European Journal of Business and Management
ISSN 2222-1905 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2839 (Online)
Vol.14, No.4, 2022

The Relationship Between Employees' Perceived Emotional Intelligence and Job Stress in Higher Education Sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Dr. Shuana Zafar Nasir[1*] Nasir Mahmood[2]
1. Management Science Department, Yanbu University College, P.O. Box 31387, Yanbu, Saudi Arabia
2. Planning & Development Department, RCYCI, P.O.Box 30436, Yanbu 41912, Saudi Arabia
* E-mail of the corresponding author: shuana123@hotmail.com

Abstract
The aim of this research study is to investigate faculty staffs' perceptions of emotional intelligence in relationship to the job stress in the higher education sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Educational system across the globe has been facing rapid reforms where the teachers' roles have become more demanding. Emotionally intelligent faculty members can make an effective learning experience by their own motivation and enthusiasm, they are more sensitive towards their students 'academic performance, disruptive behaviors and relationship management. The emotional intelligence is essential to deal with various issues in a better way. Higher education institutions are affected by the issues of globalisation, which demand faculty to handle job related stress by being emotionally intelligent. The proposed emotional intelligence (EIQ) model focuses on the relationship of perceived emotional intelligence with job stress. This research employed a explanatory research design method. A quantitative design approach is adopted by implementing a survey-based study. Psychometric scales are adopted for measuring employees' perception about their emotional intelligence and job stress. Additionally, quantitative data has been collected from faculty members (n=277) working in different higher educational institutes. PLS-SEM was used to analyse the proposed model. This research provides empirical support for the argument that emotional intelligence is a direct driver for handling job stress through the appraisal, use and regulation of emotions.
Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Stress, Higher Education Sector, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Perceptual Model
DOI: 10.7176/EJBM/14-4-04
Publication date: February 28th 2022

1. Introduction

In early works, emotional intelligence is rooted on social and emotions intelligence. Moss and Hunt (1927) suggested social intelligence as another facet of intelligence. Similarly, (Thorndike, 1920) proposed a three facet construct of intelligence; mechanical intelligence – referring to the ability to understand and manage concrete objects, abstract intelligence – indicating the ability to understand and manage ideas, and social intelligence – pertaining to the ability to understand and manage people and to act wisely in human relations (Thorndike, 1920). David (1983) suggested a concept of interpersonal intelligence as the competence to understand other individuals, and intrapersonal intelligence as the competence to understand one's self. However, until the early 1990s the concept of emotional intelligence was not given particular attention. Several researchers and scholars over the years have provided different definitions of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995).
Salovey and Mayer defined emotional intelligence 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 actions.*"

Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189)

Salovey and Mayer, after few years refined their conceptualisation of emotional intelligence to include four interrelated dimensions; the expression and appraisal of self-emotions, the appraisal of others' emotions, the use of emotions, and the regulation of emotions to facilitate performance.

1.1. Background of the Study

Educational system across the world has been facing rapid changes and reforms leaving an impact on employees' performance (Ishak et al., 2006). This system has grown tremendously where faculty is considered as an active change agent in gearing towards the goal of educational excellence (Ishak et al., 2006). Due to the active responsibility of educators, they are constantly challenged by their working environment in terms of students' assessment, disruptive students, heavy workload, hectic environment and insensitive management expectations (Ishak et al., 2010). These work arrangements lead to psychological distress, discontentment and emotional fall out among faculty members forcing them to opt for early retirement (Hakanen et al., 2006).

It is essential to have control over one's moods and emotions. Emotional intelligence helps to comprehend,

act, and control one's internal feelings in a constructive manner to alleviate stress, interact with others effectively and resolve difficulties and conflicts with a positive outcome (Jing et al., 2021). Despite of being stressed out, the teacher has to carry a smiling face to the classrooms. Rapid changes have taken place particularly in the education system of Saudi Arabia. Few years back, the teaching approach was teacher centered but now the focus has been shifted towards student centered approach where students are encouraged to think about the concepts and learn them on their own and get involved in group discussions while the teachers act more like facilitators. This new approach of teaching has made teachers job more demanding and challenging. On one side as the students try to learn and do things on their own, on the other side it puts more pressure on both parties (learners and teachers). Whenever the students are confused at any point, they would approach their teachers for guidance and clarity which in turn keep the faculty on their toes all the time. However teacher centered approach is different in a way where teachers used to go to the classroom at the given time, explain the topic through lecture and leave. Saudi Arabia has started to focus on high quality education recently, and thus the educators are required to put more efforts toward reaching the goal of educational excellence. Studies on different cultures indicate that teachers are among one of the highest level of job stress professionals (Ishak et al., 2010). Hence, in today's aggressive era, their role has become more demanding and difficult. This study attempts to explore the impact of emotional intelligence in order to overcome stress among faculty staff in higher education sector.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Emotional Intelligence

The term "Emotional Intelligence" was initially identified by Wayne Payne in his dissertation published in 1985, titled A Study of Emotions: Developing Emotional Intelligence; however, the concept of emotional intelligence gain attention and become well known after Daniel Goleman's publication Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ (1995). The definition of Emotion Intelligence remained a subject of debate. Few researchers have even argued to abandon the labeling of emotional intelligence and rather refer to emotional competencies (Jordan et al., 2010, Cherniss, 2010, Cherniss et al., 2006, Brasseur et al., 2013). In the present study, however the researcher will follow the main literature available in the field of emotional intelligence and conceptualise it as understanding and knowledge about emotional processes, and the ability or tendency to utilise this knowledge for regulating emotional as well as social behavior (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). In this study the theoretical model is based on four branch model of Mayer and Salovey (1997), where emotional intelligence is referred to be " the ability to express and perceive emotions, assimilate ones emotions in their thought, understand emotions, and regulate emotions in others and self". Researches on emotional intelligence revealed that this concept is closely tied with various construct. For example, a study conducted on emotional intelligence has shown its association with better outcomes such as less stress and depression, greater optimism and less impulsivity (Schutte et al., 1998).

According to Ciarrochi et al. (2002), emotional intelligence is found to moderate the relationship between individual's stress and mental health. Individuals with high level of emotional intelligence tend to adapt better to stress by responding less to suicidal ideation. The result of the study identified a link between emotional intelligence and stress. This connection between emotional intelligence and stress could be based on the supposition that negative emotions and subsequent stress are the outcomes of a dysfunctional relationship between the individual and the environment (Ciarrochi et al., 2002). Hence emotional intelligence is the way an individual integrate emotions effectively with his/her thought(s) and behavior in order reduce destructive or negative emotional experiences. A study conducted by (Tsaousis and Nikolaou, 2005) identified a relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress by employing a self- report measure for emotional intelligence. The study outcomes indicated that individuals who possess high levels of emotional intelligence tend to suffer less stress at their workplace by supporting a negative correlation between the constructs (Tsaousis and Nikolaou, 2005).

There is a growing interest in the study of emotions in determining the way individuals respond to potentially challenging situations. The managers who tend to score higher in emotional intelligence level experienced well-being and improved health, suffered less stress and better performance (Slaski and Cartwright, 2002). A research conducted in 2008 by Singh and Singh that demonstrated an inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress among medical professionals (Singh and Singh, 2008). The researcher further identified those employees who have the ability to regulate their emotional state of mind are healthier as they have the tendency to express their feelings, appraise their emotions correctly, and regulate their moods (Tsaousis and Nikolaou, 2005). Main aspects of emotional intelligence may associate with adaptability and flexibility in a stressful situation, which includes the ability to cope well with changing circumstances. The individuals having an ability to understand their emotional reaction(s) and being able to interpret and regulate their emotions according to the situational demand are more likely to be adaptive to changing circumstances (Jordan et al., 2010).

Selyé (1956) defined stress as an emotional reaction to various environmental stimuli, usually is a negative

way, as such emotional intelligence can work as a framework where individuals can learn how to cope up and manage their emotions. Stress and emotions are interrelated and interdependent on each other. The practical importance of emotions in stress and psychological well-being is greatly recognized (Jing et al., 2021).

2.2. Emotional Intelligence and Job Stress

The individual cannot escape from three forces of this era: Information revolution, globalisation, and the speed of change (Cascio, 2001). For an organisation to maintain its competitive edge and to ensure continued success, self-awareness is proposed as a key skill in order to handle stress (Goleman, 1998). It thereby indicates chances of possible failure, if the individual shows a lack of emotional intelligence in unstable and shaky environment. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to understand their own emotions, control them and direct them to generate appropriate actions. In a study conducted by Akerjordet and Severinsson (2007) it was found that emotionally intelligent people are able to overcome the stress and fatigue that could inhibit making accurate intentions. There has been a growing interest in how emotional intelligence affects everyday life transactions (Tsaousis and Nikolaou, 2005). For instance, emotional intelligence has been claimed as an important factor in determining individual's psychological well-being and life success (Bar-On, 2001). Similarly, previously Flury and Ickes (2001) provided evidence regarding the relationship among emotional intelligence and friendship.

The researcher is interested to explore the relationship between employees' perceived emotional intelligence and perceived job stress as such the study will adopt Job Stressor Appraisal Scale (JSAS) which will comprehensively measure employees' job stress. This scale has sound psychometric qualities (Türetgen et al., 2012). The scale and its factors show a sufficient level of internal reliability varied between 0.66 and 0.93. The results for construct and convergent validities showed significant correlations in expected directions. The findings of the study obtained on the validity and reliability of the scale by Türetgen et al. (2012) imply good psychometric qualities.

Emotional intelligence forms a stage where emotions and cognition meet. It facilitates individuals' capacity to manage stress (Ramesar et al., 2009). Emotional intelligence has a substantial effect on individual's job stress. Most of the studies showed an essential relationship among employees' emotional intelligence and their job stress. The employees with high emotional intelligence are better able to manage their perceived job stress. An emotionally intelligent employee have increased ability to cope well with the job stress by being able to control and regulate their emotions that leads towards experiencing less stress at work (Puri and Mehta, 2020) . Emotionally intelligent employees can effectively recognise their stress related emotions and thus are able to handle them appropriately to reduce frustration and stress (Stevens et al., 2019).

3. Research Methodology

The current study can be categorised as pure research with an original contribution to the knowledge. A quantitative approach of research was conducted to generalise the theoretical model of emotional intelligence in relation to job stress in the higher education sector in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This illustrates the characteristics of a single reality phenomenon as per ontological principles. On the other hand, the current study also has properties of pragmatism. From the axiological viewpoint, value-free approach considers the deductive approach which can be traced in the quantitative research studies. The researcher adopts a quantitative design that implements survey-based strategy. A survey is a strategy for collecting information from the participants in order to study the phenomenon under investigation. Under the survey strategy, a structured questionnaire was distributed among higher education faculty working in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Hence data collection and data analysis have been done quantitatively. The research has attempted to adopt psychometric scales for measuring employees' perception about their emotional intelligence and job stress.

3.1. Emotional Intelligence Scale

The attitudinal survey of this study will adopt Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) to measure emotional intelligence; it is based on Salovey and Mayer's model of EIQ. WLEI scale uses 16 items to measure four dimensions of emotional intelligence (Law et al., 2004): self-emotions appraisal (SEA), others' emotions appraisal (OEA), the use of emotions (UOE), and regulation of emotions (ROE). Reliability and validity of the scale across studies has range from 0.80 to .090. Cronbach's alpha for each of the dimensions of emotional intelligence, SEA, OEA, UOE, and ROE, are also high, which are respectively, 0.80, 0.80, 0.80, and 0.85.

3.2. Job Stress Scale

This study has adopted Job stressor appraisal scale as part of job stress battery that will comprehensively measure employees' perceived job stress. This scale is one of the main scales of the Job Stress Battery, which is currently being developed, and enables the evaluation of job stress using the transactional approach. The scale can be used to investigate various topics with respect to job stress (Türetgen et al., 2012). The study has taken into account three factors from job stressor appraisal scale (JSAS): Organisational Rules and Practices, Insecure

Relationships, Role Insufficiency. The Cronbach's alpha (Internal Consistency reliability) of JSAS is 0.93. Cronbach's alpha for each of the factors of stress, Organisational Rules and Practices, Insecure Relationships and Role Insufficiency, are also high, which are respectively, 0.90, 0.81 and 0.75.

3.3 Hypotheses

On the basis of the discussed literature, following hypothesis have been developed for this research study;

H1 (a): There is a negative relationship between Self Emotions Appraisal (SEA) and Organisational Rules and Practices (ORP)

H1 (b): There is a negative relationship between Others' Emotions Appraisal (OEA) and Organisational Rules and Practices (ORP)

H1 (c): There is a negative relationship between Use of Emotions (UOE) and Organisational Rules and Practices (ORP)

H1 (d): There is a negative relationship between Regulation of Emotions (ROE) and Organisational Rules and Practices (ORP)

H2 (a): There is a negative relationship between Self Emotions Appraisal (SEA) and Insecure Relationships (IR)

H2 (b): There is a negative relationship between Others' Emotions Appraisal (OEA) and Insecure Relationships (IR)

H2 (c): There is a negative relationship between Use of Emotions (UOE) and Insecure Relationships (IR)

H2 (d): There is a negative relationship between Regulation of Emotions (ROE) and Insecure Relationships (IR)

H3 (a): There is a negative relationship between Self Emotions Appraisal (SEA) and Role Insufficiency (RI)

H3 (b): There is a negative relationship between Others' Emotions Appraisal (OEA) and Role Insufficiency (RI)

H3 (c): There is a negative relationship between Use of Emotions (UOE) and Role Insufficiency (RI)

H3 (d): There is a negative relationship between Regulation of Emotions (ROE) and Role Insufficiency (RI)

3.4. Theoretical Framework

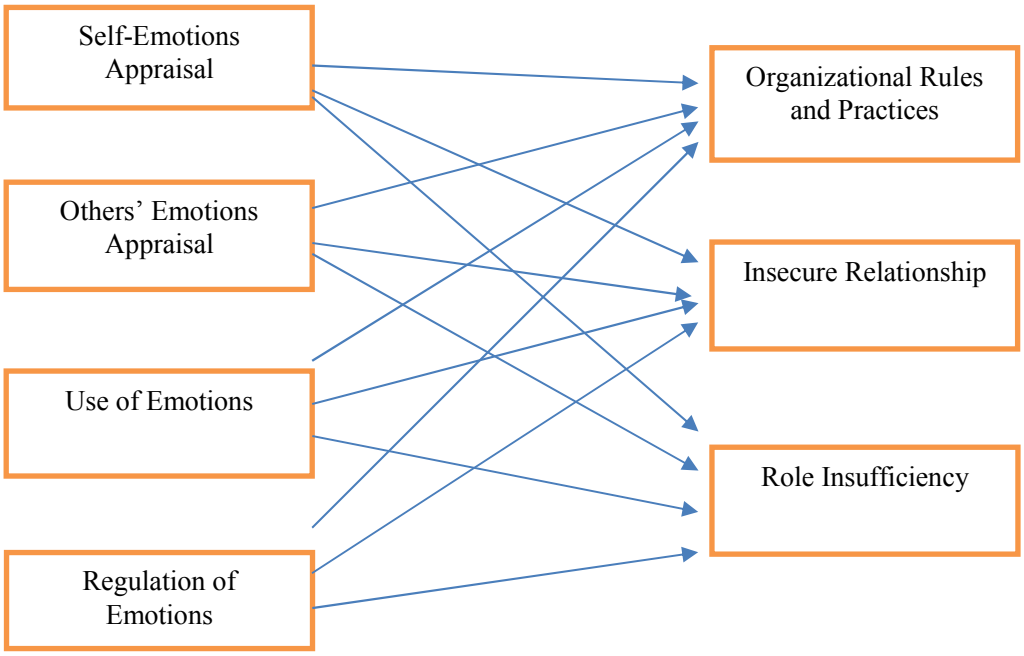

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

3.5. Population and Sample

The population comprises the higher education sector faculty in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Higher education institutes offering programs under Business Administration, Computer Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Information System, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Design and Architecture are considered to be the population for this research. Considering the impracticality of collecting data from entire population, the non-probability sampling techniques namely convenience sampling method and snowball sampling method are used to gather data from targeted sample. The structured questionnaire was emailed to 510 faculty members including both the Saudi citizens and the residents across different provinces and cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and accordingly, useable data of 277 respondents were collected for this research. Table 1 illustrates the

demographic factors of this study.

Table 1: Demographic Factors of the Study

Demographics	Classification	Frequency (277)	Valid Percentage
Gender	Male	101	36.5
	Female	176	63.5
Age	Upto 29 years	24	8.7
	Over 29-39 years	92	33.2
	Over 39-49 years	120	43.3
	Over 49-59 years	39	14.1
	Over 59 years	2	0.7
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	34	12.3
	Master's Degree	149	53.8
	Postgraduate Degree	27	9.7
	Professional Degree	3	1.1
	Doctoral Degree	64	23.1
Experience	Upto 5 years	79	28.5
	Over 5 to 10 years	98	35.4
	Over 10 to 15 years	62	22.4
	Over 15 to 20 years	10	3.6
	Over 20 years	28	10.1
Position	Instructor	30	10.8
	Lecturer	173	62.5
	Assistant Professor	71	25.6
	Associate Professor	2	0.7
	Other (Teaching Assistant)	1	0.4

4. Analysis

4.1. Model Estimation

Model estimation is done as two steps process in PLS-SEM where the first stage is to test the content, convergent and discriminant validity of constructs using the measurement model, while the second step is to test the structural model and hypotheses (Hair Jr et al., 2017).

4.2. Measurement Model Analysis

The model was assessed through internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminant validity. The Cronbach's alpha for the model varies from 0.66 to 0.904. All the Cronbach's alpha values in the reflective measurement model stand above the threshold value of 0.6 Hence, internal consistency reliability of the measurement model is fulfilled. The convergent validity (AVE) for all the dimensions ranges from 0.839 to 0.531. Thus, convergent validity is established.

Table 2: Measurement Model Assessment

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
IR	0.66	0.668	0.814	0.595
OEA	0.904	0.919	0.94	0.839
ORP	0.703	0.726	0.817	0.531
RI	0.891	0.908	0.932	0.821
ROE	0.735	0.748	0.849	0.653
SEA	0.834	0.862	0.89	0.669
UOE	0.805	0.831	0.872	0.632

4.2.1. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity specifies that "a construct is distinct from other constructs by practical and empirical standards". Hence, the establishment of discriminant validity represents a construct is truly unique from other items of measurement items in the model (Hair Jr et al., 2017). In order to assess the discriminant validity, traditionally the Fornell-Larcker criterion is used. It is used to compare the square root of the AVE values with latent variable correlations (Hair Jr et al., 2017). As shown in Table 3 below, the diagonal position illustrates the highest square root of AVE compared to each row and column of the other measurement items. Thus, Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity is established by confirming each latent variable is uniquely different from the others in the path model.

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	IR	OEA	ORP	RI	ROE	SEA	UOE
IR	**0.771**						
OEA	-0.038	**0.916**					
ORP	0.086	0.145	**0.729**				
RI	0.198	-0.238	0.029	**0.906**			
ROE	-0.401	0.237	-0.191	-0.002	**0.808**		
SEA	-0.252	0.413	0.035	-0.044	0.429	**0.818**	
UOE	-0.087	0.165	0.195	0.129	0.38	0.225	**0.795**

Henseler et al. (2015) established a new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in PLS-SEM after identifying drawbacks with Fornell-Larcker criterion (discussed above). This new method of discriminant validity referred to as the heterotrait-monotraits ratio (HTMT). "HTMT is the ratio of the between-trait correlations to the within-trait correlations" p. 118 (Hair Jr et al., 2017). Even though the threshold value of the HTMT is arguable, Henseler et al. (2015) recommend the threshold value should be below 0.90. As seen in Table 4 below, all measurement scales are below the threshold value of 0.90, thus the HTMT discriminant validity is confirmed.

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotraits Ratio (HTMT)

	IR	OEA	ORP	RI	ROE	SEA	UOE
IR							
OEA	0.108						
ORP	0.191	0.222					
RI	0.248	0.259	0.114				
ROE	0.551	0.298	0.268	0.055			
SEA	0.33	0.483	0.139	0.127	0.535		
UOE	0.194	0.178	0.276	0.162	0.484	0.286	

4.3. Structural Model Analysis

Structural model analysis is the second phase of PLS-SEM to address the results of structural model that comes after confirming the measurement model's validity and reliability (Hair Jr et al., 2016). The model assessment examines "the model's predictive capabilities and the relationships between constructs" p. 191 (Hair Jr et al., 2017). To assess structural model, t-values, coefficient of determination (R2), predictive relevance Q2, out sample prediction and effect sizes f2 are evaluated (Hair Jr et al., 2016).

4.3.1. Collinearity Assessment

It is necessary to evaluate if there is a critical level of collinearity existing between predictor variables (Hair Jr et al., 2017). The ideal Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value should be below the threshold value of 5 (Hair Jr et al., 2017). VIF measures the multi-collinearity among predictor variables (Heckman, 2015). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) signals the level of increase in the variance of regression coefficient, if predictor variables are correlated (Heckman, 2015). As shown in Table 5 below, all VIF values are below the threshold value of 5, proving that collinearity issue does not exist with the predictor variables.

Table 5: Collinearity Statistics - Inner VIF Values

	IR	OEA	ORP	RI	ROE	SEA	UOE
IR							
OEA	1.216		1.216	1.216			
ORP							
RI							
ROE	1.37		1.37	1.37			
SEA	1.405		1.405	1.405			
UOE	1.179		1.179	1.179			

4.3.2 Coefficient of Determination (R2 value)

The R2 value is used to evaluate the structural model (Hair Jr et al., 2017). The following Table 6 illustrates the predictive value particular to construct of perceived job stress. The R2 values for insecure relationships, organisational rules and practices and role insufficiency are 0.183, 0.152 and 0.087 respectively.

Table 6: Coefficient of Determination (R^2 value)

	R Square
Insecure Relationships (IR)	0.183
Organisational Rules & Practices (ORP)	0.152
Role Insufficiency (RI)	0.087

4.3.3. Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	|t-value|^	Decision	R^2	Q^2	f^2	95%CI LL	95%CI UL
H1 (a)	SEA -> ORP	0.060	0.063	0.959	Rejected	0.152	0.066	0.004	-0.046	0.163
H1 (b)	OEA -> ORP	0.160	0.060	2.641	Rejected			0.014	0.060	0.255
H1 (c)	UOE -> ORP	0.294	0.067	4.421	Rejected			0.078	0.179	0.396
H1 (d)	ROE -> ORP	-0.367	0.067	5.492	Accepted			0.110	-0.470	-0.256
H2 (a)	SEA -> IR	-0.145	0.072	1.982	Accepted	0.183	0.090	0.017	-0.261	-0.026
H2 (b)	OEA -> IR	0.103	0.056	1.820	Rejected			0.011	0.011	0.195
H2 (c)	UOE -> IR	0.073	0.054	1.427	Rejected			0.007	-0.015	0.162
H2 (d)	ROE -> IR	-0.397	0.049	8.022	Accepted			0.141	-0.474	-0.315
H3 (a)	SEA -> RI	0.042	0.065	0.625	Rejected	0.087	0.062	0.001	-0.063	0.15
H3 (b)	OEA -> RI	-0.281	0.048	5.810	Accepted			0.07	-0.359	-0.202
H3 (c)	UOE -> RI	0.170	0.065	2.640	Rejected			0.027	0.06	0.278
H3 (d)	ROE -> RI	-0.021	0.058	0.322	Rejected			0.000	-0.118	0.071

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Significant Findings

Findings from the study have demonstrated mixed results. In this section, the results that supported the assumptions are discussed. Hypothesis H1(d) representing the negative relationship between regulation of emotions (ROE) and organisational rules and practices (ORP) is accepted with effect size (0.11), this f square value reports a moderate effect between regulation of emotions (ROE) to organisational rules and practices (ORP). Hypotheses H2(a) and H2(d) representing negative relationship between self-emotions appraisal (SEA) and insecure relationships (IR) and regulation of emotions (ROE) and insecure relationships (IR) are accepted with effect size (0.017) and (0.141) respectively. Similarly, H3(b) representing a negative relationship between others' emotions appraisal (OEA) to role insufficiency (RI) is accepted with an effect size (0.07). The results indicate support for the assumption that emotional intelligence has a negative impact on job stress. A number of previous studies have found association between emotional intelligence and job stress (Yamani et al., 2014, Heidari and Heidari, 2016). However, relationship among each dimension of emotional intelligence with each chosen dimension of job stress: organisational rules and practices (ORP), insecure relationships (IR) and role insufficiency (RI) has not been studied clearly and is not available in literature. This study suggests that individual being able to regulate his/her emotions will be able to handle stress arising due to organisational rules and practices. Similarly, employees with an ability to appraise and regulate their emotion can handle stress due to insecure relations. Furthermore, individual who can evaluate and appraise emotions in others are capable to handle stress arising due to role insufficiency.

5.2. Insignificant Findings

Surprisingly, some of the results of the study failed to confirm the proposed hypotheses and thus were rejected. Such as, for the assumptions pertaining towards testing the relationship among the dimensions of emotional intelligence and job stress, the hypotheses H1a (SEA -> ORP), H1b (OEA -> ORP) and H1c (UOE -> ORP) are rejected with effect size (0.004), (0.014) and (0.078) respectively. Similarly, Hypotheses H2b (OEA -> IR) and H2c (UOE -> IR) are rejected with low effect size (0.011) and (0.007) respectively. Moreover, H3a (SEA -> RI), H3c (UOE -> RI) and H3d (ROE -> RI) are rejected with low effect size (0.001), (0.027) and (0.00) respectively. To investigate the reasons behind such a phenomenon are beyond the scope of this research, there can be potential reasons to be proposed such as: employees may feel that appraising and using their emotions and that of others will not help in controlling stress arising due to the organisational rules and practices (ORP) such as a feeling of being treated unfairly in their respective organisation. It may be that faculty does not face a problem of unfair treatment in their educational institutes that may lead towards job stress, or they might not have an issue related to the supply of resources or support needed while performing their jobs. Also, the employees may have an opinion that the methods used to evaluate their performance is not unfair. Moreover, the educationists may not understand that how appraising others emotions and using one's own emotions appropriately at the workplace may attach to the stress due to insecure relationships (IR), or it may that faculty does not face a problem of mistrust or miscommunication among their colleagues at the workplace. Similarly, appraising, using and regulating one's emotions appropriately has not supported the hypothesised relationship with role insufficiency (RI), the potential reason(s) can be that majority of the faculty members may have given tasks and assignments in line with their knowledge, skills and abilities and are generally satisfied with their job, hence they do not have the problem of role insufficiency at their workplaces. Though quantitative findings disapprove the relationship between some of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and job stress, many scholars confirm the existence by considering a different set of dimensions particularly for job stress (Darvish and Nasrollahi, 2011). Emotional intelligence is an individual's ability to create positive outcomes with respect to relationship among each other. Emotional intelligence is known to be a skill of making use of knowledge to observe the emotions well and conduct activities accordingly, it is an art of understanding and managing one's own and other emotions

that play a vital role in handling stress.(Moradi et al., 2011).

6. Conclusion

This study is first of its kind that has sought to shed light on an understanding of the effect of emotional intelligence on employees' job stress in Saudi Arabian higher education sector. A detailed and thorough literature survey was conducted to find any evidence for proving the relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress. The results from the quantitative study showed mixed results when it comes to the relationship among emotional intelligence and job stress. However, the emotional intelligence model meets all the criterion of the measurement model and the structural model. Furthermore, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity (HTMT) clearly fulfil the criterion of measurement model. Likewise, the structural model confirms the predictive capabilities and the relationship among latent variables (Hair et al., 2019a). The quantitative findings from this research work confirmed that regulation of emotions is essential to reduce job stress arising due to organisational rules and practices (ORP), insecure relationships (IR) and role insufficiency (RI). These findings support the argument that emotional intelligence is an essential contributor in reducing employees' job stress particularly in the Saudi Arabian higher education sector.

7. Future Research Avenues

- It would be interesting for future research to validate emotional intelligence model in another developed country to find out the robustness of the model.
- Future research may consider the comparison between both genders (male and female) using this emotional intelligence model.
- The constructs used in the study are measured through respondents' own perceptions, in which it is clearly hard to capture the true picture. Using truly emotional situations and recording the respondents' actions and reactions could provide a clearer idea about participants' level of emotional intelligence.

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