those positive self-evaluations about how an individual control and impact upon their environment, some of its examples include self-efficacy, optimism and organization based self-esteem but in few studies emotional management is also considered as a personal resource which would foster positive organizational outcomes via engagement. (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020);(Giardini & Frese, 2006).

Considering the above mentioned facts, firstly, in JDR model there is a sense of ambiguity regarding the role which personal resource should play, (Schaufeli, 2017) and secondly very few studies having emotional intelligence as a personal resource is available in the academic domain. In that context present study has tried to analyze the influence of emotional intelligence of physically and mentally engaged employees as a personal resource and its collective impact on overall organizational effectiveness .

5. Methodology

5.1 Data Collection and Samples

Data was collected through questionnaire to test the conceptual framework depicted in fig.1, Research setting was Delhi, India and the data was collected through corporates of delhi-NCR. The questionnaire also captures the demographic information of the respondents. Table.1 depicts the demographic profile and descriptive statistics.

Table 1 Demographic Profile and Sample Descriptive Statistics

	N	Percentage
GENDER	80	53.33
Male	70	46.66
Female		
AGE	95	63.33
20-30	29	19.33
31-40	26	17.33
41-50	0	
51-60		
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		
10+2	22	14.6
Graduation	53	35.3
Post-graduation	75	50

5.2 Measures

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is measure through Wong and Law emotional intelligence scale, WLEIS. It is a 16-item scale developed by (Law et al., 2004). CFA was in order to assess the factor loadings and after the analysis it was found that the loading of one item of the scale was below the standardized loading i.e. .5, therefore the item, “I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally.” Again the analysis was run on the remaining 15 items, now the loadings were above the standardized loadings and average variance extracted was .57. Cronbach alpha for the scale was .894.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is measure through Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9).It is nine item scale developed by (Schaufeli et al., 2006b). CFA was run in order to assess the factor loadings and after the analysis it was found that loading of one of the item was below the standardized loading, i.e .5. Therefore the item,” At my work I feel bursting with energy” was removed. Again the analysis was run on the remaining 8 items and now the loadings were above the standardized loading i.e. .5 and the average variance extracted was .59.Cronbach alpha for the scale was .929.

Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is measured through an 8-item scale developed by (Mott, 1972). CFA was run in order to assess the factor loadings and after the analysis it was found that the loadings of all the item was above the standardized loadings, i.e. .5 and average variance extracted was .49. Cronbach alpha was .900.

6. Results

Structural equation modeling using Amos-26 was used to test that proposed hypothesis.

The Measurement Model

CFA was run to predict the fitness of measurement model. The value of fit indices are: $\chi^2 = 1191.07$, degree of freedom=422 , Tucker lewis index(TLI)=.932, comparative fit index(CFI)= .94, root mean square error of approximation(RMSEA) = .089 and T value in respect to all the values are significant. There measurement model produced good fit indices.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability

Below mentioned table.2 depicts mean, SD, correlations and square root of AVE. From the table it could be interpreted that there is positive correlations between emotional intelligence, employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. There are two ways to calculate the reliability of the constructs. First, by examining the factor loadings of the constructs and second, by seeing the cronbach alpha’s value.

One item of employee engagement has been removed as its factor loading was below .05. According to (Hair et al., 2010), the cut value for cronbach alpha is .7 and the cronbach alpha for the variable under current study, i.e. emotional intelligence,

employee engagement and organizational effectiveness are .891, .926, .893 respectively. Therefore reliability values are acceptable as mentioned by (Hair et al., 2010).

The recommended value of composite reliability according to (Gefen et al., 2000) is above .7 and for the current study, the range for composite reliability ranges from .88 to .95. The discriminant validity for the paper has been fully met out and convergent validity has been partially met. To ensure the discriminant validity, square root of AVE must be greater than correlations between the construct and the other constructs and on the examination of value of AVE same has been satisfied. Therefore discriminant validity for the paper is supported. To ensure the convergent validity, the cut off value for AVE is above .5 as suggested by (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Since AVE score for the variables are .57, .59, .49. All the three values are almost met hence convergent validity is also supported.

Therefore all the scales depicts the reliability, discriminant validity and convergent validity.

The Structural Model

In the current model, impact of emotional intelligence in the absence of employee engagement is checked on organizational effectiveness and impact of the same via employee engagement is also checked. The paper also assess moderation of gender between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. This is called moderated mediation analysis according to (Preacher et al., 2007)

The structural model is tested through AMOS on the basis of maximum likelihood estimates (MLE). Values of various indices are: Chi-square=1011.73 for DOF= 471 . The value of fit indices are, GFI=.732 , CFI= .921, RMSEA=.076 , & CMIN/DF= 2.19.

Therefore structural produced reasonable fit indices, hence it can be concluded that data fits well in conceptual framework.

Table 2 Mean, SD, Correlations & Square root of AVE

Construct	Emotional intelligence	Employee engagement	Organizational effectiveness
Emotional Intelligence	.754		
Employee engagement	.618**	.768	
Organizational effectiveness	.582**	.582**	.70
Mean	62.82	33.99	29.70
Standard Deviation	8.35	5.83	5.05

**= $p < .01$

Table 3 Factor Loadings, Cronbach alpha, AVE & Composite Reliability

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	Cronbach Alpha	AVE	Square root of AVE	Composite reliability
Emotional Intelligence	EI1	.672	.894	.57	.748	.95
	EI2	.812				
	EI3	.792				
	EI4	.671				
	EI5	.693				
	EI6	.814				
	EI7	.686				
	EI8	.739				
	EI9	.701				
	EI10	.744				
	EI11	.833				
	EI12	.818				
	EI14	.684				
	EI15	.771				
	EI16	.805				
	Employee engagement	EE2				
EE3		.820				
EE4		.848				
EE5		.769				
EE6		.797				
EE7		.815				
EE8		.777				
OE1		.566				
Organizational effectiveness	OE2	.603	.900	.49	.705	.88
	OE3	.746				
	OE4	.792				
	OE5	.773				
	OE6	.737				
	OE7	.767				
	OE8	.625				

Path Estimates

As depicted in table 5. Emotional intelligence is significantly related to organizational effectiveness, ($\beta = .582$, $p < .01$) and this is in line with the hypothesis 1, thus it can be said that hypothesis 1 is supported. The structural model also provides an opportunity to test the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement and employee engagement and organizational

effectiveness. The path estimates depicted that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement, ($\beta=.618, p<.01$) and also there is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational effectiveness, ($\beta=.582, p<.01$). Therefore all the paths were statistically significant.

Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement

Emotional intelligence is positively related to organizational effectiveness and employee engagement, and employee engagement. The results of the first three steps of mediation analysis is reported in table. 3. In the full model analysis where emotional intelligence and employee engagement are explanatory variable and organizational effectiveness is a criterion variable, the strength of the relationship between EI and OE can be seen decreasing, i.e. employees engagement partially mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness. The mediating effect of the OCM was found to be .135. Therefore hypothesis 2 was supported.

Estimates of Moderating Effect

The result of the moderating effect revealed that gender moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. The direct effect of EI on EE before introduction of gender as a moderating variable was .618 but after introduction of the variable gender as moderating variable the effect of EI on EE in case of male is ($\beta=.638$) positive and significant. Therefore the strength of relationship between the two variable strengthen in case of male and in contrary the effect of EI on EE in case of female is ($\beta=.569$) also positive but the strength of relationship became weak in case of females. Therefore hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 3 EI Predicting OE And Mediating Role of EE

STEPS	PATH	ESTIMATES	SE	CR	INFERENCE
	EI→OE	.582	.040	8.73	positive relationship
	EI→EE	.618	.045	9.59	positive relationship
	EE→OE	.582	.58	8.74	positive relationship
	EI→OE	.359	.045	9.59	mediation effect supported
	EI→EE	.618	.069	4.54	
	EE→OE	.361	.048	4.52	

Table 4 Moderating Effect of Gender

PATH DESCRIPTION	MODERATING EFFECT					
	MALE			FEMALE		
→Employee Engagement	Estimates	CR	P value	Estimates	CR	P value
	.638	7.365	***	.569	5.74	***

Table 5 Path Estimates of Structural Model

Relationships	Direct effects
Emotional intelligence→organizational effectiveness	.582
Emotional intelligence→employee engagement	.618
employee engagement →organizational effectiveness	.582

7. Conclusion & Discussion

The disastrous Covid- 19 which has staggered the growth of almost all the sectors of the economy, Indian IT sector is no exception to adversity. In this context, R. Chandrashekhar, former telecom commission chairman, has opined in an article published in THE HINDU (PTI, 2020) that 100% of work could not be conducted from home, there are few issues which directly require face to face interactions and meetings. Therefore pandemic has definitely created some major constraints in the form of employee retention, employee engagement and ultimately the organizational performance, (Hindu, 2022).

Keeping the aforementioned facts under account, current study has undertaken some of the crucial constructs in context of covid-19 i.e. emotional intelligence, employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. The study examined the effect of emotional intelligence on organizational effectiveness and also the mediating effect of employee engagement. Next, this mediated relationship is moderated by gender, which in statistical language is stated as moderated mediation analysis. The analysis supported our first hypothesis i.e. emotional intelligence has positive and significant effect on organizational effectiveness which is in line with many literatures too, e.g., (Pena et al., 2012a); (Kassem & Ahmed, 2021);(Jorfi et al., 2010)

Then the present study also defends our second hypothesis i.e. employee engagement mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness. In fact JDR theory validates finds of the present academic exercise, and the findings also align with the above documented literatures in this respect, e.g. (Extremera et al., 2018); (Sanchez-Gomez et al., 2021)

Lastly, our third hypothesis adheres to our findings which discusses that in case of males relationship between EI and EE got strengthen, (from $\beta= .618$ to $\beta= .638$) and in case of females it depicted weak moderation, ($\beta= .618$ to $\beta= .569$). This finding supports the social role theory of gender given by Eagly which affirms that gender might impact one’s way of expressing and

understanding emotions which in turn would impact an individual's involvement in the form of engagement. At the same time this is in contrary to the established society norms that women express more than men due to the fact that women are primarily inside the homes, (Eagly et al., 2000) take care of the families, (Grandey & Krannitz, 2016) and are more emotional unlike men who are outside the homes and low in emotional intelligence than females, (Joseph & Newman, 2010).

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