Exploring the Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Person-Organization Fit: The Mediating Role of Political Skill

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Abstract

The principal aim of this research was to investigate the effect of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit), with a specific emphasis on the potential mediating role played by Political Skills (PS). The theoretical basis of this study is firmly rooted in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory positing that both EI and PS serve as job resources. Utilizing a survey methodology, data were gathered from 234 employees in the information technology sector in Turkey, employing a convenience sampling approach. The collected data were subsequently subjected to analysis using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) with the path analysis method in the AMOS Program. The study's results indicated that PS operates as a partial mediator in the relationship between EI and P-O Fit. This study fills a significant void in the current research literature by specifically exploring the connection between EI and P-O Fit and sheds light on the relatively uncharted territory of PS within the field of organizational studies, despite the common perception of organizations as political environments.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Political Skill, Person-Organization Fit.

1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI), a concept became widely known after Daniel Goleman (1995)'s book "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ," has emerged as a critical dimension of human social and psychological functioning.

Emotional Intelligence involves the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate one's own emotions, as well as the ability to perceive, comprehend, and influence the emotions of others. This multifaceted construct encompasses various components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation and interpersonal skills. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is regarded as a vital predictor of success in diverse aspects of life, encompassing personal relationships, professional endeavours, and overall well-being (Goleman, 1995).

Politics, on the other hand is an indispensable phenomenon not only in the realm of social interactions but also within organizational life. Within the context of organizational studies, it is frequently explored through the lenses of organizational politics perceptions and political influence tactics or behaviors. In the 1980s, the field of organizational politics studies expanded to encompass a third area, commonly named as Political Skill (PS) (Pfeffer, 1981; Mintzberg, 1983). Although this concept is relatively recent within the academic literature, it has been subject to examination in conjunction with various other variables. The ability to navigate the intricate landscape of organizational politics and achieve positive outcomes in the realm of business is significantly contingent upon possessing PS. Managing individuals within the workplace is critically tied to the possession of political acumen, enabling individuals to adapt effectively to the organizational political environment. PS consists of four subdimensions which are social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity all of which exhibit a clear and apparent connection with EI. The interplay between EI and PS in employees is thought to be a critical factor in achieving person-organization fit (P-O fit) within a workplace. P-O fit, can be described as the perception of how well an individual feels their compatibility and comfort level align with the organization, encompassing compatibility and comfort both in relation to the organization itself and their colleagues (Mitchellet al., 2001).

Individuals possessing high Emotional Intelligence (EI) are typically more adept at effectively navigating the intricate social dynamics within an organization. As per its definition, EI as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage both one's own emotions and the emotions of others, thus promoting the development of productive interpersonal relationships, is a factor believed to have a positive impact on people's PS. When these employees also possess PS, which entails the ability to influence others, build coalitions, and manage organizational politics, they become adept at understanding and maneuvering within the workplace's power structures and networks which in turn is thought to increase P-O fit. Employees with this combination of high PS and EI may better fit in with the political climate, culture, and values of the organization in the context of P-O fit, enabling them to contribute to its objectives and flourish inside its framework. Although EI has been a subject that has been frequently researched since the 1990s, when it became popular, there are still deficiencies in this field. The relationship of EI with PS and its effect on organizational adaptation is one of these areas.

As a result of our research, a gap has been identified in this part of the literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to measure the effect of EI on PS and P-O fit, while measuring a possible mediating effect of PS between EI and P-O fit.

The mediation role of PS becomes evident as it enables employees to leverage their EI in a way that aligns with the organization's culture and values. It helps in facilitating smoother interactions, mitigating conflicts, and fostering collaboration. When employees possess strong PS, they can better interpret the organization's political landscape and adapt their EI to fit the organizational context. Consequently, they are more likely to forge successful relationships, resolve conflicts, and engage effectively within the workplace, ultimately enhancing their P-O fit. Therefore, PS acts as a bridge between EI and P-O fit, enabling employees to navigate the complexities of the workplace and align their EI with the organizational culture, thereby contributing to their overall effectiveness and satisfaction within the organization.

2.   Literature Review
2.1.   Emotional Intelligence

EI encompasses the capacity to identify, comprehend, and regulate both one's own emotions and the emotions of others, which in turn promotes the development of successful interpersonal relationships. EI is often described as having four key components: the ability to recognize, utilize, comprehend, and regulate emotions (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2008).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's capability to be conscious of their own emotions, perceive the emotions of others, and effectively use emotional information. Salovey and Mayer (1990) had defined the term based on the abilities of self-awareness, self-regulation and using feedback in social situations. Although Daniel Goleman first introduced the term "emotional intelligence" to large masses with his book published in 1995 and he was the first to apply this concept to the business world with his 1998 HBR article.

Daniel Goleman says that it is not IQ and technical skills that distinguish great leaders from others, emphasizing that EI is a distinguishing feature. He asserts that Emotional Intelligence (EI) comprises five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills, and empathy. Self-awareness involves recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses, understanding personal motives, values, and the influence one has on others. Self-regulation is defined as the ability to control or redirect harmful impulses and moods. Motivation is the enjoyment of success for its intrinsic value. Empathy is the capacity to comprehend the emotional experiences of others. Lastly, social skill is the aptitude for establishing rapport with others in order to influence them in desired directions (Goleman, 1998). Subsequently, he consolidated these elements into the overarching ability to perceive and manage both one's own emotions and the emotions of others.

The concept of EI has been further refined and expanded upon by subsequent researchers, including Salovey and Mayer (1990), who introduced the EI as a collection of abilities. Their model outlines four key facets of EI: the ability to perceive emotions, to employ emotions in enhancing cognitive processes, to comprehend emotions, and to manage emotions. This perspective emphasizes EI as a set of competencies that can be cultivated and enhanced through training and practice.

Consequently, the study of EI has become increasingly important in the fields of psychology and organizational behavior, providing valuable insights into human conduct and interpersonal interactions, with implications for both individual and organizational achievement (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the beneficial results of EI in both personal and professional settings. For instance, some investigations have examined the connection between EI and person-job fit (Lee et al., 2012). In contrast, other studies have determined that EI has a positive impact on engagement (Levitats et al., 2019) and a negative impact on various aspects of burnout, including exhaustion (e.g., Mérida-López and Extremera, 2017; Extremera et al., 2018 in Levitats et al., 2022). EI is linked to better communication, conflict resolution, and empathy, which can lead to more harmonious relationships (Goleman, 1998). Leaders with high EI are often more effective in inspiring and motivating their teams, resulting in improved team performance (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000). High EI is associated with lower levels of stress and improved mental health (Mikolajczak et al., 2007).

EI has been found to be negatively correlated with burnout, leading to decreased feelings of exhaustion and emotional fatigue (Mérida-López and Extremera, 2017). EI enables individuals to make more informed decisions by using emotions as a source of information, leading to improved problem-solving abilities (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Students with strong EI skills may perform better academically and show improved social competence (Brackett et al., 2006).

Clercq et al, (2013) have studied the relationship between goal congruence and EI, based on the P-O fit research, taking EI as a moderator in the model in which they have found a positive effect. There are also other studies finding positive correlation between P-O fit and EI (Dust et al., 2017). There are some researches finding positive correlation between PS and EI (e.g. Durrani and Cheema, 2016).

2.2.   Political Skill

Many scholars maintain the view that organizations are essentially political battlegrounds (Mintzberg, 1985). In this context, although intelligence and diligence do contribute to performance, effectiveness, and career progression, other elements like social acumen and cognitive aptitude also wield considerable influence (Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz, 1988; Mintzberg, 1983; Ferris et al., 2005).

PS is the ability of the person through which he or she can influence other people working in the organization in such a way so that the organizational as well as individual goal can be achieved (Banerjee et al., 2017).

According to Ferris et al. (2005a), PS is characterized as the skill to thoroughly grasp individuals within the workplace and utilize this insight to accomplish personal and/or organizational objectives. This sets it apart from other social skills, as its primary focus is on advancing organizational achievements (Ferris et al., 2000).

The notion of PS was first introduced to the academic literature in Pfeffer's research (1981), which examined political perspectives within organizations (Ferris et al., 2005a). While the notion of political competence had been briefly explored in early 1980s organizational politics studies (Pfeffer, 1981; Mintzberg, 1983), it was elaborated and expanded upon by Ferris et al. (Ferris et al., 1999; Ferris, et al., 2005b). Nevertheless, it has been subject to investigation in conjunction with numerous variables. The concept of PS, an extension of organizational politics studies, delves into the "how" of political tactics and behaviors that were examined earlier (Ferris et al., 2007).

Despite the extensive research on organizational politics, there has been a dearth of research on PSs, leaving a significant knowledge gap in understanding the effectiveness of specific tactics. In politically charged organizations, individuals must possess PSs to attain their desired goals (Hung et al., 2012; Kolodinsky et al., 2004; Perrewe and Nelson, 2004). Hence, individuals aim to select the most effective political behaviors and implement them to the extent of their PS level to achieve organizational success (Bentley, Breland, Xu, Campion & Treadway, 2015; Hung et al., 2012; Kolodinsky et al., 2004; McAllister et al., 2015). Those with high PS exhibit self-assurance, discernment, an ability to establish, sustain, and expand social networks, openness in expressing their

true sentiments, and the capacity to devise better solutions in politically charged situations (Ferris et al., 2000; Ferris et al., 2005b; Kolodinsky et al., 2004; McAllister et al., 2015; Treadway et al., 2010).

Politically adept individuals are characterized by their cordial, supportive, and reassuring nature, effectively guiding and influencing others through a combination of social acumen and adaptability to varying demands. Four critical dimensions of PS include social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity (Ferris et al., 2007). Social astuteness denotes a high degree of self-awareness, a profound understanding of social interactions, the ability to astutely observe others, and accurate interpretation of one's own and others' behavior. Interpersonal influence implies that individuals endowed with PS exhibit a genuine and compelling personal demeanor that creates a lasting impact on those they interact with. This ability allows them to adjust their conduct in various situations to evoke the intended responses from others. Networking ability pertains to the capacity to access a wide array of resources and networks within and outside the organization, a skill at which those with PS excel. Typically, individuals with PS are adept at forming valuable friendships and forging powerful alliances and coalitions. Lastly, the dimension of apparent sincerity enables individuals to project reliability based on their social intelligence.

Numerous studies have analyzed the connection between PS and various work-related outcomes. For example, PS has been found to decrease job tension and stress while increasing performance and engagement (e.g., Kim et al., 2019). It also fosters engagement through identification and self-esteem (Basit, 2020), enhances job satisfaction (e.g., Taliadorou and Pashiardis, 2015; Meisler, 2014; Jabid et al., 2021; Kolodinsky et al., 2004), contributes to career success (Chen, Jiang, and Wu, 2021; Lu and Guy, 2016; Todd et al., 2009; Blickle et al., 2010), and increases career satisfaction (Tesdanahadi and Kistyanto, 2021). Furthermore, PS have favorable impacts on Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), job satisfaction, and a detrimental effect on the intention to leave the organization (Khan and Akhtar, 2018).

Person-Organization Fit

Person-Organization Fit (P-O Fit) refers to the compatibility between an individual and their organization in terms of values, beliefs, and overall culture (Chatman, 1989). It involves the alignment between an employee's characteristics, such as their values, skills, and goals, and the attributes and requirements of the organization. A strong P-O Fit suggests that the individual and the organization share common values and goals, which can lead to higher job satisfaction, better performance, and longer retention (Kristoff-Brown et al., 2005; Cable and De Rue, 2002). The notion of P-O fit pertains to the idea that selection procedures strive to achieve alignment between the values of candidates and those of the organization where they are employed (O'Reilly et al., 1991; Chatman, 1991; Kristof, 1996).

PO fit has been delineated as the perception of harmony or a sense of ease within the organization, encompassing both the compatibility and comfort levels between the individual and the organization, as well as between the individual and their colleagues (Mitchell et al., 2001; Johan, 2022).

P-O Fit has garnered substantial attention in the field of organizational psychology and management due to its profound implications for employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. The concept of P-O Fit posits that individuals and organizations possess unique characteristics, and the alignment of these characteristics leads to favorable outcomes for both parties.

Measuring P-O Fit is essential for both research and practical purposes. Various instruments have been developed to quantify P-O Fit. Some of the most commonly used tools include the Organizational Culture Profile (O'Reilly et al., 1991), the Fit Index (Edwards, 1991), and the P-O Fit Scale (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). These measures assess the extent to which an employee' characteristics align with those of the organization in terms of values, culture, and job requirements.

P-O Fit has substantial implications for individuals and organizations. Numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that elevated levels of P-O Fit are linked to heightened job satisfaction, greater commitment to the organization, and improved job performance. (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005;

Verquer et al., 2003). Moreover, a strong P-O Fit contributes to reduced turnover and absenteeism rates (Chatman, 1989), resulting in cost savings for organizations.

Several factors influence the degree of P-O Fit experienced by individuals within an organization. The recruitment and selection process plays a crucial role in ensuring that individuals with the right skills and values are brought into the organization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The culture of an organization, including its values, norms, and practices, significantly impacts P-O Fit. Individuals whose values align with the organization's culture are more likely to experience a high fit (Chatman, 1989). Ensuring that individuals are placed in roles that match their skills and qualifications is pivotal for person-job fit, which subsequently affects P-O Fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). P-O Fit is not static. Individuals and organizations may adapt and change over time. Maintaining fit often requires continuous adjustments (Chatman, 1989).

JDR Theory and the Hypothesis

In line with the JD-R theory, employees who possess ample personal resources and have access to sufficient job-related resources are better prepared to navigate both their social and work environments proficiently. Consequently, this leads to the attainment of favorable work-related outcomes (e.g., Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). In the context of this investigation, the JD-R theory is utilized to examine the positive influence of personal resources, particularly EI and PS, on P-O Fit. Through the adoption of the JD-R theory and the inclusion of PS as a mediating variable, this study seeks to offer a comprehensive understanding of how EI and PS contribute to the establishment of P-O Fit.

Employees with high EI can perceive and regulate emotions, fostering positive interactions with colleagues and superiors. However, within an organizational context, these interpersonal relationships are often influenced by office politics, power dynamics, and the complex web of social interactions. PS of employees can serve as a valuable mediator between their EI and P-O fit for several reasons. Firstly, EI encompasses the capacity to identify, comprehend, and regulate emotions, both within one and in others, and this skill is essential for fostering successful interpersonal relationships.

PS, involves the ability to navigate these political aspects of the workplace effectively. It encompasses social astuteness, networking abilities, and the capacity to influence others. Employees with high PS can build alliances, garner support for their ideas, and maneuver within the organization's political landscape. This skill set is crucial for ensuring that an employee's EI is effectively put into practice within the organization. Without PS, employees with high EI may struggle to navigate office politics or may find it challenging to translate their EI into action. They might face obstacles or resistance when attempting to build positive relationships or influence colleagues, which could hinder their P-O fit.

There are some studies finding positive correlation between P-O fit and EI (Dust et al., 2017; Akanni et al., 2020; Clercq et al, 2013) and between EI and person-job fit (Lee et al., 2012) while some could not find any significant correlation (e.g. Bates, 2009).

There are some researches finding positive correlation between PS and EI (e.g. Durrani and Cheema, 2016). In Banerjee et al.'s study (2017) EI and PS were analyzed together where PS's direct positive effects were found on emotions. In the study of Liu et al. (2023) transformational leadership was found to positively affect P-O fit and the EI moderated this relationship.

Whether there is not a direct study have been met in literature review, there is actually an obvious direct connection between PS and P-O fit. According to Borges and colleagues in their 2016 study, they contended that the size of social networks within organizations exerts an influence on the degree of P-O fit.

In accordance with Vigoda's (2000) findings, a heightened congruence between an individual and the prevailing political milieu, which necessitates PS, signifies an enhanced P-O fit. Put differently, individuals exhibiting elevated levels of PS are predisposed to adeptly navigate the intricacies of the organizational power structure, cultivate influential connections, and proficiently address conflicts in a manner congruent with the organization's values and objectives. Consequently,

this harmonious correspondence between an individual's PS and the organization's political environment engenders an improved P-O fit.

As a result of the literature review the hypotheses are formed as follows:

        H1:   Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on Political Skill.

        H2:   Political Skill has a positive effect on Organizational Fit.

        H3:   Political Skill mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Fit.

3.   Research Design and Methodology

3.1.   Research Model

Research model of this study is shown below (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Research Model
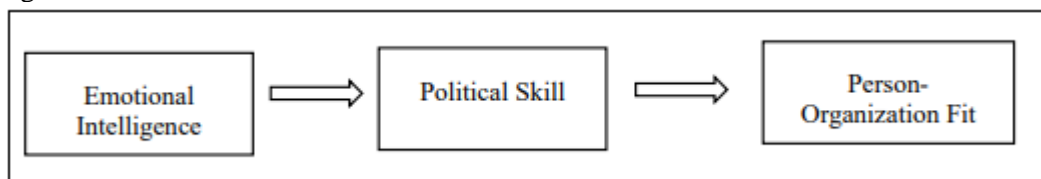
3.2.   Procedure and Measures

The population of this study consists of employees working in the information technology sector in Turkey. 234 people have participated in the study, where the number of woman respondents are 72 and number of male respondents are 162. The most common age group is 34 to 41 (37 %). Most of the respondents have educational degree of bachelor's and above (95,5 %). Participants' professional experience ranges from 0 to more than 26 years, with the largest groups having experience between 11 and 15 and 21 and 25 years (each has 23,6 %). 18 % of the respondents are working in a management role, where the rest are working as experts. 87 % of the respondents are working remotely.

PS is measured using the 18–item scale which was adapted by Ferris et al., (2005b) PS Inventory (PSI). The scale has four subdimensions which are "Interpersonal Influence", "Social Astuteness", "Apparent Sincerity" and "Networking Ability". Sample items of the scale are as follows: "I spend a lot of time and effort at work networking with others"; "I spend a lot of time at work developing connections with others"; "I have good intuition or savvy about how to present myself to others"; "I am good at getting people to like me".

In order to measure EQ, Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale is used which is developed by Pekaar and others (2017). The scale has four dimensions: Self-Awareness, Social-Awareness, Self-Management and Relationship Management. Sample items of the scale are as follows; "I always know how I feel."; "I am aware of the emotions of the people around me."; "I am in control of my own emotions."; "I can make someone else feel differently."

Subjective P-O Fit was measured using a 4 itemed scale which was developed by Piasentin and Chapman (2007) sample items of which are; "I fit in well with other people who work for this company", "I think other people would say that I fit into this organization".

Questionnaires are distributed after one-to-one explanation of the research objectives to each of the respondents. Hence, the questionnaire's response rate is nearly 100%. For all items gauging perceptions, respondents are required to provide their answers using a Likert scale ranging from 1 "Completely disagree" to 5 "Completely agree." For Turkish translation of the scales, translation back-translation method is used. For missing values, median of nearby points is used as the cleansing method. After the outlier analysis, no respondent is removed from the analysis. All the items exhibit kurtosis values below 10 and skewness values under 3. Thus, the variables in the study are considered as normally distributed.

In this study, EQ questionnaire's Cronbach's alpha is .924 for total 246 respondents (Self Awareness= .920; Social Awareness = .889; Self-Management = .891; Relationship Management = .904). PS scale scores a Cronbach's alpha of .886 (Social Astuteness= .859; Interpersonal Influence =

.759; Networking Ability = .859, Apparent Sincerity=.789). For P-O fit scale, reliability is measured as = .629.

3.3. Validity and Reliability of the Constructs

Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis are used for the measures to control the construct validity of the scales. Exploratory factor analysis demonstrates that the variables are distributed as displayed in the original scales. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis put forth that the constructs are measured as planned except the interpersonal influence dimension of the PSs variable had atypical effects on the latent variable. Thus, the PS variable is analysed with three dimensions. According to hypothesized model no multicollinearity issue is observed in this study. Common method bias is not seen either.

Before the hypothesis testing and regression analysis, all the items in the study are checked if they are correlated with each other. According to the correlation analysis all the variables are correlated with each other with p values 0.01. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables in this study.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and corrections of the study variables

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	Emotional Intelligence	Political Skill	Organizational Fit
Emotional Intelligence	3.81	.45	1	.631**	.235**
Political Skill	4.05	.52	.631**	1	.407**
Organizational Fit	4.05	.52	.235**	.407**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

3.4. Hypothesis Testing

Figure-2 shows the Structural Equation Model – Path Analysis output which is performed on AMOS program. The goodness of fit indices of the model indicates an acceptable model. (CMIN/DF=1.884, RMR=0.052, GFI=0.764, AGFI=0.735, TLI=0.864, CFI=0.873).
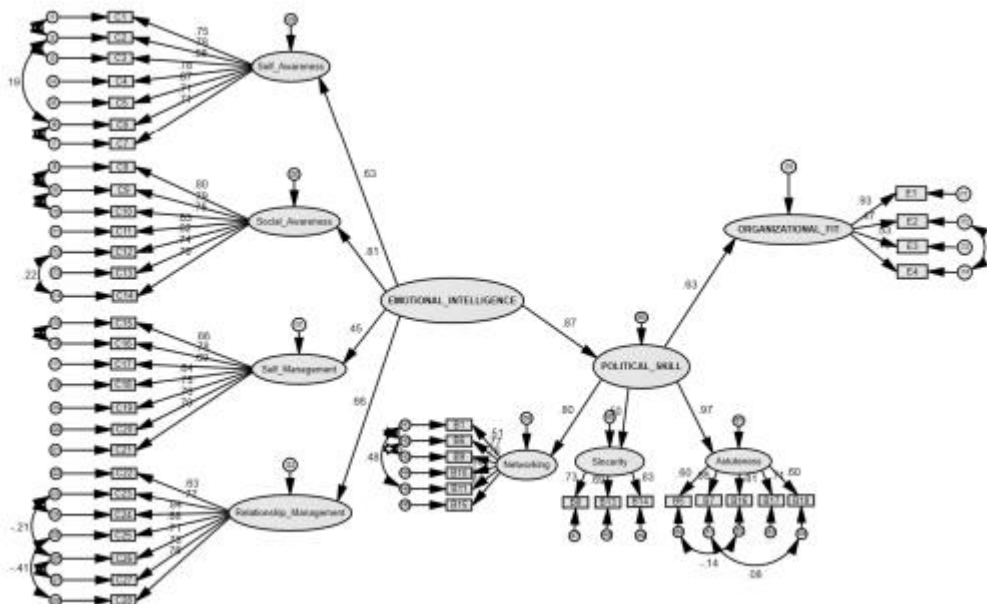
Figure II: Path analysis on AMOS

Table II shows significant direct effects between the variables.

Table II: Regression weights from SEM analysis

			Standard Estimate	P
EQ	>	PS	,866	***
PS	>	P-O Fit	,626	***

H1 and H2 are accepted as the effect of EQ on PS; and the effect PS on P-O fit is significant on the above table.H3 is also accepted with full mediation (direct effect without mediator is 0.499 with p=.000; direct effect with mediator is non-significant with p=.155).

4.   Discussion

The study's results suggest that the level of EI has a positive impact on employees' PS, and both of these factors positively influence P-O Fit, with PS serving as a mediating variable in this relationship. Consequently, all of the hypotheses posited in the study are accepted. The impact of EI on P-O fit has yielded results that support previous studies (Dust et al., 2017; Akanni et al., 2020; Clercq et al, 2013; Lee et al., 2012). The relationship between EI and PS is a relatively understudied area; however, it has been supported by the limited previous research (e.g. Durrani and Cheema, 2016; Banerjee et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2023).

Although no prior research has been met directly exploring the association between PS and P-O Fit, this study is positioned as the inaugural attempt to investigate this relationship within the framework of the original model-O Fit is an intricate and multi-dimensional concept that holds significant implications for both individuals and organizations. As organizations seek to enhance employee well-being and performance, understanding and managing P-O Fit becomes paramount. By considering the dimensions of P-O Fit, measurement tools, outcomes, and the factors influencing it, organizations can make more informed decisions regarding recruitment, placement, and employee development strategies. Achieving P-O fit in a workplace is significantly influenced by the synergy between EI and PS in employees.

The concept of P-O fit, in this context, hinges on the congruence between an employee's EI, PS, and the organizational culture and environment. When employees possess these attributes that complement the organization's political climate, it can result in a more harmonious and productive workplace. Employees who exhibit both high EI and PS are not only better equipped to understand and adapt to the organization's culture but can also exert a positive influence on their colleagues, helping to build a more cohesive and collaborative work environment. Conversely, a misfit in terms of these attributes may lead to conflicts, misunderstandings, and inefficiencies. Therefore, organizations that recognize the importance of fostering and assessing EI and PS among their employees are more likely to achieve a stronger P-O fit, ultimately contributing to organizational success and employee satisfaction.

The outcomes of the study undeniably underscore the significance of incorporating the cultivation and enhancement of employees' PS and EI into organizational management strategies. The findings recommend that organizations should prioritize assessing these social aptitudes and individual resources when selecting new personnel. Additionally, offering personal development training in these domains can contribute to the augmentation of employees' PS and SI, consequently yielding favorable impacts on organizational performance.

The study implies that organizations can gain advantages from both the selection and development of individuals who exhibit robust PS and EI as these traits heighten the probability of achieving a more favorable alignment between individuals and the organizational dynamics.

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