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Emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour in knowledge-intensive organizations: how tacit knowledge sharing acts as a mediator?

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to examine the underlying process through which emotional intelligence impacts employees' innovative work behaviour by testing the mediating role played by tacit knowledge sharing in organizations. The direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence on innovative work behaviour of employees were explored.

Design/methodology/approach – A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 171 full-time employees of five high-tech knowledge-intensive organizations located in India. The hypotheses were tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling.

Findings – The results revealed that emotional intelligence had a direct positive impact on tacit knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour of employees. Similarly, tacit knowledge sharing positively influenced innovative work behaviour. The study further showed that the relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour was partially mediated by tacit knowledge sharing.

Practical implications – To enhance innovative behaviour at work, organizations should concentrate on building the emotional competencies of its employees to increase their emotional intelligence level through suitable training programs. Besides, organizations should also focus on shaping a knowledge-sharing culture by building systems and processes through which free exchange of tacit knowledge among employees can be promoted to enhance their innovative work behaviour.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the existing pool of knowledge by demonstrating the unexplored effect of emotional intelligence on innovative work behaviour via the mediating role of tacit knowledge sharing. It also advances current literature on emotional intelligence, tacit knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour by discussing useful theoretical implications of the findings.

Keywords Emotional intelligence, Innovative work behaviour, Tacit knowledge sharing

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Employees' innovative work behaviour is an essential factor which determines organizational competitive advantage (Shin *et al.*, 2017; Wang *et al.*, 2015; Jiang and Gu, 2016). Innovative work behaviour can be defined as the development, adoption and implementation of new ideas for products, technologies and work methods by employees (Yuan and Woodman, 2010) which also extends to improvement in business procedures in specific work areas. Due to rising global competition, market changes or meeting customer expectations, organizations need to develop innovative solutions to meet these emerging problems and challenges (Savelsbergh *et al.*, 2012; Somech and Khalaili, 2014) which requires employees to engage in innovative behaviours to improve the current state of

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affairs. Organizations can become innovative by capitalizing on innovative abilities of its employees which ensures continuous and long-term effectiveness (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2010). By using their innovative abilities, employees can significantly contribute towards organizational success by developing, promoting and implementing new and useful ideas to enhance products, services and work procedures termed as innovative work behaviour (Janssen, 2000). Therefore, it is imperative for organizations to identify and promote factors that stimulate innovative work behaviour of their employees.

Knowledge-intensive organizations are characterized by the capacity to solve complex problems through creative and innovative solutions (Jenssen and Nybakk, 2009). To attain this, such organizations are dependent on the knowledge, creativity and innovative engagement of its employees (Bos-Nehles *et al.*, 2017). This study aims to examine the role of two important factors, namely, emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing that could promote innovative behaviour at work. Emotional intelligence is the ability of people to identify and manage emotions in self and others (Barchard and Hakstian, 2004). Emotionally intelligent people can quickly recover from distress and channelize their positive energy towards constructive activities (Wong and Law, 2002) and therefore, they are likely to experience positive emotions. Fredrickson (1998) discovered that experiencing positive emotions could broaden people's minds and build their resourcefulness. Moreover, positive emotions are likely to encourage people to explore and to expand new information (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) which is consistent with innovative behaviour. However, the role played by emotional intelligence in predicting the innovative behaviour of employees at work has not received enough attention by researchers. The extant literature on emotional intelligence-innovative work behaviour relationship is of recent origin (Dincer *et al.*, 2011; Shojaei and Siuki, 2014; Dincer and Orhan, 2012; Al-Omari, 2017; Hu and He, 2018) and quite scarce in the Indian context. Hence, this study aims to test the effect of emotional intelligence in stimulating innovative work behaviour of employees. Despite knowing the fact that building upon the processes through which employees exhibit innovative work behaviour will result in faster innovation at work, little attention has been received from scholars across the globe in testing the explanatory mechanisms (via mediating variables). A further attempt is made to test the mediating role of tacit knowledge sharing in explaining the relationship between emotional intelligence-innovative work behaviour of employees. As we know, tacit knowledge is highly personal and resides in human minds (Hislop, 2005). This precious tacit knowledge enables the creation of new knowledge which is essential for achieving innovative solutions. In fact, people are most likely to have strong emotions towards sharing this personal knowledge with others because it is like a personal asset to them which consists of their experiences, insights, skills and expertise. Hence, employees' tacit knowledge sharing could act as a mediator between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour. Besides, knowledge-intensive organizations have not been given due focus in the examination of emotional intelligence-innovative work behaviour relationship of their employees despite knowing that such organizations are driven by creativity and innovation behaviour (Bos-Nehles *et al.*, 2017). Based on the above knowledge gaps, this study is inspired by the following two research questions:

RQ1. What is the effect of emotional intelligence in stimulating innovative work behaviour of employees within knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations?

RQ2. How tacit knowledge sharing works as a mediator between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour of employees within knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations?

This study aims to contribute in several ways. Firstly, knowledge-intensive organizations would be able to recognize the contribution made by emotional constructs, specifically, emotional intelligence in promoting innovation at work. This will enable them to work out appropriate strategies to enhance innovative work behaviour of their existing employees. Secondly, as far as prospective employees are concerned, such organizations can hire emotionally intelligent candidates by devising suitable recruitment strategies to enhance innovation at work. Finally, organizations can build processes to inculcate knowledge sharing culture at work which promotes the free flow of tacit knowledge among employees to stimulate their innovative work behaviour.

The structure of this paper is as follows: firstly, the author defined and discussed the importance of innovative work behaviour, emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing in the context of knowledge-intensive organizations. Next, relevant literature was reviewed on the interrelationship among innovative work behaviour, emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing to develop hypotheses and propose the research model. Afterwards, the author collected quantitative data and performed data analysis using partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Next, research findings were reported and results were discussed. Finally, the author highlighted implications and insights for organizations seeking to promote innovative work behaviour in knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations in India.

Literature review and hypotheses

Innovative work behaviour

Innovation at work can be defined as the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, to benefit role performance, the group or the organization (West and Farr, 1990). In fact, innovative work behaviour is a broad behavioural construct that involves not only the generation of new ideas but also the transformation of ideas into substantial innovations (Devloo *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, innovative work behaviours are not a part of the job description of employees, i.e. it is not a formal job responsibility that employees need to perform regularly. Such behaviours are purely discretionary behaviours, called extra-role behaviours and are not formally recognized by organizational reward systems (Organ, 1988).

Expanding on the multidimensional thought of innovative work behaviour, several studies have focussed on conceptualising and identifying phases of innovative work behaviour (Janssen, 2004; Scott and Bruce, 1994; De Jong and Den Hartog, 2010). Many researchers have agreed that innovative work behaviour comprises of three phases: idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization. The first phase of idea generation includes searching different ways for improving existing products or services and solving problems by evaluating alternative courses of action and merging or reorganising information and existing concepts (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2010). The second phase of idea promotion requires making changes in the existing ways of doing things by championing it through coalition building (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2010), promoting ideas to potential allies (Janssen, 2004) and finding sponsors (Scott and Bruce, 1994) to meet resistance. The last phase of idea realization/implementation involves producing a prototype or model of the new product, technology or process (Janssen, 2004), testing and modifying the prototype (Scott and Bruce, 1994) and routinizing the new way of doing such that the innovation becomes part of the regular work processes of workgroups or entire organizations (De Jong and Den Hartog, 2010). Notably, employees engaging themselves in innovative work behaviour will make efforts to improve different aspects of their work environment

whenever they spot an opportunity and they will also be willing to adopt changes proposed by other organizational members.

Emotional intelligence

Goleman (1995) popularized the concept of emotional intelligence in his book "Emotional Intelligence". He defined emotional intelligence as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1998). Emotional intelligence is also recognized as a set of traits or abilities that help to deal with emotions and/or emotional information (Petrides *et al.*, 2007).

The four dimensions of emotional intelligence as described by Davies *et al.* (1998) are:

(1) *Appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself*: This is the ability to understand our deep emotions and to be able to express emotions naturally.

(2) *Appraisal and recognition of emotion in others*: This is the ability to perceive and understand the emotions of the people around us.

(3) *Use of emotion to facilitate performance*: The ability to make use of one's emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance.

(4) *Regulation of emotion in oneself*: The ability to regulate our emotions, enabling more rapid recovery from psychological distress.

The following section covers previous research on the relationship among emotional intelligence, tacit knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour.

Emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour

Emotional intelligence has been found to influence many individual and organizational outcomes. In fact, it is considered as a critical success factor of measuring performance at work. According to Goleman (1998), about 67% of the abilities required for high performance are attributed to emotional intelligence and matter twice as much as intelligence quotient for superior performance. Hence, emotional intelligence could guide individuals towards innovative work behaviour in a knowledge-intensive organization promoting higher performance.

Previous research by Dincer *et al.* (2011) found that emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour of the managers affect each other positively and significantly. On similar lines, Al-Omari (2017) also found a positive influence of emotional intelligence on innovative work behaviour of employees. In another study by Dincer and Orhan (2012), it was found that using emotional intelligence-enabled people to develop and apply new ideas at the workplace. In fact, the talent of being aware of one's own and other's emotions empowered people to develop new ideas and apply them in the work process. Another research was conducted by Shojaei and Siuki (2014) which expands the scope of testing the role of emotional intelligence on innovative work behaviour by examining the impact of four different components of emotional intelligence, namely, self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness and relationship management. The findings indicated that all four components of emotional intelligence had positive and significant effects on innovative work behaviour of managers. Interestingly, the highest effect in innovative work behaviour of managers was contributed by self-management. Similar research by Hu and He (2018) in China revealed that except emotions in self, all other dimensions of emotional intelligence (emotion in others, UOE and ROE) were found to impact innovation behaviour positively

and significantly. Hence, based on the above research findings the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Emotional intelligence is positively related to innovative work behaviour.

Emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is a voluntary and pro-social behaviour that people use to share their knowledge with others. One of the earlier studies linking emotional intelligence with knowledge sharing was conducted by Karkoulian *et al.* (2010) which showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence knowledge sharing. Past research by Goh and Lim (2014), as well as Priyadarshi and Premchandran (2019) also found that emotional intelligence positively and significantly impacted knowledge sharing. Van Den Hooff *et al.* (2012) showed how two dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely, pride and empathy positively impacted eagerness and willingness of employees towards knowledge sharing. Gurbuz and Araci (2012) went a step further by examining the relationship of emotional intelligence with both tacit and explicit knowledge sharing of employees. Interestingly, manage emotion-self motivation, empathy and self-awareness components of emotional intelligence were significantly related to tacit knowledge sharing behaviour. In the Indian context, Ansari and Malik (2017) also found a significant direct effect of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing of service sector employees.

Most of the above-mentioned research works have tested the role of emotional intelligence on overall knowledge sharing of employees. It would be interesting to find out the influence of emotional intelligence exclusively on tacit knowledge sharing because such knowledge resides in the human minds and it is a precious asset for people because of the personal nature of knowledge (such as personal experiences, expertise and skills) and therefore it is likely that people will have stronger emotions towards sharing this personal knowledge with others as compared to explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is driven predominantly by the effort and emotion of an individual, whereas explicit knowledge is more a function of organizational structure and resources. Hence, treating these two types of knowledge differently while measuring the impact of human emotions becomes important. Hence, in the light of these arguments the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Emotional intelligence is positively related to tacit knowledge sharing.

Tacit knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour

Most practitioners and researchers admit that a major part of knowledge in organizations exists in the form of tacit knowledge (Buckman, 2004; Mooradian, 2005). In fact, tacit knowledge represents around 75%–95% of aggregate organizational knowledge (Kothuri, 2002). Tacit knowledge is personal, context-specific and difficult to formalize and communicate (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). According to Alavi and Leidner (2001), tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in action, experience thought and involvement in a particular context. In contrast to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge exists in several forms such as abilities, experience, learned skills, undocumented processes and gut-feelings, and it relies heavily on the quality of personal relationships and difficult to reduce to writing (Holste and Fields, 2010).

Akhavan *et al.* (2015) did research on high tech companies in Iran and found that knowledge sharing behaviour of employees positively enhanced their innovative work behaviour. Another empirical study conducted by Kim and Park (2017) on Korean

organizations revealed that knowledge sharing enhances innovative work behaviour of employees. Similarly, research done in Vietnam by Phung *et al.* (2017) indicates that employees who are willing to share their knowledge enabled the organization (Hanoi University) to promote innovative work behaviour. Prior research by Akram *et al.* (2018) in China revealed that both knowledge sharing processes (knowledge donation and knowledge collection) were found to have a positive and significant impact on innovative work behaviour of the employees working in the telecommunication industry. Employees who were more interested in collecting knowledge showed better contribution towards facilitating innovative behaviour. On similar lines, Radaelli *et al.* (2014) found that employees who take interest in sharing their knowledge are more engaged in creating, promoting and implementing innovations, thus, fostering their own innovative work behaviour.

The above-mentioned studies have taken an aggregate view of knowledge sharing comprising of both tacit and explicit forms of knowledge. However, it is proposed that innovative work behaviour will be strongly influenced by tacit knowledge sharing because it enables the creation of new knowledge which can be an important contributing factor towards innovative work behaviour of employees. Moreover, sharing tacit knowledge involves mutually exchanging one's experiences, expertise and transferable skills with others which may predict employees' innovation at work. Hence, leading to the next hypothesis:

H3. Tacit knowledge sharing is positively related to innovative work behaviour.

The mediating effect of tacit knowledge sharing

Employees who are emotionally intelligent are capable of recognizing and managing their own emotions, as well as emotions in others. The development of the first hypothesis outlined a set of studies that empirically proved a positive link between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour. In fact, emotionally stable employees know how to channelize their energy towards constructive activities that enhance their intellectual development such as using innovative behaviour at work. It is proposed that emotionally intelligent employees would be involving themselves in tacit knowledge sharing to enhance their innovative work behaviour. This is because knowledge sharing facilitates social interactions that may provide employees with useful resources for their own innovations (Hansen, 1999). As we know, tacit knowledge consists of skills, experience, expertise and useful insights. When people share their valuable tacit knowledge through social interactions with their colleagues, these discussions will result in fresh ideas and in the creation of new knowledge such as new – insights, resources and tools to develop improved products and services. These new forms of tacit knowledge would enable employees to develop and implement new ideas and new ways of doing things at work. To accomplish innovative behaviour at work using their emotional intelligence, employees would be sharing their precious tacit knowledge with others. Hence, the next hypothesis is stated as:

H4. The relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour is mediated by tacit knowledge sharing (Figure 1).

Methodological approach

Sample and data collection procedure

The Indian information technology (IT) sector is in a remarkable position to lead worldwide technology innovations over the next decade. In fact, among all global IT services

companies and enterprises, the global delivery model innovation is quickly becoming an industry best practice. Interestingly, large high-tech companies have moored on this global delivery model to establish their own IT and research and development (R&D) centres in India to stimulate IT and product innovation (Jalote and Natarajan, 2019). This reflects the importance of enhancing innovative work behaviours of employees working with knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations in India. As studies exploring the role of emotional constructs in influencing innovative behaviour are quite scarce in the context of knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations, hence, these organizations were chosen in the present study. A total of nine knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations including product software, Engineering/Embedded/R&D and IT services companies registered with The National Association of Software and Services Companies were approached by the author that were located in the national capital region of India. Out of these nine organizations, five organizations agreed to participate in the study. Keeping with the limitations of time, resources and population/sample frame, the author decided to collect data using judgement sampling technique which seems suitable for the present study. The sampling unit comprises of full-time employees with minimum one-year experience at work. A total of 220 employees were purposefully approached to answer a structured survey questionnaire. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents and it was made clear that filling a questionnaire is a purely voluntary activity. To gain the confidence of the respondents and adhere to research ethics, respondents were ensured that responses will be kept anonymous. Out of total questionnaires sent out, 171 questionnaires were received from the respondents. However, two cases were highly unengaged and hence, these were eliminated from the study. Hence, 169 questionnaire responses were found to be valid for performing data analysis. Demographics summary of the respondents is presented in Table A1. The gender distribution of 169 respondents explains that 80.5% of respondents were male and rest 19.5% were female. Most respondents were in the age group of 26–30 years (62.7%) followed by 21–25 years (27.8%) and 31–35 years (9.5%). According to the level of education, 49.1% of the respondents had a post-graduate degree and 71% of respondents had up to five years of work experience.

Measures

The variables used in the research model were based on already established valid and reliable measures implying that these measures have sound psychometric properties and have already been used by other researchers in earlier studies. Nevertheless, these measures were still tested for reliability and validity to assess their suitability for the present study.

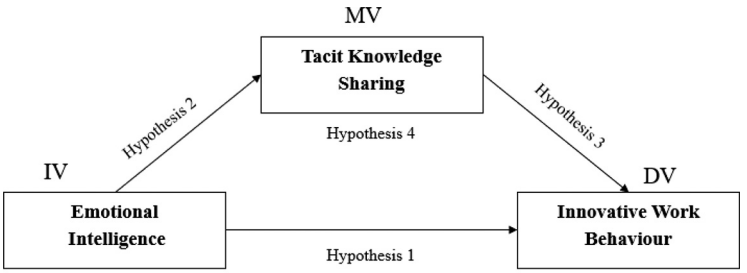

Figure 1.
Research model

Note: IV - Independent variable, DV - Dependent variable. MV - Mediating variable

Table A2 lists the survey items used to measure emotional intelligence, tacit knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour of employees.

Biographical details

This section seeks demographic information from the respondents. Respondents were requested to self-report information relating to the gender, age, level of education and work experience.

Emotional intelligence

The latent construct of emotional intelligence was measured by using a 16-item scale developed by Wong and Law (2002). It is a four-factor scale that measures self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others' emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE) and regulation of emotion (ROE). The construct was assessed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The Cronbach α for each of these factors was calculated as 0.803 for SEA, 0.815 for OEA, 0.819 for UOE and 0.831 for ROE.

Tacit knowledge sharing

Tacit knowledge sharing was measured by adopting six items from a knowledge-sharing scale developed by Reychav and Weisberg (2010). The construct was assessed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). The Cronbach α for this scale, in this study, was 0.903.

Innovative work behaviour

To measure innovative work behaviour, a nine-item scale designed by Janssen (2000) was used. Although, this scale measures three components: idea generation, promotion and implementation. Each of these components consists of three items, thus making it a nine-item scale. The three factors are combined in such a way that a higher sum of the scores indicates a higher level of innovative work behaviour (Agarwal *et al.*, 2012). Hence, these were taken as a composite factor in this study. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of performing innovative activities using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Never; 5 = Always). The Cronbach α of the combined scale was 0.906, showing internal consistency.

Data analysis and results

To perform data analysis, PLS-SEM is chosen owing to the support of the small sample size and the exploratory nature of the model (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Another reason to select PLS-SEM is the non-requirement of assumption regarding the normality of data. Also, it has been provenly used in several studies from different fields such as behavioural sciences, organization, management information system and business strategy (Wong, 2013). Firstly, IBM SPSS version 21 was used to check common method bias (CMB) and calculate inter-correlation between factors, then SmartPLS 3.0 was used to analyze the measurement (outer) model and the structural (inner) model.

Common method bias

CMB could have potentially been an issue because the data was collected from a single source of respondents using the same method, i.e. self-report measures (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The issue of CMB was checked using multiple methods. Firstly, Harman's (1976) single factor test was conducted in SPSS software by forcing all items into a single factor.

The resultant single factor explained only 29.82% of the variance, which is far less than 50%, indicating that common method variance (CMV) is not a problem. Secondly, Bagozzi *et al.* (1991) method was followed by comparing correlation values between study variables. This method suggests that the correlation value between any two study variables should not exceed 0.90. As shown in Table A3, the highest correlation between any two constructs is 0.507 which suggests that CMV is not present. Finally, collinearity test was carried out by assessing variance inflation factor (VIF) and it was found that VIF level of all factors was less than 3.3 (Kock, 2015) which shows that our model is free from CMB.

Descriptive statistics

The mean, standard deviation and inter-correlation of all the factors are shown in Table A3. All the inter-factor correlations are lower than the recommended level of 0.75, suggesting absence of multicollinearity in the data (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

Measurement model

The measurement model was tested by performing factor analysis to assess the loadings, reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of all the first-order latent variables. The results of the measurement model are shown in Tables A4 and A5. The factor loadings of the indicators ranged from 0.696 to 0.887 indicating that all the factor loadings were above the cut-off level of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The reliability was assessed using Cronbach α and composite reliability. The results of the reliability analysis show that the value of all factors was above the threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978) suggesting an acceptable level of construct validity. Next, convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE) of all first-order constructs. The values of AVE were greater than the cut-off level of 0.50 (MacKenzie *et al.*, 2011) indicating that convergent validity is achieved in this study (Table A4).

Discriminant validity was evaluated using Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) because this approach is superior to Fornell–Larcker criterion as recommended by Henseler *et al.* (2015). As the motive of discriminant validity assessment is to ensure that a reflective construct shows strongest relationships with its own items (Hair *et al.*, 2014), the HTMT values should be less than the cut-off 0.85 (Kline, 2011; Henseler *et al.*, 2015) or 0.90 (Gold and Arvind Malhotra, 2001). Table A5 presents HTMT values indicating that all factors are less than the cut-off criteria and hence, discriminant validity criterion was met in this study.

Structural model

Results of direct effects and mediation effect. The structural model depicting the direct effect of emotional intelligence and the mediation effect of tacit knowledge sharing on innovative work behaviour is shown in Figure 2. The significance of path coefficients was tested by the procedure bootstrap resampling using Smart PLS (Hair *et al.*, 2014). As shown in Table A6, emotional intelligence has a positive direct effect on innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.425$, $p < 0.001$), thus, supporting *H1*. Emotional intelligence was also found to positively effect tacit knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.380$, $p < 0.001$), thus, lending support for *H2*. Next, the effect of tacit knowledge sharing on innovative work behaviour was tested and the result showed a positive effect of tacit knowledge sharing on innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.001$), supporting *H3*. Moreover, the indirect path coefficient reveals that tacit knowledge sharing partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.136$, $p < 0.05$) because the relationship between the

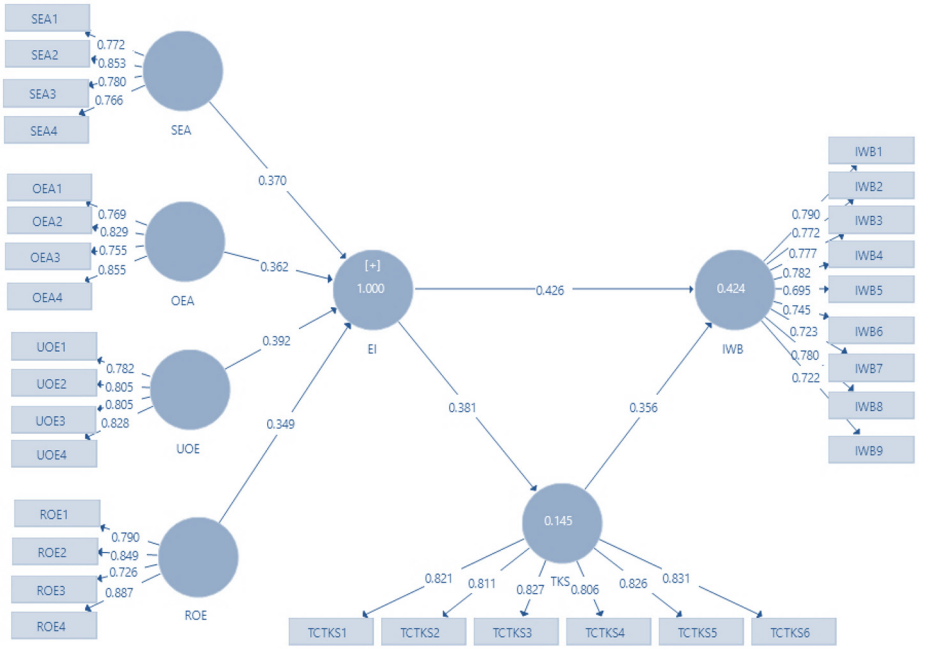

Figure 2.
Structural model with path analysis

independent variable (emotional intelligence) and dependent variable (innovative work behaviour) was significant in the presence of a mediator. Hence, *H4* is partially supported.

Results of coefficient of determination. The value of R^2 i.e. coefficient of determination explains the predictive accuracy of the structural model and yield the combined effects of all exogenous constructs on the endogenous variable (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The value of R^2 is 0.424 for innovative work behaviour which implies that 42.40% of the variance is occurring due to exogenous variables that include emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for tacit knowledge sharing is 0.145 which means 14.5% of the variation in tacit knowledge sharing is explained by emotional intelligence in this study (Table A6).

Results of substantive effect. The substantive effect size F^2 is the assessment of R^2, it refers to the circumstance when any specific predictor variable is eliminated from the research model, it examines its subsequent effect size of the eliminated variable on the outcome variable (Hair *et al.*, 2014). As indicated by Cohen (1988) the estimations of F^2 can be compared to 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 to distinguish whether the predictor (i.e. exogenous) variables have a small, medium or large effect, respectively. Table A6 shows that emotional intelligence ($F^2 = 0.268$) and tacit knowledge sharing ($F^2 = 0.188$) have a medium effect on innovative work behaviour. Similarly, emotional intelligence ($F^2 = 0.169$) has a medium effect on tacit knowledge sharing.

Discussion and theoretical implications

This study examines the influence of emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing on innovative work behaviour of employees. Emotional intelligence was found to be a significant input in enhancing innovative work behaviour of employees through the

mediated role of tacit knowledge sharing in knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations in India. This study contributes to the theory on innovative behaviour in the following ways. It adds to the current literature on innovative work behaviour by highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing in enhancing innovative behaviour at work, specifically for knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations in India. It also adds new knowledge to the existing pool by highlighting the mediating role played by tacit knowledge sharing in enhancing innovative behaviour at work. The findings revealed that emotionally intelligent employees actively engage themselves in promoting innovative work behaviour by sharing their precious tacit knowledge with other organizational members.

The findings of the study suggest that emotional intelligence is a significant contributor in positively influencing innovative work behaviour of employees ($p < 0.001$). These results are supported by previous research that have also found a positive association between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour (Dincer *et al.*, 2011; Al-Omari, 2017; Shojaei and Siuki, 2014; Dincer and Orhan, 2012; Hu and He, 2018). Emotionally intelligent employees channelize their emotional energy towards accomplishing innovation at work by generating new ideas or new ways of doing things, promoting such ideas in organizations and finally implementing them to reap the benefits. In addition, emotional intelligence has a positive effect on tacit knowledge sharing ($p < 0.001$). This finding implies that emotionally intelligent people engage in sharing tacit knowledge with others in the organization. This is likely because such people have empathy towards others and thus, are likely to help them by sharing their personal knowledge with others. Also, emotionally intelligent people experience a high-level of self-motivation which enables them to work towards constructive activities such as "knowledge sharing". The results showing the relationship between emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing agrees with previous research (Gurbuz and Araci, 2012). Also, tacit knowledge sharing was found to positively impact innovative work behaviour of employees ($p < 0.001$). This result may imply that when people exchange their tacit knowledge, it results in generation, promotion and implementation of new ideas. Certainly, mutually exchanging tacit knowledge in the form of experiences, transferable skills and expertise will lead to creation and implementation of new ideas and new ways of doing things at work, thus, accomplishing innovation at work. Finally, tacit knowledge sharing was found to partially mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour ($p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that when employees use their emotional intelligence to predict their innovative behaviour at work, they follow a path that involves sharing their precious tacit knowledge at the workplace.

Practical implications

The findings of this study provide useful insights for practitioners relating to the importance of emotional intelligence for promoting innovative work behaviour of employees in high-tech knowledge-intensive organizations in India. Firstly, high-tech organizations should focus on using the emotional intelligence level of their employees because it was found to significantly influence their innovative work behaviour. To achieve this goal, specialized emotional intelligence training and mindfulness programs can be organized. Such programs shall focus on building emotional competencies in people to create an emotionally intelligent workforce. Moreover, organizations can incorporate tests specifically designed to assess emotional intelligence and also include behavioural interview techniques in their recruitment strategy to hire emotionally intelligent candidates, in addition to the rigorous technical interviews. Secondly, the mediating role played by tacit knowledge sharing between emotional intelligence-innovative work behaviour relationship explains the route that is taken by people in organizations to enhance their innovative work behaviour

and bring fresh ideas to the organization. This calls for establishing a knowledge-sharing culture and promoting tacit knowledge sharing by organizing tech talks and open forums where individuals can share their experiences and skills with others. Hence, more opportunities should be created in organizations through which people can share their valuable "tacit knowledge" with others in the organization to reap the benefits. Organizations should focus on building systems and processes through which they can promote the exchange of tacit knowledge across the organization. In fact, when people are emotionally intelligent, it is more likely that they will engage in knowledge sharing behaviours. For example, if a co-worker is facing a difficult problem in a project and needs support, then an emotionally intelligent team member will figure it out by observing his/her facial expressions and would be willing to help because such people are high on empathic abilities. Emotionally intelligent people are also known for channelizing their energy towards constructive activities and recover quickly from psychological distress. Thus, it is obvious that they will pay more attention to solve difficult problems by trying new ways of doing things rather than sticking to a traditional path.

Limitations and directions for future research

The study although add towards a significant understanding of the direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence on innovative work behaviour of employees, yet it suffers from the following limitations. Firstly, the sample of the study provided a unique insight of employees working with knowledge-intensive high-tech companies in the private sector, if the sample is taken from other public high-tech companies it might not have generated similar results. Therefore, the results produced in this study are significant for the knowledge workers used with private high-tech organizations and these results may not be generalized to other public sector organizations. Hence, studies in future may be carried out to investigate the effects (direct and mediating) of emotional intelligence on innovative work behaviour of employees in public sector high-tech organizations. Secondly, considering the exploratory research model in this study, the use of quantitative deductive study design using cross-sectional time frame was considered appropriate. However, future research should try to adopt a longitudinal design for data collection to test the proposed relationships. This will ensure a better understanding of proper causal relationships among the variables. Thirdly, this study has used a single method (i.e. survey) and a single source for data collection, i.e. self-assessment by employees, offering a threat of CMB. Although, tests have been conducted during data analysis to check for CMB issue in this study and no major issue was reported but researchers in future should try to collect data from multiple sources such as dyads or groups to corroborate the results of this study. Moreover, for future research, the scope of the current study can be widened by testing the role of moderating variable(s) on the link between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour. This will help in understanding what factors can strengthen or weaken this relationship.

Conclusion

This study aims to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and innovative work behaviour through the mediating role of tacit knowledge sharing of employees working with knowledge-intensive high-tech organizations in India. Overall, this study determined that emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge sharing positively impacted innovative work behaviour of employees. Further, the study clearly shows that emotional intelligence-innovative work behaviour relationship was partially mediated by tacit knowledge sharing providing additional insight into how and why these variables are significant. Figure 2 shows the results of the hypothesized relationships in this study. In

totality, the research provides interesting findings in a specific setting and gives an opportunity for extending the results to other industries or other countries.

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Appendix

Table A1.
Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic characteristics	Items	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Men	136	80.5
	Women	33	19.5
Age	21–25 years	47	27.8
	26–30 years	106	62.7
	31–35 years	16	9.5
Education	Diploma	10	5.9
	Graduate	76	45
	Post-graduate	83	49.1
Experience	1–2 years	26	15.4
	2–5 years	94	55.6
	More than 5 years	49	29

Table A2.
Scale items

Emotional intelligence: Wong and Law (2002)	
SEA1	I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the times
SEA2	I have a good understanding of my own emotions
SEA3	I really understand what I feel
SEA4	I always know whether or not I am happy
OEA1	I always know my friends' emotions from their behaviour
OEA2	I am a good observer of others' emotions
OEA3	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others
OEA4	I have good understanding of the emotions of people
UOE1	I always set goals for myself and then try my best to achieve
UOE2	I always tell myself I am a competent person
UOE3	I am a self-motivating person
UOE4	I would always encourage myself to try my best
ROE1	I am able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally
ROE2	I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions
ROE3	I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry
ROE4	I have good control of my own emotions
Tacit knowledge sharing: Reychav and Weisberg (2010)	
TCTKS1	I frequently share knowledge based on my experience with other organizational members
TCTKS2	I frequently collect knowledge from other organizational members based on their experience
TCTKS3	I frequently share knowledge of know-where or know-whom with other organizational members
TCTKS4	I frequently collect knowledge of know-where or know-whom with other organizational members
TCTKS5	I frequently share knowledge based on my expertise with other organizational members
TCTKS6	I frequently collect knowledge from other organizational members based on their expertise
Innovative work behaviour: Janssen (2000)	
IWB1	I attempt to create new ideas for improvements and difficult issues
IWB2	I get involved in searching out new working methods, techniques or instruments
IWB3	I attempt to generate original solutions to problems
IWB4	I mobilize support for innovative ideas
IWB5	I work towards acquiring approval for innovative ideas
IWB6	I place efforts in making important organizational members enthusiastic for innovative ideas
IWB7	I work towards transforming innovative ideas into useful applications
IWB8	I introduce innovative ideas into the work environment in a systemic way
IWB9	I evaluate the utility of innovate ideas

	Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	SEA	4.210	0.535						
2	OEA	3.885	0.665	0.323**					
3	UOE	4.123	0.600	0.289**	0.312**				
4	ROE	3.602	0.785	0.247**	0.192*	0.287**			
5	TKS	3.812	0.675	0.326**	0.243**	0.238**	0.222**		
6	IWB	3.660	0.651	0.360**	0.369**	0.412**	0.343**	0.507**	

Notes: SEA: Self-emotion appraisal; OEA: Others' emotion appraisal; UOE: Use of emotion; ROE: Regulation of emotion; TKS: Tacit knowledge sharing; IWB: Innovative work behaviour; $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$

Table A3.
Mean, standard deviation and correlations among variables

Latent variables and items	Item loadings	Cronbach α	Composite reliability	Convergent validity "AVE"
Emotional intelligence				
Self-emotion appraisal		0.803	0.871	0.629
SEA1	0.772			
SEA2	0.853			
SEA3	0.780			
SEA4	0.766			
Others' emotion appraisal		0.815	0.879	0.645
OEA1	0.769			
OEA2	0.828			
OEA3	0.755			
OEA4	0.855			
Use of emotion		0.819	0.880	0.648
UOE1	0.781			
UOE2	0.805			
UOE3	0.805			
UOE4	0.828			
Regulation of emotion				
ROE1	0.790			
ROE2	0.849			
ROE3	0.727			
ROE4	0.887	0.831	0.888	0.665
Tacit knowledge sharing				
TKS1	0.821	0.903	0.925	0.673
TKS2	0.811			
TKS3	0.827			
TKS4	0.806			
TKS5	0.826			
TKS6	0.831			
Innovative work behaviour				
IWB1	0.791	0.906	0.922	0.570
IWB2	0.772			
IWB3	0.776			
IWB4	0.782			
IWB5	0.696			
IWB6	0.745			
IWB7	0.723			
IWB8	0.780			
IWB9	0.722			

Table A4. Result summary of the outer model showing item loadings, reliability and convergent validity of the constructs

Notes: EI: Emotional intelligence; SEA: Self-emotion appraisal; OEA: Others' emotion appraisal; UOE: Use of emotion; ROE: Regulation of emotion; TKS: Tacit knowledge sharing; IWB: Innovative work behaviour

Table A5. Discriminant validity using HTMT ratio

Analysis of HTMT ratio							
	EI	IWB	OEA	ROE	SEA	TKS	UOE
EI							
IWB	0.630						
OEA	0.814	0.428					
ROE	0.771	0.396	0.232				
SEA	0.833	0.42	0.397	0.307			
TKS	0.436	0.564	0.283	0.256	0.382		
UOE	0.844	0.483	0.381	0.352	0.356	0.279	

Notes: EI: Emotional intelligence; IWB: Innovative work behaviour; OEA: Others' emotion appraisal; ROE: Regulation of emotion; SEA: Self-emotion appraisal; TKS: Tacit knowledge sharing; UOE: Use of emotion

Table A6. Showing direct and mediation effects

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path coefficients	*t*-statistics	*p* values	Results	R^2	F^2
H1	EI → IWB	0.425***	6.562	0.000	Supported	0.424	0.268
H2	EI → TKS	0.380***	5.201	0.000	Supported	0.145	0.169
H3	TKS → IWB	0.357***	4.739	0.000	Supported		0.188
H4	EI → TKS → IWB	0.136**	3.381	0.001	Partial mediation		

Notes: ***$p < 0.001$; **$p < 0.05$; EI: emotional intelligence; TKS: tacit knowledge sharing; IWB: innovative work behaviour

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