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# [LEADERSHIP SUPPORT, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND SELF-EFFICACY AS DETERMINANTS OF JOB SATISFACTION: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING (SEM) STUDY IN PUNJAB'S PUBLIC SECTOR]

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the impact of leadership support, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy on job satisfaction, with a focus on the mediating role of job performance, within the public sector school education department of Punjab, Pakistan. Public sector organizations in Punjab face numerous challenges, including inadequate resources, high student-teacher ratios, bureaucratic constraints, and poor working conditions, which significantly impact employee satisfaction and performance. With quantitative research method, data was gathered from 502 employees through questionnaire developed and completed by the respondents themselves. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analyses has been performed via Smart PLS. Based on the findings, the outcomes reveal that leadership processes, emotional skills, and self-attitude do not only enhance satisfaction personally but also enhance performance at work which reflects and increases satisfaction. Implications of this research for theory are, firstly, confirmation of existing theoretical constructs in the context of the public sector in Punjab, Pakistan and, secondly, identification of job performance as a key mediating construct. Consequently, the study identifies novel research insights that concern leader support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, job performance, and job satisfaction within the under-researched setting of Punjab's public sector.

**Keywords:** Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Job satisfaction, self-efficacy, Job performance, Public sector organizations , Punjab Pakistan.

**Introduction**

Public sector in Punjab province of Pakistan plays an important role for the province's socio-economic development as a provider of basic public sector services of education, health and administrative sectors. Nonetheless, the public sector employee plays a central role because these organizations often offer basic needs and services to the population, they encounter different problems like low wages, job insecurity, scarce resources and authoritarian organizational structures. These issues together lead to low job satisfaction and then the decline in the job performance, especially in the education sector (Naz et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2022). Temporary, the biggest province in the country in terms of population, holds about 35 per cent of the total strength of provincial government employees employed in education and health departments only and all these data are transparent in public domain, (Javed et al., 2021). The overwhelming majority of the workers in the education sector in Punjab is in the public sector consisting of more than 300000 teachers and other employees in government school (Punjab School Education Department, 2024).

Some of the chronic problems affecting the workplaces include high student-teacher ratios, lack of training for the teachers and lack of leadership support which culminates in high work-related stress levels and poor performance and productivity outcomes (Aftab et al., 2023; Hameli&Ordun, 2022). Meeting these challenges calls for understanding the relationships between employees' organizational climate perceptions, emotional intelligences, self-efficacy, and leadership support with a focus on performance at the workplace. One compelling reason that emotional intelligence underpins job satisfaction is the increased pressure that the workers in the public sector

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bear. In all the schooling systems of the world, teachers and other officials often engage in emotional work, conflict resolution and work under conditions of scarcity of resources. Research shows that emotional quotient enables the employees to cope with such issues and thus work enhanced and be contented in the job (Kim & Kim, 2021; Sökmen& Sarikaya, 2022). In Punjab's school education department, where the average student-teacher ratio exceeds 40:In one survey conducted in rural areas, emotional intelligence was found to be instrumental in responding to emergent student behavior in the class, and or interact constructively with learners and colleagues (Naz et al., 2022; Choi et al., 2021). Emotional intelligences of school teachers significantly affect their adaptability and conflict-solvers thus improve their job satisfaction and performance; the existing literature shows (Javed et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the number of organizations that support the training of emotional intelligence is relatively small, and this is evident from the fact that many employees are not well equipped to handle the demands of their tasks, which ultimately causes them to burn out (Sammer & Majeed, 2022).

Public sector employees in Punjab: self-efficacy affects the job satisfaction and performance Multibriefs works Self-efficacy the confidence that performance attainments can be accomplished and Challenges, goals, and job satisfaction on job performance of public sector employees Self-efficacy, occupational self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment the organizational Climate, Self-Efficacy and Job Satisfaction as Predictors of In the school education department, self-efficacy is more relevant when the teachers are placed in a position to introduce change and use new pedagogy to teach diverse students under limited resources (Hassan et al., 2022). For example, instructor self-efficacy regarding the use of student-centered instructional practices predicted better academic results and individual job satisfaction (Javed et al., 2021). It has also been confirmed by the scholarly literature that self-efficacy has a role to play in mediating the relationship that emotional intelligence has with job performance; the notion is that of the employees, with high emotional intelligence, are in a position to build confidence to perform their duties (Sökmen& Sarikaya, 2022; Khan et al., 2024). However, structural factors such as limited access to professional development, or unsupportive management climate usually erode self-efficacy. For instance, only 15% of the teachers in rural Punjab afford a professional development program, which is aimed at improving the teaching practice and self-efficacy rate (Punjab School Education Department, 2024). Lack of such support weakens them in this aspect and, further, affects their job performance and job satisfaction (Nadeem et al., 2024).

In the government of Punjab school education department, the job performance of the teachers is bound with their students' result and classroom management efficiency. Different research shows that emotionally intelligent teachers, who have high self-efficacy are more likely to perform better in these areas and therefore more job satisfaction (Naz et al., 2022). However, problems including insufficient supply of funds and numerous organizational works impede job execution, which in turn generates negative feedback loop and decreases satisfaction (Sammer & Majeed, 2022). For instance, in the studied context of Pakistan, schools with sufficient teaching resources and strong leadership show up to 30 % higher levels of satisfaction among teachers than overall picture of schools lack of teaching and leadership support (Punjab School Education Department, 2024). These findings underscore the need to correct

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organizational perils in order to enable improvement in the job performance; hence job satisfaction. This research gap is most telling in view of emerging issues such as job insecurity and poor wage standards which adversely affect the health and productivity of the employees. To fill this gap, this research is to investigate the role of leadership support, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on job satisfaction among public sector employees in Punjab Province of Pakistan. Based on above aim, the researcher proposed following objectives:

### **Objectives**

1. To identify the relationship between leadership support and job satisfaction.
2. To identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.
3. To identify relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction.
4. To identify mediating relationship of job performance on job satisfaction.

### **Literature Review**

Without the support of leadership, it becomes extremely difficult to increase job satisfaction particularly in the public sector, where one has infinite benefits but the need to rethink perceptions of pay, especially those that are most highly rated, like those that exist in the school education department. According to Aftab, Khan, and Ahmed (2023), effective leadership creates a conducive working environment which results in better morale of employees and job satisfaction. Also, Anwar and Humayun (2023) state that leadership styles such as transformational and servant leadership play an important role in employee satisfaction in the education sector of Pakistan. Impact of Leadership Support International studies also highlight the significance of leadership support in their findings; for instance, Choi, Park, and Kim (2021) propose that leaders with high emotional intelligence who are able to understand and manage their workers' feelings have a beneficial impact on workplace relationships and job satisfaction.

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a significant role in determining employees' satisfaction at the workplace, as it configures interactions and enables them to handle stress and conflicts. According to Ullah et al. (2021), Khan, Butt, Nawab and Zubair (2024), emotional intelligence leads to self-efficacy, which leads to job satisfaction. Naz, Fida, and Khan (2022) make a similar argument, calling job satisfaction a mediation between emotional intelligence and job performance, with the authors noting that employees with a high level of emotional intelligence are more engaged at and satisfied with work. These results are in line with other international perspectives, like Choi et al. (2021) which claim that emotional intelligence helps improve communication, conflict resolution, and job satisfaction across various workplace environments.

Job satisfaction in the public sector has also been highlighted as being determined by self-efficacy, or the belief of individuals in their capacity to carry out tasks competently. Employees with high self-efficacy feel competent and capable, thus they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Wasai et al. 2017, Hassan, Rehman, & Nadeem, 2022). Hafeez, Qadeer, John, and Iqbal (2025) make a similar argument, suggesting that self-efficacy mediates the effects of AI-powered solutions on higher employee-level performance. This is again corroborated by foreign literature, with studies indicating that employees who have high levels of self-efficacy have higher resistance and motivation at work (Choi et al., 2021).

It has been substantiated that job satisfaction is supported through mediating role of

leadership support between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Aftab et al. (2023) also establishes a moderated mediation framework that demonstrates how ethical leadership and workplace spirituality lead to job satisfaction, with self-efficacy as a crucial factor behind this relationship. Ashfaq et al. (n.d.) further argue that servant leadership improves employee well-being, which contributes to a culture of satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Research undertaken in global settings (e.g., Khattak et al. (2022)Anwar and Humayun, 2023) corroborates that employee creativity and satisfaction can be enhanced through empowered leadership approaches in numerous public sector institutions.

In short, overall leadership support, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in conjunction significantly boosts the job satisfaction of public sectors employees. Related literature is suggestive of the importance of such factors for creating a productive and happy workforce. Local studies have brought valuable perspective on the unique context and challenges faced by public sector employees in Pakistan, whereas international studies can widen our understanding of how emotional intelligence and leadership contribute to improved job satisfaction. Future studies are encouraged to investigate these relationships more intensely, adding moderating and mediating variables that contribute to explaining job satisfaction within the education sector. On the basis of above literature and theoretical background, the following hypotheses are formulated and conceptualized:

H1: There is a significant relationship between Leadership support and job satisfaction.

H2: There is a significant relationship between Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

H3: There is a significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and job satisfaction.

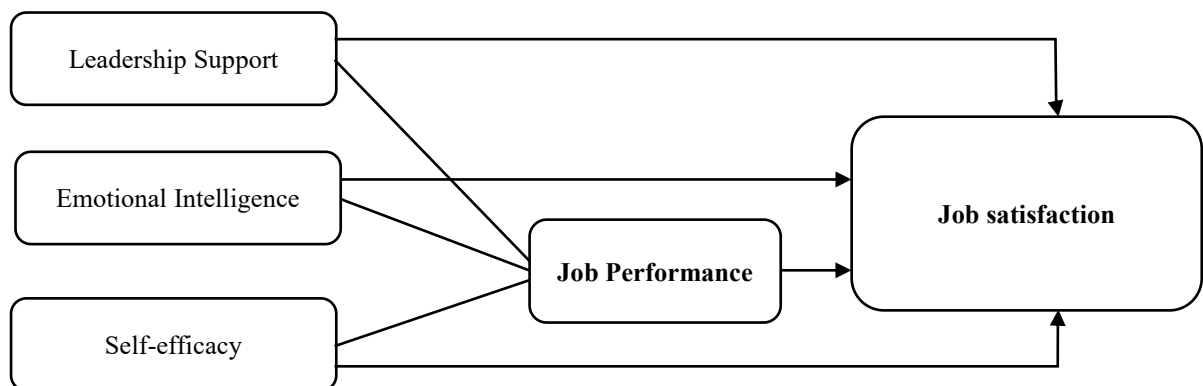
H4: There is a significant relationship between Job performance and job satisfaction.

H5: Job performance significantly mediates the relationship between leadership support and job satisfaction.

H6: Job performance significantly mediates the relationship between Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

H7: Job performance significantly mediates the relationship between Self-Efficacy and job satisfaction.

**Figure. 1 Conceptual Model of the Study**



In this conceptual framework of this study, the focus is on leadership support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, job satisfaction and job performance. In addition to this, the framework seeks to explain how leadership support, employee emotional intelligence

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and self-efficacy influence job satisfaction and an attempt to assess the role of job performance as the mediator variable.

#### **Methodology**

This study adopts an explanatory quantitative research design utilizing a survey-based approach to examine the impact of leadership support, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy on job satisfaction among employees of the School Education Department, Punjab, Pakistan. A well-structured research design ensures the systematic collection and analysis of data, leading to reliable findings (Creswell, 2013; Maxwell, 2012). The research strategy follows a questionnaire-based survey methodology, allowing for systematic and comparable responses from participants (Creswell, 2013). To ensure consistency in responses, a self-administered structured questionnaire was used as the data collection tool, employing a 5-point Likert scale to measure participants' perceptions.

The target population comprises employees working in the public sector education department in Punjab, as they are directly influenced by leadership practices, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy in their work environments. Clearly defining the target population enhances the generalizability of findings (Saunders et al., 2019). The study employs a convenience non-probability sampling technique due to accessibility constraints, allowing the researcher to gather data efficiently from a relevant population (Etikan et al., 2016). While non-probability sampling may introduce bias, using a larger sample size helps improve the reliability of the study. The study initially distributed 543 questionnaires, out of which 502 valid responses were used for analysis. The sample size was determined using Morgan's Table, ensuring validity at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error (Hair et al., 2019).

#### **Operationalization**

For data analysis, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used in this study, utilizing Smart PLS software because the study tests complex relationships between variables. Variables were measured on five constructs, including Leadership Support (10 items, adapted from House et al., 1974), Self-Efficacy (10 items, adapted from Bandura, 1997), Emotional Intelligence (10 items, adapted from Wong & Law, 2002), Job Satisfaction (10 items, adapted from Spector, 1997), and Job Performance (10 items, adapted from Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). The use of validated measurement scales and a sophisticated statistical approach guarantees a high level of rigor in the analysis and provides valuable insights into the relationships between leadership support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and job performance.

#### **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis**

Smart PLS SEM is a complex statistical tool to study the relationship between several factors (Fan et al., 2016). Closely associated with the management of large and complex data sets this method is used prominently in area of social sciences and marketing studies due to feasibility of dealing with compound data (Teo et al., 2013). Smart PLS can be regarded as a specific software because it gives a possibility to set up complex models that illustrate the dependency between latent variables and evaluate the model's overall goodness-of-fit. Another advantage of the software is that, through its elaborate graphical user interfaces analyzing results becomes easier to the researchers (Hoyle, 2012).

More precisely in the context of this research, investigating the effects of leadership

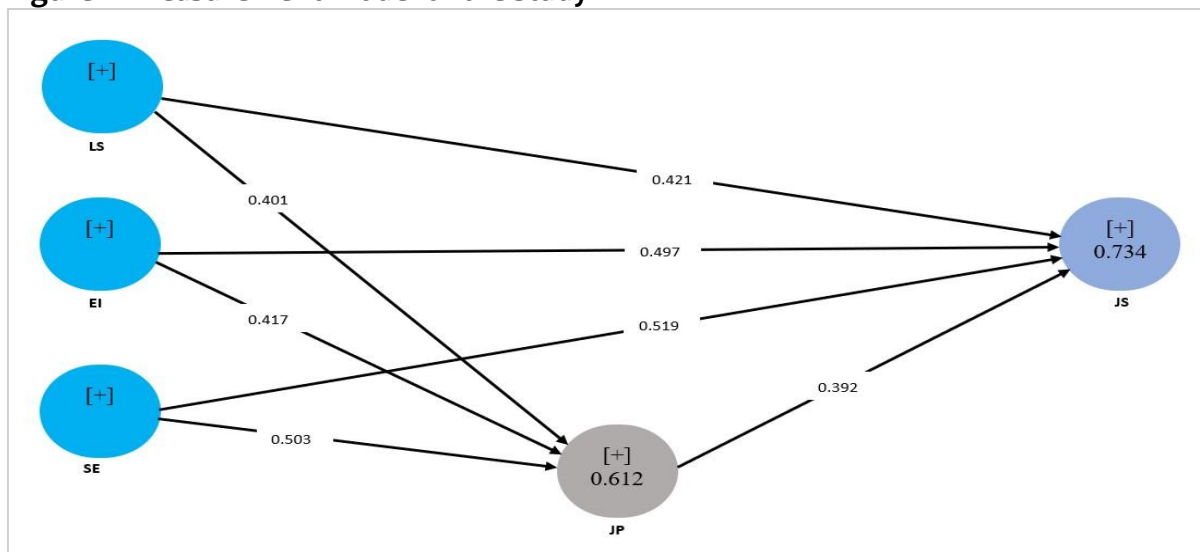
support, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy on job satisfaction of the employees within public sector organization of Punjab Pakistan, Smart PLS SEM is of great significance. It helps to consider the leadership behavior, the level of the staff's emotional intelligence, the perceptions of self-efficacy and how these significant components influence the contributors' job satisfaction. In this respect, the functional features of Smart PLS SEM can be instrumental because of its strong analytical capacities for revealing the interactions between these variables. In doing so, the study produces statistically reliable and generalizable findings regarding the intricate relationships between leadership support, self- and emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy to tap into Workplace Group Employee Satisfaction in organizations of the public sector. Moreover, it helps to specify the processes happening in background in case of Smart PLS SEM and thus improve the further strategies in regard to organization's practices and employees' satisfaction.

#### **Measurement Modeling via Algorithm Analysis**

One of the outstanding attributes of smart PLS is the algorithm modeling which enables the algorithm assisted the researchers in identifying suitable models needed to answer their research questions according to Williams et al. (2008). This process includes the expression of the system model from the environmental data that is used in the algorithm with an aim of identifying the best solution. The model is then compared and validated against the data for it to fit the research context(push payroll down). Hair et al. (2020) aver that this refined model offers the best solution to the research problem. By doing so, a researcher will be able to capture not only what is important to the study but also provides a better way to achieve specific targets within the study and results in a better way of achieving correct end results.

Specifically, for the purpose of this study that explores the effect of leadership support, emotional intelligence, and self efficacy and mediating variable job performance on job satisfaction of the public sector employees in Punjab Pakistan, the aspects of measurement modeling in smart PLS are essential. They enable the researcher to make the necessary correlates between the manifest and the latent variables which form the core of the study. Measurement modeling encompasses identifying the different measurement constructs, which include order, ordinal, nominal, Likert scales amongst others, and making sure the measurement model depicts reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2016). By using Smart PLS, this research guarantees that the constructs defined in the research, for example, leadership behaviors, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy, are measured correctly.

**Figure 2. Measurement Model of the study**



Furthermore, Smart PLS provides procedures to guarantee discriminant validity that anchors latent variables with unique constructs. This maintains a good correspondence of the variables such that valid and meaningful conclusions on the effects of these factors on the employees' job satisfaction within the PSOs can be made.

The proposed model reveals a coherent and significant relationship between the contextual factors which are leadership support, and specified study variables including employee emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, job performance and job satisfaction in the light of the present study where the influence of leadership support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and mediating role of job performance on employee job satisfaction have been studied in public sector organizations in Punjab, Pakistan. From the figure 4.8 we can notice that all the hypotheses that has been done in the current study has given significant outcomes. Given below are the results of the analysis showing that all the significance coefficients (betas) for the associations between the variables are higher than 0.05 and therefore suggest that latent constructs are closely related to each other. In addition, the R-square values which illustrate the proportion of total variance accounted by the model lies in moderate to strong area which tends to support the efficacy of the suggested model. These results reveal how highly correlated the variables are and ensure how the model gives a proper junket on the antecedents of the specified particularity of the study hence approving the model.

The large coefficients associated with each of the latent variables imply that leadership support, emotional intelligence, self- efficacy and job performance are important determinants of job satisfaction and the proposed model appears to have a sound foundation for its application in additional research and in practice. Therefore, thanks to using Smart PLS in this research, the intricacies of the analyzed variables and their relationship to employee satisfaction in public sector organizations in context of school education department have been determined and expanded the pool of global knowledge in this field. Recognizing these factors that affect job satisfaction, it becomes easier to advance measures that will help improve employee's well-being in public sector organizations for school education department since it affects organizational policy and management practices positively.



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### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is a common statistical approach based in measurement modeling that determines and elaborates the structural connections between numerous different variables (Rummel, 1988). By so doing, it has been argued that data emergent complexity is minimised and the inherent complexity of the relationship is cleaved by isolating the correlation of one variable to the other (Kim & Mueller, 1978). A justification is that CFA eliminates many a model's variables, which makes the result of the analysis easier to comprehend, as suggested by the idea of Harman in 1976. In the context of this paper on the effect of leadership support, EI and SE on the job satisfaction of employees in PSI's of Punjab Pakistan CFA can be used to identify the major factors that may have significant effects on the pattern of relationship observed among the variables in focus (Gorsuch, 2014).

That way, using CFA, the researcher is able to decide which variables can be excluded when determining the nature of the relationships in the study since they are unimportant. This method also helps in asserting that out of observable variable associations, new relationships can be determined and the total model is simplified, hence helping in the speedy conduct of the study and better analysis. When using CFA, a much clearer picture emerges on which factors are most influential as the overall impact in relation to leadership support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy on the employee job satisfaction in the public sector are easier to gauge. It brings about a more precise appreciation of the factors that motivate employees within these organizations hence upgrading their satisfaction and subsequent performance.

**Table 1. Outer Loading (CFA)**

Sr No.	Item Code	LS	EI	SE	JP	JS
1	LS1	0.702				
2	LS2	0.753				
3	LS4	0.812				
4	LS5	0.798				
5	LS7	0.759				
6	EI1		0.792			
7	EI3		0.743			
8	EI4		0.767			
9	EI5		0.776			
10	SE1			0.721		
11	SE2			0.733		
12	SE3			0.781		
13	SE4			0.764		
14	SE6			0.811		
15	JP2				0.709	
16	JP3				0.782	
17	JP5				0.723	
18	JP6				0.813	
19	JP9				0.795	
20	JS1					0.744

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21	JS3	0.756
22	JS4	0.733
23	JS5	0.729
24	JS6	0.792
25	JS7	0.781

The outer loadings in Table 1. present the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) estimates, which link the observed variables to their respective latent constructs in the study. The constructs analyzed include Leadership Support (LS), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Efficacy (SE), Job Performance (JP), and Job Satisfaction (JS). These outer loading values indicate the extent to which each observed variable represents its corresponding construct. Higher values confirm convergent validity and reliability of the measurement model.

For Leadership Support, the outer loadings range from 0.702 to 0.812, demonstrating high convergent validity and acceptable reliability. Items LS1 (0.702), LS2 (0.753), LS4 (0.812), LS5 (0.798), and LS7 (0.759) exhibit strong factor loadings, confirming their effectiveness in measuring Leadership Support. Similarly, for Emotional Intelligence, the loadings range from 0.743 to 0.792. Items EI1 (0.792), EI3 (0.743), EI4 (0.767), and EI5 (0.776) reflect strong associations, validating the construct's role in the model.

Self-Efficacy shows loadings ranging from 0.721 to 0.811, indicating robust construct validity. Items SE1 (0.721), SE2 (0.733), SE3 (0.781), SE4 (0.764), and SE6 (0.811) demonstrate reliable representation of the Self-Efficacy construct. Job Performance exhibits loadings between 0.709 and 0.813, with items JP2 (0.709), JP3 (0.782), JP5 (0.723), JP6 (0.813), and JP9 (0.795) highlighting acceptable levels of reliability and construct validity. For Job Satisfaction, loadings range from 0.729 to 0.792, confirming high reliability and construct validity. Items JS1 (0.744), JS3 (0.756), JS4 (0.733), JS5 (0.729), JS6 (0.792), and JS7 (0.781) exhibit strong factor loadings, validating the measurement of this construct.

The outer loadings for all the constructs: Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Employee Job Performance and Job Satisfaction varies from 0.702 to 0.813. These findings suggest that the used items are dependable and accurate signs of their corresponding constructs. High outer loading values testify the appropriateness of the measurement model, which can serve as the ground for further analysis. This reliability strengthens the external validity and the applied value of the research framework with the view to providing substantive investigation of the relationships among the constructs set within Punjab's PSOs.

### Internal Consistency Reliability

Hence, this study has pointed out the leadership support, the emotional intelligence, the self-efficacy, the employee job performance impact on the job satisfaction in the framework of the public sector organizations located in Punjab- Pakistan where reliability own the pivotal role in the validity and effectiveness of the survey and test in producing the accurate coefficients of these variables. Just to ensure internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the survey measurement, it is essential that a set of items measures the concept of interest with a high level of similarity (Hair Jr et al., 2020). For

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the internal consistency reliability measurement in this study, inevitability measurements include Rho\_A and composite reliability.

**Table 2. Internal Consistency Reliability Tests**

Latent Variables	Rho_A	Composite Reliability
Leadership Support	0.749	0.831
Emotional Intelligence	0.758	0.824
Self-Efficacy	0.764	0.769
Job Performance *	0.790	802
Job satisfaction	0.801	0.818

Rho\_A gives the mean rank of all possible relations that could exist between survey items; the required degree of reliability attains 0.7 and above for the test. Thus, composite reliability estimated internal consistencies between items and constructs with an acceptable average of 0.7 and above. In this study, both Rho\_A and composite reliability were used to ensure that the survey items accurately captured the constructs of interest and improve the credibility and dependability of the conclusion.

The target level of internal consistency reliability for all measures was 0.7 or above. When it comes to the results for the constructs examined in this study: Leadership Support (LS), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Efficacy (SE), Job Performance (JP), and Job Satisfaction (JS); estimates of internal consistency reliability were calculated. The assessment using Rho\_A for the latent variables, as summarized in Table 2., shows high reliability scores: Leadership Support constituted 0.749, Emotional Intelligence 0.758, Self-Efficacy 0.764, Job Performance 0.790 and Job Satisfaction 0.801. Similarly, the coefficients for composite reliability further validate the constructs: The Full Scale Score results are as follows: Leadership Support – 0.831, Emotional Intelligence – 0.824, Self-Efficacy – 0.769, Job Performance 0.802, and Job Satisfaction – 0.818.

These outcomes provide evidence of the high reliability of all constructs as coefficients were above the 0.7; Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Job Performance, and Job Satisfaction. These reliability coefficients show that the various survey items captured their respective constructs suitably, and the research model was thus consistent and valid. The high reliability means that the pattern of relationship in the variables under analysis is correctly interpreted in relation to the research questions hence providing a strong foundation in responding to the formulated research questions. Therefore, the research supports and extends leadership support, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy as antecedents of workplace satisfaction in the PSU's working in Punjab, Pakistan.

### **AVE and Discriminant Validity**

In the present study, Smart PLS software, a very effective statistical tool in testing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, was used. Two variables that were assessed for validity included AVE (Average Variance Explained) and Discriminant Validity (DV). AVE averages the share of variance in the constructs to the total variance of the corresponding latent variables and reflects the proportion of validity and reliability. AVE, according to Hair et al. (2020), offer understanding of the degree to which observed

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variables represent the latent constructs which the measurement model tests. On the other hand, DV measures how strongly a construct is differentiated from other related constructs in a model out there. DV as pointed out Hair Jr. et al. (2020), vindicates the relationship between the observed variables and the respective latent variables, which supports the idea that each construction is conceptually distinct. Any DV with a score of 0.7 or higher justifies that the chosen constructs are well differentiated from each other, which in turn confirms the model's validity.

In this study, the DV analysis confirmed the validity and reliability of the proposed measurement model. As shown in Table 3. the estimated DV values for all latent variables—Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Job Performance, and Job Satisfaction—are above 0.7. This demonstrates that the items effectively measure their respective constructs while being conceptually distinct from each other. The AVE values for each construct further validate the model:

**Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test**

Latent Variables	LS	EI	SE	JP	JS	AVE
LS	<b>0.825</b>	0.429	0.498	0.501	0.402	0.682
EI	0.322	<b>0.819</b>	0.356	0.488	0.397	0.671
SE	0.319	0.381	<b>0.807</b>	0.467	0.428	0.652
JP *	0.412	0.398	0.422	<b>0.830</b>	0.376	0.689
JS	0.422	0.510	0.500	0.398	<b>0.830</b>	0.690

The diagonal values refer to the square root of AVE for each latent construct and the off-diagonal values refer to the correlations between two constructs. For instance, the AVE for Leadership Support = 0.682, and the square root of the AVE = 0.825, implying that discriminant validity is high. Consequently, Emotional Intelligence similarly shows high validity (AVE = 0.671;  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  = 0.819), Self-Efficacy (AVE = 0.652;  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  = 0.807), Job Performance (AVE = 0.689;  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  = 0.830) and Job Satisfaction (AVE = 0.690;  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  = 0.830).

All cross-loading values are below the square root of AVE for each construct, which confirms the discriminant validity of the research model. For example, Leadership Support and Emotional Intelligence have a coefficient of 0.429, which is below the required threshold of the square root of AVEs: Leadership Support 0.825 and Emotional Intelligence 0.819. The consistency that was observed in all the pairs of construct holds as a testimony that the mentioned constructs are indeed independent of each other. These findings provide a validation of the measurement model emanating from the current study, to our belief that Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Job Performance, and Job Satisfaction are construct irrelevant. This makes it easier to ensure the validity of the results obtained in this study and lays a basic framework for examining the interaction of these factors in determining job satisfaction in organizations in Punjab Pakistan's public sector.

### R-Square and F Square

Determining the reliability of models developed with Smart PLS depends on the parameters of  $R^2$  and F-Square. In this study, these metrics were used to measure the

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overall impact of Leadership Support (LS), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Efficacy (SE) and Job Performance (JP) on Job Satisfaction (JS) of the employees working in the public sector organizations in Punjab, Pakistan.  $R^2$  coefficient has a range of 0 to 1 with coefficient indicating the percentage of the amount of variation explained by the independent variables of the dependent variable. As such, the dependent variable in the current study is Job Satisfaction while the independent variables are Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy and Job Performance. Smart PLS gives the value of this measure as an estimate of both the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) and the average of the square of dependent variables to ensure a more precision model fitness measure.

The F-Square also talks about the strength of the independent variables in compounding a specific model. It was computed relative to the total degree of variation in the dependent variable to that expounded by the independent variables. Kim (2021) and Karch (2020) posit the fact that suppose the F-Square value is greater than zero; then, it is to mean that the identified relationships among the variables are correctly modeled or captured. Cohen shows that higher  $R^2$  and F-Square values represents that the model is good one for the sense that all the relations among them have been well captured.

**Table 4. Model Fit Test (R- Square and F- Square) Tests**

Latent Variables	R Square	F Square
Leadership Support	--	0.502
Emotional Intelligence	--	0.611
Self-Efficacy	--	0.517
Job Performance *	0.612	0.523
Job satisfaction	0.734	--

From the results presented in Table 4. it is equally evident that the  $R^2$  value for Job Satisfaction is significant at 0.734 revealing that 73.4% of the overall variability in Job Satisfaction is variance in the independent variables (Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, and Job Performance). The high  $R^2$  values mean that the model has good ability to explain Job Satisfaction. Likewise, the  $R^2$  value for Job Performance is found to be 0.612, indicating that 61.2 percent variance in Job Performance is decomposed by other variables defined in this model.

The values of F-Square give information on the degree of the contribution of every independent variable. Leadership Support is a moderate variable as the result of F-Square is 0.502. We also analyze that the F-Square value of EI is the highest with 0.611 which indicates that it is the most influential factor for the model. This is also true of Self-Efficacy that yields an F-Square value of 0.517. JP is confirmed to be a mediating variable. That is because its F-Square value of 0.523 shows a mediator relationship between the independent variables and Job satisfaction. The findings of this study are in line with the specified hypothesis according to which Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, and Job Performance are the positive predictors of Job Satisfaction. They establish that Leadership Support has a moderate influence on turnover intention, whereas Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance have a considerably greater impact. While being less than the impact of Performance, Self-Efficacy appears to be an important determinant of Job Satisfaction.

Therefore, the  $R^2$  and F-Square values support the adequacies of the proposed model in

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this present study. Assessed relatively high  $R^2$  values that raises confidence on the ability of the model in explaining part of the variance of Job Satisfaction and Job Performance. The F-Square values reinforcing the importance of the various independent variables to the model's reliability, contrasting the findings. The implications of these results are to corroborate the previous research regarding associational analyses of Leadership Support, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Job Performance, and Job Satisfaction in public sector organizations in Punjab, Pakistan.

### Path Coefficients (Hypotheses Testing)

Bootstrapping is a powerful statistical tool which is used to measure the performance and variability of a statistical model by resampling. Bootstrapping is used in this study drawing hypotheses on Leadership Support (LS), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Efficacy (SE) on Job Satisfaction (JS) with Job Performance (JP) as a mediator. Therefore, the present study aims at the employees of Punjab School Education Department in Pakistan and contributes insights to the context of the public sector education system. The impact assessment of the research hypotheses incorporated in SEM is done formally with the aid of path coefficient analysis in Smart PLS. This analysis is part of Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM), a reliable statistical approach to modeling structural relationships that are often nonlinear in nature (Kim, 2021; Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019). In the present study, Structural Equation Modeling will employ Path Coefficients to assess the effect, LS on JP mediated by EI, SE on JS, and JP. The findings of this research are dedicated to the School Education Department of Punjab, Pakistan to explore the role of these factors in determining the employee outcomes in public sector education.

The study examines the coefficients for each determinant, the estimated direction, as well as the interaction effects and finally, tests hypotheses which are derived from the proposed conceptual model. It identifies not only the presence of the relations between the variables but also the type and degree of their impact on the employee outcomes. Path coefficient analysis therefore provides a background for understanding the functioning of issues relating to employee satisfaction and performance as considered in the framework of this study.

**Table 5. Path Coefficient Analysis**

Hypotheses	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
LS -> JS	0.421	0.243	0.037	11.37	0.001
EI -> JS	0.497	0.212	0.041	12.12	0.000
SE -> JS	0.519	0.287	0.044	11.79	0.003
JP -> JS	0.392	0.235	0.031	12.64	0.001
LS (JP)* -> JS	0.401	0.261	0.035	11.45	0.002
EI (JP)* -> JS	0.417	0.267	0.040	10.425	0.000
SE (JP)* -> JS	0.503	0.256	0.037	13.59	0.005

Table 5. provide an elaborate insight into Leadership Support (LS), Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Efficacy (SE), Job Performance (JP), and Job Satisfaction (JS) in the School Education Department of Punjab, Pakistan. Support from the leadership is also shown to play an important and highly significant positive role on job satisfaction with a path coefficient of 0.421 ( $t = 11.37$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding highlights the importance of

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leadership in creating a work culture that contributes to employee satisfaction. Support and Guidance by Leadership Effective leadership offers a sense of support and direction, which plays an important role in employees feeling motivated and happy about their work. Another important contributor is emotional intelligence which has a path coefficient of 0.497 ( $t = 12.12, p < 0.000$ ), indicating that it has a positive significant effect on job satisfaction. Emotional Intelligence has been proven to help leaders better perceive, understand and react to the emotions of their junior employees. Such compassion creates an inclusive and empathetic environment that helps improve employee satisfaction scores. You are bonded with every employee as an emotional intelligence buffer because emotional intelligence is very crucial to address employee needs and promote workplace harmony.

In a similar way, self-efficacy impacts job satisfaction positively, getting statistically significant  $\beta = 0.519$  ( $t = 11.79, p = 0.003$ ). Those who have confidence in their abilities and the belief that they will achieve work-related goals will experience positive job satisfaction. It leads to the improvement of motivation and engagement towards work responsibilities as self-efficacy increases employees' sense of competence and feeling of empowerment. Then job performance is also a significant predictor of job satisfaction, with a path coefficient of 0.392 ( $t = 12.64, p < 0.001$ ). It emphasizes the significance of performance as an integral element affecting employee satisfaction. Perceiving their presence of their effective performance also engages employees towards their role satisfaction. By this relationship, it reveals that job performance acts not just as an end state but as a mediator in these relationships linking management support to job satisfaction, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Finally, the mediation analyses reveal that job performance mediates the impact of leadership support, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy on job satisfaction, thus deepening our understanding of the relationship between these variables. Results indicate mediated relationship between leadership support and job satisfaction via job performance (path coefficient = 0.401,  $t = 11.45, p = 0.002$ ). This suggests that to an extent support from leadership can indirectly increase job satisfaction through job performance improvements. Similarly, emotional intelligence influences job satisfaction via job performance, with a mediated path coefficient of 0.417 ( $t = 10.425, p < 0.000$ ). Leaders who exhibit emotional intelligence indirectly boost job satisfaction by fostering higher employee performance. Self-efficacy also demonstrates a significant indirect effect on job satisfaction through job performance, with a mediated path coefficient of 0.503 ( $t = 13.59, p = 0.005$ ). This finding emphasizes the role of self-confidence in enhancing both performance and satisfaction among employees.

#### **Discussion of SEM/Smart PLS results**

This study contributes to the understanding of the mediation model comprising leadership support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and performance in the School Education Department of Punjab, Pakistan. The results of the path coefficient analysis also reflect the fact that all the three independent variables under consideration, namely leadership support, evaluation of emotions, and self-efficacy, have a positive effect on the level of job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The most significant influence of all the constructs is leadership support, which has a path coefficient of .421, and a p-value of .001. This shows the importance of the

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leadership in improving the job satisfaction scenario. In line with the findings by Aftab et al., (2023) confirms that increased levels of ethical leadership, which depict clear direction and trust are central to the achievement of high satisfaction levels among employees.

Another is emotional intelligence; the standardized regression coefficient is 0.497, a highly positive predictor of job satisfaction. Self and other aware leaders and employees promote high morale because there is understanding from both parents, employers and subordinates. Such a result supports Choi et al. (2021) who suggest that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role of moderating interpersonal communication and leadership through managing complex occurrences in organizations. Similarly, Hameli and Ordun (2022) continued the focus on the place of EI in increasing the self-efficacy among the employees and subsequently the job satisfaction. In this study, self-efficacy for job performance shows a positive path coefficient of 0.519 and  $p < 0.05$  ( $p = 0.003$ ) to indicate job satisfaction.

Slightly less self-explanatory are the associations between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, as all types of self-efficacy expectations are related to indicators of job performance and satisfaction. Khan et al. (2024) stress that the control of the emotions helps to increase the organizational self-efficacy among the personnel of the organization, and provide a positive and improved work climate and satisfaction for the employees. Review of related literature by Javed et al. (2021) affirms that leadership personal traits which encourage self-efficiency and emotional intelligence have a positive influence on commitment, innovativeness and overall satisfaction. This is especially so for the context of public sector organizations where there is significant focus on use of human capital as a key driver of performance of government institutions. Hence, the current research provides robust backing to the hypothesized correlation between leadership support, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, force and job satisfaction amongst the POs of Punjab, Pakistan. The results support studies conducted by Aftab et al., 2023; Anwar and Humayun, 2023; Sökmen and Sarikaya, 2022, which show that emotional and social factors have a generally moderate impact on the Job satisfaction. Subsequent work should fine-tune the understanding of mediating/moderating roles of these variables on job satisfaction to enhance the practice of public sector management and governance.

#### **Research Implications**

This study provides significant theoretical and practical implications for understanding the role of leadership support, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy in enhancing job satisfaction among public sector employees in Punjab, Pakistan. Theoretically, it contributes to the existing literature by integrating leadership and psychological constructs in the context of public sector education, reinforcing previous findings that supportive leadership and employee self-efficacy play a crucial role in job satisfaction (Aftab et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2022). The study also highlights the mediating role of emotional intelligence, demonstrating its importance in improving workplace relationships and reducing job-related stress (Choi et al., 2021). These insights contribute to human resource development theories and provide a behavioral perspective on employee satisfaction in educational institutions.

From a practical standpoint, the findings emphasize the need for school education



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department administrators to foster a supportive and emotionally intelligent work environment to enhance teachers' and staff members' satisfaction levels. Interventions to strengthen leadership, cultivate emotional intelligence in employees, and foster self-efficacy have the potential to greatly enhance job satisfaction and performance. Also, since the job satisfaction directly affects the teaching motivation, the learning performance of students, and the overall success of the institution, the field of educational policy should embed leadership development programs and psychological support systems as a part of the professional development subsystem for public sector employees.

#### **Recommendations**

By providing transformational and supportive leadership through leadership development programs designed for school administrators and department heads, job satisfaction for those working in the public sector can be strengthened. These programs must aim to improve skills in the areas of communication, motivation, and emotional intelligence, as it has been proven in earlier studies that emotionally intelligent leaders surround their teams with a better environment to work. There is also an opportunity to connect mentorship/coaching programs through the education department because, it can help employees to develop their self-efficacy through experiences that build confidence and encourage professional competence.

Organizations should also adopt workplace well-being initiatives that can help foster psychological resilience and stress management. Professional development training experiences for school personnel can feature sessions on emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and conflict resolution. Transparency regarding career progression opportunities and recognition programs that acknowledge employees for their contributions and accomplishments can be the way towards increased motivation and job satisfaction initiated by leadership. Finally, a feedback-driven work culture encourages a sense of belonging among the employees as they feel that their voice has been heard and valued within the organization.

#### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While this study provides valuable information, there are important limitations that must be recognized. First, the research was based on a cross-sectional survey design, which analyses employee perceptions at one moment in time. Such an approach hinders the identification of causation between the variables of leadership support and emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Longitudinal studies may be needed to establish whether these relationships hold true and apply across time. Moreover, the convenience non-probability sampling method used in this study can potentially lead to selection bias, limiting the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of public sector employees in Punjab.

The data collection method was based on self-reported information, which conceivably results in bias: respondents may be afraid to respond with what they really experience and instead provide the answer they think would be more favorable. Future research may collect multi-source data (e.g. supervisor ratings, objective performance measures) to further validate findings. Performing comparative analysis between various province of Pakistan and taking both the private sector and also multitudes of educational institutions would surely allow for a wider study of the intertwined relation

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of leadership and psychological welfare on job satisfaction in education domain.

### **Conclusion**

The need to understand the association of leadership support, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy with job satisfaction of public sector employees in Punjab, Pakistan have led this study. The results highlight how supportive leadership contributes to a positive workplace, emotional intelligence gives you the ability to have solid relationships and manage stress, and self-efficacy enables your employees to be more capable and effective in their roles. As a result, these aspects lead to more considerable job satisfaction and employee wellness in the education industry. With the PLS-SEM analysis and validation measurement scales, this study contributes to a solid empirical foundation supporting the positive role of leadership and psychological constructs in workplace satisfaction.

The study also provides policy makers and administrators with practical recommendations to develop a more supportive and engaging work environment. Also, it allows for individual motivation of employees, better performance at work, lower levels of work stress, psychological support, etc. through leadership programs, psychological workplace support initiatives, and development of human resources within the institution. Although there are limitations in terms of the research but nonetheless it provides a solid basis for future research to study these relationships from diverse sectors and across countries. In conclusion, public education can become a more effective and fulfilling place for employees through the emphasis on meeting psychological needs and performance while staying on path with the agency purpose.

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