"Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction among the Staff of Private Schools in Butwal Sub- Metropolitan City, Nepal"

Susan Parajuli*

Abstract

The study aims to analyze the effect between Employee Engagement and Emotional Intelligence. It seeks to identify how different dimensions of Employee Engagement influences Employee Intelligence. Moreover, the study seeks to examine the mediating role of Job Satisfaction on the relationship between Employee Engagement and Emotional intelligence. The study adopted a quantitative approach, gathering responses from 250 academic staff from private schools in Butwal Sub Metropolitan City using a structured questionnaire, following a simple random sampling method. Data were analyzed using PLS SEM software with different tools like assessment of measurement items, Model fit, IPMA, and Implemented bootstrapping techniques for hypothesis testing to examine the relationship between employee engagement and emotional intelligence. The findings revealed that job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of employee engagement, with relationship management exerting significant direct and indirect effects. Social awareness influenced engagement only through job satisfaction, while self-awareness and self-management showed no significant effects. It suggests that improving job satisfaction, strengthening relationship management, and fostering social awareness are critical for enhancing employee engagement. It is evident that these factors are the major contributors to emotional intelligence. Therefore, the management of private schools should consider these aspects to enhance emotional intelligence. By understanding and reformulating policies based on these factors, there is a higher possibility of improving emotional intelligence.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Employee engagement, Job satisfaction, PLS SEM, Private schools.*

Susan Parajuli*
MBA-BF Scholar of Lumbini Banijya Campus
Tribhuvan University, Butwal, Nepal
*Corresponding author

I. Introduction

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical factor influencing organizational effectiveness and success, especially within the education sector where staff motivation directly impacts student outcomes and institutional performance (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, employee engagement has emerged as a pivotal factor driving organizational success, directly influencing productivity, job performance, and institutional effectiveness (Saks, 2006). Defined operationally, employee engagement refers to the emotional and cognitive commitment employees exhibit toward their work roles, encompassing enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption in their tasks (Kahn, 1990). Emotional intelligence (EI), another critical variable, is the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and

utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others to foster positive interpersonal interactions and decision-making (Goleman, 1995). In recent years, the educational sector in Nepal has experienced significant growth, marked by an increase in private school establishments aiming to improve educational quality and accessibility (Ministry of Education, Nepal, 2020). Amidst this expansion, the motivation and engagement of staff members have become critical determinants of institutional success, directly impacting teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes (Klimoski & Sembach, 2019). Job satisfaction, often considered a mediating variable, reflects employees' affective responses to their work environment, including feelings of fulfillment, recognition, and contentment (Locke, 1976). Historically, the concept of employee engagement gained prominence in the early 1990s as organizations sought to understand what motivates employees beyond monetary incentives, with Kahn's (1990) foundational work emphasizing the psychological conditions that foster engagement. Similarly, emotional intelligence rose to scholarly and practical attention in the mid-1990s, particularly through Goleman's (1995, 1998) influential publications linking EI to leadership effectiveness and workplace success.

Within the academic field of organizational behavior and human resource management, emotional intelligence (EI) has been identified as a vital individual capacity influencing workplace attitudes and behaviors (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008). However, the specific mechanisms through which EI translates into heightened employee engagement remain an ongoing area of research, particularly in educational contexts where interpersonal skills and emotional regulation are crucial. The industry of private education in Nepal presents unique challenges and opportunities related to staff motivation, job satisfaction, and engagement. In Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, private school staff often face demanding workloads, limited resources, and socio-cultural pressures, all of which influence their psychological well-being and engagement levels (Basnet & Adhikari, 2019). The education sector, especially private schools, presents a unique context where employee engagement is essential not only for institutional performance but also for delivering quality education and maintaining a healthy learning environment. However, a persistent decline in engagement levels among teaching and non-teaching staff has been documented, often attributed to workplace stress, demotivation, and job dissatisfaction (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Such disengagement threatens the quality of education and the overall climate of schools, making it a critical issue that has captured the attention of researchers and practitioners alike. Engaged employees tend to demonstrate higher commitment, enthusiasm, and involvement, which translate into improved institutional outcomes (Kahn, 1990).

The increasing emphasis on employee engagement and emotional intelligence reflects a broader shift towards more holistic approaches to staff motivation, beyond traditional performance metrics. Debates within the academic community have focused on the extent to which emotional intelligence impacts employee outcomes, with some scholars asserting its pivotal role in promoting job satisfaction and engagement, while others question the variability of its influence across different cultural and organizational contexts (Mayer et al., 2008; Jordan et al., 2002). Additionally, ongoing challenges such as resource constraints, socio-cultural pressures, and limited professional development opportunities in Nepalese private schools' complicate efforts to foster motivated staff. These issues are compounded by a lack of localized research examining the interplay between emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and engagement within Nepalese educational institutions. Consequently, understanding these relationships is vital for devising targeted strategies that can improve staff well-being and organizational outcomes. Despite this, private school employee engagement, particularly in developing countries like Nepal, remains underexplored, especially regarding the interplay between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in influencing engagement.

Emotional intelligence plays a decisive role in shaping the success or failure of private schools by affecting leadership effectiveness, teacher engagement, student performance, and school climate. Administrators and teachers with high EI are better equipped to create supportive and motivating environments characterized by high job satisfaction and commitment (Goleman, 1998). Such environments foster collaboration, conflict resolution, and trust elements crucial to sustaining long-term institutional success. Conversely, low EI among school personnel can lead to toxic work environments marked by low morale, high turnover, and disengagement, ultimately undermining student achievement and organizational stability. Unmanaged emotions exacerbate conflicts, deteriorate communication, and elevate stress levels, which negatively impact classroom discipline and teacher-student relationships. In this way, the absence of emotional intelligence development in private schools can diminish academic outcomes, reduce staff retention, and destabilize the institution (Goleman, 1998; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Despite the growing body of literature on emotional intelligence and employee engagement, a significant research gap persists concerning the mediating role of job satisfaction, particularly within the context of private school employees in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal. While previous research has established the general importance of emotional intelligence in organizational settings (Goleman, 1990; Mayer et al., 2008), there is scant specific evidence

on how these dynamics operate among educators and staff in emerging educational markets in Nepal. However, studies have documented positive correlations between EI and employee engagement in various sectors (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2017; Alghamdi, 2021), the mechanisms through which job satisfaction influences this relationship in educational settings of developing countries remain insufficiently examined. Existing research predominantly focuses on corporate or government employees, often neglecting the distinct organizational politics, cultural dynamics, and affective pressures that private school teachers face (Görgün & Ekmekçi, 2016). Most studies focus broadly on organizational outcomes or in different cultural or regional contexts, leaving a lack of nuanced insights into the local socio-cultural factors that shape the relationship between emotional intelligence, satisfaction, and engagement in Nepalese private schools. Moreover, existing research often overlooks the practical implications for human resource management tailored to this unique context, such as region-specific challenges, resource limitations, and cultural perceptions of emotional skills.

Furthermore, school-based studies tend to emphasize teacher performance and student outcomes over employee well-being and engagement (Serrano & Reichard, 2011), leaving a critical gap in understanding how internal job satisfaction mediates the EI-engagement link. This study addresses this lacuna by adopting a localized approach that considers the unique cultural, social, and institutional characteristics of private schools in Butwal, thereby providing nuanced insights that generalized models overlook. The significance of exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and employee engagement in private schools in Butwal lies in its potential to address critical challenges faced by educational institutions in Nepal. As the education sector aims to improve overall quality and staff retention, understanding the psychological and emotional factors influencing employee motivation becomes vital. Research indicates that emotional intelligence significantly impacts organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction and performance (Mayer et al., 2008; Jordan et al., 2002). By investigating how emotional intelligence fosters employee engagement through the mediating influence of job satisfaction, this research contributes both theoretically to workplace psychology literature in Nepal and practically by informing school management strategies aimed at enhancing staff engagement and retention.

Integrating emotional intelligence within Nepal's private education sector is particularly vital given the country's multicultural and evolving educational environment (Gautam & Gautam, 2022; Shrestha & Baniya, 2016). Emotionally intelligent teachers are more likely to engage deeply with their work, positively influencing student learning and cultivating a conducive

school climate (Karmacharya, 2023). Therefore, fostering EI among school employees not only enhances individual well-being but also strengthens institutional performance and educational quality.

The implications of this research extend to multiple stakeholders. School administrators can leverage findings to design targeted professional development programs that enhance teachers' emotional competencies, thereby improving job satisfaction and engagement. Teachers can gain insights into strategies for increasing their involvement and commitment, which in turn benefits student outcomes. Policymakers can utilize the evidence to advocate for policies promoting emotional intelligence training within the education sector, ultimately raising educational standards. Additionally, future researchers can build upon this study to explore other dimensions of emotional intelligence in diverse educational contexts. In sum, this research offers actionable recommendations that can lead to tangible improvements in educational practice, benefiting the entire private school system in Nepal.

Objectives: The major objective of the study is to identify how different dimensions of emotional intelligence influence employee engagement. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To analyze the effect of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management on employee engagement.
- To analyze the perception of the respondents with regard to the constructs of the study by examining their average response level.
- To determine which factors, act as necessary conditions for the employee engagement by identifying the minimum levels that must be present for the outcome to occur.
- To examine the effect of emotional intelligence factors (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) on employee engagement by mediating effects of job satisfaction.

II. Review of Literature

Self-awareness and Employee Engagement

The relationship between self-awareness and employee engagement is supported by various theoretical frameworks and empirical studies. Emotional Intelligence Theory highlights that self-awareness is a fundamental component of emotional intelligence, allowing individuals to recognize and understand their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses (Goleman, 1995). This self-awareness enhances the ability to manage emotions effectively, leading to better interpersonal interactions and increased engagement in the workplace. Additionally, Self-

Determination Theory posits that self-awareness fosters intrinsic motivation by aligning personal motivations and capabilities with organizational goals (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Employees who possess high levels of self-awareness are likely to feel more competent and autonomous, which further stimulates their engagement. Moreover, the Job Characteristics Model indicates that self-awareness enhances how employees perceive job characteristics, such as task significance, thereby improving job satisfaction and engagement (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Empirical evidence also supports this relationship; Kahn (1990) found that individuals with greater self-awareness report higher levels of personal involvement in their work roles. Similarly, research conducted by Choi et al. (2016) demonstrated that employees with higher self-awareness levels exhibit significantly greater engagement in various organizational contexts. Furthermore, Burch and Anderson (2008) noted that self-awareness contributes to emotional well-being, which in turn fosters a more engaged workforce. Collectively, these insights suggest that self-awareness is a critical factor in enhancing employee engagement, positioning it as an essential focus for organizational development strategies. This review underscores the importance of fostering self-awareness in the workplace as a means to enhance employee engagement and, ultimately, organizational success.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between self-awareness and employee engagement.

Self-Management and Employee Engagement

The relationship between self-management and employee engagement is well-supported by various motivational and psychological theories. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), individuals experience greater engagement when they feel autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Self-management fosters autonomy by allowing employees to take control of their tasks and decisions, thereby enhancing their sense of ownership and engagement. Additionally, Goal-Setting Theory suggests that specific and challenging goals drive higher performance and engagement (Locke & Latham, 1990). Self-management aligns with this theory by enabling employees to set personal goals and monitor their progress, ultimately increasing their commitment to organizational objectives. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model further emphasizes that personal resources, such as self-management skills, play a crucial role in fostering engagement by helping employees manage their workload effectively and maintain a positive work-life balance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Empirical studies reinforce these theoretical connections. Bashir et al. (2018) found that employees who practice self-management strategies, such as time management and goal setting, report higher engagement levels, positively impacting organizational performance. Similarly, Sonnentag (2003) highlighted that self-management behaviors, including self-reflection and proactive problem-solving, contribute to increased work engagement. Furthermore, Rich et al. (2010) demonstrated through a longitudinal study that self-leadership, an aspect of self-management, enhances intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement over time. This review underscores organizations that invest in self-management training and development are likely to see improved engagement, performance, and overall organizational success.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between self-management and employee engagement.

Social Awareness and Employee Engagement

Social awareness, a key component of emotional intelligence, significantly influences employee engagement by fostering empathy, collaboration, and a sense of belonging within the workplace. Emotional Intelligence Theory posits that social awareness enhances interpersonal dynamics, leading to stronger workplace relationships and increased engagement (Goleman, 1995). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) further supports this link, emphasizing that social awareness satisfies the need for relatedness, which in turn boosts intrinsic motivation and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Social Exchange Theory also highlights the role of social awareness in fostering reciprocal workplace relationships, where employees who feel valued and understood are more likely to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement (Blau, 1964).

Empirical research reinforces these theoretical perspectives, with Miao et al. (2017) demonstrating that employees with higher social awareness exhibit greater engagement due to improved communication and teamwork. Similarly, Alghamdi (2021) found that employees with strong social awareness actively contribute to a supportive and inclusive work environment, thereby enhancing engagement. Furthermore, Serrano and Reichard (2011) established that social awareness positively impacts job satisfaction and collaboration, further strengthening workplace engagement. Encouraging initiatives that enhance social awareness among employees can lead to increased engagement and better organizational outcomes, warranting further research across diverse sectors and cultural contexts. This review underscore

the importance of fostering social awareness within organizations, as it promotes motivation, commitment, and overall performance.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between social awareness and employee engagement.

Relationship Management and Employee Engagement

According to Emotional Intelligence Theory, individuals with strong relationship management skills can effectively understand and regulate their own emotions while also navigating the emotions of others, leading to improved workplace relationships and a greater sense of belonging (Goleman, 1995). This ability to manage interpersonal interactions effectively is crucial in creating an environment where employees feel valued, supported, and connected to their colleagues and supervisors. Social Exchange Theory further supports the significance of relationship management in driving employee engagement, as it posits that individuals are motivated by reciprocal relationships and social interactions within the organization (Blau, 1964). Similarly, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory highlights the impact of strong relationships between supervisors and subordinates, emphasizing that high-quality exchanges marked by trust, respect, and mutual support lead to enhanced engagement and job satisfaction (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Additionally, Self-Determination Theory reinforces the role of relationship management in fostering engagement, as it satisfies the fundamental psychological need for relatedness, thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation and work commitment (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Empirical research strongly supports these theoretical perspectives, demonstrating that relationship management plays a crucial role in shaping employee engagement. Miao et al. (2017) found that leaders who actively invest in relationship management create an atmosphere of trust and loyalty, which directly contributes to higher engagement levels. Similarly, Alghamdi (2021) examined relationship management within educational institutions and discovered that educators who maintained strong relationships with colleagues and supervisors reported increased job satisfaction and engagement, underscoring the importance of supportive workplace interactions. Furthermore, Serrano and Reichard (2011) explored the effects of relationship management on employee outcomes across various industries, revealing that employees who felt supported by their leaders and peers exhibited greater engagement and job performance. Their research highlighted the role of relationship management in cultivating a positive psychosocial work climate that empowers employees to thrive. Future research should explore targeted strategies and interventions to further enhance relationship management

practices, ensuring sustained employee engagement across diverse organizational contexts and industries. This review emphasized the importance of relationship management in fostering teamwork, enhancing communication, and ultimately driving overall organizational success.

H₄: There is a significant relationship between relationship management and employee engagement

Job Satisfaction mediates Self Awareness and Employee Engagement

The relationship between self-awareness and employee engagement can be understood through several motivational and psychological theories. Self-awareness, as a core component of emotional intelligence, enables employees to recognize and understand their emotions, which enhances their capacity for self-regulation and motivation (Goleman, 1998). According to the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions, an increased awareness of one's emotional state can foster positive feelings that build psychological resilience and engagement (Fredrickson, 2001). Furthermore, the Job Demands-Resources Model posits that self-awareness serves as a personal resource that can buffer job demands and facilitate engagement by promoting positive work experiences (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These theories collectively suggest that self-awareness influences employee engagement both directly and indirectly through factors like job satisfaction.

Empirical studies support the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between self-awareness and employee engagement. For example, Schutte and Loi (2022) found that employees with higher emotional self-awareness reported greater job satisfaction, which in turn was associated with increased engagement levels. Their study employed a mediation analysis, revealing that job satisfaction significantly mediated the linkage between self-awareness and engagement among organizational staff. Similarly, Karmacharya (2023) observed that in private school settings, teachers' self-awareness positively affected their job satisfaction, which subsequently enhanced their overall engagement at work. These findings align with previous research by Sundaray (2011), who emphasized that emotional competence, including self-awareness, is integral to fostering job satisfaction and sustained employee engagement.

H₅: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between self-awareness and employee engagement.

Job Satisfaction mediates Self-Management and Employee Engagement

The connection between self-management and employee engagement can be understood through various motivational and emotional intelligence theories. Self-management, a core aspect of emotional intelligence, involves the ability to regulate one's emotions, behaviors, and impulses to adapt to changing circumstances (Goleman, 1998). The Self-Determination Theory posits that self-regulation, a component of self-management, enhances autonomous motivation, leading to greater engagement in work tasks (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Additionally, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model suggests that self-management acts as a personal resource that helps employees cope with job demands, thereby fostering job satisfaction and subsequent engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These frameworks imply that self-management influences employee engagement directly and indirectly through increasing job satisfaction.

Empirical evidence supports the mediating role of job satisfaction between self-management and employee engagement. Karmacharya (2023) reports that effective self-management among teachers significantly correlates with higher job satisfaction, which mediates their engagement levels in private school settings. Similarly, Schutte and Loi (2022) found that individuals who demonstrated stronger self-management skills experienced greater job satisfaction, which significantly contributed to increased engagement at work. These findings are consistent with Sundaray (2011), who emphasized that emotional regulation and self-management are vital for fostering positive work attitudes, such as job satisfaction, which in turn drive employee engagement. The mediating role of job satisfaction highlights its importance as a mechanism linking self-management behaviors to employee engagement outcomes.

H_6: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between self-management and employee engagement.

Job Satisfaction mediates Social Awareness and Employee Engagement

Social awareness-employee engagement association can be explained based on emotional intelligence and social cognitive theories. Social awareness, one of the significant facets of emotional intelligence, refers to the process of being capable of understanding, and empathizing with other individuals' feelings and views (Goleman, 1998). Social Exchange Theory

posits that effective interpersonal skills, such as social awareness, generate positive workplace conditions that can promote higher worker satisfaction and motivation (Blau, 1964). Moreover, the Job Resources-Engagement Model stipulates that social awareness will result in social support and healthy social interaction at work, which are highly valued resources that enhance

job satisfaction and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These theories propose social awareness impacts employee engagement both directly and indirectly through its positive role in job satisfaction.

Empirical studies affirm the mediating role of job satisfaction between social awareness and employee engagement. For instance, Karmacharya (2023) discovered that teachers who were socially aware reported higher job satisfaction, which contributes to their enhancement in engagement in work. Similarly, Schutte and Loi (2022) demonstrated in their research that social awareness facilitates enhanced interpersonal relationships, resulting in heightened job satisfaction and subsequently higher levels of employee engagement. Sundaray (2011) highlighted that social competence, of which social awareness is a component, has a significant impact on employees' positive work attitudes, where job satisfaction is the mediator. These researches strengthen the importance of social awareness as an impetus for job satisfaction, and thus employee engagement.

H₇: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between social awareness and employee engagement.

Job Satisfaction mediates Relationship Management and Employee Engagement

The social exchange theory and emotional intelligence theory can be employed to analyze the linkage between employee engagement and relationship management. Relationship management, which is one of the key aspects of emotional intelligence, is the ability to build and maintain good social relationships, empathy, and the power to influence others (Goleman, 1998). Social Exchange Theory postulates that cooperative relationship management behavior results in reciprocating relationships founded on support and trust, including those that improve employee satisfaction and engagement (Blau, 1964). Second, the Role of Social Capital Theory suggests that strong interpersonal relationships and relationship management skills are social capitals that contribute to job satisfaction, which in turn results in heightened engagement (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The theoretical models have the implication that relationship management affects employee engagement directly and indirectly through greater job satisfaction.

Empirical evidence supports the mediating effect of job satisfaction between relationship management and employee engagement. For instance, Karmacharya (2023) found that those who have improved relationship management are more job-satisfied and hence moderate their work engagement. Similarly, Schutte and Loi (2022) demonstrated that good relationship management improves positive social interactions, with the outcome of heightened job

satisfaction leading to improved employee engagement. These findings substantiate that relationship management influences employee engagement directly and indirectly through influencing job satisfaction.

H₈: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between relationship management and employee engagement.

This section presents a literature review, focusing on theoretical and empirical aspects relevant to the current research being pursued. The theoretical examines related theories that support the link between the variables mentioned in the framework. Moreover, the empirical review incorporates the findings of previous research conducted on the same topic. The following theoretical and empirical reviews support the conceptual framework of the study and form the basis for the development of hypothesis.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 - *Theoretical Framework*
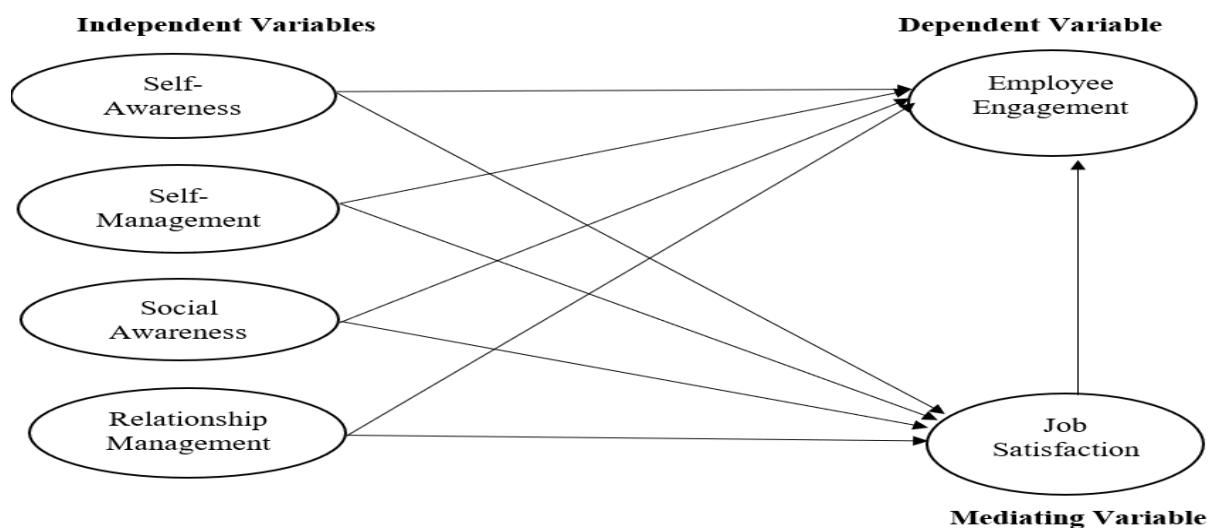
Note. Adopted from (Karmarchya, 2023)

III. Research Methodology

This section deals with the research methods adopted by the researcher in conducting the research. It looks at the various methods and procedures of the research study adopted in conducting the study in order to address and answer the research problems and questions stipulated by the researcher. In this regard, it deals with different components of research design which guides researcher to decide the population and sample from the desired research area, techniques of approaching the sampled respondent, sources of data collection, research instrument used for data collection and different types of tools used to analyze the collected data. Thus, this section is organized in the following structure: research design, population,

sample size, sampling technique, sources of data collection, data collection methods, tools used for data analysis.

Research design

A research design is a structured plan that guides data collection and analysis, shaping the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). This study adopts Descriptive Research Design and Explanatory Research Design to achieve its objectives.

Descriptive Research Design systematically presents characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena without altering variables. It identifies trends, patterns, and relationships within a population (Creswell, 2014). Explanatory research design is a quantitative approach used to investigate cause-and-effect relationships between variables by testing hypotheses and analyzing the strength and direction of associations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). Likewise, Kerlinger (1986) highlights ex post facto research, where past independent variables are analyzed to assess their effects on dependent variables (Kerlinger, 1986; Pant, 2012, p. 117). Common statistical methods include the Spearman Rank Order Coefficient, Phi Correlation Coefficient, Regression, t-test, Chi-square, and Analysis of Variance (Isaac, 1978; Pant, 2012, p. 118).

By combining descriptive and explanatory research designs, this study effectively examines variable relationships and their impact (Kerlinger, 1986), ensuring a structured and systematic approach.

Population and sample size

The population for this research comprises all respondents within the selected research area. The study was conducted in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, which consists of 19 wards. From these, Ward No.08 was selected randomly as the research site. All private schools located in Ward No.08 were included in the study, and the population consists of all teachers working in these schools. Therefore, the total number of teachers from these selected schools represents the population of the study. Therefore, the population of the study is identified as 562. The name of private schools and the number of teachers is listed in Table 1.

Table 1 - *Total teachers at private schools in Butwal Sub Metropolitan City*

S. No	Name of Private Schools	Number of teachers
1	Canon Secondary School	106
2	Everest boarding higher secondary school	205
3	Deep boarding secondary school	140

| 4 | Oxford boarding secondary school | 111 |
| | Total | 562 |

Sample is a part of a population or subset of population and denoted by n. The total sample size for this study has been obtained using the formulae developed by Yamane (1967). In case of population size is known, the Yamane formula for determining the sample size is given by:

n= N/1+Ne2 Where, n= sample size, N= Population size, and e= Margin of error (MOE), e=0.05 based on research condition. Thus, the sample size of the study is n = 234

Sampling Techniques

The sampling method is chosen to select sample respondents from the overall population for data collection. In this context, the simple random sampling method is specifically employed to approach the sample respondents. Given that the study focuses on the emotional intelligence of employees in private schools in Butwal Sub-metropolitan city, the simple random sampling technique is deemed appropriate. This choice is made because every staff member of private schools in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City has an equal probability of being selected, ensuring that the sample is unbiased and representative of the overall population

Nature and Sources of Data Collection

This study primarily relies on quantitative data, which were collected from primary sources. A structured questionnaire was designed to gather first-hand information directly from respondents.

Survey Instrument

A self-structured questionnaire was used as the survey instrument for data collection. It was developed based on operational definitions from previous literature. The questionnaire employs a seven-point Likert scale (7 = Strongly Agree, 6 = Agree, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Neutral, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree) to gather responses from participants. A set of questions was designed to measure each independent, dependent, and mediating variable, totaling 30 items. To ensure clarity and accuracy, a pilot test was conducted by distributing the questionnaire to a sample of 30 respondents. Out of 280 distributed questionnaires, 250 were fully completed, yielding a response rate of 89.29%.

Statistical Tools

The study employed various statistical tools appropriate to the nature of the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation (SD), were calculated to summarize and interpret respondent's answers. Analytical procedures included the assessment

of measurement items, evaluation of model fit, Importance Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), and bootstrapping techniques to test the proposed hypotheses regarding the relationship between behavioral factors and investment decision making.

IV. Results and Analysis

Measurement Items Assessment

Table 2 - *Assessment of measurement scale items*

Variables	Items	Outer loadings	VIF	Mean	Standard Deviation
	EE1	0.726	1.783	1.924	0.937
	EE2	0.876	2.842	4.932	1.848
Employee Engagement	EE3	0.87	2.606	5.428	1.43
	EE4	0.757	1.751	5.512	1.446
	EE5	0.786	1.98	5.176	1.588
	JS1	0.777	1.717	5.76	1.314
	JS2	0.831	1.909	4.784	1.686
Job Satisfaction	JS3	0.725	1.502	5.324	1.454
	JS4	0.742	1.668	5.452	1.431
	JS5	0.774	1.83	5.532	1.194
	RM1	0.825	2.14	5.484	1.297
	RM2	0.805	2.046	5.248	1.555
Relationship Management	RM3	0.768	1.779	5.3	1.476
	RM4	0.805	1.896	5.036	1.535
	RM5	0.746	1.699	5.4	1.414
	SA1	0.761	1.808	5.12	1.395
	SA2	0.831	1.894	5.476	1.537
Self Awareness	SA3	0.802	1.864	5.528	1.467
	SA4	0.742	1.537	5.468	1.412
	SA5	0.628	1.407	5.38	1.413
	SAW1	0.697	1.643	5.464	1.497
	SAW2	0.858	2.453	5.204	1.418
Social Awareness	SAW3	0.806	1.832	5.276	1.388
	SAW4	0.826	2.33	5.224	1.439
	SAW5	0.79	1.991	5.368	1.351
	SM1	0.804	1.882	5.012	1.589
	SM2	0.816	2	4.904	1.549
Self- Management	SM3	0.873	2.633	5.112	1.457
	SM4	0.746	1.704	5.192	1.457
	SM5	0.753	1.696	5.548	1.347

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

Table 2 presents the standardized outer loading and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of the scale items employed to measure the variables pertinent to this investigation. In accordance to

Sarstedt et al. (2017), the outer loading of an item must exceed 0.708 to signify a substantial contribution of that item in assessing the associated variable. Nonetheless, an outer loading value surpassing 0.70 may also be deemed acceptable, provided that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of the related variable exceeds 0.50. Within Table 6, two items, specifically SA5 and SAW1 exhibit values below 0.70; however, the variable linked to these items demonstrates AVE values greater than 0.50. Therefore, all 30 scale items are preserved for subsequent analysis. Furthermore, the VIF values for each item are less than 5, thereby indicating no multicollinearity within the scale items (Sarstedt et al., 2014).

Most of the mean values are on the higher side of the scale representing agreeableness towards each statement. The standard deviation value is small indicating less variation in the responses. Therefore, the data is suitable for the analysis.

Quality Criteria Assessment

Construct Reliability and Validity
Table 3 - *Construct reliability and validity assessment*

	Cronbach's alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	(AVE)
Employee Engagement	0.863	0.874	0.902	0.648
Job Satisfaction	0.829	0.837	0.879	0.594
Relationship Management	0.85	0.854	0.893	0.625
Self-Awareness	0.813	0.836	0.869	0.572
Self- Management	0.858	0.863	0.898	0.64
Social Awareness	0.855	0.863	0.897	0.636

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

The values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in Table 3 are used to evaluate the convergent validity of variables employed in this study. The Cronbach's Alpha measures of all the items are greater than the threshold value of 0.705, showing sufficient contribution of each item of the scale towards measurement of related constructs (Bland & Altman, 1997). Also, the CR for rho_a and rho_c are higher than the minimum requirement of 0.70, which is an indication of an adequate internal consistency measure (Saari et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2022). The AVE values are also higher than the threshold of 0.50, suggesting that each variable accounts for more than 50 percent of explained variance. This suggests establishment of the threshold for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). Next, the findings depicted in the table as shown above satisfy all demands of quality criteria measures.

Table 4 - *Fornell- Larcker Criterion*

	Employee Engagement	Job Satisfaction	Relationship Management	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness
Employee Engagement	**0.805**					
Job Satisfaction	0.719	**0.771**				
Relationship Management	0.621	0.641	**0.79**			
Self-Awareness	0.519	0.464	0.582	**0.756**		
Self-Management	0.52	0.469	0.577	0.685	**0.8**	
Social Awareness	0.573	0.605	0.714	0.676	0.647	**0.797**

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

Table 4 presents the Fornell- Larcker Criterion, an important discriminant validity test in structural equation model (SEM) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). It is satisfying if the average variance extracted (AVE) for a construct is higher than the squared correlation between the given construct and any other construct in the model. Off-diagonal entries should be less than the square roots of AVE of each construct. As shown in Table 4, Employee Engagement (0.805) diagonal value in bold, Job Satisfaction (0.771) diagonal value in bold, Relationship Management (0.79) diagonal value in bold, Self Awareness (0.756) diagonal value in bold, Self-Management (0.8) diagonal value in bold, and Social Awareness (0.797) diagonal value in bold are all higher than the inter-construct correlations. This means that discriminant validity of the measurement model is ensured, i.e., every construct is unique and captures a particular piece of variance (Hair et al., 2010). This ensures that constructs are not redundant and measures are indeed capturing what they are supposed to capture.

Table 5 - Discriminant Validity
Heterotrait- Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) matrix

	Employee Engagement	Job Satisfaction	Relationship Management	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness
Employee Engagement						
Job Satisfaction	0.838					

Relationship Management	0.724	0.756			
Self-Awareness	0.591	0.535	0.689		
Self-Management	0.595	0.544	0.667	0.841	
Social Awareness	0.658	0.707	0.829	0.811	0.758

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows the HTMT ratio of the correlation matrix, which cross-validates the discriminant validity of the latent variables. HTMT ratio values are between 0.535 and 0.841. HTMT ratio values should remain below the critical value of 0.85; however, a band that goes up to 0.90 is okay, as posited by Henseler et al. (2015). Thus, discriminant validity is established among the reflective constructs (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Model Fit Assessment

Table 6 - *SRMR, NFI, Chi-square, RMSEA*

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.069	0.069
d_ULS	2.232	2.232
d_G	0.947	0.947
Chi-square	1308.566	1308.566
NFI	0.731	0.731

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

Table 6 deals with the goodness-of-fit indices for the model, specifically using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). The SRMR value is 0.069, which is below the threshold value of 0.08, indicating a good fit. The normed fit index (NFI) value is 0.731, which is slightly below the critical value of 0.90. Despite this, the model demonstrates good explanatory power, as suggested by Hu and Bentler (1998).

F-square

Table 7 - *F- Square*

Variables	f-square
Job Satisfaction -> Employee Engagement	0.339
Relationship Management -> Employee Engagement	0.027
Relationship Management -> Job Satisfaction	0.146
Self-Awareness -> Employee Engagement	0.013

Self-Awareness -> Job Satisfaction	0
Self-Management -> Employee Engagement	0.013
Self-Management -> Job Satisfaction	0.002
Social Awareness -> Employee Engagement	0
Social Awareness -> Job Satisfaction	0.051

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

Table 7 f-square results indicate that Job Satisfaction has a large effect on Employee Engagement, making it the most influential predictor in the model. Relationship Management has a moderate effect on Job Satisfaction and a small effect on Employee Engagement. In contrast, Self Awareness**,** Self- Management, and Social Awareness show negligible or no effect on either Job Satisfaction or Employee Engagement, suggesting these emotional intelligence components do not significantly contribute to engagement outcomes in this context.

Table 8 - *Regression*

Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Engagement	0.584	0.576
Job Satisfaction	0.456	0.447

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

It is found from Table 8 that 45.6 percent of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables. The R-squared value for Job Satisfaction is 0.456, indicating substantial predictive power of the independent variables on Job Satisfaction (Hair et al., 2013). Additionally, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.447, approximately 44.7% of the variation in Job Satisfaction is explained by the predictors, after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model. This adjusted R-squared provides a more accurate representation of the model's goodness of fit. R-square of 0.584 means that 58.4% of the variance in employee engagement is explained by the independent variables used in the model. Adjusted R-square (0.576) slightly lower, suggests that after adjusting for the number of predictors, 57.6% of the variation is still explained showing a good model fit and strong predictive power.

Structural Model Assessment

Figure 2 - *Path Relationship Diagram*
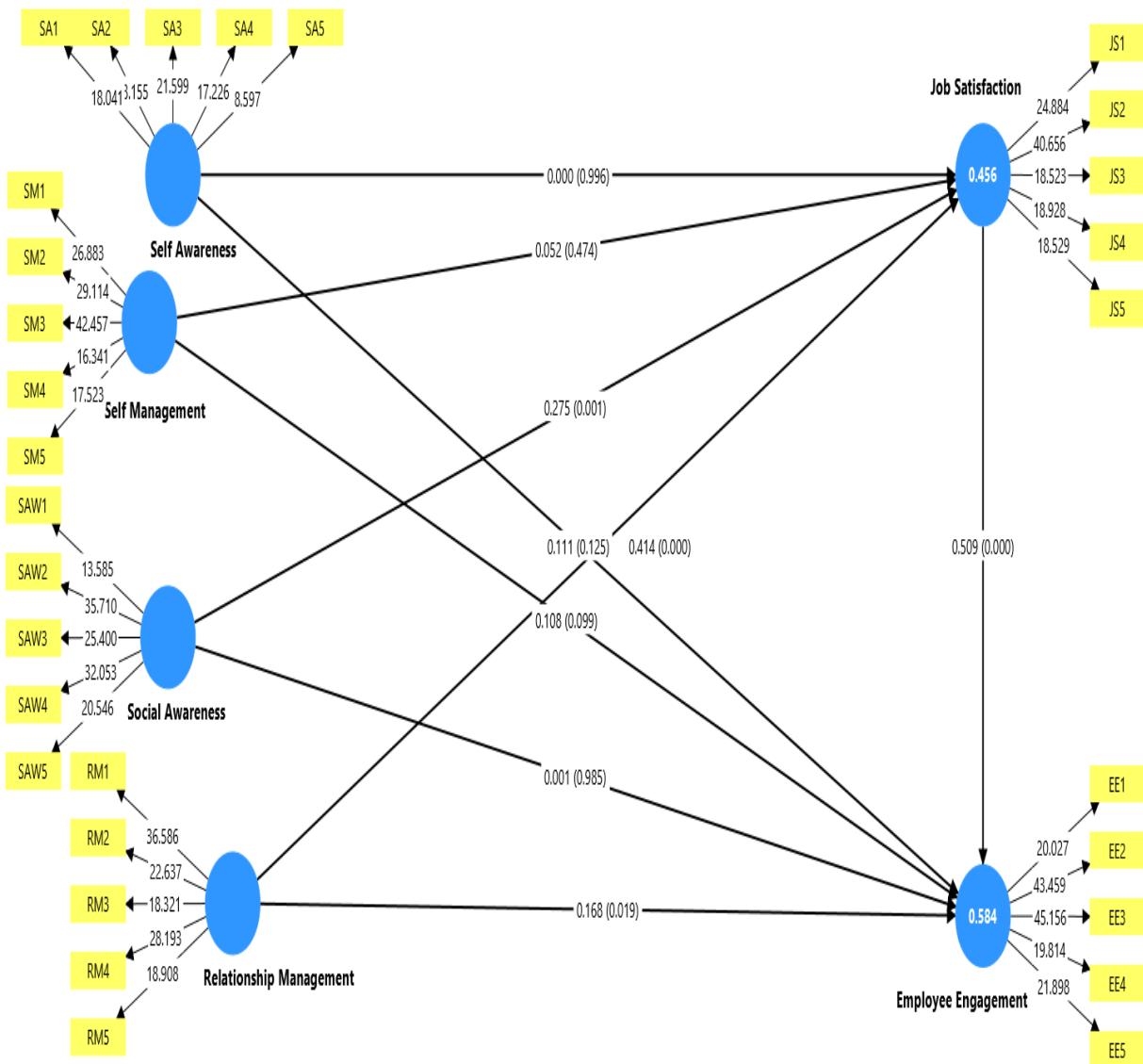
Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

Table 9 - *Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)*

Hypothesis	β	Mean	STDEV	Confidence Interval		T Stat.	P values	Decision
				2.50%	97.50%			
H1: JB -> EE	0.509	0.507	0.058	0.39	0.618	8.805	0	Accepted
H2: RM-> EE	0.168	0.165	0.072	0.018	0.301	2.339	0.019	Accepted
H3: RM-> JB	0.414	0.413	0.082	0.246	0.567	5.036	0	Accepted
H4: SA-> EE	0.111	0.115	0.072	-0.02	0.26	1.533	0.125	Rejected

Variables	β	Mean	STDEV	2.50%	97.50%	T stat.	P values	Decision
H5: SA -> JB	0	0.005	0.087	-0.162	0.175	0.004	0.996	Rejected
H6: SM -> EE	0.108	0.107	0.065	-0.026	0.231	1.65	0.099	Rejected
H7: SM-> JB	0.052	0.052	0.073	-0.096	0.194	0.715	0.474	Rejected
H8: SAW-> EE	0.001	0.004	0.074	-0.136	0.146	0.019	0.985	Rejected
H9: SAW-> JB	0.275	0.277	0.085	0.11	0.442	3.219	0.001	Accepted

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

T value more than or equal to +1.96 should be accepted

Table 9 reports the results of the structural model revealed that job satisfaction has a strong and highly significant effect on employee engagement (H1), with a path coefficient of β = 0.509, t = 8.805, and p < 0.001, confirming H1 as accepted. This indicates that employees who are more satisfied with their job are significantly more engaged in their work. Similarly, relationship management positively influences employee engagement (H2) with β = 0.168, t = 2.339, and p = 0.019, suggesting a modest but significant effect, thereby accepting H2. Additionally, relationship management also significantly predicts job satisfaction (H3), with β = 0.414, t = 5.036, and p < 0.001, indicating that stronger interpersonal management skills contribute to higher job satisfaction.

However, self-awareness does not significantly predict employee engagement (H4), as shown by β = 0.111, t = 1.533, and p = 0.125, leading to rejection of the hypothesis. Likewise, self-awareness fails to significantly influence job satisfaction (H5; β = 0.005, t = 0.004, p = 0.996). Self-management also did not have a significant impact on either employee engagement (H6; β = 0.108, t = 1.650, p = 0.099) or job satisfaction (H7; β = 0.052, t = 0.715, p = 0.474), resulting in the rejection of both hypotheses. Furthermore, social awareness demonstrated no significant relationship with employee engagement (H8; β = 0.004, t = 0.019, p = 0.985). However, social awareness significantly predicted job satisfaction (H9), with β = 0.277, t = 3.219, and p = 0.001, indicating a positive and meaningful association. Thus, only H9 related to social awareness was accepted, while the others were rejected.

Table 10 - *Mediating Effect*

Variables	β	Mean	STDEV	Confidential Interval 2.50%	97.50%	T stat.	P values	Decision

H10: RM-> JB -> EE	0.211	0.21	0.051	0.118	0.315	4.144	0	Accepted
H11: SA-> JB -> EE	0	0.002	0.045	-0.086	0.09	0.004	0.997	Rejected
H12: SM-> JB -> EE	0.027	0.027	0.038	-0.047	0.101	0.708	0.479	Rejected
H13: SAW-> JB-> EE	0.14	0.14	0.044	0.056	0.231	3.174	0.002	Accepted

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

Table 10 results indicate that job satisfaction significantly mediates the effects of relationship management and social awareness on employee engagement. Specifically, H10 ($\beta = 0.211$, p < 0.001) and H13 ($\beta = 0.140$, p = 0.002) were accepted, showing meaningful indirect effects. This means that employees with stronger relationship management and social awareness skills tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, which enhances their engagement. Conversely, self-awareness (H11; $\beta = 0.002$, p = 0.997) and self-management (H12; $\beta = 0.027$, p = 0.479) did not significantly predict employee engagement through job satisfaction, leading to the rejection of both hypotheses.

Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

Figure 3 - *IPMA MAP*
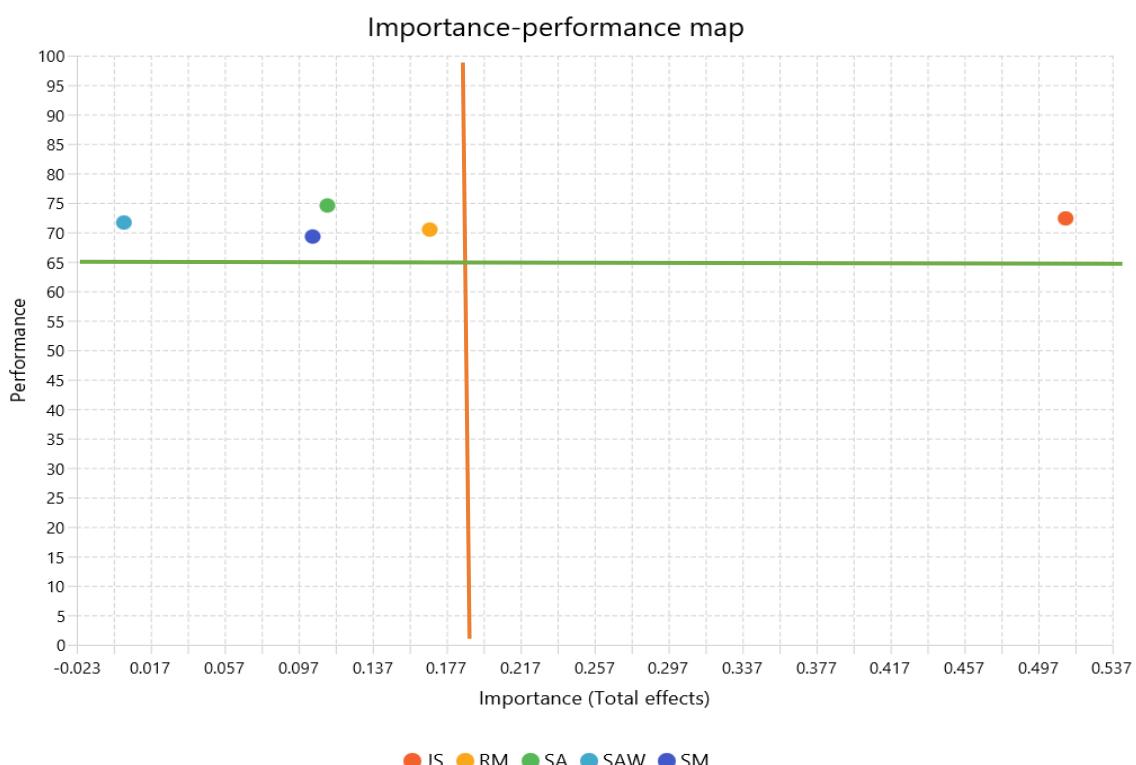
Table 11 - *IPMA Analysis*

	LV performance	Importance
Job Satisfaction	72	0.512
Relationship Management	70.474	0.168
Self-Awareness	74.563	0.112
Social Awareness	71.673	0.002
Self-Management	69.294	0.104
Mean	72	0.1796
Employee Engagement	73.357	

The Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) presented in Table 11 highlights key insights into the factors influencing employee engagement among the staff of private schools in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City. The analysis reveals that Job Satisfaction stands out with the highest importance score (0.512) and an average performance level (72), indicating it is the most critical driver of employee engagement. This suggests that targeted improvements in job satisfaction such as better work conditions, recognition, and support could lead to significant improvements in employee engagement. Self-Awareness shows the highest performance (74.563) but a relatively low importance score (0.112), implying that while employees are generally self-aware, this factor contributes less significantly to their engagement. Relationship Management demonstrates a reasonable performance (70.474) and moderate importance (0.168), indicating it is a valuable area but not as influential as job satisfaction. On the other hand, Social Awareness and Self- Management display both lower performance and minimal importance, suggesting they are fewer pressing areas for intervention. Overall, the IPMA findings underscore the need for school administrators to prioritize strategies that enhance job satisfaction, as doing so will likely have the greatest positive impact on employee engagement.

Table 12 - *Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA) – Bottleneck Values*

	LV scores - Employee Engagement	LV scores - Job Satisfaction	LV scores - Relationship Management	LV scores - Self Awareness	LV scores - Self Management	LV scores - Social Awareness
0.00%	14%	NN	NN	NN	NN	NN
10.00%	23%	32%	NN	29%	20%	NN
20.00%	31%	32%	NN	29%	20%	NN
30.00%	40%	36%	NN	29%	20%	NN
40.00%	49%	36%	NN	29%	20%	NN

50.00%	57%	36%	31%	41%	20%	31%
60.00%	66%	36%	32%	45%	20%	31%
70.00%	74%	40%	45%	48%	34%	31%
80.00%	83%	51%	46%	48%	43%	54%
90.00%	91%	62%	57%	48%	48%	54%
100.00%	100%	81%	66%	48%	65%	54%

Note. Derived from SmartPLS 4 Software

Table 12 represents Bottleneck values of latent variables using necessary condition analysis (NCA). To achieve 14% of Employee Engagement, no factors are necessary. Further, to achieve 23% of employee engagement, 32% of job satisfaction, 29% of self- awareness, and 20% of self-management are necessary. Similarly, to achieve 31% of employee engagement, 32% of job satisfaction, 29% of self-awareness, 20% of self- management are necessary. Similarly, to achieve 40% of employee engagement 36% of job satisfaction, 29% of self-awareness and 20% of self-management are necessary. Similarly, to achieve 57% of employee engagement, 36% of job satisfaction, 32% of relationship management, 45% of self-awareness, 20% of self-management and 31% of social awareness are necessary. Similarly, to achieve 100% of employee engagement, 81% of job satisfaction, 66% of relationship management, 48% of self-awareness, 65% of self-management and 54% of social awareness are necessary.

V. Discussion

The findings of this study present both convergent and divergent patterns when compared with prior research on emotional intelligence and workplace outcomes. The negative and insignificant influence of self-awareness and self-management on employee engagement and job satisfaction contradicts earlier studies that emphasized their positive role in enhancing motivation, satisfaction, and commitment (Goleman, 1998; Carmeli, 2003; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). These inconsistencies may be attributed to contextual factors within private schools in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, where institutional constraints such as heavy workloads, limited autonomy, and restricted professional development opportunities may weaken the impact of self-focused emotional competencies. In such environments, emotional regulation and self-awareness may function more as coping mechanisms rather than as drivers of engagement or satisfaction, aligning with the contextual and cascading perspectives of emotional intelligence proposed by Law et al. (2004) and Joseph and Newman (2010). Similarly, while social awareness was found to be significantly related to job satisfaction, its negative association with engagement suggests that empathic sensitivity may improve

interpersonal harmony without necessarily translating into heightened work involvement, possibly due to emotional fatigue common in service-oriented educational roles.

In contrast, the positive and significant influence of relationship management on both job satisfaction and employee engagement strongly supports existing literature that highlights the importance of interpersonal emotional competencies in organizational settings (Wong & Law, 2002; Carmeli, 2003; Anari, 2012). Effective relationship management fosters trust, collaboration, and mutual respect, which are particularly influential in collectivist cultures such as Nepal, where social bonds play a central role in workplace motivation (Gupta, 2012). Additionally, the strong positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement confirms the mediating role of satisfaction in linking emotional intelligence to engagement outcomes, consistent with prior research (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This finding supports the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, suggesting that emotional intelligence especially its relational dimensions functions as a personal resource that enhances engagement indirectly by improving psychological well-being and job satisfaction. Overall, the results underscore the contextual relevance of emotional intelligence, indicating that relational and social competencies are more critical than self-regulatory abilities in promoting satisfaction and engagement within Nepalese private educational institutions.

VI. Conclusion and Implications

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study advances the understanding of employee engagement by bridging Emotional Intelligence Theory, Self-Determination Theory, the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) Model, and Social Exchange Theory within the context of private educational institutions in Nepal. By demonstrating that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement, the study highlights the critical role of emotional and psychological resources in shaping workplace behavior. It validates the premise of the JD-R model by showing that emotional intelligence serves as a personal resource that mitigates job demands and enhances motivation. Furthermore, the application of Self-Determination Theory underscores the importance of fulfilling intrinsic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering job satisfaction. The integration of Social Exchange Theory adds depth by explaining how emotionally intelligent staff members are more likely to engage positively in reciprocal relationships with their institutions. Overall, the study provides a multidimensional framework for future research on emotional competencies and employee outcomes in educational settings.

Practical Implications

Practically, the findings of this study offer valuable guidance for school leaders, administrators, and policymakers in enhancing staff engagement and satisfaction in private schools. By recognizing emotional intelligence as a key driver of job satisfaction and employee engagement, educational institutions in Butwal and similar contexts can implement targeted training programs to develop emotional competencies among staff. Such initiatives can lead to improved communication, better conflict resolution, and stronger interpersonal relationships within the school environment. Additionally, fostering a supportive work culture that acknowledges teachers' emotional and psychological needs can enhance motivation, reduce burnout, and improve staff retention. Ultimately, investing in emotional intelligence not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to the overall effectiveness and quality of education delivery.

Conclusion

This research indicates that job satisfaction is the strongest predictor of employee engagement highlighting its central role in enhancing motivation and commitment among employees. Relationship management also showed significant direct effects on both job satisfaction and employee engagement, with a strong mediating effect through job satisfaction, confirming its importance in shaping positive workplace dynamics. Social awareness did not directly impact employee engagement but significantly improved job satisfaction, which then increased employee engagement through mediation. This indicates that employees benefit from socially supportive environments only when they feel satisfied with their job. In contrast, self-awareness and self-management had no meaningful direct or indirect influence, suggesting that intrapersonal emotional skills alone are insufficient in this organizational context. Consequently, it is concluded that if organizations concentrate on improving job satisfaction and relationship management-while promoting social awareness-there is a greater likelihood of enhancing employee engagement. Overall, organizations should prioritize fostering a work environment that emphasizes job satisfaction, enhances relationship management, and promotes social awareness through targeted training and supportive policies to effectively increase employee engagement.

VII. References

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