JOPAG
JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Journal of Politics and Governance
14(2), May – August 2024

Newcomers' Emotional Intelligence, Work Stress, and Organizational Socialization Outcomes

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Article history:

Received: July 11, 2023

Revised: November 4, 2023

Accepted: December 4, 2023

Keywords:

Newcomer Socialization Process,
Emotional Intelligence,
Work Stress,
Job Satisfaction,
Intention to Stay

Abstract

Organizational socialization is a process that facilitates new employees to reach the organizational goals or socialization outcomes, particularly job satisfaction, and intention to stay long in the organization. This research aimed to examine the relationship between the two outcomes and whether new employee's psychological trait as emotional intelligence and psychological state, like work stress, were related to the two socialization outcomes., Participants were 360 new hired employees; out of 527 new hired employee from an electronic company in Thailand, who received orientation and on-the-job skill training as the beginning part of the socialization program. Data analysis resulted that emotional intelligence was positively related to intention to stay ($r=0.37$, $p < 0.01$) and negatively related to working stress ($r =-0.24$, $p < 0.01$), and work stress was demonstrated as a mediator on the relationship between emotional intelligence and intention to stay with a total effect of 0.54 unit. Both emotional intelligence and work stress were not related to job satisfaction, and job satisfaction was not related to intention to stay. Results found relationship among emotional intelligence, intention to stay while work stress was medicated its relationship. The differences found on job satisfaction and intention to stay were discussed. Future research was suggested in order to understand more of the socialization process and newcomers' immediate outcomes.

Introduction:

World Economic Forum (2023) reported that due to the disruption in word economic, many people lose their jobs and subsequently join new jobs. Every time people change jobs, they have to undergo an organizational socialization process as newcomers to the new organization to familiarize themselves with the new organization. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) stated that organizational socialization is the process where the newcomers change themselves from outsiders to insiders in order to become engaged and effective insiders who are satisfied, committed, and intend to remain with the organization. Therefore, organizations put effort into understanding and facilitating new hired employees through the socialization process in order to maximize the effectiveness of costly personnel recruitment, selection, and training practices (Bauer, Bodner, et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007a). Some organizations may have a successful socialization process and have effectively adjusted newcomers.

Several studies to understanding and facilitating newcomer's adjustment are critical to maximizing the effectiveness of recruitment and selection has been conducted such as the study of Perrot et al. (2014) and Zhou et al. (2021). Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2013) suggested early support and undermining may lay a foundation for later work outcomes and more importantly during the first 90 days. Yet the problem that has occurred in many organizations is high turnover. The organization that is in this study faced with more than 50% turnover rate in the first month.

Former researches pay much attention to the subject of antecedents and outcomes of the socialization process, including situational determinants of newcomers' distress. However, not many researches evaluated the variables that reflect the difference of each individual, which is the relation to new employees' anxiety and stress (Ellis et al., 2015; Nelson & Sutton, 1991).

Nurse jobs are high demand emotion. Emotional Intelligent were examine in new graduate nurse socialization outcomes regarding turnover intent, job satisfaction, role conflict and ambiguity during a preceptorship programmed (Hurley, 2008; Lalonde & McGillis Hall, 2017). It is worth to study whether employees' emotional intelligence and psychological state like work stress were related to the two socialization outcomes, which are job satisfaction and intention to stay outside nursing jobs.

Purposes of the Study:

The purpose of this research research was also aimed at examining if new employees' psychological trait as emotional intelligence and psychological state, like work stress, could increase or decrease the level of the socialization outcomes: job satisfaction and intention to stay. The study, therefore, aimed to find out whether or not: (1) newcomers' job satisfaction is related to intention to stay, (2) emotional intelligence and work stress are related to job satisfaction and intention to stay, and (3) work stress played a role as a negative mediator on the relationship between job satisfaction and intention to stay.

Review of Related Literature:

Socialization process and socialization outcomes

Organizational socialization is the process where newcomers change themselves from outsiders to insiders in order to become engaged and effective insiders. Those who are satisfied, committed, and intend to remain with the organization (Van Maanen and Schein, 1977). Feldman (1976a, 1976b) presented the three-stage model of the new employee socialization process. Stage I: Anticipatory socialization occurs before employees join the organization, and new forms of expectations in various about prospective employers such as jobs transmitting, receiving, and evaluating information and making decisions about employment. State II: Accommodation is the period in which the individual sees what the organization is actually like after joining the new employer and attempts to become a participating member of the new organization. The four main activities as part of their change and acquisition and metamorphosis in this stage are learning new tasks, establishing new interpersonal relationships with coworkers, clarifying their roles in the organization, and evaluating their progress in the organization. State III: Role Management, the newcomer has already made progress in resolving issues within their workgroup and now faces the challenge of mediating conflicts between their own group and other groups, which may place demands on them. If the newcomer can resolve their role management in this stage, it will lead to general satisfaction and internal job involvement.

The socialization process yields two tiers of the outcome, proximal and distal outcomes, that are affected by information and learning (Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007). Proximal outcome or adjustment outcome is the result of newcomer adjustment after receiving the provided socialization tactic, which could result in role conflict, role ambiguity, and perceived fit. While after the newcomer's adjustment, they will adapt themselves, which turns into more 'distal' outcomes or the final socialization outcomes, which are a sign of whether the employees are successfully socialized (Saks & Ashforth, 1997;

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Wanous, 1992). The distal outcomes of the socialization process generally include organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, intentions to quit, and role orientation. This study has its focuses on two distal outcomes; job satisfaction and intention to stay.

Job satisfaction is a positive attitude or emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Landy & Conte, 2010), p 423). Job satisfaction is a significant variable in organizational studies and is the most commonly investigated dependent variable in industrial-organizational psychology (Staw, 1984) and occupational health (Kinicki & McKee, 1996). Job satisfaction is also frequently measured in newcomer studies (Saks et al., 2007b). It was found that newcomers who were successful in the socialization process would have job satisfaction which could lead to organizational commitment in the other stage. In contrast, negative job satisfaction will lead to employee withdrawal and resignation (Bauer, Erdogan, et al., 2007). However, job satisfaction can decline over the period when newcomer become familiarized to their job which could cause increasing turn over or resignation (Wang et al., 2017).

The socialization literature found that the positive result of socialization tactics leads to role clarity, self-efficacy of each individual, and social acceptance and have more strongly correlated with the intention to stay in the organization (Bauer, Bodner, et al., 2007). In the process of newcomers adapting to the new environments, they have to decide whether they want to continue working with the organization or quit the job.

Intention to Stay has been examined in the field of psychology as an antecedent variable of the emotional or attitude of an employee toward the job, i.e., job satisfaction, organization commitment, engagement, stress, burnout from work, etc. A meta-analysis of the antecedents and correlates of employee turnover for the millennial generation confirmed that work satisfaction is the most robust predictor of turnover (Tourangeau & Cranley, 2006). Job satisfaction is found positive collated to intention to stay in nursing and midwife professional career (Al-Hamdan et al., 2017; Bloxsome et al., 2019; Derby-Davis, 2014). Therefore, the two outcomes should be related. Accordingly, the following hypotheses could be stated for this study.

Hypothesis 1: Job satisfaction positively relates to the intention to stay. EI positively relates to job satisfaction.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

A core meaning of EI is the ability to manage emotions, which indicates that individual behaves according to their monitoring, evaluating, and control of their feeling or managing emotion (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988). The literature on EI generates different definitions of EI based on acceptable measurement methods (Freudenthaler & Neubauer, 2005). Differences in measurement approach lead to different lines of research (Furnham & Petrides, 2003; Mayer et al., 2008). Ashkanasy and Daus (2017) summarized the three main methods of EI measurement as follows; (1) EI model with four branches by Salovey & Mayer (1990), who conceptualized EI as the ability to perceive, evaluate and express emotions property, use feelings to generate thought, understand emotions and control for optimal expression (2) Self-perception model based on (Mayer, & Salovey, (1997) focusing on the continued reflexive process associated with mood which is continuously received and evaluated according to the state of moods (3) Mixed model integrating other social and personal skills, considering EI as a group of stable traits of social-emotional skills, cognitive abilities and personality (Bar-On, 2006). These models denote differently to measure EI. Joseph and Newman (2010) found EI performance-based ability, self-reports of emotional abilities, and mixed EI models. Because of attempting to simplify the method of study, such as the construction, the administration, and the scoring system of the research, most EI studies emphasized the self-report trait measures (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). Self-report EI gains an advantage from information on individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behavior in some specific situations, and the data can be efficiently and quickly collected. This research used the self-report EI concept by using Wong & Law (2002) questionnaire.

EI and socialization outcomes

EI is claimed that it is a predicted successful inter-personal interaction (Day & Carroll, 2004). In addition, changing new jobs makes newcomers uncertain and

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stressed (Katz, 1978), which are unpleasant moods and emotions. Moods and emotions play a central role in cognitive processes and behavior. From the research on EI, there are four major aspects of EI: the appraisal and expression of emotion, the use of emotion to enhance cognitive processes and decision-making, knowledge about emotions, and management of emotions, which can have a correlation in strengthening individual effectiveness during stress circumstance (George, 2000). With this concern, it is worth exploring how EI will play the role during the newcomer socialization process

Empirical meta-analysis studies show that EI has a positive impact on performance and job satisfaction (Miao et al., 2017; O'Boyle et al., 2011). In addition, the study of Jordan, Ashkanasy, and Härtel (2002) showed that EI has a positive impact on the intention to stay and turn over during job insecurity because of organization merging and acquisition. In a study by Chiva (2008), it was also found that EI moderated between learning capability and job satisfaction. In addition, Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) reported that EI has a positive impact on job satisfaction. Furthermore, Magro (2016) reported that EI could support refugees who were learning the new cultures in the resilience dimension, so he suggested developing an emotional intelligence curriculum to help refugees learn the new culture or learn new socialization to the new culture. The other study in the police environment found that EI leads to job satisfaction and well-being, with positive path relationships leading to employee engagement and organizational commitment, thereby having a negative relationship to turnover intentions (Brunetto et al., 2012). Two studies in the Jourdan nursing environment found that EI correlated with the intention to stay (Abualrub & Al-Zaru, 2008; Al-Hamdan et al., 2020). Accordingly, the following hypotheses could be stated for this study.

Hypothesis 2: Emotional Intelligence positively relates to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional Intelligence positively relates to intention to stay.

Work Stress

During the socialization phase, uncertainty and stress play an important role (Nelson, Quick & Eakin, 1988) as newcomers learn to adapt to their new responsibilities. In the study of Abraha (2008) and Singh (1998) about the stress of newcomers in their role given by the organization, they suggested that work stress consists of role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload.

Role ambiguity

Breaught and Colihan (1994) stated that role ambiguity is not yet well clarified. It is, however, generally accepted that role ambiguity occurs when newcomers acquire unclear information on expectations from their role and the method of work to achieve the goal (Rizzo et al., 1970). Because managers may not fully understand the requirement of the job given to the newcomers (Walker Jr et al., 1975), newcomers may encounter role ambiguity sometimes. As they are new to the organization, the lack of clear instruction and understanding may affect the decision of the newcomers. Role ambiguity is a significant reason for job dissatisfaction (Abramis, 1994).

Role conflict

Role conflict is defined as an incompatibility of job requirements and expectations. Rizzo and colleagues (1970) defined a set of incompatibilities as a set of corresponding conditions affecting role performance. Perhaps it may be incompatible with performing as the requirements cannot be done simultaneously due to their characteristics (Sohi, 1996). Role conflict is likely to be more obvious in jobs in which requirement is hardly defined and needs flexibility (Menon & Akhilesh, 1994). When newcomers do require to perform their tasks, or the expectation of several supervisors contradicts the requirement of their job, role conflict tends to occur (Handy, 1993; Lysonski & Andrews, 1990; Walker Jr et al., 1975; Wood & Tandon, 1994). Role conflict is a source of dissatisfaction as it correlates with a high level of stress and burnout. The newcomers suffering from role conflict are likely to leave the organization (Louis, 1980).

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Role overload

Role overload can be defined as a situation in which individuals perceive that the requirement exceeds their abilities and motivation to perform the job successfully (Peterson et al., 1995; Singh, 1998). Because newcomers generally have an expectation on the number of tasks, if duties exceed their expectations, it will cause negative impacts on the socialization phase of the newcomers, who will suffer from stress and burnout.

Work stress and socialization outcomes

Newcomer stress and socialization outcome have been interesting topics for researchers. Generally, organizations have tried to offer training and orientation to support newcomers, but the results may not be as expected. The most frequent formal socialization tactic being used was the employee orientation program (Nelson & Quick, 1991; Louis et al., 1983). In contrast, offsite training sessions were rated as one of the least available. Although the orientation program was the most frequently used, it was not related to newcomers' adjustment. At the same time, offsite training was only related to psychological distress symptoms. Newcomers whose offsite training was not offered reported greater psychological distress. Neither the helpfulness of formal orientation nor offsite training was related to newcomers' adjustment (Saks, 1996).

In addition, Katz (1978) and Nelson (1987) had a discussion on organizational socialization and new employee adjustment from the perspective of stressed people. Nelson (1987) combined organizational socialization and organizational stress literature and initiated a socialization stress model. Katz (1985) summarized that, in his research, the most significant idea "is that individuals undergoing a transition into a new organization are placed in a high anxiety-producing situation" (p. 137). The situation determinants of newcomers' anxiety and distress symptoms later were studied in several studies. For example, Nelson and colleagues, 1988 evaluated the socialization and adjustment of new employees from the perspective of stressed people. It was found that stress symptoms were related to the intention to resign positively. Nelson & Sutton (1991) noticed that new employees underestimating job difficulty had more adjustment difficulty and concluded that they had more distress than those overestimating job difficulties. Fisher (1985) found in his study a negative relationship between work adjustment and unmet expectations of newly graduated nurses and a positive relationship between stress and turnover (intention to leave the organization and the profession). Besides, Evans, Brown, Timmins, & Nicholl (2007) and Evans & Kelly (2004) indicated that EI increases the ability to control feeling and help nursing students select proper management strategies when facing a stressful situation. This ability ultimately ensures individuals' good mental and physical health in the nursing sample group, which is negatively related to perceived stress (Por et al., 2011). Furthermore, in Jordan nursing hospitals, the nurse with high performance would get better recognized, resulting in less stress and coping with stress better, and job stress was found to be negatively related to intention to stay (Abualrub & Al-Zaru, 2008). Therefore this research develops the following Hypotheses were stated for this study:

Hypothesis 4: Emotional Intelligent negatively relates to Work stress

Hypothesis 5: Work stress negatively relates to job satisfaction

Hypothesis 6: Work stress is negatively related to the intention to stay

Work Stress as a Mediator

A mediator variable is a variable that acts between the cause and effect in a causal chain (Mackinnon, 2015). As mentioned above, stress has a negative relation to socialization outcomes. In the early psychological literature, psychological stress was found to be dependent on cognitive mediation (Arnold, 1960). Lather Lazarus (1993) summarizes that stress is a parallel problem of the cognitive mediation of emotions. In the newcomer socialization context, organizations try to offer orientation training to reduce newcomers' stress. Some studies found that anxiety reduction mediated the relationship between training and work outcomes (e.g., Saks, 1996). Saks and Ashforth (1997) reported that the relationship between behavioral

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self-management and ability to cope and task-specific anxiety were mediated by newcomers' entry anxiety and stress. Therefore, stress can be considered a mediator for the socialization outcome.

The EI role in research provides a significant advantage as EI always correlates with a positive outcome in many aspects, such as life and work satisfaction, interpersonal functioning, healthy relationships, job performance, psychological well-being, physical health, and psychophysiological measures (i.e., cortisol levels, blood pressure) (Martins et al., 2010; Salovey et al., 1999, 2002). Research on the relationship between EI and stress coping, well-being, and professional performance in high-job stress, such as nurses and police officers, showed a negative relation with stress (Abualrub & Al-Zaru, 2008; Al-Hamdan et al., 2020; Brunetto et al., 2012).

Former research found that individuals with Emotional Intelligence have better social interaction and perceived social support (Metaj-Macula, 2017). Newcomers with good interaction and perceived social support lead to positive adjustment, including job satisfaction (Nelson & Quick, 1991b). Therefore, EI demonstrate positive relationship with job satisfaction. However, in the case that the newcomers' occupational has higher stress, the more negative impact they exert on job satisfaction. The teacher participants show that role stress (role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload) and emotional exhaustion result in negative job satisfaction (Richards et al., 2019). Since the newcomers in this study experienced high work stress during the socialization process, those with high emotional intelligence could have more job satisfaction (Sy et al., 2006) because they have better social interaction and perceived social support (Metaj-Macula, 2017). Therefore, this research hypothesized as follows.

Hypothesis 7: the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction is mediated by work stress. Those who have lower work stress will have higher job satisfaction and hence will have a high level of intention to stay.

While job satisfaction is the most robust predictor of turnover (Tourangeau & Cranley, 2006), those with higher job satisfaction will be more likely to stay (Llobet & Fito, 2013). In addition, EI also can have a direct relation that relates to employees' intention to stay as per hypothesis 3. An employee with a low EI tends to associate with difficulty responding to job demands, burnout, and reduced commitment (Nel et al., 2013). An employee who has an optimal level of emotional intelligence will enhance the management of job stress by being able to control his stress (Navas & Vijayakumar, 2018). An employee who has lower job stress will have a higher likelihood of staying, such as in the nursing sector ((Al-Hamdan et al., 2020). Therefore, this research hypothesized as follows.

Hypothesis 8: The relationship between emotional intelligence and intention to stay is mediated by work stress. Those who have higher EI will have lower work stress and hence will have a high level of intention to stay. Figure 1 demonstrates a conceptual framework portraying the eight hypotheses.

Research Methodology:

This research is quantitative research approached by using correlation and relation to test the relationship of variable. Multi-level hierarchical regression analysis is used to test the mediation effect.

Sample and data collection

The participant was from newly hired frontline operators of a big electronic company in Thailand. The permission was granted from the company. Participants were new hired employees from one company, so they had the same socialization process. During the orientation program, the recruits were informed about the research and assured of voluntary participation as well as the confidentiality of their responses. There were 527 new hires during the period of study. The 360 of survey were return. After attending a one-month socialization program, the participants were asked to answer a package of 4 questionnaires that were used to measure EI, work stress, job satisfaction, and intention to stay.

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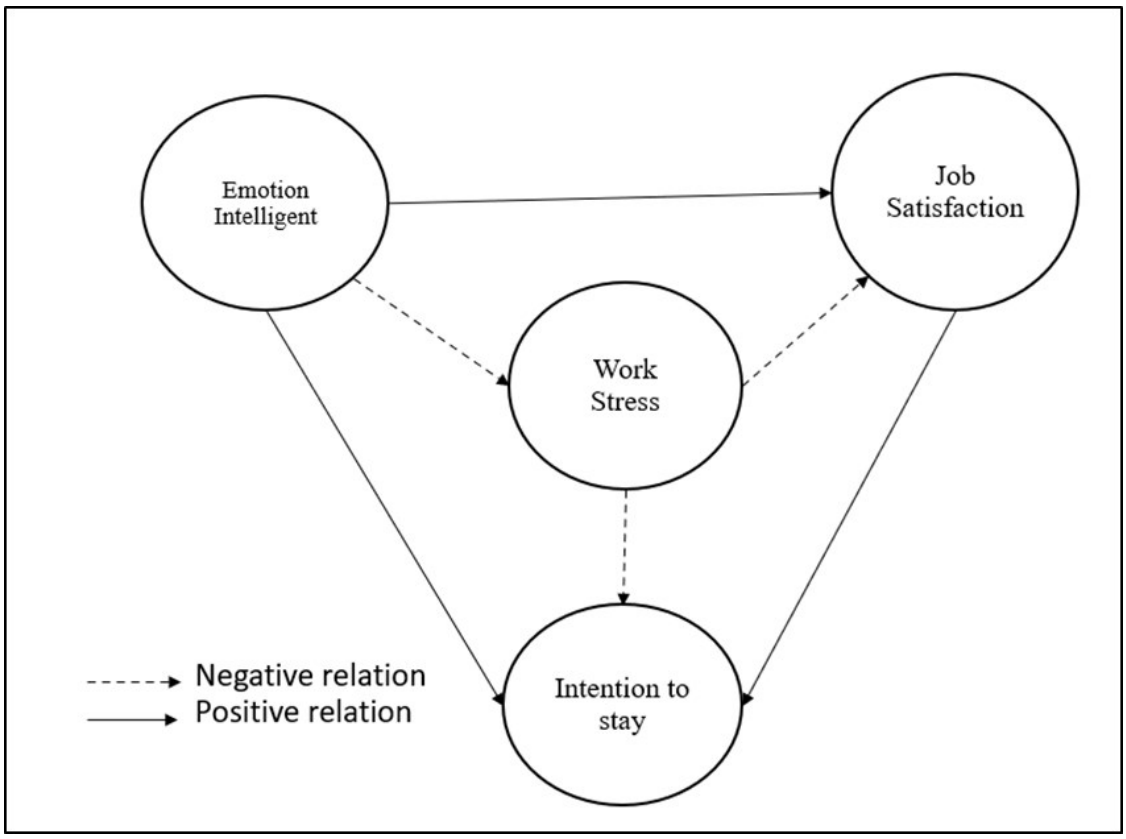
Figure 1

The conceptual framework of this study portrays the mediation effect of work stress on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, which leads to the intention to stay



Research Instrument

Questionnaires were used as an instrument to collect data in this study. Each package composes of 4 questionnaires:

(1) Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: This study used the EI measure developed by (Wong & Law (2002), which has been tested in Eastern contexts such as China, Hong Kong, and Singapore. The original WLEIS has 16 items and uses a five-point Likert rating scale. It comprises four constructs with a total item are 16; Appraisal (SEA); Others-Emotions Appraisal (OEA); Use of Emotion (UOE); Regulation of Emotion (ROE). In this study, the six-point Likert rating scale of 16 items was used. The reliability of this questionnaire in this study is high (α = 0.93), as shown in Table 1.

(2) Work Stress Questionnaire: The questionnaire used in this study aims to measure three dimensions of work stress; role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload. The role ambiguity and role conflict questionnaires were adapted from the work stress scale developed by Rizzo and colleagues (1970). The role overload questionnaire was adapted from a scale based on the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Nadler, Jenkins, Cammann, & Lawler, 1975). The questions were selected and adjusted to be relevant to the participants' work roles. The work stress questionnaire, therefore, is totally composed of 12 items. The six-point Likert rating scale was used. Participants were asked to rate their experience in each item from not at all (1 point) to always (6 points). A higher score indicated a higher level of work stress. This questionnaire found high reliability in this study (α = 0.93), as shown in Table 1.

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(3) Job Satisfaction Questionnaire: The job satisfaction scale used in this study was applied to an overall job satisfaction approach. The participants were asked to rate their satisfaction level in ten areas. The first eight items cover supervisor, pay, coworker, job content, work environment, job security, the opportunity to progress in career, and overall satisfaction with the job. The next two items concern mentors and training provided during the first month, which is considered part of the socialization program. Total job satisfaction in this study comprised ten items using the six-point Likert rating scale. Participants were asked to rate their experience in each item from not at all (1 point) to always (6 points). A higher score indicated a higher level of job satisfaction. In this study, the reliability of this questionnaire is high (α = 0.98), as shown in Table 1.

(4) Intention to stay questionnaire: The intention to stay scale in this research was adjusted from the intention to stay scale by Waung (1995). It is composed of 4 items. Participants were asked to rate their experience in each item from not at all (1 point) to always (6 points) with the six-point Likert scale. The higher score reflects a higher level of intention to stay with the company. In this study, the reliability of this questionnaire is high (α = 0.85), as shown in Table 1.

Results:

Descriptive Statistics of Participants

The participants in this study were 360 newly hired frontline operators. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 37; the average age was 24, the millennial generation. Most participants were female (330, or 91.7%) due to the nature of the job. The majority of participants graduated from high school (60%).

Hypothesis Testing

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was computed to investigate the relationship between each pair of variables measured. The results, as shown in Table 1, indicated that (1) the two socialization outcomes, job satisfaction and intention to stay, were not related (r=0.044, p>.05), so this result did not support hypothesis 1 (2) EI and job satisfaction was not related (r= .0.024, p > .05) so this result did not support hypothesis 2. However, it was found that EI was positively related to the intention to stay (r =0.371, p < .01), so this supports hypothesis 3. EI was negatively related to work stress ((r =-0.243, p < .01), so hypothesis 4 is supported. However, work stress and job satisfaction were not related (r= .0.045, p > .05) as per hypothesis 5. Furthermore, work stress and intention to stay were negatively related (r =-0.514, p < .01), so hypothesis 6 is supported.

Table 1

Inter-Correlations and Descriptive Statistics of Studied Variables

Variable	Mean [Std]	1	2	3	4
1 Emotional Intelligence	4.37 [0.70]	(0.93)			
2 Work Stress	2.87 [0.89]	-.243**	(0.93)		
3 Job Satisfaction	2.73 [1.26]	0.024	0.045	(0.98)	
4 Intention to Stay	4.66 [1.02]	.371**	-.514**	0.044	(0.85)

Note: n=360, **p < .01. Numbers in parentheses are reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) of the questionnaires

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Regression analysis

Simple linear regression was used to test if EI significantly predicted work stress. The fitted regression model was: works stress = 4.92 - 0.19*(emotional intelligence). The overall regression overall of EI and work stress was statistically significant (R2 = .06, F (1, 158) = 22.42, p < .000). It was found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted work stress (β = 0.24, p < .000).

Furthermore, simple linear regression was used to test if EI significantly predicted intention to stay. The fitted regression model was: work stress = 3.2+.25* (emotional intelligence). The overall regression of EI and intention to stay was statistically significant (R2 = 0.14, F(1, 158) = 57.234, p < .000). It was found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted intention to stay score (β = 0.37, p < .000).

Lastly, the simple linear regression result showed that work stress significantly predicted intention to stay. The fitted regression model was: intention to stay = 5.02 -0.41*(work stress). The overall regression of work stress and intention to stay was statistically significant (R2 = 0.21, F(1, 158) = 94.367 p < .000). It was found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted intention to stay (β = -0.46, p < .000).

Table 2

Results of linear regression analysis

Variables	Regression			Coefficients				
	R	R^2	std. Error	B	β	*t*	P vales	std. Error
EI à Work stress	0.24	0.06	0.66	-.19	-0.24	-4.40	0.00	0.04
EIàIntention to stay	0.37	0.14	0.64	0.25	0.37	7.57	0.00	0.03
Work stress à Intention to stay	0.48	0.21	0.80	-0.41	-0.46	-9.71	0.00	0.43

Mediation Effect of Stress

Since EI was found unrelated to JS, hypothesis 7: Those who have lower work stress will have higher job satisfaction and hence will have a high level of intention to stay cannot be tested. However, the path relationship among EI, work stress, and intention to stay showed significant relation results. Following Hayes' (2013) Macro Process via the bootstrapping method, consider a mediator has a mediational effect when (1) the indirect effect (IE) of EI on intention to stay via work stress (i.e., IE = path a x path b; a = the effect of EI on the mediator of work stress, b = the effect of work stress on the intention to stay) and (2) the bias-corrected 95% CI around the IE from 5000 bootstrap re-samples. We accepted the IE as statistically significant only if its bias corrected 95% CI excluded zero.

The results, as shown in Table 3, revealed a significant total effect of EI and work stress (B = 0.54, p <.001), of which path a: significant effect of EI on work stress (B = -0.31, p <.001) and path b: significant effect of work stress on intention to stay (B = -0.51, p <.001). Finally, when work stress was entered into the relationship between EI and intention to stay, the direct effect of EI on work stress was significant (B = 0.38, p <.001). In addition, the bias-corrected 95% CI is 0.16, and CI 95% = 0.07 to 0.26, which excluded zero. Hence, work stress is considered a mediator for EI on intention to stay.

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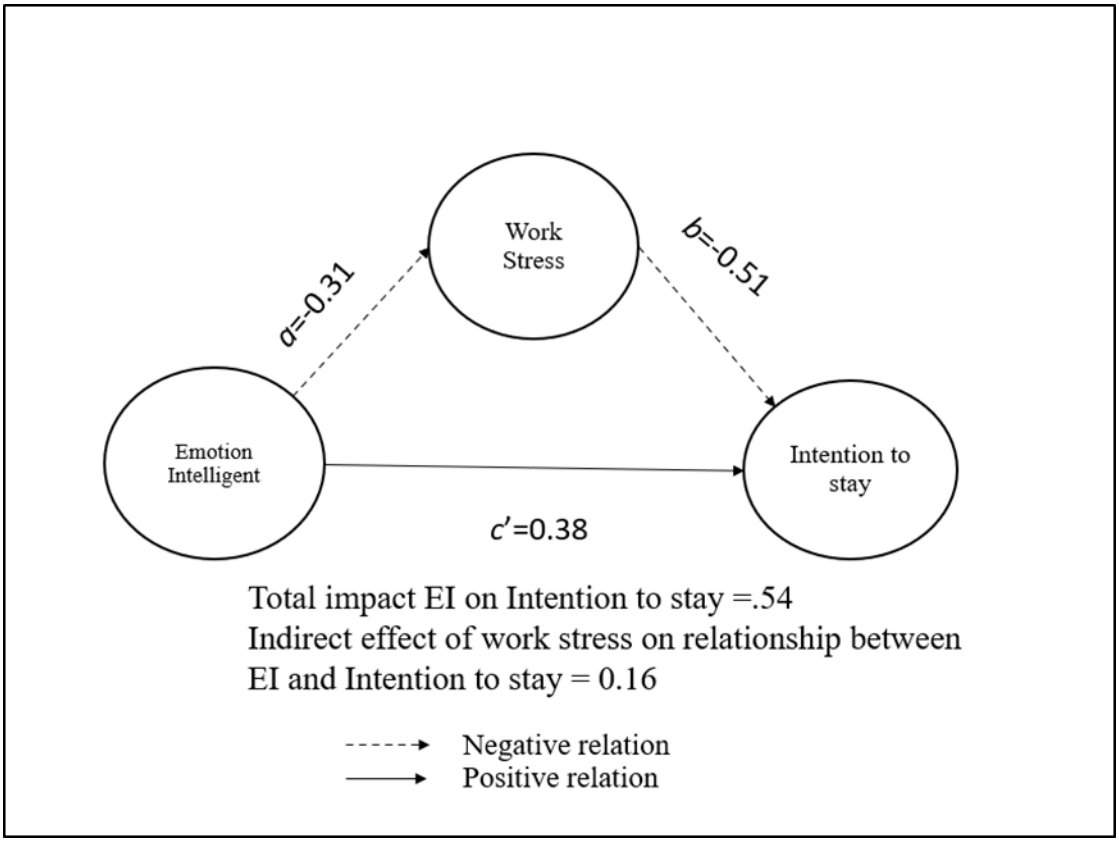
Table 3

Results of multi-level hierarchical regression analysis

		Consequence						
		M (Work Stress)				Y (Intention to Stay)		
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	*p*		Coeff.	SE	*p*
X (EI)	*a*	-0.31	0.07	<0.001	*c′*	0.38	0.07	<0.01
M (Work Stress)		-	-	-	*b1*	-0.51	-0.05	<0.001
Constant	i_M	4.24	0.29	<0.001	i_Y	4.46	0.35	<0.001
R^2 = 0.0591 $F(1,358)$= 22.47, p<0.001				R^2 =0.3285 $F(2,357)$= 87.33, p<0.001				

Figure 2

Mediation Model of Work Stress on Relationship between EI and Intention to Stay



In sum, the direct effect of EI on intention to stay is 0.38, which is the estimated difference in intention to stay between the two newcomers who experience the same level of work stress of whom report one unit different. The indirect effect demonstrated that two newcomers who differ by one unit in their EI are estimated to differ by one unit in their intention to stay by 0.16 units as a result of the tendency for those under relatively more EI to feel less work stress effect. The total impact of EI on intention to stay is 0.54. Two newcomers who differ by one unit in EI are estimated to differ by 0.54 in their reported intention to stay.

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Discussion:

The main purpose of this research is to make an understanding as well as evaluate the newcomer socialization process with its focus on employee's psychological trait, emotional intelligence, and psychological state as work stress. First of all, this study found that the two outcomes job satisfaction and intention to stay, were not related. Second, emotional intelligence was found to be positively related to intention to stay, and work stress was negatively related to intention to stay, whereas EI and work stress were not related to job satisfaction. Third, in addition, work stress demonstrated a negative mediating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and intention to stay. The findings showed strong evidence that new employees were willing to stay with the organization even though they perceived work stress.

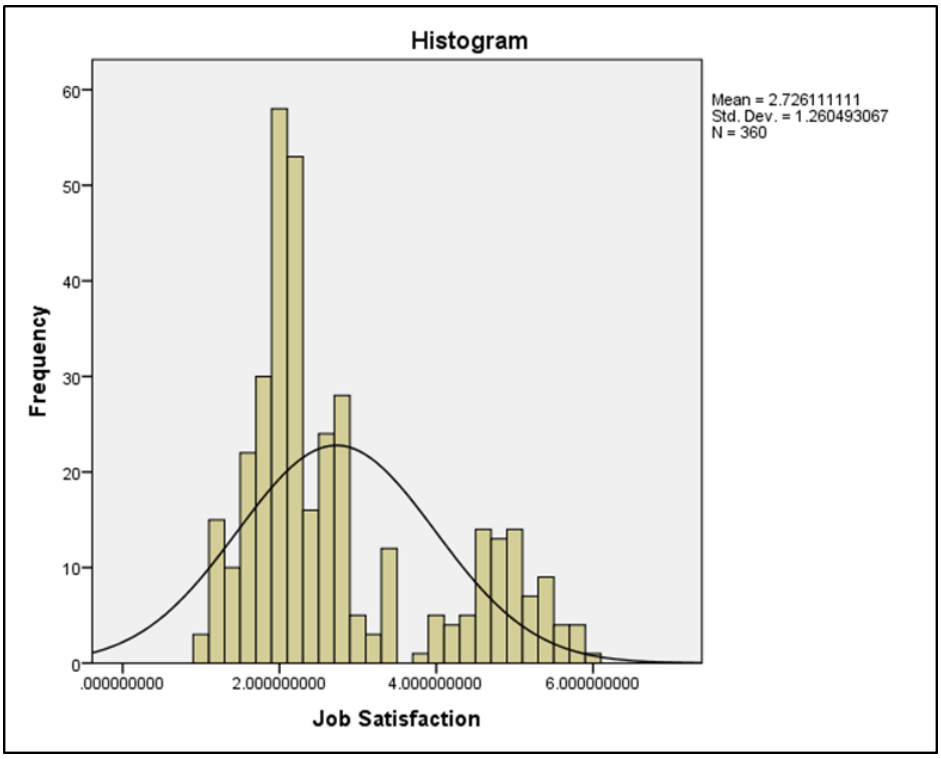
Both EI and work stress played important roles on intention to stay. In this study, results on job satisfaction were much deviated from previous research studies. Since job satisfaction was not related to any variables in this study, post hoc analysis was performed and found that job satisfaction had an abnormal distribution in having two poles, as shown in Figure 3. Probably, it was because this study asked participants to evaluate whether they felt dissatisfied or satisfied with their job, with no neutral scale. Therefore, job satisfaction has an abnormal distribution that has two curves. These two poles showed that participants evaluated either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the new environment during their first month of working in the organization. Participants might be unable or not yet to clearly indicate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Probably one month is too soon to measure job satisfaction.

Limitation

Since the turnover of this organization is very high in the first month, this study was designed to collect data from new employees during the first month, which is too early. Newcomers were still trying to make sense of the new organization, so job satisfaction is not clear as yet. Also, the participants were rather heterogeneous samples of the frontline operator in Thailand, and the majority of the sample is female at an average age 24-year-old, which could limit the generalizability of this study. This age generation could have had verities of the way to reduce stress.

Figure 3

Histogram of Job Satisfaction



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Recommendations for Practice

In this study, EI could be a consideration factor when assessing recruiting new hires for a job. At the same time, work stress shows a significant negative role in the intention to stay, while emotional intelligence shows a positive role in the intention to stay. Organizations should probably provide socialization or training to increase EI and decrease work stress which can help employees to stay longer with the organization.

Recommendations for Future Research

EI did not associate with job satisfaction at the early stage of socialization. A longitudinal study of EI through a more extended period, such as six months or one year of socialization, should be examined, and the overall mediation model of work stress, job satisfaction, and intention to stay would be examined. Job satisfaction measurement could be considered a neutral choice for participants. Additional research for various ages and societies would benefit the generalization of this knowledge.

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