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**THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON
EMPLOYEE JOB EMPOWERMENT: AN EXAMPLE OF
SERVICES INDUSTRY IN ESTONIA**

Master's thesis

Programme International Business Administration

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints, and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading. The document length is 11527 words from the introduction to the end of the conclusion.

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ABSTRACT

This master's thesis study aims to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on job empowerment among private-sector employees from the services industry in Estonia. To fulfill the aim of this thesis, the author put down specific research questions. (1) What is the association between employees' emotional intelligence and job empowerment? (2) What is the effect of gender differences on the job empowerment level of private-sector employees from services industry? (3) Does work tenure have any effect on the job empowerment of private-sector employees from services industry? The author conducts a quantitative data approach using the convenience sampling method (non-probability method) to answer the research hypotheses formulated from the literature reviewed. The study's respondents are one hundred and seventeen (117) consisting of private-sector employees from the services industry in Tallinn, Estonia. Data gathered is analyzed using Statistical tests such as Pearson r, Independent t-test, and One-way ANOVA analysis.

Major findings of the study showed that emotional intelligence of employees is significantly positively correlated to job empowerment outcomes. That is employees with a high rate of emotional intelligence are empowered since they can effectively manage and understand their emotions and that of others in executing their tasks. Gender difference of employees was revealed by the study findings to be insignificant with regards to job empowerment. This means gender does not affect regards to employee job empowerment at work and that it possesses the same potentials of being empowered irrespective of gender differences. Lastly, longer work tenure of employees is observed to have a significant effect on job empowerment. It is revealed from the study's findings that, employees with longer work tenure (work experience) are more empowered than those with shorter work tenure. This means a longer employee work tenure, therefore enhances working knowledge and experience which are crucial constituents of job empowerment outcomes at work.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, employee job empowerment, private-sector employees, gender differences, work tenure

INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, scholarly attention has been given to how a firm or an organization can increase its production to make a profit for the progress of the organization without most often considering the productivity of its employees (Aldoory, Toth, 2004). According to (Mathisen, Einarsen 2004), organizations (public and private) in today's rapidly changing environment are being confronted with greater economic and social change and also the competition that makes continuous revitalization and adaptation vital. Thus, the achievement of an organization may be dependent on its capability to adapt and cope with changes in the environment (Baker, 2000). (Spreitzer, 2007) stipulated that about 70% or more of organizations in recent years have implemented empowerment initiatives among their employees.

In today's management, empowerment initiatives have become a prevalent management strategic restructuring and adrift in organizations because of their expected potential for increasing organizational effectiveness and innovation (Spreitzer, 2007). Thus, employee empowerment is deemed necessary in an organization to assist put employees in a better position in responding speedily to any changes in the environment and in making good decisions. Organizational strategies that exist in an organization that promotes empowerment and work commitment tend to encourage ingenuity and innovation among employees have been progressively known as keen elements for organizational long-term survival (Mathisen, Einarsen, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Empowerment has undoubtedly been associated with positive outcomes of increasing organizational effectiveness (e.g., Ongori, 2009; Spreitzer, 2007). However, limited studies have been researched with regards to private-sector employees but contribute immensely to the growth and success of organizations and the country at large (Aldoory, Toth 2004; Lau, 2010). Again, research studies that consider employees' empowerment especially private-sector employees are alarmingly limited (Spreitzer, 2007). Therefore, some researchers have recommended and emphasized the need for further research in this area (Barbuto et al, 2006; Goleman et al, 2002). Moreover, for organizations to achieve effectiveness and adeptness in their operations, it is of high significance that organizations consider employees' emotional intelligence to have the capability to cope and understand the feelings of themselves as well as others advancing them towards empowerment (Mayer et al, 2003). Nevertheless, research is still on-going on how an organization

can be sharpened to inform employees' empowerment by considering how they can effectively understand and manage their emotions and that of others (e.g., Goleman et al, 2002). This, therefore, means more research is needed in the expanse of emotional intelligence and empowerment because of its expected potential benefits for making employees productive (e.g., Spreitzer, 2007) for the achievement of organizational goals.

This study thus seeks to augment the existing literature, debate, and findings on the impact of employees' emotional intelligence on job empowerment with emphasis on private-sector employees in Estonia. The central aim of this master thesis is to assess the influence of emotional intelligence on employee job empowerment among private-sector employees from services industry in Estonia. This study is significant because there are many private-sector employees from multi-cultural backgrounds and therefore the need to investigate how emotional intelligence influences their work empowerment. To fulfill the study's aim, the author has put down the research questions and hypothesis.

1. What is the association between employees' emotional intelligence and job empowerment?
2. What is the effect of gender differences on the job empowerment level of private-sector employees from services industry?
3. Does work tenure have any effect on the job empowerment of private-sector employees from services industry?

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There would be a significant positive association between emotional intelligence and employees' job empowerment (e.g., Udod et al, 2020; Kaur, Sharma 2019; Ahmed et al, 2016)

Hypothesis 2: Male private-sector employees will be more empowered with work than female private-sector employees (e.g., Aydin et al, 2011).

Hypothesis 3: Private-sector employees who have worked more than 10 years will be more empowered with work than those who have worked below 2 years, 2-5 years, and 6-10 years (e.g., Raghavan, Janardhanan, 2019).

In the context of this present study, the targeted sample were private-sector employees only, within the geographical territory of the capital city of Tallinn, Estonia, the city with the largest population from the services industry. The sample constituted of both male and female private-sector employees across the services industry in the private sector, taking into perspective their gender differences, age, educational level, and work tenure. The convenience sampling method under the non-probability technique was used to sample respondents with their consent sorted for. Since the

world, in general, is facing this global epidemic coronavirus (COVID 19), the study was carried out electronically using a standardized online questionnaire (Appendix 1) and designed in Google forms survey, where respondents received and responded to the questionnaires online to prevent any contacts. The study utilised standardised questions; Emotional Intelligence (EI), (Mayer et al, 1999; $\alpha=.71, .75, .83$) and employees' Empowerment scales, (Chiles, Zorn, 1995; $\alpha=.89, .88$). The study adopted a cross-sectional research design using the quantitative research approach which is concerned with a generation of data in a numeric form that is subject to critical quantitative analysis for the objective of making an inference. The choice of this design was to permit the collection of more data and information regarding respondents in a relatively shorter period and it was suitable since the study engaged respondents of diverse ages, gender, experience (tenure), and educational level, across private-owned companies from the services industry within the private sector in Tallinn, Estonia. Statistical analysis was employed to the correlations and dependencies utilizing Pearson r (correlation between emotional intelligence and employees' empowerment), Independent t-test (the difference between gender and job empowerment), and One-way ANOVA (the difference between the levels of work tenure and job empowerment).

Organization of the study:

This thesis consists of an introduction, three main chapters of the body, and a conclusion.

- The introduction entails the study's background, statement of the research problem, research questions, hypothesis testing, and organization of the study.
- In the first chapter, the author reviews the literature of the study, gives an overview of previous research, and presents the theoretical framework.
- Chapter two focuses on the research methodology. It entails areas like research design, Target sample, sample size estimation, methods of data collection, and sampling procedures.
- In chapter 3, the author captures the research findings, analyses the data collected, and discusses findings in answering the research questions.
- The conclusion contains summary of the core research findings, theoretical implications, practical implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Finally, the author of this thesis would like to thank his supervisor Merle Ojasoo for her constant support and assistance during this research.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section describes the theoretical framework, review of related studies, and conceptual framework. The theoretical framework sets the premise that offers the foundation for understanding the current study. The related review discussed what other researchers have found about the research area understudied.

This section provides a set of related statements that describe a variety of occurrences and consequently sets as a supporting structure around which systematic and organized display of data can be built. (Cresswell, 2012) concluded that quantitative studies must be essentially grounded on a theory serving as the framework for the study. The theoretical framework of the current study is hinged on the ability model framework of emotional intelligence, mixed model of emotional intelligence, and the theory of structural empowerment.

1.1 The concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is seen as a set of core competencies for identifying, processing, and managing emotions that enable an individual to cope with daily demands in a knowledgeable, approachable, and supportive manner (Goleman et al, 2002). The context of emotional intelligence (EI) of employees in their quest for job empowerment examines the capability of an employee's capacity to cope and understand the feelings exhibited towards others as well as accepting their feelings (Mayer et al, 2003). Emotional intelligence encompasses the feeling of others and effectively handling relationships thereby crucially contributing a set of skills for responsive employees. Furthermore, emotional intelligence stimulates employees' forbearance, confidence, and control which are core elements of empowerment.

Emotional intelligence provides workers access to their resources which are branded by self-awareness and the ability to motivate oneself to carry out tasks effectively, be creative, and perform well (Akerjordet, Severinsson, 2007). Neurobiological research in recent years has created a paradigm shift in organizational behaviour literature, demonstrating the significance of taking the intelligence of feelings seriously (Goleman et al, 2002). Employees mostly in organizations are faced with the dilemma of managing their feelings so as not to show negatively towards one another and to their superiors.

An employee who can manage his emotions can both appreciate and regulate their feelings which invariably supports them from piling up the negative emotions that can impact negatively on their job output. In several ways, emotional intelligence provides for employees' new potential in terms of reciprocal symbiotic interaction that is entrenched in a social context (Yukl, 2006). The attempt to apply emotional intelligence to leadership, satisfaction, innovation, empowerment, etc. has started to emerge in the literature (Barbuto et al, 2006; Goleman et al, 2002). Also, emotional intelligence serves as a buffer for employees in developing a healthy mood in understanding a complex situation in working with the paradoxical nature of human beings. Thus, emotional intelligence engenders employees' satisfaction, motivation, and engagement which intend to empower them (Goleman et al, 2002).

1.2 Measuring and understanding Emotional Intelligence (EI)

In measuring EI, it is noted that many models have been adopted and designed and these include the Boston EI measure, Emotional Quotient Inventory, Work Personality Index, and many others. All the EI measures are however built around theoretical models and frameworks which provide the criteria for analysis and measurement.

Goleman in 1998 propounded a framework to outline five key elements for identifying, measuring, and understanding emotional intelligence, which included the following as cited in (Goleman,1998). The five keys Goleman specified are Self-awareness (understanding one's self, emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and appearance to others); Self-regulation (the ability to control one's emotional impulses, actions, and reactions and bring the emotional side under the subjection of the logic and analytical thought processes of decision making); Motivation (the will and drive to move forward in the face of setbacks, negative emotions and remain focused for success); Empathy (the capacity to not only read other people's emotions but relate to those emotions, understands them, and utilize them for success. Empathy specifies the capability to put one's self in the shoes of others and see things from their perspective or viewpoint) and Social skills (the ability of a person to interact, communicate and relate with others in much the same way every time despite their emotional state at that particular time).

1.2.1 The Mixed Model

The mixed model was developed by (Goleman, 1995). The mixed model emphasizes on a collection of emotional and social capabilities comprising the capacity to be conscious of, comprehend, and express oneself; the capability to be cognisant and develop alliance with others. It also concentrates on the facility to deal with sturdy emotions and the capability to adapt to change and curb problems of a personal and social nature (Bar-On, 1997). Bar-On conjectures that persons with greater than middling emotional intelligence are in broad-spectrum, more successful in responding to environmental pressures and demands. Bar-On further stipulated that a paucity in emotional intelligence is seen as a paucity of accomplishment and the reality of emotional problems. Bar-On posited that there are problems of persons coping with their environment most especially with those persons lacking in reality testing including subscales, stress tolerance, problem-solving, and controlling of impulse. Bar-On in broad-spectrum cogitates emotional and cognitive intelligence to augment equitably to a person's general intelligence. This, in turn, provides a signal of a person's perspective to thrive in life (ibid).

Goleman's model differed from Salovey and Mayer's emotional intelligence model in the sagacity that he added a few personality traits like trustworthiness, innovation, etc. which has also earned the criticism that it was unreasonably all-encompassing" (Locke, 2005). Furthermore, (Goleman, 2001) believes that these emotional competencies are not innate talents but those that can be learned and developed. In turn, the prospective to advance these emotional competencies becomes dependant on an individual's emotional intelligence which he believes is a concealed and innate talent. While emotional intelligence is seen as natural, emotional competencies are the product of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, therefore, engenders emotional competencies which is a crucial element for the empowerment of employees.

1.2.2 Ability model framework of Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Peter Salovey and John Mayer first developed that theory of emotional intelligence in 1990 and this pure theory integrated concepts from the grounds of intelligence and emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). From the intelligence theory, intelligence includes the capability to carry out abstract reasoning, and emotional research which emphasizes the notion that emotions are indications that transport steady and discernible meanings about relationships that several basic emotions are universal. (Mayer et al, 2004) suggest that persons differ in their aptitude to process information of emotional nature and in their facility to relay emotional processing to a broader cognition. This capability then is perceived to be apparent in certain adaptive behaviours.

The ability model framework of emotional intelligence is hinged on cognitive-emotional ability which acts as the theoretical underpinnings regarding emotional intelligence and job empowerment. Emotional intelligence is frequently indicated to advance performance assessments and manage anomalies. According to (Mayer et al, 2003, p. 10) individuals' emotions exhibited at the workplace are explained as a "state of unified feeling comprising of physiological changes, motor preparedness, cognitions with regards to individuals' actions and inward experiences".

Furthermore, emotional intelligence was consequential in human endeavours and for this reason, (Mayer et al, 2003) deemed it necessary by accentuating the ability to investigate individuals' EI at work. Furthermore, (Goleman et al, 2002) posited that emotional intelligence comprises four dimensions integrated into the personality of individuals. The four dimension includes self-awareness (the capability to comprehend and accurately engage in self-assessment of one's feeling), self-management (capacity to manage one's internal impulses, states, and resources), Social awareness (the capacity to understand other people's emotions) and relationship management (capacity to engage in interaction with others constructively to attain a positive outcome).

Again, (Laschinger et al, 2015) stipulated that a link exists between a vital constituent of emotional intelligence and the capacity of employees to workplace challenges. They further revealed that this pattern is vital to employee empowerment. The model also describes it as a demonstration of abilities that 'link emotion and intelligence' to expand or amplify individuals' thoughts to accomplish individuals' empowerment and satisfaction at work. The emotional intelligence ability model, according to (Mayer, Salovey 1997), abilities ranges on a continuum from the realization of emotions to the management of emotions.

The holistic emotional intelligence is indicated as coalescing abilities that segregate into four levels specifically emotional perception, usage of feelings to aid thought, comprehending, and regulation of feelings (ibid). According to them, the emotional perception of a person's capability to ascertain fundamental emotions in segments is plausible to precede the ability in the individuals' perception of faking expressions of emotional feelings. The relevance of this section reveals a positive relationship that exists between employees with EI and job empowerment. It however relates to the research question of finding out if employees' high emotional intelligence is likely to impact their job empowerment.

1.3 The concept of Employee Empowerment

According to (Ongori, 2009), empowerment involves decision making, motivation, trust, and breaching the inner boundaries among employees and organizational management. Employee empowerment according to (Griffith et al, 2008) is also known as an effort made by organizations that intensify employees' perceptions of control, autonomy, and capacity to affect the bigger system in the organization of which they form part. Moreover, employee empowerment is seen as an organizational innovative strategy of working with employees and a swing of power from the higher management control to the lower level of organizational management (Tzafrir et al., 2004). It was further posited that employee empowerment in an organization enhances greater job satisfaction, innovation and learning, and robust organization commitment which predicted employee lower turnover. Several approaches speculated in management literature posits that empowerment in an organization enhances and encourage employee. For instance, as suggested by (Ugboro, Obeng 2000) organizational strategies like task identity, opportunities for career development, performance-based reward system, job enrichment, and task meaningfulness at the workplace that offers work autonomy are identified as ways of empowering employees in organizations.

1.3.1 Theory of structural empowerment

Kanter expanded version of structural empowerment theory serves as the theoretical underpinning in understanding the concept of empowerment in the context of this study (Laschinger et. al., 2001). With this theory, the crucial idea is that structures within the organization provide employees with the control to effect and complete tasks (Kanter, 1993). This power according to Kanter is seen as the capability to accomplish tasks through the mobilization of resources to achieve organizational goals. Kanter however, categorized this power as formal and informal.

According to Kanter formal power is links to the individual's discretion, recognition, visibility, and significance to the attainment of the organizational goals (ibid). Informal power offers an elucidation of power developed through coalitions with supervisors, peers, and subordinates within the organization. The assumption here is that formal and informal clout influence employees' access to opportunity, resources, support, and information (ibid). Structures within an organization with regards to access to opportunities afford a means to learn and grow in one's job leading to greater commitment, motivation, and innovation. This however suggests that employees lacking

opportunities in the organization feel stuck in their jobs with lower job expectations and organizational commitment.

Furthermore, this theory posits that employees must have access to resources, information, and support including materials, fiscal resources, suppliers, and time engender them to become productive thereby achieving organizational goals. Again, employees must have access to formal and informal knowledge required to be productive. Moreover, information to employees provides an understanding of organizational practices not only concentrating on technical knowledge. According to the structural theory, access to support includes receiving guidance and feedback from supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Access to support offer much encouragement of employees' engaging in original thinking, autonomous decision-making, risk-taking thereby reducing the hierarchy of approvals required (Greco et al, 2006). This theory suggests that organizational structures comprising of access to resources, information, and support provide access to empowering resources, making employee competencies pivotal to job empowerment in an organization (Kanter, 1979; Greco et al, 2006).

1.4 Review of Related Study

This section reports and reviews similar studies about what other researchers have done on the variables under study. This review affords a basis for the justification for the study in addressing gaps in previous studies.

1.4.1 Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Employee's Job Empowerment

A study conducted by (Udod et al, 2020) examined the effect of emotional intelligence on empowerment and in determining how these perspectives shape employee work experiences. The study employed a qualitative descriptive design adopting in-depth interviews. The study also employed a purposive sampling technique in selecting middle-level managers who report directly to a chief executive officer of a large non-profit organization located in rural western Canada. The study's sample size constituted fifteen (15) middle level managers who report unswervingly to the CEO. The study findings established that emotional intelligence constructs are necessary tools to build associations and empower employees and hence creating enhancing conditions for creativity at work.

Again, (Kaur, Sharma 2019) aimed to study factors affecting employees' work performance by concentrating on the impact of emotional intelligence on the work performance of employees. The study adopted secondary data for analysis and discussion based on literature. It was observed from the study that; emotional intelligence had a positive influence on employees' work performance. It was indicated that emotional intelligence constructs are vital for empowering employees leading to better work performance. Again, it was further posited that the greater the emotional intelligence of employees, the higher they experience job satisfaction, commitment, empowerment, job performance, and reduced turnover intention.

(Lakshmi, Sekhar-Rao 2018) further assessed the association between emotional factors and employee performance. The study adopted data from diverse secondary sources to establish the theoretical examination of emotional intelligence and performance. Findings from the study showed emotional intelligence had a direct positive relationship with the performance of employees at work. Furthermore, the study established emotional intelligence creates awareness, learning from one another, sharing of knowledge, creating trust and concerns for others which are important elements for job empowerment.

(Chirasha et al, 2017) also conducted a study to explore the alliances between the emotional intelligence of managers and performance. The study adopted a purely quantitative descriptive survey of Kwekwe, and Gweru city council located in Zimbabwe. The study utilised the purposive sampling technique to sample thirty-two (32) line managers by which stratified random sampling was also used to select four hundred (400) employees as a sample for the study. From the study findings, there existed a positive significant association between emotional intelligence and performance. The study further concluded that emotional intelligence had a substantial influence on managers' empowerment at the workplace leading to better performance of executing their tasks.

A study conducted by (Liberty, Kida 2017) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on employees' work performance. The study adopted standardized questionnaires in data collection. The study's sample size constituted one-hundred and twenty-one (121) employees of six organizations from mixed industries operating in Maiduguri Borno State, Nigeria. The study employed Chi-Square in testing the analyses formulated. It was found out from the study findings that; employees' emotional intelligence was a more potent drive for successfully achieving performance at work. Again, emotional intelligence must drive more in achieving empowerment

at work than monetary reward or status and hence recommended that more attention should be offered to an employee as an incitement to drive performance.

(Ugoani,2016) explored the association between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness. The study utilised the survey research design which is useful for dealing with a particular subset of a larger population. The study's population was the people staying in Abia State, Nigeria. The study sampled 352 respondents ranging from age 21 and 65 using a simple random sampling technique. From the findings, it was realized that emotional intelligence had a substantial positive association with organizational competitiveness as well as a positive significant influence on empowering employees. It was further indicated that emotional intelligence is positively significantly linked to workplace success.

(Ahmed et al, 2016) examined the impact of emotional intelligence on the rate of performance of employees. The study employed standardized questionnaires as a means of gathering data. The study sample size was two hundred and thirty-five (235) employees from higher educational institutions in three cities located in Pakistan. Statistical tests such as correlations and regression were utilized to analyse and test the formulated hypotheses. The study findings revealed a substantial positive association between emotional intelligence and employees' performance. Additionally, emotional intelligence was a significant tool for driving empowerment thereby engendering creativity and innovation in the workplace.

(Atiq et al, 2015) did a study to find out the association between emotional intelligence and empowerment, commitment, and organizational structures. The study adopted a standardized scale of measurement for emotional intelligence, empowerment, and institutional structures. The study utilized 231 sample size constituting employees from different universities in Islamabad. Again, the study employed correlations and regression statistical tests for the analysis. It was revealed from the study findings that, emotional intelligence had a substantial positive association with employees' empowerment, commitment, and organizational structures

(Suehs,2015) conducted a study to examine if there is a statistically significant association between frontline managers' and supervisor's emotional intelligence and engagement at work of their direct report. The study employed non-experimental and quantitative analytics in testing the formulated hypothesis. Again, a bivariate association method of Pearson r was utilized to test the potential correlation between the emotional intelligence among frontline supervisors and managers and employee involvement for their unswerving reports. The study employed five hundred and eighty-

five (585) employees for the analysis. The study's findings provided support for a significant association between emotional intelligence, employee engagement, and empowerment at work.

Moreover, (Gunu et al, 2014) further investigated the effect of emotional intelligence on organizational commitment and performance of employees within the manufacturing industry. The research study adopted a descriptive survey design. Again, the study randomly disseminated two hundred and six (206) to respondents. However, out of the 206 questionnaires distributed, only one-hundred and twenty (120) were returned and used for the analysis making the study's sample size 120. The study revealed a significant positive association between emotional intelligence on organization commitment, empowerment, and performance. The study further suggests that emotional intelligence is a crucial factor for empowering employees to be competent in handling and managing emotions which contributes to better performance.

Also, a study conducted by (Lucas et al, 2008) explored the perception of nurse manager's emotional intelligence leadership style and structural empowerment, and the impact of the span of control on emotional intelligence and empowerment relationships.

The study utilized a descriptive correlational survey design to test the hypothesized model within two community hospitals located in Ontario, Canada. The study sample size was two hundred and three nurses (203) within these two hospitals with a 68% response rate. The study findings showed that the extent of control had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between nurses' perception of emotional intelligence of their managers and feelings of empowerment at the workplace. Again, it was emphasized that emotional intelligence had a substantial positive association with job empowerment. However, managers with strong emotional intelligence may not empower their staff with a larger span of control above their reach.

Furthermore, (Akerjordet, Severinsson, 2008) did a study to examine the amalgamation of the literature on the empirical and theoretical basis of emotional intelligence and its alliance with leadership, well-being, and empowerment. The study focused on nurse leaders working in a hospital. The study engaged in a literature search utilizing international databases with the coverage from the period January 1997 and December 2007. The study employed eighteen articles that were included in a thorough integrative review. From the study, the emotional intelligence of nurse leaders was significantly associated with job empowerment processes alongside positive organizational outcomes. Conclusively, the study posited that emotionally intelligent nurse headship is characterized by supervisory and self-awareness skills which leads to positive job empowerment processes engendering a favourable work climate.

Another study conducted by (Jorfi et al, 2010) investigated managers' and employees' performance levels of Iran's educational administration, focusing on the understanding of the emotional intelligence of both managers and employees and its association to job performance. The study utilized one hundred and fifty (150) managers and employees of educational administrations in Iran. Findings from the study indicated that emotional intelligence is a vital factor for organizational performance. It was further indicated that emotional intelligence had a positive significant impact on employee empowerment which enhances the rate of performance of superiors and employees in educational administrations of Iran.

Moreover, it can be asserted that organizational competitive advantage is associated with good work behaviours approved by empowered employees in organizations. The existence of empowerment at the workplace creates employees feeling of being the key proponents to the accomplishment of the organization which boosts employees' confidence in their capacity to significantly add to the attainment of organizational goals and objectives (Chan et al, 2008). It was further posited that employees become committed to achieving organizational objectives with the help of empowerment initiatives since it places employees at the centre of the organization rather than on the fringes. Also, it means that a change that occurs in an organization is stimulated by employees and empowerment is a keen strategy that expedites the practice of positive organizational change. However, organizational factors such as role clarity, organizational culture, learning, climate to mention but few influence employees' empowerment at the workplace (Avolio et al, 2004). This study, nevertheless, assessed how emotional intelligence influences employee empowerment in an organization.

1.4.2 Demographic variables (gender & tenure) and employee's job empowerment

A study conducted by (Raghavan, Janardhanan 2019) found out one important factor which is the tenure of work and its influence in enhancing and improving performance. Again, the role of psychological empowerment was also evaluated. The study utilised a quantitative research approach. The study consisted of two hundred and thirty-nine (239) supervisory staff in tile manufacturing companies. The study findings depict that both work tenure and empowerment are positively associated with employees' performance such that longer work tenure enhances empowerment due to many experiences with the work environment. Again, tenure did not affect performance in the presence of empowerment.

(Tshilongamulenzhe, Takawira, 2015) conducted a study to explore the role of gender differences on the work engagement levels of employees. The study adopted a quantitative non-experimental cross-sectional survey design. The study employed one hundred and fifty-four (154) university employees with a South African University. A purposive sampling method was utilized in selecting respondents for the study as a sample. The study findings revealed an insignificant statistical effect of gender differences on employees' level of work engagement and empowerment. The study emphasized that gender does not affect empowering employees if the same opportunity and resources are distributed fairly at work.

(Baijal, 2013) explored the effect of demographic variables on employee empowerment. The study utilised the survey research design and utilizing a standardized scale of measurement in data collection. The study employed 100 Middle and Lower-level managers in Union Bank of India. Findings of the study established that gender had no significant effect on employee empowerment and therefore no need to make independent policies for both males and females. However, the educational level had a significant effect on empowerment.

Furthermore, (Aydin et al, 2011) did a study to determine the impact of gender on empowerment and organizational commitment of teachers. Fifteen masters' and doctorate done between 2005-2009 were analysed using Meta-analysis produce in Turkey. In this segment, the procedures that were carried out for data collection, coding of the studies in terms of the principles determined the definitions of the independent and dependent variables. At the end of the research study, it was found that the gender impact on empowerment and organizational commitment and was in the favour of males though insignificant. Further analysis of demographics was also investigated indicating that employees with longer tenure and good educational background were more committed and empowered than those with shorter tenure at work.

However, (Sinangil, Ones 2003) conducted a study to explore gender differences in the performance of expatriates at work. For the research study, expatriates from thirty-six (36) countries around the world were employed. The respondents in the study were completely voluntary. Two hundred and twenty expatriates currently on international assignments in Turkey but one hundred and ninety-three constituted the sample for the research study. One hundred and sixty-four (164) were males and twenty-nine (29) were females. The result of the study showed that men and women expatriates on average were rated quite similarly in terms of empowerment and their job performance.

Almost all the studies reviewed above were done outside the shores of Estonia and hence become necessary to replicate in the Estonian context to offer deeper explanations. This study focused on the impact of emotional intelligence on job empowerment among private-sector employees in Tallinn, Estonia from the services industry.

1.5 Proposed Conceptual Framework

According to (Maxwell, 2005) a ‘conceptual framework’ is a graphical or narrative explanation of the key concepts and constructs or variables and the presumed associations between them.

(Rocco, Plakhotnik, 2009) further posited that the conceptual framework objective is to classify and define concepts significant to the study and map associations among them. It is in this light that the author proposed the below conceptual concept which demonstrates two variables: emotional intelligence and job empowerment among private employees in Tallinn. Figure 1 below assimilates the earlier discussion into the conceptual framework.

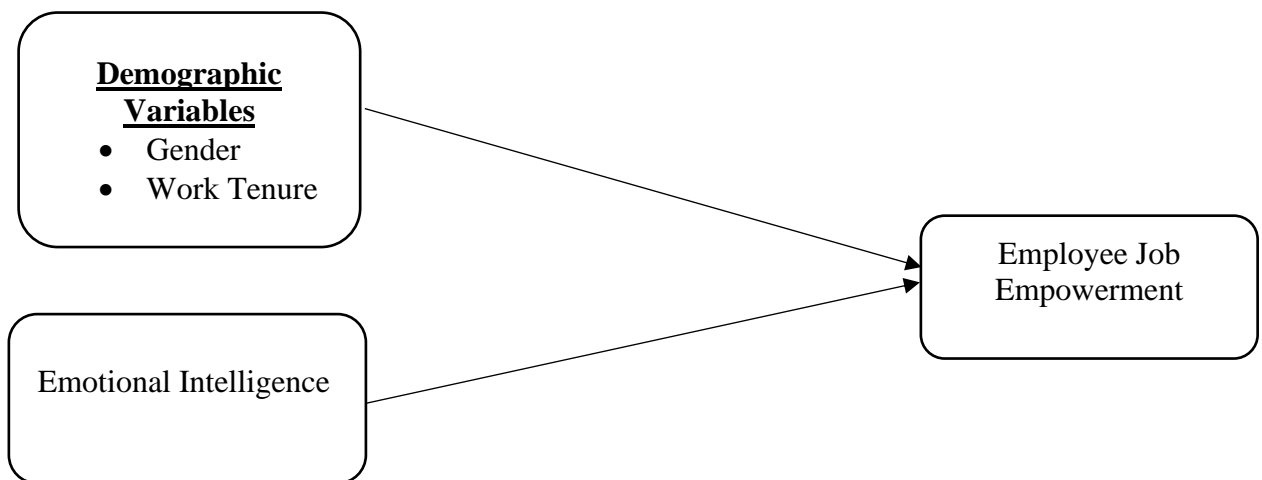


Figure 1. Conceptual framework
Source: Created by the author

Figure 1 illustrates the schematic representation of the hypothesized relationship between the respondent’s demographic variables (personal variables) on the dependent variable (employee job empowerment). It is hypothesized that personal variables such as work tenure and gender differences are likely to significantly influence employee job empowerment. It is also hypothesized that emotional intelligence would have a significant positive association with employee job empowerment.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter gives a detailed explanation of the research methodology utilized for the study and this includes research design, targeted sample, sampling technique, data collection method, and procedures. The positivism approach utilizing quantitative analysis of statistical tests to analyse the research data collected. The reason for this methodology shows that the study is hinged on facts from data gathered and renders independence of the study without any interference. Again, the positivism research methodology is accepted as being objective.

2.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was utilized for the present study. According to (Babbie, 2004), this form of survey design is grounded on observations representing a single point of time. Thus, this design was used because data was collected on the study variables at a single point in time with a questionnaire for analysis. According to (Bartlett, 2005), survey design was deemed appropriate because it is quantifiable and generalizable to an entire population if the population is sampled appropriately and also permits for the collection of more data and information regarding respondents in a relatively shorter period. Moreover, it is suitable since the study engaged respondents of diverse ages, gender, experience (tenure), and educational levels.

According to (Punch, 2005), it is a study of this nature that attempts to survey participants across an extensive spectrum in a situation with regards to social research. With the utilization of this survey methodology, questionnaires were utilized to solicit information from participants, which ensured that many participants were covered. Thus, the cross-sectional design is more comprehensive with the comparative precision with which a target variable is affected by diverse demographic variables. Moreover, this design is chosen for the fact that it is the most appropriate for the study which is concerned with finding out the relative accuracy with which the dependent variable could be predicted using several predictor variables (Brewerton & Millward, 2001).

Instruments/Measures

The questionnaire constitutes a demographic section and standardized measuring instruments to measure Emotional Intelligence (Mayer et al, 1999) and Employee Job Empowerment (Chiles & Zorn, 1995). Already existing and standardized instruments were utilized as a means of measurement of the variables being understudied.

Demographics

The first section of the questionnaire captured the demographical data of participants which consisted of gender (male and female), age, educational level, and work tenure.

Independent/Dependent Measures / Instruments

Emotional Intelligence (EI), (Mayer et al, 1999)

The EI scale was captured in section two of the questionnaire. The measurement of EI comprised of three established dimensions which include MSCEIT Version 2, Self-Rated EI, and Genos EI Version (Mayer et al, 1999). Each subscale was rated by a 5-point Likert scale, that ranges between one (Never) to five (always). Twenty-one (21) items were used to measure EI, e.g. *‘I respond appropriately to events that frustrate me; I fail to handle stressful situations on the job effectively’* ($\alpha=.71, .75, .83$).

Employees’ Empowerment, (EE) (Chiles, Zorn, 1995)

The EE scale was captured in section three of the survey. The scale comprises two subscales namely competence ($\alpha=.89$) and control/autonomy ($\alpha=.88$) which consisted of four items each (Chiles, Zorn, 1995). Some examples of items under competence are, “I feel competent to perform the tasks required for my position; I feel adequately prepared to perform my job”. Also examples of items of control/autonomy are, “my manager trusts me to make the appropriate decisions in my job; I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job”. Participant was asked to rate their level of empowerment about their work on 7-point Likert-type scale for each subscale that ranges between one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). High scores represent high employee empowerment.

2.2 Targeted Sample and Size Estimation

The targeted sample considered in the present study were private-sector employees from the services industry in Estonia. The choice of this sample was strategic in the sense that, the author wanted to assess the impact of emotional intelligence on job empowerment specifically in Tallinn, the city with the largest population in measuring whether emotional intelligence, gender difference, and work tenure had any influence on employee job empowerment in the services industry, one of Estonia's most important industries. Tallinn known to be a cultural hub has many diverse private-sector employees of multi-cultural backgrounds working in private-owned companies within the services industry and hence the sample selected will serve as a representation of employees within the services industry domain in Tallinn, Estonia with less difficulty. Again, the targeted sample aligns with the theoretical and practical relevance to the research as a whole. A sample of 117 respondents representing private-sector employees from the services industry in Tallinn, Estonia consisting of both males and females were sampled. (Tabachnick, Fidel, 2007) rule of thumb was adopted as the basis of this sample size. Their assumption was that $N > 50 + 8(m)$, where (N = sample size) and (m = number of variables) considered in the study. Since there are 2 variables (emotional intelligence and empowerment), the sample size was estimated to be greater than 66. Therefore, the sample size of 117 was justified. The reason behind this sample size was that a greater sample size increases the likelihood of the rationale that sample statistics represent the population appropriately. Statistical tests such as Pearson r , Independent t -test, and One-way ANOVA analysis were utilized in analysing the hypothesis formulated.

2.3 Data Collection Method

Purposive and convenience sampling methods (non-probability method) were utilized in selecting private-sector employees from services industry. Data was obtained mainly from participants through the distribution of survey links, by strictly joining for the purpose of research, different social, work, and job group pages on social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn based in Tallinn, Estonia mainly focusing on employees in the services industry. Distribution of survey links was also made through email addresses to respondents based on convenience and availability. A few members of major social group pages such as "Work in Estonia", "Jobs in Estonia" etc were contacted directly by the author and requested their email addresses.

A list of (37) email addresses was compiled, and questionnaire links were distributed to these emails. Survey links were also distributed by Facebook messenger to personal friends and colleagues living in Tallinn and working as private sector employees from the services Industry to fill up the survey. According to (Kumekpor, 2002) convenience sampling is seen as selecting an appropriate group of participants for the aim of data collection for a study. Instruments for the study were distributed to respondents who willingly accepted to partake in the study.

The questionnaire included an introduction section and reason for the research, which informed the respondents on their; Right to Refuse Participation, Confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary response due to the sensitive nature of the survey. The author's name and e-mail address were provided for respondents who might need clarification on questions that are not clear to them.

The further rationale behind the selection of this sampling method was due to the restricted time frame for the accomplishment of the present study, the purpose of proximity, fewer costs, very simple and easy. A limitation lies in its inability to offer an equal chance to the population to be part of the sample. (Brewerton & Millward, 2001) however stipulated that convenience sampling though not grounded on the principle of probability sampling procedure, is tremendously effective in predicting outcomes.

2.4 Procedures

Standardized questionnaires (Appendix-1) comprising the emotional intelligence and employee empowerment scales were disseminated electronically in English only, using Google forms survey to private-sector employees from services industry in Estonia because of the safety protocols of Covid-19. The principle of informed consent stipulated in the ethics codes that guide research was used in obtaining participants for the study. After reading the informed consent in the introduction section, those who volunteered to partake in the study were utilized by clicking the link to the questionnaire to fill and thus, clearly understood that the study was eligible for only private-sector employees from the services industry in Estonia. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic and increasing confirmed positive cases daily in Tallinn, the link to the online survey was active and closed after 12 working days (15th October 2020- 1st November 2020) to enable sufficient time for the respondents to complete the questionnaire for data collection.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The current study sought to assess the influence of emotional intelligence on employee job empowerment among private-sector employees from services Industry in Tallinn, Estonia. With regards to this thesis and as already stated in the literature review; three hypotheses were tested utilizing the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Though the Author targeted 120 sample size, however, 117 valid responses were completed and used for analysis. Hence, the study's sample size was 117. The chapter has been set into three sections. The first section is the preliminary analysis, and the second section captured the various hypotheses proposed and tested. The chapter finally ends with the observed model, summary, and discussion of the research findings.

3.1 Preliminary Analysis

Summary of the results are presented in tables 1 and 2 below:

For the variables studied, the analysis consisted of testing for reliability, normality, and computing descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Summary of Means, SD, Reliability, Skewness, and Kurtosis of Emotional Intelligence and Employee Job Empowerment.

Variable	Mean	SD	α	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Intelligence	66.91	7.86	0.63	0.10	0.58
Employee Job Empowerment	43.34	8.99	0.90	-0.89	0.35

Source: Author's calculation

The preliminary analysis consists of testing for normality, computing descriptive statistics, reliability, skewness, and kurtosis for the core variables understudied.

For normality, the curve of skewness should not exceed +1 and it must be less than -1. Again, Kurtosis is utilized to measure the steepness or flatness of the data suggesting that the range for the kurtosis should be between -3 to +3, otherwise the data is not normal. The study's data however falls with this normality and hence normality test for skewness and kurtosis indicated no problem in this study. (Appendix 2-Table 9). The reliability coefficients of the study variables were examined by computing Cronbach's alpha. From the analysis, the alpha values for all the scales

were found to be above the threshold of 0.60 reported as appropriate for psychometric analysis (Wells & Wollack, 2003). The reliability coefficients ranged from 0.63 to 0.90 (Table 1). These consistency coefficients computed boosted the confidence of the Author in the use of the scales as the reliability of the scales was confirmed and established.

Table 2. Summary of Demographic Characteristics of Sample.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
• Male	63	53.8
• Female	54	46.2
Age Groups		
• 18-25yrs	10	8.5
• 26-30yrs	42	35.9
• 31-40	41	35.0
• Above 40yrs	24	20.5
Educational level		
• Secondary education (SHS)	5	4.3
• Diploma	8	6.8
• Bachelor's Degree	43	36.8
• Master's Degree	52	44.4
• PhD	9	7.7
Work Tenure		
• Less than 2yrs	13	11.1
• 2-5 years	30	25.6
• 6-10years	41	35.0
• Above 10years	33	28.2

Source: Author's calculation

From table 2 above, out of 117 respondents sampled, 63 were males representing 53.8% and 54 females representing 46.2%. For age groups, the study employed 10 respondents between 18-25years representing 8.5%, 26-30years were 42 representing 35.9%, 31-40years were 41 representing 35.0% and lastly above 40years were 24 representing 20.5%.

For Educational level, 5 respondents had completed secondary education representing 4.3%, 8 respondents hold Diploma representing 6.8%, 43 were bachelor’s degree holders representing 36.8%, 52 were master’s degree holders representing 44.4% and lastly, 9 of these respondents were Ph.D. holders representing 7.7%. Regarding tenure, respondents who have worked less than 2years were 13 representing 11.1%, 2-5years were 30 representing 25.6%, 6-10years were 41 representing 35% and above 10years were 33 representing 28.2%.

3.2 Testing hypotheses

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), Independent t-test, and One-Way ANOVA were used in the hypothetical tests. The Pearson r was used to analyse H1 to find out the extent to which emotional intelligence relates to employees’ job empowerment. The Independent t-test was used to analyse H2, with gender differences in the display of job empowerment at work. Finally, the One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test was used to analyse H3 by examining the mean difference of work tenure (less than 2years, 2-5years, 6-10years, and above 10years) on job empowerment of employees.

Hypothesis 1: There would be a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee job empowerment.

Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test this hypothesis. Pearson r as a parametric test was used by the author to examine the association between emotional intelligence and job empowerment.

A summary of the results is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Pearson r statistics indicating the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employee’s Job Empowerment. Source: Author’s calculation

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r	p
Emotional Intelligence	117	66.91	7.86	116	0.22**	0.01
Employee Job Empowerment	117	43.34	8.99			

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05

Source: Compiled by the Author

From the table 3 above, the result indicates a significant association between emotional intelligence and job empowerment ($r_{(116)} = 0.22, p = 0.01$). Therefore, the hypothesis that “*There*

would be a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employees job empowerment” was supported. (Appendix 2-Table 9).

Hypothesis 2: Male employees will be more empowered at work compared to their female counterparts.

The Independent t-test as a parametric test was used by the author to examine the difference between two independent samples (male and female) on job empowerment.

The results are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Summary of Independent t-test showing gender differences relative to employee’s Job Empowerment.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Male	63	44.29	8.89	115	1.23	0.11
Female	54	42.24	9.06			

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05

Source: Author’s calculation

Results from table 4 indicate that there statistically insignificant difference between males and females with regards to their job empowerment at work [$t_{(115)} = 1.23, p = 0.11$]. At 0.05 level of significance, males (M = 44.29; SD = 8.89) did not differ from that of females (M= 42.24; SD = 9.06). Though males scored slightly higher than females on job empowerment but were statistically insignificant rendering both male and female employees on the same level in terms of empowerment at work.

The gender effect on employee’s job empowerment was insignificant since it failed to meet the necessary significant difference to emerge male sex superior over the female gender. Therefore, the hypothesis that “*males will be more empowered at work compared to their female counterparts*” was not supported. (Appendix 3-Table 10).

Hypothesis 3: Private-sector employees who have worked more than 10years will be more empowered with work than those who worked below 2 years, 2-5 years, and 6-10 years.

This hypothesis was analyzed using One-Way ANOVA since there was one factor (work tenure or experience) having several levels such as below 2 years, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, and more than 10 years compared to job empowerment.

The result is revealed in Table 5.

Table 5. A Summary of the Means and Standard Deviation of Work Experience differences to Job Empowerment of Employees (N=117).

Work Tenure	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Less than 2yrs	13	33.62	8.57
2-5yrs	30	41.73	9.02
6-10yrs	41	41.90	8.06
Above 10yrs	33	50.42	3.90
Total	117	43.34	8.99

Source: Author's calculation.

From table 5 above, employees that have worked above 10 years scored highest (N=33, M=50.42, SD=3.90), followed by those worked 6-10years (N=41, M=41.90, SD=8.06), followed those who have 2-5years (N=30, M=41.73, SD=9.02) and lastly those who have worked less than 2years (N=13, M=33.62, SD=8.57). (Appendix 4-Table 11).

Table 6. Summary of One – way ANOVA results for the performance of the four groups

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Between Groups	3047.71	3	1015.90	18.14	0.00
Within Groups	6328.61	113	56.01		
Total	9376.33	116			

Source: Author's calculation.

From Table 6, there was a statistically significant variance among the 4 groups at the 0.05 significance level [$F(3, 113) = 18.14, p=0.00$]. To determine the exact groups that contributed to the difference, multiple comparison analysis was assessed, using Bonferroni-Post Hoc Test. Table 7 shows a summary of these results.

Table 7. A Summary of Multiple Comparisons of Mean difference of Employee's Work Tenure (Experience) Less than 2yrs, 2-5yrs, 6-10yrs, Above 10years.

	Less than 2yrs	2-5yrs	6-10yrs	Above 10yrs
Less than 2yrs	-	-8.12*	-8.28*	-16.81*
2-5yrs	-	-	-0.17	-8.69*
6-10yrs	-	-	-	-8.52*
Above 10yrs	-	-	-	-

** $p < .05$

Source: Author's calculation

From the table 5, 6 & 7 above, the results showed that there was statistical substantial variance work tenure (experience) of employees [less than 2yrs (N =13, Mean = 33.62, SD = 8.57), [2-5yrs (N = 30, Mean = 41.73, SD = 9.02), [6-10yrs (N = 41, Mean = 41.90, SD = 8.06) and Above 10yrs (N= 33, Mean = 50.42, SD= 3.90)] with their mean differences being significant, on job empowerment [$F_{(3,113)} = 18.14, p < .05$].

Thus, from the multiple Comparisons-Post Hoc test (Appendix 5-Table 12), it was realized that employees with more than 10years working experience were more empowered at work than the other groups with a statistically significant mean difference of 16.81, 8.69, and 8.52 when compared with less than 2years, 2-5years and 6-10years, respectively. This implied that employees with longer work tenure exhibited greater empowerment levels at the workplace than employees with shorter and moderate work tenure. Hence, the hypothesis that *“Private-sector employees who have worked more than 10years will be more empowered with work than those who have worked below 2 years, 2-5 years and 6-10 years”* was supported by the current data.

3.3 Observed Model

The observed model of this study illustrates the schematic representation of the observed significant positive association between the predictor (emotional intelligence) and its effect on criterion (employee job empowerment). Furthermore, the independent variable, work tenure had a positive significant correlation with job empowerment. This demonstrates that the longer the employee work tenure the more they become empowered and vice versa. The summary is presented in figure 2 below.

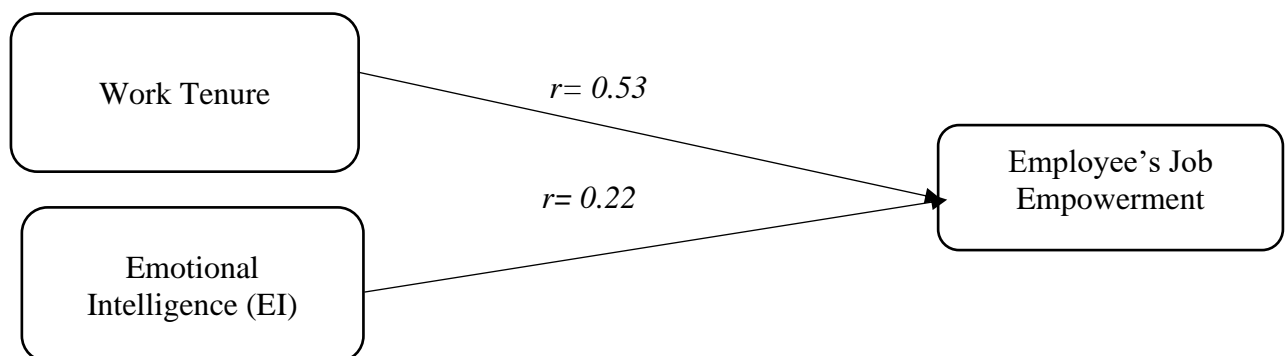


Figure 2. Observed model
Source: created by the author

3.4 Summary of research results

Hypothesis 1 stated that *there would be a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' job empowerment* was supported demonstrating that as the emotional intelligence of employees increases their job empowerment as well increases too.

Again, hypothesis 2 which stated that *males will be more empowered at work compared to their female counterparts* was not supported. The result appears to be statistically insignificant depicting that gender differences of employees had no effect on job empowerment.

Lastly, hypothesis 3 stated that *private-sector employees who worked more than 10years will be more empowered with work than those who worked below 2 years, 2-5 years, and 6-10 years* was supported. This demonstrates that longer work tenure correlates significantly positively with employee job empowerment. Summary of the study's finding is presented in table 8 below showing each of the 3 hypotheses with their corresponding illustrations and outcomes.

Table 8. Summary of hypotheses, illustration, and outcomes.

Hypothesis No.	Illustration	Outcome
Hypothesis 1:	<i>There would be a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' job empowerment</i>	Supported
Hypothesis 2:	<i>Males will be more empowered at work compared to their female counterparts</i>	Not Supported
Hypothesis 3:	<i>Private-sector employees in services Industry who have worked more than 10 years will be more empowered with work than those who have worked below 2 years, 2-5 years, and 6-10 years</i>	Supported

Source: created by the author

3.5 Discussion of Research findings

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Job Empowerment

The present study offers additional insight into how emotional intelligence is related to employee job empowerment in private companies from the services industry in Tallinn, Estonia. Hypothesis 1 stated that emotional intelligence will correlate positively with employee's job empowerment. From the result of the correlation analysis, the findings revealed a significant positive association between emotional intelligence and job empowerment, and this was supported in accordance with the current study's results.

In reference to the Ability Model framework of Emotional Intelligence, (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), it was posited that the ability of an employee to effectively handle and manage one's emotion and intelligence expand or amplify the individuals' thoughts to attain job empowerment. This means employees with high levels of emotional intelligence are more empowered than their counterparts with low emotional intelligence. The present study's result confirms this claim.

The study's findings are exactly in line with the works of (Mayer et al 1997; 2003) who suggested that in the perception of emotion, the ability of individuals to ascertain fundamental emotions by understanding their very own emotions and that of others could handle and manage work properly and it also influenced their work empowerment.

Moreover, research has also established that when the employees lack emotional intelligence, it is likely to lead to anger, redundancy, resentment, fear, and disappointment at management which causes work dissatisfaction leading to disempowerment (Adil & Kamal, 2016). Again, the result of this research study confirms (Kanter,1995) structural empowerment theory. According to this theory, when employees have access to empowering work structures, they have the propensity to achieve emotional intelligence and feel motivated through the understanding of their emotions and that of others to get things executed effectively at work.

This however means that, when employees possess a higher level of emotional intelligence in empowering work structures, they become astute in decision-making, influence, acceptance of responsibility, control, and willingness to actively be involved with work leading to empowerment. This study's finding is also consistent with the work of (Udod et al, 2020) who posited that employees' emotional intelligence at work is a strong predictor of work empowerment. Meaning, employees who have better control of their emotions with other colleagues at the workplace are always happy and empowered since they fully understand the meanings of behavioural attitudes. The assumption here is that employees possessing higher emotional intelligence effectively manage their emotions and others' which affords them the capability to be in control of their work

thereby empowering them. Hence, they manage their responses to these attitudes suitably to prevent conflict and confrontations to live at peace with others at the workplace. Thus, understanding one's emotions and others in the work setting engender empowerment at work since emotional intelligence stimulates the emotional stability of employees which is a crucial constituent of achieving empowerment, (Kaur & Sharma, 2019).

Furthermore, EI at the workplace reduces employees' negative attitudes such as resentment, disappointments in management, uncertainty to mention but a few, and helps them to gain stable emotions in executing their organizational tasks (e.g., Lakshmi & Sekhar-Rao, 2018; Adil & Kamal, 2016). This makes them comfortable in directing resources, effort, and energy towards the accomplishment of organizational goals. The finding means that employees in a normal situation are more prospective to attain empowerment at work if employees are helped with how they can effectively and properly manage their very own emotions and that of others as emotional intelligence significantly relates to job empowerment. This finding, therefore, means that employees' emotional intelligence significantly predicts employee job empowerment at the workplace (e.g., Chirasha et al, 2017; Atiq et al, 2015).

Additionally, in the investigation of the literature and the present study findings. Emotional intelligence is shown to play a keen role in employees' empowerment at the workplace. Considering the situation in Tallinn where the study was conducted, work demands and pressures especially for private-sector employees are prevalent and deemed consequential for employees to attain emotional intelligence. This means lack of emotional intelligence of employees connecting with supervisors, co-employees, etc. affects their work output decreasing their work satisfaction leading to disempowerment. This explains that regardless of all these difficulties especially for private-sector employees in Tallinn encounter, their ability to holistically understand and properly manage their emotions and that of their colleagues enhances empowerment at work.

Emotional intelligence on the employees' part regardless of the difficulties at work brings about satisfaction as revealed in the study's findings.

These findings are mirrored in previous research emphasizing that emotional intelligence of employees affords them the capability to comprehend the emotions, feelings, and needs of others in effectively managing positive and negative emotions exhibited at the workplace (Cote, 2017). The emphasis here is that employees with emotional stability can work diligently with their superiors, co-employees, etc. by achieving confidence in taking control of work thereby leading to job empowerment. The emotional intelligence of employees pushes them to do more than what would normally be expected in activating positive emotions to ensure creativity at the workplace leading to empowerment.

Gender and Employee's Job Empowerment

Hypothesis 2 stated that male private-sector employees will be more empowered than their female counterparts. The findings of this study however did not support this formulated hypothesis. As it showed a statistically insignificant difference between males and their female colleagues in terms of their empowerment level at work. The results revealed by the present study could be interpreted to strengthen the contention of those like (Tshilongamulenzhe, Takawira 2015; Baijal, 2013) who posited that, men and women on average are rated quite similarly in terms of work empowerment. They further suggested that males and females appeared to feel empowered and specifically felt that they have more control with regards to themselves and their work tasks. This was true across the specific components that make up the construct of empowerment.

However, the current study's findings are contrary to some past research such as (Aydin et al 2011) who emphasized that the gender of employees in an organization might drastically differ in terms of empowerment and will be in favour of males. Moreover, the findings explain that the issue of gender does not necessarily make a difference in terms of the particular employee's empowerment since both genders can be empowered if they are equally equipped with the necessary resources and skills to perform their tasks without any discriminations at work (Sinangil et al, 2003).

Thus, males and females feel empowered with their work when they feel part of the organization's decision making, have equal opportunities and have some kind of autonomy about their work roles.

Work Tenure and employee empowerment

Findings observed from the data analysis indicate significant support for hypothesis 3 which states that private-sector employees who worked more than 10 years will be more empowered than those who worked below 2 years, 2-5 years, and 6-10 years. This however suggested a differential effect of tenure on employee job empowerment at work. From the study findings, it was realized that employees with longer working years (above 10 years) were more empowered followed by moderate working years (2-5 years and 6-10 years). Moreover, employees with shorter working years (below 2 years) at work were less empowered.

The present study results are similar to the findings of (Raghavan, Janardhanan 2019) that establish a significant positive association between longer tenure and employee job empowerment. This can be explained by the fact that working for a long period in a particular organization affords the employees to gain much experience and competent enough to exercise autonomy over their work engendering empowerment. Also, the result of the study further indicated that longer work tenure affords employees with knowledge and experience to speed up their learning process and become competent to actively exercise some level of autonomy over their work.

The finding is also coherent with previous studies (e.g., Aydin et al, 2011; Raghavan & Janardhanan 2019) suggesting that employees with longer tenure stand a higher chance of becoming empowered than those with shorter tenure at work.

Another assertion by (Spreitzer, 2007) indicated longer work tenure of employees enhances empowerment because they easily become competent through experience with regards to the learning process of the work. It can therefore be argued that employees with long years of working become more empowered than those with shorter working years which reflects the findings from this study. This means employees with longer working years gain much working experience at work and gives them the advantage to gain more knowledge and work experience thereby becoming competent when given training at work which engender empowerment. This, therefore, makes it feasible to realize that employees with longer working years were more empowered than those with shorter working years.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to assess the influence of emotional intelligence on employees' job empowerment among private-sector employees from the services Industry in Tallinn, Estonia. To fulfil the study's aim, the author put down the following research questions:

1. What is the association between employees' emotional intelligence and job empowerment?
2. What is the effect of gender differences on the job empowerment level of private-sector employees from services industry?
3. Does work tenure have any effect on the job empowerment of private-sector employees from services industry?

The current study provides important theoretical implications for especially organizational management scholars. The study's finding contributes to the body of knowledge in organizational management, internal characteristics for exceptional management in organizational achievement with regards to employee's job empowerment. The organization's systemic nature is crucial in determining its employee's empowerment in the achievement of organizational goals. This however emphasized that the empowerment of private-sector employees in Tallinn, Estonia from the services industry is facilitated by the ability of these employees to effectively manage their emotions and relate well with others.

The first research question of this thesis was “what is the association between employees' emotional intelligence and job empowerment”?

The study findings present a strong association between emotional intelligence and job empowerment outcomes. This suggests a new direction for management in empowerment studies in the context of their relationships with employees' emotional intelligence. It also extends the efforts in examining possible internal drivers for employee's job empowerment in the organization revealing that employees' ability of effectively managing their emotions and that of others facilitate empowerment at work. Furthermore, it also investigated the emotional intelligence construct from a multidimensional perspective, offering insight into the unique meanings and implications. The assumption is that employees with emotional intelligence possess stable emotions that stimulate creativity and control in executing their tasks. The body of research would greatly benefit from future efforts to refine existing multidimensional measures of emotional intelligence and further establish its relationships with job empowerment outcomes.

The study suggests that for management to facilitate empowerment of their employees at work, managers not only have to satisfy employee's psychological efficacy but their power needs, needs for decision-making authority, and autonomy through equipping their employees with a higher rate of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence of employees fosters healthy relationships between colleagues, subordinates, and team leaders/managers which engenders an atmosphere of creativity and innovativeness. Emotional intelligence positively impacts empowerment outcome making employees believe that they have the skills and abilities to do their work and they can influence the system in which they work with stable emotions.

This explains that emotional intelligence of employees plays a very significant role in employees' job empowerment because no matter the work situations, employees with higher emotional intelligence comparable to those with lower EI can cope, adjust and relate effectively with colleagues at work thereby making them take full charge of their work leading to empowerment. This will help Human Resources to tailor programs that will facilitate to develop the emotional intelligence capacity of employees in the attainment of empowerment. The implication of this is that emotional intelligence of employees stimulates and facilitates empowerment outcomes that are geared to increase worker output in the quest for achieving organizational goals.

Moreover, emotional intelligence of employees has been indicated to contribute immensely to the employees' empowerment at work. This means management, in collaboration with the Human Resources departments would need to incorporate training programs centred on enhancing the emotional intelligence capacity of employees to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge. This will effectively help employees to comprehend and manage their very own emotions and that of their colleagues to enable them to foster good working relations. This, therefore, leads to empowerment at work as employees become creative, innovative, competent, and exercise control and autonomy in executing their tasks.

The second research question of this thesis was “What is the effect of gender differences on the job empowerment level of private-sector employees from services industry”?

The study findings depict the insignificant effect of gender differences on empowerment outcomes. This means gender has an insignificant effect on job empowerment and therefore both males and females have the same level of achieving empowerment at work. This study has enhanced our understanding of empowerment outcomes, job performance, and organizational evaluation aspects of employing people as far as gender is concerned. Furthermore, gender differences have been shown in the study to be insignificant with regard to employee job empowerment. This means that males and females at the work setting can equally be empowered

if provided with the necessary resources, skills, and knowledge without recourse to prejudice, stereotype, or discrimination in the distribution of work resources. The results showed a statistically insignificant difference between male and female employees suggests that equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and skills should be discharged for both male and female employees with regards to their organizational obligations. This, therefore, depicts that there should be a need for management to maintain this for the accomplishment of organizational goals. Moreover, in these modern times, there is no justifiable reason for excluding or limiting employee with regards to gender. Gender-based employee selection is indefensible in terms of job empowerment outcomes at work.

The third research question of this thesis was “ Does work tenure have any effect on the job empowerment of private-sector employees from services industry”?

Longer work tenure of employees has been posited by the study’s finding to have a significant positive association with job empowerment outcomes. The practical implication here is that management and stakeholders of organizations must make the necessary or put in place measures to retain and ensure longer working years of their employees. This will, however, propel them to achieve more knowledge, control, and working experience which is a vital constituent of enhancing job empowerment at work. Longer working years of employees are significantly linked with experience, creativity, competencies, and control of employees in effectively executing their tasks which in turn leads to empowerment.

Limitations of the study

Although this study is useful for understanding the emotional intelligence model and its impact on employees’ job empowerment pertaining to private-sector employees from services industry in Tallinn, Estonia; the study faced several limiting factors. Firstly, the geographical scope of the current thesis was a small sample size of 117 private-sector employees from services industry working in Tallinn, Estonia. This limitation of sample size is the result of the outburst of coronavirus (COVID-19) making it difficult for the author in getting more respondents. Though the author adopted online questionnaires to make it easy for people to respond yet still many people could not respond to the online questionnaires sent to them. Due to such a small sample size, the restricted result although relevant to private-sector employees in various private companies from the services Industry may limit generalizability across the whole population.

Secondly, some other constructs relevant to the individual prospects like employee ‘s attitude, behavior, and personality traits i.e., locus of control, leadership, social support (leader-member

exchange relationships) were not investigated; these could be investigated to predict the person-to-person variation of job empowerment level.

Lastly, the hypothetical relationships considered in this research are verified through the cross-sectional data and utilizing a quantitative approach. This approach however is limited in offering an in-depth understanding of employees' emotional intelligence and empowerment outcomes. Future research, therefore, should develop mixed methods by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a holistic and in-depth understanding of the models of emotional intelligence and empowerment outcomes of employees at work.

Recommendation for future research

The limitations acknowledged open up the opportunities for future studies. Future research should include the extended coverage of sample size by utilizing a larger sample size and focus on the inclusion of diverse geographical areas (other metropolitan cities and regions). Again, a larger sample selection must be expanded across the public-sector employees and other diverse institutions like manufacturing, electronics, etc as this study focused on private-sector employees from the services industry.

On the organization's end, the influence of employee training and development for the enhancement of emotional intelligence can also be focused for future studies specifically for the jobs in which employees are supposed to be available for more hours monotonously and get physically and emotionally depleted to achieve empowerment outcomes.

Other studies can also focus on the examination of job empowerment over various development stages of a person. Since employee job empowerment is normally seen to vary among young and old employees, young employees are inclined to be motivated, loyal, adapt to change, switch jobs, and react to the deteriorative circumstances as compared to the older ones who remain entrenched in their job throughout their life. Hence, job empowerment should be highlighted varying with the demographics, personality variables, locus of control, leadership, social support, etc. since all these can also influence levels of empowerment of employees.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

The actual questionnaire was designed using Google forms survey, but as it was not possible to download in that actual format, therefore the questions are captured here to show what they were.

Dear Respondent,

My name is Saadi Nabil Basbous, studying for a master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) at Tallinn University of Technology (TAL-TECH). I am researching the title "The influence of emotional intelligence on employee job empowerment: An example of services industry in Estonia". I kindly ask you to take a moment and fill this questionnaire survey.

Participation in this project is anonymous, voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw at any time. To make this questionnaire valid, Kindly note that **ONLY PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYEES** from the services industry in Tallinn, Estonia are eligible to take part in this survey!!

Your response to all the questions will be appreciated. Your decision whether to participate in this study will not in any way be prejudicial to you.

All information obtained in this project will be kept private and confidential and would be used for purposes of research only.

For any further questions or inquiries, you may have, concerning this questionnaire it may be forwarded to me: saadibasbous23@gmail.com

Thank you for your cooperation!

Please answer the following questions about you, your job, and your organization by ticking:

Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

Age: 1. 18-25yrs 2. 26-30yrs 3. 31-40yrs 4. Above 40yrs

Please indicate the highest level of education you obtained: (please tick one)

Secondary education (SHS)

Diploma

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Ph.D.

Number of years worked:

(1) Less than 2 years (2) 2-5years (3) 6-10 years (4) More than 10 years

The following Statements relate to certain instances (emotions) we experience in life. Use the scale below as a guide and tick the number that fits you most in front of each statement.

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**
Never **Seldom** **Sometime** **Usually** **Always**

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5
I respond appropriately to events that frustrate me.					
I fail to handle stressful situations at work effectively.					
When I am under stress, I become impulsive (emotional).					
I take criticism from colleagues personally.					
I am effective in helping others feel positive at work.					
I effectively deal with things that annoy me at work.					
I appropriately respond to colleagues who frustrate me at work					
I fail to keep calm in difficult situations at work.					
I help people deal with issues that cause them frustration at work					
I remain focused when anxious about something at work.					
I fail to resolve (find solutions to) emotional situations at work effectively.					
When upset at work I still think clearly.					
I do not know what to do or say when colleagues get upset at work					
I have problems dealing with my feelings of anger.					
When someone I know is in a bad mood, I can help the person calm down and feel better quickly.					
I can handle stressful situations without getting too nervous.					
I know the strategies to make or improve other people's moods.					
I can handle the most upsetting problems.					
I am not very good at helping others to feel better when they are feeling down or angry.					
I know how to keep calm in difficult or stressful situations.					
I am the type of person to whom others go when they need help with a difficult situation.					

Source : Emotional Intelligence (EI), (Mayer et al, 1999)

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement on the employee's empowerment by marking one of the seven alternatives below each statement, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree*, 3=*somehow disagree*, 4=*neither agree or disagree*, 5=*somehow agree*, 6=*agree*, 7 = *strongly agree*.

ITEMS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel competent to perform the tasks required for my position							
I feel adequately prepared to perform my job							
I am confident about my ability to do my job							
I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities							
I have the authority to make the decisions that need to be to perform my job well							
My manager trusts me to make the appropriate decisions in my job							
I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job							
I have considerable opportunity for interdependence and freedom in how I do my job							

Source: Employees' Empowerment, (Chiles, Zorn 1995)

Appendix 2- Table 9. Descriptive statistics for correlation of EI & EE

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS										
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis			
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	117	44.00	91.00	66.9145	.72690	7.86258	.097	.224	.581	.444
Employee Empowerment (EE)	117	15.00	56.00	43.3419	.83118	8.99057	-.885	.224	.351	.444
Valid N (listwise)	117									

Correlation is significant at the 0.05
 Source: SPSS output, Authors calculations

Appendix 3- Table 10. Independent Samples Test results for Gender differences in Employee’s Job Empowerment

INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
EE	Equal variances assumed	.031	.860	1.229	115	.221	2.04497	1.66364	-1.25037	5.34032
	Equal variances not assumed			1.227	111.606	.222	2.04497	1.66607	-1.25625	5.34620

Correlation is significant at the 0.05
Source: SPSS output, Authors calculations

Appendix 4- Table 11. Descriptive statistics for Work Experience differences on Job Empowerment of Employees

EE	DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS							
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					less than 2yrs	13		
2-5yrs	30	41.7333	9.02079	1.64696	38.3649	45.1018	20.00	56.00
6-10yrs	41	41.9024	8.06475	1.25950	39.3569	44.4480	21.00	56.00
above 10yrs	33	50.4242	3.89736	.67844	49.0423	51.8062	41.00	56.00
Total	117	43.3419	8.99057	.83118	41.6956	44.9881	15.00	56.00

Source: SPSS output, Authors calculations

Appendix 5- Table 12. Multiple Comparisons of Mean difference of Employee’s Work Tenure (Experience)

MULTIPLE COMPARISONS

Dependent Variable: EE

Bonferroni

(I) WorkTenure	(J) WorkTenure	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	2-5yrs	-8.11795*	2.48495	.009	-14.7913	-1.4446
less than 2yrs	6-10yrs	-8.28705*	2.38204	.004	-14.6840	-1.8901
	above 10yrs	-16.80886*	2.45056	.000	-23.3898	-10.2279
	less than 2yrs	8.11795*	2.48495	.009	1.4446	14.7913
2-5yrs	6-10yrs	-.16911	1.79801	1.000	-4.9977	4.6594
	above 10yrs	-8.69091*	1.88785	.000	-13.7607	-3.6211
	less than 2yrs	8.28705*	2.38204	.004	1.8901	14.6840
6-10yrs	2-5yrs	.16911	1.79801	1.000	-4.6594	4.9977
	above 10yrs	-8.52180*	1.75018	.000	-13.2219	-3.8217
	less than 2yrs	16.80886*	2.45056	.000	10.2279	23.3898
above 10yrs	2-5yrs	8.69091*	1.88785	.000	3.6211	13.7607
	6-10yrs	8.52180*	1.75018	.000	3.8217	13.2219

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source : SPSS output, Author’s calculations

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