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## Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among repatriates: repatriation adjustment as a mediator

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**Abstract:** Job satisfaction is a crucial variable that positively influences personal and organisational outcomes. The influence of emotional intelligence on employee satisfaction has been well documented in the literature, but lack of studies found such research among repatriates. This study aims to investigate the influence of repatriates' emotional intelligence on job satisfaction through repatriation adjustment. The study was conducted with 96 repatriates who have at least two years of expatriation experiences. The proposed relationship was assessed through structural equation modelling with SmartPLS. This study found that emotional intelligence enables repatriates to adjust their repatriation transition better and better adjustment enhances their job satisfaction. Unexpectedly the proposed relationship between emotional intelligence and satisfaction was not significant as expected. However, this study found that the relationship between emotional intelligence and satisfaction absorbed by repatriation adjustment. This study contributes to the literature by empirically investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence and satisfaction among repatriates and by introducing adjustment as a mediator on this relationship. The implication for organisation and individual, limitations of the study and avenue for future research has been discussed.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence; satisfaction; repatriates; repatriation; adjustment; transition; expatriation.

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## 1 Introduction

The increasing globalisation of economies has increased the internationalisation of the business. Practitioners and research scholars endlessly telling that the internationalisation of businesses is generating unique managerial challenges, especially challenges to human resource management. However, despite considerable advances in our understanding of the expatriation stage of international assignments, the literature on repatriation remains incoherent and lacking (Chiang et al., 2018; James and Azungah, 2019) and there is a pressing need for a better understanding of repatriation phase (Chiang et al., 2018; James, 2019).

Repatriation is the phase in which individuals (repatriates) return to their home organisation after completing their international assignment (Akkan et al., 2018). Repatriates return to their home country with valuable knowledge, skills and expertise, and they have become unique assets to the organisation (Chiang et al., 2018). When employees (repatriates) are happy with their work and work environment, they are encouraged to employ their valuable talents in the organisation and share their expertise with other members of the organisation. Also, satisfied employees are always loyal and committed to their organisation, want to remain at their home organisation and engage in their work. Therefore, repatriates' satisfaction can be an essential variable of determining the success of both the organisation and repatriates. Because of the positive consequences of employee satisfaction, it has been a critical variable of interest in much organisational research. The considerable number of studies focused on employee job satisfaction and highlighted the number of personal, organisational and environmental variables as the determinants of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, it is surprising that a study on satisfaction among repatriates is relatively scant.

Upon repatriation, repatriates undergo adjustment process, and during this process, they overcome repatriation related stress and challenges through successful adjustment. Adjustment theorists in the area of domestic relocation (Ashford and Taylor, 1990; Nicholson, 1984), overseas adjustment (Black et al., 1991) and repatriation adjustment (Black et al., 1992) noted that moving to a new place creates uncertainty and there is the need for individuals to reduce uncertainty. The repatriation adjustment is the "transition from a foreign culture back into one's home culture" [Adler, (1981), p.343]. It is the experience of reintegrating into their home context, having stayed in different surroundings for a considerable period (Adler, 1981). Upon repatriation repatriates experience a shock called 'reserve-cultural shock'. Reserve-cultural shock smashes the expectations of both organisation and repatriates. Upon repatriation, repatriates experience a feeling of alienation, uncertainty and stress, and high turnover (Black et al., 1992; Brookfield, 2015; Suutari and Brewster, 2003).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an ability of individuals to communicate, influence, initiate change and accept change (Goleman, 1998). EI 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 et al., 2000a, 2000b). EI as consisting of abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification, to regulate one's moods and keep distressed from swamping the ability to think, empathies and to hope (Goleman, 1995). Also, individuals with higher levels of EI are more likely or more able to engage in collaborative conflict resolution. Such abilities and competencies may facilitate repatriates to overcome repatriation related issues and make them satisfied. In the

repatriation context, repatriates with high EI can better adjust to their repatriation, and better adjustment leads to satisfaction among repatriates.

The influence of personal and environmental factors on employees' satisfaction has been well documented. Repatriation is a transition from the host country to home country organisation, and this transition is associated with repatriates feeling of stress, uncertainty and loss of control (Black et al., 1992; Brookfield, 2015). Individual-level resources are the key variable that enable individuals to overcome their transition stress and challenges (Gruman and Saks, 2013) and make employees satisfied during a stressful time. Stevens et al. (2007) highlighted the importance of repatriates' individual-level resources on their satisfaction and found that lack of repatriate's self-adjustment capabilities adversely affects their satisfaction. Therefore, this study mainly focuses on repatriate's EI which is an individual-level resource that can facilitate repatriates' transition and their satisfaction. According to socialisation resource theory (SRT) (Gruman and Saks, 2013) resources facilitate repatriates to adjust their repatriation transition better, thus leading to positive organisational and individual outcomes. Therefore, EI as a resource can enhance repatriates' job satisfaction through repatriation adjustment. However, the influence of EI on adjustment and satisfaction among repatriates has not been examined so far.

Therefore the present study aims to identify to what extent EI influence repatriation adjustment and satisfaction. Also, this study aims to investigate the mediating role of repatriation adjustment in the relationship between EI and job satisfaction among repatriates. Unsuccessful repatriation can cost to both organisation and repatriates. For organisation, it is not only the financial cost (investment on expatriates) also it is a cost in terms of lost skill knowledge and networks that repatriates acquired and developed during their expatriation (Chiang et al., 2018). For the individual, unsuccessful repatriation creates cost in terms of loss of control, stress, frustration, and loss of motivation and well-being (Black et al., 1992; Chiang et al., 2018; James, 2019). Therefore, this study by investigating EI, adjustment and satisfaction among repatriates, particularly by investigating the mediating role of adjustment on the relationship between EI and satisfaction contributes to both the literature and practice.

## **2 Literature and hypotheses**

### *2.1 EI and adjustment among repatriates*

Repatriation adjustment is a process of re-adjusting into the home context, having stayed overseas for a significant period (Chiang et al., 2018). Large numbers of studs on repatriation steadily telling that the process of repatriation adjustment was more severe than what repatriates expected, and their overseas adjustment (Akkan et al., 2018; Chiang et al., 2018). Upon repatriation, repatriates experience reverse cultural shock, which lasts approximately a year to a year-and-a-half for repatriates to fully adjust (Adler, 1981; Akkan et al., 2018; Black et al., 1992). Upon repatriation, repatriates see the home context as unfamiliar, and they need to re-adjust and settle into that context (Lee and Liu, 2007). In the process of repatriation adjustment, repatriates attempt to reduce uncertainty and achieve a degree of fit with the different aspects of the home context (Black et al., 1992; Judge, 1994).

EI is "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 action"

[Salovey and Mayer, (1990), p.189]. EI has been explained through three theoretical approaches (Palmer, 2007; Palmer et al., 2007). The first approach (ability model) views EI as the ability related to identifying and controlling emotions. In this approach intelligence and emotions are linked, and highlight EI is a cognitive and mental capability of an individual in understanding and managing emotions (Mayer et al., 2004). The second approach sees EI as a trait and suggests EI as a skill can be learned, and it leads to superior performance at work (Bar-On et al., 2006). The third approach (competency model) views EI as a set of emotional competencies that can be learnt (Goleman, 2001). According to Goleman (2001), it is a combination of a set of emotion-related competencies that can be learnt. Though there are three approaches to EI these are complementary but not contradictory (Palmer et al., 2007).

Goleman (1995) defines EI as consisting of abilities such as being able to motivate one and persist in the face of frustration, to control impulses and delay gratification, to regulate one's moods. Individuals with EI can:

- a know emotions, recognising feelings as they occur, and discriminating between them
- b handle feelings, so they are relevant to the current situation and appropriately react
- c 'gather up' feelings and directing towards a goal, despite self-doubt, inertia, and impulsiveness
- d recognise feelings in others and tuning into their verbal and non-verbal cues
- e handle interpersonal interaction, conflict resolution, and negotiations (Goleman, 1995).

Previous studies found that EI plays a moderation role in aggressive behaviours and workplace stress. Wong and Law (2002) found that EI was positively correlated with the follower's satisfaction and willingness to engage in extra-role behaviour. According to SRT, job/role transition is fundamentally challenging and stressful, and resources enable employees to overcome transition stress and challenges (Gruman and Saks, 2013). The resources increase psychological capital (Gruman and Saks, 2013) that increases an individual's confidence to succeed in challenging tasks, make personal attributions for positive outcomes. The EI competencies, as an individual-level resource can enable individuals to overcome repatriation stress and challenges. Hence the researcher proposes the following hypothesis.

H1 EI positively influences the adjustment of repatriates.

## 2.2 *Adjustment and satisfaction*

In the organisational socialisation employees' job satisfaction is one of the key outcomes of adjustment. Job satisfaction is related to how an employee feels about their job and what extent they like it (Spector, 1997). According to Weiss (2002), job satisfaction is an attitude towards employees' work-related evaluation, affect and beliefs. Though in the literature satisfaction has been viewed in a different perspective the current study view satisfaction as "a positive (or negative) evaluative judgment one makes about one's job or job situation" [Weiss, (2002), p.175]. Surprisingly, satisfaction as a vital variable of the study within the repatriation literature is relatively scant. However, satisfaction was identified as an antecedent or consequence of adjustment within expatriation literature.

Bhaskar-Shrinivas et al. (2005) revealed a positive influence of adjustment on job satisfaction of expatriates. A few repatriation studies have connected the adjustment to repatriates' job satisfaction. In their study, Stevens et al. (2007) discovered a positive influence of adjustment on job satisfaction. Also, Lee and Liu (2007) found a positive influence of repatriates' adjustment on their job satisfaction. Through the successful adjustment, repatriates reduce uncertainty, rid of repatriation stress, overcome repatriation challenges, establish control over the environment and achieve a degree of fit with the different aspects of the home context (Black et al., 1992; Judge, 1994). In other words, through the successful adjustment, to overcome the repatriation challenges, repatriates increase their resources that increase the positive energy (Gruman and Saks, 2013). Therefore, in this study, the researcher proposed that:

H2 Repatriation adjustment positively influences job satisfaction.

### 2.3 *EI and satisfaction*

EI plays a key role in achieving job satisfaction (Wong and Law, 2002; Sy et al., 2006; Wolfe and Kim, 2013). Theories of EI disclose that individual's competencies such as self-regulation self-awareness, self-motivation, social skills and empathy enable individuals to cope with environmental challenges (Goleman, 1998). Some EI scholars (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Mayer and Salovey, 1997) suggest EI as an individual competency increases an individual's ability to handle stressful situations and enhance individual's positive attitudes and behaviours.

Spector (1997) model highlighted that job satisfaction is influenced by both organisational and personal factors. Tett and Meyer (1993) identified Job satisfaction is determined by both environmental factor and individual personality characteristics and according to Mayer and Salovey (1997) EI is one of the personality characteristics. According to Goleman (1996), people with EI understand and regulate theme self and others which in turn can determine the level of satisfaction. Jordan et al. (2002) found that EI positively influences job satisfaction. Zeidner et al. (2004) highlighted that EI positively influences personal and life satisfaction. However, Hosseinian et al. (2008) found no relationship between EI and job satisfaction.

Many studies are evidence for that EI positively influence job satisfaction of employees. Individual's self-awareness and self-management can facilitate them to regulate their negative feelings and emotions, and thus the individual can perform well and feel happy. Understanding others and the environment make them create a good relationship with others around them and see and seize the opportunity around them. Further, these characteristics help individuals to identify and use their strength and opportunity and to eliminate and overcome their weakness and threats. Therefore employees with high EI reduce uncertainty and stress, better manage themselves than others and thus they will better adjust their repatriation transition and be more satisfied than others. Hence the researcher proposes the following hypothesis.

H3 EI positively influence repatriates' satisfaction.

As discussed above individual-level resources such as EI increases individual's confidence to succeed in challenging tasks, make personal attributions for positive outcomes, and enables individuals to bounce back from adversity (Luthans et al., 2006). Individual-level resources are positively connected to both proximal and distal

socialisation outcomes (Gruman and Saks, 2013). According to SRT, individuals with necessary resources can overcome their repatriation challenges, reduces their stress, and get the energy to solve problems and able to cultivate more resources (Gruman and Saks, 2013; Hobfoll, 2002; Saks and Gruman, 2012). Such resources facilitate repatriates to adjust their repatriation transition better, thus leading to positive organisational and individual outcomes. Therefore, EI as a resource enhance repatriates' job satisfaction through repatriation adjustment. Therefore, the researcher proposed the following hypothesis.

H4 Repatriation adjustment mediates the relationship between EI and job satisfaction.

### 3 Methods

Researcher, in this study, adopted the quantitative approach, and data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire. This study relied on cross-sectional and self-reported data which is prone to common method variance (CMV) issues. The researcher has taken necessary steps to minimise CMV in both survey design stage and analysis stage, as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). In the survey design stage, it was informed to the participant that absolute anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained. Also, the researcher has taken necessary actions to reduce difficulties in understanding the survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In the analysis stage, Harman's single factor test was conducted and found that no single factor emerges and common factor accounts for the majority of the covariance among the measures.

This study was conducted with 96 Sri Lankan repatriates. The three criteria were used to select the respondents:

- a Respondents must have been a permanent employee of the organisation in the home country (Sri Lanka) before his/her expatriation.
- b Respondents should have engaged in their work in a host county organisation at least two-years and returned to their home organisation after completing the assignment.
- c Respondents should have less than 18 months repatriation experience at home organisation.

The researcher used the snowball sampling method to identify the respondents who fit the selection criteria.

Participants were invited to the survey with their consent; before the data collection, participants were requested to sign a consent form. In addition to this, participants were provided with detailed participant information sheet (PIS) which give more details about the purpose of the study, the process of the study, and how respondent's anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed to repatriates. In order to maintain absolute anonymity and confidentiality, respondents were not requested to provide personal data and each questionnaire accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Respondents were advised to send the completed questionnaire to the researcher directly.

Out of 200 questionnaires, 118 responses were received. The response rate (59%) was higher than the average rate (52.5%) organisational research. Twenty-two questionnaires were removed from the study because of the high number of missing values (more than

15% per indicator). Ultimately this study was conducted with 96 respondents. Majority of the respondents (55%) from Garment sector and others are from a mixture of sectors. The greater part of the respondents was male ( $N = 72$ , 75%) and married ( $N = 73$ , 75%). Concerning age and work experience, their average age and expatriation experiences were 42.1 years and 4.3 years, respectively. Average work experience at the home organisation after their repatriation was 9.2 months.

Data were analysed using SPSS and SmartPLS. PLS-SEM is a powerful tool for complex model analysis with a small sample size (Hair et al., 2013a, 2013b; Reinartz et al., 2009). Because of the nature of the study (prediction oriented) and the number of small sample size (small) the researcher selected PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2011, 2017; Hair et al., 2013a, 2013b).

Respondents' profile data (age, gender, work experience before expatriation, during, and after repatriation) were correlated with the three primary constructs of the study: EI, adjustment, and satisfaction. Correlations between respondents' profile variables and the three constructs were insignificant, but there are significant correlations between the three constructs of the study. There is a moderate correlation between satisfaction and adjustment (0.66) and low correlation between adjustment and EI (0.44) and EI and satisfaction (0.36).

### 3.1 Measures

#### 3.1.1 Emotional intelligence

EI was measured with Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) with 16 items (Wong and Law, 2002). It this measure EI comprised with four dimensions of EI 'self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others-emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), and regulation of emotion (ROE). Participants rated items on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. For this scale, Wong and Law (2002) reported excellent internal consistency reliability ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ). In this study, EI has been considered as a higher-order construct of its four dimensions: SEA, OEA, UOE, and ROE. The latent variable score of each component has been used as indicator's score of EI.

#### 3.1.2 Adjustment

This study focuses on repatriates' work adjustment, and it was measured using the repatriation adjustment scale (Black, 1994). The three items used from this scale were intended to measure repatriate's perceived adjustment to their job upon return. A seven-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 (very unadjusted) to 7 (very adjusted) was applied. This scale obtained acceptable reliability evidence in the previous and the current study.

#### 3.1.3 Job satisfaction

In this study, five items job satisfaction scale developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) called a job satisfaction inventory had been used to measure repatriates job satisfaction. Despite the age of this measure, it has still been used widely in recent literature and obtained acceptable reliability value (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.7$ ). Participants rated items on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*. Sample

items were: 'I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job', 'most days I am enthusiastic about my work' and 'I find real enjoyment in my work'. This scale obtained acceptable reliability evidence in the previous and the current study.

## 4 Data analysis and interpretation

### 4.1 Measurement model

The three constructs used in the current study are reflective. As suggested by Hair et al. (2011, 2017) researcher examined the measurement model through factor loading, Cronbach's alpha (CrA), composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Table 1 shows constructs and its items, items' loading, CrA, CR and AVE. Factor loading of each indicator, CrA, and CR of each construct met the threshold value of 0.70 except one EI component (OEA). Loading of OEA was 0.58, which is below the threshold value of 0.7. However, it was kept as AVE of the construct (EI) was gather than its threshold value of 5 (Hair et al., 2011). Satisfactory loading, CrA and CR demonstrating adequate reliability of the measures. AVEs of all reflective latent variables were more than 0.50 (Table 1) that explains adequate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 1** Constructs' reliability and validity

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>CrA</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Emotional intelligence (EI)	SEA	0.84	0.71	0.82	0.54
	OEA	0.58			
	UOE	0.74			
	ROE	0.75			
Adjustment (ADJ)	Adj_1	0.90	0.86	0.91	0.78
	Adj_2	0.89			
	Adj_3	0.86			
Satisfaction (SAT)	Sat_1	0.77	0.89	0.92	0.69
	Sat_2	0.84			
	Sat_3	0.86			
	Sat_4	0.90			
	Sat_5	0.80			

The following three widely accepted criteria were used to examine discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011, 2017; Hensler et al., 2015). The three criteria were:

- a Square root of AVE of each construct is larger than the largest correlation of any other constructs (Fornell-Larcker criterion).
- b Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) values for all pair of constructs should be less than the threshold value of 0.90 and the confidence interval of the HTMT statistic should not include the value 1 for all combinations of constructs.
- c An indicator's loading with its related construct should be higher than its cross-loading.



**Table 2** Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>SAT</i>	<i>ADJ</i>	<i>EI</i>
Satisfaction	<i>0.83</i>		
Adjustment	0.66	<i>0.88</i>	
Emotional intelligence	0.36	0.44	<i>0.73</i>

Note: italic diagonal figures (italic) are the square root of AVE.

The results show that the square root of AVE of each construct (SAT = 0.83, ADJ = 0.88, EI = 0.73) is higher than the largest correlation of other constructs (see Table 2). Each indicator's loadings to the specified constructs are significantly higher than the loading to any other constructs (see Table 3).

**Table 3** Loading and cross-loading

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>SAT</i>	<i>ADJ</i>	<i>EI</i>
Adj_1	0.52	<i>0.90</i>	0.34
Adj_2	0.65	<i>0.89</i>	0.51
Adj_3	0.57	<i>0.86</i>	0.29
OEA	0.19	0.26	<i>0.58</i>
ROE	0.22	<i>0.27</i>	<i>0.75</i>
SEA	0.23	0.38	<i>0.84</i>
UOE	0.37	0.36	<i>0.74</i>
Sat_1	<i>0.77</i>	0.55	0.28
Sat_2	<i>0.84</i>	0.52	0.39
Sat_3	<i>0.86</i>	0.59	0.29
Sat_4	<i>0.90</i>	0.61	0.32
Sat_5	<i>0.80</i>	0.47	0.21

HTMT value for all pair of constructs was less than the threshold value of 0.90: HTMT for ADJ to SAT 0.75, EI to SAT 0.43 and EI to ADJ 0.54. Also, the confidence interval of the HTMT statistic did not include the value 1 for all combinations of constructs. These analyses (Fornell-Larcker criterion, loading and cross-loading and HTMT value) show that the measurement model is proving enough discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011, 2017).

#### 4.2 Structural model

Following the measurement model quality assessment the structural model quality was assessed through widely accepted criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2011, 2017): multicollinearity, the significance of path coefficient, variance explained ( $R^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) and the effect size ( $f^2$ ) suggested by Hair et al. (2011, 2017). The determinant of the coefficient of the critical endogenous construct ( $R^2$  for satisfaction = 0.45) was satisfactory. The cross-validated redundancy of dependent variables (Stone-Geisser's  $Q^2$  statistics) was larger than the threshold value of zero; proving predictive relevance of the model. Moreover, multicollinearity statistics (VIF) were less than its threshold value of 5, which indicates that multicollinearity was not a threat to this

structural model. The effect size of ADJ on SAT (0.57) and EI on ADJ was reasonable, but the effect size of EI on SAT was (0.01) fragile.

Following the measurement and structural model analysis, the proposed hypotheses were tested via a bootstrapping technique. The Bootstrapping procedure requires no distributional assumption and produces reasonable standard error estimates (Tenenhaus et al., 2005). In PLS-SEM setting, the no sign changes option, 0.05 significance levels, and 5,000 samples in the bootstrapping setting were used to generate standard error and t-statistics. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4** Path coefficient and its significance

	<i>Path coefficient</i>	<i>T-statistics</i>	<i>P values</i>
ADJ → SAT	0.63	8.09	0.00
EI → SAT	0.08	0.85	0.40
EI → ADJ	0.44	6.37	0.00

The results indicate that the two proposed relationships were significant at 0.05 sig levels. The higher the level of EI, the higher the level of ADJ. The higher the level of ADJ, the higher the level of SAT. Unexpectedly, the proposed positive influence of EI on satisfaction was not significant at 0.05 significance levels. Adjustment and EI together explain 45% ( $R^2$  0.45) variance on satisfaction.

### 4.3 Mediator analysis

The proposed mediating effect on the relationship between repatriates' EI and satisfaction was assessed according to Hair et al.'s (2017, pp.233–234) guidelines. In this model, the path coefficients for EI to SAT ( $\beta = 0.08$ ) was insignificant ( $p > 0.05$ ). Nevertheless, the path coefficients for EI to ADJ ( $\beta = 0.44$ ) and ADJ to SAT ( $\beta = 0.63$ ) were significant. Thus, the indirect effect of EI to SAT through ADJ was 0.28 ( $0.44 * 0.63$ ), and it was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The insignificant direct effect and significant indirect effect concludes that the relationship between EI and SAT is mediated by ADJ, and adjustment functions as a full mediator between the relationship EI and SAT.

## 5 Discussion and conclusions

The current study assessed the influence of EI on satisfaction and the mediator role of adjustment in the relationship between EI and satisfaction among repatriates. As expected, this study found that repatriates EI positively influence repatriation adjustment, and adjustment positively influences repatriates' job satisfaction. Unexpectedly the current study found that there is no significant relationship between EI and satisfaction when an adjustment in the model. However, the current study indicates that adjustment mediates the relationship between EI and job satisfaction.

EI enables individuals to successfully adjust their transition (Koveshnikov et al., 2014). EI as a personal competency/resource (Koveshnikov et al., 2014; Mayer and Salovey, 1997) enables individuals to overcome repatriation challenges and stress (Saks and Gruman, 2012) and thus, facilitates repatriation adjustment. Moreover, repatriates see the home organisation as unfamiliar, and experience psychological discomfort, alienation,

uncertainties, and loss of control (Black et al., 1992; Kraimer et al., 2012; Vidal et al., 2007). Individuals with higher EI are more likely to understand and manage themselves and others and can make sense of the environment. Therefore, people with high EI can reduce uncertainty and gain control over the work environment, and thus, able to manage repatriation transition well and better adjust their repatriation.

As shown in the previous studies (Lee and Liu, 2007; Oddou et al., 2008), the current study also found that better adjustment enhances repatriates' job satisfaction. Better adjusted repatriates establish their position in the organisation, have a sense of certainty, feel acceptance, well-being, and psychological comfort and better-fitted to the home context (Adler, 1981; Black et al., 1992) and thus they highly satisfied with their job (Stevens et al., 2007).

The relationship between EI and job satisfaction of employees was well documented in the literature (Wong and Law, 2002; Sy et al., 2006; Wolfe and Kim, 2013); however, the positive influence of EI on their satisfaction has not been assessed among repatriates so far. Stevens et al. (2007) found that level of repatriate self-adjustment capabilities adversely affect their satisfaction. Unexpectedly, the present study found that EI has no significant influence on satisfaction among repatriates. As the mediator variable (adjustment) absorb the strength of the relationship between EI and satisfaction, it appears as non-significant. When comparing the direct effect of EI and adjustment on satisfaction adjustment play an important role than EI in determining repatriates' job satisfaction. Therefore, this study introduces context-specific determinant (adjustment) of job satisfaction. In other words, this study highlighted that during the repatriation transition repatriates' adjustment is a more significant variable than EI in determining repatriates' satisfaction. Moreover, this study highlights that EI is a strong predictor of adjustment, and through adjustment, it enhances employee satisfaction.

By empirically investigating the relationship between EI and job satisfaction among repatriates and introducing adjustment as a mediating variable, this study extends the existing literature. Repatriation literature paid much attention to the organisational role in the repatriation adjustment process, and less attention on the role of individual-level resources in the adjustment process (Akkan et al., 2018; Chiang et al., 2018; James, 2019, 2020). This study by empirically investigating the role of an individual-level resource (EI) on adjustment and job satisfaction among repatriates contribute to the repatriation literature also.

Repatriates return to their home organisation with competitive expertise and become unique assets to the home organisation (Chiang et al., 2018). Unsuccessful repatriation hampers the expectations of repatriates and the organisation and can cost to both of them (Akkan et al., 2018; Chiang et al., 2018). Therefore, both organisation and repatriates are responsible for overcoming repatriation challenges and stress and for enhancing satisfaction (Stevens et al., 2007; James, 2019). The international assignments start with expatriation and end with repatriation (Black et al., 1992; Chiang et al., 2018). To reap maximum outcomes from the repatriates, the organisation need to take necessary steps from the expatriate selection. Self-management capabilities are the crucial determinants of successful adjustment of both expatriation and repatriation. People with high self-management capabilities are more likely to overcome their transition stress and challenges (Black et al., 1992; Huff et al., 2014; James, 2019; Kowsikka and James, 2019; Koveshnikov et al., 2014; Saks and Gruman, 2012; Stevens et al., 2007). Studies reported that personal competencies, particularly competencies related to EI such as emotional control, emotional management and relationship buildings, enable individuals

to manage their transition successfully (Huff et al., 2014; Koveshnikov et al., 2014). James (2019) found that repatriates proactive behaviour is a strong predictor of repatriation adjustment and engagement than perceived organisational support. The present study also found that EI is a significant predictor of repatriation adjustment and indirectly predict repatriates' satisfaction. Therefore, in addition to developing appropriate HR practices, the organisation need to pay more attention to developing strategies to enhance repatriates' individual-level resources. Particularly, organisation need to focus on developing repatriates' EI capabilities which cover the necessary skills and abilities required to manage the uncertain and stressful situation (Goleman, 1995; Palmer et al., 2007). The organisation can facilitate employee to enhance their EI by providing appropriate training. Individuals also take effort to enhance their EI competencies (resource) to meet their expectation.

### 5.1 Limitation and further research

The findings are based on a small number of the sample (96). To overcome the issues related to small sample size researcher used PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 3, which is highly recommended for SEM analysis with a small sample size (Hair et al., 2011; Reinartz et al., 2009). As the current study relied on cross-sectional and self-reported data, it should be treated with caution due to the possibilities of CMV issues. The longitudinal method may minimise CMV issues, and it is suitable for testing the different degrees of adjustment and can provide further insights into the repatriation process (Vidal et al., 2007). Further research is required to identify context-specific variables that influence the relationship between EI and satisfaction. Also, further studies can examine the influence of other individual-level resources/factors (for example, psychological capital) on adjustment and satisfaction to identify the individual's role in the adjustment process.

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