

# Mediating Role of Locus of Control in the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Acceptance to Change

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## Abstract

Change is inevitable, and organizations have to understand it. However, it is not possible until the employees of the organizations embrace the change. Thus, the present study attempted to investigate the influence of Locus of Control and Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Employees' Acceptance to Change. The data were obtained from the survey of faculties from institutions of higher education in India. Mediation measurement was conducted using AMOS to investigate the effect of Locus of Control on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Acceptance to Change, and a profound impact was observed from the study. The study explained the role of the psychological variables in implementing change in the organization by suggesting that the management should implement planned training of emotional intelligence for faculties, deploying participation, facilitation, negotiation strategies, and strengthening the communication channels for catalyzing smooth change in organizations.

**Keywords:** acceptance for change, emotional intelligence, locus of control, higher education

JEL Classification Codes : J24, M10, M12, O15

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Druker (2009) stated that it is not difficult to predict the future; it is essential to understand the objectives of change. Today, where the world is becoming a global platform of learning, every step is endowed by knowledge and growth. Professional education has also benchmarked itself in the new arch of wisdom.

Organizational change in higher education is not only essential for professional excellence, but it is a requirement for the industry. Buchanan, Fitzgerald, Ketley, Gollop, Jones, Lamont, and Whitby (2005) emphasized sustainable change instead of change, and its cascading effect on the performance goal, vision, strategies, leadership down the line in the organizational structure in the long run.

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Innovation and transformation are required, and understanding that change will be critical. Indian higher education needs to reform its practices, pedagogy, and organizational working. The approach leads to collaborating education, experience, innovation, and improvement all together under one portfolio, however, human capital acts as a catalyst for any exceptional change to sustain in an organization.

Also, previous studies have enlightened us with an emphasis on the psychological variables in this change management. Venkatesan and Rohatgi (2018) illustrated that tremendous changes in the business environment leads employees of the organization into changes in their mental, physical, social, and cognitive well - being.

According to Chou (2014), employees' acceptance to change significantly collaborates with issues of transformational leadership, the role of top management in organizational change, the phenomenon of resistance to change, and psychological traits or predispositions of individuals experiencing the change, which are equally decisive for the sustainability of change. Gupta (2018) advocated that organizations can compete nationally and internationally and survive in the long run with appropriate change management strategies.

Research on organizational change has expanded rapidly, but literature gaps remain in terms of the higher education institutions. Much research focuses on outcomes such as leadership, technology, management role change dimension, emotional capability, and emotional intelligence towards personal adaptation to change behaviors.

Steigenberger (2015) advocated that emotion acts as a catalyst in sensemaking of an individual towards change. Wittig (2012) revealed that to mobilize sustainable radical change, the emotional energy of the employees is essential.

Although these outcomes are pertinent to organizational change, there is a need to extend the range of study towards psychological variables as the sense of responsibility and readiness people hold towards their decision of commitment to organizational change.

## Literature Review

**(1) Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Acceptance to Change :** Researchers over a decade have explained emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. It is perceived as identification of self-perceived emotional control (Bar-On, 2010). As change causes intense emotions (Daus, Dasborough, Jordan, & Ashkanasy, 2012), emotional intelligence naturally is a key variable to be studied for better implementation of change. People need to develop their EI skills for acceptance of change (Coetzee & Harry, 2014). Volumes of studies have established that emotional intelligence and personality traits can have a significant impact on the change acceptance (Bar-On, 2010). Researchers have also found a significant relationship between organizational learning and adaptive performance with higher emotional intelligence (Dasborough, Lamb, & Suseno, 2015 ; Pradhan, Jena, & Singh, 2017). It has been reported that, in the context of universities, it is especially important to focus on the emotional aspects associated with change implementation; not only the perceptions before the change, but also emotions after changes take place. Change has been explored in the dimensions of readiness and resistance ; however, it has been less explored with acceptance to change. Acceptance to change talks about the positive psychology, understanding the need, urgency, and proposed change, and giving a significant approval to change by both mental and physical association of an individual. Change has to be conceptualized towards the total well - being of an employee (Di Fabio & Gori, 2016) towards change. Di Fabio and Gori (2016) determined the four crucial constructs for employees' acceptance to change as: support for change, predisposition to change, change seeking, and cognitive flexibility.

The relation between emotional intelligence and acceptance to change in the context of higher education has been examined by few researchers. The researchers also threw significant light on the association of acceptance

and emotional intelligence in an organizational context. Thus, it can be easily understood as a crucial factor that can affect the employees' acceptance for organizational change, and it provides a platform for us to formulate our first hypothesis:

↳ **H1** : Emotional intelligence is positively associated with employees' acceptance to change in institutions of higher education in India.

**(2) Locus of Control and Emotional Intelligence** : Over the last decade, much attention has been relied on to the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and locus of control (LOC) in the academic literature.

The locus of control has been found to have a significant association with emotional intelligence, and both are psychological variables. Thus, their proportionate roles on each other and other behavioral outcomes as a personality trait, attitude values, and beliefs have been examined. Turnipseed (2018) tried to explain the above mentioned with his empirical research based on individuals measuring the mediating role of locus of control on emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior. Dhani and Sharma (2017) advocated about a significant association between emotional intelligence and personality of an individual.

Locus of control is explained as the stability observed in individual behaviors, how an individual holds the responsibility of the consequences of various behaviors and life events perceived by him/her, which indeed reflect the control an individual has within himself/herself that can be managing one's emotions, their understanding, and governance (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013).

Johnson, Batey, and Holdsworth's (2009) study showed a firm correlation between the variables - locus of control, emotional intelligence, and subjective well being (affect behavior and life satisfaction). The study revealed that employees with a high internal locus of control were high on emotional intelligence. This study helped us to formulate the second hypothesis :

↳ **H2** : Emotional intelligence is positively associated with locus of control in institutions of higher education.

**(3) Locus of Control as a Mediator** : Researchers have, over some time, indicated the relationship between locus of control and organizational change (Oreg, Michel, & By, 2013).

D'Souza, Agarwal, and Chavali (2013) and Sunil (2017) reported that locus of control bore a direct relation to acceptance to change, especially internal, because of their belief of control over their environment, and consequently to reduce dissonance by maintaining cognitive consistency would be more likely than external to commit to a change. Some studies also further underlined that emotional intelligence is positively related to locus of control (El Badawy, Trujillo - Reyes, & Magdy, 2017). This change requires explaining the nature and necessity of change and discussing issues associated with change with people having higher emotional intelligence as they can act as a better change agent in expressing their emotions and handling the interpersonal relationships in a judicious and empathetic manner. Acceptance for change, on the other hand, will be more for the employees having believed that they can control the outcomes of their lives. Therefore, for the present study, it has been proposed that locus of control mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' acceptance to change. All this helps us to postulate our third hypothesis for the study:

↳ **H3** : Locus of control positively mediates the positive relationship of emotional intelligence and employees' acceptance to change.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The motivation of the research is due to the scarcity of empirical findings on organizational change across higher

education institutions in India, within an obscure understanding of the role of responsibility holding behaviors as the locus of control and their impact on the governance of emotional state with an outcome as positive employee acceptance to change. Thus, our study undergoes phenomenal and quantitative research to unveil our primary objective of understanding the role of locus of control as a mediator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and employees' readiness to change. To our knowledge, no study has been conducted to examine the mediating effect of locus of control on the relationship between EI and acceptance to change. The current study is thus designed to fill this gap. In summary, this study aims to examine this mediating effect and its implications in higher education institutions by considering a sample of Indian higher education institutions' employees.

The three-fold objectives of this study are as follows:

- (1) To study the association between emotional intelligence and employees' acceptance to change in higher education institutions.
- (2) To assess the relationship between locus of control and emotional intelligence of employees of the higher education institutions.
- (3) To identify and ascertain the degree and direction of the impact of locus of control in the relation between emotional intelligence and employees' acceptance to change in the higher education institutions.

## Methodology

**(1) Participants :** The study was undertaken, and data were collected from 400 faculties of higher educational institutions of India across the disciplines like Management, Engineering, Pharmacy, Food Technology, Fashion to provide wide coverage. The descriptive research design was used in the study. Out of 400 respondents, 389 responded to the study, in terms of the completed questionnaire, which gave the study a response rate of 97%. The timeline of the study was August 2017 to March 2018.

The study covered faculty with high experience and age as well as freshers to the domain; the age of the faculty ranged from 21 years to above 60 years. Out of 389 respondents, 87% of them were in the age group of 20 - 40 years. Out of 389 respondents, 85% were married, and 80% were Assistant Professors.

### (2) Questionnaire

**(i) Emotional Intelligence :** The study tries to capture and assess the self-measured emotional intelligence of the respondents through the self-report Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS, Wong, Law, & Wong, 2004) which comprised of 16 brief statements.

The scale embraces four measurement dimensions: Self Emotional Regulation (SER), Use of Emotion in Performance (UEP), Self-Emotional Appraisal (SE), and Others' Emotional Appraisal (OE). Items included in the questionnaire were as : "I always know my friends' emotions" and "I am a self-motivated person." The faculties were asked to rate their statements on a 5 - point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. It is a measurement tool for a global trait EI score as a higher score predicts higher levels of the trait EI in individuals. The reliability and validity of the scale are relatively higher than 0.8 (Kong, Zhao, & You, 2012). The confirmatory factor analysis was used in the study and determined the internal reliability to be above 0.85.

**(ii) Locus of Control :** Rotter's Locus of Control Scale is used to measure the locus of control of the participants. Rotter's Scale for Locus of control has two dimensions : External locus of control and internal locus of control comprising of 29 items in the scale (Rotter, 1966). Under this scale, 23 statements like, "Many of the unhappy

things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck," and "People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make" are evaluative and try to tap the respondents' opinions on the dimensions of internal and external locus of control. Six filler items are present on the scale, they are neutral and hold no evaluation importance and were incorporated to remove biases from the respondents' opinion. Zerega, Tseng, and Greever (1976) measured the reliability coefficient of the scale as above 0.8, and inter reliability of the RLOC scale in our study was 0.82.

**(iii) Acceptance of Change :** The Acceptance of Change Scale (ACS, Di Fabio & Gori, 2016) is used in the present research to determine the inclination of the respondents to accept or their readiness towards change. The Acceptance of Change Scale is a 20 items scale with responses using a 5 - point Likert scale as (1 = *not at all*, 2 = *a little*, 3 = *somewhat*, 4 = *much*, 5 = *a great deal*). The scale facilitates to trap the tendency of the respondents towards acceptance to change under five dimensions referred to as Predisposition to Change (PDE) with items as, "I easily identify alternative paths" ; Support for Change (SC) (example of the item as, "When I compare myself with others, I am better able to cope with change") ; Change Seeking (CS) (example of the item as, "Although I do not see the benefits, I cannot wait to change") ; Positive Reactions to Change (PRC) (an example of the item as, "I am aware of mutations that involve the change") ; Cognitive Flexibility (CF) (example of item as, "My opinions may have changed"). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the five dimensions of the scale are : Predisposition to Change ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) ; for Support for Change, the  $\alpha = 0.79$  ;  $\alpha = 0.80$  for Change Seeking ;  $\alpha = 0.75$  for Positive Reaction to Change,  $\alpha = 0.72$  for Cognitive Flexibility, and  $\alpha = 0.88$  for the overall scale.

Demographic information, including age, gender, grade, and year of service were also collected. Only higher education institutions' faculty members participated in this research.

**(3) Procedure :** Data for the study were collected from the population of the faculty members of higher education institutions in India via a questionnaire that was emailed to them. The survey was divided into three questionnaires. The first questionnaire measured the faculty's emotional intelligence ; the second questionnaire measured the internal and external locus of control of the faculties ; and the third covered the employees' acceptance to change tendency. If not responded, the email was followed by two reminders, first a week later and the second, a fortnight later.

## Analysis and Results

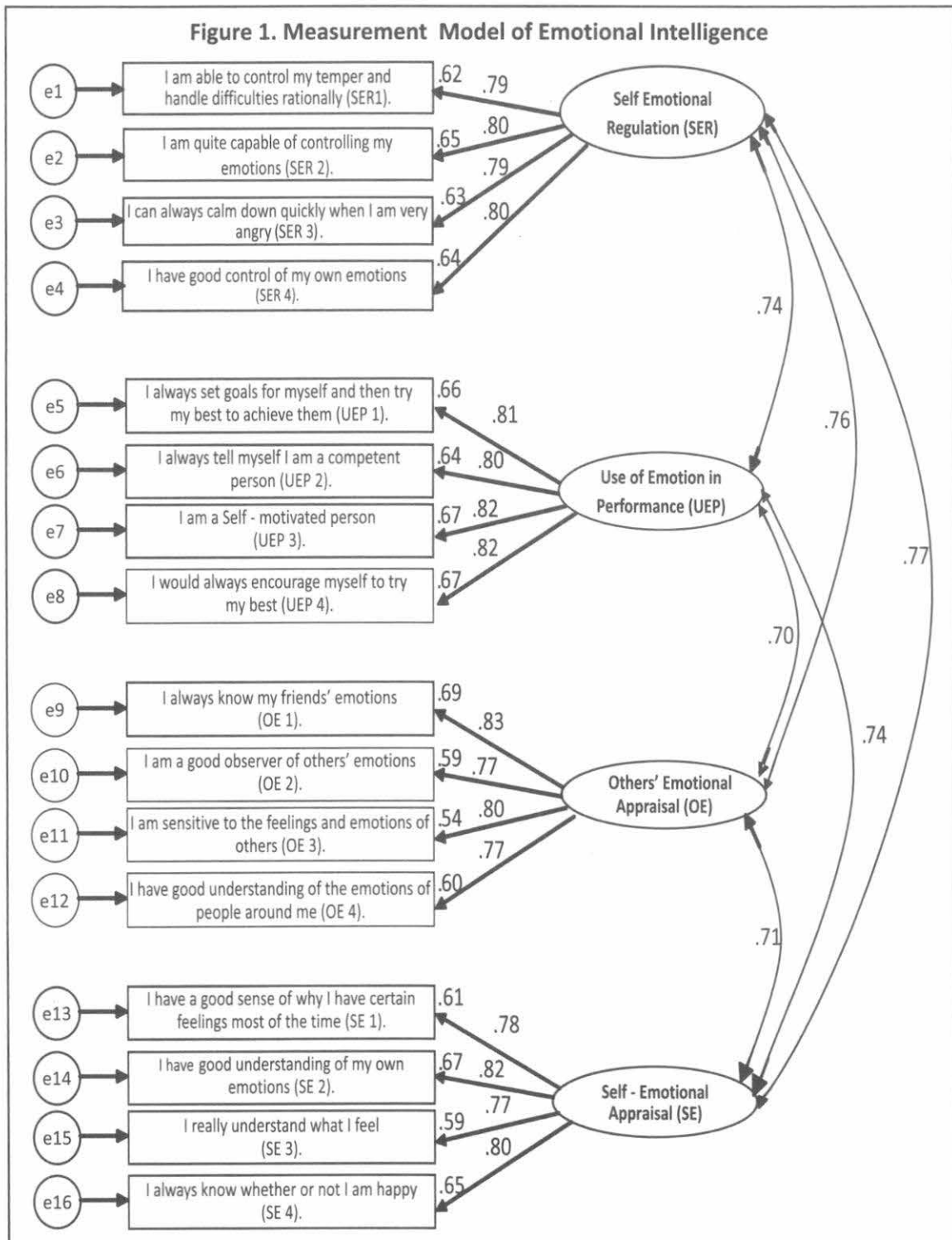
Confirmatory factor analysis has been implemented to identify the factors that contributed to emotional intelligence and employees' acceptance to change of the faculty members of higher education institutions and the role of locus of control as a mediator to govern the relationship between EI and employee' acceptance to change.

**(1) Emotional Intelligence :** After conducting the content validity, the construct EI had 16 variables. CFA allows the testing of the hypothesis that a relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs exists. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to verify the constructs and to find meaningful factors exploring emotional intelligence of faculty members. Based on the importance, ratings were given to the 16 items in the scale as shown in Figure 1, and the confirmatory analysis brought out four components. Self-Emotional Regulation (SER), Use of Emotion in Performance (UEP), Self-Emotional Appraisal (SE), and Others' Emotional Appraisal (OE).

Validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure for a latent construct. The three types of validity required for a measurement model are :

**Convergent Validity :** In this, all the items in a measurement model are statistically significant, which is a subset of

construct validity. The value of AVE (average variance extracted) should be 0.5 or higher, CR > 0.7, and CR > AVE (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). From the Table 1, it is evident that the average variance extracted (AVE)



**Table 1. Validity of the Model : Emotional Intelligence**

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Self-Emotional Regulation (SER)	Emotion in Performance (UEP)	Others' Emotional Appraisal (OE)	Self-Emotional Appraisal (SE)
Self-Emotional Regulation (SER)	0.874	0.634	0.586	0.874	0.796			
Emotion in Performance (UEP)	0.885	0.659	0.544	0.885	0.737***	0.812		
Others' Emotional Appraisal (OE)	0.872	0.630	0.574	0.874	0.758***	0.703***	0.793	
Self-Emotional Appraisal (SE)	0.872	0.630	0.586	0.873	0.765***	0.737***	0.706***	0.794

is greater than 0.5 for the four constructs as SER (AVE) = 0.634, UEP (AVE) = 0.659, OE (AVE) = 0.630, and SE (AVE) = 0.630, and all the constructs have a composite reliability (CR) value above the 0.7 threshold as SER (CR) = 0.874, UEP (CR) = 0.885, OE (CR) = 0.872, and SE (CR) = 0.872. It is evident from the Table 1 that for all items, CR > AVE.

**Construct Validity :** Construct validity is achieved when the fitness indexes for a construct achieve the required level. From the fitness indexes mentioned in Table 2, it is evident that CFI = 0.983 and RMSEA = 0.041 are within the acceptable limits for the measurement model as CFI > 0.95 (Gatignon, 2010) and RMSEA < 0.06 (Brown, 2014) thresholds. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement instrument has good construct validity.

**Discriminant Validity :** Malhotra and Dash (2011) and Hair et al. (2010) advocated the requirement for discriminant validity in the measurement of correlation between exogenous constructs should MSV < AVE and square root of AVE is greater than the inter-construct correlations. It is evident from the Table 1 that none of the covariances between the constructs are above the square root of AVE. Also, the Table 1 reflects the measure of MSV < AVE as (0.586, 0.544, 0.574, and 0.586), respectively for all items. Thus, the model has good discriminant validity.

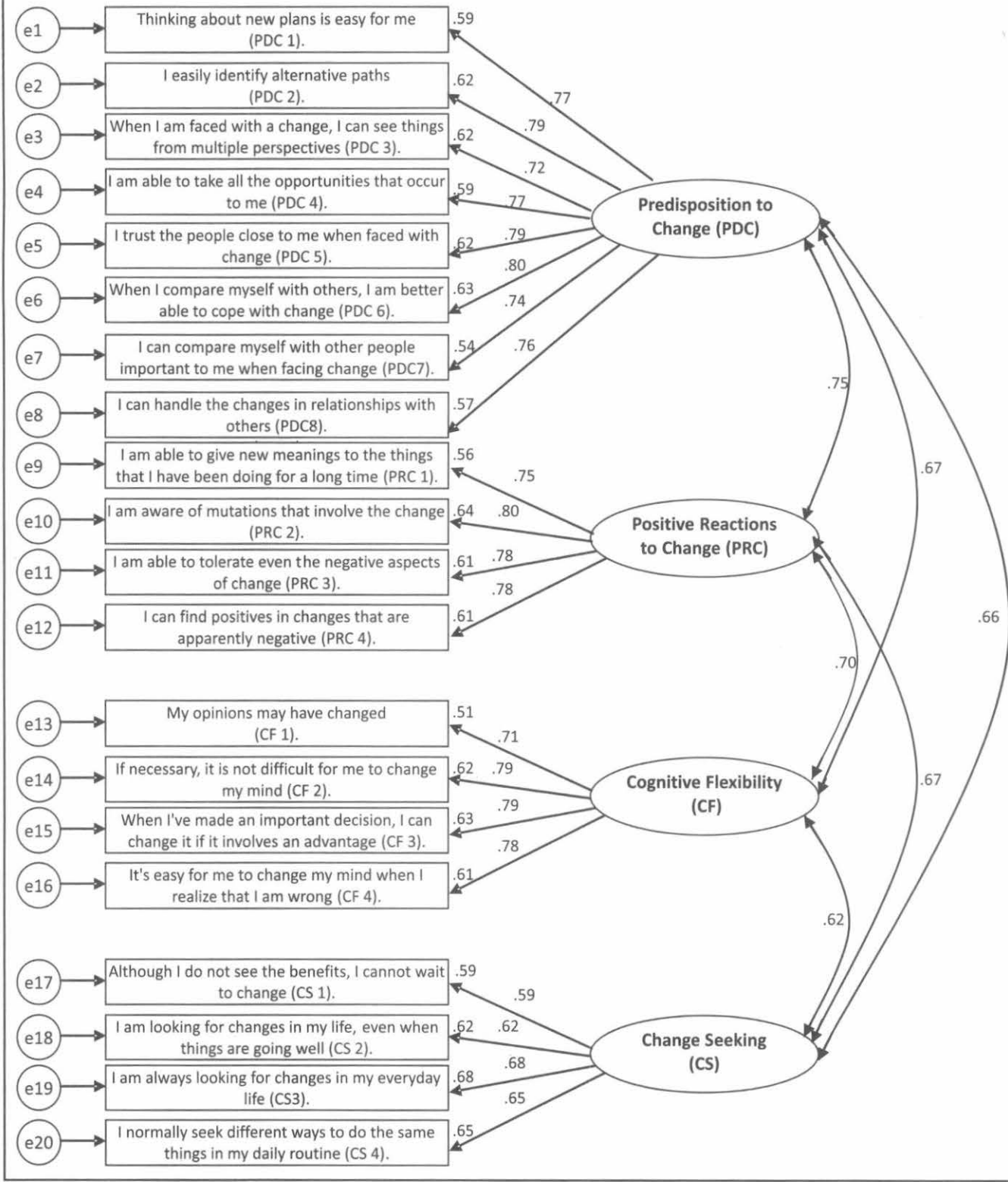
**Reliability :** The reliability of the constructs is checked through composite reliability (CR). Hair et al. (2010) recommend a cut-off value of  $\alpha \geq 0.7$  for a construct to be reliable. As per the Table 1, all the constructs have the composite reliability (CR) value above the 0.7 threshold as SER (CR) = 0.874, UEP (CR) = 0.885, OE (CR) = 0.872, and SE (CR) = 0.872.

The initial four-factor solution obtained from the EFA is also subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

**Table 2. CFA Results : Emotional Intelligence**

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	163.066	--	--
DF	98	--	--
CMIN/DF	1.664	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.983	>0.95	Excellent
SRMR	0.029	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.041	<0.06	Excellent
PClose	0.899	>0.05	Excellent

**Figure 2. Measurement Model of Employees' Acceptability to Change**





**Table 3. Validity of the Model : Employees' Acceptance to Change**

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR (H)	Predisposition to Change (PDC)	Positive Reactions to Change (PRC)	Cognitive Flexibility (CF)	Change Seeking (CS)
Predisposition to Change (PDC)	0.919	0.586	0.562	0.920	0.765			
Positive Reactions to Change (PRC)	0.859	0.604	0.562	0.860	0.750***	0.777		
Cognitive Flexibility (CF)	0.853	0.592	0.497	0.856	0.670***	0.705***	0.770	
Change Seeking (CS)	0.873	0.633	0.455	0.875	0.662***	0.674***	0.623***	0.796

CFA allows the testing of the hypothesis that a relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent constructs exists. CFA is conducted using the AMOS software. The Figure 1 shows the measurement model, and the Table 2 summarizes the CFA results.

The values of the fit indexes, CFI (comparative fit index) and RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) are 0.983 and 0.041, respectively. The acceptable value for CFI for a CFA model should be greater than 0.9 (Bentler & Mooijaart, 1989) and for RMSEA, this value should be less than 0.1. As SRMR (<.08) (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008) indicates better model - data fit, our model value for SRMR is 0.029. The CMIN/DF is indicated as there is a minimum discrepancy, and the ratio is used as a measure of fit, and its threshold value should be between 1 and 3 (Byrne, 1998), as represented, the values are CMIN/DF = 1.664 and the PClose value explains the difference between observed and expected covariance of items, which should be >0.05 (Gatignon, 2010), and our value is 0.899. Since both the fit indexes have values within the specified limits, therefore, it can be concluded the observed data fit the factor structure.

**(2) Employees' Acceptance to Change :** The construct - Employees' Acceptability to Change scale had 20 items, and a confirmatory factor analysis is conducted for the participants, which reduced the variables to four dimensions as Predisposition to Change (PDC), Change Seeking (CS), Positive Reactions to Change (PRC), and Cognitive Flexibility (CF) in the study represented in the Figure 2.

**Convergent Validity:** Statistical significance is measured here and is defined as convergent validity. The value of AVE (average variance extracted) should be 0.5 or higher, CR > 0.7 and CR > AVE. From the Table 3, it is evident that average variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.5 for the four constructs as PDC (AVE) = 0.586, PRC (AVE) = 0.604, CF (AVE) = 0.592, CS (AVE) = 0.633 and all the constructs have the composite reliability (CR) values above the 0.7 threshold as PDC (CR) = 0.919, PRC (CR) = 0.859, CF (CR) = 0.853, CS (CR) = 0.873. It is evident from the Table 3 that for all items, CR > AVE.

**Construct Validity:** From the fitness indexes mentioned in Table 4, it is evident that CFI = 0.972 and RMSEA = 0.045 are within the acceptable limits for the measurement model as CFI > 0.95 (Gatignon, 2010) and RMSEA < 0.06, that is acceptable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement instrument has good construct validity.

**Discriminant Validity:** Malhotra and Dash (2011) advocate threshold values for discriminant validity as MSV < AVE and square root of AVE is greater than interconstruct correlations. It is evident from the Table 3 that none of the covariances between the constructs are above the square root of AVE. Also, the Table 3 reflects the measure of MSV < AVE as 0.562, 0.562, 0.497, and 0.455, respectively for all items. Thus, the model has good discriminant validity.

**Table 4. CFA Results for Employee Acceptability to Change**

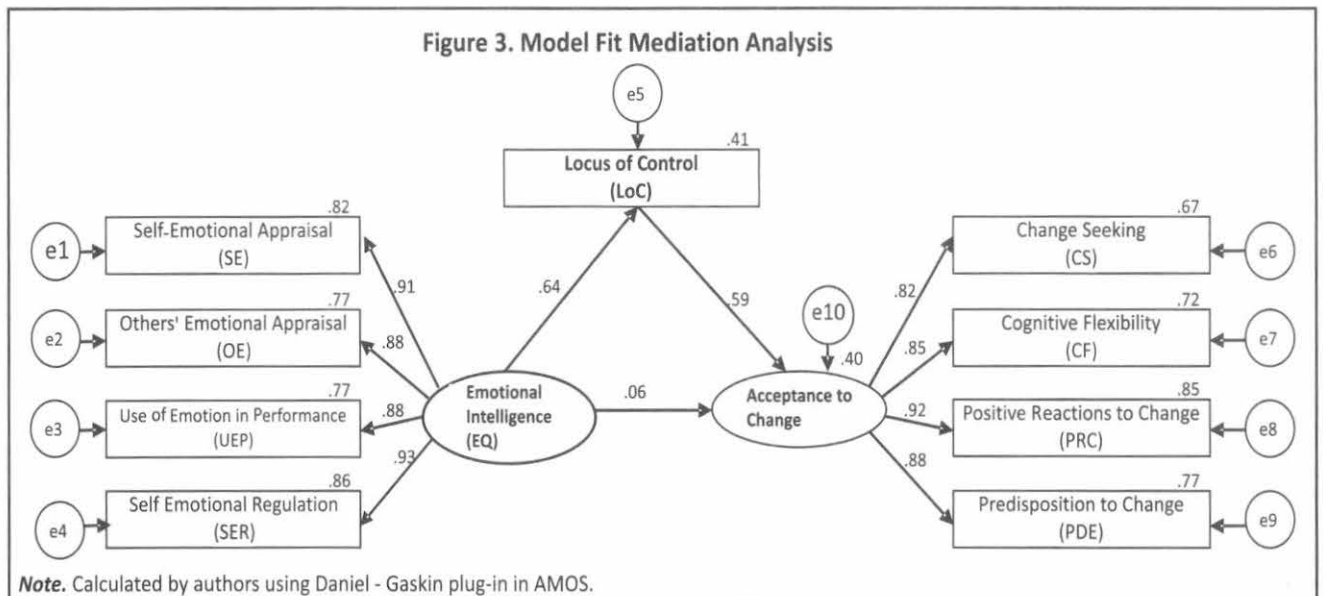
Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	292.719	--	--
DF	164	--	--
CMIN/DF	1.785	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.972	>0.95	Excellent
SRMR	0.034	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.045	<0.06	Excellent
PCLOSE	0.836	>0.05	Excellent

**Reliability :** The reliability of the constructs is checked through composite reliability (CR) (Hair et al., 2010). As per the Table 3, all the constructs maintain the threshold value, that is,  $\geq 0.7$  as PDC (CR) = 0.919, PRC (CR) = 0.859, CF (CR) = 0.853, and CS (CR) = 0.873.

Our Employees' Acceptability to Change questionnaires were validated with both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and four factors are derived out of it as PDC, PRC, CF, and CS. CFA was conducted using the AMOS software. The measurement model is shown in Figure 2, and Table 4 summarizes the CFA results for Employees' Acceptability to Change.

The values of the fit indices, CFI (comparative fit index) and RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) are 0.972 and 0.045, respectively (Table 4). The acceptable value for CFI for a CFA model should be greater than 0.9, and for RMSEA, this value should be less than 0.1. Standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)  $< .08$  indicates better model-data fit, and our model (Table 4) for the value for SRMR is 0.029.

The CMIN/DF is a ratio as a measure of fit, and the acceptable values for it are between 1 and 3, and as represented in Table 4, the value for CMIN/DF is 1.785 and the Pclose value explains the difference between observed and expected covariance of items, which should be  $>0.05$  (Gatignon, 2010), and our value is 0.836. Since both the fit indexes have values within the specified limits, therefore, it can be concluded that the observed data fits the factor structure.



**Table 5. Model Fit Meditation Analysis**

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	32.840	--	--
DF	25	--	--
CMIN/DF	1.314	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	0.997	>0.95	Excellent
SRMR	0.018	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.028	<0.06	Excellent
PCLOSE	0.925	>0.05	Excellent

**Table 6. Mediation Measurement**

Hypothesis	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Conclusion
Emotional Intelligence --->Locus of Control	2.686	---	2.686	Significant Influence
Emotional Intelligence ---> Employees' Acceptance to Change	0.385	---	0.385	Significant Influence
Emotional Intelligence --> Locus of Control --> Employees' Acceptance to Change	0.054	0.330	0.386	Full Mediation Effect

**(3) Mediation Analysis :** The study data is also analyzed using Daniel Gaskin plug-in in AMOS to measure the mediation effect of our factor - locus of control on the variable emotional intelligence and the relationship with Employees' Acceptability to Change. Model fitness is derived using various fitness indices.

The values of the fit indices, CFI and RMSEA are 0.997 and 0.028, respectively. The acceptable value for CFI for a CFA model should be greater than 0.9, and for RMSEA, this value should be less than 0.1 for a good fit index represented in Table 5. Its values are for good construct validity, which is a dimension to the content validity of the model.

As per Table 5, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) indicates the discrepancy between the sample covariance matrix and the model covariance matrix. As SRMR (<.08) indicates better model-data fit, our model value for SRMR is 0.018.

The CMIN/DF determines that its threshold value should be between 1 and 3, and our value of CMIN/DF is 1.314, and Pclose value should be >0.05, and our value is 0.925. Since both the fit indices have values within the specified limits, therefore, it can be concluded that the observed data fit the factor structure.

The Figure 3 depicts the model fit of the mediation analysis and supports the mediation model that the locus of control variable mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Acceptability to Change. Locus of control, as measured by the internal - external scale (Rotter, 1966), is identified as a mediator. The mediation effect is estimated in path models in which there is a direct effect of locus of control variables on emotional intelligence (path a), that is, 2.686 as shown in Table 6. This represents a significant influence of the variable, a direct effect of Emotional Intelligence on Employees' Acceptability to Change (path b), which is visible with a significant influence of 0.385. A direct effect of Locus of Control on Emotional Intelligence relationship with Acceptance to Change is 0.054 and an indirect effect as 0.330 represents a full mediation effect within our variables as shown in the Table 6.

## Discussion

The present study has been designed to examine the important role of locus of control on the relationship between

Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Acceptance to Change. As we expected from the literature review, our results show a significant impact of locus of control over EI and Employees' Acceptance to Change.

Lee (2013) argued by stating that the emotionally intelligent individuals have a considerable elevation in their performance. The variables : Others' Emotional Appraisal and Self-Emotional Management comprising of self emotions' recognition, regulation, and utilization were detected to be significant with the performance of emotion at work. The present study is also related to the literature present as the 16 variables pertaining to the dimension of emotional recognition and regulation were framed together and were eventually classified under four major dimensions, which are also in synchronization to the previous literature as SER, UEP, SE, and OEA (Goleman et al., 2013 ; Wong et al., 2004).

We tried to tap the constructs of Employees' Acceptance to Change using confirmatory factor analysis. At a certain instance, we advocate that the employees' emotional positive association towards change leads to a sustainable organizational change.

Our study goes with the literature and derives four major components from the 20-item scale of Employees' Acceptance to Change using confirmatory factor analysis. PDC is explained as a positive association of an individual to change efficiency to use it to improve his/her self. CS determines as a value-adding tendency to an individual, a psychological stimulation enhancing the change drivers, encouraging the behavior to adapt and try new things (Di Fabio & Gori, 2016). CS dimensions offer a scope of positivity in the individual where he or she is pertinent towards a hope of good outcomes of the change. Another construct derived is PRC, which induces the explanation of positive psychological emotional behavior among employees and their reaction to change.

Our paper also tries to intervene and explain the role of psychological variables as emotional intelligence and locus of control in the generation of these positive reactions (Nordin, 2011) as emotional control and governance aid in the predisposition of individuals to understand and learn about the positivity of change and seek advantages through it (Di Fabio & Gori, 2016). A multitasking approach, or the tendency of an individual to switch between the old frame to the new frame, is illustrated as Cognitive Flexibility (CF), our fourth construct of the study, which is one's state can be highly beneficial for the organization as the adaptive employees or individuals having a rational approach to understand and adopt new possibilities of change can make the transition ready for the organization.

The major findings of the study state that the full mediation is observed by the locus of control on the relationship of Emotional Intelligence and Employees' Acceptance to Change, thereby accepting the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between locus of control and emotional intelligence of employees of higher education institutions (Johnson et al., 2009 ; Ng, Ke, & Raymond, 2014). Higher control of an individual on his/her external and internal environment reflects higher emotional sensibility and management. It can be beneficial for the academic institutions as these faculties are the backbone of the education system of a nation, and changes in the academic institutions are needed to be sensibly and positivity adhered to and embraced.

The research also examines the relationship between Locus of Control and Employees' Acceptance to Change in higher education institutions, and finds the relationship to be significant (D'Souza et al., 2013 ; Schwarz & Bouckenooghe, 2017 ; Sunil, 2017). Researchers have advocated the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational change (Serrat, 2017). The rigidity in an individual's behavior, the ability to hold the responsibility of uncertainty lead the individual to resist the change, and if these areas can be psychologically managed, then the scope of smoothening can be witnessed in the organizations.

## **Managerial Implications**

Organizational changes become possible when they are accepted by the employees, but successful implementation of change happens only when it is voluntarily embraced by the employees. The study also has

several practical implications for managements, leaders, and organizations facing organizational change as understanding the impact of organizational change is not a uniform experience for all employees. While change can be elating for some, it can be confusing for others, causing low morale and decreased productivity hindering the intervention.

The resistance may be for several reasons and maybe overt and covert. Organizations may employ several strategies to overcome these changes ranging from education/communication, education, participation, facilitation, negotiation, manipulation to coercion. The deployment of a strategy or combination of strategies will depend upon several situational factors. Nevertheless, the sustainable and effective implementation for change requires educating and communicating with the employees that instills a feeling of commitment in the employees. However, communicating or educating will be more effective for employees having an internal locus of control. More the employees feel attached to their organization, the higher would be their commitment to the organization, and the greater will be their willingness to accept and embrace change.

Successful implementation of change requires attention in developing programs for employees' emotional intelligence in organizations, especially institutions of higher learning that are going through tremendous changes in their environment from placid - randomized environment to turbulent - field environment, may it be in the form of several changes of accreditation or internationalization of higher education institutions (Bagga, Bansal, Kumar, & Jain, 2016 ; Ramanathan, 2018) as secured and emotionally stable employees feel more effectively connected to the organization. In creating employees' acceptance for change, especially for non-linear changes, the managements can identify the employees with higher emotional intelligence and internal locus of control, which will show acceptance to change and can be utilized as change agents to educate others to enhance successful implementation of the change. This study is particularly important in today's environment, where higher learning institutions are getting more complex, diverse, hostile, and uncertain.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The study has several methodological limitations, and few of them are addressed here. First, since this study has a cross-sectional design, so it was difficult for us to make cause and effect inferences. The second limitation is that the mediating effect of locus of control has been demonstrated in this study, but there might be many other mediators also, which have a significant impact on EI and Employees' Acceptance to Change. The third limitation is that it uses non-clinical sampling based on convenience ; so, the current findings of the study can be generalized to clinical populations. Finally, the data of the study were collected through self-report measures, which could be a threat to internal validity. For minimizing the influence of subjectivity, we used multiple methods for evaluation.

## **Scope for Future Research**

The study tries to investigate the employees' association to change and actions of psychological variable as EI and LOC affecting its governance. The significance of the study implies to various dimensions of the higher education institutions. By understanding the outcomes of the study, the education system can enhance its performance and productivity as faculties are the ground on which the higher education system grows and survives, and their emotional stability, management, and positivity utilization in the domain of changes are necessary for higher education institutions to enhance the sustainability of the changes in the long run. New interventions and development in higher education systems leave a space of adaptive behavior control in individuals. There is also scope for determining the dimensions of changes in higher education institutions.

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