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The relationship between emotional intelligence, frontline employee adaptability, job satisfaction and job performance

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ABSTRACT

Adaptable FLE's are an asset for the organization and customer alike as they are an indispensable part of service experience. They are subjected to pressures which are not found on any other positions in the organizations and displaying organizationally desired emotions play an important part in a service encounter. Therefore, the present research examines the relationship between emotional intelligence, frontline employee adaptability and job outcomes (Job Satisfaction and Job Performance). 517 FLE's working in Power utility in India participated through a cross sectional study. The research found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and frontline employee adaptability. Specifically, all the dimensions of emotional intelligence positively impacted FLE adaptability. In addition, FLE adaptability is found to positively impact Job outcomes. The results and implications are discussed.

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a significant predictor of key organizational outcomes especially in the times of 'affective revolution' in management studies. Although it is generally accepted that emotions are an intrinsic part of the workplace, but still job-related emotions still constitute an under-developed area of study (Bande et al., 2015). Adaptability of employees is also a key factor which is known to impact organizational outcomes like Job satisfaction and Job performance (Cullen et al., 2013). An adaptable employee is an asset for the organization (Chebat and Kollias, 2000) and customer (Ahearne et al., 2005) because it known to impact organization performance (Cullen et al., 2013, 2014; Nesbit and Lam, 2014; Pulakos et al., 2000) and customer satisfaction (Clark, 2000; Keillor et al., 2011). Previous research has developed and tested the general model of employee adaptability (Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012; Ployhart and Bliese, 2006; Pulakos et al., 2000; Pulakos et al., 2002). Frontline employees (FLE's) are critical to organization success (Kafetsios and Zampetakis, 2008) and these employees are subjected to pressures which are not found in other positions (Kao et al., 2014). Thus, the general model of employee adaptability cannot be used to explain frontline employee adaptability. Many researchers have conceptualized employee adaptability to be multidimensional phenomenon (Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012; Pulakos et al., 2000; Sony and Nandakumar, 2014). In order to measure FLE adaptability, a scale is also developed by Sony and Nandakumar (2015). FLE due to their proximity to customers are often subjected to emotional distress and previous research has categorized that handling emotions are critical to their success (Shih-Tse Wang, 2014). Emotional intelligence has been propounded as a major contributing factor for the performance of employees and it contribute to more positive attitudes, behaviors and outcomes (Goleman, 1998; Goleman et al., 2013; Wong and Law, 2002). Studies have also explored the importance of Emotional intelligence on the frontline employee performance (Prentice and King, 2011; Prentice and King, 2013).

Emotional intelligence is conceptualized as a multidimensional concept (Goleman, 1998; Schutte and Malouff, 1999; Wong and Law, 2002). FLE adaptability also encompasses several new dimensions that have lately attracted research attention. The dimensions like Interpersonal, Service offering, Political, Social, Physical, Group and Organizational adaptability dimensions unearthed by Sony and Nandakumar (2014) appear to be important and worthy of investigation in the context of Emotional intelligence. An investigation of these issues is important because emotional intelligence being a multi-dimensional construct, the different dimensions may impact FLE adaptability.To the best of our knowledge previous research has not explored the impact of the each dimensions of emotional intelligence on the dimensions of FLE adaptability.

Another potential aspect to consider is most studies on emotional intelligence is conducted on Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies. Henrich

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et al. (2010) stressed the importance of use of non western samples especially when the interest of study is of human nature. This study is conducted in India which is a non western society (Viswanathan et al., 2010). Zeidner et al. (2004) commented that though there exists a plenty of literature of Emotional intelligence in workplace environment, however they stressed that the ratio of hyperbole to hard evidence is high. They also observed that there was over-reliance in the literature on case studies, expert opinion, anecdote, and unpublished proprietary surveys. In this study we seek to extend to address this gap and this study investigates the impact of Emotional intelligence on frontline employee adaptability and job outcomes in a non western sample through a cross sectional study in power sector.

2. Background theory

Adaptability is an indistinct construct that is purported to be pertinent in a range of situations. It can also be viewed from numerous perspectives (Van Dam, 2013). Stokes et al. (2010) explicated that adaptability in the workplace has been conceptualized and investigated as an outcome, such as task or job performance, adaptive expertize, as strategy selection or as a stable individual difference construct etc. They further argue that while each study adds to our understanding of workplace adaptability in its many different ways thereby clarifying the construct further. Pulakos et al. (2000) broad definition of adaptive performance was altering behavior to meet the demands of the environment, event, or new situation. Ployhart and Bliese (2006) model helped to understand individual differences in the context of adaptability. They further submitted that the individual differences contribute to aspects of job performance which can impact the task, contextual, and counterproductive work behavior. This theory clarifies adaptability as a predictor in terms of dispositions and various KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities). However this theory does not consider adaptive performance as an outcome or criterion as it is in the job performance domain. Elucidating adaptive performance as a criterion is important for and ascertaining the usefulness of job performance models which can be used by practitioners at the forefront of the changing workplace.

Allworth and Hesketh (1999) have recognized that adaptability is a substantial component of the job performance domain. Ilgen and Pulakos (1999) stressed that business and military settings alike also commented on the need for their personnel to be agile and adaptable. In response, a plethora of research projects have been directed at identifying predictors of adaptive performance for training and selection purposes (Ployhart and Bliese, 2006; Pulakos and O'LEARY, 2011; Stokes et al., 2010).

2.1. Frontline employee adaptability

FLE's are an integral part of the service experience (Singh, 2000) and play a salient role in the customers' satisfaction and perceptions of service quality. Service judgments are based primarily, on the specialized skills, techniques, and experiences of the employee with whom a customer interacts (Paulin et al., 2000). FLE's are perhaps, the most critical link in the provision of superior service to customers (Alexandrov et al., 2007). However, they are caught in the middle between discerning customers' service excellence demands and management's productivity and performance requirements or constraints. Most often, they need to participate in unscripted and challenging interactions with customers (Zablah et al., 2012), thus leading to altering of behaviors in response to interactions with customers (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996). Different employees respond to such situations differently (Gwinner et al., 2005; Ployhart and Bliese, 2006). Hence, some employees may be good at it, and some are not. Thus, adaptability of FLE's attains a perennial dimension, as usually such behaviors being purposeful, in role and organizationally desired behaviors. Pulakos et al. (2000) were the first to propose a global model of adaptive performance. Ultimately, they proposed eight dimensions of adaptive performance, including: dealing with uncertain or unpredictable work situations; handling emergencies or crisis situations; solving problems creatively; handling work stress; learning new tasks, technologies and procedures; demonstrating interpersonal adaptability; demonstrating cultural adaptability; and demonstrating physically oriented adaptability. The advantages of the model were that it was the first time a multidimensional model of adaptive performance was proposed. An vital reflection from their study is that each of the eight dimensions were dependent on the type of job being considered (Gwinner et al., 2005). Besides, another aspect, to ponder over, was the disagreement on the number of dimensions. Johnson (2003) criticized that four out of eight dimensions can be viewed as a Single dimension.

They argued that dealing effectively, with unpredictable and changing work situations and learning new tasks, technologies, and procedures uniquely reflects adaptive performance, as opposed to task performance or citizenship behaviors. This model was more parsimonious and predicted adaptive performance. However, when Pulakos et al. (2002) asked supervisors to rate employee's adaptive performance using similar items, they found that a single factor best fit the data (see also Shoss et al. (2012)). Subsequently, researchers have conceptualized adaptive performance as a one-dimensional construct, but one that encompasses adaptation to changes occurring at the task, team, and organizational levels (Griffin et al., 2007; Griffin et al., 2010). Studies by Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) viewed employee adaptability as a multidimensional construct with five dimensions and found in a non military setting there were significant differences in the dimensions proposed by Pulakos et al. (2000) and Pulakos et al. (2002).

Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) developed a five dimensional adaptability performance scale, however there is disagreement on number of dimensions proposed by Pulakos et al. (2000). Moreover, the research was not conducted among the FLE's and hence cannot be used in this research. Recent research has suggested that the dimensions of adaptability in power sector are different as compared to other service sectors. FLE's are distinct from other employees. The three distinctive functions reported by previous researches are first, FLE's disseminate information coming from the external environment back to the organization (Rafaeli et al., 2008). Second, they represent the face of the organization to the customer (Karatepe and Kilic, 2007). Lastly, they must display organizationally desired behaviors during interactions with customers (Arnold and Barling, 2003) even if these behaviors are not a reflective of their true feelings (Adelmann, 1995).

Besides it is also prudent to consider the context specific nature prevailing in a developing country power sector, in addition to these three factors. Frontline employee being the interface, between the customer and the organization, has to bear the brunt of the customer and other stake holders, due to the inherent inability of the power sector to meet needs of the customers. Power, being an essential service, it caters the basic needs of customers, hence, there is a narrow zone of tolerance for the customers as the expectation of desired service is high (Michael and Mariappan, 2011). FLE's plays an important role being the first interface between the Power utility and customers. Hence the FLE's in addition to actually offering the technical service like attending complaints etc, the FLE has to exhibit an in role, organizationally desired behavioral requirement, wherein they need to change their behavior in

Table 1
Seven dimensions for frontline employee adaptability.

Dimension	Definition	Authors
Interpersonal adaptability	Defined as the verbal, non verbal and emotional adaptive behavior exhibited by the FLE, as per the requirement of the customer or situation through interpersonal communication	Gwinner et al. (2005), Pulakos et al. (2000), Sony and Nandakumar (2014), Sony and Nandakumar (2015) and Zablah et al. (2012)
Service offering adaptability	Defined as the ability to produce the desired service. It include Professional Adaptability, skill variety Adaptability,creative problem solving Adaptability and dealing with uncertain and unpredictable situations adaptability to manufacture the service	Gwinner et al. (2005), Hartline and Ferrell (1996), Sony and Nandakumar (2014) and Sony and Nandakumar (2015)
Political adaptability	Defined as the ability to adapt to the legitimate / illegitimate demands of ruling or opposition political parties of the area where FLE is working. It includes adapting to the ruling party representatives and adapting to the opposition party representatives as most of the times their demand are conflicting	Brass (1984), Brass (1994), Min (2011), Petty et al. (1984), Sony and Nandakumar (2014) and Sony and Nandakumar (2015)
Social aspects of adaptability	Defined as an FLE consciousness or competency to adapt to the society. It includes adapting to local culture, language and social consciousness. Social aspect of adaptability is a set of formal/ informal values and norms and subjectively-felt obligations that FLE perceive about the society, which are instrumental in shaping the FLE adaptability in the organization.	Michael and Mariappan, (2012), Min (2011), Sony and Mekoth (2012), Sony and Nandakumar (2014) and Sony and Nandakumar (2015)
Physical aspect of adaptability	FLE exhibits competency of adapting to the physical factors of the Job. FLE adapting to physical requirement of Job like working in physically in convenient working conditions like heat, noise, inclement of the weather, dangerous working condition as dealing with electricity, working at long hours, Odd days, standing for a long time or a carrying weight etc	Pulakos et al. (2000), Sony and Nandakumar (2014) and Sony and Nandakumar (2015)
Group adaptability	FLE adapting to groups within the organization and external to organization.	Andrews (1995), Campion et al. (1993), Michael and Mariappan (2012), Sony and Nandakumar (2014) and Sony and Nandakumar (2015)
Organization adaptability	FLE exhibiting competency to adapt to organizational culture, rules, policies used in the organization	Arnold et al. (2012), Hesketh and Neal (1999), Hollenbeck et al. (1996), Sony and Nandakumar (2014) and Sony and Nandakumar (2015)

response of customer outrage or dissatisfaction, political interference, capacity constraints etc. Power utilities in India are a subject to ridicule by the politicians and general public alike due to shortage of power, load shedding, brown outs, blackout, political interference, inefficiency etc. (Min, 2011).

There are reports of customers and other stake holders like politicians etc verbally and physically abusing the FLE's (Petty et al., 1984; PTI, 2012, 2013; Sprung et al., 2012). Under such circumstances the previous research model of employee adaptability needs further confirmation and research, in order, to confirm its applicability in assessing adaptability of frontline service employees, in power sector and previous research of employee adaptability cannot be generalized for power sector. Recent researches (Sony and Nandakumar, 2014) have testified the above proposition using grounded theory and the seven dimensions for frontline employee adaptability were unearthed as explicated in Table 1. They define FLE adaptability as "*the frontline employee (rater) exhibiting interpersonal, service offering, political, social,physical, group and organizational adaptive behavior(attributes) as per the demands or requirement of stake holders, environment, event or a new situation(focal object)*". The research was furthered recently and a 41 item scale is developed to measure FLE adaptability using the proposed dimensions.

2.2. Emotional intelligence

Scholars tend to view emotional intelligence as a factor which has a potential to contribute to more positive attitudes, behaviors and outcomes. Schutte et al. (2002) remarked that emotional intelligence can be conceptualized as either competency or ability (Ciarrochi et al., 2000; Mayer et al., 1999) or a personality trait (Schutte and Malouff, 1999; Schutte et al., 1998). The present research view emotional intelligence as a competency that is expected to augment positive attitudes toward work, and drive positive behaviors and better outcomes. Emotional intelligence is a subset of social intelligence, which includes ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to differentiate among them and to use this information to steer one's thinking and actions (Salovey and Mayer, 1989). Mayer et al. (1999) subsequently, conceptualized emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to aid thoughts, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reactively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Wong and Law (2002) and Mayer et al. (1999) defined EI as a set of interrelated skills concerning "*the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth*". Salovey and Mayer (1989),Mayer et al. (1999) and Wong and Law (2002) conceptualized EI as composed of four distinct dimensions and definition is given in Table 2.

Adaptive employees are also identified as having the ability to combine cognitive and affective skills to promote learning, curiosity, self-confidence, and coping abilities in approaching new tasks (Hesketh and Neal, 1999; Savickas et al., 2005). Goleman (1998) explained emotional intelligence, can lead to more adaptive and productive behavior in the workplace. They further suggest the importance of emotional competency for higher and lower management levels as such in the adaptability spectrum of frontline employees; the emotional intelligence might play a vital role in adaptability. Huy (1999) contended that the present theories of individual and organizational change have focused mostly on cognitive processes, at the expense of social and emotional bases of change. At the individual level, emotional intelligence is defined as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Mayer and Salovey, 1995), to put it simply is how we handle ourselves and others.

Although emotional intelligence is considered innate, emotional competencies can be developed with motivation, practice, feedback, and support. They enhance the potential emotional intelligence of a given individual. Goleman (1998) defined emotional

Table 2
Operational definition and measures of research variables.

Variable	Operational definition of construct	No of items (Scale reliability)	Source
Emotional intelligence	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 **Self emotional appraisal:** This relates to the individual's ability to understand their deep emotions and be able to express these emotions naturally. **Others' emotional appraisal:** This relates to peoples' ability to perceive and understand the emotions of those people around them. **Regulation of emotion:** This relates to the ability of people to regulate their emotions, which will enable a more rapid recovery from psychological distress. **Use of emotion:** This relates to the ability of individuals to make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance.	16 (Cronbach Alpha=0.70–0.82)	Wong and Law (2002)
Job satisfaction	collection of feelings that an individual holds towards his or her job	5 (Cronbach alpha=0.77)	Adams et al. (1995)
Job performance	Employee Job performance, in general, refers to behaviors that are relevant to organizational goals and that are under the control of individual employees	6 (Cronbach alpha=0.875)	Babin and Boles (1996) and Ellinger et al. (2008)
FLE adaptability	Frontline employee adaptability is defined as the frontline employee (rater) exhibiting interpersonal, service offering, political, social,physical, group and organizational adaptive behavior (attributes) as per the demands or requirement of stake holders, environment, event or a new situation(focal object)	41 (Cronbach alpha=0.793)	Sony and Nandakumar (2015)

competence as "a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work". There is growing evidence that emotional competence is learnable and can be grown for employees

2.3. Research question and hypothesis

Emotional intelligence is seen in literatures as a factor which has a potential to contribute to more positive attitudes, behaviors and outcomes. Frontline employee adaptability is a competency that frontline employee exhibits while adapting along various dimensions, as per the demands or requirement of stake holders, environment, event or a new situation. Emotional intelligence may help an employee to adapt along the various dimensions. Recent research by has shown that emotional intelligence can positively impact career adaptability like career concern, career control, career confidence and career curiosity (Coetzee and Harry, 2014). Frontline employee adaptability is different from career adaptability in terms of dimensions, definitions etc. However being a vocation behavior it strengthen the conviction that Emotional intelligence may impact frontline employee adaptability. Hence we put forth the research question what is the relationship between emotional intelligence, frontline employee adaptability and job outcomes? This study will specifically extend the literature by clarifying the hypothesized relationship. Further emotional intelligence being a multidimensional concept this study will also clarify, which dimensions of emotional intelligence will impact the frontline employee adaptability. The study will further clarify the moderating impact of work experience on the impact of emotional intelligence and frontline employee adaptability. An additional contribution of the study would be to clarify the relationship between frontline employee adaptability and job satisfaction and job performance.

Among the FLE's due to the close nature of interactions with constituents external to the organization, emotions can make or break a situation. Under such conditions it may help an FLE who is emotionally competent to exhibit behaviors which are desired by other stakeholders. Self emotional appraisal relates to the individual's ability to understand their deep emotions and be able to express these emotions naturally. FLE who have great ability in this area will sense and acknowledge their emotions well before most people and hence FLE adaptability being a Meta competency this dimension is contemplated to positively impact FLE adaptability, hence it is proposed as

Hypothesis H1. Self emotional appraisal will have a positive effect on FLE Adaptability.

Others' emotional appraisal relates to peoples' ability to perceive and understand the emotions of those people around them. FLE who are high in this ability will be much more sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others as well as reading their minds which in turn may help to adapt and hence it is proposed that

Hypothesis H2. Others' emotional appraisal will have a positive effect on FLE Adaptability.

Regulation of emotion relates to the ability of people to regulate their emotions, which will enable a more rapid recovery from psychological distress. An FLE who can regulate the emotions may influence FLE adaptability.

Hypothesis H3. Regulation of emotion will have a positive effect on FLE Adaptability.

Use of emotions relates to the ability of FLE to make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance. An FLE who can use emotions to actuate performance may influence FLE Adaptability.

Hypothesis H4. Use of emotion will have a positive effect on FLE Adaptability.

2.4. Job outcomes

The two job outcomes studied in this study is (1) job satisfaction and (2) job performance. Job satisfaction is studied as it reflects the feelings of employees towards the Job. Emotionally intelligent frontline employee will have a different feeling towards the Job compared to the others. Same would be the case with adaptable employee. Similarly emotionally intelligent employee may perform differently than others and also an adaptable employee will perform better than non adaptable employee. With this premise in mind the job satisfaction and Job Performance is critically chosen

Table 3
Sample characteristics.

Sample size	517	**Percentage**
Male	399	77%
Female	118	24%
Age in years		
	Mean	35.1 years
	Range	24–52 years
Level of Education [a]		
12th	119	23%
ITI	124	24%
Diploma	186	36%
Graduation	88	17%
Designation		
Station Operator	160	31%
Billing Clerk	134	26%
Junior Engineer	150	29%
Assistant Engineer	73	14%
Number of customer handled in a day		
	Mean	21
	Range	10–37
Experience in years		
	Mean	8 years
	Range	5–26 years

ITI – Industrial Training institutes technical qualification, Diploma – Diploma in Engineering or technology.

[a] 12th – 12 years of education.

2.4.1. Job satisfaction

Robbins (2005), defined job satisfaction as a collection of feelings that an individual holds towards his or her job. Job satisfaction has been observed to affect levels of job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, grievance expression, tardiness, low morale, high turnover, quality improvement and participation in decision-making. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences." An adaptable FLE would be exhibiting behaviors as per the requirement of various stake holders leading to an internal appraisal state for the employee about his/her performance. If the employee is able to exhibit behaviors which benefit the stakeholders, then this will definitely impact his internal appraisal system, which in turn will result in a pleasurable or positive emotional state. Therefore it is an important step to conjecture, whether FLE adaptability would constitute job satisfaction. Thus it is hypothesized that

Hypothesis H5. FLE Adaptability is positively related Job Satisfaction.

2.4.2. Job performance

Employee Job performance, in general, refers to behaviors that are relevant to organizational goals and that are under the control of individual employees (Babin and Boles, 1996; Ellinger et al., 2008). Murphy (1989), defines job performance as a function of the individual's performance of specific tasks that comprise standard job descriptions, and declares that it is also affected by variables such as maintaining good interpersonal relations, absenteeism, and withdrawal behaviors, substance abuse and other behaviors that increase hazards at the workplace. Befort and Hattrup (2003), indicate that the essence of job performance relies on the demands of the job, the goals and the mission of the organization and the beliefs of the organization about which behavior are mostly valued and hence hypothesized that FLE adaptability is related to Job performance, hence it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis H6. FLE Adaptability is positively related Job Performance.

3. Research design

3.1. Operational definition of variables

The operational definition of the variables along with its sources and operational definitions used in this research is explicated in the Table 2.

3.2. Sample and data collection

The researcher used purposive sampling, also called as judgmental or selective sampling, in which the population elements are selected based on the judgment of the researcher.

In this study the researcher is interested to study the adaptability among frontline employee in power sector. Robertson (1995) definition of Frontline employee is one who engages in job-related interactions with a person who is considered part of the environment and who is not a member of the organization was used. The researcher chose FLE's (Station Operators, Billing Clerk, Junior and Assistant Engineers) who were willing to put in their effort and time for this study and they were working in power utility in western India after securing permission from the employers. Data collection was done by using a questionnaire, which was personally handed over to the employees, after explaining the rationale for the survey and emphasizing the importance of their contribution to this study. The questionnaire was distributed to around 711 employees, (Hair and Black, 2006) suggests a sample size of 500 for a study with more than seven dimensions while using structural equation modeling. The completed questionnaires were collected personally by the researcher and three of his friends who volunteered for data collection to ensure high return rate. Out of this 531 returned the study, 14 questionnaires were incomplete with more than 10% and were discarded, a total of 517 usable questionnaires was available with a response rate of around 72%. To know whether the effect of response bias is significant between those who responded early, with those who responded late, this study performed both chi-square tests and t tests. The null hypothesis of this analysis is that an early respondent has the same characteristics as a late respondent. The observed significant level p for all variables is much higher than 0.05 suggesting no response bias between those who responded early and those responded late and sample characteristics are given in Table 3.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Reliability analysis

From Table 4 this it is evident that all constructs have Cronbach's α of 0.7 and above, which is a substantiation of high reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 4
Cronbach α and average loadings.

Construct	Cronbach α	Average Loading
Emotional intelligence	0.76	0.78
FLE adaptability	0.79	0.82
Job satisfaction	0.76	0.72
Job performance	0.77	0.74

Average loading is average factor loading of each construct.

4.2. Validity analysis

4.2.1. Convergent validity

The items that are indicator of a specific construct should converge or share a high proportion of variance in common. Evidence of convergent validity is provided by all factor loadings being statistically significant (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) and the average factor loadings are of each factor is greater than

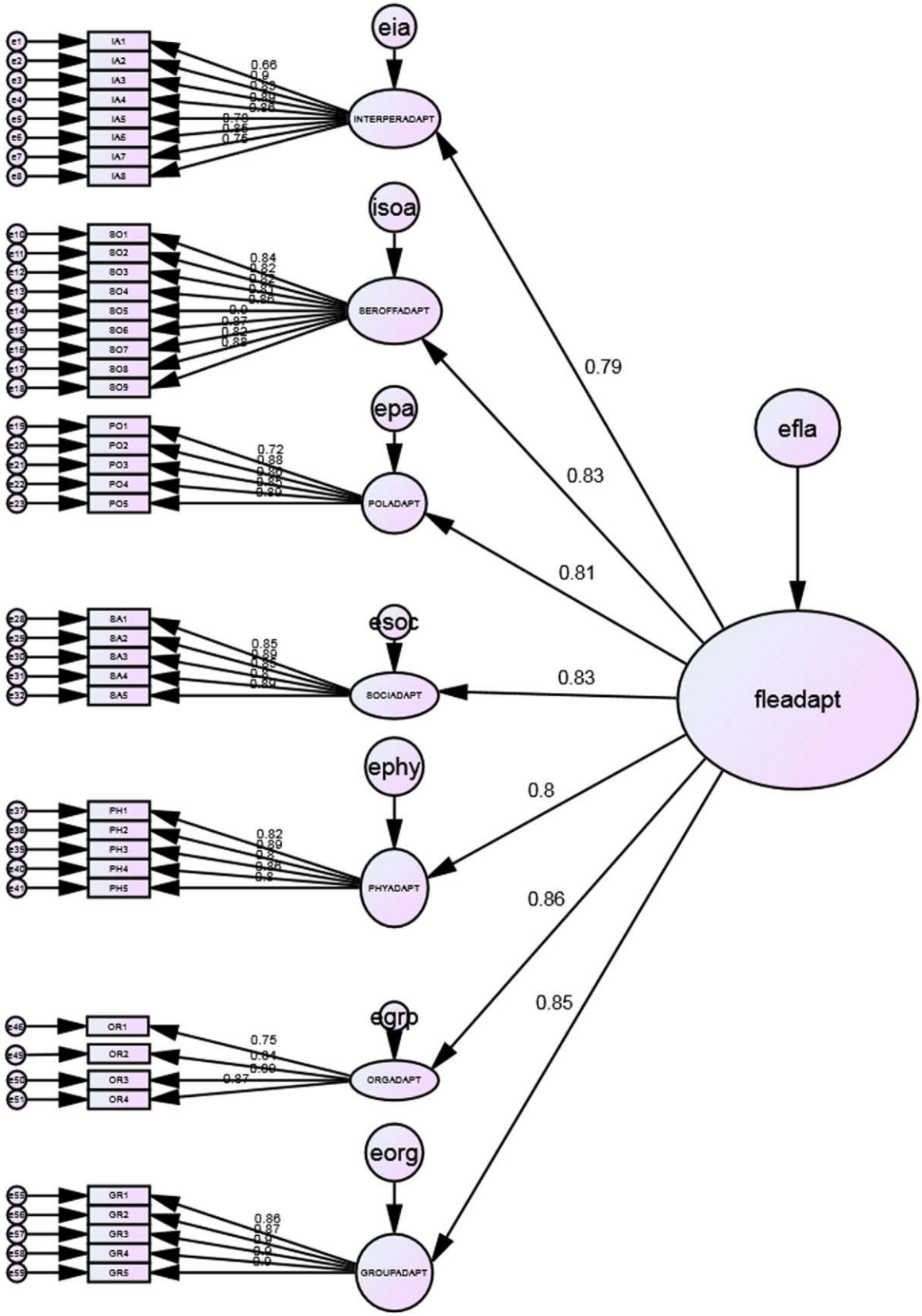

Fig. 1. Second order CFA of FLE adaptability.

Table 5
Loadings of second order factor analysis of FLEADAPT scale.

First order dimension/items	Latent variable	Std Estt	*P* value	Rsq
Seroffadapt[a]	< –FLEADAPT[b]	0.83	0.001	0.69
Interperadapt[c]	< –FLEADAPT	0.79	0.001	0.62
groupadapt[d]	< –FLEADAPT	0.85	0.001	0.72
Sociadapt[e]	< –FLEADAPT	0.83	0.001	0.69
poladapt[f]	< –FLEADAPT	0.81	0.001	0.66
phyadapt[g]	< –FLEADAPT	0.80	0.001	0.64
orgadapt[h]	< –FLEADAPT	0.86	0.001	0.74
SO6 I use a various tactics to satisfy customer in uncertain situations.	< –Seroffadapt	0.90	0.001	0.81
SO9 I can easily suggest a lot of solutions to meet each customer's needs.	< –Seroffadapt	0.88	0.001	0.77
SO7 I can easily reorganize my work to deal with uncertain situations.	< –Seroffadapt	0.87	0.001	0.75
SO5 I try to manage actions during uncertain work situations.	< –Seroffadapt	0.86	0.001	0.73
SO1 I can use my skills to vary service as per customer needs.	< –Seroffadapt	0.84	0.001	0.71
SO3: It is better to be multiskilled to satisfy a customer	< –Seroffadapt	0.82	0.001	0.67
SO8 I try to convert new ideas into practical solutions for customers needs.	< –Seroffadapt	0.82	0.001	0.68
SO2 I can use my skills in different social or cultural setting to satisfy customers.	< –Seroffadapt	0.82	0.001	0.67
SO4 I use wide range of skills to modify the service to meet customer needs.	< –Seroffadapt	0.81	0.001	0.66
IA2 I try to talk differently with different customers.	< –Interperadapt	0.90	0.001	0.81
IA4 At times I show negative emotions while dealing with customers.	< –Interperadapt	0.89	0.001	0.79
IA5 I feel exhausted to tell the same things to different customers.	< –Interperadapt	0.86	0.001	0.74
IA7 I present myself in a way that makes good impression to satisfy customers.	< –Interperadapt	0.85	0.001	0.72
IA3 I can change my communication to handle situations.	< –Interperadapt	0.83	0.001	0.69
IA6 I try to help customers feel better when they are showing negative emotions	< –Interperadapt	0.78	0.001	0.61
IA8 I adjust my tone of voice depending on the customers I am serving.	< –Interperadapt	0.75	0.001	0.56
IA1 I try to change my talk as per customer needs.	< –Interperadapt	0.66	0.001	0.43
GR3 Good relations with group members will not help me to serve customers.	< –groupadapt	0.90	0.001	0.82
GR5 I set aside individual differences to adapt well with people from other organizations	< –groupadapt	0.90	0.001	0.82
GR4 While working it is difficult to adjust with people outside my organization.	< –groupadapt	0.89	0.001	0.80
GR2 I think in terms of other group member's point of view in order to act as a team.	< –groupadapt	0.87	0.001	0.76
GR1 I easily adjust my behavior towards group members from my organization	< –groupadapt	0.86	0.001	0.73
SA5 I offer to work for extra hours during major social events	< –Sociadapt	0.89	0.001	0.79
SA4 It is important for me to contribute to society.	< –Sociadapt	0.89	0.001	0.80
SA2 It is a waste of time to learn local language to satisfy customers.	< –Sociadapt	0.89	0.001	0.78
SA3 I try to be aware of the major events in the locality to serve customers better.	< –Sociadapt	0.85	0.001	0.73
SA1 I try to learn about the society to understand my customers.	< –Sociadapt	0.85	0.001	0.72
PO5 I can manage conflicting demands of ruling and opposition party.	< –poladapt	0.89	0.001	0.79
PO2 I use a variety of tactics to deal with the demands of political parties.	< –poladapt	0.88	0.001	0.77
PO3 I look for range of solutions for illegal demands of political parties.	< –poladapt	0.86	0.001	0.74
PO4 It is better to please the influential party than the weaker party	< –poladapt	0.85	0.001	0.73
PO1 I set aside my political orientation while dealing with politicians.	< –poladapt	0.72	0.001	0.51
PH2 I adjust to the physical requirements of work like standing for a long time or carrying weight	< –phyadapt	0.89	0.001	0.79
PH4 Even with all safety measures,I find it difficult to work in physically unsafe situations.	< –phyadapt	0.86	0.001	0.75
PH1 I can only work efficiently in comfortable environment.	< –phyadapt	0.82	0.001	0.66
PH5 I can sometimes skip physical needs (skip meals etc) to handle situation.	< –phyadapt	0.80	0.001	0.65
PH3 I can go to my physical extremes to accomplish a task.	< –phydapt	0.80	0.001	0.64
OR3 I can easily adapt to changing rules and regulation of my organization	< –Orgadapt	0.89	0.001	0.79
OR4 I am comfortable working according to the procedures of my organization.	< –Orgadapt	0.87	0.001	0.75
OR2 I can easily adjust with the culture of my organization.	< –Orgadapt	0.84	0.001	0.70
OR1 I adjust my values and goals to the values and goals of my organization.	< –Orgadapt	0. 75	0.001	0.56

p Values associated with the cross-loadings lower than 0.05; and that the loadings are equal to or greater than 0.5 (Hair, 2009).

[a] Service offering adaptability.
[b] Frontline employee adaptability.
[c] Inter-personal adaptability.
[d] Group adaptability.
[e] Social adaptability.
[f] Political adaptability.
[g] Physical adaptability.
[h] Organizational adaptability.

0.7 suggesting high loading. The variance extracted is also greater than 0.5 (Hair, 2009) indicating good convergence. The construct reliability was computed for all constructs is greater than 0.7 thus supporting the convergent validity.

4.2.2. Discriminant validity

To check for discriminant validity the correlation square of all dimensions was compared with the Average Variance Extracted for each construct. The variance extracted percentages was greater than hence discriminant validity of each construct. To check for discriminant validity amoung constructs the variance extracted percentages for any two construct was compared with the correlation estimate between these two constructs. It was also found that variance extracted was greater than the correlation estimate suggesting discriminant validity.

4.3. Social desirability bias

To test whether socially desirable response (SDR) bias had affected the subject response, a six item measure of the Marlowe–Crowne scale developed by (Donavan et al., 2004) was administered to all respondents as being a self reported survey, and there is potential for socially desired responding, perhaps to overstate their own capabilities and performance (Mabe and West, 1982).

The result, using data from this survey, indicated a non-significant correlation between SDR bias and all the constructs in the study easing concerns about this issue.

4.4. Common method bias

When self-report questionnaires are used to collect data at the same time from the same participants, common method variance (CMV) may be a concern. This concern is strongest when both the dependent and focal explanatory variables are perceptual measures derived from the same respondent (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). In this research we asked only bare minimum personal details e.g. no name is asked, in addition we categorically invoke the doctrine of privilege communication where in the researcher is duty bound to protect the data of the respondents, In order to account for acquiesce responding the scale contains positive and negative worded statements. To test for common method bias, the researcher employed the "unmeasured latent factor method" suggested by Hammer et al. (2013) and Podsakoff et al. (2003) to extract the common variance. The difference in standardized loading with or without latent factor was less than 0.2 and also common variance extracted less than 15% suggestion no common method bias (Chin et al., 2012).

4.5. Second-order confirmatory factor analysis – FLE adaptability construct

The seven dimensions of Interpersonal, service offering, political, group, physical, social and organizational adaptability belong to the construct FLE adaptability and hence the higher order factor can be hypothesized to account for relations in lower order factors. The purpose of the second-order confirmatory factor analysis is to facilitate testing the hypothesis. As shown in Fig. 1, all the first-order seven factors load very well onto the second-order FLEADAPT construct. The regression weights are very close and range from 0.77 to 0.89, with all critical ratios above 1.96. The model fit indices for first order CFA was: χ^2=2223, χ^2/df=2.91, df=759, GFI=0.883, RMSEA=0.63, PCLOSE=0.025, CFI=0.912, RMR=0.136 The model fit indices show similar results as the first-order confirmatory factor analysis: χ^2=2280, χ^2/df=2.94, df=773, GFI=0.892, RMSEA=0.61, PCLOSE=0.022, PGFI=0.686, NFI=0.847, CFI=0.920, RMR=0.156, The slight difference in the first-order and second-order estimations occurs due to the emergence of slightly different degrees of freedom between executing the first-order and second-order measurement models. The above statistics show that all the 41 items converge into a single FLE adaptability construct. The 41 items are partitioned into seven component factors: interpersonal adaptability, service offering adaptability, political adaptability, social adaptability, physical adaptability, group adaptability and organizational adaptability.

Each of the 41 items is loaded onto only one of these seven factors, without any cross loading. The loadings are expounded in Table 5.

4.6. Nested models

The above second order CFA of FLE adaptability model was tested against other competing models. Attempts were made to incorporate one general factor plus a number of component factors. All the model fit indices of the model i.e. one general factor plus seven component factor show improvement from those of other models thus demonstrating a best fit compared to other models.

4.7. Overall measurement model

The fit statistics of overall measurement model are (χ^2= 6396 df= 2183, $p < .0001$) C_{min}/df=2.93, the, GFI=0.91, CFI (0.92), NNFI (0.916), RMSEA 0.0672, SRMR =0.047, provided evidence of acceptable fit. Additionally, all items loaded significantly on their respective constructs. As the overall conceptual model was complex a multiple method for model building as was used. The first the model was build using the graphical user interface. The purpose of graphical user interface as suggested by Galitz (2007), is to enable ease in model building without resorting to complex programming, as the tools for model building is readily available. However, when the complexity of the model increases, the GUI (graphical user interface) loses its advantage. In other words, such a philosophy is justifiable when models are simple; however, when models are complex, programming method or script based model building is advantageous (Galitz, 2007). Hence, a visual basic script was written for this model. Both the model i.e. using graphical user interface and visual basic script yielded similar fit statistics thus confirming the model validity.

4.8. Structural model

After establishing that the measurement model has sufficient levels of validity and reliability, the study proceeded to assess the hypothesized structural model. Since multicollinearity poses problems when testing theory using structural equation modeling (Jagpal, 1982), VIF was found to be less than 8 suggestion no issues. As regards to normality, using Amos one can directly assess the multivariate normality. The value of kurtosis statistic was found to be less than the critical ratio (CR) of this statistic i.e. less than 8.00, suggesting no multivariate normality issues (Kline, 2011). As the model under consideration is a complex model, modeling the structural model with measurement model would make the model complex. Hence due to the complexity of the hypothesized model, as recommended by (Goudarzi et al., 2011), the analysis continued by converting the multi-item measures to a single-item measures, using data imputation feature with regression imputation of AMOS 18.0 (Arbuckle, 2009).This imputation of the data of measurement model is done to make a manageable model. Loehlin (2013) explicates the strategy to form composite variable of all indicators of each factor and use that as a single indicator of the latent variable, with its path fixed to the square root of internal consistency reliability (for a standardized variable) and its error fixed to residual variance. The merit of this strategy is that the investigation of the structural model is quicker, cheaper and cleaner because of the smaller matrix and the elimination of distractions from the measurement model (p.198). Gaskin (2012) provides guidelines that to create composite variables from latent factors. The fit statistics of the model is given as below. The fit statistics is elucidated in Table 6.

The standard CFA model assumes relationships between each pair of constructs. Only a saturated structural model would make this assumption. So SEM structural models attempt to explain inter construct relationship more precisely than does CFA. A structural model demonstrating an insignificant Cmin/df value with its CFA model is strongly suggestive of adequate structural fit.. The Cmin /df for structural 2.96 and measurement model is 2.93. GFI, CFI, RMSEA, SRMR of measurement model is 0.92, 0.931, 0.0612,

Table 6
Fit statistics of structural model.

CMIN/DF	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	PCLOSE
2.96	0.928	0.939	0.0424	0.0596	0.14

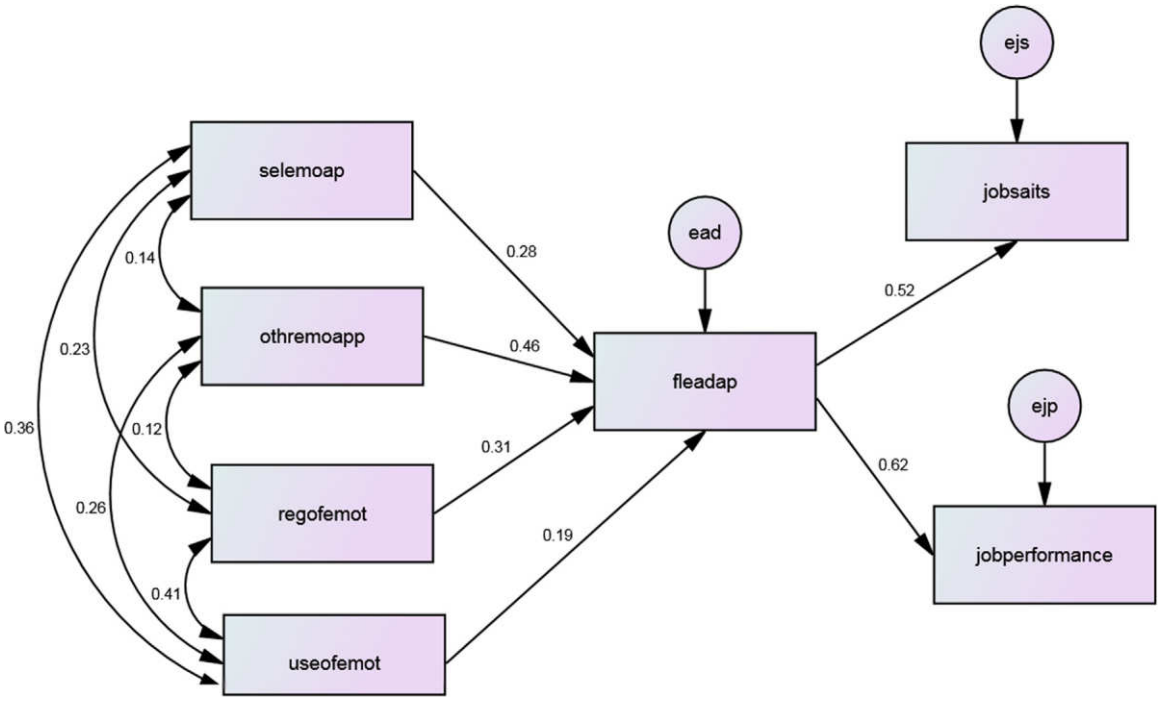

Fig. 2. Path diagram of structural model.

0.043and whereas for structural model is the, GFI=0.928 CFI=.939, RMSEA=0.0596, SRMR=0.0424. For practical purposes considering the complexity of the model these minor differences are insignificant and the structural model suggests adequate fit. The model was checked for residuals. The residuals were found to be less than the absolute value of |4|.

4.9. Path analysis results

Path analysis was performed to test the theoretical model. All analyses were conducted using the AMOS 18.0. These analyses used the maximum likelihood method of parameter estimation, and all analyses were performed. The hypothesized model was assessed by examining the *p*-values of the paths and their standardized regression weights. The significant paths had small to moderately strong size standardized regression weights. The hypothesis H1 to H6 was tested based on the path model. The structural model is given in Fig. 2 and the results of hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 7.

4.10. Moderating effect of work experience of frontline employees

Various researchers have advocated the role of work experience on the impact of emotional intelligence (Ealias and George, 2012; Hur et al., 2014). We used multi-group analysis within AMOS to assess the moderating effect of number of years of work experience on the structural model. Before conducting the analysis, however, we created two separate samples: a relatively "high" ($N=221$) and "low" ($N=296$) based on the number of years of experience of FLE. It was done on the sample based on median splitting of the data according to number of years of experience of FLE as a moderating variable. Results of the multi-group analysis are shown in Table 8. The results suggest difference in relationship between low and high experienced FLE.

We found that experience of FLE has a moderating effect on the relationship between EI and frontline employee adaptability. To be specific, The impact of self emotion appraisal on FLE adaptability was greater for high experience group ($\beta=0.28$,$p<0.05$) than for low experience group ($\beta=0.15$, $p<0.05$). Similarly the impact of others emotion appraisal on FLE adaptability was greater for high experience group ($\beta=0.46$, $p<0.05$) than for low experience group ($\beta=0.25$, $p<0.05$)

Table 7
Summary of hypothesis testing.

	Standardised estimate	C.R	*P* Value	Hypothesis	Remark
Adap[a] <– selemoapp[b]	0.28	8.32	0.001	H1	Supported*
Adap <– othremoapp[c]	0.46	12.36	0.001	H2	Supported*
Adap <– regofemot[d]	0.31	15.3	0.001	H3	Supported*
Adap <– useofemot[e]	0.19	4.31	0.001	H4	Supported*
Jobsatis[f] <– Adap	0.52	20.36	0.001	H5	Supported*
Job Performance[g] <– Adap	0.62	28.54	0.001	H6	Supported*

* Significant at 5% level.
[a] FLE adaptability.
[b] Self emotional appraisal.
[c] Others emotion appraisal.
[d] Regulation of emotion.
[e] Use of emotion adapt.
[f] Job satisfaction.
[g] Job performance.

4.11. Testing for mediation

4.11.1. Partially mediating model (theoretical model)

This model examines the impact of emotional intelligence on FLE adaptability and job outcomes i.e. job satisfaction and job performance and explores the direct influence of FLE adaptability on job outcomes.

4.11.2. Direct model

This model examines the direct impact of Emotional

Table 8
Estimated coefficients in multi-group analysis.

Estimated parameters				
Path	**Low Experience**	**High Experience**	**Test of χ^2 difference**	**Moderating effect**
Adap < – selemoapp	0.15	0.28	Significant $p < 0.05$	Yes*
Adap < – othremoapp	0.25	0.46	Significant $p < 0.05$	Yes*
Adap < – regofemot	0.29	0.31	Not Significant $p > 0.05$	No
Adap < – useofemot	0.19	0.20	Not Significant $p > 0.05$	No
Jobsatis < – Adap	0.51	0.52	Not Significant $p > 0.05$	No
Job performance < –Adap	0.63	0.62	Not Significant $p > 0.05$	No

* Significant at 5% level.

Table 9
Model comparisons of direct, partial and completely mediating.

Model	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	**df**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**RMSEA**	**SRMR**
Direct Model	52.11		1	0.896	0.872	0.0778	0.072
Partial Mediating Model	4.8	47.31	1	0.9	0.887	0.0712	0.073
Completely Mediating Model	26.46	25.65	9	0.918	0.909	0.0696	0.063
				p-value < 0.05 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 15.50$, df=8)			

intelligence and FLE adaptability on job outcomes.

4.11.3. Completely mediating model

This model assumes that the FLE adaptability is the mediating variable between emotional intelligence and job outcomes.

The fit statistics of all three models are elucidated in Table 9 and completely mediating model is best fit. The multigroup analysis was carried out for experience of FLE's and for both groups (low and high experience) FLE adaptability fully mediates the relationship between EI and Job outcomes (job satisfaction and job performance).

5. Discussions and implications

The present study extends an emerging body of research on affectivity in the workplace by testing for links between emotionality (EI), FLE adaptability and job outcomes. The results underline the important role of FLE adaptability at work in this relationship. This study found a positive relationship between emotional Intelligence and FLE adaptability. The hypothesis H1 found a positive relationship between self emotional appraisal and FLE adaptability. After seven studies on emotional intelligence, Nicola S Schutte et al. (2001) concluded, that, strong positive relations between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. This study extends the research trend by concluding that FLE who are high on self appraisal dimension of EI will have positive impact on adaptability. Self emotional appraisal relates to the individual's ability to understand their deep emotions and be able to express these emotions naturally. Hence the FLE who have great ability to understand his/her deep emotions and be able to express emotions will naturally sense and acknowledge their emotions well before most people. A possible explanation offered for such relation is offered by Gallese et al. (2007) in their seminal paper on mirror neurons. Self emotion appraisal may trigger the mirror neurons and the neuron “mirrors” the behavior of the other, as though the observer was himself acting. Clark et al. (2012) speculates that mirror neurons contribute to language abilities and Pettijohn et al. (2011) have argued that mirror neuron systems in the human brain help us understand the actions and intentions of other people leading to better interpersonal relations.

The hypothesis H2 found a positive relationship between others emotional appraisal and FLE adaptability. Others' emotional appraisal relates to peoples' ability to perceive and understand the emotions of those people around them. FLE who are high in this ability will be much more sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others as well as reading their minds. This research supports others emotional appraisal is found to be positively related to FLE adaptability. Researchers recognize the inseparability of communications and emotions. The link between cognition, emotion and communication has been the interest of many researchers (Goudarzi et al., 2011). Research also suggest that emotions result from appraisal of events, situations etc. (Vargo and Lusch, 2004) and therefore by understanding others emotions a link between cognition, emotion and communication is set through.

This research delineates an important quality in employees that cognition of others emotion appraisal suggests a positive relationship with FLE adaptability, thus rightly suggesting the importance of understanding others emotions to enable to adapt to the verbal, non verbal aspect of adaptability. FLE adaptability encompasses exhibition of multi skills to manufacture a service. It includes skills like handling uncertain or unpredictable or emergency situation etc. Vargo and Lusch (2008) explicates the importance of emotions while handling unpredictable situations, and this research corroborates their research and also takes the work further by suggesting that it is the dimension of understanding of others emotion that is positively related FLE adaptability.

FLE adaptability also includes adapting to various events in the society or having a consciousness or concern for the society. As pointed by Bar-On et al. (2004) there will be a positive relation between emotional intelligence and social skills of individuals. However this research specifically points out that others emotion appraisal is positively related FLE adaptability. FLE adaptability also comprises managing the demands of ruling and opposition party. It involves handling conflicts. Maglio and Spohrer (2008) proposed that emotional intelligence will help in handling conflicts. Gruhl et al. (2007) while studying nurses proposes that emotional intelligence helps nurses learn how to effectively handle conflict in the work environment. They further stress that developing the competencies of EI and understanding how to effectively handle conflict is necessary for nurses working in a highly stressful occupation. This study has a relevance here as nurses are also frontline employee (Belk, 2007). The present study takes the work further by suggesting that in emotional intelligence, it is others emotion dimension, which is related to handling or managing conflicts. Once an employee apprise others emotion, it removes the sting from the conflict and this leads to behaviors which leads to solving the problem.

The Hypothesis H3 found a positive relationship between Regulation of emotion and FLE adaptability. Regulation of emotion in self relates to the ability of people to regulate their emotions, which will enable a more rapid recovery from psychological

distress. This study finds that regulate the emotion in self positively related to the FLE adaptability. Previous research have recognized that there will be psychological distress, while handling customers,as they may vary from polite to abusive (Deery et al., 2002). Similar sentiments can be said about the politicians as they also tend to be at times abusive and threatening because they want to grind their own axe (Tongia, 2003). Handling group member has its own share of emotional labor as the group members objectives is to maximize their task domain in respective group or team activity (Thomas, 1976) leading to emotional problems (Yin, 2013). If an employee posses the skill to regulate the emotions in self, it will act as recovery mechanism, from these psychological distresses. Hirschman (1986) has, also proved a positive relationship between regulation of one's emotions and resilience from negative experiences. Hence, this research supports a positive relationship between regulation of emotion and FLE adaptability.

The Hypothesis H4 found a positive relationship between Use of emotion and FLE adaptability. Use of emotion relates to the ability of individuals to make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance. Use of emotion is found in this research to be related to FLE adaptability. Previous research has acknowledged that use of emotions leads to better verbal communications (Arora and Stoner, 2009) non verbal communications (Rohm, 2006) and emotional communications (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). FLE adaptability encompasses all three forms of communication like verbal, non verbal and emotional and hence, in lines with the previous research, this study also delineates a positive relationship between uses of emotion by individuals to be positively related to FLE adaptability.

The Hypothesis 5 found a positive relationship between FLE adaptability and Job Satisfaction.. Job satisfaction is operational zed in this study as collection of feelings that an individual holds towards his or her job. A positive adaptability – Job satisfaction link has been suggested by various researchers e.g. in Adapting to change (Cullen et al., 2013), adapting selling (Park and Holloway, 2003) and career adaptability (Hirschi, 2009). This work defines the seven dimensions of frontline employee adaptability and extends the work further by proving a positive relationship of all dimensions of adaptability and Job satisfaction.

The Hypothesis 6 found a positive relationship between FLE adaptability and Job Performance. Job Performance is studied, as behaviors that are relevant to organizational goals and that are under the control of individual employees (Babin and Boles, 1996; Ellinger et al., 2008). A positive adaptability –Job Performance link has been suggested by various researchers e.g. in Adapting as a role flexibility (Pulakos et al., 2002), task and contextual performance (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997).

The impact of self emotion appraisal on FLE adaptability was greater for high experience group than for low experience group. Similarly the impact of others emotion appraisal on FLE adaptability was greater for high experience group than for low experience group. Self emotional appraisal and others emotion appraisal relates to an individual ability to appraise one's own and other emotions. Ability to understand emotions improves as one experiences life events over a period of time (Izard, 2013). Therefore FLE's who are highly experienced can better understand their and others emotions, hence exhibit better FLE adaptability compared to low experienced FLE's.

6. Conclusion and limitation

Ultimately, this research explores the relationship between emotional intelligence, FLE adaptability and Job outcomes. The research confirms the positive impact of emotional intelligence on FLE adaptability. It is also found that frontline employee adaptability completely mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and Job outcomes i.e. job performance and job satisfaction. The positive relationship between FLE adaptability and job performances and job satisfaction is also confirmed. Although this study has provided relevant and interesting insights into the understanding of FLE adaptability, it is important to recognize its limitations. First, data in this study were obtained from firms in Western India. Although it can be said that the samples represent a cross-section of a large number of businesses, it would be useful to obtain a broader and wider sampling frame from other countries. Since respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior are influenced by their cultures, it would be useful to test whether the existing FLE adaptability scale can be generalized to situations in other countries. The replication of this study on a wider scale with different national cultures is essential for the further generalization of the findings

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