

The Mediatory Role of Job Satisfaction Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

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Abstract: The present study aims to assess the mediation effect of job satisfaction between emotional intelligence and perceived job performance. The participants were educators currently teaching in both public primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. Questionnaire survey were distributed to the participants to collect data. Bootstrapping approach was used to test the mediation effects of job satisfaction in the current study. The findings revealed that intrinsic factors of job satisfaction functioned as a mediator others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion on perceived job performance. However, extrinsic factors of job satisfaction did not show any significant mediation effects. Importantly, results of this study has extend the literature of emotional intelligence in organization settings.

Key words: Job satisfaction, emotional intelligence, perceived job performance, mediation, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

The concept of emotional intelligence has been recently regarded as a function to improve qualities of employees and has become a major topic of interest in the social and organizational psychology literature (Ingram, 2013; Law *et al.*, 2004; Neophytou, 2013; Petrides *et al.*, 2007).

The result of past researches indicated that significant relationship exist between emotional intelligence with job performance (Jennings and Palmer, 2007; Law *et al.*, 2008; Rojell *et al.*, 2006). However, there were some preceding researches revealed the linear effect model of emotional intelligence on job performance may be overly simplistic and incomplete (Brunetto *et al.*, 2012; Cote and Miners, 2006). Therefore, there is still a lack of understanding of how emotional intelligence is related to job performance. Likewise, job satisfaction mediates the direct effect between emotional intelligence and job performance is yet to be studies. In addition to this, studies examining the interactive effects of the three constructs: emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and job performance in a single study is absent from the literature and remain a gap to be studied. Therefore, a complete hypothesized model for this study can be established based on the relationship of the three constructs by using the structural equation modeling approach.

Literature review

Emotional intelligence: Emotional intelligence has its roots in the concept of social intelligence was introduced first time by Thorndike (1920). Salovey and Mayer (1990) were among the earliest to propose the name “emotional intelligence” and who are frequently cited as the originators for the model of emotional intelligence. Their perspective of pure emotional intelligence theory integrates both intelligence and emotion. They conceptualized emotional intelligence as “the capacity to reason about emotions and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assists thought to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (Salovey and Mayer, 1997). This definition has now been widely accepted in the academic study. The theoretical and conceptual aspects of emotional intelligence have come up with two different perspectives: ability and mixed model. The ability approach perceives emotional intelligence into four major branches such as perceive emotion, assimilating emotion, understanding emotion and regulating emotion (Salovey and Mayer, 1997). This ability model views that an individual capability to process information associated with emotions is against one another. Currently, the model by Salovey and Mayer (1990) is the only ability model of emotional intelligence. Mixed model of emotional intelligence is substantially

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different than the mental ability. Two mixed models within a different conception have been proposed by Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (1995). Bar-On (1997) considers emotional intelligence as a mixed model by emphasizing the co-dependence of cognitive ability and personality traits that influence the individual personal well being. In contrast, Goleman (2001)'s model integrating and individual's abilities and personality aspects to determine performance in the workplace and organizational leadership.

Job satisfaction: The concept of job satisfaction has been emerged over time from organization theory (Moore *et al.*, 2006) and a myriad of research works have been reported on the results of job satisfaction in numerous disciplines (Wild *et al.*, 2006). Since, Hoppock introduced first time the concept of job satisfaction, it is a subject that received considerable attention and interest by researchers and practitioners alike. Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg *et al.*, 1959) is one of the most well known theories in examining extrinsic and intrinsic factors exerting affected job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. Extrinsic factors are external factors directly associated to job environment and frequently lead to employee dissatisfaction at work. So of the important extrinsic job satisfactions category are pay, company policies, job security, relations with others and physical working conditions. Whereas, intrinsic factors are frequently associated to a set of job characteristics and self actualization. Intrinsic factors lead to employee satisfaction at work. Intrinsic job satisfactions category are promotional opportunities, recognition, achievement and responsibility.

Job performance: Job performance is considered a highly important aspect for an organization or its work unit as well as individual employees. Organizations require highly performing workforce to contribute towards the organizational goals, to meet the needs and expectations of customers and to insure that they consistently deliver excellent results to remain competitive in the industry. In order to conceptualize performance, behavioral aspect of performance and outcome aspect of performance have to be differentiated (Campbell *et al.*, 1993; Motowidlo, 2003; Roe, 1999). According to Campbell *et al.* (1993), behavioral aspect of performance refers to all behaviors involves in accomplishing a given job in the work situation. In contrast, the outcome aspect of performance refer to an individual's specific behavior will result in a particular result or outcome. While at the conceptual level most researchers agree that performance is behavior and is widely used in academic research (Campbell *et al.*, 1993;

Motowidlo *et al.*, 1997). In practice, business organizations are more likely to agree on performance outcome. Therefore, this study defined performance as synonymous with behavior.

Conceptual framework of the study

Emotional intelligence and job performance: Empirical studies have found that cognitive ability or IQ predicts only anywhere from 4-25% of the variance for high performing workers (Hunter and Hunter, 1984; Sternberg, 1997). A valid predictor for future performance was determined by the emotional intelligence (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Prentice and King, 2013). Study by Slaski and Cartwright (2002) also reported managers with higher scores on emotional intelligence are better in work performance than managers with lower emotional intelligence. Recently, O'Boyle *et al.* (2011), Joseph and Newman (2010) conducted a meta analysis to tested the incremental validity of emotional intelligence measures to explain job performance. They classified emotional intelligence measures into three categories: performance based, self-report ability measures and self-report mixed models. They found that all three types of emotional intelligence measures predict job performance.

The mediating effects of job satisfaction: Currently, there is limited of research devoted to examining the mechanism involved in explain the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance (Brunetto *et al.*, 2012; Cote and Miners, 2006). The social psychological perspective regards individual behavior is driven by attitudes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). This influence creates the direction from job satisfaction to job performance. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990, 1997), high level of emotional intelligence will improve an individual's competencies and this can lead to positive individual attitudes and behaviors. Thus, this study expect to place job satisfaction as a mediator between emotional intelligence and perceived job performance would be more reliable in explaining why emotional intelligence works through job satisfaction to influence job performance. In addition, the connection between emotional intelligence to satisfaction and job performance is possible since, job satisfaction is position within the nomological network and it is functions as a mediator of the relationship between various antecedent variables and volitional workplace behaviors (Crede *et al.*, 2007).

Theoretical framework: Based on the literature review in the preceding section, a conceptual framework showed in Fig. 1 was presented. This framework illustrated the indirect influences of emotional intelligence on perceived

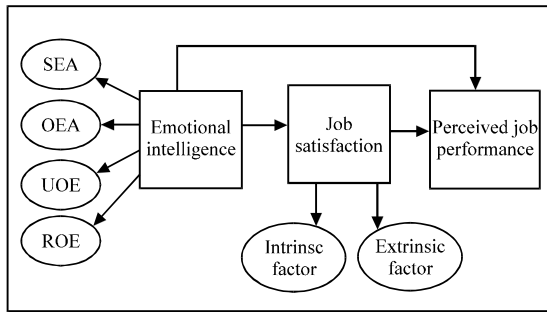


Fig. 1: A pattern of conceptual framework on the construct of emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and perceived job performance

job performance, mediated by job satisfaction. It was developed by integrating concepts drawn from three theories: Davies *et al.* (1998) based on the ability model of emotional intelligence that proposed emotional intelligence into four distinct dimensions which consists of self emotional appraisal, others’ emotional appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion; Herzberg *et al.* (1959)’s two-factor theory that focuses on the actual satisfaction with the achieved correspondence in relation to intrinsic and extrinsic job environmental factors leading to work contentment and perceived job performance is defined based on Campbell’s theory that individuals’ work behaviors or actions in performing job tasks and duties that contributing to the achievement of organizational goals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants: The current study consisted of full time teachers from 32 public primary and secondary schools in Peninsular Malaysia. A total of 640 full time teachers were asked to complete a paper-based survey. Together with the questionnaire, a cover letter explained the purpose of the research and assure anonymity and confidentiality of the data. Participation of the respondents in this study was voluntary and can withdraw from the research at any time. After deleting incomplete responses, a final sample of 384 educators was used for the analysis, yielding a response rate of 60%.

Measures: The survey instruments in this study were adapted from previously validated instruments by the researchers. Since, this study was conducted in a Malay language speaking context, all measures were translated from English to Malay language.

Emotional intelligence: The 16 items Wong and Law (2002) Emotional intelligence scale was adapted. The

scale consists of four emotional intelligence dimensions. The Self Emotional Appraisal (SEA) assess an individual ability to acknowledge their own emotions. The Others’ Emotional Appraisal (OEA) assess an individual ability to comprehend another’s feeling and emotions. The Use of Emotion (UOE) assess an individual ability to use emotions to direct them toward personal performance. The Regulation of Emotion (ROE) assess an individual ability to control their emotions. The standardized factor loadings showed that all the items were loaded above the standard value of 0.50.

To confirm dimensionality of the emotional intelligence construct, two alternative models were compared using confirmatory factor analysis. Model 1 combined all 16 items in a single factor model while Model 2 contained four emotional intelligence dimensions. The result indicated that Model 2 fitted the data better ($\chi^2 = 181.081$, $df = 98$, $\chi^2/df = 1.848$, $GFI = 0.944$, $AGFI = 0.922$, $NFI = 0.927$, $TLI = 0.957$, $CFI = 0.965$, $RMSEA = 0.047$) than Model 1 ($\chi^2 = 1320.687$, $df = 104$, $\chi^2/df = 12.699$, $GFI = 0.637$, $AGFI = 0.526$, $NFI = 0.464$, $TLI = 0.402$, $CFI = 0.482$, $RMSEA = 0.175$). These results indicated that items for emotional intelligence measurement can serve as a reasonable estimate of their dimensions in a four factor model.

Job satisfaction: The present study was interested in examine the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction, therefore, the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) consists of 20 items developed by Weiss *et al.* (1967) was adapted. Based on the results of factor loadings, several items loaded below 0.50 were deleted. As a result, a total of 11 items were used in this study.

Perceived job performance: Perceived job performance was measured with two items adapted from Tessema and Soeters (2006) and seven items adapted from an in-role performance scale designed by Williams and Anderson (1991). Five items were dropped due to low factor loading. Hence, there were only four items retained in the current study.

Analytic strategy: The primary aim of the present study was to determine whether job satisfaction mediating the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived job performance by performing structural equation modeling using maximum likelihood method. Prior to the analysis, the primary task is to ensure data screening process was carried out to examined the accuracy of data entry, missing values and outliers. The Harman’s single factor test was conducted for common method bias. Then

a confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS was performed to evaluate the measurement model among all latent variables (self emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion, regulation of emotion, intrinsic job satisfaction, extrinsic job satisfaction, perceived job performance). Several goodness-of-fit statistics were employed to evaluate model fitness: Chi-square statistic (χ^2 , χ^2/df), Goodness-of-Fit (GFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). Finally, bootstrapping approach with 1000 samples were requested (95% confidence intervals) for mediation analysis.

RESULTS

Harman single-factor test: Harman's single-factor test was applied to examine the issue of common method variance. All variables in this study were loaded into an exploratory factor analysis and examine the unrotated factor solution to determine the number of factors that are necessary to account for the variance in the variables. If only a single factor emerges from the factor analysis and this factor accounts for the majority of covariance among measures, it might be reasonable to conclude that common method variance is present (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The first factor variance extracted was 20.64% which was not large enough to indicate common method bias.

Assessment of measurement model: The confirmatory factor analysis of the overall measurement model (emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and perceived job performance) for the present study was assessed. The overall measurement model exhibited a satisfactory fit to data with the following indices $\chi^2 = 780.106$, $df = 411$, $\chi^2/df = 1.723$, GFI = 0.896, NFI = 0.855, TLI = 0.924, CFI = 0.933, RMSEA = 0.043. All the observed items loaded significantly and fairly well (standardized regression weight >0.5; $p < 0.01$) to their proposed scale.

Reliability and validity: To establish psychometrics properties on the measurement model, reliability and validity was evaluated. Reliability analysis were conducted for all the study variables in terms of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliabilities. Both Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliabilities calculated in the present study exceeded the value of 0.7 for all cases which were considered satisfactory for each construct. Table 1 summarize the results of the reliability analysis.

Table 1: Reliability and validity of the CFA Model

Latent variables	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
SEA	0.63-0.83	0.829	0.831	0.553
OEA	0.60-0.82	0.808	0.810	0.520
UOE	0.63-0.68	0.744	0.745	0.423
ROE	0.73-0.84	0.864	0.868	0.622
IS	0.50-0.69	0.816	0.814	0.357
ES	0.66-0.84	0.806	0.813	0.594
PJP	0.66-0.73	0.778	0.801	0.501

SEA: Self Emotional Appraisal, OEA: Others' Emotional Appraisal, UOE: Use of Emotion, ROE: Regulation of Emotion, IS: Intrinsic Job Satisfaction, ES: Extrinsic Job Satisfaction, PJP: Perceived Job Performance

To determine the construct validity, both convergent validity and discriminant validity have to be evidenced. In examining convergent validity, three criteria were evaluated: all standardized parameter estimates must be significant and exceed 0.50, construct reliabilities must exceed 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) by each construct should exceed 0.50. As evident from Table 1, the overall results offer support for convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was evaluated by comparing the shared variance (squared correlation) with the AVEs among each pair of latent constructs. If within each possible pairs of constructs, the AVE is larger than the shared variance observed, then discriminant validity is evidenced (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). All AVE estimates in the current study were larger than the corresponding shared variance estimates. This indicated the measured variables have more in common with the construct they are associated with than they do with other constructs. Therefore, the CFA Model demonstrated discriminant validity.

The mediating effect of job satisfaction: To conduct a mediation analysis, bootstrap approach was use in the current study with 1000 samples were requested. Bootstrapping is the preferred method to test the statistical significance of indirect effects in mediated models (Mallinckrodt *et al.*, 2006). Bootstrapping create Confidence Intervals (CI) of the indirect effect. If this CI does not include zero, statistically significant mediation exist. Since, AMOS does not report significant test for multiple mediation effects, the test of the overall mediation model was performed separately. Thus, intrinsic factors of job satisfaction was first tested as a mediator then followed by the extrinsic factors of job satisfaction.

The results showed that the indirect effect of intrinsic factors of job satisfaction were significant in the relationship between all dimension of emotional intelligence and perceived job performance, except self emotional appraisal. In contrast, extrinsic factors of job satisfaction did not mediate the direct effect of all

Table 2: Result summary of mediation analysis

Structural paths	St. direct effect	St. indirect effect	Mediation
SEA-IS-PJP	0.092	-0.003 (CI: -0.035 to 0.028)	No
OEA-IS-PJP	0.056	0.030* (CI: 0.003 to 0.064)	Full
UOE-IS-PJP	0.214**	0.062** (CI: 0.032 to 0.100)	Partial
ROE-IS-PJP	0.110*	0.058** (CI: 0.026 to 0.101)	Partial
SEA-ES-PJP	0.087	0.002 (CI: -0.006 to 0.017)	No
OEA-ES-PJP	0.081	0.005 (CI: -0.002 to 0.026)	No
UOE-ES-PJP	0.267**	0.009 (CI: -0.001 to 0.031)	No
ROE-ES-PJP	0.156**	0.012 (CI: -0.001 to 0.042)	No

The standardized direct and indirect effect and the associated 95% confidence interval of indirect effect were based on the findings from a bootstrapping analysis. SEA: Self Emotional Appraisal, OEA: Others' Emotional Appraisal, UOE: Use of Emotion, ROE: Regulation of Emotion, IS: Intrinsic Job Satisfaction, ES: Extrinsic Job Satisfaction, PJP: Perceived Job Performance. *p<0.05, **p<0.01

dimensions of emotional intelligence on perceived job performance. A summary of all possible mediation path results was provided in Table 2.

To verify the harmony of the final structural model, each of the direct and indirect relationships among a set of variables were evaluated based on the results of the mediation analysis and all insignificant paths were eliminated for analysis. The final model produced a very good fit to data which resulted in $\chi^2 = 8.160$, $df = 6$, $\chi^2/df = 1.360$, GFI = 0.994, NFI = 0.981, TLI = 0.982, CFI = 0.995, RMSEA = 0.031.

DISCUSSION

An important interest of this study is to examine whether job satisfaction as one possible mechanism underlying the emotional intelligence on perceived job performance. Bootstrapping analysis was performed to assess this mediating influence. In line with the expectation, the findings of this study provides some support that job satisfaction was a mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived job performance in the educational sector sample. The results demonstrated three out of four mediational routes for the mediation effect of intrinsic factors of job satisfaction. However, extrinsic factors of job satisfaction did not provide support for the mediation effect.

This study provides evidence that others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion have a direct impact on intrinsic factors of job satisfaction and an indirect effect on the perceived job performance. Self emotional appraisal was not associated with intrinsic factors of job satisfaction. As a consequence, only

others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion and regulation of emotion were linked to intrinsic factors of job satisfaction which in turn influenced perceived job performance. On the other hand, extrinsic factors of job satisfaction did not show any significant mediation effects in the relationships between emotional intelligence dimensions and perceived job performance. These results seem to suggest that the emotional intelligence variables were more strongly related to intrinsic job satisfaction than extrinsic job satisfaction which in turn affects perceived job performance.

These results confirm that emotionally intelligence employees may experience job satisfaction (especially intrinsic job satisfaction) which in turn increase their job performance. The present findings also confirm the nature of the mechanisms underlying the effects of emotional intelligence on job performance as suggested by Brunetto *et al.* (2012). This indicates that, the role of intrinsic factors of job satisfaction should not be ignored as it might be a necessary condition for an emotionally intelligence employee in achieving desired work outcomes. Consistent with the idea by Herzberg *et al.* (1957), intrinsic factors of job satisfaction are the key determinant that motivate employees to work better. Emotional intelligence may influence job satisfaction due to its ability to improve emotional well-being and decrease psychological stress when implementing job (Brackett *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, the mediation effect of job satisfaction supported the theory by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), suggesting that emotionally intelligence employees that have positive attitude towards the intrinsic factors of job satisfaction might lead to better job performance.

This study has been unable to demonstrate that extrinsic factors of job satisfaction as a possible mediator. Extrinsic factors play an important role in the work environment by reducing job dissatisfaction. However, extrinsic factors do not function as the motivator in motivating employees to perform better in their work (Herzberg *et al.*, 1957). This might explain why the mediating effect of extrinsic factors did not occurs between all the emotional intelligence dimension and perceived job performance. Another possible explanation for this is that respondents in the current study are likely to experienced emotional strain due to the stressful working environment which in turn might influence their ability to reciprocate positive work outcome to exchange the extrinsic factors provided by the organization.

CONCLUSION

The current research represents an empirical study to investigate the indirect impact of emotional intelligence on

perceived job performance. To conclude, intrinsic job satisfaction can be considered as a stimulator. Thus, the level of intrinsic job satisfaction may be an important factor that influences the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived job performance. When seeking to improve employees' job performance, management should take into account the link between emotional intelligence and intrinsic factors of job satisfaction.

There were several limitations that should be considered in the present study. The major limitation involved in the present study was the reliance on the self-report measures for assessing the constructs which might lead to biased responses and questionable findings (Bagozzi and Yi, 1990; Law *et al.*, 2008; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Hence, future studies that include self-report, ability emotional intelligence test, interview, anecdotal materials and objective performance data would provide a more complete evaluation of individuals' emotional skills, job satisfaction and job performance. The model tested in the present study was based on a cross-sectional design. So, future researches may test the mediating model by using longitudinal or experimental studies which will provide a better understanding of these variables from a developmental perspective. Finally, the present study was restricted to the education sector in one country. Thus, future research drawing across different sector or different field of work should be emphasized. If this would be designed as a comparative study, it may lead to beneficial outcomes to organization in hiring decisions.

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