The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction Among State Civil Servants

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among state civil servants in Malaysia. Although emotional intelligence is positively correlated with job satisfaction, past studies showed mixed results. Most of the studies involved employees in the private sector. Studies of employees in the public sector were rare. Differences in the organization objectives and cultures in both private and public sectors might affect the relationship of these two variables. The emotional intelligence domains in this study include self-emotional appraisal, others' emotional appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. 65 state civil servants in Malaysia participated in this study. A questionnaire covering respondents' demographic information, emotional intelligence scale and job satisfaction scale was used. Cronbach's alpha scores for these instruments ranged from 0.838 to 0.907. The study only found a significant positive correlation between the regulation of emotion and job satisfaction. It is suggested that employees who are better in regulating their emotions tend to manage their jobs better hence leading to better job satisfaction. The outcome of this study will help the state government to plan and develop suitable human resource interventions to improve employees' emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, job satisfaction, civil servants*

INTRODUCTION

In most countries, the public sector is the largest employment sector, contributing a significant amount of workforce to the country (OECD, 2015). The job performance of these employees can influence the country's productivity and wealth generation. Hence it is essential to identify the predictor of their job performance. It was found that job satisfaction is a good predictor of job performance (Sony & Mekoth, 2016). Employees who have greater job satisfaction tend to perform better in their various work capacity. Empirical evidence shows that employees who have better job satisfaction would also possess better emotional intelligence (Pau & Sabri, 2015). Emotional intelligence is the awareness and regulation of own emotions as well as the recognition of the emotions of others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). People who have high emotional intelligence tend to be able to manage work-related stress well hence achieving better job satisfaction (Lee, 2018).

Even though many past studies on the employees in the private sector indicated that emotional intelligence was correlated with job satisfaction, the results were mixed (Dzakwan, 2015; Jung & Yoon, 2016; Long, Yaacob & Chuen, 2016; Kassim, Bambale & Jakada, 2016). Moreover, studies involving employees in the public sector were rare. The organizational objectives between the private and public sector differ significantly (do Monte, 2017; Karyotakis & Moustakis, 2016; Sarangi, Pradhan & Jena, 2017; Zeffane & Bani Melhem, 2017). Being a public sector organization, there is no profit motive attached to its operations. Such difference has placed the employees' attitude and motives on their work to a less stringent expectation (Bullock, Stritch & Rainey, 2015). It was perceived that employees in the public sector did not face intense pressure to attain excellent job performance hence less requirement for high level of emotional intelligence. However, this perception is now been challenged with rapid corporatization of public sector. Past studies over the decade had shown that civil service is providing less than satisfactory level of services to the citizens (Xavier, Siddiquee, & Mohamed, 2016). In response to this, many countries have implemented programs of transformation in the public sector. In the state of Sarawak, the state government had launched its transformation initiatives program called Sarawak Civil Service 2010-2020 (SCS 2010-2020) Action Plan (Sarawak State Civil Service 2010-2020 Action Plan: Transformation and Innovation

Initiatives, 2009). Its objective is to elevate the quality level of services provided by the state civil servants to be of world-class standard. Such an initiative requires the state civil servants to be not only efficient but responsive to the demand to arise from their work. This would definitely draw more demands for human resource development of the state to meet the expected standards of quality. Civil servants might need to exercise high level of emotional intelligence in their work in order to produce excellent job performance and achieving job satisfaction. However, studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in the public sector were rare. Such kind of studies are essential in order to shed light for effective human resource planning and development.

This study investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of the state civil servants in Malaysia. The outcome of this study will aid the state government in better human resource planning, particularly in the area of employees' emotional intelligence and their job satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence has been theorised by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the individual's ability to direct his or her thoughts and actions through good management of feelings and emotions. There are four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence. The first dimension is the ability to appraise and express the emotion of self (SEA). This involves the sensing and understanding of individuals' emotions and the ability to express them, in verbal and/or non-verbal forms, to the people around them in a natural way. The second dimension is the ability to appraise and recognise the emotions of others (OEA). This involves the sensing and understanding the emotions of the people around the individuals. Individuals with such ability can demonstrate more empathy to others. This could be valuable in the process of building a good relationship with the people around them. The third dimension is the ability to regulate own emotions (ROE). A mastery of this dimension could help to prevent destructive reactivity and efficient recovery of distress that could be harmful to the relationship with the people around them. The last dimension is the ability to use emotions to facilitate performance (UOE). This refers to the ability of the individuals to direct their emotions towards constructive endeavours.

Emotional intelligence is an essential variable in the study of organisational productivity, employee turnover and job satisfaction (Seyal & Afzaal, 2013). In the private sector, studies have shown that emotional intelligence could be the stimuli for good employee and customer relationships (Papathanasiou & Siati, 2014). Webb (2011) stated that leaders with higher emotional intelligence were able to drive employee motivation for job performance and satisfaction. Hence emotional intelligence is an important variable in promoting and sustaining job satisfaction in an organisation.

Past studies also revealed that the lack of profit motive in the operation of public sector promotes a work culture that is less competitive as compared to the private sector. Employees in the public sector might not perceive a need to provide services that are efficient and effective (Bullock *et al.*, 2015). However, over the past two decades, the public sector in most countries has undergone reformation and corporatisation with an aim to improve its quality of services to the public (Karyotakis & Moustakis, 2016). This move was crucial in ensuring the optimization of national resource utilization. In today's competitive borderless market, the services provided by the public sector would determine a country's abilities to attract business opportunities for better economic development. The reformation entails a fundamental change of workflow and organizational culture. Work-related stress often escalated with these changes. Therefore, employees in the public sector need to exercise a high level of emotional intelligence in order to manage these stresses well (Ramanauskas, 2016; Shukla & Srivastava, 2016). Past studies have shown that emotional intelligence is a good prediction of job stress (Shukla & Srivastava, 2016). In addition to these drastic changes, the increasing awareness of human rights and educational level among citizens have also raised the demand on employees in the public sector. Public administration is expected to be efficient and effective. Hence, employees in the public sector need to have a high level of emotional intelligence in order to deliver excellent quality of service (Stenvall & Virtanen, 2017). High emotional intelligence enables employees to manage conflict better at the workplace (Hopkins & Yonker, 2015). They are able to monitor and manage their own emotions more effectively. This might have led to better job satisfaction (Sani, Masrek, Sahid, Zaini & Anwar, 2016).

Studies of the correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among employees in the private sector had shown mixed results. Some studies had found positive correlations between these two variables (Rahman & Haleem, 2018; Pau & Sabri, 2015). Job satisfaction refers to the feelings of an employee has towards his or her job. The effect of job satisfaction can be assessed in terms of absenteeism rate, quality of work and the level of involvement in work-related events (Habib, Aslam, Hussain, Yasmeen, & Ibrahim, 2014). Past studies also showed that emotional intelligence was negatively correlated with job burnout (Salami & Ajitoni, 2016). This suggests that improving employees' emotional intelligence can help to manage work-related stress better and reduce job burnout. This might, in turn, increases the employees' job satisfaction (Huang, Chan, Lam, & Nan, 2010; Salami & Ajitoni, 2016).

Surprisingly, past correlational studies that based on the four dimensions of emotional intelligence model theorized by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and job satisfaction showed mixed results. Pandey and Sharma (2016) found positive correlation of all the four dimensions of emotional intelligence with job satisfaction among employees in a large size bank. Unlikely, Dzakwan (2015) and Kassim, Bambale and Jakada (2016) found that only the use of others' emotion (UOE) and regulation of own emotion (ROE) dimensions had positive correlation with job satisfaction among academicians in public universities. Similar result was reported by Jung and Yoon (2016) who took samples from the food and beverage industry. A study done by Long, Yaacob and Chuen (2016) found that only emotional self-awareness (SEA) dimension and the use of others' emotion (UOE) were positively correlated with job satisfaction of teachers in public schools. Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou and Niakas (2012) as well as by Trivellas, Gerogiannis and Svarna (2013) found that appraise and recognise the emotions of others (OEA) dimension was not correlated to job satisfaction. Hence, it could be predicted that industrial, organizational and social factors are the factors affecting the correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction (do Monte, 2017; Karyotakis & Moustakis, 2016; Sarangi, Pradhan, & Jena, 2017; Zeffane & Bani Melhem, 2017).

Empirical evidence shows that emotional intelligence can be trained (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). There are different types of training for emotional intelligence and they could yield a positive effect on the

emotional quotients of the employees. It can be an effective human resource intervention in improving job satisfaction and job performance of civil servants. However, the correlation between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among civil servants in Malaysia has yet to receive much attention. The knowledge on this area would help the relevant human resource planning unit to plan and develop effective human resource interventions to improve the level of emotional intelligence and the job satisfaction of the employees in the public sector.

There are four hypotheses of the study:

- Hypothesis 1: Self emotion appraisal (SEA) has a significant relationship with job satisfaction (Long, Yaacob, & Chuen, 2016; Pandey & Sharma, 2016; Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou & Niakas, 2012; Trivellas, Gerogiannis & Svarna 2013))

- Hypothesis 2: Emotion appraisal of others (OEA) has a significant relationship with job satisfaction (Pandey & Sharma, 2016)

- Hypothesis 3: Use of emotion (UOE) has a significant relationship with job satisfaction (Jung, & Yoon, 2016; Kassim, Bambale & Jakada, 2016; Pandey & Sharma, 2016; Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou & Niakas, 2012); Trivellas, Gerogiannis & Svarna, 2013)

- Hypothesis 4: Regulation of emotion (ROE) has a significant relationship with job satisfaction (Dzakwan, 2015; Jung, & Yoon, 2016; Kassim, Bambale & Jakada, 2016; Pandey & Sharma, 2016; Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou & Niakas, 2012; Trivellas, Gerogiannis & Svarna, 2013)
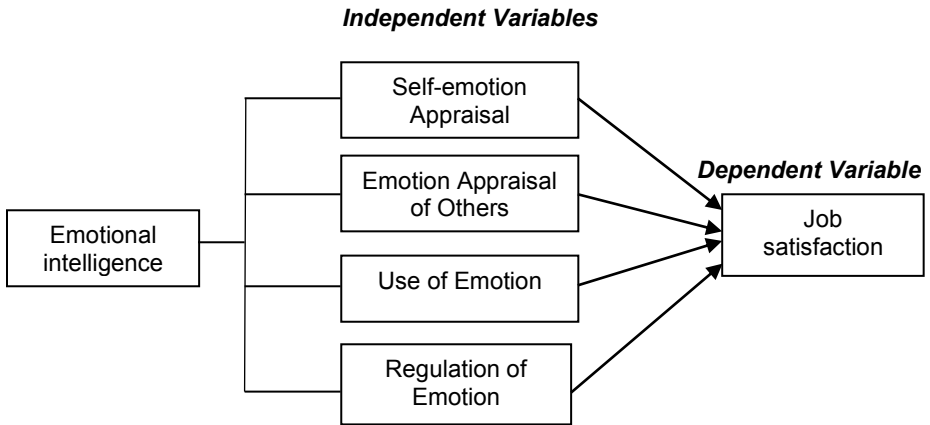
Independent Variables

Figure 1: Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative method was used in this study to determine the relationship between the employees' emotional intelligence and their job satisfaction.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were state civil servants in Malaysia. This study employed a non-probability purposive sampling method that involved all the 70 employees (100% samples) within the population of interest. All of the employees, varying from General Worker Group, Support Group to Management and Professional Group were chosen as the research respondents. This sampling method is essential to obtain information into the interested phenomenon since the population consisted of workforce with different characteristics, in terms of their age, gender, academic qualifications and years of working experience. The sample size of greater than 30 and fewer than 500 is suitable for behavioral research, as suggested by Roscoe's rules of thumb (Aziz & Mahmood, 2011).

Data Collection Procedures

A self-administered five-point Likert type scale questionnaire was circulated in hard copy to all the 70 employees, with scores of 1=totally disagree; 2=disagree; 3=undecide; 4=agree; and 5=totally agree. The completed questionnaires were collected after two weeks of distribution. All questionnaires were checked for completeness before keying into the statistical analysis software for analysis. Sixty-five usable questionnaires were used for the analysis.

Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Profile of respondent, Wong and Law's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), and Brayfield and Rothe's General Index of Job Satisfaction was distributed to the respondents as the data collection instrument.

WLEIS is one of the widely used instruments to assess emotional intelligence (Kong, 2017; Sulaiman & Noor, 2015). This instrument consists of 16 items that were designed based on the four domains of Emotional Intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) to assess the respondents' beliefs concerning self-emotional appraisal (SEA), others' emotional appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE). The items are presented in Table 1.

An employee's degree of contentment regarding his or her job was measured using Brayfield and Rothe's General Index of Job Satisfaction that comprises 20 items as presented in Table 2.

Data collected was analyzed using validity and reliability, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation tests. A total of 65 completed surveys were analysed in the study, resulting in a 95.9% response rate.

Cronbach's alpha values were used to examine the reliability of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction items. The Cronbach's alpha values shown in Table 3 and Table 4 demonstrate that all of the items were highly reliable.

Table 1: Items of Ability Domain

Ability domains	Items
Self-emotional appraisal (SEA)	1. I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time. 2. I have good understanding of my own emotions. 3. I really understand what I feel. 4. I always know whether or not I am happy.
Others' emotional appraisal (OEA)	5. I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior. 6. I am a good observer of others' emotions. 7. I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others. 8. I have good understanding of the emotions of people around me.
Use of emotion (UOE)	9. I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve them. 10. I always tell myself I am a competent person. 11. I am a self-motivated person. 12. I would always encourage myself to try my best.
Regulation of emotion (ROE)	13. I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally. 14. I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions. 15. I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry. 16. I have good control of my own emotions.

Table 2: Items of Job Satisfaction

1. My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.
2. Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.
3. I feel my job is more interesting than others I could get.
4. I find real enjoyment in my work.
5. I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.
6. I feel fairly well-satisfied with my present job.
7. I am satisfied with my job for the time being.
8. I like my job better than the average worker does.
9. My job is like a hobby to me.
10. It seems that my friends are more interested in their jobs.
11. My job has a fair (impartial) promotion policy.
12. I enjoy my work more than my leisure time.
13. Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work
14. I consider my job rather unpleasant.
15. I am disappointed that I took this job.
16. My job is pretty interesting.
17. Each day of work seems like it will never end.
18. I am adequately paid for the job I do.
19. I am often bored with my job.
20. I definitely dislike my work.

Table 3: Reliability Analyses Result for Emotional Intelligence Domains

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	No of items	Remarks
Domain (SEA)	.861	4	Highly reliable
Domain (OEA)	.838	4	Highly reliable
Domain (UOE)	.907	4	Highly reliable
Domain (ROE))	.861	4	Highly reliable

Table 4: Reliability Analyses Result for Job Satisfaction

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	No of items	Remarks
Job Satisfaction	.855	20	Highly reliable

Validity of the Instrument

The Wong and Law's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) was adopted from Wong and Law (2002). The factor analysis results show that the average loadings of the 16 items in the four emotional intelligence ability domains were more than 0.70 (Wong & Law, 2002). The cumulative total variance value was gathered as 65.436% for the 16 items for emotional intelligence (Uslu & Karakiraz, 2014; Özen, Ardiç, Uslu, & Karakiraz, 2014).

The Brayfield and Rothe's General Index of Job Satisfaction was adopted from Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The validity of this instrument was verified by Aryee, Budhwar and Chen (2002), Gautam, Mandal and Dalal (2006), and Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou and Niakas (2012) and confirmed its validity to be used to measure job satisfaction.

Data Analysis

Both Wong and Law's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) and Brayfield and Rothe's General Index of Job Satisfaction's structured questionnaire was distributed to all respondents. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program Version 20 was used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics were performed to ensure the fulfilment of the assumptions needed. Pearson correlation coefficient for each hypothesis was calculated to determine whether to reject the null hypotheses.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents

The first stage in the data analysis was to assess demographics. The demographic categories considered gender, age, year of working experience, and highest academic qualification. 73.8% of the respondents were women and 26.2% men. 23.1% of respondents were between the ages of 26-30 and 31-35 years old. 16.9% of respondents were 36-40 years old, followed by 9.2% of respondents in the age group of 41-45 years old and 7.7% of respondents were in the age groups of 46-50 and 51-55 years old respectively. 3.1% of respondents were between the ages of 51-55 and 56-60 years old, while 1.5% of respondents were 61-65 years old which was the minor age group.

Based on the findings, the majority of the respondents, 49.2% were in the range of 1-5 years of working experience, which were novice employees. 21.5% and 10.8% of the respondents were in the range of 6-10 and 16-20 years of working experience respectively. 9.2% of respondents were working for 11-15 years, followed by respondents in the working experience of range between 21-25 years (3.1%). Minority of respondents were in the range of 26-30 years, 31-35 years, 36-40 years, and 41-45 years, which represented by 1.5% of respondents each, respectively.

Concerning the highest academic qualification among the employees, majority of the respondents, 35.4% had Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) qualification, followed by Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM)/ Diploma qualification and Degree qualification with 33.8% and 24.6% of respondents respectively. Minority of the respondents, 4.6% with only a Primary 6 qualification and 1.5% of respondents had Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (SRP) qualification. The characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	17	26.2
Female	48	73.8
Age		
21-25	8	12.3
26-30	15	23.1
31-35	15	23.1
36-40	11	16.9
41-45	6	9.2
46-50	5	7.7
51-55	2	3.1
56-60	2	3.1
61-65	1	1.5
Years of working experience		
1-5	32	49.2
6-10	14	21.5
11-15	6	9.2
16-20	7	10.8
21-25	2	3.1
26-30	1	1.5
31-35	1	1.5
36-40	1	1.5
41-45	1	1.5
Highest academic qualification		
Primary 6	3	4.6
Sijil Rendah Pelajaran (SRP)	1	1.5
Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)	23	35.4
Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM)/Diploma	22	33.8
Degree	16	24.6

Emotional Intelligence

The respondents were asked to assess their emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Table 6 reveals that majority respondents agreed that they perceive and understand others' feelings (Mean = 4.17, Std. dev. = 0.59000), and they are able to control and recover their feelings (Mean = 4.17, Std. dev. = 0.59000). These highest means were in domains Others' Emotional Appraisal (OEA) and Regulation of Emotion (ROE), followed by domain Self-Emotional Appraisal (SEA), indicated that the respondents can understand their feelings and emotions (Mean = 4.13, Std. dev. = 0.68050). Domain Use of Emotion (UOE) shows that most of the

respondents were undecided on using their feelings as a guide to doing better activities (Mean = 3.98, Std. dev. = 0.76737). Generally, the respondents' reaction of emotions in the workplace was consistent.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence

Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	4.13	0.68050
SEA	4.17	0.59000
OEA	3.98	0.76737
UOE	4.17	0.59000
ROE		

Job Satisfaction

The overall descriptive findings of job satisfaction presented in Table 7 indicated that most of the respondents were unable to judge their own feelings towards their satisfaction level at work (Mean = 3.46, Std. dev. = 0.50276).

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction

Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Satisfaction	3.46	0.50276

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality showed that the collected data for emotional intelligence and job satisfaction were normally distributed. Due to the normality of the data, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between the domains of emotional intelligence (SEA, OEA, UOE, and ROE) and job satisfaction. The results of Pearson Correlation analyses for the relationship between the domains of emotional intelligence (SEA, OEA, UOE, and ROE) and job satisfaction were presented in Table 8, Table 9, Table 10 and Table 11.

SEA and Job Satisfaction

Hypothesis 1: Self-emotional appraisal (SEA) has significant relationship with job satisfaction

The results in Table 8 show that null hypothesis 1 was not rejected (r = -0.012, p>0.01). It is concluded that there is no significant relationship between Self-Emotional Appraisal (SEA) and Job Satisfaction among employees in the organisation.

Table 8: Correlation between Domain SEA and Job Satisfaction

		SEA	Job Satisfaction
SEA	Pearson Correlation	1	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.923
	N	65	65
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.012	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.923	
	N	65	65

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

OEA and Job Satisfaction

Hypothesis 2: Emotion appraisal of others (OEA) has significant relationship with job satisfaction

The results in Table 9 show that null hypothesis 2 was not rejected (r = 0.112, p > 0.01). It is concluded that there is no significant relationship between Others Emotional Appraisal (SEA) and Job Satisfaction among employees in the organisation.

Table 9: Correlation between Domain OEA and Job Satisfaction

		OEA	Job Satisfaction
OEA	Pearson Correlation	1	-.112
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.376
	N	65	65
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.112	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.376	
	N	65	65

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

UOE and Job Satisfaction

Hypothesis 3: Use of emotion (UOE) has significant relationship with job satisfaction.

The results in Table 10 show that null hypothesis 3 was not rejected (r = 0.112, p > 0.01). It is concluded that there is no significant relationship between Use of Emotion (UOE) and Job Satisfaction among employees in the organisation.

Table 10: Correlation between Domain UOE and Job Satisfaction

		UOE	Job Satisfaction
UOE	Pearson Correlation	1	.112
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.376
	N	65	65
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.112	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.376	
	N	65	65

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

ROE and Job Satisfaction

Hypothesis 4: Regulation of emotion (ROE) has significant relationship with job satisfaction.

The results in Table 11 show that null hypothesis 4 was rejected (r = 0.384, p < 0.01). It is concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between Regulation of Emotion (ROE) and Job Satisfaction among employees in the ministry.

Table 11: Correlation between Domain ROE and Job Satisfaction

		ROE	Job Satisfaction
ROE	Pearson Correlation	1	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	65	65
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.384**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	65	65

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

This study shows that regulation of emotion was significantly correlated with job satisfaction among the employees in the ministry. This result supports the findings of previous studies where regulation of emotion

(ROE) was found to be correlated with job satisfaction (Dzakwan, 2015; Jung, & Yoon, 2016; Kassim, Bambale & Jakada, 2016; Pandey & Sharma, 2016). This might suggest that regulation of emotion (ROE) dimension is independent of the employment sector, since many past studies were based on employees in the private sector (Pandey & Sharma, 2016). Employees in both the public and the private sectors might face similar stress at their workplace and this renders similar ability in regulating their emotions at work. Effective regulation of emotion might have resulted in better management of their jobs hence casting positive feelings towards their jobs (Huang *et al*., 2010). They might react more positively when facing workplace stress hence improving job satisfaction (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa-Kaja, Reyes & Salovey, 2010). Employees who have high emotional intelligence often have high job satisfaction and, correspondingly, high job performance (Pradhan, Jena & Singh, 2017).

This study also found that the other three domains of emotional intelligence (i.e., self-emotion, emotion of other and use of emotion) were not correlated with job satisfaction of employees in the ministry. These outcomes support the findings by Güleryüz, Güney, Aydin and Asan (2008) that self-emotional appraisal (SEA) and others' emotional appraisal (OEA) have no significant correlation with job satisfaction. In addition, the studies conducted by Psilopanagioti, Anagnostopoulos, Mourtou and Niakas (2012) as well as by Trivellas, Gerogiannis and Svarna (2013) also proved that OEA was not correlated to job satisfaction. This might suggest that sectoral differences in the public and private sector are not a predictor for differences in the relationship of these variables. Sani *et al*. (2016) also found that only certain dimensions of emotional intelligence have a correlation with job satisfaction. Such a phenomenon highlighted the complexity of emotional intelligence and its varying relationship with job satisfaction. The nature of work and educational level of the samples might contribute towards this diverse outcome. Indeed, many industrial, organisational and social factors (do Monte, 2017; Karyotakis & Moustakis, 2016; Sarangi, Pradhan, & Jena, 2017; Zeffane & Bani Melhem, 2017) could affect employees' emotional intelligence and this suggests that emotional intelligence and job satisfaction need to be examined in context.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this research indicated that employees with good regulation of emotion are more likely to enjoy greater job satisfaction. Regulation of emotion reduces employees' stress level by assisting them to recover from uneasy and angry feelings at work. The findings discuss that employees in the ministry are able to control their emotions to avoid interaction issues among colleagues. Findings of this study validate the role of emotional intelligence in improving job satisfaction. These findings would help human resource development practitioners to design an effective strategic training and development program to enhance emotional intelligence in relation to job satisfaction among the civil servants.

A limitation of the present study is that data were collected only from employees of a single ministry in the state civil service. As such, the generalisation of the findings to other sectors may not be appropriate due to the different sector operations, government policy and implementation, and cultural differences. Future research should be carried out at other ministries in the country. Besides, the results might also suffer from respondents' bias on emotional intelligence and job satisfaction because the employees of the ministry have a wide range in their educational level. A cross-sectional study that focuses on samples that are either having a narrower range of educational level or grade of work in different ministries might shed more light on the relationship of these two variables.

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