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The Mediating Role of Occupational Well-Being in the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement Among Hotel Employees

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the mediating role of occupational well-being in the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement among hotel employees. The research method was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population consisted of all employees of selected hotels in the city of Mashhad in 2026. The sampling method was convenience sampling, and based on the inclusion criteria, 175 participants were selected. In determining the sample size, considering the total number of questionnaire items, which amounted to 11 items, a sample size of approximately 165 participants was considered appropriate. To increase the accuracy of the findings and compensate for the possibility of sample attrition, 200 questionnaires were distributed among employees within the statistical population. Ultimately, 175 valid questionnaires were included in the statistical analysis process. The measurement instruments included the standardized Employee Well-Being Questionnaire developed by Zheng et al. (2015), the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire developed by Schering (1996), and the Job Involvement (Work Engagement) Questionnaire developed by Thomas Lodahl and Kejner (1965). Data analysis was conducted using path analysis through the PROCESS macro, SPSS version 25, and AMOS software. The results indicated that emotional intelligence had a significant direct effect on work engagement ($b = 0.62, t = 9.25, p < .001$). Furthermore, occupational well-being had a significant direct effect on work engagement ($b = -0.49, t = -9.66, p < .001$). In addition, emotional intelligence had a significant direct effect on occupational well-being ($b = 0.28, t = 3.44, p < .001$). Finally, emotional intelligence had a significant indirect effect on work engagement through occupational well-being ($b = 0.14, t = 3.27, p < .001$). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence has a significant direct relationship with work engagement, and occupational well-being strengthens this relationship as a mediating variable. Therefore, psychological interventions focused on emotional intelligence may contribute to improving employee productivity.

Keywords: occupational well-being, work engagement, emotional intelligence

Introduction

The hospitality industry is widely recognized as one of the most emotionally demanding and service-oriented sectors in contemporary organizations. Hotel employees are continuously required to interact with guests, manage interpersonal relationships, respond to customers' emotional needs, and maintain high-quality service performance under stressful and dynamic working conditions. Consequently, psychological and emotional capacities have become critical determinants of employee effectiveness, organizational sustainability, and customer satisfaction within hotel environments [1, 2]. In recent years, organizational researchers have increasingly emphasized the importance of psychological resources and positive organizational behavior in improving employee functioning and enhancing organizational outcomes [3, 4]. Among these

psychological resources, emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement have attracted considerable scholarly attention because of their substantial contributions to employee productivity, psychological health, and organizational performance.

Work engagement is considered one of the most important indicators of positive occupational functioning and organizational vitality. It reflects a persistent and positive psychological state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work activities. Engaged employees demonstrate high levels of energy, enthusiasm, and commitment toward their jobs, which ultimately contribute to higher organizational performance and service quality [5, 6]. In the hospitality industry, where service quality largely depends on employees' direct interactions with customers, work engagement plays a particularly important role in shaping customer experiences and organizational success [7, 8]. Employees with high levels of work engagement are more likely to demonstrate proactive behavior, maintain positive relationships with guests, and show greater resilience when facing occupational challenges [9, 10]. Conversely, low work engagement is associated with emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, turnover intention, and lower service performance [6, 11].

Theoretical frameworks such as the Job Demands–Resources Theory suggest that personal resources significantly contribute to the development of work engagement and occupational well-being. According to this theory, employees who possess adequate personal and psychological resources are better able to cope with workplace stressors and maintain positive occupational functioning [6]. Emotional intelligence has been identified as one of the most influential personal resources within organizational settings because it facilitates effective emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, and adaptive coping strategies [12, 13]. Emotional intelligence generally refers to the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others. Employees with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of managing stressful situations, maintaining constructive workplace relationships, and responding appropriately to emotional demands in professional contexts [14, 15].

The significance of emotional intelligence has become increasingly evident in hospitality organizations due to the emotionally intensive nature of service occupations. Hotel employees are often required to engage in emotional labor by displaying positive emotions regardless of their actual emotional state, which can create psychological strain if not effectively managed [2, 8]. Emotional intelligence enables employees to regulate their emotions more effectively and reduce the negative consequences of emotional labor. Studies have demonstrated that emotionally intelligent employees exhibit higher levels of organizational commitment, customer orientation, and occupational adaptation [16, 17]. Moreover, emotional intelligence has been associated with improved job performance, stronger interpersonal communication, and greater customer satisfaction in hospitality settings [1, 18].

Previous research has consistently reported positive relationships between emotional intelligence and work engagement. Employees with high emotional intelligence tend to experience greater motivation, psychological resilience, and emotional stability, which enhance their engagement with work activities [12, 19]. Merida-Lopez et al. demonstrated that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to teachers' work engagement by reducing perceived stress and strengthening emotional regulation abilities [20]. Similarly, Gong et al. found that emotional intelligence indirectly improves job satisfaction and work engagement through psychological empowerment [21]. In service industries, emotionally intelligent employees are more capable of maintaining enthusiasm and commitment in demanding occupational environments, thereby increasing their work involvement and organizational effectiveness [8, 15].

Another important construct related to employee functioning is occupational well-being. Occupational well-being refers to employees' positive psychological experiences, emotional satisfaction, and sense of fulfillment within the workplace. It encompasses emotional, cognitive, social, and psychological dimensions associated with employees' professional lives [22, 23]. Occupational well-being has emerged as a critical factor in organizational psychology because it contributes not only to employees' mental health but also to productivity, organizational commitment, and service quality [3, 7]. Employees who experience higher occupational well-being are generally more motivated, psychologically healthy, and capable of coping with occupational stressors [9, 24].

In the hospitality industry, occupational well-being is particularly important because employees are frequently exposed to irregular work schedules, high customer expectations, emotional demands, and job stressors. These occupational conditions may reduce employees' psychological well-being and negatively affect their work engagement and performance if appropriate psychological resources are unavailable [4, 11]. Research has shown that employees with higher occupational well-being experience greater job satisfaction, lower burnout, and stronger organizational attachment [22, 23]. Furthermore, occupational well-being has been identified as a significant predictor of employee engagement and performance in service organizations [7, 9].

Recent empirical studies have also highlighted the close relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational well-being. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to manage emotions effectively, maintain positive social interactions, and cope adaptively with workplace stress, all of which contribute to improved well-being [22, 25]. Gao et al. found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted occupational well-being and work engagement among clinical nurses, suggesting that emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to experience positive psychological states in occupational environments [25]. Similarly, Li et al. reported that emotional intelligence positively influences job well-being through empathy and communication satisfaction [22]. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence may serve as an important antecedent of occupational well-being across different occupational settings.

In addition to its direct effects, occupational well-being may also function as an important mediating mechanism in the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement. Employees with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to experience positive emotional states and psychological satisfaction at work, which subsequently increase their motivation and engagement in occupational activities [12, 13]. Occupational well-being may therefore explain how emotional intelligence translates into greater work engagement. Although several studies have examined direct relationships among these variables, fewer investigations have specifically focused on the mediating role of occupational well-being, particularly within hospitality organizations [7, 25].

The hospitality industry in Iran presents unique occupational challenges due to intense competition, customer expectations, organizational pressures, and the necessity for continuous interpersonal interactions. Employees working in hotels must maintain professional emotional displays while simultaneously managing occupational stress and service demands. Under such conditions, emotional intelligence and occupational well-being may play critical roles in promoting employee engagement and organizational sustainability [17, 26]. Despite the growing importance of psychological variables in organizational management, limited research has examined the interrelationships among emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement among Iranian hotel employees. Existing studies in Iran have primarily

focused on organizational citizenship behavior, creative productivity, or customer loyalty rather than examining comprehensive models involving occupational well-being and work engagement [26, 27].

Moreover, the post-pandemic organizational environment has increased the importance of employee psychological health and emotional adaptation in service industries. Studies conducted during and after the COVID-19 crisis indicated that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to occupational resilience, job performance, and employee psychological stability under stressful conditions [11, 28]. These findings highlight the necessity of examining emotional intelligence and occupational well-being as protective factors in demanding occupational settings such as hotels. Furthermore, contemporary organizational approaches emphasize the importance of investing in employees' psychological resources to improve long-term organizational effectiveness and sustainability [3, 4].

Considering the theoretical and empirical importance of emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement, as well as the limited number of studies investigating their interrelationships among hotel employees, further research appears necessary. Understanding these relationships can provide practical implications for organizational managers and human resource specialists in designing psychological interventions, employee support programs, and training strategies aimed at improving employee engagement and service quality within hospitality organizations [14, 18]. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the mediating role of occupational well-being in the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement among hotel employees.

Methodology

This study was fundamental in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of research design. Regarding the nature of the data, the study was quantitative, and the data collection method was field-based. The statistical population consisted of all employees working in Mithaq, Melal, Golden, Ziafat, Pardisan, Khorshid, Almas, Novin, and Ghasr Al-Ziafah hotels in the city of Mashhad in 2026. The sampling method was convenience sampling. Considering the nature of the study, which was based on structural equation modeling and the examination of relationships among variables, the minimum sample size was determined according to the number of model parameters and methodological recommendations. Typically, for such analyses, between 10 and 15 participants are recommended for each parameter or questionnaire item (Kline, 2016). Given that the total number of questionnaire items was 11, a sample size of approximately 165 participants was considered appropriate. In order to increase the accuracy of the findings and compensate for possible sample attrition, 200 questionnaires were distributed among the employees. This sample size provided sufficient statistical power for testing the proposed model and generalizing the findings to the target population.

After data collection and preliminary screening of the responses, 25 questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis due to incomplete responses, unreliable answering patterns, or failure to meet the required response criteria. Ultimately, 175 valid questionnaires were included in the statistical analysis process. This procedure was carried out to improve the precision and validity of the data and to ensure the quality and reliability of the research findings. All statistical analyses were conducted using complete and valid datasets.

Data collection was conducted using four instruments, including a demographic information form, the Employee Well-Being Questionnaire developed by Zheng et al. (2015), the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire developed by Siberia Schering (1996), and the Job Involvement (Work Engagement) Questionnaire developed by Lodahl and Kejner (1965).

The demographic information form was designed to collect personal and demographic characteristics of the participants, including age, educational level, and marital status. This form was used to provide a demographic profile of the study participants.

Employee well-being was assessed using the standardized Employee Well-Being Questionnaire developed by Zheng et al. (2015). This instrument consists of 18 items and three dimensions measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Each item is scored from 1 to 7. Sample items include statements such as “I am satisfied with my life.” The questionnaire evaluates occupational well-being as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional well-being, social well-being, professional well-being, cognitive well-being, and psychosomatic well-being. In this study, employee well-being was operationally defined as the total score obtained by participants on the 18-item scale. Scores ranged from 18 to 126, with higher scores indicating greater occupational well-being. Previous studies confirmed the content validity of the questionnaire through expert evaluations. In addition, the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach’s alpha coefficients above 0.70, and a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.80 was reported for the overall scale.

Emotional intelligence was measured using the Siberia Schering Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (1996). The original form of the instrument contains 70 items divided into two sections. The first section includes 40 items describing life situations in which respondents select the option most consistent with their emotional and psychological state. The second section contains 30 emotionally oriented fictional stories. However, due to cultural incompatibility, the second section was not used in the Iranian standardization conducted by Mansouri (2001). In the preliminary implementation, only the first section was administered, and seven items were removed because of low correlations with the total test score. Consequently, the final version used in this study consisted of 33 items. The questionnaire measures five dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills. Each participant received separate scores for each dimension in addition to an overall emotional intelligence score. Responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale, and some items were reverse scored. The possible score range for the questionnaire was between 33 and 165. Previous studies reported satisfactory psychometric properties for the instrument, and the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the 33-item version was reported as 0.85.

Work engagement was assessed using the Job Involvement Questionnaire developed by Lodahl and Kejner (1965). This instrument measures the extent to which individuals psychologically identify with their jobs and the degree to which their work occupies an important role in their lives. The questionnaire consists of 20 items rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Several items were reverse scored according to the questionnaire instructions. After summing the item scores, higher scores reflected greater work engagement. Scores above 40 indicated high job involvement, and scores approaching 80 represented very high levels of work engagement. Lower scores indicated that work constituted only a limited aspect of the individual’s life. The questionnaire has been widely used in organizational and occupational psychology research and has demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity in previous studies.

The questionnaires were distributed to employees in person. Participants received explanations regarding the objectives of the study and instructions on how to complete the questionnaires. They were also assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used exclusively for research purposes. After completion, the questionnaires were collected and prepared for statistical analysis.

Prior to conducting the main analyses, the normality of data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. In addition, Levene’s test was applied to examine the homogeneity of variances. Data analysis was subsequently performed using path analysis to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships among emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 25 and AMOS software. The significance level for all statistical tests was set at $p < .05$.

Findings and Results

Among the 175 hotel employees participating in the study, 102 participants (58.3%) were male and 73 participants (41.7%) were female. The age distribution indicated that 46 participants (26.3%) were between 20 and 30 years old, 81 participants (46.3%) were between 31 and 40 years old, and 48 participants (27.4%) were older than 40 years. Regarding educational level, 39 participants (22.3%) held a diploma degree, 96 participants (54.9%) held a bachelor’s degree, and 40 participants (22.8%) possessed postgraduate qualifications. In terms of marital status, 111 participants (63.4%) were married and 64 participants (36.6%) were single. Furthermore, the majority of participants had between 5 and 10 years of work experience in the hotel industry.

Table 1

The descriptive statistics for the research variables, including emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Emotional Intelligence	118.42	14.37	76	154
Occupational Well-Being	81.56	11.24	49	117
Work Engagement	57.84	8.91	31	77

As shown in Table 1, emotional intelligence had the highest mean score among the study variables ($M = 118.42$, $SD = 14.37$). Occupational well-being demonstrated a moderate to high mean score ($M = 81.56$, $SD = 11.24$), while work engagement also showed a relatively high average level among hotel employees ($M = 57.84$, $SD = 8.91$). The obtained standard deviations indicated acceptable variability among participants’ responses.

Table 2

Pearson correlation coefficients among emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement

Variables	1	2	3
1. Emotional Intelligence	1		
2. Occupational Well-Being	.41**	1	
3. Work Engagement	.62**	.49**	1

** $p < .01$

The correlation matrix demonstrated significant positive relationships among all study variables. Emotional intelligence was positively correlated with occupational well-being ($r = .41$, $p < .01$) and work engagement ($r = .62$, $p < .01$). In addition, occupational well-being showed a significant positive correlation with work engagement ($r = .49$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that higher levels of emotional intelligence are associated with greater occupational well-being and stronger work engagement among hotel employees.

Table 3

The proposed model coefficients in their unstandardized form.

Paths	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error (SE)	Critical Ratio (C.R.)	p
Emotional Intelligence → Work Engagement	0.74	0.08	9.25	.001
Occupational Well-Being → Work Engagement	-0.58	0.06	-9.66	.001
Emotional Intelligence → Occupational Well-Being	0.31	0.09	3.44	.001

According to Table 3, emotional intelligence had a significant direct effect on work engagement (B = 0.74, C.R. = 9.25, p = .001). Moreover, occupational well-being demonstrated a significant direct effect on work engagement (B = -0.58, C.R. = -9.66, p = .001). Emotional intelligence also had a significant direct effect on occupational well-being (B = 0.31, C.R. = 3.44, p = .001). These findings indicate that emotional intelligence significantly predicts both occupational well-being and work engagement among hotel employees.

Table 4

The direct, indirect, and total effects within the fitted structural model.

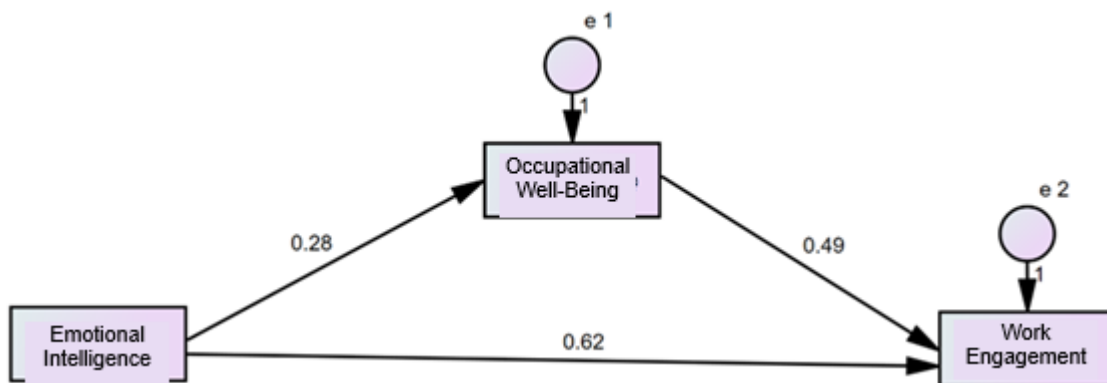
Effects	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect
Emotional Intelligence → Work Engagement	0.76***	0.62***	—
Occupational Well-Being → Work Engagement	—	-0.49***	—
Emotional Intelligence → Occupational Well-Being	—	0.28***	—
Emotional Intelligence → Work Engagement through Occupational Well-Being	—	—	0.14***

***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05

The results of Table 4 revealed that emotional intelligence had a substantial total effect on work engagement ($\beta = 0.76$, $p < .001$), including a significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < .001$). Occupational well-being also exerted a significant direct effect on work engagement ($\beta = -0.49$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, emotional intelligence significantly predicted occupational well-being ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < .001$). Most importantly, emotional intelligence had a significant indirect effect on work engagement through occupational well-being ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < .001$), confirming the mediating role of occupational well-being in the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement among hotel employees.

Figure 1

Final Model of the Study



Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the mediating role of occupational well-being in the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement among hotel employees. The findings demonstrated that emotional intelligence had a significant direct effect on work engagement among employees. This result indicates that employees with higher levels

of emotional intelligence experience greater psychological involvement, enthusiasm, and commitment toward their occupational roles. Hotel environments are characterized by intensive interpersonal interactions, emotional labor, and continuous customer-oriented communication, all of which require employees to effectively regulate their emotions and maintain positive social relationships. Emotional intelligence appears to provide employees with the psychological capacity necessary to cope with occupational pressures while preserving positive emotional functioning and professional motivation. Individuals with stronger emotional regulation and interpersonal understanding are more capable of maintaining energy and psychological investment in their work activities despite demanding organizational conditions.

The finding concerning the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement is consistent with previous empirical studies conducted in organizational and hospitality contexts. George et al. reported that emotional intelligence significantly predicts work engagement by enhancing employees' emotional adaptation and psychological functioning [12]. Similarly, Merida-Lopez et al. demonstrated that emotionally intelligent employees exhibit higher levels of engagement because they are better able to manage occupational stress and maintain positive emotional experiences in the workplace [20]. Sulyantie and Gani also found that emotional intelligence positively contributes to employee engagement and performance through motivational mechanisms [19]. In hospitality organizations specifically, Yeh reported that emotional intelligence is strongly associated with job involvement among frontline hotel employees because emotionally intelligent individuals can better navigate emotionally demanding customer interactions [8]. These findings collectively support the argument that emotional intelligence functions as a critical psychological resource that facilitates active occupational participation and organizational commitment.

The positive effect of emotional intelligence on work engagement can also be interpreted through the framework of Job Demands–Resources Theory. According to this theoretical perspective, personal resources such as emotional intelligence help employees cope effectively with occupational stressors and maintain positive motivational states [6]. Employees working in hotels frequently encounter emotional exhaustion due to irregular work schedules, customer complaints, and high service expectations. Emotional intelligence enables employees to regulate emotional reactions, prevent psychological depletion, and sustain occupational energy and commitment. Therefore, emotionally intelligent employees are more likely to perceive workplace demands as manageable challenges rather than overwhelming stressors, which contributes to stronger work engagement.

Another important finding of the study was that occupational well-being had a significant direct effect on work engagement. This result suggests that employees who experience greater psychological well-being, emotional satisfaction, and professional fulfillment are more likely to become psychologically immersed in their work activities. Occupational well-being enhances employees' positive attitudes toward their jobs and strengthens their emotional attachment to organizational goals. Employees who feel psychologically healthy and valued within the workplace are generally more motivated to invest effort and enthusiasm in occupational responsibilities. In hotel settings, occupational well-being may be particularly important because service employees are continuously exposed to emotionally demanding interactions and operational stressors. Under such conditions, employees with higher occupational well-being may possess greater resilience and adaptive capacity, enabling them to remain engaged and productive.

This finding is aligned with earlier studies emphasizing the role of well-being in promoting employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. Kautish et al. found that occupational well-being significantly predicts work engagement and

job satisfaction among hospitality managers [7]. Damianus et al. similarly reported that workplace well-being positively contributes to employees' work engagement and occupational commitment [9]. Li et al. also demonstrated that job well-being improves employees' emotional stability and psychological functioning, thereby increasing occupational motivation and engagement [22]. The findings of the present study further support the assumption that psychologically healthy employees are more likely to demonstrate vigor, dedication, and absorption in work-related activities.

The present findings also indicated that emotional intelligence had a significant direct effect on occupational well-being. This result suggests that emotionally intelligent employees experience more positive psychological states within occupational settings. Emotional intelligence facilitates emotional self-regulation, empathy, constructive communication, and adaptive coping strategies, all of which contribute to psychological well-being in the workplace. Employees capable of effectively understanding and regulating their emotions are less vulnerable to emotional exhaustion, interpersonal conflict, and occupational stress. Consequently, they are more likely to maintain psychological balance and satisfaction in their professional lives.

This finding corresponds closely with previous studies conducted in organizational and healthcare environments. Gao et al. found that emotional intelligence significantly predicts occupational well-being among clinical nurses [25]. Li et al. similarly demonstrated that emotional intelligence improves job well-being through empathy and communication satisfaction [22]. Hashemi and Sadeghian also emphasized the importance of psychological and emotional factors in promoting workplace well-being among employees [23]. Furthermore, Ganesh and Ganesh reported that emotionally intelligent frontline hotel employees are better able to manage work-family balance and occupational stressors, which contributes positively to psychological well-being [15]. These findings collectively reinforce the notion that emotional intelligence serves as a protective psychological factor within demanding occupational environments.

The significant indirect effect of emotional intelligence on work engagement through occupational well-being was among the most important findings of the present study. This result confirms the mediating role of occupational well-being in the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement. In other words, emotionally intelligent employees appear to experience higher occupational well-being, which subsequently increases their work engagement. This finding highlights the importance of psychological well-being as a mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences occupational outcomes. Emotional intelligence alone may not directly enhance work engagement unless it contributes to positive emotional and psychological experiences within the workplace.

The mediating role of occupational well-being can be interpreted based on positive organizational psychology perspectives emphasizing the interaction between personal psychological resources and workplace experiences. Emotional intelligence enables employees to establish healthier interpersonal relationships, regulate workplace emotions effectively, and cope adaptively with stress. These capacities improve employees' psychological well-being and satisfaction, which then foster greater engagement and commitment to occupational roles. Employees who experience emotional balance and psychological fulfillment are more likely to perceive work as meaningful and rewarding, thereby increasing their dedication and involvement.

The mediating findings of the present study are consistent with earlier research examining indirect mechanisms linking emotional intelligence to occupational outcomes. Merida-Lopez and Extremera demonstrated that work engagement mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress [13]. Gong et al. found that psychological

empowerment and work engagement mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction [21]. Cudjoe et al. also reported that emotional intelligence strengthens job performance through psychological empowerment mechanisms among hotel employees [18]. The present findings extend this body of literature by demonstrating that occupational well-being functions as an important intermediary process connecting emotional intelligence with work engagement among hotel employees.

The findings also possess important practical implications for hospitality organizations. Hotel managers and human resource specialists should recognize that employee engagement is not solely determined by organizational policies or financial incentives, but is also strongly influenced by employees' emotional and psychological capacities. Developing emotional intelligence skills through training programs may improve employees' occupational well-being and increase their engagement and productivity. Emotional intelligence training can help employees regulate stress, improve interpersonal communication, and enhance emotional resilience in customer-oriented environments. Similarly, organizational interventions aimed at improving occupational well-being, such as supportive leadership, psychological counseling services, flexible work arrangements, and employee recognition systems, may strengthen employee engagement and organizational sustainability.

Another noteworthy implication concerns the role of organizational culture in promoting emotional and psychological resources. Organizations that encourage emotional support, interpersonal respect, and employee empowerment are more likely to foster occupational well-being and engagement among staff members. In hospitality environments, where employees frequently experience emotional demands and customer-related stress, supportive organizational climates may function as protective factors against psychological exhaustion and disengagement. Therefore, organizational strategies focusing on psychological health and emotional development may substantially improve employee retention, service quality, and customer satisfaction.

Despite the valuable findings of the present study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships among emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement. Second, the study relied exclusively on self-report questionnaires, which may increase the possibility of response bias and socially desirable responding. Third, the sample was limited to hotel employees in Mashhad, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to employees working in other cities, industries, or cultural contexts. Additionally, other organizational and psychological variables that may influence work engagement, such as organizational support, leadership style, personality traits, and occupational stress, were not examined in the present study.

Future research should employ longitudinal and experimental designs to better examine the causal relationships among emotional intelligence, occupational well-being, and work engagement. Researchers are also encouraged to investigate additional mediating and moderating variables, including organizational climate, resilience, psychological capital, burnout, and leadership behaviors. Comparative studies across different occupational groups and cultural contexts may provide a broader understanding of how emotional intelligence influences employee engagement in various industries. Furthermore, qualitative studies exploring employees' lived experiences regarding emotional intelligence and occupational well-being may offer deeper insights into the psychological processes underlying work engagement.

From a practical perspective, hospitality organizations should prioritize the development of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being among employees as part of their human resource management strategies. Training workshops

focusing on emotional regulation, stress management, communication skills, and interpersonal competence may help employees better cope with occupational challenges and improve their work engagement. Managers should also create supportive and psychologically healthy workplace environments that encourage employee participation, emotional support, and professional growth. Implementing employee assistance programs, psychological counseling services, and recognition systems may further strengthen occupational well-being and organizational commitment. Ultimately, organizations that invest in employees' emotional and psychological resources are more likely to achieve sustainable productivity, improved service quality, and long-term organizational success.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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