



"Unlocking Job Satisfaction: Exploring The Impact Of Cultural Intelligence On Job Satisfaction Among Employees In Upscale Hotels"

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how front desk staff members at upscale hotels catering to a broad international customer feel about their jobs in relation to cultural intelligence (CQ). It looks into how frontline employees may effectively use cultural intelligence to encourage them to provide individualized service to customers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Regression analysis with Smart PLS is used in the study to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and cultural intelligence among the different clientele of the hotel industry. Several upscale hotels in India provided the basic data for this study. The findings demonstrate that cultural intelligence has a significant and favorable effect on employees' job satisfaction. This implies that there is a direct correlation between the cultural quotient and the satisfaction levels of employees. These results also highlight the significance of cultural competence in raising overall job satisfaction and productivity in the hotel industry. This suggests that front desk employees with greater levels of cultural intelligence are better able to cater to the various demands of visitors, which in turn enhances the hotel's overall success.

Keywords: Cultural Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Upscale Hotels, Productivity, Front Desk Staff.

Introduction

When it comes to premium service encounters, managing cross-cultural connections presents special difficulties. It becomes essential to have cultural intelligence (CQ) in certain situations. The ability to comprehend and modify exchanges to successfully account for cultural variations is referred to as cultural intelligence. This ability is especially important for satisfying the requirements and tastes of a discriminating global clientele. Lam et al. (2020) did research that emphasizes the value of cultural intelligence in circumstances related to luxury hospitality. According to their research, visitors staying at upscale hotels are more likely than those at low-cost hotels to believe that staff members have a higher degree of cultural intelligence. Furthermore, higher visitor satisfaction levels are correlated with higher levels of cultural intelligence, underscoring the critical role that it plays in providing outstanding customer service. Essentially, the standard of exchanges in high-end service encounters is improved by the capacity to comprehend and adjust to varied cultural dynamics. This enhances the success and reputation of high-end hospitality establishments while also promoting excellent client experiences. In the luxury service business, it is still critical to prioritize cultural intelligence in order to fulfill the changing needs of an international customer as the global landscape changes.

Employees of luxury hotels are expected to be under more pressure to demonstrate their cultural IQ (CQ), which could result in more work-related stress and negatively affect their general wellbeing. Although earlier studies (Lam et al., 2020; Paparoidamis et al., 2019) have focused on the core aspects of CQ among frontline hospitality workers, there is still a knowledge vacuum regarding how staff members handle their emotions in large, chain luxury hotels. To close these gaps, more in-depth analyses and evaluations of how applying cultural

intelligence affects service employees' job happiness are desperately needed (Diwakar et al., 2024). Through exploring the complexities of cultural regulation in various cultural contexts, scholars and professionals can acquire a more thorough comprehension of the obstacles and prospects that emerge in high-end hospitality environments.

Hotels and other hospitality sectors are forced by the difficulties in providing cross-cultural service to regularly evaluate their performance in comparison to the demands of their varied clients, employees, and partners (Mohsin, 2006). Understanding and adjusting to the cultural quirks that influence the encounters of stakeholders from different origins depends on this continuous assessment. Because cultural diversity is a constant in the dynamic world of hospitality, organizations need to be constantly monitoring how effectively they are meeting the demands and preferences of their different stakeholders. This entails not just providing basic service but also acknowledging and honouring the cultural sensitivities and expectations of partners, guests, and staff who come from many cultural backgrounds (Cheema et al., 2024). In order to satisfy the expectations of your consumer base and other consumers while also properly understanding and meeting their needs, it is imperative that you recognize the inequalities that result from cultural differences. Organizations can exploit opportunities for collaboration, cohesiveness, and advancement instead of conflict, fragmentation, and failure by acknowledging and embracing these differences (Harris, 2004).

According to Stauss and Mang (1999), the phrase "service encounter," which refers to a customer's relationship with a service supplier, has gained widespread usage in the literature on service management. Interactions with customers are crucial in the hospitality industry. They are crucial points of contact for promoting hotel services, making an impression on guests, and eventually enhancing the reputation of the business. Every client interaction in the field of hospitality management is an opportunity to highlight the hotel's dedication to quality and guest happiness. Every interaction a visitor has with the hotel from the time they arrive until they leave affects how they view it; as well as how likely it is that they will stay again or refer others to it.

Job satisfaction, according to Locke (1976), is a favorable state brought about by an individual's assessment of their employment or work experiences. It expresses the evaluation of one's work circumstances as a whole, taking into account many facets of the workplace and personal satisfaction. Conversely, Spector (1997) stressed that job satisfaction is an all-encompassing feeling or a conglomeration of perspectives regarding many aspects of work. Locke's viewpoint emphasizes the subjective component of job happiness by arguing that an individual's experiences, expectations, and views of their workplace all have an impact. It includes both material aspects like pay, benefits, and job stability as well as immaterial ones like coworkers, company culture, and chances for both professional and personal development. The substantial influence that working environments can have on job satisfaction is highlighted by Saari and Judge (2004). They contend that businesses ought to place a high priority on creating policies that will increase worker satisfaction and lessen the negative impact that job discontent has on people's general well-being and happiness. The argument emphasizes how important it is for the workplace to shape employees' experiences and views. Good working conditions can help individuals feel more satisfied with their jobs and more overall well-being. These factors include fair pay, room for growth, friendly management, and a positive organisational culture.

In the hotel sector, contentment has been linked to lower effort, following rules as they stand, ideal wage levels, and flexible work schedules (Locke, 1976). According to Dawson et al. (2011), businesses in the sector are realizing more and more how important employee work satisfaction is. The hospitality industry places a strong focus on job happiness because it understands how important it is to both employee performance and overall organisational success. Employee engagement, productivity, and dedication are more likely to be higher when they are happy with their work environment and conditions. Due to the many interactions that professionals in the hotel sector have with clients from a variety of cultural backgrounds, cultural intelligence is an essential component of their work. Although cultural intelligence is important in this context, its relationship to job satisfaction in the Indian hotel industry has not yet been properly investigated. The purpose of this study is to clarify the relationship that exists between cultural intelligence and job satisfaction in the Indian hotel sector. Through exploring this uncharted territory, the research aims to provide light on the ways in which cultural intelligence influences job satisfaction and overall industry success.

Literature Review

Cultural intelligence

According to Earley (2002) and Earley & Mosakowski (2004), cultural intelligence (CQ) is the capacity to understand, adjust to, and interact with a variety of cultural contexts. Several facets of CQ are identified by Earley et al. (2006), including behavioral, motivational, cognitive, and metacognitive elements. According to Ang et al. (2006) and Thomas et al. (2015), metacognitive CQ is the ability to perceive, recognize, analyze, and acquire cultural information and norms when engaging with people from different cultural backgrounds. People that possess this ability are able to actively recognize and comprehend minute cultural differences (Earley et al., 2006) as well as recognize other people's cultural preferences (Ang et al., 2007). As a result, while interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, they could modify their mental models. Consequently, this ability represents sophisticated cognitive processes (Ang et al., 2007, p. 338).

Cognitive competency is defined by Ang et al. (2006) as a person's general comprehension of social standards, beliefs, actions, conventions, and taboos in a variety of cultural contexts. People with high cognitive CQ are able

to identify and modify cultural perceptions in cross-cultural contexts while taking similarities as well as distinctions into account (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). Ang et al. (2006) defined motivational CQ as the ability to focus one's energy and passion on learning and performing well in a variety of cultural contexts. Self-efficacy is fundamental to motivating CQ because it motivates people to exhibit cooperative conduct and adaptive abilities, especially in situations where they are not familiar with the culture (Ang et al., 2007). This improves cross-cultural communication (Chen et al., 2012).

The ability to act appropriately in social settings with people from different cultural origins is a component of behavioral CQ (Ang et al., 2007; MacNab and Worthley, 2012). This encompasses both verbal and nonverbal indicators that may be seen, such as speech, language, and conversational styles, as well as nonverbal indications including body language, facial expressions, and speech patterns (Earley et al., 2006). People that possess high behavioral CQ are able to react correctly in a variety of cultural settings (Bücker et al., 2014). A person who exhibits high competency across the metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral elements of cultural intelligence (CQ) is referred to as a "Cultural Chameleon" (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004, p. 96). These people are able to mobilize these elements concurrently in culturally heterogeneous situations (Earley and Peterson, 2004), easily adjusting to different cultural settings. They can negotiate cross-cultural relationships with agility and efficacy because to this talent, which also shows flexibility in perceiving and reacting to cultural quirks.

Although the idea of "The Cultural Chameleon" embodies an ideal of having high scores in each of the four CQ components, Earley and Mosakowski (2004) note that this archetype is not very common. Rather, they suggest a range of ideal forms, acknowledging that people frequently have a combination of traits. According to Earley and Mosakowski (2004), p. 96, these ideal kinds include "The Local," who has very low CQ; "The Analyst," who exhibits high levels of cognitive and metacognitive CQ; "The Confident," who stands out for having high motivational CQ; and "The Mimic," who specializes in behavioral CQ. This classification emphasizes that not everyone neatly fits into the pattern of "The Cultural Chameleon," acknowledging the variation in how people display and prioritize different components of cultural intelligence.

Cultural intelligence and job satisfaction

According to Thomas et al. (2015), cultural intelligence (CQ) is crucial in the international hospitality industry, especially when it comes to interacting with customers from different cultural backgrounds. Service personnel are essential in luxury hotels because they deliver authentic and customized experiences, as evidenced by studies by Lo and Au Yeung (2020) and Wall et al. (2011). The Hong Kong Tourism Board's 2019 research reveals that foreign tourists prefer upmarket accommodations, which may present more opportunity for staff to interact with guests from different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, Lam et al. (2020) discovered positive associations between the perceived cultural intelligence (CQ) of frontline staff and guest satisfaction scores, highlighting how crucial cultural intelligence is to improving guest experiences and encouraging goodwill in the upscale hotel industry.

As a result, management at posh hotels has more expectations for the cultural competency of its employees in order to satisfy the high standards of customer service quality. Thus, creating luxurious hospitality experiences becomes increasingly dependent on the cultural intelligence (CQ) of frontline service personnel. When it comes to responding deftly to unexpected behaviour, frontline staff with metacognitive CQ is able to notice and differentiate cultural subtleties and distinctions among visitors from a variety of cultural backgrounds (Bücker et al., 2014). Service personnel can improve their interactions with visitors in the context of luxury hospitality by incorporating their cognitive cultural intelligence (CQ). Employees may improve their strategy to more fully comprehend and considerately and empathetically attend to the requirements and preferences of guests by drawing on their varied cultural experiences and expertise (Nagpal et al., 2024). This may increase employee satisfaction by promoting pleasant cross-cultural interactions and experiences for both customers and service personnel. Studies conducted outside of the hospitality and tourism industry have confirmed the link between workers' CQ and job satisfaction (AlMazrouei and Zacca, 2021; Fata et al., 2017; Takdir et al., 2020), emphasizing the significance of investigating these relationships within environments of luxury hospitality.

Many studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of motivational cultural intelligence (CQ) on a range of factors, including performance on individual tasks (Presbitero, 2017), quality of service (Paparoidamis et al., 2019), and performance in real estate sales (Chen et al., 2012). The importance of motivational CQ for service personnel and companies is highlighted by these studies. Hotel service staff members may become more self-assured and enthusiastic with motivational CQ, which would allow them to participate in cross-cultural service interactions with professionalism and zeal (Lam and Cheung, 2018; Paparoidamis et al., 2019). Similarly, during service encounters, hotel staff members can respond to cultural cues from clients with verbal and nonverbal behaviour that are culturally appropriate thanks to their behavioral cultural intelligence (CQ). According to Lam et al. (2020), service personnel who exhibit cultural intelligence by comprehending and utilizing verbal and nonverbal cues that are consistent with the cultures of their clients typically result in higher levels of client satisfaction.

Cultural intelligence undoubtedly possesses the capability to enhance customized offerings and produce favorable experiences for hotel visitors. But it's crucial to remember two things: First, the literature that has already been written about cultural intelligence (CQ) in service contexts has primarily concentrated on motivational CQ, CQ among leaders/managers, and organizational outcomes. Secondly, hotel managers may

give priority to staff members' cultural capabilities given that high-end hotel guests prefer to have excellent interactions with service staff. As such, employees in high-end hospitality environments may often rely on their cultural intelligence (CQ) in cross-cultural service encounters. It's unclear how this will affect frontline workers' job happiness, though. Among managers from abroad in the United Arab Emirates, AlMazrouei and Zacca (2021) recently found a favorable association between CQ and job satisfaction. The important question that has to be addressed is if these CQ skills can also improve the level of job satisfaction experienced by front desk employees in upscale hotels that operate in multicultural settings. **As a result, the following theories are proposed:**

H1: Meta-Cognitive CQ has a positive significant impact on Job Satisfaction of upscale hotel employees.

H2: Cognitive CQ has a positive significant impact on Job Satisfaction of upscale hotel employees.

H3: Motivational CQ has a positive significant impact on Job Satisfaction of upscale hotel employees.

H4: Behavioral CQ has a positive significant impact on Job Satisfaction of upscale hotel employees.

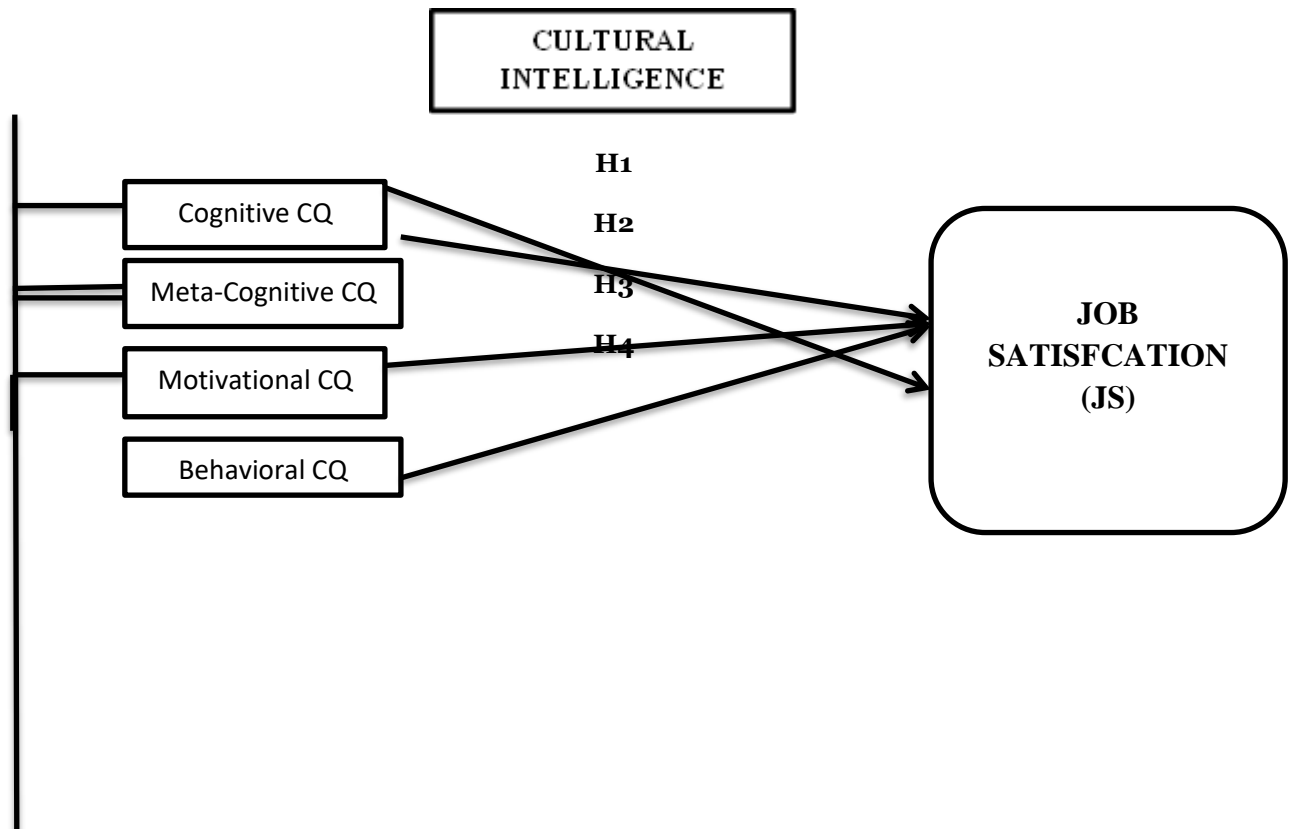


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Methods

Research Design

The study examined the impact of cultural intelligence on front desk employees' job satisfaction in the hotel business using a descriptive research approach.

Participants

Front desk employees from 4- and 5-star hotels in different parts India which witness large influxes of tourists were engaged in the study. Using proportionate sampling approaches, data were randomly gathered from 200 staff working at various 4- and 5-star hotels in order to meet the research objectives.

Measuring Instruments

The study measured cultural intelligence (CQ) using the 20-item CQ Questionnaire, which was created by Earley and Ang in 2003. To assess employee job satisfaction, Agho, Price, and Mueller's 1992 job satisfaction measuring tool was also used. With the help of subject matter experts, both instruments were validated, and certain elements were eliminated from both scales. For additional analysis, only the items that were judged to be extremely significant to the study were kept.

Data Analysis and Results

The study used SmartPLS Version 4.0 for the analysis and partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Two crucial steps in the PLS-SEM process were evaluating the measurement model and doing an analysis of the structural model. Convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model were examined. While discriminant validity looked at how different items were from one another across dimensions, convergent validity measured how closely related items were to one another (Rehman et al., 2023). The assessment of the structural model was centered on looking at suggested relationships between constructs. In this investigation, the following were evaluated: the impact size (f^2), the coefficient of determination (R^2), the significance and importance of structural model relationships, collinearity, and predictive relevance (Q^2).

Measurement model assessment

Table 1 presents the assessment of the measurement model using measures like factor loading, composite reliability (CR), and average extracted variance (AVE). Although 0.700 is the standard benchmark for factor loading, Ramayah et al. (2018) state that values as low as 0.4, 0.5, and 0.6 are considered acceptable in some situations. The composite reliability (CR) and average extracted variance (AVE) standards are 0.7 and 0.5, respectively. All of these thresholds have been met, as shown in Table 1, suggesting that the measurement model has acceptable convergent validity. Figure 2 displays the SmartPLS output that shows how the measurement model was evaluated.

Table 1 .Factor loading, composite reliability and average variance extracted

	Item Code	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Behavioral	BE1 BE3 BE4 BE5	0.768 0.818 0.796 0.747	0.863	0.612
Cognitive	CO1 CO2 CO3 CO4 CO5 CO6	0.702 0.693 0.806 0.78 0.791 0.678	0.881	0.553
Meta-Cognitive	MC1 MC2 MC3	0.813 0.869 0.842	0.88	0.602
Motivation	MO1 MO2 MO3 MO4	0.919 0.775 0.865 0.663	0.758	0.543
Job Satisfaction	JS1 JS2 JS3 JS4 JS5	0.680 0.774 0.839 0.828 0.826	0.881	0.602

As advised by Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015), the heterotrait-monotrait correlation ratio (HTMT) was used to assess the measurement model's discriminant validity. Although Kline (2011) indicated that the value should not exceed 0.85, Gold, Malhotra, and Segars (2001) suggested a threshold of 0.9. All of these requirements were met, as shown in Table 2, suggesting that the measurement model exhibited discriminant validity.

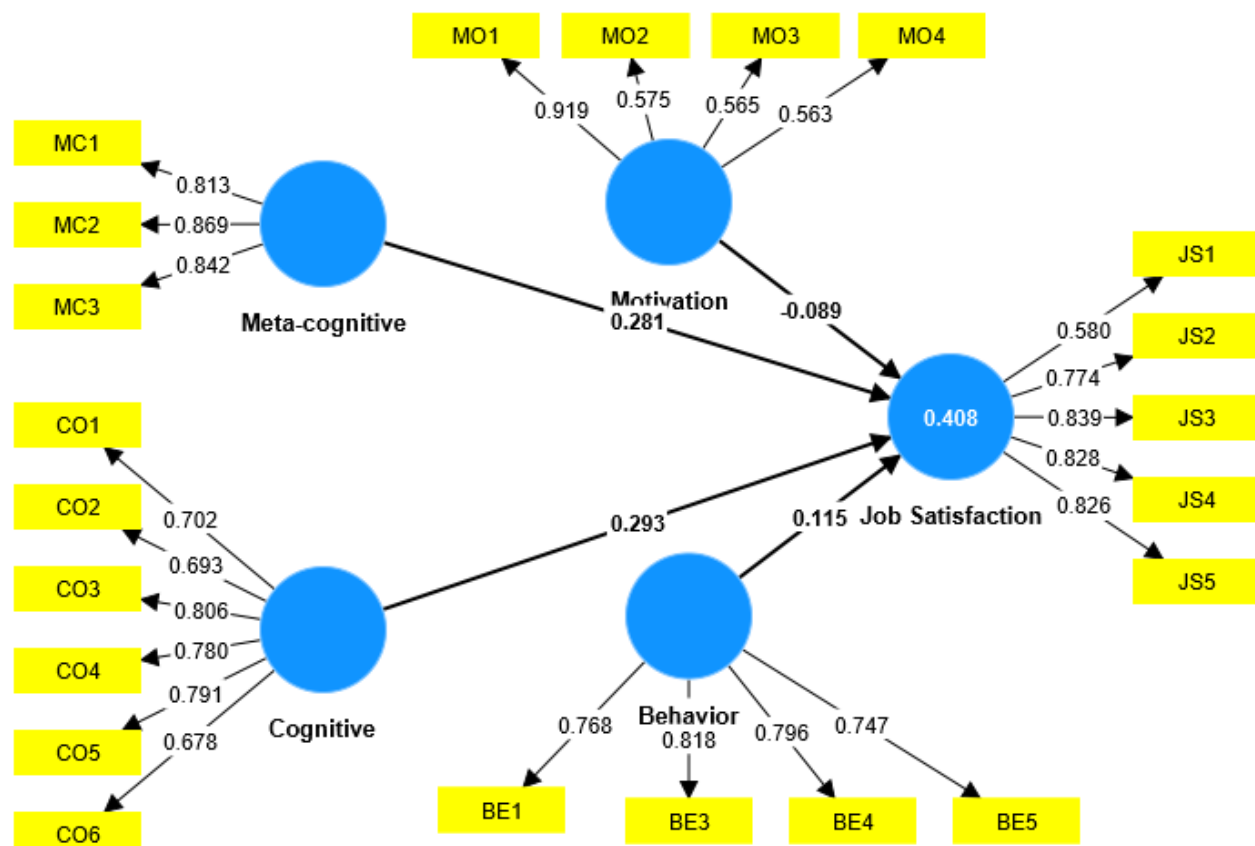
Table 2 .HTMT assessment of discriminant validity

	Behavior	Cognitive	Job Satisfaction	Meta-cognitive	Motivation
Behavior					
Cognitive	0.895				
Job Satisfaction	0.633	0.706			
Meta-cognitive	0.783	0.874	0.708		
Motivation	0.123	0.159	0.169	0.14	

Structural model assessment

In order to determine if the model has multicollinearity, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was looked at. The results indicate that there are no problems with multicollinearity in the model, with each VIF value comfortably falling below 3.3, as shown in Table 3 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). The results of the bootstrapped structural model study are shown in Table 3. The following criteria were used to evaluate the hypotheses: support was defined as $p < 0.001$ ($t > 1.645$), $p < 0.05$ ($t > 1.96$), or $p < 0.001$ ($t > 2.58$). Every hypothesis is categorically validated by the results. R^2 should be at least 0.35, according to Cohen (1988), and this study's R^2 value of 0.408 shows how significant the estimated model is.

An experiment using blindfolding with a $D = 7$ distance omission was carried out to evaluate predictive significance. PLS-SEM analysis and the Q^2 value computation, which is based on a cross-validated redundancy technique, are in good agreement (Hair et al., 2017). A Q^2 score of 0.381 in the data indicates that all endogenous variables have predictive significance. The phrase " f^2 value" refers to the magnitude of an endogenous variable's impact on an exogenous variable. Cohen (1988) defined a moderate effect as $0.15 \leq f^2 \leq 0.349$, a small effect as $f^2 \leq 0.03$, and a large influence as f^2 value of 0.35 or above. Table 3 shows that all of the relationships have impact sizes that fall into the small or moderate range.

**Fig 2. SmartPLS output of the measurement model**

Discussion

Although a great deal of research has been done on the relationship between cultural intelligence and job satisfaction (Barakat et al., 2016), there is still a large gap in the literature when it comes to studies that look at cultural intelligence in the context of India. Since the global market is changing so quickly, startups are realizing how critical it is to give their staff members the tools they need to interact with people from all backgrounds and locations. There is growing recognition of the importance of cultural intelligence as a crucial skill for achieving success. Despite the extensive research in this area, there has been limited attention given to comprehending cultural intelligence within the Indian context. Therefore, there is an urgent need for further research to elucidate the role and significance of cultural intelligence in the Indian workplace. These kinds of studies may provide insightful information for businesses hoping to prosper in a more globalized and culturally varied commercial environment.

The hospitality industry is dynamic and diverse, thus it is imperative that workers possess certain abilities and characteristics in order to keep up with its quick evolution. In the hotel sector, businesses mostly provide their customers with intangible services (Chon & Maier, 2009). Research has shown that employees with cultural intelligence in the hotel industry report higher levels of job satisfaction. This shows that among hotel workers, job satisfaction and cultural intelligence are significantly correlated. Therefore, encouraging cultural intelligence in employees may be crucial to improving job satisfaction and general performance in the hospitality industry. This suggests that workers will probably be more satisfied with their jobs as their cultural intelligence rises. When staff members experience satisfaction from their regular interactions with new customers, it inspires them to work harder to provide exceptional customer service. Therefore, it can be concluded that cultural intelligence has a favorable impact on employees' job happiness in the hotel sector. This means that companies in the hospitality industry could improve overall worker happiness and output by funding programs that increase workers' cultural intelligence. Additionally, by acknowledging the inextricable connection between cultural intelligence and job satisfaction, HR policies and training initiatives that aim to foster a more stimulating and encouraging workplace in hotels and associated businesses can be improved.

Furthermore, in a time when globalization is transforming the hospitality sector, hotels need to be more culturally aware in order to interact with a wide variety of clients and stay ahead of the competition. Therefore, for hotels hoping to prosper in the dynamic and diverse terrain of the modern hospitality business, investing in cultural intelligence training and creating a work atmosphere that is sensitive to cultural differences are essential tactics. It is strategically necessary for hotels to invest in cultural intelligence training if they are to successfully navigate the complexity of the modern, international hospitality market. Hotels may improve the entire guest experience by providing their personnel with the necessary knowledge and abilities to understand and accommodate cultural differences, leading to more meaningful interactions with guests. Cultural intelligence training enables hotel staff to traverse cultural intricacies with grace and skill, from identifying norms and communication styles to comprehending cuisine preferences and religious rituals. This, in turn, builds stronger relationships and rapport with customers.

Moreover, developing an organizational culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion is necessary to create a work environment that is culturally sensitive. This goes beyond training programs. In addition to drawing excellent people from a variety of backgrounds, hotels that value diversity and foster an inclusive workplace atmosphere also show that they are dedicated to comprehending and catering to a global audience. This inclusive culture fosters a sense of involvement and belonging among staff members by extending beyond encounters with customers to internal procedures including hiring, promotion, and employee development. The hospitality sector is changing rapidly due to globalization, and hotels need to understand how important cultural intelligence is to sustaining long-term performance and increasing customer happiness and loyalty. In order to remain competitive in the market and meet the varied needs and preferences of a global clientele, hotels may establish themselves as administrators in the modern hospitality landscape by investing in cultural intelligence training and creating a work environment that is sensitive to cultural differences.

Table 3. Results of path analysis, VIF, f², R² and Q²

Column1	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	VIF	f ²	R ²	Q ²
Behavior -> Job Satisfaction	0.115	0.113	0.071	1.607	0.000	2.234	0.08		
Cognitive -> Job Satisfaction	0.293	0.298	0.073	4.017	0.000	2.789	0.052	0.408	0.3

Meta-Cognitive -> Job Satisfaction	0.281	0.28	0.061	4.602	0.00 0	2.1 34	0. 06 2		8 1
Motivation -> Job Satisfaction	0.089	0.099	0.049	1.792	0.00 0	1.0 22	0. 05 3		

Conclusion

Behavioral Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is the most noticeable element in a dynamic luxury hospitality atmosphere where interactions are most important. Consumers can quickly determine how well a service staff member understands and respects their culture, which can have a favorable or negative impact on their experiences and degree of happiness with the hotel. Previous study has indicated that behavioral CQ does not significantly affect job satisfaction, in the same way that it does not significantly affect cultural adjustment (Jyoti and Kour, 2015). According to Earley (2002), learning a new language is considered essential for cultural adaptation because language proficiency reflects the nuances of one's culture. It is possible that employees in the service industry may experience a decrease in job satisfaction as a result of their incapacity to learn another language and interact with others in a way that is culturally sensitive. Suffice it to say, learning a language helps employees acclimate to a new culture more easily and respond to subtle cultural differences, which in turn makes them happier in their jobs in the hospitality industry overall. Thus, funding language-learning initiatives for service staff may play a key role in promoting cultural competency and job happiness in the sector.

Four senior hoteliers all agreed that the positive results seen in both CQ dimensions regarding personal capabilities are correlated with the positive influence of cognitive and motivational CQ on job satisfaction (Ang et al., 2007; Paparoidamis et al., 2019). Employees who provide cross-cultural services may feel a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment when they can apply cultural norms they understand to cross-cultural service interactions. This is especially true when managers commend them for providing professional service. The service staff's self-efficacy and enjoyment from demonstrating their cultural competences throughout cross-cultural service contacts were reflected in their committed effort and energy. Senior managers stressed that when clients and hotel management acknowledged and complimented service staff, the staff members' motivation levels increased. This highlighted even more how motivational CQ has a beneficial impact on their level of job satisfaction.

According to the study's conclusions, the majority of the service personnel' traits fit into the "Confident" type and, to a lesser extent, the "Analyst" category as defined by Earley and Mosakowski (2004). These workers showed that they were skilled at using both cognitive and motivational CQ to their advantage when providing services in a multicultural hotel setting, which improved job satisfaction. Additionally, the findings indicated that in order to improve cross-cultural service interactions and promote a higher level of job satisfaction among staff, hotel management should concentrate on developing the metacognitive and behavioral CQ of service employees.

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