

Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership Effectiveness: Mediation Effect of Perceived Organizational Support and Supervisor Support

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on effectiveness of leaders based on a sample of 199 middle managers operating in UAE and Pakistan. Respondents were selected through convenience sampling and survey based questionnaires were used as instrument for data gathering. The research indicated significant relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness, and represents this relation to be mediated through perceived organizational support at organizational level and supervisor support at individual level. Structural equation modeling (SEM) and Preacher & Hayes regression approaches were used to measure mediation effect. The mediation results were significant for both of the mediators. Moreover, the study displays that leaders were more effective when they use emotional intelligence properly. Although there is evidence for the association between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, the mediating role of perceived organizational support and supervisor support on this association remained unexplored till now.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Leadership Effectiveness, Perceived organizational Support, Supervisor Support

Introduction

In this era the organizations are facing fierce competition, every organization is trying to get maximum output through its workforce. The leadership plays vital role to motivate employees and attain organizational goals. The ability to understand and control own and emotions of others, varies from person to person; those higher in this ability are called emotionally intelligent. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence (EI) have more fruitful interpersonal relationships with employees than individuals with low level of EI. Emotional intelligence is considered as an “affective revolution” in leadership literature (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Brown & Moshavi, 2005; George, 2000). The study of emotions in the framework of leadership has become a basic theme of interest for organizational behavior research over the past decade. It has been driven by recognition that emotions play a dynamic role in the working lives of people as they perceive the world, and try to understand and interact effectively with co-workers and clients.

Emotions are omnipresent in leader-follower interactions, both arises from and exerts influence on these interactions (Rubin, Munz, & Bommer, 2005). Leaders who manage their emotions effectively, addresses their followers concerns with greater proficiency and hence establish more caring interpersonal relations (Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009; Humphrey, 2008) EI explains how employees perceive, regulate and act upon these emotions beyond the effects of personality and cognitive ability, according to their job requirement (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Mayer et al. (2003) categorize emotional intelligence into four dimensions; perceiving emotion (i.e., identifying emotions in faces, pictures, music, etc.), facilitating thought with emotion (i.e., harnessing emotional information in one’s thinking), understanding emotion (i.e., comprehending emotional information), and managing emotion (i.e., managing emotions for personal and interpersonal growth).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the subset of social intelligence which monitors emotions and feelings of people for distinguishing their actions and thinking (Salovey & Mayer, 2008, p. 10). It sways workplace outcomes as described by Law et al. (2004) that self-report of employees regarding EI is significantly associated with leader’s evaluations of interpersonal assistance, job dedication and task performance. Goleman (2004) linked EI with effective leadership in business and validated that it’s the basic constituent to distinguish between the great and average leaders.

An emotionally intelligent leader is capable of expressing influential sympathy and support toward frustrated followers, also “irritation at slackers and encouragement for good performance” (Humphrey, Pollack & Hawver, 2008, p. 160), guide teams in ambiguity, confusion, and conflict (Humphrey, 2006; Pescosolido, 2002); and provide inspiration and a sense of meaning, identity, and commitment to followers (Prati, Douglas,

Ferris, Ammeter, & Buckley, 2003). There is convincing evidence indicating link between EI and job performance of middle managers as well as perceived organizational support (POS) and job performance (Erdogan and Enders, 2007). However, there is no clear evidence mentioning perceived organizational support (POS) mediating link with EI and leader's effectiveness, the recent future research proposed to investigate perceived organizational support (Kurtessis et al., 2015). This study therefore, is going to fill the research gap and aimed to predict perceived organizational support and supervisor support mediation effect on the relation between EI and leadership effectiveness.

Literature Review

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

EI is argued as the real measure for differentiating the skills and competencies of superior managers (Pool & Cotton, 2004). Literature in this ground has revealed close association between the level of EI and leadership i.e. 'EI can sort the difference between effective and deprive managers' (Carmeli 2003, p 792). Highest performing managers have higher EI than other managers (Bnenza 2006; O'Boyle et.al, 2011) which verified Goleman's EI theory of leadership success. Nevertheless Moon (2011) argued that EI cannot be entirely or expressively comprehended without considering employees cultural tenets and norms because of cross-cultural differences in EI.

A rising number of studies are found to inspect the relationship between EI, managerial activities and human behaviors (Fernandez-Berrocal and Extremera 2005), i.e., resistance to stress (Mikolajczak, Luminet et al. 2006), social interaction, academic achievement and leadership effectiveness (Gil and Spector 2005) concluding significant relationship. However (Ravi chandran et al., 2011) found no direct relationship among EI and work effectiveness. Therefore it can be assumed that,

H1: There is a relationship between emotional intelligence of middle managers and leader's effectiveness.

Yoon and Thye (2000) suggested that higher Perceived organizational support (POS) results in higher perceptions of supervisor support (SS) among employees, thus arguing POS to be the force impacting supervisory support. Saks (2006) suggested that POS, Supervisor support (SS), rewards and recognition are possible antecedents of employee work engagement. Kalliiath and Beck (2001) indicated that high SS assisted in reducing stress and turnover. Middle managers who obtain supervisory support are more enthusiastic and perform smartly and effectively (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1994). They build more social exchange relationships (Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996) with their immediate leaders (top managers), and perform more productively. Tusi et al., (1997) used dyadic analysis and presented significant link among SS and performance of workers. OST, emphasized on social exchange, SS and POS in past few years (e.g., Aselage & Eisenberger, 2009; Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Wayne et al., 2009), giving opportunity for theory-driven meta-analysis of the POS literature based on OST. However, no quantitative analysis has addressed many important POS and SS findings on important topics like leadership, positive orientation toward organization, and employee well-being. This study therefore aimed to integrate POS and SS literature to clarify their roles in increasing effectiveness. As middle managers are considered to be life-blood of organizations (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1994) and affected simultaneously by firm-level leaders (e.g. CEOs) and team-level leaders (e.g. division heads). Thus, greater POS and supervisory support from the top management along with high task expectations of CEO will lead to effective performance by the middle managers; this literature leads to the development of following hypothesis.

H2: There is a relationship between perceived organizational support and middle level leadership effectiveness.

H3: There is a relationship between supervisory support and middle level leadership effectiveness.

Perceived Organizational Support

Organizational support theory OST (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Shore & Shore, 1995) indicated that employees have common thinking regarding the degree to which organization appreciates their efforts and concern about their growth called as perceived organizational support (POS). At the extensive level, it is associated with increased productivity (Erdogan and Enders, 2007; Witt and Carlson, 2006), team work approach (Piercy et al., 2006), employee loyalty and retention (Loi et al., 2006). It is believed that employee commitment through social exchange along with organizational identification is more strongly related to effectiveness of leader for successive outcomes (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Kanter (1982, P 96) proposed that middle managers control the pulse of operations, therefore they can consider, propose, and perceive innovative tasks that top managers may not have thought of regarding organizational support. There is convincing evidence indicating significant link between EI and job performance of middle managers as well as POS and job performance (Erdogan and Enders, 2007). However there is no clear evidence mentioning POS mediating link with EI and leaders effectiveness, therefore this study is aimed to predict POS

mediation effect on the relation between EI and leaders performance in the organization. This lead to the development of hypothesis that:

H4: Perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence of middle level managers and leaders effectiveness

Supervisor Support

Along with organization, supervisors also enhances employees morale, as they are more senior and experienced individuals who provide guidance and growing skills to their new colleagues (Raabe and Beehr, 2003). Supervisors perform positive part in socializing colleagues and impact their loyalty with organization (Rowden, 2000). Supervisor support (SS) is found to be significantly linked with employee loyalty and contrarily associated with turnover (Payne and Huffman, 2005). High and low SS affects employees in numerous conducts, in organizational settings; SS affects performance from various sources and levels (e.g., Chen & Bliese, 2002). Nonetheless poor supervisor support has been cited as a source of decreased performance both at individual and organizational level (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004). Literature is present on SS but there has been relatively little empirical attention given to its mediating role for increased effectiveness of leaders (Schlosser, Knox, Moskovitz, & Hill, 2003; Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002). As EI enable managers in better understanding of employees behaviors and effectiveness of leader” (Walter et al., 2011, p. 55), they as supportive supervisors are judged to be influential in handling employees emotions hence are more effective in terms of productivity (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). Thus it can be assumed that,

H5: Top manager’s supervisory support mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence of middle managers and leadership effectiveness.

Methodology

The population of this study comprised of middle managers of United Arab Emirates and Pakistan multinational organizations who at a time are leaders for their subordinates and subordinates for their executives; including Memory Technology Middle East Faco, Gems Group, Ministry of Health UAE, Dewa, National Bank of Fujairah, Genesis Equipment solutions, Cedar, Arwa, Technosat, Jesr Al Mawfjah Tech Cont LLC, Telenor Pakistan, Archstone Properties, Mobilink Pakistan, USAID, Big John's, Elixir technologies, Solvebits, WHO, Redsteel, Technology and Meerub's Couture.

A sample size of 199 managers was selected for this study. A total number of 400 questionnaires were floated, out of which 206 were returned but 7 were incomplete so a final sample size of 199 is taken for completing the research. The response rate comes out to be 49.75%

Convenience sampling was used which falls in the non-probability classification.

Survey based Questionnaires were used as instrument for data gathering, in UAE and Pakistan

Emotional Intelligence (EI) was measured by using Wong and Law (2002) EI Scale that contains 16 items with four factors i.e. "self-emotion appraisal", "others' emotion appraisal", "use of emotion" and "regulation of emotion". Each factor is measured with a total of four items. In the validity and reliability study of the scale, the loads of the factors were found to be between 0.83-0.85, 0.74-0.89, 0.76-0.82, and 0.66-0.83 respectively. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the same four factors vary between 0.83 and 0.90.

Leadership Effectiveness (LE) was measured by MLQ-5X that has a reliability value greater than 0.70 and is therefore, rated as an acceptable statistical testing level in a wide range of leadership styles (Smartt, 2010).

Perceived organizational support (POS) consisted of three high-loading items from the Survey of perceived organizational support (SPOS) for assessing employees’ perception that the organization value their contribution and cared about their well-being (Items 1, 4, and 9; Eisenberger et al., 1986) with factor loadings, respectively, of 0.71, 0.74, and 0.83.

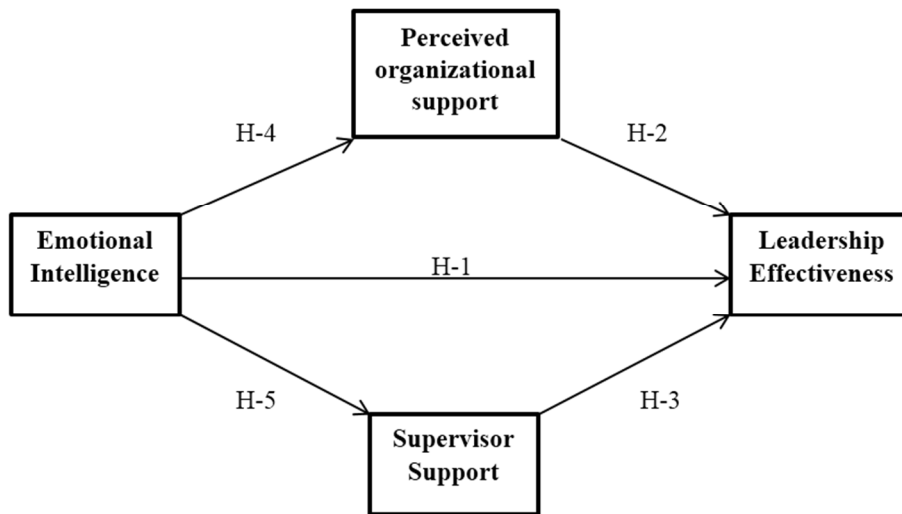
Supervisor Support (SS) was measured by using Personal and Esteem Support subscale of the Inventory of Supportive and Unsupportive Managerial Behaviors scale (Rooney & Gottlieb, 2007; $\alpha = .96$). It’s a 9-item scale which asks participants to rate the extent to which their supervisor’s behaviors are esteem enhancing and convey regard for their personal well-being.

Procedure

Data gleaning was done through 20 organizations out of which 7 organizations including Memory Technology Middle East Faco, Gems Group, Ministry of Health UAE, and National Bank of Fujairah UAE along with Dewa Pakistan, Mobilink and Telenor Head offices Islamabad Pakistan, were visited personally, having 10 respondents each. For collecting cross cultural and reliable data, the author personally visited UAE. Some of the questionnaires were distributed personally among middle managers in multi-cultural organizations, found in Dubai Mall. Rest of the data was gathered by forwarding questionnaire link via social network to 11 companies’ by middle managers. Friends and other references were used to get the questionnaire filled in. The data gathering was a difficult task especially in the eastern and collectivist culture it becomes more problematic and proved to

be cumbersome and time taking. It happened in this study also but it was resolved by using some influential and useful references.

Theoretical Framework



Analysis & Findings

From comparative cross-cultural perspective of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness, several important results have been emerged, which are analyzed and discussed in this section.

Table 1: Reliability

No of respondents (N= 199)

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Leadership Effectiveness	.754
Supervisor Support	.853
Emotional Intelligence	.805
Perceived Organizational Support	.782

The values of cronbach alpha presenting good to acceptable reliability range, with POS and SS values greater than 0.8 showing good reliability while LE and EI values were found greater than 0.7, so lie in acceptable reliability range (Nunully, 1978).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics:

Variables	N	Mean	Std. D	Skeweness	Kurtosis
Gender	199	1.32	.468	.770	-.422
Age	199	2.34	1.208	.159	.164
Education	199	1.68	.869	.983	.245
Experience	199	2.53	1.180	.744	.043
Employer Type	199	1.81	.394	-.585	.516
Leadership Effectiveness	199	3.6445	.51152	-.152	-.945
Perceived Organizational Support	199	3.3550	.47728	.589	-.320
Supervisor Support	199	3.5378	.56423	.325	-.085
Emotional Intelligence	199	3.6924	.53692	-.309	-1.02

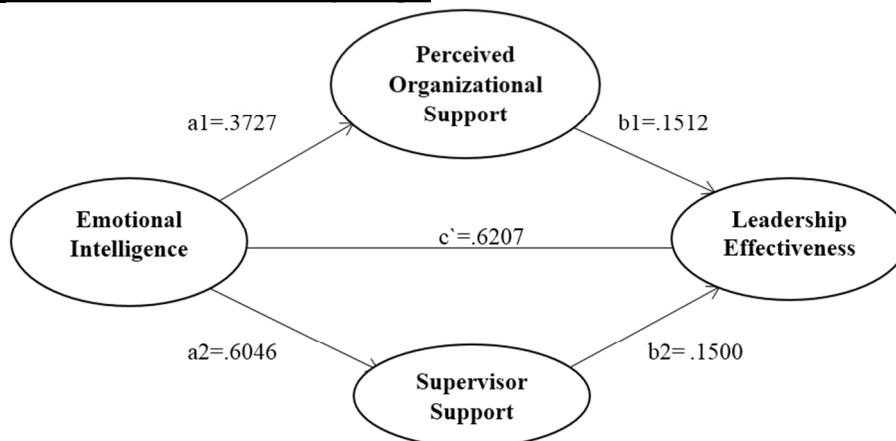
Descriptive statistics indicates that around 63% of the respondents were males and rest were females, most of the respondents were young and in the age group of 31 to 40 years. As far education level is concerned 70% managers were having bachelor's degree, 27 % master's degree and 3% were PhD qualified with 6 to 15 years of work experience. The 80% of the organization involved in this study were private and 20 % representing public sector.

Table 03 : Correlations matrix of the scales by sample

	Leadership Effectiveness	Supervisor Support	Emotional Intelligence	Perceived Organizational Support
Leadership Effectiveness	1			
Supervisor Support	.614	1		
Emotional Intelligence	.806	.575	1	
Perceived Organizational Support	.500	.521	.419	1

The table depicts that emotional intelligence is positively and significantly correlated with leadership effectiveness, supervisor support and perceived organizational support as the value of coefficient correlation of emotional intelligence is 0.806 for leadership effectiveness, 0.575 for supervisor support and 0.419 for perceived organizational support at 5 % level of significance. The table-3 further exposes that leadership effectiveness is positively and significantly correlated with supervisor support (0.614 at 5%) and perceived organizational support (0.500 at 5%) level of significance. The table explains that leadership effectiveness is significantly correlated with all three facets, and its relation with emotional intelligence is mediated by supervisor and perceived organizational support.

Figure 01: Mediation effect of the scales by sample



Where

EI=X, LE= Y, POS= M1, SS=M2

Indirect effect of X on Y through M1= $a_1 b_1$

Indirect effect of X on Y through M2= $a_2 b_2$

Direct effect of EI on LE= c'

Table: 04 Results of Mediation of the scales by sample

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	coeff	se	t	p
EI	POS	.3727	.0575	6.4816	.0000
EI	SS	.6046	.0612	9.8735	.0000
POS	LE	.1512	.0502	3.0112	.0029
SS	LE	.1500	.0471	3.1827	.0017
EI	LE	.6207	.0466	13.3252	.0000

Note: X=EI (Emotional Intelligence), Y=LE (Leadership Effectiveness), M=POS and SS (Perceived Organizational Support) and (Supervisor Support), Sample=199, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Data Analysis on the basis of Regression Based Approach of Preacher & Hayes

The mediation effect was measured by using Regression-Based Approach of (Hayes, 2013). The table 04 portrays, the regression coefficient received on emotional intelligence (EI) is (coeff, 0.3727), which explains that EI reports positive relationship with perceived organizational support (POS) its (P value) is also significant. In

the second equation while analyzing the model summary, the regression coefficient received on EI is (coeff, 0.6046), which is statistically significant and explains that EI report positive relationship with supervisor support (SS). The inclusion of POS and SS as mediators reports positive effect of LE on X on Y, $M1 = a_1 b_1$ (0.1512) and $M2 = a_2 b_2$ (0.1500), representing the acceptance of H2 and H3. In the third equation of Table 1, while analyzing the model summary, the regression coefficient received on POS is (coeff ,1512), which explains that POS reports positive relationship with leadership effectiveness (LE), which lead to the acceptance of H4. In equation four while analyzing model summary, the regression coefficient received on SS (M2) is (coeff, 0.1500) which is statistically significant, explaining SS reports positive relationship with the LE and indicating the acceptance of H5. In the fifth equation the regression coefficient received on EI is (coeff = 0.6207) which is significant and explains positive relation between EI and LE, stating the acceptance of H1 of the present study. Over all the standard error reported in all equations is low.

Table 05: Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	SE
POS	.0563	.0263
SS	.0907	.0453
TOTAL	.1471	.0365

Finally, significances of indirect effects i.e. emotional intelligence (EI) effect on leadership effectiveness (LE) via perceived organizational support (POS) was tested. These analyses provided further evidence for POS as a mediator between EI and LE. Similarly, the mediation between supervisor support (SS) was significant for LE. Effect size at 95% confidence interval indicated medium mediation effect of POS, 0.0563 and comparatively larger mediation effect of SS, 0.0907. Significant differences between mediation effects were therefore obtained, indicating acceptance of hypotheses.

Data Analysis on the basis of Structural Equation Modeling

In structural equation modeling (SEM), the structural model defines relationships between latent (unobserved) constructs (Byrne, 2010). Thus, structural model helps in specifying the manner by which particular latent constructs directly or indirectly alters the values of other latent constructs in the model (Byrne, 2010).

In the current study, the proposed structural model is composed of four major latent constructs with 5 exogenous and 4 endogenous variables; Figure 1 presents the structural model and the proposed relationships among the constructs. The findings suggested that emotional intelligence, perceived organizational support, supervisor support and leadership effectiveness are correlated.

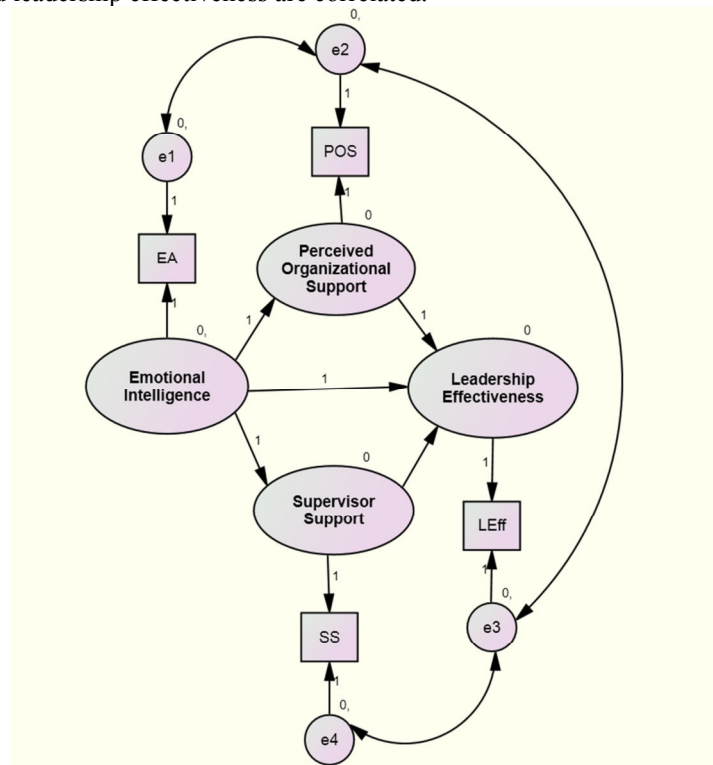


Figure: 2 Proposed Structural Model

Before deliberating hypotheses results projected by the research, the overall fit of structural model was assessed for evaluating the extent of proposed causal relationships between the latent constructs that fits the research data. It is recommended for a research to have one absolute fit index and one incremental index along with the Chi-square and the degrees of freedom value (Hair et al., 2010). GFI and RMSEA were reported as absolute fit indices, and CFI and TLI were reported as incremental fit indices. Hence, the overall fit of structural model was assessed with the same set of fit indices as those of measurement models. The fit indices indicated, the structural model to have a good fit with data ($\chi^2/df = 2.4$, CFI = 0.996, NFI = 0.994, TLI = 0.962, RMSEA = 0.084), thus supporting the basic theoretical framework of research.

Table 6: Hypotheses Test Results for the Proposed Structural Model

Hypothesis	Hypothesized Relationship	Standardized Coefficient	Result
H1	LE <--- EI	0.620	Supported
H2	LE <--- POS	0.151	Supported
H3	LE <--- SS	0.150	Supported
H4	POS <--- EI	0.372	Supported
H5	SS <--- EI	0.604	Supported

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

Hypothesis 1 investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, it was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between the two. The results, demonstrated positive and significant paths from EI to LE ($\beta = 0.620$, Supported). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Perceived Organizational Support and Leadership Effectiveness

Hypothesis 2 projected that there would be a relationship between POS and LE. The results, demonstrated significant paths from POS to LE ($\beta = 0.151$, Supported). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Supervisor Support and Leadership Effectiveness

Hypothesis 3 anticipated that there would be a relationship between SS and LE. The results, demonstrated significant paths from SS to LE ($\beta = 0.150$, Supported). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Organizational Support and Leadership Effectiveness

Hypothesis 4 proposed POS to mediate relation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. The results, demonstrated significant paths from EI via POS to LE ($\beta = 0.372$, Supported). Thus, hypothesis 2 was supported.

Emotional Intelligence, Supervisor Support and Leadership Effectiveness

Hypothesis 5 proposed SS to mediate relation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. The results, demonstrated positive and significant paths from EI via SS to LE ($\beta = 0.604$, Supported). Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Table 07: Goodness of fit and values of indices in the model

Indices	Goodness of fit	Values
χ^2/df	2 -----> 5	2.4
CFI	>0.95	0.996
TLI	>0.95	0.962
NFI	>0.95	0.994
RMSEA	0.5----->0.8	0.084

As shown in Table, the structural models fit the data well, as all the observed values of indices lies within the goodness of fit range

Discussion

The most important aspect of this study is that supervisor support highly mediates leadership effectiveness, which can be generalized on broader scale as samples were taken from various cultures. Results of mediation analyses were significant for both the mediators that show novel contribution to literature. These research findings demonstrated that there are multiple factors that mediate the association between EI and LE. As the samples are taken from multiple cultures and nationality managers from UAE and Pakistan, these findings can be replicated and generalized across different cultures over the globe.

For finding indirect effect, there is a debate in which cases structural equations models (SEM) are better option that increases efficiency of measurement estimates but at the cost of reduced power and greater standard errors (Ledgerwood & Shrout, 2011). For conducting mediation analysis, strong measurement reliability and low

measurement errors are necessary (Aiken & West, 1991; Kenny & Judd, 2013). In this study reliability of scales are acceptable to good with all values greater than 0.75. By taking data characteristics into consideration, with methods and buffering issue of simple mediation with fixed order mediation model, bootstrapped analysis by Preacher and Hayes (2004) is preferred and for increasing efficiency of measurement estimates SEM is applied for getting highly reliable mediation outcomes by both means.

Implications

Although there is evidence for the association between emotional intelligence, EI and leadership effectiveness, LE (e.g. Walter et al., 2011) the mediating role of perceived organizational support and supervisor support on this association remained unexplored till now. The present study stated that effect of emotional intelligence on leadership effectiveness is mediated through perceived organizational support at organizational level and supervisor support at individual level.

Conclusion

Existing literature has proposed that emotional intelligence is essential element for leadership success in cross cultures globally (Garf and Harland, 2005; Gabel et al., 2005; Leiba-O'Sullivan, 1999). This study explains the importance of emotional intelligence along with perceived organizational and supervisor support for effectiveness of leader. These competencies are important for responding accurately to others' cultural and emotional needs so to be capable of leading influentially in culturally diverse communities. In the current study mediation effect of POS at organizational level and SS at individual level is observed on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness of middle managers by two methods, i.e. regression based approach of Preacher & Hayes along with structural equation modeling, results showed significant mediation effect by both the methods. After this research it can be concluded that middle managers may become more successful in achieving their organizational goals and become effective leaders, if they control their own and emotions of subordinates by providing them their desired support as supervisor at individual level and expected organizational support at organizational level. Emotionally intelligent leader has positive impact on subordinates' performance that enables them to create participative management and team consensus that ultimately enhance organizational performance.

Limitations

Conclusions regarding causality are limited due to the cross-sectional nature of study and reliance on questionnaire only rather than personal interviews. Use of convenience sampling and small sample size for data collection might limit generalizability of results. Larger and representative sample taken from other countries than Pakistan and UAE is needed to further investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness at individual as well as organizational level.

Directions for Future Research

For analyzing variations due to mediators with the passage of time, future research is directed towards experimental manipulation of mediators on one hand and personal data collection in several sequences for more reliable results. Also, a full mediation model that accounts for multiple internal and external resources and emotional intelligence of both managers as well as employees is necessary for revealing complete pathways of emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. Further research is desirable for understanding the relationships between leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence of employees and their impact on team effectiveness. Field experiments can be more useful in estimating the impact of increasing EI and leadership effectiveness of supervisors on individual and team outcomes. Another dimension can be investigating the differences in observations regarding leadership effectiveness of middle managers with low and high EI.

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