

## **Does the Tactful play of Emotions Breed Positive Job Outcomes?**

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### **Abstract**

*Intelligent processing of emotions has transformed into a crucial concern for organizations in the last two decades. This study examined the influence of emotional intelligence on employee job outcomes i.e. job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior alongwith mediating influence of perceived organizational justice. Proportionate stratified random sampling was employed in this study to collect survey data from banking sector employees(n=352) who work in scheduled public and private banks of Pakistan. The results of study indicate that emotional intelligence explains significant variation in perceived organizational justice and job outcomes; job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the results confirm the mediating impact of perceived organizational justice between emotional intelligence and job outcomes.*

**Key words**-emotional intelligence, job outcomes

### **Introduction**

In past few years, “an Affective Revolution” has taken place in organizational arenas. In this revolution, the importance of psychological constructs like Emotional Intelligence(EI) and Emotional Labor in explaining work related outcomes like Job Satisfaction (JS), Organizational Commitment(OC) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior(OCB) is recognized (Meisler, 2013; Meisler, 2014). The research literature depicts that regulation of moods and intelligent dealing of emotional information leads to attitudinal and behavioral outcomes favorable for successful organizational functioning (Codier & Odell, 2014; Kim et al., 2015). Many research scholars, academicians and practitioners have explored the impact of EI on plethora of outcomes like social support (Koydemir & Schtz, 2012), employee health (physical and mental) and wellbeing (Karakus, 2013; Higgs & Dulewicz, 2014), academic achievement(Song et al., 2010) etc. But EI is being studied specifically in relationship with job outcomes in only few studies (Meisler, 2013; Meisler, 2014). Furthermore, the association of EI with

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certain perceptions related to jobs like Perceived Organisational Justice (POJ) is also understudied in literature. Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2012) tested the direct relationship between EI and POJ on sample of Italian nurses utilizing Bar-on mixed model (1997) of EI. Likewise, Meisler (2013) analyzed the function of POJ as a mediator between EI and turnover intentions on the sample of employees from financial organization. But there still exist a gap in considering the interplay between EI and POJ in other situations. Furthermore, the mediating influence of POJ between EI and other work outcomes like JS, OC, and citizenship behaviors is yet to be examined.

This study materializes EI as conceptualized in the ability model of EI proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) and validates Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2012) and Meisler (2013) studies by considering Pakistani culture and banking sector as a sample. The ability model of EI envisages EI as ability to judge, use, express and control feelings and emotions thus enhancing intellectual functioning of brain (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). This study contributes to the body of literature in three ways. Firstly, it visualizes the role of EI at workplace. Secondly, it examines the influence of EI in generating and building employee perceptions regarding the justice environment and the outcomes. Lastly, this study clarifies the mediating mechanism by which EI exerts and influence on employee attitudes and behaviors.

#### *Theoretical background of the study*

*EI and Job Outcomes.* Goleman (1998) relying on the EI theory suggests that individuals with enhanced level of EI abilities tend to show more positive feelings, emotions and states. These positive emotional states engage employees in generating positive outcomes thus, neglecting and suppressing negative emotions and feelings (Wong & law, 2002). Theory of EI posits that those employees who have the ability to use, appraise, analyze, understand their emotions and control the negative feelings at workplace are more satisfied at job (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Meisler, 2014) and more committed to organization (Aghdasi et al., 2011; Alavi et al., 2013). Thus, EI nurtures joyful state of mind and positive attitude to get involved in OCB's (Jung & Yoon, 2012; Jain, 2012). EI influence activities taking place in the organization like the manner people do their tasks, ability to work as a team member, flourishing capability hidden talents, client satisfaction etc (Zeidner et

al., 2004). In contrast to low emotionally intelligent employees, workers with quality of emotional management do not ruminate on negative events and emotions (Trivellasa et al., 2013). Rather, they believe in optimism and positive nurturing of emotions which increase their satisfaction with work life, enhance their enjoyment of being member of the organization and trigger positive behavioral responses.

H2a: EI has a positive and significant influence on JS.

H2b: EI has a positive and significant influence on OC.

H2c: EI has a positive and significant influence on OCB.

#### *Mediating effect of perceived organizational justice*

The evaluation of only direct influence of EI on job outcomes can be regarded as a generalization of reality. A missing link exists in understanding that how EI affect job outcomes of employees in terms of perceptions of justice. Several empirical studies analyzed the role of certain mediators in relationship between EI and job outcomes (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Jordan & Troth, 2011; Meisler, 2013). This study follows that trend and posits POJ as a mediator between EI and job outcomes (JS, OC and OCB). According to reactive content theories employees react to unfair treatment by showing negative emotions which help them to pacify the inequity in the exchange process thus reducing positive outcomes like commitment etc (Chou et al., 2013). In the same manner, fair treatment and just environment generate positive emotions and positive work outcomes (Whitman et al., 2012).

Literature highlights that EI shapes the perceptions of employees regarding fairness in the organization. Employees judge the behaviors of others as just or unjust which further breed their organizational justice perceptions (Meisler, 2013). Emotionally intelligent individuals take hold of their emotions in such a way that they ignore the negative events and generate positive perceptions regarding environment of justice (Petrides et al., 2007). The linkage between perceptions of justice and job outcomes is guided by norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). Reciprocity is a process of exchange which means that a benefit received by a person makes him liable to repay something valuable in return. The process of exchange triggers a never ending process of repayment. This enhances the social exchange process and increases commitment of all members (Chou et al., 2013). Moreover, employees repay through favorable behaviors in their control like OCB's thus enhancing the degree of

satisfaction with their jobs. Thus, perceptions of just environment and fair treatment by organization makes emotionally intelligent employees indebted to yield desirable work outcomes in return i.e. JS (Sareshkeh et al., 2012), OC (Alavi et al., 2013) and OCB (Gaungling, 2011). The employees display emotional reactions to fairness of allocation and exchanges prevalent in organization by engaging in certain behavioral and attitudinal consequences (Barsky et al., 2011).

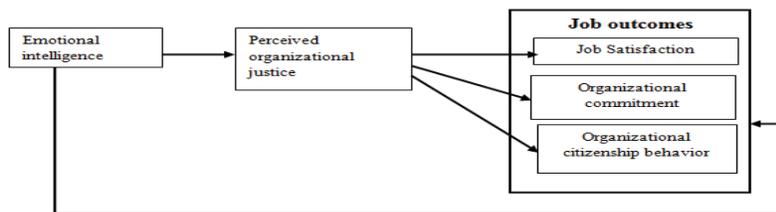
H4a: POJ mediates the relationship between EI and JS.

H4b: POJ mediates the relationship between EI and OC.

H4c: POJ mediates the relationship between EI and OCB.

### *Proposed Research Model*

Figure 1: Research model



### **Methodology**

The data is collected from 352 employees from banking sector of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Stratified random sampling technique is used by this study as this technique is being used by a number of recent studies because of its adequacy (i.e. Kumar, 2005). The total population of public and private banks is stratified in to two strata; 9 public banks and 22 private banks (State bank of Pakistan, 2013). The stratum of public bank is divided in to substratum public commercial banks and specialized banks. The list of employees was obtained from human resource departments of banks and 600 questionnaires were floated to randomly selected 30 branches of public and 41 branches of private domestic banks operating in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, thereby using the relevant sampling proportion of 134 employees from public sector

banks and 466 from private domestic banks. Out of 352 employees 67.6%(238) employees were male and 32.4%(114) female. Most of the employees ranged in age group of 26-35 years(59.4%). 25 % (88) employees were from public sector and 75% (264) from private sector

### Measures

All the items given below are measured through five point Likert scale ranging from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree. 16-item Wong and LawEI scale (WLEIS)(Wong & Law, 2002) is used to measure EI of employees. POJ is measured by Neihoff and Moorman (1993) 20 item justice scale. JS is measured through five item version of Brayfield-Roth (1951) JS index. OC is measured through 9 shorter version of organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al., (1982). OCB is measured by 9 items taken from Smith et al., (1983) OCB scale.

## Results

### Descriptive statistics and correlation

Table II shows the descriptive statistics, reliabilities and correlations of the sample. Emotional intelligence is significantly correlated to job outcomes; JS ( $r=0.27$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), OC( $r=0.33$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and OCB( $r=0.39$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Likewise, POJ has a significant relationship with job outcomes; JS ( $r=0.61$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), OC( $r=0.42$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and OCB( $r=0.26$ ,  $p<0.01$ )

Table I Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and cronbach alpha of main variables

		Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1	EI	3.78	0.46	(0.86)				
2	POJ	3.34	0.53	0.34**	(0.93)			
3	JS	3.51	0.65	0.27**	0.61**	(0.87)		
4	OC	3.70	0.67	0.33**	0.42**	0.45**	(0.87)	
5	OCB	3.83	0.60	0.39**	0.26**	0.26**	0.50**	(0.84)

Notes: n=352; \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

### Hypothesis testing

Table II and Table III depict the relationships between EI, POJ and job outcomes. Findings show that EI has a significant positive

association with POJ( $\beta=0.34$ ,  $t$ -statistic= $6.75$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), JS ( $\beta=0.27$ ,  $t$ -statistic= $5.20$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), OC( $\beta= 0.33$ ,  $t$ - statistic= $6.54$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and OCB( $\beta= 0.39$ ,  $t$ -statistic= $8.14$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) proving hypothesis H1, H2a, H2b and H2c respectively. Likewise, POJ has a significant and positive relationship with JS( $\beta= 0.61$ ,  $t$ -statistic= $14.42$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), OC( $\beta= 0.42$ ,  $t$ -statistic= $8.69$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and OCB ( $\beta= 0.26$ ,  $t$ -statistic= $5.10$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Table II Results of Regression analysis of EI, POJ and job outcomes

Predictor	OCB			POJ			JS			OC		
	$\beta$	$R^2$	$t$ -statistic									
EI	0.34***	0.12	6.75***	0.27***	0.07	6.75***	0.33***	0.11	6.54***	0.39***	0.16	8.13***

Notes:  $n=352$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

#### Mediator role

Table III depicts that EI was positively related to POJ ( $\beta= 0.34$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) which in turn was positively and significantly associated with JS( $\beta= 0.59$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), OC ( $\beta= 0.35$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and OCB( $\beta= 0.14$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). In addition the main effect of EI on JS( $\beta= 0.07$ ;  $p= ns$ ) was not significant but the main effect of EI on OC( $\beta= 0.21$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and OCB was significant( $\beta= 0.35$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, POJ fully mediated the relationship between EI and JS but partially mediated the relationship between EI and other two job outcomes; OC and OCB. Using 2000 bootstrap samples via AMOS 18 (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) it was found that indirect effects of EI on JS( $\beta= 0.28$ , Bias corrected 95% CI= [0.13, 0.26], excluding zero), OC ( $\beta= 0.17$ , Bias corrected 95% CI= [0.07, 0.18], excluding zero) and OCB ( $\beta= 0.06$ , Bias corrected 95% CI [0.00, 0.10], excluding zero), via POJ were significant. Thus, Hypothesis 4a is fully supported while Hypothesis 4b and 4c are partially supported.

Table III Mediating effect of POJ between EI and Job Outcomes

IV	DV	Effect of IV on M LL95%CI	Effect of M on DV UL95%CI	Total effects	Direct effects
EI	JS	0.34***	0.35***	0.27***	0.07
	OC	0.26	0.59***	0.33***	0.21***
	OCB	0.17	0.14*	0.39***	0.35***
		0.01			

Notes: IV=Independent variable,DV= Dependant variable, M= Mediator, LL= Lower limit, UL=Upper limit, CI=Confidence Interval \*p< 0.05\*\*\* p< 0.001

### Discussion

The results of study reveals a statistically significant impact of EI on POJ. This result is consistent with the limited past empirical research (Di Fabio & Palezzeschi, 2012; Meisler, 2013). The results depict that the underlying difference between emotional abilities of employees create a difference in perceiving the justice environment of organization. The employees who are adept in dealing with own emotions and emotions of people around them tend to perceive their work environment as just and trustworthy. They neglect the pessimism related to the events taking place in organization. Instead, they develop an optimistic viewpoint about organizational environment because of their art of dealing with emotional processes of brain. Moreover, the findings of this study also reveal a positive association between EI and job outcomes; JS, OC and OCB. The study showed that ability to deal with emotions generates positive outcomes in organization. Employees who have an exclusive ability of playing and managing emotions are more satisfied with different aspects of job as this ability diminishes the negative aspects of work events and instances. Emotionally intelligent employees also experience a specific emotional attachment with their work place which urges them to embrace the membership of organization. Likewise, employees who are adept dealing with their emotions are more likely to perform behaviors which are not part of their

formal job description. Thus, employees deal with negative feelings and attitudes and manage to consistently maintain a positive emotional state that yields positive work outcomes (Meisler, 2013; Meisler, 2014). EI makes employees to tactfully understand, appraise and analyze with emotions thus avoiding the unnecessary mood swings that enhance the level of satisfaction of employees (Trivellasa et al., 2013; Emdady & Bagheri, 2013), emotional attachment with organization (Aghdasi et al., 2011) and engagement in OCB's (Jain, 2012).

The empirical findings of the study also illustrate the mediating impact of POJ relationship between EI and job outcomes. POJ fully mediated the relationship between EI and JS. While, POJ partially mediated the relationship between EI and OC. Similarly, in case of EI and OCB, the hypothesis was partially supported. The results depict that EI shapes the perceptions of employees regarding the justice environment which in turn produce positive work outcomes guided by the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960). The employees who are rated high on the compass of EI make a mindful use and management of own emotions and also understand emotions of other people. This ability of employees leads to positive interpretation of work environment and deeds of others which help them to develop perceptions of justice. Emotionally intelligent workers nurture an ideal ability of ignoring the negative events prevalent in organization and focusing on positive events. This staunch focus on positive instances generates a perception of justice and equity in emotionally intelligent employees which serves to engage them in positive attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, when these justice perceptions are created employees feel indebted to reciprocate in form of positive attitude and behaviors at work place (Gouldner, 1960).

#### *Managerial Implications*

The banking sector management should not ignore the importance of emotions for employees because management of emotions is crucial for service sector employees (Hanzaee & Mirvaisi, 2013). The successful use, appraisal and control of emotions can lead to enhanced JS, OC and OCB of employees. Employees who are aware of the technique of using and managing emotions yield excellent performance outcomes which enhance the competitive edge of organization. Empirical studies have proved that EI training by leadership can alter the degree of EI of employees (Nelis et al., 2009; Meisler, 2013). The prospective

implications of EI training to influence the perceptions of justice and organizational efficiency are prevalent.

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that EI has a significant impact on employee job outcomes. Emotionally intelligent employees have a unique ability to use, express, understand and appraise own and other's emotions which enhance their JS and OC. EI ability enhances the tendency of employees to get engaged in OCB's. EI has also a significant impact on employee perceptions of justice which breed positive outcomes. Furthermore, the study revealed that POJ mediated the relationship between EI and job outcomes.

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