Ethical Climate's Mediating Role on the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to determine the effects of emotional intelligence (EI) on job satisfaction and to examine whether ethical climate has a mediating role in this effect.

Methodology: The study was conducted among employees of sales organizations in the automotive industry. Relationships between variables were determined by correlation and bootstrap regression analysis with data from 127 participants.

Findings: The results revealed that emotional intelligence shows statistically positive and significant relationships with job satisfaction and ethical climate. Moreover, positive correlation was determined between ethical climate and job satisfaction. The most important result is the decrease of the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction in the triple relationship that includes ethical climate. The findings indicated that the relationship between emotional intelligence levels and employees' perception of organizational ethical climate weakened their impact on job satisfaction.

Implication: Ethical climate has a mediating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The relationship between emotional intelligence levels and job satisfaction is indirectly strengthened by ethical climate. However, the triple relationship of variables weakens the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, ethical climate, job satisfaction.

JEL: M10, M12, M54

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Introduction

Scholars believe that people must have emotional intelligence (EI) and intellectual intelligence (IQ) in order to achieve both organizational and individual success and happiness. The statements that high EI is important for individual and organizational success attract the attention of academicians, researchers, and business executives.

Emotional intelligence emerges as a very important notion for both business and daily life thanks to recent studies. Unlike mental intelligence,t EI can be developed. Moreover, to achieve organizational success, EI should be evaluated along with the logical dimension of the decision-making process (Arslan, Efe, and Aydın, 2013). Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) emphasize that emotions are an indivisible part of organizational existence, and therefore, employees' emotional conditions should also be taken into consideration. The literature presents EI, which has significant effects on managerial practices (Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002), as based on Edward L. Thorndike's (1920) concept of "social intelligence". The concept of "emotional intelligence" has become a notable issue both in academic circles and in the field of application especially since the 1990s within the framework of Thorndike's (1920) concept of "social intelligence". Salovey and Mayer (1990) argue that EI is the ability to use the thoughts, behaviors, and knowledge acquired by observing and interpreting the individual's feelings and the feelings of others.

Emotional intelligence plays a substantial role in the personal ability to cope with difficulties, unexpected situations, and problems one experiences in personal, social, and business life. There are assumptions that EI affects diverse variables associated with the work environment, namely absenteeism, leadership, ethical behavior, job satisfaction, commitment, job performance, and ethical climate (Tett and Meyer, 1993; Goleman, 1995; Megerian and Sosik, 1996; Cooper and Sawaf, 1997; Grandey, 2000; Desphande, 2009). The general opinion views EI as having a favorable influence on job performance as it is to improve the quality of working life. For example, Goleman (1995) argues that EI raises employee competitiveness and makes them more successful in their jobs. Moreover, Mavroveli et al. (2009) state that people with high EI levels can easily regulate their emotions compared to people with low EI levels. Mavroveli et al. (2009) also assert that people with high EI levels are better at establishing and developing social relationships, and they are more accepted in group. Employees are expected to solve the problems they face quickly, effectively, and following certain ethical rules. Therefore, organizations should have a positive organizational ethical climate. According to Agarwal and Chaudhary (2013), EI is of great significance to ethical judgments in decisions. Moreover, Agarwal and Chaudhary (2013) argue that

EI helps employees better withstand changes to organization culture and status. However, there are studies that argue the level of employee EI is also effective in individual decision-making within the organization. Desphande (2009) determines that EI positively affects the ethical decision-making process. Moreover, as the EI level increases in individuals, more ethical organizational decisions can be made.

The 2018–2022 Turkish currency and debt crisis leads to negative consequences in many sectors. Economic recession, which directly affects the consumption behavior of consumers, may also indirectly affect employee behavior. Scholars observe that this recession is most pronounced in the automotive industry. As a result, sales personnel working under pressure in unfavorable industry conditions in which it is difficult to make sales may witness a degradation in emotional intelligence capacity, an increase in unethical behaviors, and a decrease in job satisfaction. Based on these assumptions, this study analyzed the behaviors of sales personnel working in the automotive industry. The study was designed to scrutinize the effects of EI, job satisfaction, and ethical climate variables on behaviors of the sales staff who were forced to work under pressure in a period when the sector is contracting and conditions are negative. The objective of this research was to analyze the effects of EI levels of sales staff on job satisfaction. However, the main objective was to discover whether employees' perceptions of organizational ethical climate play a role in the relationship between EI and job satisfaction levels.

Emotional Intelligence

The term "emotional intelligence" was first introduced in the 1964 study by Beldoch, a psychologist at Cornell University, and used also in 1966 by Leuner in an article entitled "Emotional Intelligence and Emancipation" in the journal *Practice of Child Psychology and Child Psychiatry* (Leuner, 1966). One of the most important developments in the field of EI appeared in the 1980s with Reuven Bar-On's EI model. Bar-On states that the model consists of five complementary and intertwined – yet completely different – general skills and behavioral sections. Moreover, the model includes the dimensions of personal abilities, interpersonal abilities, harmony, stress management, and general mood (Bar-On, 1997). Bar-On (2006, p. 14) argues that emotional-social intelligence is "emotional and social competences and skills that provide an opportunity for the individual to evaluate and express himself, to understand and develop relationships with other people he interacts with, and to meet daily demands".

Detailed examination of emotional intelligence by Mayer and Salovey (1990, p. 189) resulted in the description of EI as "the ability of an individual to observe the sensations

of both himself and other people, to distinguish these feelings and emotions accurately, and to use the knowledge he has acquired to guide his thoughts and actions." Like the intelligence of scientific logic, EI consists of a group of interrelated abilities, and it is handled in four dimensions. These dimensions include understanding and expressing emotions, assimilating emotions in thought, and adjusting emotions with thought (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). In another definition, Cooper and Sawaf examine EI as "the ability to sense and use emotion as a source of human energy, knowledge, relationships and effect as well as the power and rapid perception of emotions" (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997: 8). Emotional intelligence has quickly become the center of attention of the media, the public, and academia with Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence: Why Is It More Important Than IQ?* published in 2006. Goleman describes EI as "being able to mobilize himself, continue his journey despite setbacks, postpone satisfaction by controlling impulses, regulate mood, not allow troubles to prevent thinking, put himself in the shoes of another and nurture hope" (Goleman, 2006, p. 62). Goleman defined EI through the abilities such as recognizing, understanding, managing, empathizing, and social skills. In general, the main features of EI are empathy, expressing emotions, understanding emotions, controlling temperament, independence, adaptability, solving interpersonal problems, persistence, kindness, kindness, and respect (Goleman, 2006).

Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera (2006) argue that there are sociological and epistemological reasons why EI quickly attracts the attention of the masses, one of which is the experience of the business world in the influence of emotions on organizational outcomes. According to the theory of EI, individuals with a high level of EI can easily manage their own and other people's emotions in business life. In this way, they will be at peace with themselves and others and achieve great success in human relationships. Modern business world requires many people to work jointly and in close interaction. In such an environment, one's ability to manage own and others' emotions allow working in harmony. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in helping people work more efficiently through understanding and helping them (Grossman, 2000). If an individual can manage own emotions effectively, s/he becomes equipped with abilities to determine the most effective actions to solve problems. An individual's ability to perceive EI provides mechanisms that enable them to develop in their life, work, family relationships, and citizenship tasks (Cherniss and Goleman, 2001). Although the idea of whether EI can contribute to productivity in enterprises is controversial (Goleman, 1998, p. 202), most agree that emotionally intelligent people will perform better in all areas of life than people who are less intelligent in terms of EI (Bar-On, 2003; Maraichelvi and Rajan, 2013).

Ethical Climate

In their working lives, employees follow the values that guide them as they do in their daily lives. Ethical climate is one of these sets of values that guides employee behavior in the workplace. Like the humanities, organizations have a set of ethical rules. Just as individuals use personal considerations to decide what to do in situations of ethical dilemmas, the organizational ethical climate is guided by the direct separation of what is wrong when organizations encounter conflicting values. Ethical climate – a hot subject in recent scholarship – was originally designed by Victor and Cullen in 1987–1988 to make ethical decisions and actions based on philosophical and sociological theory (Martin and Cullen, 2006). Ethical climate reflects the common perspective of ethical behaviors that affect policies, practices, and methods, which are supported, rewarded, and desired by the organization (Guerci et al., 2013). It is generally defined as organizational administrations and processes that show what is right and wrong, what is and should not be done (Parboteeah et al., 2005). According to Barnett and Vaicys (2000), ethical climate perception guides individuals in determining which problems should be evaluated within the scope of ethics and which criteria should be used to understand, evaluate, and solve problems. Deshpande (1996) foregrounds the ethical climate of organizations as one of the most significant factors affecting employee behavior. In support of Deshpande (1996), Trevino, Butterfield, and McCabe (1998) state that if the organization supports ethical behavior, employees will exhibit more ethical behavior and will show more commitment to their organizations. Thanks to the ethical climate, employees consider alternatives in solving problems. Moreover, ethical climate supports employee decisions about which behavior is acceptable and which is not. That is, employees can evaluate encountered events and behaviors with alternatives through their ethical climate experience in the organization (Barnett and Schubert, 2002). Employee perception of ethical climate is influenced by organization policies, procedures, reward systems, and formal or informal systems (Erondu, Sharland, and Okpara, 2004). Employee perception of the importance of ethical issues depends on the ethical priority of management. An unethical climate is likely to emerge in organizations in which employees think that top management does not pay much attention to ethical values. However, knowledge and ethical priority of ethical climate among managers will ensure the formation of procedures and practices that encourage ethical behavior among employees (Shafer, 2015).

There are various factors that contribute to the formation of ethical climate in organizations. These factors formalize the organization's ethical climate notion. According to Victor and Cullen (1988), the most important determinants of ethical climate are

ethical codes, social norms, organizational structures, and various factors that belong to the organization and external environment. The authors theoretically examined organizational ethical climate types in nine dimensions. These dimensions consist of individual interest, organizational interest, productivity, team interest, social responsibility, friendship, independence, organizational regulations and methods, legislation, and professional rules. Although the ethical climate model proposed by Victor and Cullen (1988) emphasizes the existence of nine theoretical types of ethical climate, the situation is different in practice. They categorize the existence of ethical climate into five types, respectively "caring, independence, rules, law and code, instrumentalism," which are widely accepted in the literature.

Job Satisfaction

The Hawthorne study conducted by Mayo et al. in 1924–1933 is acknowledged by many authors as the real starting point for research on job satisfaction and motivation. The researchers based on the idea that the human factor is the most precious resource in any organization, thus providing an in-depth analysis of the impact relevant to somatic and operational working ambiance on employee productivity and satisfaction, rather than focusing on the personal economic needs that enable individuals to be motivated (Gaspar, 2006). The results of the Hawthorne survey highlighted that employees can also strive for non-wage purposes.

Job satisfaction is a thoroughly examined subject in the field and handled from different perspectives. Accordingly, different definitions appeared regarding job satisfaction. Locke (1976, p. 1304) interprets job satisfaction as "an individual's pleasant or positive emotional state as a result of his or her assessment of work or work experience." Spector (2003, p. 210) defines job satisfaction as "an attitudinal variable that reflects how people generally feel about their jobs and their various elements of it." According to another definition, Robbins and Judge (2013, p. 79) present job satisfaction as "positive emotions related to a job as a result of evaluating the characteristics of a job."

The concept of job satisfaction has recently gained in importance for two main reasons. First, employee thoughts and feelings about their jobs are seen as an important reason for both themselves and their jobs since job satisfaction impacts physical and mental fitness. Furthermore, it has positive or negative effects on employee social relations. Moreover, employee job turnover, absenteeism, low productivity, and organizational commitment are also affected by job satisfaction levels. Second, managers need to know the influence of employee attitudes toward their jobs on performance and productivity.

This attitude helps to control the changes, deficiencies, or compliances in management, thus providing a more effective operating structure (Feldman and Hugh, 1983).

The studies started by Herzberg, Mausner, and Synderman in 1959 and conducted in different countries until 1987 led to the emergence of two-factor theories, which are frequently used to explain the basic needs in the work environment. As a result of the research, two different dimensions were discovered that would be identified with job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, and Synderman,1959). The authors classify the dimensions of job satisfaction as motivating and hygiene factors in their book named *The Motivation to Work*. They state that motivating factors such as success, recognition, respectability, job, responsibility, progress, and development are also satisfying elements for employees, while as hygiene factors, they classify management policy, supervision, relations with managers, personal life, working conditions, wages, relations with colleagues, relations with subordinates, status, safety factors (Rao, 1972).

Relations Between Emotional Intelligence, Ethical Climate, and Job Satisfaction

We may say that the correct management of emotions will contribute positively to both the employee and the organization. From this viewpoint, the attitudes toward the job and the ethical behaviors of employees with high EI can positively change. Thanks to the ethical climate of an organization, it will be possible for employees and managers to use their EI effectively and to perform better. It will be easier for employees to understand, control and manage emotions in an environment in which ethical criteria are taken into consideration in all decisions and in which everything is applied within an ethical framework. In support of this, Desphande (2009) states that EI levels positively influence ethical decision-making processes and argued that employees can make more ethical decisions when their EI levels are high.

Locke (1969) describes job satisfaction and dissatisfaction as "complex emotional reactions to work." This definition suggests that job satisfaction is in a direct positive relationship with the structure of EI (Grandey, 2000, p. 104). On the other hand, Tett and Meyer (1993) classify the elements that determine job satisfaction into two categories as external elements that contain organizational, social, and cultural characteristics, along with internal elements that include personality and emotional characteristics. In other words, according to the authors examining organizational behaviors, the job satisfaction of employees is influenced by more elements than just external factors like wages, interests, and colleagues. What is to significantly affect emotions are also

personal abilities and other internal factors that enable close relationships with employees. Employees' awareness of emotions helps them to control their negative emotions and perform better. From this viewpoint, we may state that individuals with high EI can easily eliminate feelings of despair and stress, which results in their greater satisfaction from work.

Koh and Boo (2001) argue that the more the employees hold a positive ethical perception of their organization, the more they perceive their organization as fair to them, and the authors posit that – in this case – this probably enhances employee job satisfaction. In support of this, the authors indicate that the relationship between ethical climate and job satisfaction is positive. According to Schroeder (2002), personal satisfaction regarding business ethics occurs in two ways. The first is the satisfaction of working in an ethical company, and the tsecond is the existence of ethical practices or the satisfaction of seeing ethical practices in business activities. Various studies that tested the relationship between the variables determined that the satisfaction level of employees in organizations with a positive ethical climate would be high and positively affected by that climate (Vitell and Davis, 1990; Desphande, 1996; Schwepker, 2001; Conine and Rowden, 2006).

This research was designed to test the effects of ethical climate on the relationship between EI and job satisfaction. Accordingly, within the context of the statistical results and the theoretical background of the research, we sought to answer the following research question: "Is emotional intelligence related to job satisfaction through ethical climate?" The research model and hypotheses were created by considering the theoretical information in the literature and studies that examined the variables of the research subject as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The proposed research model
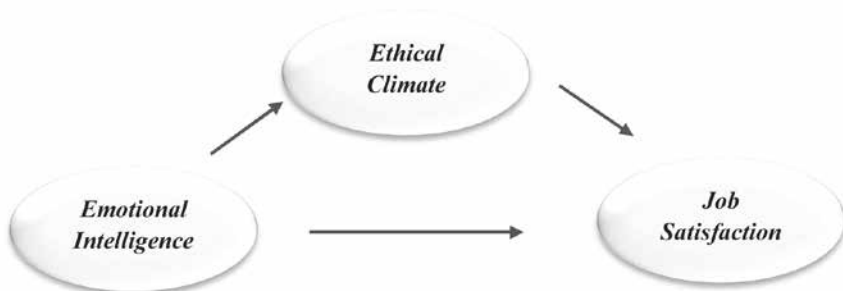
Source: own elaboration.

The hypotheses formed within the scope of the research question were:

H1: Emotional intelligence affects ethical climate.

H2: Ethical climate affects job satisfaction.

H3: Ethical climate has a mediating role in the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

Methodology

Research Desing

The data needed for the purpose of the study were obtained from the sample within the scope of the research population in November 2019: sales personnel of automotive companies operating in the province of Hatay in Turkey of approximately 750 sales personnel. Considering the time and cost constraints, data were collected from the population by using the convenience sampling method. To reach a sufficient sample size, we applied the rule used to reach at least five times more participants than the total number of expressions of the scales used in the study (Everitt, 1975). In line with this rule, the sufficient sample size for the research was determined to be 135 participants, following the scope of the quantitative research model and relational research design. We planned to apply the questionnaire to 300 employees by using the survey technique. As many as 138 employees participated in the data collection process, but only 129 participants' data were found suitable for analysis.

The data were prepared for analysis by performing missing value, outlier, and normal distribution tests. After that, validity and reliability analyses were made for the measurement tools used. The perception levels of participants toward the variables were measured by descriptive statistical analysis, and the relationships between variables were tested with correlation analysis. Next, regression analysis based on the bootstrapping method was performed to test whether the following statements have a mediation effect of ethical climate on the relationship between EI and job satisfaction. Scholarship asserts that the bootstrapping method gives more reliable results than the traditional method of Baron and Kenny (1986) and the Sobel test (Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes, 2007; Zhao, Lynch, and Chen, 2010; Hayes, 2018). The hypotheses were tested using the process macro developed by Hayes (2018). Various suggestions were made by comparing the findings obtained from the results of all these analyses with the existing literature.

Sample

The study sample consisted of automotive sales personnel in Hatay, Turkey (n = 127): 59.1% (75 employees) of the sales personnel supporting the research were men, and 40.9% (52 employees) were women. Among participants, 37.8% (48 employees) were aged 29–35, 66.9% (85 employees) were married, 39.4% (50 employees) had a bachelor's degree, and 8.7% (11 employees) had a master's degree or a Ph.D.

Measures

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Wong and Law (2002) was preferred to test the employees' EI perception. The scale consists of 16 items and four dimensions: appraisal and expression of emotion in the self (four items), appraisal and recognition of emotion in others (four items), use of emotion to facilitate performance (four items), and regulation of emotion in the self (four items). The adequacy of sampling was tested with the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin test (KMO; Kaiser, 1970). The KMO analysis result was .894, while the Barlett test proved significant (p = .000). The data fit the four-factor structure of the scale. We determined that the factor loads of the scale varied between .67 and .91.

Ethical climate scale consists of six items. The scale was developed by Luria and Yagil (2008) and was validated for Turkey by Çalışkan (2015), who used it to test the perception of employees' ethical climate. The adequacy of sampling was also tested with the KMO test. The KMO analysis result was .853, while the Barlett test proved significant (p = .000). The data fit the four-factor structure of the scale. We determined that the factor loads of the scale varied between .78 and .89.

To measure the perception of employee job satisfaction, we used the job satisfaction scale developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) validated for Turkey by Bilgin (1995). Designed in one dimension, the scale consists of five items. The adequacy of sampling was also tested with the KMO test. The KMO analysis result was .853, while the Barlett test proved significant (p = .000). The data fit the four-factor structure of the scale. We determined that the factor loads of the scale varied between .74 and .89.

All the measurement tools were surveyed with the five-point Likert scale (1 – "strongly disagree;" 5 – "strongly agree) so that the participants could properly express their attitudes toward each research question.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Findings regarding the confirmatory factor analysis conducted to test the validity of the factor structures of the scales are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis

	Variables	CMIN/DF ≤ 5	p	IFI ≥ .90	TLI ≥ .90	CFI ≥ .90	RMR ≤ .08	RMSEA ≤ .08
1	Emotional Intelligence	2.26	.000	0.93	0.92	0.93	.007	0.08
2	Ethical Climate	1.68	.001	0.98	0.97	0.98	.005	0.07
3	Job Satisfaction	2.48	.004	0.98	0.96	0.98	.003	0.08

Note: goodness-of-fit ranges are based on "acceptable" standards by Jackson, Gillaspy, and Purc-Stephenson (2009).
Source: own elaboration.

Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Correlation Analysis

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for all variables are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptives and intercorrelations between all variables

	Variables	$\bar{x}$	s	α	1	2	3
1	Emotional Intelligence	4.12	.63	.94	1		
2	Ethical Climate	3.47	.77	.70	.60**	1	
3	Job Satisfaction	3.56	.92	.89	.52**	.59**	1

Source: own elaboration

According to the mean values, we noticed high participants' perception levels toward variables of emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and ethical climate. Cronbach's alpha values (α ≥ .70) indicated that the scales are reliable (Nunnaly, 1978). Pearson correlation analysis results showed that there are statistically significant and positive relationships within all variables at medium level ($p < .01$, $r > .30$) (Ratner, 2017). Variance inflation factors (VIF) test was applied to measure that the variables were not connected with each other. The average VIF value of variables was determined at 1.564. Since VIF < 5, there was no multiple colinearity problem (O'Brien, 2007).

Bootstrapping Regression Analysis

The regression analysis based on the bootstrapping method was used to test the hypo-
theses constructed in compliance with the main research objective. Analyses were
performed by making use of the process macro developed by Hayes (2018). The
5000-resampling option with the bootstrapping method was preferred in the analyses.
In the mediating effect analysis performed with the bootstrapping method, the 95%
confidence interval values obtained as a result of the analysis should not include
zero (0) for the research hypotheses to be supported (MacKinnon, Lockwood, and
Williams, 2004). Findings related to the regression analysis performed for this purpose
are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Bootstrapping regression analysis results (N = 127)

Variables	Ethical Climate (EC)			Job Satisfaction (JS)		
	b	LLCI	ULCI	b	LLCI	ULCI
Research Model						
Emotional Intelligence (X)	.736**	.563	.910	.398**	.144	.651
Ethical Climate (M)	–	–	–	.513**	.306	.720
R^2		.360			.630	
Indirect Bootsrap Effect	Emotional Intelligence → Ethical Climate → Job Satisfaction $b = .378$, % 95 BCA CI [.185, .580]					
	F(1; 125) = 70.5553; p < .001			F(2; 124) = 40.8401; p < .001		

Note: * p < .05, **p < .01.
Source: own elaboration.

The mediating effect was tested to reveal the mediating role of ethical climate in the
effect of EI on job satisfaction. Accordingly, the indirect effect of EI on job satisfaction
through ethical climate was proven to be significant (b = .378; 95% BCA CI = .185, .580).
Therefore, we may see that ethical climate mediates the relation between EQ and job
satisfaction. According to these results, all prediction variables included in the regres-
sion analysis explained about 38% (R^2 = .397) of the change in job satisfaction. Cor-
rected bias and accelerated confidence interval values (BCA CI) after bootstrapping
analysis did not include 0 (zero). The full standardized effect size of the mediation
effect was K^2 = .257, and we may state that this value is an effect size close to high.

Consequently, we tested that these findings support the research hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) in the context of the theoretical model.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of this article was to determine the effects of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction and to analyze the mediating effect of ethical climate in this relationship. Therefore, we studied the automotive sector employees working in the automotive industry in Hatay, Turkey. The data required to test the relationships between variables were obtained with the convenience sampling method using the survey technique.

The correlation and bootstrapping regression analyses were applied to appoint the relationships between emotional intelligence, ethical climate, and job satisfaction. The results disclosed that there is a medium, positive, and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Thus, we could deduce that employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence were more satisfied with their jobs. The findings indicating that there is a positive significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction agree with several previous studies (Goleman, 1995; Nahid, 2012; Soleiman and Fatemeh, 2012; Long, Yaacob, and Chuen, 2016; Shukla, Adhikari, and Ray, 2016). Another different aspect of this study was the use of mediating effect analysis. The findings of this analysis showed that ethical climate has a mediating effect on the positive and significant relation between EI and job satisfaction. This indication disclosed that the relation between the EI levels of employees and their job satisfaction was strengthened by their perceived ethical climate. Based on the hypothesis supported by the research model, the most important finding of this study is the decrease in the effect of EI on job satisfaction in the triple relationships of variables. The results demonstrated that the level of the relationship between EI levels and employees' perceptions of organizational ethical climate (b = .736) weakened EI's impact on their job satisfaction (b = .378). The fact that the perception of the organizational ethical climate of sales staff – which was the study sample – has more effect on job satisfaction (b = .513) than EI (b = .398) explains the situation in this triple relationship. Furthermore, we noticed that similar results appeared in different studies in the field of organizational behavior. For example, Wu (2014) tried to examine the influence of various factors – emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction – on the ethical behaviors of employees working for three state-owned Chinese firms. A significant and positive impact of regulation of one's emotions, promotion, and supervision on ethical behaviors was one of the major results of the study.

Asad, Naseem, and Faiz (2017) examined the relationship between organizational virtuousness and job satisfaction with the mediating role of ethical climate. They hypothesized that an increase in perceived virtuousness in the presence of an improved ethical climate will lead to greater job satisfaction. The results demonstrated that ethical climate partially mediates the effect of organizational virtuousness on job satisfaction. In another parallel study, Gong et al. (2020) explored the impact of psychological empowerment and work engagement in the link between trait EI and job satisfaction. The results indicated that work engagement partially mediated the association between trait EI and job satisfaction. Moreover, the serial one mediator model revealed that trait EI could influence job satisfaction via the serial mediating impact of "psychological empowerment–work engagement." In another study similar to ours, Zhang et al. (2021) detected that leaders' emotional intelligence and organizational ethical climate were significantly related to authentic leadership.

This paper suggests that the specified sample from the automotive sector highlighted how emotional intelligence and ethical climate can increase job satisfaction among sales staff. Employees' job satisfaction increases as they use their abilities to observe their own and others' sensations, to distinguish these emotions and feelings correctly, and to use the information they acquire to guide their thoughts and actions. However, although employees are good at understanding and expressing emotions, but also assimilating and adjusting emotions with thought, ethical management practices have more positive effects on their job satisfaction.

The results of this study offer practical implications for management. According to our results, rather than increasing EI levels, we argue that management policy that raises job satisfaction levels by creating positive effects on organizational ethical climate perception would be more beneficial for the organization. The organizational ethical climate is an important variable that positively affects job satisfaction regardless of employees' mood, feelings, and thoughts. Moreover, the empirical evidence provided in this study may serve as a guide for future research in the relevant domain.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study was limited to the examination of ethical climate as a mediating variable between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Future studies should examine leader-member exchange, organizational culture, organizational trust, and organizational loyalty as mediating variables in the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Our study sample was only from automotive sales personnel in

the province of Hatay in Turkey, and it was limited to 127 participants. Different work climates and environments could have different effects on employee emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Therefore, future studies should investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, ethical climate, and job satisfaction in different regions, countries, and industries. The research could be done in any period without an economic recession and sales staff under less pressure. We expected that the negative conditions experienced in the sector depending on national economy parameters would affect the study results. Our interview and observation procedures could be used in future studies. The use of different research methods may lead to different results. Methodologically, only quantitative analyses were employed for the study, but the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods could increase the predictive power of relationships between variables. Moreover, more comprehensive results can be obtained if the research is done with different sampling methods. We strongly recommend that more investigations and research be undertaken to analyze the relationship between emotional intelligence, ethical climate, and job satisfaction.

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