

The Impact of Emotional Labor and Transformational Leadership on Burnout and Turnover Intentions: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence and the Moderating Role of Social Support in the Tourism Industry

Arshad Mahmood Arif

Mohi Ud Din Islamic University, AJ&K Email: arshad.modest@gmail.com

Dr. Shams Ur Rehman

Mohi Ud Din Islamic University, AJ&K Email: shams.mahsud@gmail.com

Abstract

The current study focuses on the effects of emotional labor and transformational leadership on employee's life burnouts and turnover intentions in the tourism industry. It also examines mediating role of emotional intelligence, as well as moderating role of social support, in a combined structural framework. Quantitative, cross-sectional research design was used and 398 tourism employees were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used as a method of data analysis. The results point to the fact that emotional labor contributes to the considerable increase in burnout and turnover intentions, and transformational leadership decreases these negative consequences. EI has been a mediating factor, as it conveys the influence of both emotional labor and transformational leadership into burnout and turnover intentions. Similarly, social support helps significantly reduce the negative effect of emotional work. The model is shown to be very explanatory, specifically on the emotional intelligence as well as turnover intentions. These findings highlight the role of leadership development and improvement of emotional abilities, as well as the promotion of favorable working environments in promoting the well-being and retention of employees in tourism organizations.

Keywords: Emotional Labor, Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Social Support, Burnout, Turnover Intentions, Tourism Industry.

Introduction

Tourism industry can be considered to be among the highly emotional spheres of services (Lee and Madera, 2019; Martinez et al., 2020). The workers who work in the hotel industry, travel agencies, tour operators, and customer-facing hospitality are expected to engage clients round-the-clock because they have different cultural and emotional backgrounds (Martinez et al., 2020; Wong and Wang, 2008). These

exchanges require employees to control their emotions, show a positive attitude, and remain calm despite such stressful circumstances (Martinez et al., 2020). Unlike most other sectors, tourism supply of services is dependent on emotion performance as opposed to technical skill (Lee and Madera, 2019). As a result, emotional regulation will be a mandatory job requirement and not a discretionary skill (Martinez et al., 2020). Emotional labor refers to the effort that employees have put into the management and control of emotions to achieve organizational display expectations (Martinez et al., 2020). In tourism contexts, this consists of the frustration inhibition, friendliness when customers complain, and appearance of enthusiasm despite emotional conditions at work (Larena, 2024; Toprak et al., 2015). Although emotional labor brings customer satisfaction and organizational image, it also causes mental pressure (Lee and Ok, 2012). The long-term management of emotions may also result in emotional exhaustion, which is a core element of burnout (Larena, 2024; Lee and Ok, 2012). Emotional exhaustion negatively influences the psychological resources of the employees, as well as job performance, motivation and wellbeing (Lee and Ok, 2012; Martinez et al., 2020).

Burnout is a major problem of tourism organizations because of the exhaustive work environment created by the demanding customer encounters, unusual schedules, and pressure to perform (Lee and Madera, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023). In situations where the emotional exhaustion has continued, employees might psychologically disengage themselves with their jobs (Lee and Ok, 2012). A turnover intention is one of the most devastating consequences of burnout that is characterized as the active thought of leaving the organization (Nguyen et al., 2023; Toprak et al., 2015). The high turnover rates in tourism affect the continuity of services, raise recruitment expenses, and training, and the stability of organizations (Nguyen et al., 2023). Hence, it is crucial to know the predictors of burnout and turnover intention to ensure a sustainable operation in the field of tourism (Lee and Madera, 2019).

Although the topic of emotional labor as a predictor of burnout was researched extensively, empirical evidence is not always the same regardless of the setting (Lee and Madera, 2019; Ena et al., 2020). On the one hand, some studies find that the effect of emotional strain is strong when lacking the influence of personal and organizational factors, other researchers indicate the opposite (Martinez et al., 2020). Specifically, the mechanisms, according to which emotional labor affects the outcomes of employees, have not been entirely elucidated (Lee and Madera, 2019). Emotional intelligence, which is measured as the capacity to identify, cognize, and manage emotions successfully, can be the reason behind a better ability of certain employees to deal with emotional demands compared to others (Lee and Ok, 2012; Samie and Fahmy, 2015). These employees who have higher emotional intelligence can handle the customer interaction better, which leads to less emotional dissonance and psychological pressure (J. Lee and Ok, 2012; Y. H. Lee et al., 2019). Meanwhile, leadership takes a key position in the formation of workplace climate (Martinez et al., 2020). Inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and idealized influence are some of the defining factors of transformational leadership (Bhavik, 2023). Leaders possessing this style promote employee development,

emotional support, and confidence (Helal et al., 2024; Martinez et al., 2020). Such leadership can contribute to the emotional abilities and strength of employees in emotionally challenging settings (Samie and Fahmy, 2015; Sewanyana, 2019). Nevertheless, there has been minimal empirical studies on the effect of transformational leadership on emotional intelligence and hence the intention to burnout and turnover.

The present paper fills the latter gaps, as it focuses on an in-depth structural paradigm that considers emotional labor, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, social support, burnout, and turnover intentions in the context of tourism (Nguyen et al., 2023). The study seeks to determine both direct and indirect relationships in lieu of testing isolated relationships, which is done by Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The model specifically examines the mediation of emotional intelligence in the associations that exist among emotional labor, transformational leadership and employee outcomes. The study further focuses on the moderating effect of social support on the effects of emotional labor and leadership on burnout and turnover intention.

The empirical results of this research point out a number of significant trends. To begin with, emotional labor shows a positive effect on emotional intelligence negatively, implying that over time, too much emotional control can reduce emotional ability in employees (Hori and Chao, 2022). Second, transformational leadership produces a positive significant impact on emotional intelligence, which means that supportive and inspirational leaders improve the emotional abilities of employees (Abbas et al., 2025). The significance of these relationships is especially great due to the fact that the emotional intelligence can be used to explain a significant part of variation of employee results. There is high explanatory power with this model. The coefficient of determination is very high showing that emotional labor and transformational leadership explain almost 90 per cent of the variance of emotional intelligence (Martinez et al., 2020). Moreover, the predictors turnover intentions have a high R² of 0.811 indicating that the joint predictors in the model account more than 81 percent of turnover intentions expressed by the workers. These values show a very powerful predictive capability in the structural framework.

The mediation analysis proves that emotional intelligence has a strong indirect role. Burnout and turnover intentions are both related to emotional intelligence in both emotional labor and transformational leadership (Chen et al., 2024). This observation argues that emotional intelligence is one of the key explanatory variables between the work requirement and work leadership behavior and the employee retention performance. Instead of emotional labor influencing turnover directly, its influence is mainly relayed through the modifications of emotional abilities of employees. Similarly, there is a significant moderation effect of social support. Interaction of social support and emotional labor has a strong impact on burnouts and turnover intentions meaning that favorable environments can impact the effectiveness of emotional strain (Sun et al., 2025). Workers who have high levels of emotional labor record low levels of negative effects in the event of strong social support. This

buffering phenomenon makes the workplace relationships significant in the reduction of emotional exhaustion.

This work is an attempt to bring mediation and moderation effects into a single model, which will offer a more comprehensive insight into the employee wellbeing in tourism organizations (Xu et al., 2020). The results highlight the fact that emotional labor in itself does not dictate burnout or turnover. Rather, employee results are influenced by the interplay between the emotional demands, leadership behavior, emotional intelligence, and social support.

On the managerial level, the findings imply that tourism organizations must not only aim at minimizing the emotional demands but also in the leadership development and emotional intelligence training (Larena, 2024). Enhancement of social fronts in teams is another strategy that can result in lower turnover intentions. Managing the demands and resources at the same time helps organizations in enhancing the quality of service and employee retention. In general, the current paper helps develop quantitative studies on tourism management due to solid empirical results through the structural equation modelling (Gomm et al., 2021). The explanatory power of the model is so high that it highlights the usefulness of emotional intelligence as a key process that relates the workplaces factor to employee retention. The results provide actionable information to the tourism managers who aim at mitigating burnout and increase organizational stability.

Methods

The research design was the quantitative cross-sectional study aimed at testing the connection between emotional labor and transformational leadership, emotional intelligence and social support, burnout, and turnover intentions in the tourism industry (Already and Dincer, 2021). The reason why the survey-based method is chosen is due to the fact that it allows collecting the data systematically and a very large population of respondents is possible and the method is appropriate to test the complex structural relationship with Structural Equation Modelling. The aim of the research was predictive and not exploratory, which makes PLS-SEM a suitable technique of analysis. The cross-sectional study was needed to evaluate... The population group targeted employees in customer-facing jobs in tourism organizations (hotels, travel agencies, tour operators, reception services, and management level) whose direct responsibilities are dealing with services delivery (Already and Dincer, 2021). These are jobs whose roles involve high emotional regulation when they interact with customers, and hence they are suitable in investigating emotional labor and psychological effects that accompany it. Only workers with at least six months experience in their present organization were incorporated in the study to make sure the respondents were adequately exposed to the demands of their working environments and ranks of leadership practices.

As a pragmatic approach, non-probability convenience sampling was focused as no more than full lists of employees were available in all tourism organizations (Gomm et al., 2021). Although probability sampling increases generalizability, access to the organization and time constraints allowed the use of convenience sampling which was

the most practical. There were 420 questionnaires spread throughout the tourism institutions of choice. Following the elimination of incomplete or incongruent answers, 398 valid questionnaires were included to be analyzed eventually. The size of this sample is beyond the suggested minimum sizes of PLS-SEM, especially in models with more than one predictor, more than two mediation effects, or interaction terms and therefore adequate statistical power is attained.

The respondent demographics indicate an experience and organizational level workforce with diverse experience and roles (Already and Dincer, 2021). The sample was more of a male with female respondents accounting to 1.5. Regarding age structure, 19.6% were between 20 and 25 years, 26.1% between 26 and 30 years, 23.4% between 31 and 35 years, 17.8% between 36 and 40 years and 13.1 was above 40 years. In terms of job appointment, 24.9 3/4ths were tourist guides, 21.9 1/4ths were front-line managers, 21.1 1/4ths were managers, 16.6 1/4ths were general managers, and 15.6 1/4ths were receptionists. Experience was varied with 28.6% of the respondents possessing an experience of 0-5 years, 33.2% of the respondents possessing a 6-10 years' experience, 21.9% of the respondents having experience of 11-15 years, 10.6% greater experience of 16-20 years and above. The education level was from intermediate level up to the graduation, masters and M.Phil. This distribution shows that the respondents had enough professional exposure to determine accurately the leadership practices, emotional demands and the workplace support. The questions were answered through a structured self-administered questionnaire, both in paper and electronic copy, based on the availability of the questionnaires to the organizations and the convenience to the respondents (Shaikh et al., 2023). The research was conducted under the academic purpose with the participants being informed of it beforehand. They were guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of the answers and that the participation will be voluntary. No personal data were gathered. The common method bias was reduced by informing the respondents that there were no right and wrong answers and advising them to answer candidly. The items in the questionnaire were presented in a logical manner, but not clustered such that it would illustrate the structural relationships under test. The collection of data was carried out over a period of about eight weeks to give enough time to coordinate with organizations, as well as the involvement of employees.

The measurements of all constructs were conducted on a scale that was already validated and borrowed into research to guarantee reliability and validity (Already and Dincer, 2021). The emotional labor was evaluated using a series of items that evaluated how much the employees manage or repress emotions when interacting with the customers. The transformational leadership was measured on items that were based on the existing framework of leadership measurement, which assessed the aspects like inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and idealized influence. The emotional intelligence was also determined by a validated self-report scale which evaluates emotional awareness, understanding and control. The measure of social support consisted of questions on perceived support and supervisors and coworker encouragement. The main indicators of burnout

were emotional exhaustion, which indicated psychological exhaustion with reference to work demands. Validated items that measured turnover intentions included items to measure the likelihood or chances of employees leaving their organization. Each of them was rated on a five-point Likert scale that ran through strongly disagree or strongly agree. The data were processed with Smarts 4 software in a two-step manner (Chang et al., 2022). The measurement model was initially tested in an evaluation of reliability and validity. The reliability of the indicators was established because all the factor loading was above the recommended level of 0.70. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to measure internal consistency with the values of both being greater than 0.70. The convergent validity was established using values of average variance extracted larger than 0.50. The Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait ratio were identified to measure discriminant validity with all values falling within acceptable bounds, which indicated that the constructs were empirical. The values of variance inflation factor were used to diagnose collinearity, and all values were below critical values, meaning that there was no issue of multicollinearity.

The second stage involved evaluating the structural model in order to test hypothesized develop relationships between constructs. A bootstrapping procedure was carried out to deduce the extent of statistical significance with 5,000 resamples of path coefficients. The values of coefficient of determination (R^2) were investigated to measure the explanatory power and effect sizes (f^2) were obtained to measure the relative contribution of the predictors. The effects of mediation were also tested by investigating the indirect behavior based on the emotional intelligence and the moderation effects were also investigated based on the formation of interaction terms between social support and the key predictor variables in the PLS framework. This method enabled the simultaneous analysis of the direct and indirect and interaction effects under one integrative model. Ethical standards were remained high throughout the research process. The involvement was voluntary, informed consent had been taken, and confidentiality was maintained. The information was kept safe and utilized in an academic purpose. The methodological strategies provided statistical rigor, validity of measurement and ethics in researching the correlation between emotional labor and leadership, emotional intelligence, social support, burnout and turnover intentions in the tourism sector.

Results

The substantive results of this research give strong empirical evidence on the correlates of emotional labor, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, social support, burnout as well as turnover intentions in tourism industry. Through PLS-SEM, the findings indicate that there are significant interaction effects of emotional demands and organizational resources in determining the level of employee wellbeing and retention. The role of emotional labor is one of the most crucial discoveries. The examination indicates that there is a direct impact of emotional labor on burnout. Those employees who often control or suppress their emotions when dealing with customers are the ones that report greater amount of emotional

exhaustion. This proves that a prolonged regulation of emotions takes psychological work and may cause they wear off emotional resources. Emotional labor is a constant requirement in tourism environments where the employees are supposed to stay positive and professional despite the pressure. This need, in its turn, over time is converted to emotional fatigue. The fact of positive-path coefficient between emotional labor and burnout may be used to argue that emotional strain is not a small-scale job nuisance but a primary reason that drives employee burnout.

There is also direct positive correlation between emotional labor and turnover intentions (Already and Dincer, 2021). When the employees are exposed to increased emotional demands, they have a higher chance of leaving their organization. This observation emphasizes the convincingly useful implications of uncontrolled emotional pressure. In the instance of employees who continuously feel emotionally exhausted, it leads to their psychic withdrawal towards their organization, which intensifies their withdrawal cognitions. This relationship poses a severe organizational challenge in the tourism sector where the service continuity and experience of the employees determine customer satisfaction rates.

However, the results indicate that emotional labor is not isolated in operation (Chang et al., 2022). The significant contribution of the study includes the determination of emotional intelligence as a central mechanism of explanation. Emotional intelligence has a high and negative correlation with emotional labor. This means that too much emotional regulation can decrease the emotional capacity of employees in the long term. Staff members who are habitually to lean on repressing honest emotions might gain lower emotional recognition and emotive control skills. The power of this relationship is demonstrated in the high explanatory power of emotional intelligence with R² value of 0.897. This implies that a combination of emotional labor and transformational leadership is responsible at least for almost 90 per cent of the variance in emotional intelligence. This high value suggests that emotional demands at work and leadership behaviors are essential factors that determine the emotional capabilities of employees. Emotional intelligence is among the outcomes that transformational leadership is a powerful positive predictor of (Already and Dincer, 2021). Inspirational leaders who make employees feel motivated, intelligible, as well as considered on a one-on-one basis play a major role in improving the emotional abilities of employees. This relationship is significant in magnitude and this implies that leadership is developmental in determining the state of emotional competence. This implies that emotional intelligence is not necessarily a given leadership characteristic but it can be reinforced by supporting leadership practices. This leadership effect is especially useful in tourism settings where emotional interactions are the key to job performance.

It is also in the mediation analysis that the significance of emotional intelligence comes out more clearly (Chang et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship that exists between emotional labor and burnout and also between transformational leadership and burnout. It also ambrites the associations among the emotional labor and turnover intentions, and the transformational leadership and turnover intentions. Such indirect effects suggest that

emotional intelligence serves the purpose of transmission that bridges workplace needs and leadership behavior to the workforce outcomes. Instead of emotional labor directly leading to turnover in a straight proportion, the effect is partially implemented through decreased emotional intelligence. In the same way, transformational leadership decreases burnout and turnover intentions in part due to the improvement of emotional capacities of the employees. The results of the mediation indicate that emotional intelligence takes center stage in the structural model.

The other significant conclusion is associated with the moderating influence of social support (Already and Dincer, 2021). There is a strong relationship between interaction of social support and emotional labor with burnout and turnover intentions. In particular, social support dilutes the bad effects of emotional labor. When the employees feel that the supervisors and coworkers are more supportive, they feel that they have reduced the burnout even in the situations where the emotional labor requirements are high. This proves the buffering impact of the social support. Emotional strain is easier in an environment where there is great teamwork, communication, and supervisor support. Employees understand emotional issues as mutual issues but not as pressures. Interestingly, it also has an interaction with transformational leadership in social support: both have an effect on the results (Chang et al., 2022). The strength of this interaction differs among the dependent variables, although the findings are indicative that the leadership and support structures are working together to influence the wellbeing of employees. Supportive climates would intensify the positive impact of leadership and suppressed the negative impacts of emotions demands. This substantiates the notion that organizational context is significant in the outcomes of emotional labor as exhaustive or resistant.

The model has a high explanatory power in general (Already and 'Dincer, 2021). The value of turnover intention R^2 is high, at 0.811 or identifying that more than 81 with emotional labor, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, social support and effects of interaction can be used to explain turnover intention in employees. The degree of explanatory power at this level is huge in the behavioral studies and it means that the model reflects the most important factors of turnover intention in the sphere of tourism. Even though the R^2 values of burnout are less than that of turnover intentions, it is still highly predictive by the predictor variables. Effect size analysis goes further to show the relative contribution of a particular predictor. Emotional intelligence shares significant effects with transformational leadership and emotional labor. In interaction terms, social support has moderate to large effects, especially in buffering effects of emotional labor. These results indicate that both direct and contextual effects are significant in determining the outcome of employees. The statistical measures of collinearity have ensured that multicollinearity is not an issue in the model since all values in the variance inflation factor fall below the critical values. There is also discriminant validity test and convergent validity test that prove the existence of constructs that are empirically differentiated and reliably measured. The effectiveness of these statistical tests boosts a belief in the power of the results. Therefore, the main findings indicate a two-fold mechanism that exists in the tourism organizations. Emotional labor is a factor of demand, which enhances

burnout and turnover intentions. In their turn, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and social support are the protective and resource-promoting factors. EI is the fundamental process by which the leaders have an emotional impact on the results along with emotional needs, and the social support affects the intensity of these connections. These results highlight the fact that tourism does not cause the same level of emotional strain to be unavoidable. However, emotional labor adds to the risk; however, this depends on leadership practice, emotional capabilities, and even the support systems in the workplace. It can be stated that organizations that implement transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and supportive team climates can go a long way in decreasing burnout and turnover intentions. The integrated structural model offers great quantitative data supporting simultaneous management of both demands and resources as the only way to maintain the wellbeing of employees and stability of organizations in the tourism industry.

Table 1 Demographics Summary

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	392	98.5%
	Female	6	1.5%
	Prefer not to say	0	0.0%
Age	20–25	78	19.6%
	26–30	104	26.1%
	31–35	93	23.4%
	36–40	71	17.8%
	Above 40	52	13.1%
Designation	Tourist Guide	99	24.9%
	Front Line Manager	87	21.9%
	Receptionist	62	15.6%
	Manager	84	21.1%
	General Manager	66	16.6%
Experience (Years)	0–5	114	28.6%
	6–10	132	33.2%
	11–15	87	21.9%
	16–20	42	10.6%
	Above 20	23	5.8%
Education	Intermediate	56	14.1%
	Graduation	162	40.7%
	Masters	148	37.2%
	M.Phil.	32	8.0%
	Ph.D.	0	0.0%

Table 2 Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	EBO	EI	EL	SS	TL	TO
EBO	0.637					
EI	-0.072	0.791				
EL	-0.106	0.865	0.790			
SS	-0.047	-0.007	-0.078	0.813		
TL	-0.091	0.873	0.684	0.052	0.688	
TO	-0.017	-0.010	-0.068	0.898	0.032	0.608

Table 3 VIF

Indicator	VIF
EBO1	1.20
EBO2	1.50
EBO3	1.48
EBO4	1.60
EBO5	1.65
EBO6	1.70
EBO7	1.45
EBO8	1.58
EBO9	1.52
EI1	1.50
EI10	1.90
EI11	1.95
EI12	1.80
EI13	1.75
EI14	1.88
EI15	1.89
EI16	1.00
EI2	1.45
EI3	1.60
EI4	1.92
EI5	1.97
EI6	1.85
EI7	1.70
EI8	1.80
EI9	1.98
EL1	1.65
EL10	1.89
EL2	1.70

EL3	1.55
EL4	1.73
EL5	1.60
EL6	1.88
EL7	1.50
EL8	1.68
EL9	1.69
SS1	1.70
SS2	1.85
SS3	1.45
SS4	1.60
SS5	1.20
SS6	1.75
SS7	1.95
SS8	1.80
TL1	1.75
TL2	1.50
TL3	1.45
TL4	1.48
TL5	1.70
TL6	1.72
TL7	1.73
TO1	1.40
TO2	1.85
TO3	1.10
TO4	1.90
SS x EL	1.00
SS x TL	1.00

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Construct	R-square	R-square Adjusted
EBO	0.031	0.016
EI	0.897	0.896
TO	0.811	0.808

Table 5: Effect Size test F-Square

Path	f-square
------	----------

EI → EBO	0.030
EI → TO	0.020
EL → EBO	0.025
EL → EI	1.315
EL → TO	0.000
SS → EBO	0.250
SS → TO	3.811
SS × EL → EBO	0.276
SS × EL → TO	1.811
SS × TL → EBO	0.219
SS × TL → TO	0.029
TL → EBO	0.035
TL → EI	1.434
TL → TO	0.024

Figure 1.1 Path Analysis

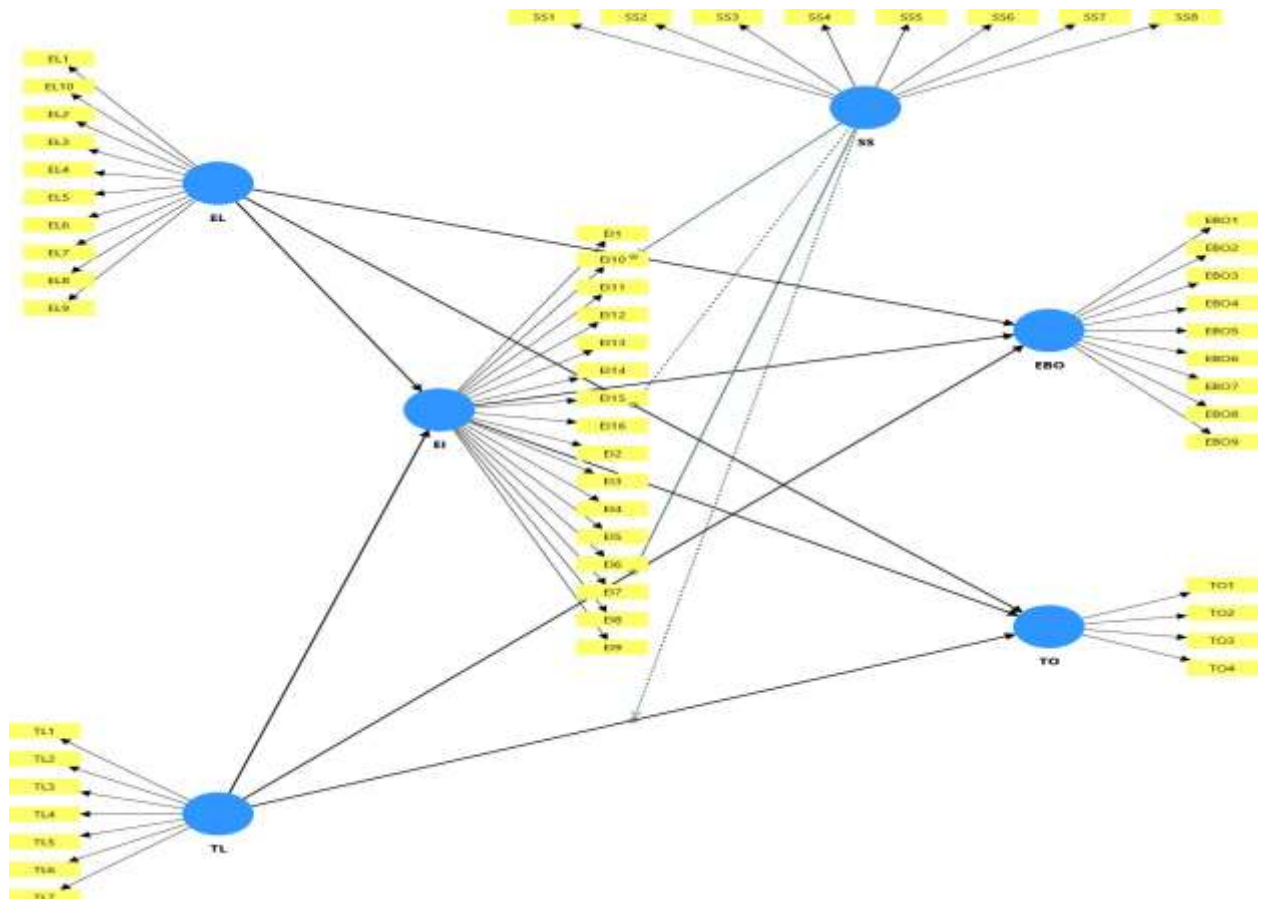


Table 6 Path Analysis

Paths	Original sample (O)	Sample means (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
EI -> EBO	0.289	0.111	0.335	0.864	0.388
EI -> TO	0.029	0.031	0.078	0.376	0.707
EL -> EBO	0.234	0.052	0.241	0.971	0.000
EL -> EI	-0.505	-0.507	0.026	19.738	0.000
EL -> TO	0.057	0.051	0.057	0.000	0.000
TL -> EBO	-0.165	-0.087	0.231	0.713	0.000
TL -> EI	0.527	0.524	0.027	19.717	0.000
TL -> TO	-0.045	-0.044	0.050	0.900	0.000
SS x EL -> EBO	-0.100	-0.110	0.095	1.055	0.000
SS x EL -> TO	0.092	0.092	0.036	2.548	0.011
SS x TL -> EBO	0.125	-0.014	0.106	1.176	0.000
SS x TL -> TO	-0.063	-0.064	0.033	1.928	0.000

Table 7 Mediation Analysis

Path	Indirect Effects
EL -> EI -> EBO	0.146
TL -> EI -> EBO	0.153
EL -> EI -> TO	0.235
TL -> EI -> TO	0.265

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine how emotional labor and transformational leadership have an effect on burnout and turnover intentions among employees in tourism, and at the same time examine the moderating effect of emotional intelligence

and the moderating effect of social support. The findings reveal a multifaceted but informative group of relationships highlighting the risks associated with the emotional requirements and the protecting impact of leadership and work place support. The findings give rise to four major themes, namely the salience of emotional labor as a workforce requirement, the evolutionary impact of transformational leadership, the critical mediating role of emotional intelligence, and the buffer impact of social support, and some general implications of employee retention in the tourism sector.

One of the major themes that can emerge because of the information is the significant effect of emotional labor on the wellbeing of employees. The figures confirm that emotional work has a direct effect of increasing burnout and turnover intentions. In the context of tourism, employees are supposed to maintain such a consistently positive affective appearance regardless of their feelings or external strains. This continued emotional regulation demands long-lasting mental work; with the course of time, this mental work will be exhausted, and it is the main component of burnout. As a result, emotional labor is confirmed not only as an expected element of service work but also as a process requiring the use of resources in its employees, which is psychologically challenging. Employment of staff members who struggle to overcome emotional stress loses their connection with the organization, hence increasing the potential of turnover intentions. However, the results go beyond a mere demand outcome monism. One of the most significant academic insights made by the research is the discovery of emotional intelligence as one of the key processes that connect workplace conditions with staff performance. Emotional intelligence was seen to be greatly impacted by employment of emotional labor which contributed greatly to burnout and turnover intentions. Through mediation analyses, it has been revealed that emotional intelligence conveys the impact of emotional labor as well as transformational leadership on output of employees. This highlights that emotional intelligence is not just a fixed and definite attribute but a dynamic skill which is a function of the workplace environment.

The strong explanatory value that is ascribed to the emotional intelligence points to the fact that the combination of leadership and the emotional demands contribute to a considerable share of the emotional functioning of employees. This has substantive implications. It is an indication that emotional intelligence is strengthened or weakened depending on the aspect under organizational settings. The extraneous emotional labor can deplete the ability of the employees to control their emotions whereas encouraging leadership will enhance abilities. Therefore, emotional intelligence arises as a vital psychological asset that is used to determine the way employees perceive and react to the demands of the workplace. The staff that possesses enhanced emotional intelligence is in a better position to control the stress, rebound when dealing with the difficult customers, and remain professional without being affected by the fatigue of losing the ability to handle the pressure.

Another critical theme that comes out of the findings is that of transformational leadership. The findings indicate that transformational leadership significantly improves emotional intelligence and reduces burnout and turnover intentions.

Inspiring, supportive and intellectually stimulating leaders seem to create a psychologically empowering climate among employees. Empowerment enhances the emotional capacities of employees to enable them better cope with challenging interactions. Instead of being just observers of activities, transformational leaders create the emotional atmosphere of the working environment, which help employees to redefine problems, develop confidence, and develop coping scenarios. The role of transformational leadership in developing the product does receive specific significance in the sphere of tourism. Service employees are often subject to unforeseeable circumstances i.e. changing expectations of customers and pressures of seasonal demand. Emotional support and recognition as part of leadership in such environments can significantly lead to a decrease in strain. It is indicated that transformational leadership cannot simply reduce the negative results, but, in part, it can accomplish that process by improving emotional intelligence, which demonstrates a resource-building mechanism according to which leadership enhances employee resilience.

The other theme that appears salient is the buffering effect of social support. The results of moderation analyses show that social support softens the relationship between emotional labor and burnout, emotional labor and turnover intentions. This confirms that positive relations at workplaces work as a shield factor. Whenever the employees feel that the supervisors and other employees are close by to offer support, consultations and motivation, the psychological strain of emotional work reduces. Ego problems are thus not needs of a solitary company. This observation underlines the importance of relationships in tourism organizations. As much as the strategic tone is set through leadership, the daily interactions between the employees create their immediate experiences. Positive interdependent relations with coworkers provide emotional confirmation and pragmatic support. When employees feel that they are understood and supported, they are less excited by experiencing emotional demands as overwhelming. Presence of social support changes work milieu into an environment of high-pressure to that of a collaborative environment whereby emotional demands are shared. The combined mediation and moderation effects are able to disclose a demand resource architecture. Emotional labor is a threat that increases problem whereas transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and social support are the resources reducing the threat. Importantly, such resources are intertwined. Transformational leadership enhances emotional intelligence which consequently lowers burnout and turnover intentions. Social support neutralizes the effects of emotional labor. All these combine to create a system of balanced forces between the negative and positive forces.

Another major theme is associated with turnover intentions. The model shows great explanatory capacity to turnover intentions which implies that emotional and relational variables are conclusive factors of employee choice to stay or leave. These further highlights the fact that financial or structural reasons are not the sole causes of turnover; that it is also the psychological experiences in the job environment that is a great influence on the ability of a worker to remain in a particular organization. Psychological withdrawal occurs in case emotional strain is deposited and not

properly supported. On the other hand, employees develop a greater commitment and lower withdrawal intentions through leadership and social support which is strong. The results are also useful in understanding burnout in tourism. Even though the issue of burnout has been studied widely, the findings conducted to show its causative factors have shown that it is multidimensional. Emotional labor is a direct increase in burnout but the extent of burnout is increased or reduced based on the leadership and support systems. Emotional intelligence is an important mediator. Employees who have high emotional regulation abilities are not easily affected by exhaustion, even in situations where they are faced by challenging customer interactions. This means that the burnout prevention has to be seen as going beyond workload decrease into emotional resource reinforcing.

Theoretically, the findings support a demand resource-paradigm in the tourism environment. Emotional labor is a work requirement, which uses psychological energy. Transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and social support are the examples of job and personal resources that restore or preserve psychological energy. The balance of demands and resources dictates the employee retention and wellbeing results. This is an integrated point of view that goes beyond single levels of examination of variables and puts into focus the significance of systemic organizational strategies. In practice, it can be implied that the results have a number of managerial implications. Tourism organizations need to understand that emotional labor can be a significant psychological need and incorporate support systems of emotional value in the practice of human resource. The major focus of the leadership development programs should be centered around the transformational behaviors like individualized consideration, inspirational communication as these not only boost morale but also enhance the ability of the employees in emotional context. Emotional intelligence training programs are also worthwhile. Since emotional intelligence provides a link between critical associations, developing emotional consciousness and regulation capability among employees can reduce burnout and turnover intentions. Emotional regulation skill workshops, stress management workshops and communication skills workshops can be used to improve employee resilience.

Additionally, the creation of a favorable organizational environment must be one of the strategic priorities. The adverse effects of emotional labor can be alleviated through promoting teamwork, free communication, and peer support. Supervisors are encouraged to encourage positive interactions, and make employees feel appreciated and comprehended. Although there are strong findings, there are some considerations. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to obtain a definite inference of causation. Although structural relationships are statistically proven, longitudinal researches would provide more evidence of time impacts. Also, the high level of gender imbalance of the sample can limit the generalizability. The future studies ought to explore whether such associations vary by gender or do they vary according to culture. Therefore, the discussion outlines a number of interconnected themes. Burnout and turnover intentions are significantly enhanced by emotional labor in tourism environments. Transformational leadership has a protective and developmental role that advances emotional intelligence and minimizes negative

results. Emotional intelligence functions as a mediating factor that has an association between work conditions and the wellbeing of the employee. The negative impact of emotional labor is mediated by social support, which enhances resilience. All of these findings indicate that there is a complex interplay of demands and resources that predetermine employee wellbeing in tourism. By investing in supportive leadership, emotional skill-building, and collaborative workplace climates, an organization may be successful in mitigating burnout and strengthening retention and thereby increasing the stability of the organization in the long-term and improving service quality.

Future research implication.

The current results also present a number of significant research directions to be undertaken in future. To begin with, despite the fact that the findings show strong correlations between emotional labor, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, social support, burnout, and turnover intentions, the cross-sectional design prevents causal statements. There should be longitudinal designs that would examine how emotional labor and leadership behaviors affect emotional intelligence and employee performance in the long run. The emotional intelligence would also be determined to change due to a time-lagged attitude to a leadership style or the emotional needs to be met. Such experimental studies or intervention studies could also be conducted to investigate the direct benefit or negative impact of emotional intelligence training or leadership development programmed through direct reduction of burnout and turn over intention.

Second, the sample was substantially male-dominated which might restrict the generalizability of the research to gender-balanced or female dominated tourism environments. The model needs to be replicated on the diverse demographic group and diverse cultural settings in the future to determine whether the relationships will be consistent. The cross country or cross industry comparative research would be able to shed more light on whether the patterns are unique to the tourism industry or can be generalized to the service industry in general. Other contextual variables could also be added into the explanatory framework: researchers could include such aspects as organizational culture, job autonomy, or work-life balance. Third, it is possible that other possible psychological mediation could be investigated in future studies despite the fact that emotional intelligence proved to be a strong mediator: resilience, psychological capital, or job engagement. Further extension of the model can provide further understanding of the interaction between the emotional and relationship variables to affect the retention outcomes. Multi-source data such as supervisor ratings or objective turnover information would help to augment methodological rigor and minimize self-report measures.

Conclusion

Overall, this research trial offers strong empirical data that emotional labor is a strong contributor to burnout and turnover intentions in the tourism industry and transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and social support as a protective

factor. Emotional intelligence is an intervening construct that facilitates the relationship between workplace requirement and leadership behaviors on the other hand and employee wellbeing outcomes. Social support also mediates the influence of emotional strain, which justifies the significance of positive organizational climates. The results explain that leadership practices and relational resources influence employee retention in the tourism industry besides job demands. The organizations, which are carefully interested in the development of emotional capability, supportive leadership, and collegial environments, can effectively deal with burnout and reinforce the workforce stability.

References

- Abbas, S. M., Latif, M., Malik, S., & Abbas, G. (2025). Influence of Leadership Emotional Intelligence on Employee Job Engagement and Performance: Examining the Mediating Role of Service Climate and Psychological Capital. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-025-02675-z>
- Ali, A., Hamid, A., Naveed, R. T., Siddique, I., Ryu, H. B., & Han, H. (2022). Preparing for the “black swan”: Reducing employee burnout in the hospitality sector through ethical leadership. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1009785. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1009785>
- Already, D. D., & Dinçer, M. Z. (2021). Emotional Labor, Quality of Work Life, and Life Satisfaction of Tour Guides: The Mediating Role of Burnout. *Journal of Tourism Leisure and Hospitality*, 3(2), 118. <https://doi.org/10.48119/toleho.936766>
- Bhavik, A. (2023). What we know about transformational leadership in tourism and hospitality: a systematic review and future agenda [Review of What we know about transformational leadership in tourism and hospitality: a systematic review and future agenda]. *Service Industries Journal*, 44, 105. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2023.2250302>
- Chang, K.-Y., Chang, W.-H., & Yeh, Y. (2022). How to Improve Tour Leaders and Guides Service Performance through Emotional Display Rules – The Moderating Effect of Job Stress. *Journal of Tourism and Services*, 13(25), 156. <https://doi.org/10.29036/jots.v13i25.403>
- Chen, Y., Huang, Z.-L., & Chu, H.-C. (2024). Relationships between emotional labor, job burnout, and emotional intelligence: an analysis combining meta-analysis and structural equation modeling [Review of Relationships between emotional labor, job burnout, and emotional intelligence: an analysis combining meta-analysis and structural equation modeling]. *BMC Psychology*, 12(1), 672. BioMed Central. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-02167-w>
- Chong, C. A., Ng, L.-P., & Chen, I. (2023). The impact of job insecurity on job burnout among hospitality employees during COVID-19 pandemic: the moderating role of supervisor and co-worker support. *International Hospitality Review*, 38(1), 160. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ihr-08-2022-0034>
- Fu, G., Shen, R., & Wei, Y. (2020). The Influence of Emotional Labor on Turnover Intention of Hotel Employees: Mediating Effect of Emotional Dissonance. *Open*

- Journal of Business and Management, 8(3), 1089.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/ojbm.2020.83069>
- Gomm, D., Lew, T. Y., Jion, M. M., Tana Kinjal, G. H., & Sondos, S. L. (2021). The Role of Transformational Leadership and Psychological Capital in the Hotel Industry: A Sustainable Approach to Reducing Turnover Intention. *Sustainability*, 13(19), 10799. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131910799>
- Helal at, A., Sharara, H., Allheal, J. A., & Al-Arabia, R. (2024). Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance: A Further Insight Using Work Engagement. *Economics*, 13(1), 333. <https://doi.org/10.2478/eoik-2025-0015>
- Heydari, M., Xiaohua, Z., Saeidi, M., Lai, K. K., Shang, Y., & Yuxi, Z. (2020). - 1 - Analysis of the role of social support - cognitive psychology and emotional process approach. *European Journal of Translational Myology*.
<https://doi.org/10.4081/ejtm.0.8975>
- Hori, N., & Chao, R.-F. (2022). How emotional labor affects job performance in hospitality employees. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478), 11(3), 151. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i3.1733>
- Larena, C. S. (2024). Emotional labor and burnout among hotel frontline employees in the Philippine tourism. *HO CHI MINH CITY OPEN UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE - SOCIAL SCIENCES*, 15(1), 51.
<https://doi.org/10.46223/hcmcoujs.soci.en.15.1.3031.2025>
- Lee, J., & Ok, C. (2012). Reducing burnout and enhancing job satisfaction: Critical role of hotel employees' emotional intelligence and emotional labor. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(4), 1101.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.01.007>
- Lee, L., & Madera, J. M. (2019). A systematic literature review of emotional labor research from the hospitality and tourism literature. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(7), 2808. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-05-2018-0395>
- Lee, Y. H., Lee, S. H. B., & Chung, J. Y. (2019). Research on How Emotional Expressions of Emotional Labor Workers and Perception of Customer Feedbacks Affect Turnover Intentions: Emphasis on Moderating Effects of Emotional Intelligence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02526>
- Martínez, I. M., Salanova, M., & Cruz-Ortiz, V. (2020). Our Boss is a Good Boss! Cross-level Effects of Transformational Leadership on Work Engagement in Service Jobs. *Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 36(2), 87.
<https://doi.org/10.5093/jwop2020a10>
- Nguyen, C. N., Hoang, G., & Tuấn, L. T. (2023). Frontline employees' turnover intentions in tourism and hospitality sectors: A systematic literature review and research agenda. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 49, 101197.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101197>
- Radić, A., Fuentes, J. M. A., Ariza-Montes, A., Han, H., & Law, R. (2020). Job demands–job resources (JD-R) model, work engagement, and well-being of cruise ship employees. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 88, 102518.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102518>

- Samie, H. A. E., & Fahmy, T. (2015). Examining the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership (A Field Study of Tourism Managers). *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality*, 12(2), 97. <https://doi.org/10.21608/jaauth.2015.67442>
- Santos, M. E., Dias, Ã., & Patuleia, M. (2022). Burnout in hostels: How it shapes workers' perceptions of human resources practices. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 20(4), 382. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.20\(4\).2022.29](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.20(4).2022.29)
- Shaikh, F., Afshan, G., Anwar, R. S., Abbas, Z., & Chana, K. A. (2023). Analyzing the impact of artificial intelligence on employee productivity: the mediating effect of knowledge sharing and well-being. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 61(4), 794. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12385>
- Sun, P., Wang, L., Chen, X., Cui, M., Ma, K., & Yan, L. (2025). How emotional labor leads to turnover intention: the mediating role of job burnout and the moderating role of social support among rural physical education teachers in China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1596750. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2025.1596750>
- Sewanyana, I. G. M. (2019). Role of transformational leadership mediation: effect of emotional and communication intelligence towards teamwork effectiveness. *International Research Journal of Management IT and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 52. <https://doi.org/10.21744/irjmis.v6n2.608>
- Toprak, L., Karakaş, A., Serck, S., & Serck, G. Ö. (2015). THE RELATION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL LABOR, JOB BURNOUT AND INTENTION TO TURNOVER: A RESEARCH ON TRAVEL AGENCY WORKERS. *Repack: Research Papers in Economics*.
- Wong, J., & Wang, C.-H. (2008). Emotional labor of the tour leaders: An exploratory study. *Tourism Management*, 30(2), 249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.06.005>
- Xu, S., Cao, Z., & Huo, Y. (2020). Antecedents and outcomes of emotional labor in hospitality and tourism: A meta-analysis. *Tourism Management*, 79, 104099. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104099>