

# EMOTIONS AT WORK: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTIONAL LABOR IN PREDICTING WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT, PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS, AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationships amongst emotional intelligence, emotional labor, work-family conflict, satisfaction with life, and psychological distress among a sample of employees working in three public sector organizations in Pakistan. After establishing the psychometric properties of the scales, hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares structural equation modeling. Results indicated that (a) emotional intelligence was positively related to deep acting and satisfaction with life and negatively to psychological distress; (b) deep acting was positively related to work-family conflict and psychological distress; (c) satisfaction with life was negatively related to psychological distress; and finally (e) work-family conflict was positively related to psychological distress.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, emotional labor, psychological distress.

## INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) - the ability to identify, process, and manage emotions, in both self and others (e.g., Goleman, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997)- is an important area of emotions research that has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention within the organizational behavior community. EI involves 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 (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Various studies have already examined the relationship between EI and several life criteria like, life satisfaction, depression, positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and anxiety (e.g., Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Livingstone & Day, 2005; O'Connor & Little, 2003; Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2002). More interestingly, empirical studies demonstrating the predictive role of EI within organizational setting are also growing (e.g., Carmeli, 2003; Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005).

Although various researches have linked individual difference variables to EI construct, only few have attempted to examine the relationship between EI and Emotional Labor (EL). Hochschild (1983) was the first to coin the term *emotional labor*. She defined EL as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display to keep up with job requirements. EL is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value” (p. 7). With the increasing trend of ‘service oriented organizations’ (e.g., Bowen, Siehl, & Schneider, 1989), where internal clients and coworkers are equally treated as important customer-like

constituencies (Witt, 1999), the role of EL has gone beyond the traditional focus on only service provider-client interaction to universally applied phenomenon in the work place (Liu, Perrewé, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2004). Hence, employees as emotional beings play key roles and must be instructed by the organization to present themselves according to certain emotional rules.

Employees perform EL through two types of acting mechanism: surface acting (SA) and deep acting (DA) (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1983). In DA, employee attempts to *deeply modify* internal feelings to match the required organizational display rules. In SA, employee modifies outward displays to be consistent with display rules without shaping inner feelings. In other words, employee hide felt emotions or fake unfeelt emotions. This research emphasizes upon the role of DA. DA involves changing inner feelings by altering something more than outward appearance. Employees engaged in DA make an effort to understand people, be empathetic to their circumstances, and internalize their feelings. Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) referred to this act as “faking in good faith” because employees’ intent is to seem authentic to the audience. For example, a cashier tries to look concerned by feeling what a demanding customer is experiencing (from within the frame of reference of that particular customer).

Mixed support has been found for the relationship between EI and EL strategies. For instance, Austin, Dore, and O’ Donovan (2008) failed to find a significant relationship between EI and DA. Miklolaiczak, Menil, & Luminet (2007) found a negative significant relationship between EI and both types of EL strategies, i.e., DA and SA. However, Coté (2005) and Johnson (2007) found that individuals with high EI were more likely to engage in DA and individuals with low EI in SA.

There is increasingly scholarly interest in the relationship between work and family life (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinely, 2005; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes, 2009). Recently, researchers have started giving attention to the relationship between EL and work family conflict (WFC) (e.g., Kinman, 2009; Montgomery, Panagopolou, & Benos, 2005; Montgomery, Panagopolou, de Wildt, & Meenks, 2006; Seery, Corrigan, & Harpel, 2008; Yanchus, Eby, Lance, & Drollinger, in press). Despite this initial stream of research, results concerning the relationship between EL and WFC are somewhat inconsistent. For instance, Seery et al. (2008) and Montgomery et al. (2005) found different results regarding relationships between WFC and EL strategies.

Moreover, most of the studies on EI, EL, and WFC have been conducted primarily in the individualistic cultures of the West raising questions about the generalizability of these findings to other parts of the world (specially to the collectivist cultures of the East). Therefore, more pragmatic research is required that examines relationship between EI and EL in other occupational and cultural settings.

The main objective of this study was to build and test on prior research the theoretical links amongst EI, EL, satisfaction with life, WFC and psychological distress within South Asian context (collectivist culture). In the following discussion, the model representing the different links amongst the constructs is briefly summarized. Then an empirical study is reported that tested the relationships amongst constructs. Finally, implications of results are discussed.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### EI and EL

EI (through mood maintenance) is an ability that allows people to better regulate their emotions compared to others. According to Mayer & Salovey’s (1997) definition, emotional intelligence has four important components.

**Perception, appraisal, and expression of emotion.** Emotionally intelligent employees are good at perceiving, appraising, and expressing the emotions. It concerns the accuracy with which

employees identify emotions and emotional content. This is a major aspect of emotional work (Zapf, Seifert, Schmutte, Mertini, & Holz, 2001) which facilitates the effective performance of EL duties (Lam & Kirby, 2002). Emotionally intelligent employees, while performing EL duties, can easily empathize and accurately express their emotions in order to neutralize or perhaps transform the other person's emotions (Zapf, Vogt, Seifert, Mertini, & Isic, 1999). In sum, emotionally intelligent employees deep act more because they know what people around them feel, read people accurately, are good at recognizing their own feelings, and don't always maintain neutral expressions (i.e., smiles when happy or pleasant) (Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

**Emotional facilitation of thought.** Emotions enhance and assist thinking (beyond just influencing them) (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). Emotionally intelligent employees are better able to prioritize thinking with the help of emotions, generate emotions as an aid to judgment, and consider multiple points of view (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Such abilities help an actor to decide which emotional reactions he has to perform. Mayer and Salovey (1997) termed this process as operation of "emotional theatre of mind" in which emotions are generated, felt, manipulated, and examined in order to be better understood. Thus, employees high on EI would engage themselves more in DA because high EI predisposes individuals to realistically and accurately operate such an emotional theatre.

**Understanding and analyzing emotion.** Emotionally intelligent employees are better able to analyze emotions by carefully examining the causes, key factors, and outcomes of emotions and by anticipating the probable emotional trends over time (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The quality of EL practices and related outcomes of these EL practices depend upon individual's level of emotional knowledge and understanding. Hence, one's understanding of emotion is effective for the successful deployment of EL practices (Grandey, 2003). Emotionally intelligent employees would be more involved in DA, because high level of EI predisposes employees to (a) appropriately interpret the meanings conveyed by emotions (e.g., sadness often accompanies a loss), (b) understand complex feelings (e.g., awe as a composition of fear and surprise), and (c) recognize the transition among emotions (e.g., shift from anger to shame (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 13).

**Managing emotion.** Emotionally intelligent employees are able to (a) stay open to feelings (pleasant/unpleasant), (b) can reflectively engage/detach from an emotion, (c) reflectively monitor emotions (in oneself and others), and (d) effectively manage emotions in oneself and others by moderating negative emotions and enhancing pleasant ones (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotionally intelligent employees would be more prone toward employing the DA strategy, because they can "psych up", calm down, or maintain a good mood as desirable and can cheer others up, calm others down, or manage others feelings appropriately (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). Hence,

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive relationship between EI and DA.

## **EI, EL, and Psychological Distress**

Most of theorists look at a broader definition of psychological health containing two factors: Psychological well-being (positive mental health states like life satisfaction) and psychological distress (negative mental health states like anxiety and depression) (Massée et al., 1998; Veit & Ware, 1983).

Ridner (2004) defined psychological distress as "the unique discomfoting, emotional state experienced by an individual to response to a specific stressor or demand that results in harm, either temporary or permanent, to the person." (p. 539). Psychological distress is a complex and multidimensional construct (Massée et al., 1998; Ridner, 2004; Veit & Ware, 1983). In its simplest form psychological distress is viewed as a construct that represents aspects of negative

functioning. For instance, according to Massée et al., (1998), psychological distress is usually operationalized by measures of self-depreciation, irritability, anxiety, depression, and social disengagement.

In their review of psychological well-being research, Diener and colleagues (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999) assert that, “personality is one of the strongest and most consistent predictors of subjective well-being” (p. 279). In this nexus, there are several reasons why EI may influence psychological distress. Research suggests that EI abilities and traits contribute to good physical and psychological health (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer 1999; Salovey, Rothman, Detweiler, & Steward, 2000; Tsaousis, & Nikolaou, 2005). Emotionally intelligent individuals have good physical and psychological health because they are better able to cope with life’s challenges and can control their emotions more effectively (Taylor, 2001). In literature, various empirical studies have well documented the significant negative relationship between EI and psychological distress (e.g., Besharat, 2007; Dulewicz, Higgs, & Slaski, 2003; Tsaousis & Nikolaou, 2005) and between EI and sub dimensions of psychological distress, such as, depression and anxiety (Bauld & Brown, 2009; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Fernandez-Berrocal, Alcaide, Extremera, & Pizarro, 2006).

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a negative relationship between EI and psychological distress.

Within work setting, there may be discrepancy between felt and required emotions. This discrepancy creates experience of emotional dissonance which has been associated with many negative psychological outcomes (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Zapf, 2002). According to Wharton (1999), the major reason for this discrepancy is that, the organizational display rules prevent employees from interacting with customers based on spontaneous intuition, which compel employees to replace and suppress their own emotional response by an organizationally sanctioned response.

Grandey (2003) assert that, ‘DA minimizes emotional dissonance by bringing feelings in line with expressions, so DA’s relationship with emotional exhaustion should be weaker than the relationship between SA and emotional exhaustion’ (p. 89). In other words, both SA and DA impact psychological distress but SA has more profound impact on psychological distress than DA’s impact. In line with Grandey’s (2003) assertion, this study hypothesizes that,

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a positive relationship between DA and psychological distress.

### **EI, EL, and Satisfaction with Life**

Satisfaction with life refers to a cognitive judgment of life in which individuals compare their life circumstances with a self-imposed standard (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). In other words, individuals will report high satisfaction with life if their perceived life circumstances are in line with their own standards. It is a hallmark of the subjective well-being area that it centers on the person’s own judgment, and not upon some criterion which is judged to be important by the researcher (Diener et al., 1985).

Emotionally intelligent individuals have good physical and psychological health because they are better able to cope with life’s challenges and can control their emotions more effectively (Taylor, 2001). In literature, various empirical studies have well documented the positive relationship between EI and satisfaction with life (e.g., Extremera & Fernandez-Berrocal, 2005; Freudenthaler, Neubauer, Gabler, & Scherl, 2008). Thus,

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a positive relationship between EI and satisfaction with life.

The depletion of cognitive and energy resources (while modifying internal states in DA) suggests that emotional demands at work produce strain (Grandey, 2003) that makes it difficult for employees to remain satisfied in their personal lives. However, Upto now, there has been little empirical evidence in literature about the relationship between EL and SWL. Yanchus et al. (2009), reported a statistically non-significant correlation between EI and satisfaction with life ( $r = .06, p > .05$ ). Since, DA negatively impacts psychological well-being (Grandey, 2003), it is expected that the relationship between DA and life satisfaction would be negative.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a negative relationship between DA and satisfaction with life.

### **EI, EL, and WFC**

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define WFC as, “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (p. 77). According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), WFC can be time-based, strained based, or behavior based. In time-based conflict, the time demands of one role make it difficult to participate fully in another role. Strained –based conflict occurs, when the strain experienced in one role domain intrude or ‘spill over’ into the other role, making it difficult to fulfill the responsibilities of that role. Finally, behavior-based conflict occurs when the behaviors that are expected or appropriate in one role (family/work) are viewed as inappropriate or dysfunctional when used in other role (family/work). In other words, behavior-based conflict is described as conflict stemming from incompatible behaviors demanded by competing roles.

Carmeli (2003), in a study conducted on senior managers, found a statistically significant negative relationship between EI and WFC. He argues that, “managers who have high emotional intelligence may better and more carefully handle the inherent work-family conflict than those with low emotional intelligence” (p. 805). In another study, Lenaghan, Buda, and Eisner (2007) found that individuals with high EI and low WFC reported the highest well-being while those with low EI and high WFC reported the lowest well-being. In other words, EI acted as a protector variable in the impact of WFC on well-being. Hence, the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions would help individuals in balancing work interferences with family.

**Hypothesis 6:** There is a negative relationship between EI and WFC.

The relationship between EL and WFC can be traced into behavior-based and strained –based conflict. According to Hochschild (1983), performance of EL duties may engender a fusion of self and work roles. Employees performing DA are often too identified (preoccupied) with their work roles that they find it difficult to depersonalize and detach themselves from their work roles. They find it difficult to recover their true feelings (even after the role performance) and hence lose track of when they are acting or not (Hochschild, 1983). This preoccupation may interfere with their efforts to fulfill the demands of a competing role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Hence, due to this fusion of self and work role, a person is unable to adjust behavior to comply with the expectations of different roles (e.g., son, father, brother, husband), and is likely to experience conflict between the roles (work role and family role). For example, behavioral styles that employees exhibit at work (e.g., power, authority) may be incompatible with behaviors desired by members within the family domain. Thus, high involvement in a role due to DA is predicted to influence WFC.

**Hypothesis 7:** There is a positive relationship between DA and WFC.

## WFC, Satisfaction with Life, and Psychological Distress

There is ample evidence for the negative effects of WFC on psychological factors. For example, WFC has been found associated with Burnout (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996), high levels of depersonalization (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998), psychological distress (Kafetsios, 2007; O'Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth, 1992), and psychological well being (Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996). This leads to following prediction:

**Hypothesis 8.** There is a positive relationship between WFC and psychological distress.

Life satisfaction is an important protective psychological factor which is associated with positive growth and development. Various studies have documented a negative relationship between life satisfaction and other psychological health related variables such as, social stress, anxiety, and depression (Haranin, Huebner, & Suldo, 2007) and suicide ideation and decreased mental health (Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane, 2004). Thus,

**Hypothesis 9.** There is a negative relationship between satisfaction with life and psychological distress.

## METHOD

### Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 200 employees from three public sector organizations situated in province of Balochistan, Pakistan. 92 participants of the total sample (46 percent) were males and 108 (54 percent) were females. The mean age for this sample was 31.48 years ( $SD = 8.10$ ). All participants were treated in accordance with the "Ethical principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (American Psychological Association, 2002). Administration of the questionnaires was carried out by post graduate students who acted as research assistants and no monetary incentive was provided.

## MEASURES

**Emotional intelligence.** Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS: Wong & Law, 2002), one of self-report measures based on Salovey and Mayer's model (1997), taps individuals' knowledge about their emotional abilities. Specifically, the WLEIS is a measure of beliefs concerning self-emotional appraisal (ability to understand one's deep emotions and be able to express these emotions naturally), others' emotional appraisal (ability to perceive and understand the emotions of other people), regulation of emotion (ability to regulate one's own emotions), and use of emotion (ability to make use of one's emotions by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance). The response scale has been seven point Likert-type scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). Coefficients alphas for the four dimensions were: SEA: .80; OEA: .82; ROE: .82; UOE: .81.

**Psychological distress.** Psychological distress was measured by Chan's (2005) twenty items scale. This scale measures psychological distress in terms of current non-psychotic symptoms in the five symptom areas represented by scales of health concerns, sleep problems, anxiety, dysphoria, and suicidal ideas. Respondents were requested to rate each symptom statement on a 5-point scale (not at all to extremely) by comparing themselves during the past 2 weeks with

their ‘usual selves’. Coefficients alphas for the five dimensions were: health concerns: .75; sleep problems: .68; anxiety: .60; dysphoria: .86; and suicidal ideas: .78.

**Work-to-family conflict.** WFC was measured by five item scale that was developed by Netemeyer et al., (1996). The sample items include, “things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me”. The response scale has been seven point Likert-type scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). In the present study, the coefficient of internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for this scale was .92.

**Deep acting.** DA was measured by three items adopted from Brotheridge and Lee (1998) EL scale. The sample items include, “I make an effort to actually feel the emotions that I need to display to others”. The response scale has been seven point Likert-type scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). In this study, DA scale had good internal consistencies (Alphas = .86).

**Life satisfaction.** The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) is a subjective self-report measure of life satisfaction. Respondents indicate their level of agreement with each of five statements on a seven-point scale. Examples of items are “In most ways my life is close to my ideal” and “I am satisfied with my life”. In the current study, the Cronbach coefficient alpha for the SWLS was .78.

## DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

**Partial Least Squares (PLS).** Like covariance based structural equation modeling (CBSEM), PLS is a latent variable modeling technique that incorporates multiple dependent constructs and explicitly recognizes measurement error. However, PLS is far less restrictive in its distributional assumptions and sample size restrictions as compared to covariance-based structural equation modeling. Moreover, the application of PLS requires a minimum sample size that is (1) ten times the number of items comprising the most formative constructs, or (2) ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a particular construct in the inner path model (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995). With a sample size of 200 in this study, these requirements were well met. Specifically, SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende, and Will, 2005) was employed to test the hypothesis. SmartPLS allows for estimating both measurement model and structural model simultaneously.

According to Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics (2009) recommendations PLS model was analyzed and interpreted in two stages: the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model relates to the relations between manifest variables (observed items) and latent variables. The measurement model is tested by assessing the validity and reliability of the items and constructs in the model. This ensures that only reliable and valid constructs’ measures are used before assessing the nature of relationships in the overall model. In PLS, individual item reliability is assessed by examining the loadings of respective items on their respective latent construct (Hulland, 1999). The higher loadings imply that there is more shared variance between the construct and its measures than error variance. Composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) (Werts, Linn, & Joreskog, 1974) and Cronbach’s alpha (1951) were used to assess the reliability of scales. Composite reliability is preferred over Cronbach’s alpha because it offers a better estimate of variance shared by the respected indicators and because it uses the item loadings obtained within the nomological network (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2006). Fornell and Larcker’s (1981) average variance extracted (AVE) criterion was employed to assess the convergent validity of constructs. An AVE value greater than 0.50 indicates that a latent variable is able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators on average (Henseler et al., 2009). Discriminant validity of measurement model was tested through Fornell and Larcker’s (1981) AVE test. Evidence of discriminant validity occurs when square root of the variance extracted estimation exceed the correlations between the factors making each pair (Fornell and Larcker,

1981). Each latent variable shares more variance with its own block of indicators than with another latent variable representing a different block of indicators.

Structural model specifies relations between latent constructs. The structural model is tested by estimating the paths between the constructs, which are an indicator of the model's predictive ability. The nonparametric bootstrapping procedure (Chin, 1998; Davison & Hinkley, 2003) using 1000 subsamples was performed to evaluate the statistical significance of each path coefficient and to provide confidence intervals for all parameter estimates. Contrary to CBSEM (covariance based structural equation modeling) PLS path modeling does not report any kind of fit indices like TFI, RMSEA or CFI (since PLS makes no distributional assumptions for parameter estimation). The evaluation of PLS model is therefore based on prediction oriented measures that are non-parametric (Chin, 1998). Goodness-of-fit (GoF) (Tenenhaus, Esposito Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro 2005) was employed to judge the overall fit of the model. GoF, which is the geometric mean of the average communality (outer measurement model) and the average  $R^2$  of endogenous latent variables, represents an index for validating the PLS model globally, as looking for a compromise between the performance of the measurement and the structural model, respectively. GoF is normed between 0 and 1, where a higher value represents better path model estimations.

## RESULTS

### Measurement Model

The factor loadings from the final PLS measurement models are reported in Figure 1. All items loaded significantly ( $> .50$ ) on their respective factors which was an indication of indicator reliability. Composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) (Werts et al., 1974) and Cronbach's alpha (1951) values for all scales exceeded the minimum threshold level of  $.70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), thus indicating the reliability of all scales used in this study (Table 1). Results revealed that the variance extracted for all factors exceeded the minimum threshold value of  $.50$  which was an indication of convergent validity of all scales (Table 1). Fornell and Larcker's (1982) test for discriminant validity revealed relatively high variances extracted for each factor compared to the inter-scale correlations, which was an indication of discriminant validity of five constructs (i.e., WFC, psychological distress, EI, satisfaction with life, and DA) (Table 1).

### Structural Model

As shown in Figure 2, hypothesis 1 was supported. EI was positively related to DA ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 2.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Also as expected, both EI and DA were statistically significantly related to psychological distress ( $\beta = -.15$ ,  $t = 2.91$ ,  $p < .01$  and  $\beta = .18$ ,  $t = 3.42$ ,  $p < .001$  respectively) (hypothesis 2 and 3). As expected in hypothesis 4, EI was positively related to satisfaction with life ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $t = 5.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However counter to hypothesis 5 and 6, the relationships between DA and satisfaction with life and between EI and WFC were non-significant ( $\beta = -.004$ ,  $t = .03$ ,  $p > .05$  and  $\beta = .003$ ,  $t = .046$ ,  $p > .05$  respectively). Support was found for hypothesis 7. As expected, DA was positively related to WFC ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $t = 3.42$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Finally, as expected in hypothesis 8 and 9, WFC was positively related to psychological distress ( $\beta = .41$ ,  $t = 7.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and satisfaction with life was negatively related to psychological distress ( $\beta = -.19$ ,  $t = 2.56$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The goodness-of-fit (GoF) (Tenenhaus et al., 2005) index for the PLS model was 0.30, which indicated an acceptable data-model fit.



**Table1:** Inter-Factor Correlations, Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity.

	Correlations					CR <sup>b</sup>	α <sup>c</sup>	AVE <sup>d</sup>
	1	2	3	4	5			
1. DA	.93 <sup>d</sup>					.91	.86	.78
2. EI	.23 <sup>**</sup>	.76				.85	.77	.59
3. SWL	.08	.35 <sup>***</sup>	.72			.84	.78	.52
4. WFC	.29 <sup>***</sup>	.07	-.15 <sup>*</sup>	.83		.92	.89	.70
5. PD	.25 <sup>***</sup>	-.15 <sup>*</sup>	-.29 <sup>***</sup>	.48 <sup>***</sup>	.76	.87	.81	.58

WFC = Work-family conflict; PD = Psychological distress; DA = Deep acting; EI = Emotional intelligence; SWL = Satisfaction with life.

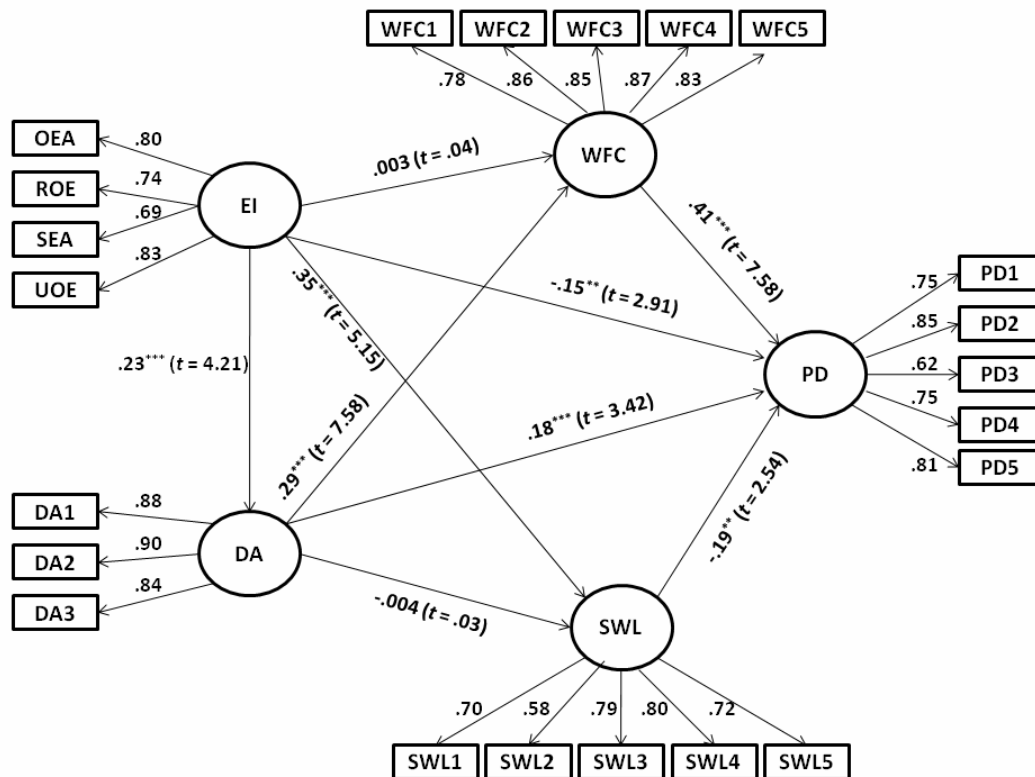
a square root of AVE.

b Composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) =  $(\sum \lambda_i)^2 / [(\sum \lambda_i)^2 + \sum \text{Var}(\epsilon_i)]$ , where  $\lambda_i$  is the outer factor loading, and  $\text{Var}(\epsilon_i) = 1 - \lambda_i^2$  is the measurement error or the error variance associated with the individual indicator variable(s) for that given factor (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

c  $\alpha$  = Cronbach Alpha (Cronbach, 1951).

d Average variance extracted (AVE) =  $(\sum \lambda_i^2) / [(\sum \lambda_i^2) + \sum \text{Var}(\epsilon_i)]$ , where where  $\lambda_i$  is the outer factor loading, and  $\text{Var}(\epsilon_i) = 1 - \lambda_i^2$  is the measurement error or the error variance associated with the individual indicator variable(s) for that given factor (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001 (2-tailed).



**Figure 1**

Structural Model. DA = Deep acting; WFC = Work-family conflict; PD = Psychological Distress; PD = Psychological distress; PD1 = Health concerns; PD2 = sleep problems; PD3 = anxiety; PD4 = dysphoria; PD5 = suicidal ideas; SWL = Satisfaction with Life; EI = Emotional intelligence; OEA = Others' emotional awareness; ROE = Regulation of emotion; SEA = Self emotional appraisal; UOE = Understanding of emotion. *t* values computed after bootstrapping procedures (1000 resamples). \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001 (2-tailed).

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the associations amongst EL, WFC, and psychological distress in a sample of public sector organizations in Pakistan. Proposed hypothesis received considerable support. This is the first study (to my knowledge) in any South Asian country's context to assess the relationships of EL and EI with other variables.

It was hypothesized that EI would be positively related to DA (modification of internal feelings). In line with previous studies (Coté, 2005; Johnson, 2007) support was found for this hypothesis. This finding indicates that EI is a vital characteristic that enables an individual to appropriately match the EL strategy to the situation (Feldman, Barrett, & Gross, 2001). Furthermore, EI enables people to deep act more that is, to understand people, be empathetic to their circumstances, and internalizes their feelings.

There was a positive relationship between DA and psychological distress. This finding suggests that employees who engage themselves in DA are susceptible to psychological distress. Due to fusion of self and work role, a person is unable to adjust behavior outside the work environment which leads to psychological distress.

EI appears to be a reliable predictor of both life satisfaction and psychological distress. The obtained results were in line with previous studies, where EI was a strong correlate of satisfaction with life (e.g., Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005; Freudenthaler et al., 2008) and psychological distress (e.g., Besharat, 2007; Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Tsaousis & Nikolaou, 2005).

The findings of this study suggest that the degree of EL undertaken by employees may have negative implications for their psychological well-being that extend beyond their work domain. DA was significantly related to WFC. This suggests that employees are more often preoccupied with their roles at work (due to DA) that they lose track of when they are acting (at work) and when they are off the job (at home). Hence, this preoccupation with job role makes it difficult for the employees to comply with their other roles at family. In other words, "selling" feelings for a wage results in alienation from one's real self (Hochschild, 1983). Moreover, the depletion of cognitive and energy resources (while modifying internal states in DA) suggests that emotional demands at work produce strain (Grandey, 2003) that makes it difficult for employees to fulfill family duties and responsibilities.

The results of this study confirmed expectation for an inverse relationship between WFC and psychological distress. This finding is in line with previous research that documented the adverse effects of WFC on psychological distress (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Kafetsios, 2007).

Individuals with high levels of life satisfaction reported lower levels of psychological distress. This finding is in line with previous research that documented the negative relationship between the satisfaction with life and psychological distress (Haranin et al.,)

## IMPLICATIONS

Effort-Recovery Model (E-R Model: Meijman & Mulder, 1998) suggests that employees build up negative effects on the job. This does not necessarily give rise to negative consequences for employees' well-being as long as employees are given adequate time to recover from these effects. Jobs that require substantial amounts of EL (emotional demands) should take into consideration the adequate amount of private time (e.g., schedule breaks) that can be sufficient to recover from (emotional) load effects built up at work resulting from high level of emotional work. This can help employees from carrying these negative effects from their work to non work life.

Training programs focusing on emotional regulation skills and DA techniques to cope with emotional demands of work and family can help in reducing the deleterious effects of SA (Yanchus et al., in press). Besides training, employers can help employees to internalize their roles rather than fake the emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1983) by providing them adequate resources needed to meet the demands of the job.

The negative impacts of DA can be minimized by selecting employees with the aim of achieving the best person-job fit. For instance, applicants who demonstrate a high level of positive affectivity and emotional regulation skills would be considered good job fit for jobs requiring high level of EL strategies. Positive affectivity and emotional regulation skills are shown to be negatively related to WFC and psychological distress (Kafetsios, 2007; Yanchus et al., in press). Based on Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build model of positive emotions, it is suggested that intervention strategies should be introduced within work setting that cultivate positive emotions among employees. According to Fredrickson's (2000, p. 1), positive emotions (such as, joy and contentment) broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire, and help in eradicating the hold of negative emotions on an individual's mind and body. Enhancement of positive emotions help in preventing and treating problems such as psychological distress, deeply rooted in negative emotions. Fredrickson's (2000), suggested many intervention strategies that may help in preventing and treating psychological health related problems, as well as, help in building personal strengths, resilience and wellness of people. These intervention strategies include, (a) Relaxation therapies (e.g., imagery exercises, muscle exercises, meditation exercises), (b) decreasing the intensity of unpleasant events and increasing the rates of engagement in pleasant activities, (c) cognitive therapies, (d) training employees in finding positive meaning in daily life, (e) building empathy between people and groups.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study are subject to several limitations which are common in this type of research. First, the results are specific to organizations in one geographical area and may or may not be generalizable to other areas. Second, the cross-sectional data precludes any inference of causality. The direction of causality (in cross-sectional studies) cannot be established and will have to be examined using longitudinal data. Third, respondents in this study were full-time employees and these findings may not be applicable to part-time employees. Fourth, this study only explored the relationship of WFC with DA. Future studies should also explore the impact of DA on family-to-work conflict (FWC). Finally, since all measures were self report based measures we cannot avoid the social desirability bias.

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