

Impact of Emotional Leadership on Affective Commitment of Teachers Amidst the COVID-19 Global Pandemic: A Moderated and Mediation Model

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Abstract

Leadership plays a vital role in the success of an organization. This study aims to investigate the paradigm of emotional leadership and its influence on faculty commitment towards their job in the higher education sector of Pakistan. Affective Events Theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Data was collected from 228 university teachers in Lahore, Pakistan. PLS-SEM was employed to test the reliability and validity of the dependent and independent variables used in the study. The results revealed that emotional leadership had a substantial impact on teachers' affective commitment. The findings of this study suggest that emotional leadership plays a vital role in employees' commitment during crises such as the global pandemic. The data was collected in a cross-sectional setting. In future, researchers might carry out longitudinal studies in a similar context. Other studies also consider additional variables and insights into the context of emotional leadership and commitment of employees. To sum up, studies concerning the effectiveness of emotional leadership on teachers' affective commitment during times of crisis not only enhance our comprehension of organizational dynamics but also offer practical suggestions for cultivating favourable organizational results in times of distress.

Keywords: Emotional Leadership, Affective Commitment, Emotional Dissonance, Emotional Resilience, Human Resource Primacy

Introduction

In the face of the coronavirus pandemic, governments worldwide have imposed lockdowns in their countries since the virus affects the public. In a developing country like Pakistan, the virus cases have soared. Similarly, academic institutions have closed all the schools, colleges, and universities as per the government's directives. This global pandemic characterizes grave and abrupt changes to the institutional systems to slow down the growth rate of the virus in the country by following strict measures. The role of leaders in academia is critical in responding to a crisis like COVID-19 so that organizational culture tends to be more resilient and collaborative.

In this way, the organizations will develop a capacity to bear the brunt of crises. The sector of education is severely disturbed in the wake of COVID-19 disease as countrywide slowdowns and closures affect the world's student population. The COVID-19 pandemic troubled the education

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system (Khan et al. 2011). The challenge thus executed had to be acknowledged by the education sector to take benefit of learning that operates greatest in digital systems (Joshi et al. 2020). Adapting technology for e-teaching in a short time has been a major task for teachers. In this regard, Joshi et al. (2020) stated that digital classes amid lockdown have been terrible counter for faculty.

Teachers have been laden with manifold roles as advisors, guides, supervisors, collaborators and coworkers (Ogunsola et al., 2020). Researchers agree that the position and responsibility of a teacher encompasses the incorporation and demonstration of knowledge (Kulshrestha & Singhal 2017). Research suggests that leadership plays a vital role in the success of an organization (Ouakouak et al., 2020). This study aims to investigate the paradigm of emotional leadership and its influence on employees' commitment to their jobs. According to (Ashkanasy & Humphrey 2011), managing emotions at the workplace often instigates certain reactions in the form of emotional dissonance and certain job-related attitudes that employees have towards their jobs and the workplace. Studies show that regulating emotions may positively or negatively impact employees' overall wellbeing (Indregard et al., 2018).

Therefore, there is a need to study the impact of emotional leadership on employees' affective commitment. Only a few studies have been conducted on teachers' emotional experiences at their organizations in a situation like a global pandemic. Therefore, there is a need to conduct more quantitative research on teachers' emotional responses (Ogunsola et al., 2020). Multiple researchers have undertaken research to solve the issues that students in many countries encountered when learning through the internet during COVID-19. To the best of the authors' understanding, this study used quantitative analytic approaches to address instructors' difficulties when doing online instruction and evaluation in home environments during such epidemics. This research study tops the gap by supporting the literature in the context of emotional leadership and affective commitment of university teachers 'through the prevalent pandemic conditions (Joshi et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2020).

This research study broadens the existing literature in theory and practice. Extant studies have revealed the fact that emotions shape the way people behave at work, and thus, it is important to study the impact of emotions on the leadership and commitment of teachers in universities of Pakistan (Asrar et al. 2017 and Khan, Akhter & Bhutta, 2020). According to Asrar et al. (2017), studying other variables in the context of emotional leadership, performance, and commitment of faculty employed in Pakistani universities is important. Leadership competencies and their impact on employees' organizational commitment have been studied in the case of school heads of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Suleman et al. 2020; Khan et al. 2021). Mehmood and Maitlo (2020) have also asserted in their study of aviation employees in Pakistan that organizations must study the relationship between emotional leadership and the commitment of employees in the services sector. The main research question of this study is whether emotional leadership influences the affective commitment of teachers in Pakistan by mediating roles of emotional dissonance and employees' emotional resilience and the role of human resource importance as a moderator. This research study addresses teachers' emotional wellbeing and job-related commitment in Pakistan's context amidst COVID-19 (Khan et al., 2023).

Literature Review

Theoretical Background

Taking into consideration the Affective Events Theory (AET), certain events in the workplace may cause employees to react in the form of positive and negative emotions. According to the AET,

emotions refer to a rejoinder or answer to incidents occurring in the organizations. AET concentrates on the arrangement, reasons and outcomes of emotional encounters at the workplace (Weiss & Cropanzano 1996). This theory distinguishes issues that might trigger certain emotional responses in workers regarding their jobs and how such responses concern employees. The underpinning foundation of this theory reveals the part of emotions with regard to organizational behaviour. It may also be considered that an emotional saga leads to certain emotional feedback. These, in turn, influence employees' commitment to their jobs. Emotions and commitment are knitted close together and show a positive association with each other (Ogunsola et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2023). To increase job satisfaction and employee performance, it is advised that organizations give priority to and improve work motivation, staff dedication, and work atmosphere. To improve job satisfaction and employee performance, organizations should enhance work motivation through leadership styles, employee commitment, and work environment (Admit et al., 2024).

Hypotheses Development

Emotional Leadership

Leadership mentions the practice of shaping people to realize and accede to what is required to be accomplished as well as how to achieve a goal, and the course of enabling the efforts both at an individual and collective level to achieve common targets (Mayer et al., 2012). This pertains to more applicability and significance for an organisation's success and the impact on employees' attitudes whenever they face a situation of crisis (Mayer et al., 2012, Visser, van Knippenberg et al. 2013). In particular, emotional leadership suggests that the emotions of disciples must be managed to display identification, consideration, empathy, tolerance and approval for their emotions and requirements (Grandey, 2000). Previous studies (Ouakouak et al., 2020) suggest that emotional leadership can influence, monitor, and encourage employees in organizations and thus lead to their affective commitment. One of the most vital functions of leadership is to regulate the emotions of employees, eventually aiding in maintaining an imperative and valued bond between the top management and other levels of management amidst adversity (Loerakker & van Winden 2017). Jeremias et al. (2024) demonstrate how perceived leadership and psychological capital may enhance emotional commitment in demanding situations.

H1: Emotional Leadership has a significant impact on the affective commitment of employees.

Emotional Dissonance

Emotional Dissonance (ED) refers to a conflict that arises because of the communication and feelings of emotions (Alrawadieh et al., 2020; Nair & Sivakumar 2020). Based on the perspective of the context of contingency, the impact of emotional dissonance on organizational commitment may differ in terms of their strength, subject to the inclusion or riddance of a moderator (Abraham 1998). In their research study, Taxer and Frenzel (2018) examined whether teachers expressed their emotions and whether these led to the wellbeing of teachers. It was found that the group of teachers had negative emotional profiles regarding their welfare, commitment and certain job-related attitudes. Although the relationships between emotional dissonance, employee deviant conduct and organizational commitment have been ascertained, the mediation effects are still inconclusive in the research settings in Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2020; Sarwar & Panatik 2020). Based on the results of the cross-sectional data, Neilsen et al. (2024) conclude that emotional dissonance may be a risk factor for child welfare professionals' purpose to leave due to leadership styles. In the prospective study, no correlation was found between increased turnover intent and

emotional dissonance. The results also show that burnout and management styles rather than job discontent explain the relationship between emotional dissonance and the desire to leave.

H2: Emotional Leadership leads to emotional dissonance in employees.

H2a: Emotional Dissonance mediates the relationship between emotional leadership and affective commitment in employees.

Emotional Resilience

Emotional resilience is an intricate and multifaceted concept. Emotional resilience is the capacity to regain and bounce back in difficult times. Research has examined this construct in workplace settings. Existing literature reveals that emotional resilience has significance in the education sector and trainers, but it is not a distinctive natural attribute. However, thoroughly pursued mediation can establish and improve emotional resilience (Grant & Kinman, 2014). Emotional dissonance precedes adverse effects on the teachers and the institutions they are associated with, influencing their dedication and welfare. Numerous issues influence the feelings of educators in the organization. The consequent emotional collapse of the faculty may be diminished if the institutions have leaders with empathy for employees, offer them an environment of encouragement and adhere to fairness (Nair & Sivakumar, 2020).

A research study undertaken by (Santarone et al., 2020) emphasizes that the organization must take measures and attempts to let employees get psychological aid without fearing disgrace or humiliation. Emotional help must be given to employees in such a way so that they can select which method works well for them (Anasori et al., 2020). Previous research suggests that the emotional resilience of employees tends to be more demanding. However, leadership and financial/nonfinancial benefits help employees achieve effective organizational commitment (Khan et al., 2020). Recent research suggests that there needs to be more research on the emotional well-being of employees in Pakistan in times of crisis (Mukhtar, 2020). Therefore, there is a need to address the mediating role of emotional resilience between leadership styles and organizational commitment in employees (Mukhtar, 2020). Shulga and Busser (2024) have discussed that employee emotions are fundamental to the management of human resources focused on people and have historically been understood to influence a significant portion of workers' routine job performance and occupational behaviours.

H3: Emotional Leadership leads to emotional resilience in employees.

H3a: Emotional Resilience mediates the relationship between emotional leadership and affective commitment in employees.

Affective Commitment

In the organizational behaviour literature, organizational commitment is delineated as how much employees are willing to stay with the organization they are working with and do not want to leave it. Affective commitment (AC) is one of the types of organizational commitment in organizational behaviour research. It is the intensity of an individual's wish or desire to remain with the organization based on an emotional bond (Albrecht & Marty, 2020). Researchers believe that leadership styles, employee empowerment, organisational support, decentralization and empathy are some factors associated with employees' affective commitment, especially for police officers (van Gelderen & Bik 2016). Clément et al. (2020) explained teachers tend to be affectively committed to their workplace because of the right leadership and employees' perceived trust in management.

H4: Emotional resilience leads to affective commitment in employees.

Moderated Role of Human Resource Primacy

Human resource primacy (HRP) refers to employees' view of how the company demonstrates concern for its workers wellbeing, joy, and bliss (Nielsen & Knardahl 2017). For a better understanding of organizational behaviour literature, studies suggest that human resource importance has been well-known in the social psychology of organizations. Still, scant research is available based on employee wellbeing and the elements of organizational behaviour in the management sciences. Literature suggests that human resource primacy positively correlates with the relationship between emotional dissonance based on the perception of employees regarding the climate of the organization and the commitment of employees to be part of that organization (Guzley, 1992). According to (Christensen et al., 2019), human resource primacy is a feature and component of an organization's overall climate or culture.

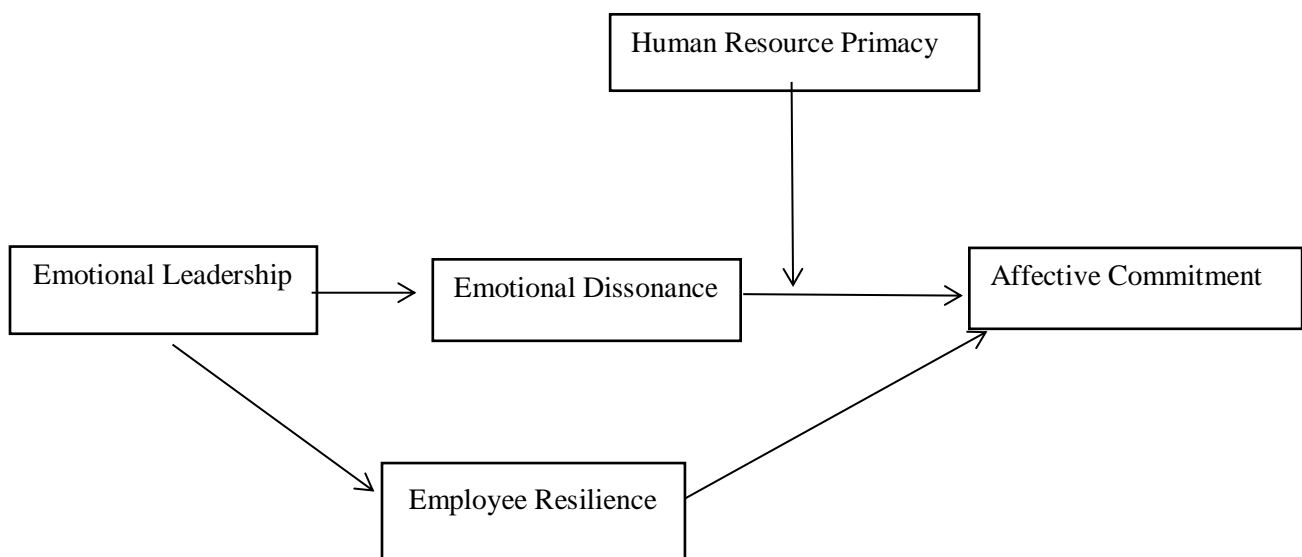
This refers to trust, organizational support, appreciation, acknowledgement, justice and employee development. This eventually leads to employees' adherence and duty to the organization and better organizational performance (Christensen et al., 2019). Extant literature shows that HRP refers to an organization with a climate where employees are considered the most significant resource (Moran & Volkwein 1992; Christensen et al., 2019). Research also suggests that HRP reinforces the relationship between emotional dissonance and employees' affective commitment (Nielsen & Knardahl 2017).

Based on the above literature, the following hypothesizes educated:

H5: Human Resource Primacy moderates the relationship between employees' emotional dissonance and affective commitment.

Based on the hypotheses above, the following research framework is proposed for this study. The framework refers to the emotional leadership and commitment of employees in the context of academic institutions. The model is based on the affective events theory, which considers the workplace's feelings in the workplace setting.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Methodology

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section was based on the demographic data of the respondents and the other section consisted of adapted scales from the previous research. The scales used for Emotional leadership had 5 items by Van der Voet (2014). They inquired whether the leaders within organizations met the emotional needs of the employees. The pretested scales for human resource primacy were adapted from The General Nordic Questionnaire based on the three items related to occupational health. The scale for emotional dissonance was adapted from a three item Frankfurt Emotional Scale. The scale for employee resilience comprised of fourteen items of the pretested Resilience Scale. The Affective Commitment Scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) was used for measuring affective commitment of employees.

Sample Design and Data Collection

The data for this research study was obtained from faculty members in the higher education institutions of Lahore city, which is the capital of Punjab province of Pakistan. A questionnaire was prepared from the existing and already tested scales. The questionnaires were distributed via google forms to 540 faculty members. However, only 228 questionnaires were received. Simple random sampling was administered for the survey. The survey was done online because of the lockdown situation in the country due to the corona virus pandemic. As the offices were closed and it was difficult to reach the respondents personally, therefore the response rate of the study was 42.2% only. The survey was carried out for a period of one month. The respondents' profile contains faculty from public and private sector universities of Pakistan. The age of the respondents varied from 24 to 55 years.

Table 1: Demographics

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	112	49.1
	Female	116	50.8
Qualification	Masters	161	70.2
	PhD	53	23.2
	Post-Doctorate	14	6.1
Nature of Employment	Public	104	46
	Private	124	54

The respondents' profile contains faculty from public and private sector universities of Pakistan. The age of the respondents varied from 24 to 55 years. The faculty from public sector universities comprised of 46% whereas 54% of the respondents were from the private sector universities of Lahore, Pakistan. Out of 228 respondents, 161 (70.6%) had education up to MS level, 53(23.2%) were PhDs and 14 (6.1%) had education up to the post-doctorate level. 32.5% of the respondents had experience from 1 to 5 years, 22.8% of them had experience up to 6 to 10 years, 24.65% of the faculty had experience from 11 to 15 years, 7.9% of them had experience from 16 to 20 years and there were 12.3% of the faculty whose experience was from 21 – 25 years. 13.2% faculty was adjunct or visiting lecturers, 48.2% were lecturers, 27.2% were Assistant Professors, 7% of the faculty were Associate Professors and only 4.4% of the respondents were Professors.

Findings and Analysis

PLS-SEM was utilized for data analysis due to its superior estimate strategy. Based on the supporting theory for the model, the research's variables and study components were anticipated. For structural educational modelling, PLS-SEM is regarded as a useful and practical technique (Hair et al., 2016). Because PLS-SEM does not require data normality to proceed with analysis, it is also utilized (Hair et al., 2016). PLS algorithm and bootstrapping techniques were utilized in PLS-SEM to determine factor loadings and route coefficients. To forecast the model, measurement model evaluation and structural model assessment were carried out.

Normality of Data

The average distribution of the data is not required in PLS-SEM to move on with additional statistical analyses (Hair et al., 2007). Using skewness, kurtosis, and graphical plots with values ranging from -2 to +2, which indicated that the data was regularly dispersed, the symmetry of the data for the present investigation was evaluated.

Common Method Bias

The fact that the VIF values were less than 3.3 indicates that the current study does not have a common technique bias problem. Therefore, the multicollinearity problem does not exist. Faculty members working full-time higher education institutions in Lahore made up the subject matter's population. As of the most recent data from the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan's statistical information section, there are around four thousand full-time instructors working in Pakistan's higher education institutions.

A sample size of full-time members of faculty was chosen using the cluster sampling approach and employed for study analysis. Two phases of the sampling procedure were applied. Out of the total individuals, clusters of private higher education universities were chosen arbitrarily for the first round. Afterwards, full-time faculty members were chosen at random using a basic random selection technique. Members of the faculty were surveyed to gather data. 280 faculty members were chosen at random to receive a series of questionnaires that were self-administered. This method was implemented since it allowed for the quicker collection of participant data. Of around three hundred surveys, around two hundred and twenty-eight were sent back and utilized for the study.

Measurement Model Assessment

Convergent validity of the data was evaluated by measurement model assessment. Factor loads, combined reliability, and normal variance extraction were used to achieve this. When using a reflective assessment model, the convergent and discriminant validities were used to verify overall validity and the composite reliability was used to evaluate the data's dependability. The items were examined for internal consistency using Confirmatory Factor Analysis, (CFA) based on the composite validity scores. Average Variance Extracting (AVE) was used to assess the convergent validity, while loadings and Heterotrait-monotrait ratios were used to determine the discriminant validity. This ensures that the measurements are reliable before the structural model evaluation. The outcomes of the measuring model evaluation are displayed in the table that follows. The findings demonstrate the validity of each of the constructs, including Affective Commitment, Human Resource Primacy, Emotional Leadership, Emotional Dissonance, and Emotional Resilience, based on statistical inference and parameter estimates (Chow & Chan, 2008). The general model constructions therefore have sufficient validity for convergent analysis.

Table 2: Convergent Validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Affective Commitment	AC1	0.789	0.762	0.837	0.512
	AC3	0.735			
	AC5	0.682			
	AC7	0.806			
	AC8	0.531			
Emotional Dissonance	ED1	0.923	0.763	0.832	0.637
	ED2	0.899			
	ED3	0.501			
Emotional Leadership	EL1	0.897	0.924	0.946	0.814
	EL2	0.882			
	EL3	0.927			
	EL4	0.902			
Emotional Resilience	ER10	0.755	0.81	0.862	0.513
	ER13	0.778			
	ER14	0.668			
	ER20	0.758			
	ER22	0.712			
Human Resource Primacy	ER8	0.61	0.81	0.888	0.725
	HRP1	0.811			
	HRP2	0.896			
	HRP3	0.846			

Discriminant Validity

Hensler et al. claim that the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (The HTMT technique) is a novel and cutting-edge method for evaluating the components' validity for discrimination. The HTMT ratio numbers for the faculty in the country's higher educational system are displayed in the following chart. Given that every construct's score is smaller than 0.90, for instance (Gold et al., 2001), the concepts' discriminant validity had been verified. The connection among the factors is generally referred to as the correlation among the factors being investigated (Akash et al., 2023).

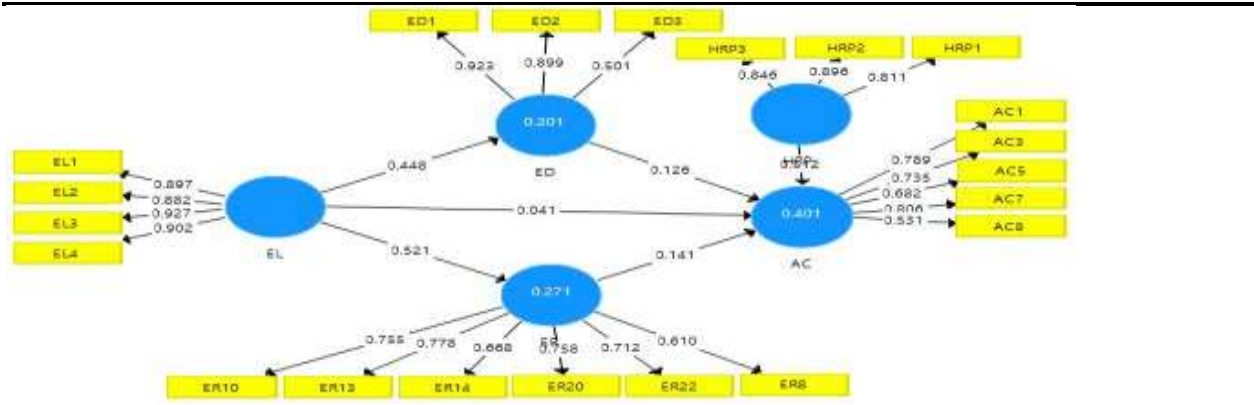
Table 3: HTMT Ratio

	AC	ED	EL	ER	HRP
AC					
ED	0.327				
EL	0.408	0.415			
ER	0.481	0.518	0.581		
HRP	0.702	0.156	0.433	0.397	

The next stage was of evaluating the assumptions after the measurement model's suitability was verified. The structure of the model was evaluated using the PLS-SEM method and bootstrapping techniques (Chin, 2010). Initially, the structural algorithm's analytical ability was assessed using the endogenous construct's coefficient of prediction (R square values) (Chin, 2010), and the path

parameter's level and degree of significance were ascertained (Hair, et al., 2014). The model was cleared of loadings for factors that were under the threshold of 0.5.

Figure 2: Measurement Model Assessment



Structural Model Assessment

The purpose of the structural model assessment is to evaluate the study's claims. This was accomplished via bootstrapping using the PLS-SEM technique (Chin, 2010). The path coefficient's range of significance was determined. According to Chin (2010), the estimated magnitudes associated with cognitive dissonance, resilience to emotions, and emotional commitment were found to be 0.401, 0.201, and 0.271, correspondingly. These numbers are indicative of moderate and substantial influences or outcomes. The following is a discussion of the outcomes following the conduction of bootstrapping:

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	B	Mean	SD	T-Statistics	P Values	Decision
ED -> AC	0.122	0.121	0.07	1.753	0.04	Supported
ED*HRP -> AC	0.08	0.077	0.078	1.033	0.151	Not Supported
EL -> AC	0.187	0.19	0.059	3.189	0.001	Supported
EL -> ED	0.448	0.453	0.051	8.867	0	Supported
EL -> ER	0.521	0.526	0.053	9.733	0	Supported
ER -> AC	0.122	0.129	0.087	1.403	0.081	Not Supported
HRP -> AC	0.51	0.512	0.068	7.49	0	Supported

Emotional leadership and affective commitment were positively and significantly correlated, according to the algorithm's output and bootstrapping PLS-SEM results ($\beta = 0.187$, $t = 3.189$, $p < 0.05$). As a result, Hypothesis 1 is validated. According to the data ($\beta = 0.448$, $t = 8.867$, $p < 0.05$), which show that emotional leadership causes emotional dissonance, hypothesis 2 was also validated. The variables showed a positive connection, supporting the hypothesis ($\beta = 0.521$, $t = 9.733$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, it is supported by hypothesis 3 that emotional leadership makes workers more emotionally resilient. Since the t-value of 1.403 seems to be less than the 1.645 cutoff value, hypothesis 4 is not supported and is not statistically significant.

Emotional resilience leads to affective commitment in employees. As the t value (0.151) is less than the cutoff value, which is 1.645, therefore the hypothesis is not supported which means that human resource primacy does not moderate the relationship between emotional dissonance and affective commitment in employees.

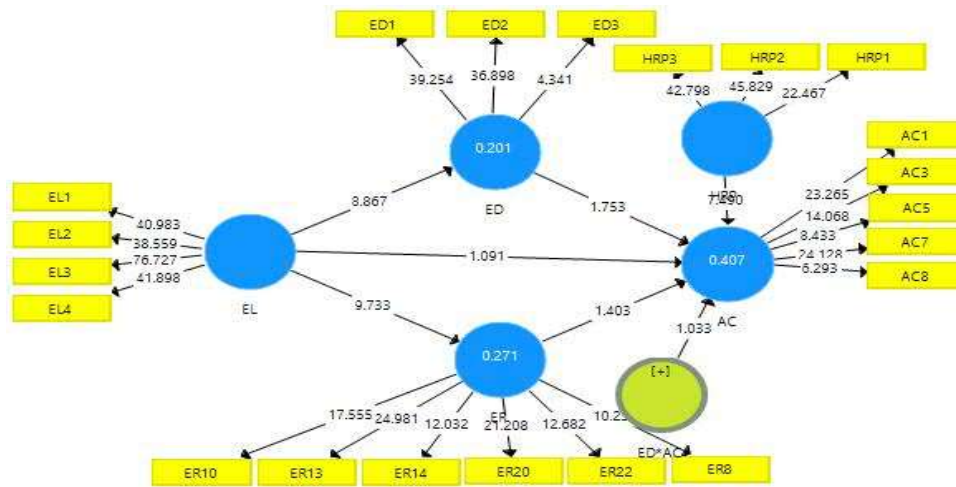
Mediation Results

The mediation results obtained from PLS-SEM are known as specific indirect results. For this study, it has been found that emotional dissonance mediates the relationship between emotional leadership and affective commitment since the t value is 1.705 greater than the cutoff value of t-statistics. However, emotional resilience does not mediate the relationship between emotional leadership and affective commitment in the teachers of higher education institutions of Pakistan as shown in the table below:

Table 5: Specific Indirect Effects

	B	Mean	SD	t value	P Values	Decision
EL -> ED -> AC	0.055	0.054	0.032	1.705	0.044	Supported
EL -> ER -> AC	0.063	0.067	0.046	1.393	0.082	Not Supported

Figure 3: Structural Model Assessment



Conclusion

To ascertain the study's conclusions. SPSS was utilized to depict the characteristics of the respondents. PLS-SEM analysis was used to verify the measures' accuracy and dependability. The study assumptions were tested using the bootstrapping approach in PLS-SEM analysis (Amir et al., 2023). The overall outcome showed enough proof of the measurement model's discriminant, convergent, and reliability to support its acceptance. Following the evaluation of the measurement model and the testing of the structural model (Akash et al., 2023), it seems that affective commitment among staff members is significantly impacted by emotional leadership. However, the association between affective commitment and emotional leadership was only facilitated by emotional dissonance. The worldwide coronavirus epidemic does not alleviate the affective commitment and emotional dissonance experienced by Pakistani university instructors, nor does

human resource primacy. The results of the present investigation are consistent with earlier research, as Huo et al. (2020) discovered a strong correlation between organizational commitment and emotional leadership styles in addition to other leadership modalities among Pakistani health sector workers.

The current research results also align with those of Jung et al. (2020), who examined the emotional influence of empowered management on workers' commitment in Korean enterprises. It also indicated that employee resilience mediated the relationship between emotional leadership and commitment in Korean employees. The results of this research investigation are consistent with those of Ouakouak et al. (2020), who discovered a strong correlation between the dedication and emotional leadership of staff members working in Kuwaiti government agencies during an emergency. The study's findings also support earlier research by Nair and Sivakumar (2020), which demonstrated the mediation function of feelings of dissonance among teachers' commitment to organizations and approaches to leadership in the Indian state of Kerala.

Gavya et al. (2024) emphasize how important leadership philosophies are in determining employees' commitment to the company, with emotional leadership philosophies being particularly influential. Organizations can improve overall performance and commitment by prioritizing leaders developing these leadership styles. This has wider ramifications for the administration, especially when dealing with employee retention and overall business performance. Organizations may increase staff engagement and devotion by promoting transformative and emotional leadership, resulting in a more motivated and dedicated staff.

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