Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction:
Mediated by Transformational Leadership

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Abstract: The study conceptualized transformational leadership as a mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. It was also aimed at finding the impact of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership on job satisfaction. However, the role of emotional intelligence in creating transformational leadership behavior was also examined. The research was carried out on a purposively selected sample of 250 managers from telecommunication organizations all over Pakistan. The results revealed positive, moderate and significant impact of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership on job satisfaction. It was found that Emotional Intelligence plays positive and significant role in creating Transformational leadership behavior. The results also revealed partial mediating role of transformational leadership in relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Implications of these findings are discussed and suggestions are made for future research.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence · Transformational leadership · Job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction of employees is one of the emerging issues for today's HR managers based on the strategic link between job satisfaction and employee productivity. Satisfaction of employees is a complex phenomenon as it depends on various factors for employees at different hierarchical level of the enterprise. It is therefore essential for the executives of the organizations to cope with this challenge strategically.

Job satisfaction concerns with physical as well as psychological aspects of jobs. Personal factors of employees should be linked with financial gains in order to achieve the long-term viability of the organizational objectives. Emotional intelligence concept is vital which use social skills in understanding the personal emotions of employees and accordingly motivate them towards the desired goals. A good leadership style is also essential by the executives to accomplish the optimum level of satisfaction of the employees.

Emotional Intelligence, Job satisfaction and Leadership Style are some of the emerging issues in the organizational theory. The past literature endorse emotional intelligence [1, 2] and transformational leadership [3, 4] as predictors of job outcomes including job satisfaction.

A wide range of research suggests that emotional intelligence abilities and traits influence job satisfaction [5,6] but relationship between Job Satisfaction, Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Style has not yet received empirical attention. Further, there are rare studies that find the mediating effect of transformational leadership between emotional intelligence and Job Satisfaction.

This study examines the role of emotional Intelligence as a variable that is predicted to have an effect on transformational leadership that subsequently effect job satisfaction.

Literature Review

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is imperative to retain and attract employees with high qualifications. Dissatisfied employees are usually emotionally and mentally detached from the organization, become less committed and are more prone towards leaving the organization [7]. The positive or negative feelings related to the job, perception that work is not imposed, emotional response to tasks and, physical and social work conditions refer to job satisfaction [8-10]. The individual
within a work environment builds an attitude towards the job on the basis of the perception of the presence and absence of the job characteristics concerning their particular needs [11].

Job satisfaction is considered as indescribable and mythical concept which have been centre of attention of researchers and managers since a long time [12]. The level of satisfaction within a job is considered to be most important information concerning an employee [13]. For this particular reason the interest of managers and human recourse specialists remained in the ways of improving satisfaction of an employee within a job [14]. Hopkins [15] defined job satisfaction as “the fulfillment or gratification of certain needs of the individual that are associated with one’s work”.

Past research examined that job satisfaction is effected by a number of variables including wage increases [16]; agency-influenced work and employment conditions [17]; motivation [18,19]; performance [20]; higher occupational positions [21], emotional intelligence [22-24].

**Emotional Intelligence:** The upcoming emotional revolution proposes emotional intelligence as an important predictor of important organizational outcomes including job satisfaction [1,2]. It is argued that emotional intelligence affects individual’s health (mental as well as physical) and career achievements [25]. Emotional intelligence is defined as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth”[26]. It is the capability to understand and manage emotions efficiently for the better functioning of cognitive processes and to facilitate decision making [27].

There are number of reasons why job satisfaction may be influenced by emotional intelligence. Organizations require interpersonal interactions related to job duties like customer service, reporting to supervisor, cooperation and coordination with peers [28]. It is anticipated that the processes related to emotional intelligence like being aware of one’s emotions and regulating it, promotes social relationship and affect the experience of emotion and stress at work. Emotionally aware employee can control stress and negative emotions and may also exhibit better performance. If the employee is able to control his emotions and be in a positive emotion state he will be able to exhibit positive attitude towards organization thus making him loyal and more committed to the organization. This situation reduces the chances that such employee would quit the job [28].

**Transformational Leadership:** In recent years the emotions at workplace received considerable attention. Organizational psychologists focused on finding the reasons, outcomes and expression of emotion in the workplace [29,30] and found that Work attitude and behavior of the employees is affected by type and intensity of their emotional experiences [30,31]. It is further suggested that emotions play an important role in the perception and emergence of leaders in groups [32,33].

Leadership includes everything from the supervisory effect on subordinates’ attitudes to the CEO’s’ effect on organizational performance. Leadership has been defined in a number of ways. Most of the present definitions of leadership reveal some basic elements such as group, influence and goal [34] varying in terms of ability of the leaders, their personality traits, their influence and their emphasis on behavior style [35].

A relatively new concept of leadership was proposed by Bass [36] and later on refined further by Avolio and Bass [37], proposing Full Range Leadership (FRL) Model. The theory proposed three dimensional model of leadership style; transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership. However, in literature the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership were mainly focused, as both styles may be linked to the achievement of desired goals and objectives. Transformational leader is the one who creates an environment of commitment and develop interest to work and make efforts for achievements of organizational objectives by motivating the people in the organization. They inspire employees to perform beyond expectation and in doing so recognize and satisfy their higher order needs [36].

There emerges an emotional relationship between transformational leaders and their followers. Such leaders generally emotionally support their followers and are able to spread the emotions concerning their own expectations [33]. Transformational leaders depend upon the use of emotions [38]. Palmer et al., [39] also found transformational leadership to be emotion based. Darling et al. [40], in an exploratory study, suggested that emotional intelligence made leaders susceptible to use transformational behavior. The association between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership was also supported by Gardner and Stought [41].
The current scenario recognizes leadership and job satisfaction as essential components [42]. Leadership is considered to be an important predictor of job satisfaction [21]. It is conceivable that transformational leaders by using their vision prevents employees from stress and dissatisfaction while motivate them to perform more than expectation [43,44]. Albion and Gagliardi [3] found transformational leadership positively and significantly related to job satisfaction during change. A large number of nursing research recognized the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction [45,46]. Transformational leadership was also found positively affecting job satisfaction of sales people [4,47,48].

Based on past research, this study formulated the following hypotheses:

H1: There is positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and job satisfaction.

H2: Transformational leadership perception has a positive impact on job satisfaction

H3: Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more transformational in their leadership style

H4: Transformational leadership perception has positive mediating effect in the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

**METHODS AND MATERIALS**

**Sample and Procedure:** A convenient sample comprised of 250 employees from the telecommunication organizations in Pakistan. Education level of the respondents was from masters to onwards. The instructions were given on every questionnaire specified with their required information about demographic. Participants were assured that information will be used for the research purpose only. A cross-sectional research design was used to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction and Transformational Leadership Style. Data was collected through questionnaires, personally administered at top telecom companies. Appointments were made to visit the telecom organizations to personally deliver the set of printed questionnaires.

**Measures**

**Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire:** Schutte et al. [49] EI Scale was used in the study. The scale consisted of 26 items and anchored at a five point likert scale with (1) strongly dissatisfied to (5) strongly agree. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the score for the present study sample was 0.93.

**Job Satisfaction Questionnaire:** The scale by Schriesheim and Tsu [50] was used in the study. It consisted of 6 items; and anchored at a five point likert scale with (1) strongly dissatisfied to (5) strongly agree. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the score for the present study sample was 0.76.

**Transformational Leadership Style Questionnaire:** The Transformational Leadership sub-scale of leadership questionnaire MLQ-5 by Bass and Avolio [51] was used to measure transformational leadership. It consisted of 18 items that was rated on five point Likert scale ranging from (1) Never to (5) Always. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the score for the present study sample was 0.93.

**RESULTS**

The main aim of the study was to examine the mediating role of Transformational Leadership Style on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction. The study also aimed at finding the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction.

Table 1 show the descriptive statistic and co-efficient alpha reliabilities for the scales used in the present study. All the scales reliabilities exceeded the .70 as recommended by Nunnally (1978). Cronbach’s alpha of. 93, 76 and 93 for the Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction and Transformational Leadership Style respectively, were significantly high for research use. The mean value range from 119.76 of Emotional Intelligence to 21.20 for Job Satisfaction. Alpha value was above .70 showing that all the instruments are reliable to be used.

Table 2 shows the Correlation of all the variable of the study. All the variables are positively and significantly related. Emotional Intelligence is positively and significantly related with Job Satisfaction (r=.271, p<.001) and transformational leadership (r=.554, p<.001).

Table 3 shows the results of regression analysis to find the effect of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction. The value of R² is .07 which shows that 7 percent variation is brought in Job Satisfaction due to Emotional Intelligence. β value of .27 shows that Emotional Intelligence brought significance change in Job Satisfaction.

Table 4 shows the results of regression analysis to find the effect of Transformational Leadership Style on Job Satisfaction. The value of R² is .07 which shows that 7 percent variation is brought in Job Satisfaction due to Transformational Leadership Style. β value of. 27 shows that Transformational Leadership Style brought significant change (p<.001) in Job Satisfaction.
Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (N=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Alpha coeff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>119.76</td>
<td>20.63</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>21.20</td>
<td>10.75</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership Style</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73.68</td>
<td>14.79</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Correlation Matrix for all variables (N=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.271*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Job satisfaction</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>-.554*</td>
<td>.270*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<.001

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Emotional Intelligence with Job Satisfaction (N=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (constant)</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>3.73*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .074, ΔR² = .087
F=13.89(DF=1,175), P<.001

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Transformational Leadership Style with Job Satisfaction (N=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (constant)</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>3.71*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .07, ΔR² = .07
F=13.76(DF=1,175), P<.001

Table 5: Regression Analysis for Emotional Intelligence with Transformational Leadership Style (N=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (constant)</td>
<td>24.72</td>
<td>5.643</td>
<td>4.380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>0.469</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .31, ΔR² = .303
F=77.36(DF=1,175), P<.001

Table 6: Standardized Multiple Regression Beta Weights (N=250)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>(constant)</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² change = .021
F=9.055, DF=(1,175), P<.001

Testing for Mediation: As per the recommendations of Baron and Kenny [52], regression analyses were conducted to examine the hypothesized relationships among the variables. For a variable to function as a mediator Baron and Kenny [52] suggested following conditions; a) Independent variable must be related to dependent variable; b) independent variable must be related to the mediator; c) mediator must be related to the dependent variable and finally when independent variable and the mediator are included, the direct relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable should become significantly smaller (partial mediation) or non-significant (full mediation).
Table 6 presents the results of the analysis between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction with the inclusion of Transformational Leadership Style as the mediator. Value of $R^2$ change = 0.21 shows that 2 percent additive effect was brought in the relationship due to transformational leadership. Beta weights reduced from 27 to .18 and was statistically significant showing partial mediation [52].

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The aim of the study was to examine the impact of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership on job satisfaction and to investigate the mediating role of transformational leadership in fostering the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

First hypothesis anticipated a positive impact of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction. This hypothesis was substantiated as Emotional Intelligence had a significant and positive impact on Job Satisfaction. Previous studies exhibit the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction. This finding of current study is in line with earlier findings that suggested that emotions play important role in determining Job Satisfaction. The employees who are dissatisfied in their jobs may develop emotions like helplessness, anger, hatred and fatigue [53,54] which may lead them towards poor physical and mental health. If taken from management perspective, they may also decrease performance of the employees, their absenteeism, turnover, strike and early retirements [55,56]. Recent studies in this field found emotional intelligence to be an important predictor of job satisfaction. For instance, Sy et al. [6] found a positive association between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in food service workers and their managers. A study of a group of managers by Lopes et al. [24] also established association between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction using self and supervisor reports.

Second hypothesis anticipated a positive impact of Transformational Leadership Style on Job Satisfaction. This hypothesis was substantiated as Transformational Leadership Style had a significant and positive impact on Job Satisfaction. The results of the study are inline with the previous researches. For instance Rad and Yarmohammadian [21] found leadership as an important factor affecting job satisfaction. The relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction has also been established in the fields of nursing [45,46] and sales [47,48]. Transformational leaders motivate employees to perform better and by using their vision minimizing their stress and dissatisfaction [43,44].

Third hypothesis anticipated a positive and significant impact of Emotional Intelligence on Transformational leadership. Emotional Intelligence is an intangible asset that is the ability to manage one’s own and others’ emotions whereas, Transformational Leaders display themselves as a role model by achieving confidence, respect and trust of their followers [36]. Transformational leaders motivate their followers to perform further than expected, stimulate awareness and encourage them to work beyond their self interest, which are dependent upon manipulation of their emotions [38,41,57]. Such leaders not only understand their emotions but those of others as well. They are able to express their feelings, use emotional knowledge in solving problems and effectively control their emotional states [41]. They usually give emotional support to their followers and are capable of spreading the emotions regarding their own expectations [33].

Fourth hypothesis anticipated that Transformational Leadership Style mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction. The results provide partial support for the hypothesis. The previous literature suggest that emotional intelligence is positively associated with job satisfaction [6,24] and transformational leadership [58-61,33]. Few studies in the past have also recognized transformational leadership as a mediator in the relationship between behavior-based control and key salespersons outcome [62] and between promotion focus and organizational commitment [63]. However, there is lack of evidence of transformational leadership as a mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Present study examined this relationship and found transformational leadership partially mediating between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

The current study has a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction by providing support for the mediating role of Transformational Leadership Style in relation between the Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction.

**Limitations:** The cross-sectional design is one of the limitations of this study. The generalizability of the study is also limited due to the use of convenience sampling method. This study used one-dimensional measures of
Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership Style and job satisfaction and should be viewed as a first step for future research that would be extended to employ different facets of Transformational Leadership Style. i.e. Attributed, Charisma, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration.

Future Research: The findings of this study have practical implementations of Emotional Intelligence on employee Job Satisfaction. There are several other characteristics of Human Resource Management in different industries of Pakistan where Emotional Intelligence application might be equally beneficial. For further research it is suggested to advance this study and examine effects of Emotional Intelligence on other areas of Human Resource Management. In future, the best way to analyze these relationships is to conduct a longitudinal research design instead of cross-sectional. This study may be replicated on other populations as this study was conducted on employees of telecom organizations in Pakistan. The role of other Leadership Styles for example Transactional and Laissez-faire may also be employed for investigation. It is suggested that purposive or strata sampling may be used in future studies.

Practical Implications: This paper provides an empirical analysis of the relationship among Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction. The findings of this study stress the importance of Transformational Leadership within organizations. This study suggests that training program emphasizing this particular leadership style i.e. Transformational Leadership Style is advisable. This study has direct implication for preparing future leaders. The leaders should be trained about understanding and managing their emotions and that of others. This effort is expected to result in employees’ satisfaction at workplaces.

When attempting to improve Job Satisfaction of employees, practitioners should consider the link between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership. Under certain conditions Emotionally Intelligent people are assumed to be more satisfied than other people. Organizations must train their employees for both Emotional Intelligence skill and technical skills side by side. Organizations should be enlightened and well aware of the importance of Emotional Intelligence for Job Satisfaction of employees.

Trainings are required to conduct to get employees recognize with Emotional Intelligence and the use of Emotional Intelligence. It will be not only beneficial for employees but for the organizations also by creating a win-win situation for both entities. Therefore recognizing Emotional Intelligence is first step that further require encouragement to promote and improve this construct, by doing so, in long run, individual success becomes synonymous with organization success.

REFERENCES


