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Conceptualizing the mediating role of well being in relation to emotional intelligence and its consequences

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the paper is to conceptualize emotional intelligence and its various consequences like organizational commitment, life satisfaction and well being.

Methodology: The conceptual model is developed on the basis of existing theoretical framework and empirical research conducted on emotional intelligence.

Findings: The model developed include six dimensions of emotional intelligence and its relationship with organizational commitment, well being and life satisfaction. Specifically the model comprises of emotional intelligence which affect life satisfaction in context to family, friends, self, job and living environment also its effect on well being and organizational commitment is identified.

Contribution: The paper contributes to the human resource management literature by designing conceptual model of emotional intelligence and its further consequences.

Originality/Value: There has been no research that illustrates the emotional intelligence model based on non profit making organizations demonstrating its various consequences. The paper makes an in-depth attempt to comprehend the significant contribution made by emotional intelligence on various other factors.

Practical Implication: Identifying the impact of emotional intelligence on its various consequences is important for setting and implementing various programs regarding the development and enhancement of life satisfaction of the employee's working with non profit making objective. Beside this, emotional intelligence also helps to uplift the commitment of the employees working in the organization for a longer tenure.

Limitations: Being conceptual in nature, the major limitation is the lack of empirical data to test the model. Hence there is a need to conduct an empirical research in future.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Organisational Commitment, life satisfaction and well being.

Introduction

Traditional definitions of intelligence has emphasized over the cognitive aspects such as memory and problem solving but several prominent researchers in the intelligence field of study have begun to recognise the importance of the non-cognitive aspects too. For instance, as early as 1920, Thordike used the term social intelligence to describe the skill of understanding and managing other people. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is relatively a recent behavioural model, rising to prominence now days. Emotions are organised responses crossing the boundaries of many psychological subsystems consisting of psychological, cognitive, motivational and experiential systems. Emotions arise in response to an event either internal or external that has a negative or positive valence meaning for an individual (Salovey & Mayer, 1989). Research on emotional intelligence is gaining momentum (Stankov & Roberts, 1998; Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999) [13, 18, 58] and becoming one of the most topical areas in organisational research. The early Emotional Intelligence theory was originally developed during the 1970s and 80s by the work and writings of psychologists Gardner, Salovey and Mayer.

Emotional Intelligence is increasingly relevant in organisational development and developing people because emotional intelligence principles provide a new way to understand and assess people behaviours, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential. Emotional Intelligence is an important consideration in human resources planning, job profiling, recruitment, interviewing, selecting, management development and relational management.

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Individuals who score higher in their ability of perceiving accurately, understanding, and appraising others emotions are better able to respond flexibly to the changes in their social environment and to build supportive social networks (Salovey *et al.*, 1999) [58]. Social and emotional abilities were found to be four times more important than intellectual quality in determining professional success and prestige (Feist & Barron, 1996) [17]. In this regard, Goleman (1995) [18] suggested that successful life outcomes are more a function of emotional rather than cognitive intelligence. The emotional intelligence concept provides a psychometric framework for the intuitive and appealing idea that people differ in their emotional skills and these differences relate to the real life outcomes such as career and relationship success.

Emotional intelligence has been found to associate with various outcomes such as life satisfaction, organisational commitment and well being. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in individual's subjective and emotional reactions while facing stressful encounters, these emotional abilities influence the wellbeing of an individual (Salovey *et al.*, 2009) [59].

Individuals who are able to understand and regulate their emotions generally maintain a better outlook toward life and experience better psychological well being and satisfaction with life (Heck & Oudsten, 2008; Salovey, 2001) [26, 53]. Emotional intelligence is a tool to gauge emotional state of an individual. As special people require very intimate feelings to open up, it becomes indispensable for the guardian of emotional intelligence to understand the impulse of such individuals and get associated with their inner self. The present research work is the outcome of the need to understand the emotional insight of those dealing with special people (i.e., differently able).

Brunetto *et al.* (2005) [9] has identified the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction, well being and engagement of police officers in explaining their organisational commitment and turnover intentions. As per Carmeli, Halevy, and Weisberg (2007) emotional intelligence have positive relationship with four aspects of psychological wellbeing, i.e., self acceptance, life satisfaction, somatic complaints and self esteem also employees experiencing wellbeing, function better than employees who experience emotional deficit. He suggested that other predictors of wellbeing, i.e., both work related aspects e.g., organisational care and support and non-work related aspects, i.e., family issues that may explain additional variance in psychological well being can be explored in the future research. Emotional intelligence is significantly related to customer orientation level and highest organisational commitment is obtained by exhibiting moderate level of customer orientation behaviour. Further, higher emotional intelligence leads to higher organisational commitment (Rozell, Pettijohn, and Parker, 2001).

The various dimensions of job satisfaction such as satisfaction with pay, co-workers and supervisors are needed by the workers to meet their basic needs. When employees' needs are met, there is likelihood that the level of organisational commitment manifested by the workers would be high. Further, emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment Adeyemo (2007) [2]. Emotional intelligent employees can handle work challenges better using core skills of emotional intelligence such as interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and

general mood. As per Guleryiz *et al.* (2008) [25], job satisfaction act as a mediator between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment and their dimensions. Emotional intelligence accounts for individual differences in life satisfaction whereas positive affect strongest predicts life satisfaction. One of the component of emotional intelligence, i.e., emotional clarity, add a statistically significant increase in the prediction of life satisfaction over and above both positive and negative affect (Palmer, Donaldson, and Stough 2002) [42]. Also (Extremera and Berrocal, 2005) [16] states that individuals who are less depressive and neurotic and know clearly what they are feeling tend to have higher life satisfaction. He also suggested that Further research is needed to understand how emotional intelligence interacts with personality and both influence level of well being and adaptation of individuals as a necessary step to develop claimed prevention and treatment programmes based on emotional intelligence. Law *et al.* (2007) confirms that emotional intelligence is a four dimensional construct and views emotional intelligence as an overall measure of a set of interrelated abilities. Further, he states that emotional intelligence positively and significantly leads to life satisfaction.

Thus, the extant literature on emotional intelligence conducted across the globe has identified its relation with various other contributory factors for the employee's welfare. Beside this, researchers have also realized the need to have more research on emotional intelligence. The review of all the relevant literature indicates little research on the mediating role of well being between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment.

The review of the existing literature reveals that very little research is conducted to examine the integrated model of emotional intelligence, well being, life satisfaction and organizational commitment. Hence present conceptual study is undertaken to achieve the following research objectives:

- To examine the direct influence of emotional intelligence on life satisfaction, well being and organizational commitment.
- To examine the influence of well being on organizational commitment.
- To examine the influence of well being on life satisfaction.

Hence there is need to develop a conceptual model to understand the meaning of emotional intelligence, its various dimensions and the further consequences. Therefore, the present study aims at analysing various dimensions of emotional intelligence and exploring its consequences, viz., well being, life satisfaction and organisational commitment in context to nonprofit making organisation. In the following section, we briefly review previous conceptualizations of emotional intelligence, their important dimensions (Emotional perception, emotional management, emotional understanding and use of emotions), well being, life satisfaction and organizational commitment and then propose a model. This is followed by formulation of research propositions. The final section offers some implications of employing the model.

Review of literature

Emotional intelligence

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has its roots that reach deep into the study of psychology in the past few centuries (Goleman, 1997) [19]. In 1920, Thorndike

introduced the concept of “social intelligence” and defined it as “the ability to understand and manage men and women and to act wisely in human relations”, which has germinated the seeds of the EI concept. Emotions are important part of human being, they affect our actions and motivate behaviour and practices (Stanley & Burrows, 2005) [62]. The notion of “emotional intelligence” originally appeared in 1990 in two academic journal articles by Mayer, Dipaolo, & Salovey; and Salovey & Mayer. Salovey and Mayer (1990) [54] gave first definition of EI as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions, the ability to access or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) [54]. It helps to discriminate, monitor, and use emotions in problem solving (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) [54] and enhances the potential of an individual for intellectual and emotional growth. As per Goleman (2006) [20] emotional intelligence concerns the ability of a person to maintain self-control, enthusiasm, persistence and self-encouragement. In line with this, Bar-On, Maree and Elias (2007) [4] defined EI as a kind of multiple level ability that crosses over self emotions and social composition. The four EI dimensions proposed by Davies, Stankov, and Roberts (1990) are as follows:

Appraisal and expression of emotions in one self

It relates to an individual’s ability to understand his/her deep emotions and to be able to express emotions naturally. People who have good ability in this area sense and acknowledge their emotions better than others.

Appraisal and recognition of emotions in others

It relates to an individual’s ability to perceive and understand the emotions of the people around them. People who rate highly in this ability are very sensitive to the emotions of others as well as able to predict others emotional responses.

Regulation of emotions in one self

It relates to the ability of a person to regulate his/her emotions, enabling a more rapid recovery from the psychological distress. A person with high ability in this area is able to return quickly to normal psychological state after rejoicing or being upset, they also have better control on their emotions and are less likely to lose their temper.

Use of emotions to facilitate performance

It relates to the ability of a person to make use of emotions by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance. A person who is competent in it is able to encourage himself/herself to do better continuously and to direct his/her emotions in positive and productive directions.

Organizational Commitment

Organisational commitment concerns the extent to which an organisational member is loyal and willing to contribute to the organisation. The sense of cohesion among members in the organisation is the key to organisational effectiveness. Only when organisational members have a sense of

belonging with organisational mission, goals and values then only they contribute all their efforts to the work and the organisation (Jaskyte & Lee, 2009; Sinclair *et al.*, 2005) [28, 61]. Salancik (1977) [52] considered organisational commitment as the behaviour of an individual expressed in correspondence to his/her reliance on a specific organisation. To some scholars, organisational commitment can explain individual and organisational behaviours (Becker *et al.*, 1996) [6]. It is also believed that organisational commitment can effectively predict the resignation of employees (Porter *et al.*, 1974). In the light of its significance, organisational commitment has been explored as a hot issue in the literature of organisational management.

In a model of commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1987), the three approaches were labelled as ‘affective’, ‘continuance’ and ‘normative’ commitment respectively.

Affective Commitment

Allen and Meyer (1990) [3] defined affective commitment as the emotional attachment to and identification with an organisation, making the employee loyal and attached to the organisation. Additionally, Coffman and Molina (2002) [11] argued that greater the employees’ level of affective commitment, the stronger is their engagement with the job. Affective commitment involves three aspects; the formation of an emotional attachment towards the organisation, identification with the organisation, and the desire to maintain organisational membership. Allen and Meyer (1990) [3] argued that individuals develop emotional attachment for their organisation when they identify with the goals of the organisation and show willingness to assist the organisation in achieving these goals. They further explained that identification with an organisation happens when an employee’s own values are in harmony with organisational values and he is able to internalise the values and goals of the organisation. Jaros *et al.* (1993) [27] suggested that affective commitment is the most widely discussed form of psychological attachment to an employing organisation.

Continuous Commitment

The second dimension of organisational commitment introduced by Allen and Meyer (1990) [3] is continuance commitment, which is based on Becker’s (1960) [5] side-bet theory. The theory states that as individuals remain in the employment of an organisation for longer periods, they accumulate investments, which become costly to lose the longer an individual stays. These investments include time, job effort, organisation specific skills, which are not transferable or generate greater cost of leaving the organisation that discourage them from seeking alternative employment, work friendships and political deals. In addition to the fear of losing investments, individuals develop continuance commitment because of perceived lack of alternatives.

Normative Commitment

The third dimension of organisational commitment is normative commitment, which reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel they ought to remain with the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990) [3]. Researchers have overlooked this view of organisational commitment, as relatively few studies explicitly address normative

commitment. Randall and Cote (1991) [45] as well as Allen and Meyer (1990) [3] are some of the few who have attempted to differentiate normative commitment from the other components of organisational commitment.

Life Satisfaction

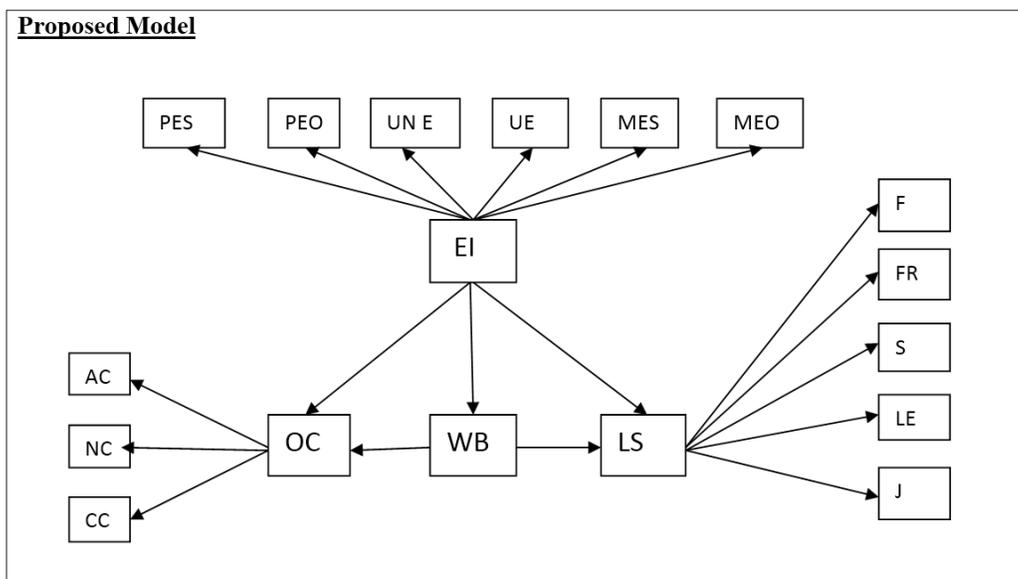
Life satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that refers to one’s overall evaluation of life domains such as health, finance, job, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationships (Michalos, 1991) [39]. In line with this, life satisfaction is considered as a cognitive and global appraisal that people make while considering their contentment with their life as a whole or with regard to specific domains of life such as family, friends, living environment, job and self (Suldo & Huebner, 2006) [63]. Societies differ in the emphasis they place on certain values and resources, due to which the life satisfaction level of members in various societies are influenced to different degrees by various predictors of life satisfaction. Two predictors of life satisfaction are self esteem and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Diener & Diener, 1995; Michalos, 1991; Myers & Diener, 1995) [14, 39]. According to Diener and Diener (1995) [14], self-esteem and interpersonal relationships contribute to the life satisfaction in individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Well being

The theoretical structure of the construct psychological well being and its operationalisation has been subjected to extensive research (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 1996) [49, 51]. Psychological well being is a complex and multidimensional construct. In a simple form psychological well being represents a generalised feeling of happiness (Schmutte & Ryff, 1997) [60]. It represents wellness that is conceived as progressions of continued growth of an individual across the life course (Ryff, 1995) [50]. This view reflects that well being emphasises over the life satisfaction and happiness and also represents wellbeing as an aspect of positive functioning (Ryff, 1995) [50].

Proposed model of the study

The proposed model includes four latent constructs with emotional intelligence placed as the central construct. It incorporates six dimensions of emotional intelligence construct which comprises of emotional perception in self, emotional perception in others, understanding of emotions, use of emotions, managing emotions in self, managing emotions in others and three other constructs that include life satisfaction, organizational commitment and well being. (see fig 1). Several theoretical bases are considered for designing the model of the study.



Note: EI- Emotional intelligence, OC- Organizational Commitment, WB-Well Being, LS- Life Satisfaction, AC- Affective Commitment, NC- Normative commitment, CC- Continuous Commitment, F- Family, FR- Friends, S-Self, LE-Living Environment, J- Job.

Fig 1: The Proposed Model

Relationship between EI, OC, WB and LS

Emotional intelligence theoretically leads to several important life criteria that ability measures are expected to predict, which include variables such as psychological well being, life satisfaction, empathy, quality of interpersonal relationships, success in occupations that involve considerable reasoning with emotions, e.g., leadership and psychotherapy, scholastic and academic success (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) [36, 54]. The aspects of positive, psychological or mental functioning suggested by Ryff (1989, 1995) and followed by Ruderman *et al.* (2002) [47], life satisfaction, self-esteem, and self-acceptance are used to assess employees psychological well being. Life satisfaction refers to a cognitive evaluation or

judgement of one’s overall life (Diener *et al.*, 1985) [15]. Self-acceptance refers to the degree to which one possesses positive attitude towards her or his past life, acknowledging both unsatisfactory and satisfactory achievements (Gough & Bradley, 1996) [22]. As Ruderman *et al.* (2002) [47] noted, self-acceptance taps into other dimensions of well-being such as autonomy, positive relationships with others, initiatives and openness to new experiences, similar to those indicated in Ryff and Keyes’s (1995) [50].

Studies have shown the impact of emotional intelligence on organisational commitment (Goleman, Bayatzis, & Mckee, 2002) [21]. Vries and Miller (1984) [66] illustrated that organisational success and failure can be determined by the emotional tone set by the executive or presumed leader of an

enterprise. Therefore, EI can be conceptualised as collateral for developing organisational commitment within organisations. Organisational commitment is defined as the psychological state or mindset that ties an employee to the organisation (Meyer *et al.*, 2002) [38]. Organisational commitment comprises the strongest emotional component and includes general interests, principles, values, and goals (Tsai, Tsai, & Wang, 2011) [64]. Emotional intelligence has a meaningful relationship with job outcomes such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Wong & Law, 2002) [67] i.e., employees who cannot appraise and regulate their emotions, as Abraham (1999) [1] pointed out as having less organisational commitment. Also, individuals with high emotional intelligence are more committed to their organisations (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002) [41] and have high performance at work.

P1: Organizational commitment is positively influenced by emotional intelligence.

P2: Well being is positively influence by emotional intelligence.

P3: Life satisfaction is positively influence by emotional intelligence.

Brackett and Mayer (2003) [7] stated that emotional intelligence positively leads to psychological well being and employees experiencing well being function better than employees who experience emotional deficit. Lopes *et al.* (2003) [31] reported that individuals who are high in emotional intelligence exhibit a high level of quality social relationships. A study by Nikolaou and Tsaousis (2002) [41] showed a strong relationship between some components of emotional intelligence and organisational commitment and revealed that the use of emotions in emotional intelligence has strong links with organisational commitment in spite of the weak and average links between the control of emotions and understanding emotions with organisational commitment.

Employee's health and well being has gained substantial attention from management researchers and industrial/organisational psychologists. Numerous researchers and consulting psychologists believe that organisations should adopt healthy workplace practices that focus not only on profitability and productivity of the organisation but also contribute to enhance the health and psychological well being of its employees (Grawitch, Gottschalk, & Munz, 2006; Grawitch, Tares, & Kohler, 2007; Russell, 2008; Wright & Cropanzano, 2004) [23, 24, 48, 68]. It has been observed that psychological well being is related to a variety of organisational outcomes such as enhanced job performance, job satisfaction, work involvement, increased profitability, competitiveness of the organisation and reduced employee turnover (Keyes, Hysom, & Lupo, 2000) [29]

P5: Well being mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment.

Literature has put forward examination of the relationship between emotional intelligence and a sense of well being and tended to focus on specific dimensions of well being like life satisfaction (Palmer, Donaldson, & Sough, 2002) [42] and positive relation with others (Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003) [32]. Emotional intelligence contributes beyond personality traits, to explain the psychological well being of employed individuals. Brackett and Mayer (2003) [7] stated that emotional intelligence positively leads to psychological well being and employees experiencing well being function better than employees who experience emotional deficit.

Literature embraces on well being as an important indicator of quality of life. A person's well being is studied in its relationship to various situations in many aspects of life. The domains of life refer to concrete areas where a person functions as a human being. Well being is considered as a predictor of life satisfaction (Cummins, 1997; Veenhoven, 1997) [12, 65], where people evaluate their lives both for the shorter and the longer periods.

P6: Well being mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction

Implications

The present study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of emotional intelligence life satisfaction, well being and organizational commitment. The study conceptualises emotional intelligence to be comprising of six dimensions that is, perceiving emotions in self, perceiving emotions in others, understanding of emotions, use of emotions, managing emotions in self and managing emotions in others. Emotional intelligence (EI) is an effective tool to increase organizational productivity. Emotional intelligence has a positive impact on life satisfaction, it can be improved by bringing positivity in life. employees should live in present, be appreciative of what they have and should stop drawing comparison with others. Focus should be on what they love about self or what they are good at and to build on that for a longer period. They should understand their strengths and weaknesses so that they feel motivated by the satisfaction of meeting their own standards of excellence. Emotional intelligence can help the employees to inculcate the habit of being goal-oriented. It can be career goals, financial goals or relationship goals, the idea of making a commitment to something and seeing it through can be a rewarding experience. They should make distinctions between day-to-day goals and long-term goals and prioritise them as they seem necessary.

Employees can implement initiatives by showing readiness to act upon the opportunities available without being told. This will lead to higher organisational commitment. To intensify the organisational commitment they can also try to find out solution of problems and helping their co-workers in developing their skills. Strong organisational commitment leads to higher level of motivation.

Limitation and Future Research

Several limitations are involved in this study. First the study is totally based on existing theoretical and empirical literature on emotional intelligence conducted majorly in developed countries. Hence empirical researches are needed to be conducted in context of developing nations. Further, future research must concentrate on the measurement issues toward operationalisation of the model in the study. A standardized questionnaire need to be designed to measure and implement the model using different modes of data collection, including face-to-face interviews, telephone surveys, web surveys, as well as self-administered survey etc. Besides, future research should be conducted on the measurement issues of stress and relationship quality. The previous studies are confined only to the profit making organizations, nonprofit making organizations can be taken into consideration in future research.

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