



Impact of management communication, post mergers and acquisitions, on turnover intention: The mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of emotional intelligence

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of management communication, post mergers and acquisitions, on turnover intention through the mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of emotional intelligence. The study employed a time-lagged research design to collect data from employees working in organisations that have undergone mergers and acquisitions in the recent past in Pakistan. Data was analysed using SMART PLS (v3) to estimate the measurement model and the structural model. Findings reveal that management communication negatively correlates with turnover intention. In addition, job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between management communication and turnover intention. However, emotional intelligence does not significantly intervene in the communication turnover intention linkage at high levels of emotional intelligence while the negative relationship between management communication and turnover intention is stronger than at lower levels of emotional intelligence. This is one of the few efforts that examine the association between management communication and turnover intention through the mediating role of job satisfaction. This is also the first study to empirically investigate the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the underlying linkage between management communication and turnover intention.

Keywords: *Management communication, job satisfaction, turnover intention, emotional intelligence, mergers and acquisitions*

INTRODUCTION

Despite the burgeoning interest in turnover intention, there are still significant gaps in the understanding of factors influencing turnover intention. Moreover, there is a lack of a standard framework to gauge turnover intention and cope with this critical issue (Kim et al., 2017). This issue gets inflated when organisations undergo a transformation process. It is argued that today's organisations are compelled to experience continuous change in response to global demands, technology, and economic cycles (Stouten et al., 2018), where changes in organisations brings a plethora of challenges for the organisation (Hassan & Ayub, 2019). For instance, there is a significant connection between organisational change and an aggravated voluntary turnover of employees (van Den Heuvel et al., 2017). More recently, organisational changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has witnessed heightened intentions to resign (Bajrami et al., 2021) and negative work behaviours (Galanti et al., 2021). In recent times, organisational change is regularly witnessed in outsourcing, organisational restructuring, downsizing, as well as mergers and acquisitions (Lewis, 2019).

Mergers and acquisitions are one of the crucial forms of growth strategy and market expansion widely utilised by today's organisations (Renneboog & Vansteenkiste, 2019). Research on factors that impact the turnover intention of employees post mergers and acquisitions is augmented due to the overwhelming consequences on a wide array of employee outcomes (Jackson, 2018). Thus, relatively little is known about the antecedents of turnover intention post mergers and acquisitions. Although it has been theorised that management communication can be associated with turnover intention, only a small sample of studies have investigated this relationship (Al-Dalahmeh et al., 2020). The current study addresses this gap by examining management communication as an antecedent of turnover intention. Exploring management communication in this context is important because a number of studies suggest that management communication is a critical factor that affects a wide array of employee work outcomes within organisations (Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019). Furthermore, management communication can be practically addressed through appropriate interventions by organisations (Al-Dalahmeh et al. 2020). Therefore, investigating management communication as an antecedent may present opportunities to manage and/or lessen turnover intention.

This study seeks to broaden this line of inquiry by exploring a causal mechanism that might also underpin the relationship between management communication and turnover intention — job satisfaction. Notwithstanding the paramount importance and multitude of academic and managerial interest in assessing job satisfaction to predict work outcomes, such as turnover intention (Khan et al., 2020), few studies have empirically tested these relationships in the post-merger and post-acquisition phases. Researchers recognise job satisfaction as an essential factor in the working lives of employees of all kinds. In fact, there is a proven consensus on the association between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Li et al., 2019). In another recent study, Puhakka et al. (2021) have linked superior level of job satisfaction with lowered turnover intention. Employees who are satisfied are more engaged with their organisations and less likely to quit their jobs (Alam & Asim, 2019). However, no research has identified the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between management communication and turnover intention.

To guide the theoretical arguments pertaining to the indirect effect of management communication on turnover intention through the sequential mediation of emotional resilience and job satisfaction, this study also investigates the boundary conditions of the underlying phenomenon under which employees are more likely to quit their organisations.

Specifically, this research answers the call of Nwanzu & Babalola (2020) to explore the boundary effects of emotional intelligence in the proposed hypothesised model. Emotional intelligence refers to “an individual’s ability to understand one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information as a guide to one’s thinking and actions” (Joseph et al., 2015, p. 300). The role of emotional intelligence as the buffer agent has been found in several well-cited studies (Kundi & Badar, 2021; Sadovvy et al., 2021).

Investigating emotional intelligence as a moderating variable is pertinent as such change involves aggravated emotions (Hassan & Ayub, 2019). This further makes the present study more salient to explore the intervening role of emotional intelligence in the underlying linkage. Although several studies have identified the relationship between management communication and turnover intention (Al-Dalahmeh et al., 2020), very little is known about the potential moderators, especially the ones which can magnify the impact of management communication on employee-related factors, for example, job satisfaction and turnover intention. Besides, it is argued that management communication influences the success of workplace change (Schulz-Knappe et al., 2019). Further, the individual’s psychological predispositions are critical for understanding how employees perceive managerial interventions (e.g., management communication) that affect their related outcomes. Eventually, employees are responsible for executing organisation-wide change initiatives and thus, their perceptions and individual differences are important factors that will determine the success of this process.

Therefore, the current study outstretches the boundary effects of emotional intelligence to determine its moderating impact in the relationship between management communication and turnover intention, mediated by job satisfaction. This research is also an effort to measure the indirect effects of management communication on turnover intention of employees, post merger and acquisition, through the mediating role of job satisfaction and the moderating role of emotional intelligence. The next section presents the study’s hypotheses.

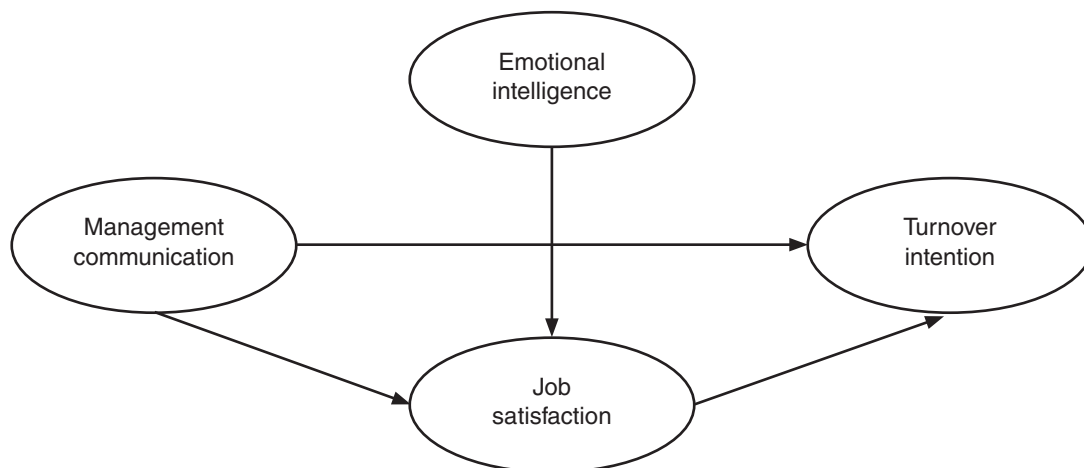


Figure 1. Conceptual model

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Mediating role of job satisfaction

There is an established consensus that communication plays a significant role in mergers and acquisitions (Zagelmeyer et al., 2018). Communication serves a meaningful role in sharing

information regarding the extent and repercussions of mergers and acquisitions by promoting a sense of belonging, fostering commitment and motivation, and controlling organisational members' behaviour (Zagelmeyer et al., 2018). According to Christensen (2014), management communication is a crucial factor in determining how employees perceive change(s) and hence can lead to increased support and reduced resistance. However, if management communication is not properly implemented, it can result in exacerbated resistance itself (Deline, 2019). When employees lack proper information about the consequences of change, they may start contemplating a range of uncertainties, such as changes in job roles, autonomy, and/or the fear of job loss. This is because if the vision behind change(s) is not properly communicated, employees will undergo a heightened degree of uncertainty (Hassan & Ayub, 2019). Therefore, well-planned and executed management change communication is essential for the successful implementation of any change (Li et al., 2021).

Previous studies have shown that there is a positive connection between effective communication and employee behaviour in organisations (Raza et al., 2018). Past research has also found an association between turnover intention and organisational change (Oreg et al., 2011). A host of research in this milieu found that unwanted turnover intention is one of the most deleterious outcomes of organisational change (van Den Heuvel et al., 2017). The phenomenon of change can have a downward spiral of consequences on individuals as well as organisational levels. This is because turnover intention can serve as a proxy of actual turnover, hence may impose severe costs to organisations. As noted earlier, mergers and acquisitions are the most critical forms of organisational change (Abdulai & Ibrahim, 2016), hence, the influence of management communication post mergers and acquisitions can amplify the effects of turnover intention (Brien et al., 2015; Mustamil et al., 2014). According to Belete (2018), turnover intention amongst employees precedes an actual turnover in organisations. Therefore, it is important to implement management communication strategy effectively to reduce its repercussions. Formally, successful implementation of management communication concerning mergers and acquisitions results in a reduced level of subjective threats associated with turnover intention and hence, lowers turnover intention. Therefore, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1. There is a negative relationship between management communication and turnover intention

Furthermore, job satisfaction could diminish employee's turnover intention. Job satisfaction is impacted by multiple factors (Manaf et al., 2021) and research implies that employees possess a greater sense of affiliation with their organisations (Li et al., 2019). However, job dissatisfaction leads to the act of quitting (Alam & Asim, 2019). That is to say when an employee develops a low level of affiliation with the organisation, the likelihood of intending to quit may increase. According to the psychological process model of employee turnover proposed by Ngo-Henha (2018), job dissatisfaction develops into thoughts of quitting for the sake of getting a more satisfying job (Albalawi et al., 2019). Several well-cited empirical studies have also linked job satisfaction with reduced levels of employee turnover (Alam & Asim, 2019; Mullen et al., 2018). There is also evidence from the perspective of organisational change that job dissatisfaction translates into heightened turnover intention (Yousef, 2017). That is to say, job satisfaction offers limited capacity to experience turnover intention (Azeez et al., 2016). Therefore, the study suggests the second hypothesis as follows:

H2. There is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.

In combination, these hypotheses also suggest a mediating role of job satisfaction, such that employees' sense of contentment, associated with management communication, diminishes turnover intention because of their satisfaction with their jobs. Employees who perceive that their organisation is efficient in implementing management communication may result in reduced turnover intention because they are satisfied with their jobs and devote their efforts in the best interest of the organisation (Purba & Ananta, 2018). Furthermore, through effective communication, organisations can make the process of change transparent, culminating into a heightened degree of trust on the change process. Several other studies have proposed a mediating role of job satisfaction between personality and citizenship behaviour (Herminingsih & Kasuri, 2018), manager's emotional intelligence and project success (Rezvani et al., 2016), as well as leader-member exchange and turnover intention (Han & Jekel, 2011). In short, the perception that when an organisation successfully implements change communication, that is, elucidates the rationale and consequences of mergers and acquisitions, employees experience a greater degree of job satisfaction, which ultimately lowers their turnover intention. Therefore, the third hypothesis is derived as such:

H3. Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between management communication and turnover intention.

Moderating role of emotional intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence is regarded as one of the most significant ways in dealing with organisational change, and it is argued that emotional intelligence possesses the ability to cope with the negative effects experienced by employees who experience change transformations (Hassan & Ayub, 2019). The empirical studies in support of this notion suggest that there is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and turnover intention (Lee & Chelladurai, 2018; Mohammad et al., 2014; Saeed et al., 2014). This is because employees who possess high levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to deal with a wide range of professional requirements with ease (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). Scholars in the realm of organisational change corroborate that mergers and acquisitions are complex phenomena because of the heightened uncertainty associated with them (Renneboog & Vansteenkiste, 2019). This perceived uncertainty causes emotional dissonance among employees, which serves as a workplace stressor (Hassan & Ayub, 2019).

When employees perceive that mergers and acquisitions will have devastating repercussions for their employment, they experience elevated fear (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019), which results in increased turnover intention (De Leon, 2021). Therefore, organisations should implement change communication effectively to lower the negative repercussions of transformations (Jackson, 2018). However, the study also predicts that emotional intelligence serves as an intervening variable that underpins the effects of management communication on turnover intention. By drawing on their emotional intelligence, employees can choose between positive and negative emotions and determine how to control negative emotions provoked due to perceived uncertainty. Therefore, a plausible connection can be established: (i) management communication helps employees to deal with negative emotions and ultimately, lowers turnover intention, and (ii) emotional intelligence strengthens the negative relationship between management communication and turnover intention, such that at high levels of emotional intelligence, the negative relationship between management communication and turnover intention is more pronounced and vice versa. Based on this, we suggest the fourth hypothesis as follows:

H4. Emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between management communication and turnover intention such that the negative association is stronger at higher levels of emotional intelligence (vice versa).

METHOD

Sample and procedure

The study utilised time-lagged (i.e., “three-wave”), single-source data gathered from employees working in companies which underwent mergers and acquisitions in the recent past, located in various cities in Pakistan. For instance, these mergers and acquisitions include the merge between Unilever with Best Foods, Engro Foods being acquired by Royal Friesland Campina, Pepsi Lahore being acquired by Lotte and Warid being acquired by Mobilink. Data was collected over a period of six months with a time interval of two months between each wave starting from March 2021 to August 2021. The researcher employed the research design under the recommendations of Maxwell and Cole (2007) to collect data in different time intervals with the intention to measure the causal effects in the mediation analysis as there is a limitation of the cross-sectional research design. This is also to avoid biases in measuring parameters in the mediation analysis (Cole & Maxwell, 2003).

The researcher distributed questionnaires to the target respondents, selected through the non-probability, purposive sampling technique, and employed a face-to-face mode of data collection. As the detailed lists of the employees working in these organisations were not accessible, the purposive sampling technique was found to be appropriate to collect arbitrary responses. The researcher distributed questionnaires along with a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study and ensured confidentiality of the responses. In the first wave, the researcher distributed 450 questionnaires to collect data for management communication and job satisfaction as well as demographic details of the respondents, of which 413 questionnaires were received. The researcher screened the questionnaires and dropped 17 incomplete and/or wrongly filled questionnaires. In the second wave, the researcher contacted 396 respondents to collect data about emotional intelligence and received 374 completed questionnaires of which 365 matched the original responses. In the third wave, the researcher collected responses for turnover intention.

Finally, the researcher consolidated all the responses collected in the three waves with the keys generated by each participant as they were instructed, that is, the respondents were requested to provide initials of their names followed by their birth months. The author processed 352 completed questionnaires, leaving a response rate of 83%. Of the total respondents who participated in the survey, 59% were men and 41% were women. With respect to occupation, 21%, 42%, and 37% of the respondents were in the “top, middle, and lower managerial positions”, respectively. Concerning tenure, 12% of the respondents worked at their organisations for 6–12 months, 22% worked 1–4 years, 24% worked 4–7 years, 22% worked 7–12 years, and 20% worked more than 12 years.

Measures

The researcher adopted research scales from previous studies and distributed them in the English language, as English is the medium of instruction at schools/colleges/universities as well as used in the business sector in Pakistan. The questionnaires were anchored on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (“Strongly agree”) to 5 (“Strongly disagree”).

Management communication

The research instrument to measure management communication was adopted from Raina and Roebuck (2016), using a 26-item scale. Sample items included “my manager gives me appropriate information post mergers and acquisition” and “occasionally I find it difficult to understand job instructions”.

Emotional intelligence

The research instrument to measure emotional intelligence was adopted from Wong and Law (2002), using a 16-item scale. The sample items included “I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time” and “I really understand what I feel”.

Job satisfaction

For job satisfaction, the research instrument was adopted from Raina and Roebuck (2016), using a 3-item scale. The sample items included “Post Merger and Acquisition, I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job”, “Post Merger and Acquisition, all things considered (i.e., pay, promotion, supervisors, coworkers, etc.) and “How satisfied are you with your present line of work”.

Turnover intention

The research instrument to measure turnover intention was adopted from Brough and Frame (2004), using a 3-item scale. The sample items included “How often did you generate the idea to leave the job in the past six months?” and “How likely are you going to look for a new job in the following six months?”.

Data analysis

The study utilised partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine the measurement model and the structural model. Data was analysed in SMARTPLS (v 3.3.3) for the following reasons: (i) “the aim of this study is to maximise the explained variance in the endogenous variable rather than theory confirmation” (Hair et al., 2017); (ii) “the study examines a complex moderated mediation model, thus, rendering support to utilise PLS SEM” (Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019).

RESULTS

Measurement model

The study used a reflective hypothesised model and checked, at the first stage, internal consistency using Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability (CR) metrics, as well as convergent and discriminant validity by assessing outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) indices (Hair et al., 2017). To confirm internal consistency, the recommended values of Cronbach’s alpha and CR should be greater than the minimum threshold level of 0.7 (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). The results shown in Table 1 confirms internal consistency. To measure convergent validity, AVE scores were computed and results demonstrate that all the AVE values are above the minimum acceptable value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Similarly, outer loadings were also measured to assess the reliability of the indicators and all the values above 0.5 were retained for subsequent data analysis except for certain indicators, which were dropped in the subsequent analysis due to poor loading values (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 1. Validity and reliability of constructs

	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Management communication		0.561	0.920	0.901
MC1	0.666			
MC3	0.675			
MC15	0.752			
MC16	0.780			
MC17	0.814			
MC20	0.716			
MC24	0.782			
MC25	0.789			
MC26	0.752			
Emotional intelligence		0.611	0.940	0.929
EI2	0.750			
EI5	0.742			
EI6	0.832			
EI7	0.855			
EI8	0.841			
EI9	0.688			
EI12	0.750			
EI13	0.798			
EI14	0.768			
EI16	0.780			
Job satisfaction		0.556	0.789	0.606
JS1	0.687			
JS2	0.776			
JS3	0.769			
Turnover intention		0.727	0.888	0.812
TI1	0.868			
TI2	0.777			
TI3	0.908			

Note: AVE: average variance extracted; CR: composite reliability

After assessing convergent validity, the author also tested for discriminant validity to confirm that the intra-construct correlations should be greater than the inter-construct correlations (Hair et al., 2017). For this purpose, the author assessed the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion (Hair et al., 2017). According to Henseler et al. (2015), the HTMT criterion is a more robust measure of discriminant validity than cross-loadings and Fornell-Larcker. As such, the study employed the bootstrapping technique to measure the HTMT ratio, using resamples of 5,000 with one-tailed t-test at 90% significance level, to warrant an error probability of 5%. Table 2 illustrates the results of the HTMT ratio. All the values are below the maximum acceptable threshold level of 0.90 (HTMT.90).

Table 2. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio

	EI	JS	MC	TI
EI				
JS	0.968			
MC	0.881	1.076		
TI	0.710	0.760	0.759	

Note: EI: emotional intelligence; JS: job satisfaction; MC: management communication; TI: turnover intention

Structural model

In stage two, after assessing the measurement model, the study measured the structural model employing a non-parametric, bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping technique using 5,000 resamples to yield the path coefficient (β) values and their relevant t-values. Moreover, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (q^2), and effect size (f^2) are reported to evaluate the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2017). Table 3 presents the results of this analysis which suggests that management communication has a significant negative relationship with turnover intention ($\beta = -0.724$; $t = 5.842$; $p = 0.000$; $f^2 = 0.007$), supporting $H1$. Furthermore, job satisfaction has a non-significant positive relationship with turnover intention ($\beta = 0.054$; $t = 0.675$; $p = 0.500$), rejecting $H2$.

Table 3. Effects on endogenous variables

Hypotheses	β	CI (5%, 95%)	SE	t-value	p-value	Decision	f^2	R^2	Q^2
$H1$ MC \rightarrow TI	-0.500***	(-0.720, -0.326)	0.099	5.074	0.000	Supported	0.030	0.668	0.380
$H2$ JS \rightarrow TI	0.054	(-0.103, 0.211)	0.080	0.675	0.500	Not supported	0.002	0.469	0.390
$H4$ MC x EI \rightarrow TI	0.001	(-0.044, 0.046)	0.023	0.051	0.959	Not supported	0.108		

Note: EI: emotional intelligence; MC: management communication; JS: job satisfaction; TI: turnover intention; ***significance $p < 0.05$ (1.96)

Furthermore, the study proposes that job satisfaction mediates the negative association between management communication and turnover intention. The study utilised Zhao et al.'s (2010) mediation approach to measure the relationship between management communication and turnover intention, mediated by job satisfaction. The study obtained point estimates of indirect effect using the BCa bootstrapping technique, with 5,000 resamples. Table 4 indicates that the direct effect of the association between management communication and turnover intention was significant at 95% CIs (-0.653, -0.315). Besides, indirect effect was not significant at 95% CIs (-0.085, 0.176), indicating "direct only non-mediation" (Zhao et al., 2010). Furthermore, variance accounted for (VAF) was also measured to validate the mediation analysis. The analysis found that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between management communication and turnover intention with a VAF value of 41%, supporting $H3$.

Table 4. Summary of mediating effect tests

	Path	t-value	BCCI		Path	t-value	95% BCCI	Decision	VAF
Total effect	-0.456***	5.318	(-0.653, -0.315)	Indirect effect	0.044	0.669	(-0.085, 0.176)	Supported	41%
MC \rightarrow TI				MC \rightarrow JS \rightarrow TI					

Note: MC: management communication; EI: emotional intelligence; JS: job satisfaction; TI: turnover intention; VAF: variance accounted for (indirect effect / total effect*); *total effect: direct effect + indirect effect

The study assessed the moderating role of emotional intelligence using a two-stage approach in light of Hair et al.'s (2017) recommendations. The study analysed the CIs to test the interaction effect. In addition, the BCa bootstrapping procedure was adopted with 5,000 resamples to yield the effect size. The analysis found that the interaction term (management communication* emotional intelligence) has a positive insignificant impact on turnover intention ($\beta = 0.001$; $t = 0.051$; $p = 0.959$) with a significance level of 5%, with a small effect size (Kenny, 2016). Table 4 illustrates that CIs did straddle 0 in order to obtain the β value of the interaction effect, rejecting $H3$.

Furthermore, the study assessed the simple slop analysis, consistent with Dawson's (2014) recommendations, to understand the relationship between management communication and turnover intention, moderated by emotional intelligence. The three lines illustrate the association between management communication and turnover intention. The middle line shows the average moderating effect. The other two lines represent the association between management communication and turnover intention for higher (i.e., mean value of emotional intelligence plus one standard deviation) and lower (i.e., mean value of emotional intelligence minus one standard deviation) levels of emotional intelligence. The relationship between management communication and turnover intention was negative for all three lines. Thus, the relationship between management communication and turnover intention is stronger at higher levels of emotional intelligence and vice versa. Finally, the study also tested the predictive relevance of the proposed model using Stone-Geisser's Q^2 with an omission distance of 5. The analysis yielded a Q^2 value greater than 0. Hence, the model's predictive relevance was also established.

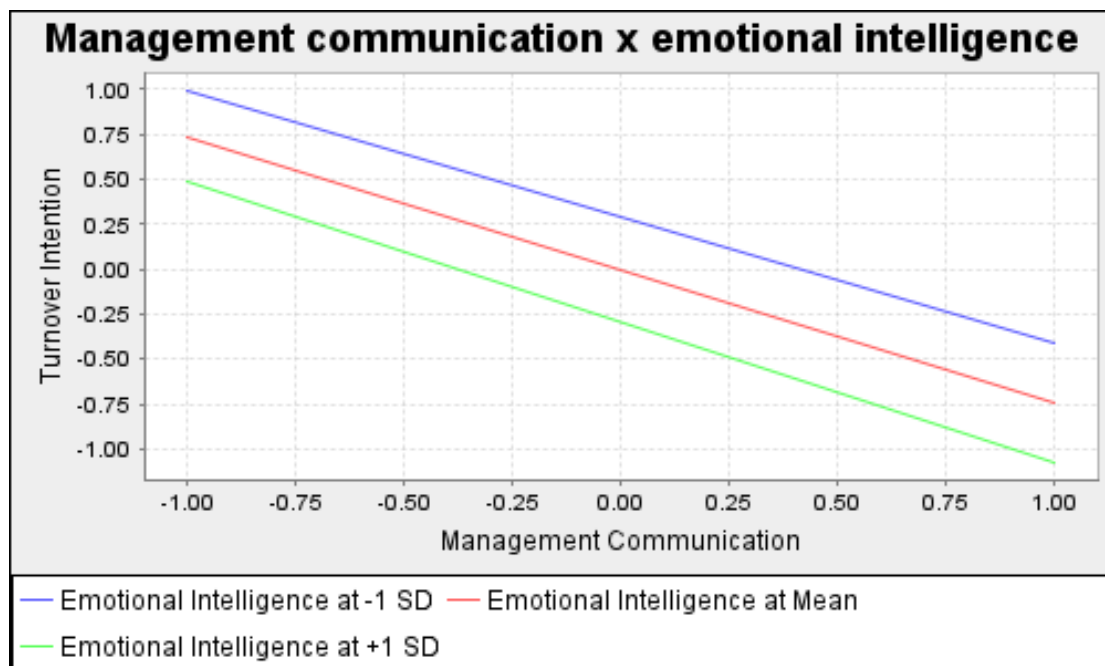


Figure 2. The moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between management communication and turnover intention

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of management communication,

post mergers and acquisitions, on turnover intention in Pakistan's corporate sector. In addition to examining the indirect effect of management communication on turnover intention, the study also investigated the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between management communication and turnover intention. The study also examined the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between management communication and turnover intention, mediated by job satisfaction. To test the hypothesised model, the study collected data from employees working in corporate sectors in Pakistan that had undergone mergers and acquisitions in the past. The researcher collected data at different time intervals with a two-month gap between each wave. As predicted, the study found that management communication significantly impacts employees' turnover intention, post mergers and acquisitions. The study also found that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between management communication and turnover intention. However, the interaction effect of emotional intelligence was not significant in the indirect relationship between management communication and turnover intention. The next section presents implications for theory and practice.

The findings of the study support the theoretical framework and contributes to the extant literature of mergers and acquisitions. For instance, the link from management communication to turnover intention through the mediating role of job satisfaction has not been previously explored. The study suggests that effective communication of the change process can help organisations deal with the amplified issues of perceived uncertainty linked to organisational change. The role of management communication is of paramount importance because they are needed not only to inform the rationale of the change but also to communicate the consequences of the change (e.g., the continuity/discontinuity of jobs). Employees must be properly communicated on the threshold levels and benchmarks of performance that may determine the changing nature of jobs, or even job loss. Once they are fairly informed about the change process, their satisfaction levels can be enhanced, ultimately translating into reduced levels of turnover intention. Furthermore, through casting emotional intelligence as the moderating variable, the study makes a substantial contribution to the literature of mergers and acquisitions. The findings of this study present a number of theoretical and practical implications as discussed in the subsequent sections.

Theoretical implications

The study adds enriching insights to the existing body of knowledge of mergers and acquisitions. First, the study investigates a hitherto understudied linkage between management communication and turnover intention. For instance, Al-Dalhmeh et al. (2020) emphasised the need for examining the communication-turnover intention linkage. For this reason, the researcher examined the impact of management communication on employee turnover intention. However, despite the burgeoning of research interest exploring antecedents of turnover intention, research is scant in examining contextual antecedents. Although some preliminary studies have assessed the contextual antecedents of turnover intention from different perspectives (Brien et al., 2015; Rafferty & Restubog, 2010), the communication-turnover intention linkage has not been extensively examined. The study thus offers insights that the perception of efficient management communication translates into reduced turnover intention.

Second, the study tested the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between management communication and turnover intention. This is the first study in an emerging country that examines job satisfaction as a causal mechanism and explains how effective management communication copes with turnover intention. Thus, in addition to studying the indirect effect of management communication on turnover intention,

this study proposed the mediating role of job satisfaction in the underlying linkage. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research findings that found a significant mediating role of job satisfaction between employee engagement (Al-Dalahmeh et al., 2018), organisational commitment (Ćulibrk et al., 2018) and work outcomes. Furthermore, Shafique et al. (2018) found the mediating role of job satisfaction in predicting turnover intention is stimulated by ethical leadership.

Third, the study outstretches the boundary conditions of the communication-turnover intention linkage by predicting emotional intelligence as the moderating variable. It is noted that mergers and acquisitions can bring a heightened degree of perceived uncertainty (Hassan & Ayub, 2019) which results in eliciting fear among individuals. However, as theorised, the study did not find that employees who draw on emotional intelligence become capable of mitigating the negative effects of perceived uncertainty. Thus, the interaction effect of emotional intelligence coupled with effective management communication, the likelihood that employees demonstrate high turnover intention is not diminished. Prior research in the context of organisational change confirmed the moderating role of employability (Çalışkan & Özkoç, 2020), willingness to participate (Mehmood et al., 2019), and boundaryless career attitude (Won & Tak, 2017), among others. Hence, this study offers a unique contribution in the literature of organisational change by measuring the moderating role of emotional intelligence, which to date has not been examined.

Practical implications

The study presents several important practical implications. First, the findings of this study reveal that management communication significantly influences employees' turnover intention. It is argued that employees are the most crucial capital for the sustenance and development of any company. Nevertheless, the voluntary leaving of employees imposes huge costs on organisations. Whereas, turnover intention turns into actual quitting of employment. The issue becomes aggravated when organisations undergo change transformations such as mergers and acquisitions. The study found that management communication serves as a coping mechanism to deal with turnover intention. Therefore, managers should understand the importance of effective communication of change cascaded throughout organisations. For this reason, organisations should establish proper communication channels and inform employees about the rationale and consequences of such transformations. Proper managerial interventions, that is, involving employees in the decision-making process of implementing change, should be adopted. The perceived process of fairness transforms into effective change implementation and results in mitigating negative work behaviours.

Last but not the least, the study theorised that emotional intelligence serves as a moderating variable in the relationship between management communication and turnover intention, mediated by job satisfaction. In this regard, organisations should implement the necessary interventions such as training sessions to gauge and enhance the emotional intelligence ability of their employees. Furthermore, managers should determine the emotional intelligence capability of their applicants and hire employees who score high on emotional intelligence. This is because successful organization-wide transformation follows an effective emotional transformation among employees.

Limitations and future directions

The study presents several theoretical and practical implications, nonetheless, is subject to several limitations. First, the use of time-lagged data is the strength of this study. However,

future studies should employ longitudinal design to generalise the predictability of the proposed theoretical framework. Second, this study is conducted in a non-Western cultural context, therefore, findings of this study should not be generalised in Western countries. In future studies, the impact of communication can be investigated on variables like corporate reputation (Tahir et al., 2021). It is also suggested that studies be conducted in Western countries to investigate the boundary effects of person-organisation fit (Pratama et al., 2022), organisational justice (Colquitt, 2012), and perceived organisational support (de Leon, 2021) in the communication-turnover intention linkage.

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