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Article

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Emotional intelligence, organizational justice and work outcomes

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore the associations between emotional intelligence (EI), organizational justice (OJ) perceptions and work outcomes. The study proposes a model where EI is linked to job satisfaction and turnover intentions through the three dimensions of organizational justice.

Design/methodology/approach – In all, 556 employees in the Malaysian service sector were used as samples for this study. Analysis was performed using SPSS and AMOS structural equation modelling (SEM) path analysis to test the study's hypotheses.

Findings – Results indicate that EI had a significant direct effect on all organizational justice sub-dimensions (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) as well as on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. However, only distributive justice was found to partially mediate the relationship between EI, job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Originality/value – This study provides further insights into the mechanisms through which trait EI impacts service sector employee workplace attitudes. It also investigates the role of trait EI in deciphering why employees may differ in their OJ perceptions and deepens understanding of the discrete roles that organizational justice sub-dimensions perform.

Keywords Emotional intelligence, Organizational justice perceptions, Job satisfaction, Turnover intention, Malaysia

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Ensuring employees stay and are satisfied with their jobs represents a pivotal challenge for organizations (Böckerman and Ilmakunnas, 2012). Referring to ones' ability to identify their own emotions and of others, and informing a favourable relationship with others (Salovey and Mayer, 1990), emotional intelligence (EI) is considered a key determinant of employees' work attitudes and perceptions of workplace events (Jordan *et al.*, 2003; Miao *et al.*, 2017; Ramos *et al.*, 2021). While EI has been found to influence job satisfaction and turnover



intentions, little is known about the mechanisms through which this occurs (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002; Nauman *et al.*, 2019).

Understanding whether emotionally intelligent employees are better at perceiving and regulating their reactions to fairness in the workplace may help explain why some are better able to thrive in organizational settings compared to others (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2018). As a core theory of emotions in the workplace, Affective Events Theory (AET) (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) stipulates that cumulative effective experience at work together with other factors including personality shape employees' satisfaction and intention to stay.

Based on AET, this study proposes Organizational Justice (OJ) (Greenberg, 2001) as a mediator in the relationship between EI with job satisfaction and turnover intention. Referring to an employee's subjective sense of fairness regarding organizational decisions (Greenberg, 2001), OJ constitutes critical emotional workplace experiences that can shape employees work attitudes. Research has shown the different dimensions of OJ to have varying effects on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention (Meisler, 2013; Suifan *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, although fairness perceptions are subjective and influenced by emotions (Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2012; Ouyang *et al.*, 2015), few studies have examined the influence of EI on OJ (Törnroos *et al.*, 2019).

Therefore, this paper examines the relationship between trait EI and OJ with job satisfaction and turnover intention among employees in the Malaysian service sector. Using samples of 556 service sector workers, our study provides new insight into understanding the mechanisms through which EI influences workplace attitudes (Petrides *et al.*, 2016) and the role of OJ. This paper responds to Törnroos *et al.*'s (2019) call to explore the role of EI in deciphering why individuals may differ in their perceptions of OJ.

Trait emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and turnover intention

Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined EI as a set of interrelated skills concerning "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (p.10) which operationalized in four aspects of self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, regulation of emotion and use of emotion (Wong and Law, 2002). According to Miao *et al.* (2017), EI predicts positive workplace attitudes and demonstrates incremental variance and relative importance beyond the cognitive ability of one's personality trait.

On the other hand, job satisfaction refers to the positive emotional state derived from an individual's subjective experience with their job (Locke, 1976) that has a positive relationship with EI (Miao *et al.*, 2017). It is suggested that emotionally intelligent employees are likely to perceive their jobs in a more satisfying and rewarding manner, as they are more resilient and better at evaluating and regulating others and own emotions (Kong and Zhao, 2013). Besides, emotionally intelligent employees are likely to act in more appropriate ways and develop a meaningful relationship with colleagues due to mastery in managing and responding to others' emotions (Byron, 2007; Sy *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, employees higher in EI acquire more positive experience in the workplace, resulting in a higher level of job satisfaction (Miao *et al.*, 2017). This leads to our first hypothesis.

H1a. EI is positively related to job satisfaction.

Turnover intentions refer to employee's subjective estimation of their probability of leaving their organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1982). Studies have shown employees with high EI have lower turnover intentions (Clarke and Mahadi, 2017; Lee and Liu, 2007). This is due to

emotionally intelligent employees tend to have more positive experiences in the workplace, are more engaged and enjoy better relations with their colleagues (Carmeli, 2003) that make them less likely to leave their organization (Meisler, 2013).

H1b. EI is negatively related to turnover intention.

Trait emotional intelligence and organizational justice

Employee perception of OJ is subjective and often considered a product of organizational occurrences, systems and the interaction between leaders and co-workers (Hollensbe *et al.*, 2008). OJ consists of three dimensions of distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Bies and Moag, 1986). Distributive justice (DJ) refers to the perception of fairness regarding the distribution of organizational rewards according to the input–output process. Procedural justice (PJ), on the other hand, refers to the perceived fairness of procedure utilized to allocate firm resources and reward including access to decision-making processes and outcomes. Meanwhile, interactional justice (IJ) refers to the concern voiced by an employee regarding the quality of interpersonal treatment during the implementation of organizational procedure (Bies and Moag, 1986).

Perceptions towards fairness influences individuals' reactions related to interpersonal treatment and procedural formality (Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2012; Karam *et al.*, 2019). On this basis, the high likeliness of emotionally intelligent employees to be more careful in interpreting and understanding organizational decisions reduce their encounter to misunderstanding and conflict occurrence around them (Meisler, 2013). Such a tendency shapes this group of employees to have a better perception related to organizational fairness from procedural, distributive and interactional aspects (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2007). The ability of high EI employees to appraise other's emotions increase the likelihood of this employee's group to better evaluate and understand organizational decision before asserting criticism. Furthermore, given the ability to control their own emotions and thoughts (Di Fabio and Palazzeschi, 2012), emotionally intelligent employees may be less likely to ruminate over the negative or unfair decision (Petrides *et al.*, 2007) and henceforth better at deciphering whether they are being treated with honesty, politeness and respect by the organization (Meisler, 2013). Therefore, our next hypotheses are below.

H2a. EI is positively related to Distributive Justice.

H2b. EI is positively related to Procedural Justice.

H2c. EI is positively related to Interactional Justice.

Organizational justice, job satisfaction and turnover intentions

According to AET, events and experiences in the workplace may elicit varying emotions among employees, which in turn impact their attitude and behaviour (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Decisions relating to performance appraisal, promotion, work assignment and the distribution of reward (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001) are few examples of constituting effective events that can shape the job satisfaction and turnover intentions of organizational members (Medina-Craven and Ostermeier, 2020).

Employees' evaluations towards organizational decisions are also hugely influenced by procedural accuracy, consistency and perceived biased or the opinion of change (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Schminke *et al.*, 1997). Employees who perceive more fairness concerning how their performance is rated and tasks are assigned may feel more satisfied. This is derived

from the positive emotional response towards outcomes received concerning the actual work performed (Narcisse and Harcourt, 2008). When employees feel they are being treated fairly and concerning rewards distribution, procedural integrity and communication, they may experience a heightened sense of job satisfaction (Suifan *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, our next hypotheses are below.

H3a. DJ is positively related to Job Satisfaction.

H3b. PJ is positively related to Job Satisfaction.

H3c. IJ is positively related to Job Satisfaction.

Perceived organizational fairness also links to the degree of employee turnover intentions (Bal *et al.*, 2011). Employees' perceptions of the fairness in procedures may create a sense of obligation within them to perform in the future, even if the present reward seems unfair. Hence, employees may increase their commitment and involvement in the organization, thereby reducing their turnover intentions. Additionally, when employees perceive fairness in the distribution of rewards and are treated adequately by their managers, they will be less likely to leave the organization (Suifan *et al.*, 2017; Swalhi *et al.*, 2017).

H4a. DJ is negatively related to Turnover Intentions.

H4b. PJ is negatively related to Turnover Intentions.

H4c. IJ is negatively related to Turnover Intentions.

The mediating role of organizational justice

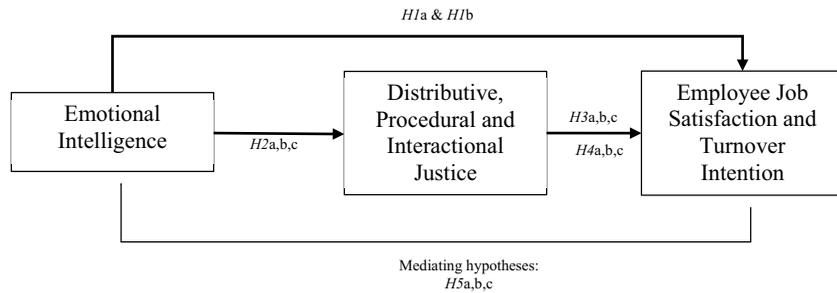
Fairness perceptions are subjective and thus influenced by individuals' emotional state and ability (Ouyang *et al.*, 2015). Being able to accurately appraise the emotions of others makes employees with higher EI more precise in deciding whether they are being treated appropriately, fairly and in respectful manner by people inside the organization (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). Having a positive perception towards organizational fairness generates a greater sense of trust and faith in the employee–employer relationship (Ouyang *et al.*, 2015). Mikula *et al.* (1998) suggested that experience of justice motivates positive emotions, while injustice induces negative emotion. Henceforth, organizational justice may either improve or reduce employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions depending on the spectrum of OJ employees are experiencing.

Consistent with AET, we postulate that employees with higher EI are more likely to have positive perceptions of OJ due to their thorough consideration when evaluating organizational event, which then motivates them to remain in the organization and promote higher satisfaction towards work. Our premise is partly supported by Ouyang *et al.* (2015) and Meisler (2013) which suggested DJ, PJ and IJ as functional mediators in predicting work outcome. Henceforth, we propose the following hypothesis and conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

H5a. DJ mediates the relationship between EI and job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

H5b. PJ mediates the relationship between EI and job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Figure 1.
Conceptual model



H5c. IJ mediates the relationship between EI and job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Method

Sample

We tested our hypothesis using data from 556 full-time employees from eight service-sector organizations in Malaysia. Data was collected online via Qualtrics across the eight organizations in two waves. All questionnaire items were in English, as it was the working language of the eight organizations and a language that was familiar to participants. In the first wave participants reported their EI, and demographic factors. After one month, participants were reported their perceptions of OJ, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. 67.4% of respondents were female, with a mean age of 36.8 years (s.d. = 9.52). Managerial positions were held by 51.4% of respondents, and the average tenure was 7.12 years (s.d = 7.40).

Measures

EI was measured using 16 items using the WLEIS scale (Wong and Law, 2002). The scale measures one's perception of their ability in appraising their and others' emotions, using emotions and regulating emotions over the past 3 months. Of the various EI scales, we chose Wong and Law's (2002), as it has been frequently used in research examining EI in non-Western settings and thus shown to have good reliability and validity in the Malaysian context as well (Libbrecht *et al.*, 2014; Santos *et al.*, 2015). Responses were rated on seven-point Likert scales ("1 = totally disagree" to "7 = totally agree"), with higher scores signifying a higher EI.

Niehoff and Moorman's (1993) 20-item scale was used to measure *Organizational Justice (OJ)* and its three sub-dimensions: DJ, PJ and IJ. Despite concerns about an unbalanced number of items for DJ, PJ and IJ, Niehoff and Moorman's (1993) has consistently demonstrated high reliabilities across all dimensions. Further, prior research has also supported Niehoff and Moorman's (1993) original three-factor structure (Gürbüz and Mert, 2009) in a variety of different contexts. Hence, in this study, we chose Niehoff and Moorman's (1993) OJ scale. Responses were rated on five-point Likert scales ("1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree").

Three items from Lee and Bruvold (2003) were used to evaluate employee's *Job Satisfaction (JS)*, while three items from Landau and Hammer (1986) was used to measure *Turnover Intentions (TI)*. Both scales were rated on five-point Likert scales ("1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree").

Finally, *Age* (years), *Tenure* (years) and *Gender* (0 = Male, 1 = Female) were controlled for.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis, reliability and validity test

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to confirm the construct validity of all scales. EI had a good fit with a second order four-factor model χ^2 (n = 557) = 327.546, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 3.342$, RMSEA = 0.065, CFI = 0.925, GFI = 0.960, TLI = 0.961. OJ was three factors with χ^2 (n = 557) = 766.406, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 4.589$, RMSEA = 0.080, CFI = 0.994, GFI = 0.988, TLI = 0.994. Job satisfaction was a single factor with χ^2 (n = 557) = 0.841, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 0.841$, RMSEA = 0.000, TLI = 1.00, CFI = 1.00, IFI = 1.00, and turnover intention was also a single factor χ^2 (n = 557) = 1.835, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 1.835$, RMSEA = 0.039, TLI = 0.999, CFI = 0.999, IFI = 0.999. Interrelation between constructs was less than 0.557, meanwhile intra-constructs exceeded the recommended cutoff of 0.05, thus indicating good discriminant and convergent validity (Hubley, 2014). Normal distribution is assumed with skewness and kurtosis statistics between -1 and $+1$ for our data (Table 1).

Correlation between variables

Table 2 presents the means and correlations between the major variables of the study. EI was positively correlated to DJ, $r = .12$, $p < 0.05$; PJ, $r = .10$, $p < 0.05$; IJ, $r = .11$, $p < 0.05$; JS, $r = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$ and negatively to TI, $r = -0.14$, $p < .01$. DJ, $r = .41$, $p < 0.01$; PJ, $r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$; and IJ, $r = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$ were positively correlated to JS. DJ, $r = -0.44$, $p < 0.01$; PJ, $r = -0.37$, $p < 0.01$; and IJ, $r = -0.38$, $p < 0.01$ were negatively correlated to TI.

Hypotheses testing

Table 3 summarizes the result for the hypothesis testing which performed using SEM using path analysis. The model yielded an acceptable goodness of fit with χ^2 (n = 557) = 2865.647, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/\text{df} = 3.081$, RMSEA = 0.061, TLI = 0.970, CFI = 0.968, IFI = 0.976. Results show EI having a significant effect on IJ ($\beta = 0.924$, $p = 0.008$), PJ ($\beta = 0.962$, $p = 0.015$), DJ ($\beta = 0.655$, $p = 0.007$), as well as on JS ($\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.026$) and TI ($\beta = 0.063$, $p = 0.026$). Hence, H1a, H2a, H2b and H2c are supported. Only DJ was found to significantly effect on both JS ($\beta = 0.360$, $p = 0.009$) and TI ($\beta = -0.439$, $p = 0.007$). Hence, H3a and H4a are supported. Result showed a significant indirect effect of DJ between EI, JS (indirect $\beta = 0.508$, $p = 0.004$), and TI ($\beta = -0.515$, $p = 0.009$), thus only supporting H5a.

Discussion

This study examined whether the dimensions of OJ mediated the relationship between EI, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Our study provides new insights into how EI influences job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Petrides *et al.*, 2016), and OJ (Törnroos *et al.*, 2019). Broadly, our findings reconfirmed the positive relationship between trait EI and job satisfaction. However, contrary to theoretical expectations and prior evidence, our study found a positive relationship between trait EI and turnover intentions. That is, emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to have withdrawal intentions than others. One possible explanation for such a finding may lie in the very nature of the trait EI concept itself. Research suggests that emotionally intelligent employees are not only able to recognize their own and others' emotions but are also more likely to recognize the environmental demands and pressures of their workplace (Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, 2004). Thus, we suggest, that because they are better able to appraise their work

Construct	Items	Convergent validity		Reliability
		Factor loading	AVE ^a	α
EI	I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time	0.673	0.636	0.88
	I have a good understanding of my own emotions	0.833		
	I really understand what I feel	0.884		
	I always know whether or not I am happy	0.664		
	I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior	0.730		
	I am a good observer of others' emotions	0.847		
	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others	0.766		
	I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me	0.841		
	I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them	0.691		
	I always tell myself I am a competent person	0.763		
	I am a self-motivating person	0.840		
	I would always encourage myself to try my best	0.799		
	I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally	0.784		
	I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions	0.910		
	I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry	0.747		
	Distributive Justice (DJ)	I have good control over my own emotions		
My work schedule is fair		0.562		
I think that my level of pay is fair		0.707		
I consider my work load to be quite fair		0.711		
Overall, the rewards I receive here are quite fair		0.761		
Procedural Justice (PJ)	I feel that my job responsibilities are fair	0.691	0.641	0.903
	Job decisions are made by the general manager in an unbiased manner	0.829		
	My general manager makes sure that all employee concerns are heard before job decisions are made	0.842		
	To make job decisions, my general manager collects accurate and complete information	0.810		
	My general manager clarifies decisions and provides additional information when requested by employees	0.862		
	All job decisions are applied consistently across all affected employees	0.829		
	Employees are allowed to challenge, or appeal job decisions made by the general manager	0.794		
	When decisions are made about my job, the general manager treats me with kindness and consideration	0.844		
Interactional Justice (IJ)	When decisions are made about my job, the general manager treats me with respect and dignity	0.761	0.639	0.960
	When decisions are made about my job, the general manager is sensitive to my personal needs	0.740		

Table 1.
Validity and reliability of the scales

(continued)

Construct	Items	Convergent validity		Reliability
		Factor loading	AVE ^a	α
Turnover Intention	When decisions are made about my job, the general manager deals with me in a truthful manner	0.731		
	When decisions are made about my job, the general manager shows concern for my rights as an employee	0.881		
	Concerning decisions made about my job, the general manager discusses the implications of the decisions with me	0.825		
	The general manager offers adequate justification for decisions made about my job	0.837		
	When making decisions about my job, the general manager offers explanations that make sense to me	0.850		
	My general manager explains very clearly any decision made about my job	0.835		
Job satisfaction	I often think about quitting my present job	0.76	0.613	0.744
	I will probably look for a new job in the next year	0.85		
	As soon as possible, I will leave the organization	0.84		
Job satisfaction	I am satisfied with my job	0.76	0.508	0.857
	Knowing what I know now, if I had to decide all over again whether to take the job I have now, I would definitely take it	0.64		
	I would recommend a job like mine to a good friend	0.73		

Note: ^aAVE is average extracted variance; CR is composite reliability

Table 1.

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age	36.74	9.61	0.65**	0.10*	0.10*	-0.19**	-0.08	0.03	-0.06	0.26**
2. Tenure	7.13	7.40		0.08*	0.07	-0.16**	-0.08	-0.01	-0.07	0.19**
3. Gender	0.68	0.47			0.00	-0.12**	-0.01	0.02	-0.02	-0.02
4. Job satisfaction (JS)	3.64	0.80				-0.54**	0.45**	0.41**	0.47**	0.26**
5. Turnover intention (TI)	2.76	1.03					-0.37**	-0.44**	-0.38**	-0.14**
6. Procedural justice (PJ)	3.30	0.81						0.54**	0.83**	0.10*
7. Distributive justice (DJ)	3.45	0.74							0.52**	0.12*
8. Interactional justice (IJ)	3.55	0.78								0.11*
9. Emotional Intelligence (EI)	5.50	0.66								

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; Gender: 1 = female, 0 = male

Table 2.
Descriptive statistic and correlation between constructs

environment compared to others, emotionally intelligent employees may be more willing to leave their current organization if they recognize that the negative aspects of their work environment may be detrimental to their overall well-being (Di Fabio and Kenny, 2019).

Responding to Törnroos *et al.* (2019) recent call, this study found a positive relationship between EI and all three dimensions of OJ. Organizational decisions regarding pay, promotion and performance are made by individuals. Thus, this may lead to feelings of frustration and anger towards individual making the decision, rather than the decision *per se*. Our findings suggest that because of their enhanced ability to regulate their own

Paths	Estimates	
	Standardized estimates (β)	<i>p</i> -value
<i>Direct effects (EI)</i>		
EI to Interactional justice	0.924**	0.008
EI to Procedural justice	0.962*	0.015
EI to Distributive justice	0.655**	0.007
EI to Job Satisfaction	0.092*	0.026
EI to Turnover Intentions	0.063*	0.026
<i>Direct effects (Job satisfaction)</i>		
Interactional justice to Job Satisfaction	0.291	0.121
Procedural justice to Job Satisfaction	0.003	0.839
Distributive justice to Job Satisfaction	0.360*	0.009
Age (controlled)	0.054	0.353
Gender (controlled)	-0.004	0.923
Organizational tenure (controlled)	0.140*	0.038
<i>Direct effects (Turnover intention)</i>		
Interactional justice to Turnover Intentions	-0.185	0.397
Procedural justice to Turnover Intentions	-0.058	0.535
Distributive justice to Turnover Intentions	-0.439*	0.007
Age (controlled)	-0.083	0.160
Gender (controlled)	-0.095*	0.009
Organizational tenure (controlled)	-0.126*	0.013
<i>Indirect effects (via Distributive justice)</i>		
EI to Job Satisfaction	0.508**	0.004
EI to Turnover Intentions	-0.515*	0.009

Notes: EI is emotional intelligence, JS is job satisfaction, TOI is turnover intention, *indicates *p* is significant with lesser than 0.05, **indicates *p* is significant with lesser than 0.005

Table 3.
Summary of
significant paths
based on path
analysis SEM

emotions and acknowledge that of others, emotionally intelligent employees may be better apt at rationalizing the behaviour of others in the organization (Quebbeman and Rozell, 2002). Similarly, perceived fairness affects employee's trust in the organization, as well as their subsequent attitudes. Accordingly, emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to perceive that they are treated with fairness, dignity and feel that there is a greater balance between their efforts and the rewards provided by their organization.

The study also adds to debates concerning the differential effects of OJ and its dimensions on workplace attitudes (Shkoler and Tziner, 2017). Contrary to theoretical predictions, only DJ was found to predict employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Suifan *et al.*, 2017). This may be attributed to the fact that in emerging economies like Malaysia, ensuring fair pay, promotions and benefits is of particular importance to employee's intentions to leave and their sense of job satisfaction (Santos *et al.*, 2015). This is also consistent with earlier findings that demonstrated employees from Eastern cultures tend to be more sensitive to an organization's DJ rather than PJ and IJ (Jiang *et al.*, 2017).

The study also extends our understanding of the mechanisms by which EI influences workplace attitudes. Particularly, the finding showed the uniqueness of DJ to partially mediate the relationship between, EI, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Perchance, emotionally intelligent employees are better at appraising, comprehending and managing

their emotions concerning how monetary or non-monetary outcomes are distributed in organizations (Kofi *et al.*, 2016). This in turn creates positive affective reactions while maintaining perceptions of mutual exchange between employees and the organization, thus increasing their sense of job satisfaction and reducing their turnover intentions. Hence, our study demonstrates the importance of examining OJs dimension separately, as specific dimensions may have unique effects on job satisfaction and turnover intentions than others (Ouyang *et al.*, 2015).

Practical implications

Our study has several implications for organizations. Firstly, assessing EI during the selection process provides organizations with an opportunity to promote justice perceptions and job satisfaction within the organization (Petrides *et al.*, 2016). Secondly, organizations may do well by ensuring that rewards are distributed fairly and that the rationale behind a manager's decision is clearly explained and justified. This may lead employees to have favourable perceptions of fairness in the organization, thereby also increasing their commitment to the organization as well (Suifan *et al.*, 2017). Thirdly, there is growing awareness of the importance of training for and developing employees EI (Mattingly and Kraiger, 2019). Accordingly, organizations may seek to provide training opportunities to employees to raise their EI, as this will help them cope within the workplace, while improving their positive perceptions of their job (Ouyang *et al.*, 2015). Finally, organizations may target employees with lower EI when distributing resources to effectively manage their perceptions of justice and job satisfaction.

Limitations

Our study is not without its limitations. Firstly, causation cannot be inferred by our findings due to cross-sectional design. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to derive causal conclusions. Secondly, emotions can vary over time and can be influenced by discrete events (Fredrickson and Joiner, 2018). Hence, future research may explore employees' EI over time to discern any possible "in-person" differences that may arise. Thirdly we only focused on a limited number of organizational-level factors. Future research may wish to explore the role of organizational support and leadership characteristics within the model proposed in this study. Finally, our sample consisted of employees from service-based organizations in Malaysia and therefore, the conclusions should be cautiously generalized. Future research may wish to replicate this study among employees in other sectors and cultural settings as these contexts (Santos *et al.*, 2015).

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