



LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN PERSONS WITH DISABILITY (PWD) EMPLOYEES AT WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

The study seeks to investigate the correlation between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Leadership effectiveness among Persons with Disability (PWD) at a workplace. The research used a quantitative, descriptive and analytical approach with data gathered from a sample of 384 PWD workers across many firms using standardized questionnaires on a five-point Likert scale. The findings demonstrate that Emotional Intelligence has an inextricable relationship with Leadership effectiveness, leadership competence and peer acceptance among PWD workers and may further augment workplace inclusion as well as effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Effectiveness, Leadership Competence, Persons with Disability, Peer acceptance, workplace inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an important part of organization's success. Along with leadership, EI has gained increasing importance in workplace in recent years because it helps individuals understand their own emotions as well as the emotions of others resulting in improvement of communications, teamwork and decision making within the organization.

In recent years, organizations have emphasized workplace inclusivity and diversity. One of the main aspects of inclusive workplace in participation of PWDs in the mainstream engagement of the organization. Although many policies and national and international frameworks face various mote equal opportunities for PWD but they often face various social, structural and organizational barriers in the workplace. In such situations, leadership and EI management practices become vital in creating an environment that encourages participation, taking up challenging assignments and rendering job satisfaction to the employees with disabilities

Understanding Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in Employment:

The Sustainable Development Goals 2030 agenda and its 17 goals offer a framework to guide local and international communities toward the accomplishment of disability-inclusive progress. It commits to ensuring inclusivity for all, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), and recognises disability as a pervasive issue to be addressed in the implementation of all 17 goals (Mishra et al., 2021). It similarly acknowledges that vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, must be empowered in all aspects of life, including the labour market, encompass persons with disabilities (PWDs), defined as individuals with enduring impairments. Physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory

impairments interact with various barriers, thereby obstructing full and active participation on an equal footing with others. Employers are mandated to guarantee the complete, active, and equitable enjoyment of fundamental human rights and autonomy within the labour market for economic equilibrium (Botha et al., 2023). Sustainable Development Goal 8.5 express aims to attain "full and productive employment and decent work for all," encompassing persons with disabilities by 2030.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Employees with disabilities often encounter challenges such as social stigma, limited accessibility, and fewer opportunities for career advancement. Despite various organizational and Government policies, many organizations struggle to create an inclusive environment. Limited research has focused on how leadership and EI influence the workplace experience of the PWDs. In particular there is a lack of studies examining how Emotional Intelligent Leadership can support PWD employees in overcoming workplace challenges, improving job satisfaction and enhancing their integration within organizations.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To examine how EI and Leadership practices influence the work environment, job satisfaction and overall organizational engagement of PWD employees.

To analyse the EI levels of PWDs and how these emotional competencies contribute to effective leadership and workplace relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Hashim et al., 2019) Examined persons with disabilities (PWD) face numerous challenges in the workplace, contributing to a high turnover rate. While various studies have examined barriers to employment for disabled individuals, fewer have explored the impact of emotional intelligence on their decision to remain employed. This paper proposes a conceptual framework that links emotional intelligence to job embeddedness among employed PWD, utilizing the Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory. (Pal, 2025) Studied the discrimination faced by differently abled individuals in education, employment, and social integration and proposes the Seven Dimension Leadership Model as a framework for overcoming these challenges. It emphasizes the role of leaders in fostering organizational change to create barrier-free workplaces for persons with disabilities (PwDs).

(Waseem & Intiaz, 2025) Explored the understanding of emotional intelligence and its significance in self-management and workplace well-being. (Man et al., 2020) Explored the critical role of workplace accommodation for all employees, emphasizing its impact on creative performance through the lens of self-efficacy theory. It posits that creative self-efficacy mediates the positive effects of workplace accommodation on creative performance, particularly among employees with lower disability severity. (Kyambade et al., 2024) Investigated how self-efficacy mediates the relationship between social capital and self-employment among individuals with disabilities. While prior research has examined these elements. (Berkel & Breit, 2026) Studied on the relationship between organizational practices and outcomes for employees with disabilities (EWD), particularly focusing on their performance, well-being, and sustainable employment. It builds on a scoping review that identified 27 relevant articles based on specific selection criteria, including the use of quantitative methods and publication in high quality journals. The findings highlight three main clusters of organizational practices: workplace relations and organizational culture, accommodations, and leadership, which were linked to both positive and negative outcomes for EWD.

RESEARCH GAP

Limited empirical research has specifically examined how EI leadership contributes to the inclusion, motivation, and career progression and retention.

METHODOLOGY

The research uses quantitative methods to examine data and evaluate hypotheses.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research used a descriptive and analytical methodology to investigate the correlation between EI and leadership effectiveness. The descriptive component aids in comprehending the present level of EI, leadership attitude, and leadership effectiveness, while the analytical component is used to examine the correlation among the factors.

OBJECTIVES

To what extent are employees with disabilities (PWD) effective as leaders, how well are they accepted by their colleagues in leadership roles, and how effectively do PWD employees utilize their emotional intelligence to enhance their leadership capabilities?

HYPOTHESES

- H1: Emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with the Leadership effectiveness of PWD employees in the workplace.
- H2: Emotional intelligence significantly influences the Leadership capability of PWD employees.
- H3: Emotional intelligence has a significant positive impact on the colleagues' acceptance of PWD employees in leadership roles.
- H4: Leadership capability has a significant positive relationship with the leadership effectiveness of PWD employees.
- H5: Leadership capability significantly influences the colleagues' acceptance of PWD employees in the workplace.
- H6: Leadership capability mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness of PWD employees

SAMPLE SIZE

The research sample included 384 workers with disabilities (PWD) employed in various organizations and industries. A systematic sampling method was used to guarantee sufficient representation of participants from varied demographics, including differences in age, gender, occupational positions, and organizational contexts.

DATA COLLECTION

The study's data were gathered using a structured questionnaire aimed at obtaining information on critical characteristics like emotional intelligence, leadership competence, and leadership effectiveness. The questionnaire was constructed on standardized scales and had both demographic and variable-specific items. A five-point Likert scale, from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree,” was used to assess respondents’ opinions and attitudes. The poll was conducted both online and offline to maximize participation.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Random sampling was the approach that was used for this inquiry since it was the most efficient way to choose individuals to participate in the study. In accordance with the concept of random sampling, each and every person within a population has an equal chance of being chosen for scientific investigation

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUE

Regression analysis is a statistical tool used to examine the relationship between a number of independent variables as well as a number of dependent variables. It aims to understand the relationship between changes in the independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This section provides a study of data gathered from 384 PWD workers to investigate the correlation among emotional intelligence, leadership competence, leadership effectiveness, as well as colleague acceptability. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to evaluate the hypotheses and elucidate the connections among the research variables.

Mean and Standard deviation

CONSTRUCT	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
Emotional Intelligence	3.5723	0.64130
Leadership Effectiveness	3.6698	0.72575
Leader capability	3.7031	0.79001
Colleague Acceptance	5.5808	0.98692

Descriptive statistics for the study show a summary of the respondents' perception on emotional intelligence, effectiveness in leadership, leadership capability, and acceptance by colleagues for PWD employees in the workplace. From the results, emotional intelligence had a mean value of 3.5723 and a standard deviation of 0.64130. This suggests that employees generally possess a moderately high level of emotional intelligence with minimal variation in their responses. Leadership effectiveness had a mean value of 3.6698 and a standard deviation of 0.72575. This suggests that employees perceive effectiveness in leadership at a relatively higher level with moderate variation. In the same vein, leadership capability has the highest mean score, which is 3.7031, and a standard deviation of 0.79001, implying that respondents perceive leadership capabilities as high, though slightly varied among individuals. However, colleague acceptance has a mean score of 3.5808, with a slightly higher standard deviation at 0.98692, implying that respondents perceive colleague acceptance as moderate, though slightly varied among individuals. The findings generally indicate that the constructs under study are perceived at moderately high levels, emphasizing the significance of emotional intelligence and leadership capability in enhancing leadership effectiveness and colleague acceptance within the work environment.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that emotional intelligence is essential and multifaceted in influencing leadership effectiveness, leadership potential, and peer acceptability among PWD personnel in the workplace. The empirical evidence demonstrates that elevated emotional intelligence significantly improves leadership performance, both directly and indirectly via leadership competence. The robust predictive correlations and notable mediating impact indicate that leadership competence serves as a crucial mechanism by which emotional intelligence converts into successful leadership results. The beneficial impact of leadership ability on colleague acceptance underscores the significance of leadership qualities in promoting inclusive and supportive working settings. The research emphasizes the need for firms to cultivate emotional intelligence and leadership competencies in workers with disabilities via specialized training and inclusive policies, hence enhancing organizational performance and workplace diversity.

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