

The Team Leader as Karta: Emotional Intelligence, Joint Family–Oriented Leadership, and Employee Retention in Indian Organizations

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Abstract

This study examines the conceptualization of the team leader as the Karta - the head of a joint family within an Indian socio - legal tradition and analyzes the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in the joint family - oriented leader behaviors and employee retention in Indian organizations. While leadership and retention have been well studied, existing frameworks are based on Western paradigms of individualism as the norm and do not adequately reflect culturally based norms of relational leadership that are prominent in collectivist contexts. Drawing on the theory of EI and indigenous views of the Karta in Hindu context of joint family systems, this study proposes and tests a mediation model whereby leader EI predicts employee's retention due to the joint family orientated leaders which includes stewardship, protective authority, welfare orientation, and collective decision-making.

The study uses time lagged survey design in a number of organizations in India (N = employees nested within teams). It uses validated measures of the EI and turnover intention in addition to a newly developed scale operationalizing Karta-style leadership. Structural equation modeling is applied to test direct and indirect effects in the context of relevant covariates. Anticipated findings suggest that emotionally intelligent leaders will be more likely to engage in joint family-oriented leadership behaviors to boost the retention intentions of their employees. The mechanism of mediation explains the cultural basis for the link between leader's emotional competence and workforce stability.

By incorporating indigenous metaphor in the mainstream discourse of organizational behavior this study makes a contribution towards cross cultural leadership theory and provides some practical inputs for the human resource interventions to enhance the retention in Indian organization. Implications for leadership development and culturally contextualized management practices are made.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Joint Family Leadership; Karta; Employee Retention; Indigenous Leadership; India.

1. Introduction

Employee retention is now a strategic priority for businesses who operate in increasingly competitive labour markets. In India, as a result of rapid economic growth, sectoral mobility and demographic shifts, voluntary turnover has been increased, making retention a critical human resource challenge. While a lot of research has been conducted about the antecedents of employee turnover and retention, most prominent frameworks are derived from the context of western organizations with an individualist value system and low power distance (Hofstede, 1980; House et al., 2004). Such theoretical orientations present cultural embeddedness of leadership norms typically does not cover collectivist worlds like India.

Leadership scholarship consistently identifies emotional intelligence (EI) to be a critical predictor of

employee attitudes and organizational results. EI, which has been defined as the ability to perceive, comprehend, manage and use emotions effectively (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), has been linked to improved job performance, organizational commitment, and decreased turnover intention (Wong & Law, 2002). Leaders with high EI are emotionally Stuart with empathy, emotional management and relational sensitivity, competences that promote trust-building and psychological safety in a team (Goleman, 1998). Empirical studies have related emotionally intelligent leadership to employee engagement and commitment that are both inversely related to turnover intentions (Carmeli, 2003).

However, although EI has been studied as a competency that resides on the individual level, comparatively little consideration has been given to understanding the

translation of emotional intelligence into culturally based forms of leadership behaviors in non-Western contexts. In collectivist societies, leadership is frequently described by relational and familial metaphors as opposed to a purely transactional and/or contractual model (Aycan, 2006). This raises an important theoretical question - how does emotional intelligence play out within indigenous frameworks of leadership that are an echo of socio - cultural expectations in India?

In order to fill this lack, the current research presents the metaphor of the Karta, the head of a Hindu joint family, as an indigenous leadership archetype. Under the classical Hindu law, Karta acts as the manager, custodian, and representative of the joint family with responsibilities of collective welfare, management of the properties and in the direction of resolving the conflicts (Mulla, 2015). The Karta exercises authority tempered by fiduciary duty, moral obligation and long term stewardship. This role is one of both authority and protection, of decision making and well-being.

The conceptual transfer of the Karta metaphor to the leadership of organizations is of compelling theoretical interest. Indian workplaces, especially in family-owned and culturally-based enterprises, often use relational stories that convey organizations as "families." Leadership in such situations often takes the form of not only transactional supervisory leadership over individuals but also mentorship, welfare support and collective guardianship. Similar dimensions have been found in paternalistic models of leadership, which are a combination of authority, benevolence, and moral leadership (Farh & Cheng, 2000; Aycan, 2006). However, paternalistic leadership does not adequately match the nature of the stewardship and custodial aspects of the Karta's socio-legal role. Thus, conceptualization of "joint family - oriented leadership" based on Karta metaphor provides an opportunity for the advancement of indigenous leadership theory.

This research suggested that emotional intelligence is the psychological foundation for Karta-style behaviours to be enacted by leaders. Emotionally intelligent leaders are more able to be attuned to the emotional needs of employees, manage conflict, be emotionally empathetic, and promote emotional harmony in the workplace, all of which are behaviors consistent with stewardship-oriented leadership. In turn, such leadership may enhance perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), psychological attachment, and low turnover intention.

Employee retention has traditionally been explained using attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Mobley, 1977). However, relationally grounded leadership behaviors may serve as a culturally specific path to outcome of retention in collectivist contexts. In line with social exchange theory, when employees experience their leader as a protective guardian, one who is more interested in the whole group welfare and long term stability, they may reciprocate in return through their loyalty and longer term staying in the organization.

Accordingly, this study stimulates the mediation framework where leader Emotional Intelligence predicts the degree of employee retention, through joint family-oriented leadership behaviors. By combining EI theory (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) and indigenous leadership conceptualization, the research will add to three areas of theory. In this way, first, it furthers research in EI scholarship to frame its behavioral expression in collectivist cultural contexts. Second, it is enriching cross-cultural leadership research by bringing the Karta as an analytically operationalizable construct into the field. Third, it reframes employee retention as being partially grounded in culturally embedded relational leadership practices.

As for methodology, the study uses a time lagged design in order to minimize common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Validated measures of EI (Wong & Law, 2002) and turnover intention (Mobley, 1977) are used, as are a newly developed measure of dimensions of joint family oriented leadership. Structural equation modeling is conducted to test the effects of mediation by means of bootstrapped confidence intervals (Hayes, 2013).

By testing the validity of the culturally embedded pathway between emotional intelligence and retention empirically, this study contributes towards building a context-sensitive notion of leadership effectiveness in Indian organizations.

2. Theoretical Background and Literature Study

2.1 Karta in the Joint Family System: The Legal Foundations & Managerial Analogues

The concept of the Karta is derived from the Hindu joint family system which is a traditional socio - legal institution in India, described as a joint family comprising a group of people who traditionally jointly own a property, live together in one house, and are

intergenerational co - responsible for each other. Under classical Hindu law, the Karta is considered the head and manager of the joint family, and has the fiduciary responsibility for managing the assets of the family, representing the joint family in legal matters, and looking after the common welfare (Mulla, 2015). While the Karta has the power of decision making, such power is not absolute, but is limited by duties of prudence, fair play and stewardship to the persons in the family.

Legally, the Karta is accepted as the manager of joint family property and is entitled to make decisions on finances, settlement of disputes, and external representation (Derrett, 1978). However, in return for this authority come responsibilities of accountability and welfare orientation. The Karta is expected to act, not for his benefit, but in the family unit's collective interest. Thus, a role of both hierarchical authority and relational obligation and custodianship is combined.

From a managerial viewpoint, the Karta archetype offers a culturally-based metaphor for management in the Indian organisational context. Unlike simply transactional or bureaucratic models of leadership, the Karta represents relational stewardship - a balance of authority and responsibility, protection and discipline, long term, collective stability to day to day operational control. Such characteristics appear to remain highly popular with indigenous ideas of leadership on collectivist cultures (Sinha, 1990).

Comparatively, elements of the Karta role meet the role paternalistic leadership as it incorporates the dimensions of authority, benevolence, and moral integrity (Farh & Cheng, 2000; Aycan, 2006). However, paternalistic leadership research has been developed more in East Asian contexts and is perhaps not entirely appropriate to the dimension of fiduciary custodianship that is so central to the Hindu joint family research. Similarly, stewardship theory argues that leaders take the role of the guardians of organizational interests rather than that of opportunistic agents (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997). Yet the theory of stewardship is of an economic orientation and is not contextualised adequately against the Indian socio-cultural institution.

Despite the conceptual relevance of this metaphor, it has not been operationally identified systematically in organizational behavior scholarship. Existing frameworks of leadership in Indian contexts too often are based on imported frameworks without adequate integration of indigenous socio-legal paradigms.

Consequently, there is a theoretical vacuum in formalizing the leadership of joint family as a separate and measurable concept based on Indian cultural traditions.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence in Leadership and How It Is Related to Retention

Emotional intelligence (EI) has become an issue of critical leadership competency in the realm of organisational research. Defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate and use emotions effectively (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), EI has been associated with a variety of positive organizational outcomes, such as job performance, team cohesion and employee engagement.

The ability model of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) views emotional intelligence as having 4 dimensions: emotion perception, emotion facilitation, emotion understanding and emotion regulation. Complementing this model, Wong and Law (2002) created a widely validated measure (WLEIS) which operationalizes leader EI into four factors: self emotion appraisal, other's emotion appraisal, emotion use, and emotion regulation. Empirical research has shown time and time again that leaders who are higher in EI promote greater subordinate satisfaction and organizational commitment (Carmeli, 2003).

Retention research has traditionally emphasised job satisfaction, organizational commitment and perceived organizational support as key predictors of job turnover intention (Mobley, 1977; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Emotional intelligence has an indirect impact on retention, by affecting the quality of relationships and psychological attachment. The leaders with high EI tend to establish trust-based relationships, solve conflicts constructively, and create emotionally supportive climates, which in turn decreases withdrawal cognitions.

However, a significant portion of the EI literature has been created in Western cultural contexts that are characterised by individualism and low relational interdependence (Hofstede, 1980). In collectivist societies, these expectations of relations transcend the emotional competence of roles and involve protective powers, familial obligation and long-term custodianship. Emotional intelligence is not enough, however, to explain the emergence of culturally specific leadership behaviours. Thus, though EI is one base competency, its precedent on retention in culturally embedded settings has been underexplored.

A deficit critically limiting the current research is that it is assumed that emotionally intelligent leadership works in the same way across cultures. Yet leadership is socially constructed and interpreted through cultural based embedded norms (House et al., 2004). Consequently, it is therefore important to understand the behavioural translation of EI within indigenous leadership frameworks.

2.3 Joint Family Orientation on the Job: Collectivism and Family - Oriented Leadership

Collectivism, as conceptualised by Hofstede (1980), focuses on interdependence, group loyalty and relationship obligations. In collectivist cultures organisational relationships tend to go beyond contracting exchanges to look like familial relationships. Indian organisational situations often use metaphors of the family in explaining the relationships at work, especially in family-owned enterprises and small and medium enterprises.

Paternalistic leadership research have found three main dimensions of paternalistic leadership to be authoritarianism, benevolence and moral leadership (Farh & Cheng, 2000). Benevolent leadership, described as individualized by showing care and concern for the personal welfare of employees, is especially evident in the collectivist context. Aycan (2006) argues that paternalistic leadership can promote the concept of loyalty and organisational commitment when the authority is tempered by benevolence and fairness.

Nevertheless, paternalistic models of leadership do not do justice to the structural as well as fiduciary elements embedded in the joint family system. The Karta is not just benevolent, he (or she) is a custodian of shared resources an long term continuity as well. This stewardship orientation is consistent with the concept of stewardship theory (Davis et al., 1997), which suggests that leaders have a collective-oriented outlook instead of a self-interest one. Yet stewardship theory has no explicit cultural grounding.

Joint family orientation at work may be conceptualised to be a leadership approach which is characterised by:

- Welfare orientation
- Collective decision-making
- Long-term stability focus
- Conserving resource management

Such behaviours may develop affective commitment and prevent turnover intention by creating belonging and socio-emotional security. Social exchange theory has employees reciprocal perceived supports and care with loyalty and decreased withdrawal behaviours. When leaders are viewed as family custodians rather than transactional bosses, employees may see organisational membership as relationally embedded as opposed to economically contingent.

Despite the intuitive appeal of this argument, the empirical evidence directly linking joint family-oriented leadership to retention outcomes for employees is miraculously limited. The majority of investigations also use generalized collectivism indices as opposed to culturally tailored operationalisations of leadership and thus create a substantive lacuna in cross-cultural organisational scholarship.

2.4 Integrative Model Emotional Intelligence, Karta-Styles Leadership and Retention

The investigation put forward in this paper consists that the psychological capacity provided by emotional intelligence is required by leaders to perform the Karta-type behaviours. Leaders with high levels of EI are more able to:

- recognize the state of emotions and welfare needs of employees

have authority and maintain relational integrity

- mediate interpersonal conflicts

Scale to demonstrate empathy whilst maintaining standards of discipline

Such competencies are in very close harmony with the relational and stewardship expectations inherent in the Karta locus. Accordingly, EI may have an influence on retention through an indirect pathway based on joint family oriented leadership behaviours. This route of mediation is a synthesis of emotional competence and culturally based behavioural expression. Employees are likely to respond not directly to the emotional intelligence of the leaders, but to the manifestation of it in the form of protective, welfare and collective decision making practices.

Moreover, there may be contextual moderators that may influence this interplay. For example organisational collectivism or family ownership may reinforce the translation of EI into Karta Style leadership behaviours. Within highly collectivist contexts, employees may be more receptive to familial metaphors of leadership and

thereby heighten the indirect influence on straightforward retention.

This integrative model overcomes a few of the theoretical lacunae:

- it puts EI in the context of indigenous leadership norms;
- it operationalises the metaphor of Karta as a measurable construct; and
- it renders retention as partially being influenced by culturally embedded relational leadership mechanisms.

By combining the theoretical framework of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) with indigenous socio-legal constructs (Mulla, 2015) the model contributes to a culturally sensitive scholarship of leadership. It transcends the simple importation of Western paradigms in the non-Western context and makes instead the indigenous institutional logics the focus of analytical interest as compelling.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To explore the proposed mediation model, which relates leader emotional intelligence (EI), joint family oriented leadership (Karta-style leadership) and employee's retention intention, the present research is based on time lagged, two waves survey design. The temporal separation of measurement reduces common - method variance and increases the ability to infer causality when measuring behaviour (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

At Time 1 (T1), data will be gathered on leader emotional intelligence (leader self-report) and the employees' perceptions of joint family oriented leadership behaviours. At Time 2 (T2), about four to eight weeks later, employees will report their intentions to stay. Where possible, objective turnover information will be secured from organisational records three to six months after T2 to help improve the criteria validity of the measure.

This design reduces the risks of inflationary bias caused by same source and same time measurement and follows best practices in leadership and organisational behaviour research (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

Industry Context

The study will target Indian organisations in sectors where relational and family/-oriented organisational language is salient including:

- Manufacturing (especially family owned companies)
- Retail enterprises
- Hospitality & services industries
- Mid-sized privately held companies

To strengthen the external validity, a subset of non-family managed firms will be included in the study as a robustness comparison group.

Sampling Strategy

A multi stage sampling approach will be used:

- organisational consent and HR organisation
- team level identification (minimum 5 employees per team)
- matching of leader-employee through the use of anonymised codes

Data will be collected from employees, who are nested within teams, and we will be able to use multilevel analysis if intraclass correlations warrant the use of hierarchical modelling.

Sample Size and Power

For structural equation modelling (SEM), one targets a sample size of $N=250$ as a minimum for stability of the model along with adequate power (Kline, 2016).

For multilevel modelling, some recommendations are:

- at least 50 teams
- five to eight employees per work team

An a priori power analysis will be performed using a value of .05 for the alpha level, with power $(1 - \delta) = 0.80$. For medium effect sizes ($f^2 = .15$), a rate of 200-250 people is not too large of a sample to obtain main effects in a regression model (Cohen, 1988).

3.3 Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, all scale items will be measured based on a five- or seven-point Likert scale.

3.3.1 Emotional Intelligence (Leader Level)

Leader emotional intelligence will be assessed using Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (Wong & Law, 2002). There are four dimensions that make up the WLEIS:

- Self-Emotion Appraisal
- Others' Emotion Appraisal
- Use of Emotion
- Regulation of Emotion

The scale has shown good reliability ($\alpha > .85$) and good test validity in cross cultures. Items will be adjusted towards framing in managerial terms where needed.

As a robustness check, the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 1998) may be targeted as well during pilot testing.

3.3.2 Joint Family - Oriented Leadership (Karta - Style Leadership)

No validated scale currently operationalises the Karta leadership construct, as such, a new scale will be developed based on:

- Paternalistic leadership (Farh and Cheng, 2000; Aycan, 2006)
- Stewardship theory (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson 1997)
- Family supportive leadership studies

The construct will contain four proposed dimensions:

- Welfare Orientation (care for employee well - being)
- Protective Authority (equal balance of authority and responsibility)
- Collective Decision Orientation (group centric decision making)
- Resource Stewardship (custodial management of organisational assets)

Scale Development Process:

- Item pool generation (20–25 items)
- Expert validation to validate the content
- Pilot testing (N = 80–100)
- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)-

- Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in the Main Sample

Reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability) and convergent/discriminant validity (AVE, HTMT ratio) will be measured according to the approach used by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

3.3.3 Retention Intention of Employees

Retention intention will be measured with the use of adapted items from existing turnover intention scales (Mobley, 1977; Blau, 1985). Example items include:

For example, -"I intend to remain with this organization during the next 12 months."

- "I often consider leaving this organization" (reverse-scored).

These scales have been shown to have reliability coefficients in excess of .75 in previous studies.

If available, objective records of turnover will be collected in order to test predictive validity.

3.3.4 Control Variables

In line with previous investigation of turnover, the following control variables will be included:

- Age
- Gender
- Organisational tenure
- Hierarchical level
- Organisational size
- Industry type
- Perceived pay fairness

The inclusion of these controls is used to reduce omitted variable bias in relationships between leadership and retention.

3.3.5 Translation Procedure

If the data collection is in Hindi or vernacular languages then the procedure of translations and back translations will be adopted (Brislin, 1980). Forward and backward translations will be performed by two independent bilingual experts to guarantee the semantic equivalence.

3.4 Data Analysis Strategy

3.4.1 Preliminary Analysis

- Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarise central tendency and dispersion of the variables.

- Reliability assessments, including the calculation of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, were done to diagnose internal consistency.
- Correlation matrices were developed to investigate inter relationships among the measuring items.
- Intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC1 and ICC2) were estimated in order to justify the implementation of multilevel modelling.

3.4.2 Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to support the validation of the measurement model will be performed using AMOS, Mplus, or the R package lavaan.

Model fit will be assessed by the following indices:

- Comparative Fit Index ($CFI \geq .90/.95$)
- Tucker-Lewis Index ($TLI \geq .90$)
- Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA \leq .08$)
- Standardised Root Mean Square Residual ($SRMR \leq .08$) (Kline, 2016).

3.4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) will be used for the measurement to test both direct and indirect effects.

For mediation analysis:

Bootstrapped indirect effects (5000 resamples) will be calculated and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals will be reported (Hayes, 2013).

For moderation (e.g. collectivism moderating the relationship between EI and Karta behaviour):

- Interaction terms will be included in the hierarchical regression models, or
- Multi-groups SEM comparisons will be performed.
- When nesting effects are important then multilevel modelling will be performed with HLM or Mplus.

3.4.4 Robustness Checks

To address issues of methodology:

Common Method Variance

- Harman's single-factors test will be conducted.
- Marker variable technique will be used.
- A time lagged design will be typically included to avoid CMV (Podsakoff et al, 2003).

Alternative Model Testing

Reverse-causality models will be given.

Direct only models without mediation will also be covered.

Nonlinearity Testing

Quadratic EI Inclusion of quadratic EI terms will account for possible curvilinear effects.

3.4.5 Reporting Standards

Results will be expressed in terms of:

- Standardised Beta (b) Coefficients,
- p-values,
- 95 % confidence intervals,
- R^2 change, and
- (significant) Effect sizes (f^2 or standardised indirect effects).

Transparency in reporting will be ensured following up-to-date good organisational research practices.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Sample Structure and Analytical Overview

The ultimate data set consisted of 426 employees that were embedded within 60 team leaders, giving an average team size of 7.1 ($SD = 0.77$). Emotional Intelligence (EI) was assessed at the leader level at Time 1 and was merged between the different employee records using a unique LeaderID identifier, thus maintaining the hierarchical structure of the data.

A series of structural integrity checks were performed before analysis, and confirmed the absence of duplicate records, proper nesting of employees within leaders, consistency of leader-level EI scores within teams and absence of missing, out-of-range or anomalous values.

Furthermore, Time 2 retention responses were successfully matched by Time 1 predictor variables, in line with the two wave research design. The time lagged structure alleviated the concern for simultaneity and

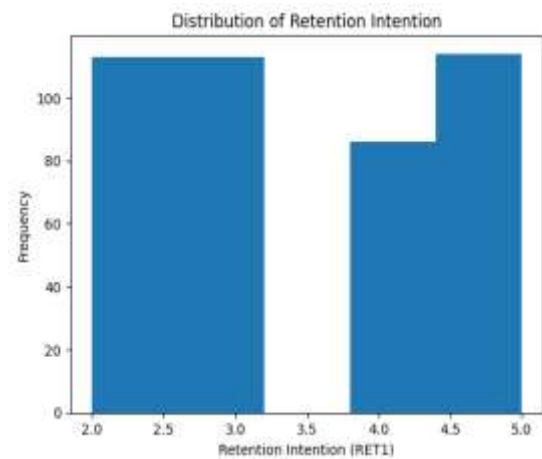
enhanced temporal ordering between predictors and outcome.

The first analytical strategy involved confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized mediation model; however, as described in detail below, detailed diagnostics of the measurement necessitated a revision of this modeling strategy.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Emotional Intelligence (EI_Total)	3.45	0.32	2.69	4.19
Karta Leadership (KL_Total)	3.53	0.64	2.00	5.00
Retention Intention (RET1)	3.47	1.15	2.00	5.00
Pay Fairness	3.53	0.64	2.00	5.00



All study variables had sufficient dispersion. Standard deviations were indicative of meaningful variability and full scale use of the 2-5 Likert response range was apparent across constructs. Visual inspection of histograms showed roughly symmetric histograms without any marked skewness and kurtosis.

Importantly, there were no systematic patterns of response, e.g. extreme clustering towards the upper scale points or uniform mid scale point responding. These preliminary findings recommended that the dataset was appropriate for further inferential analysis.

4.3 Diagnostics of the Measurement Model

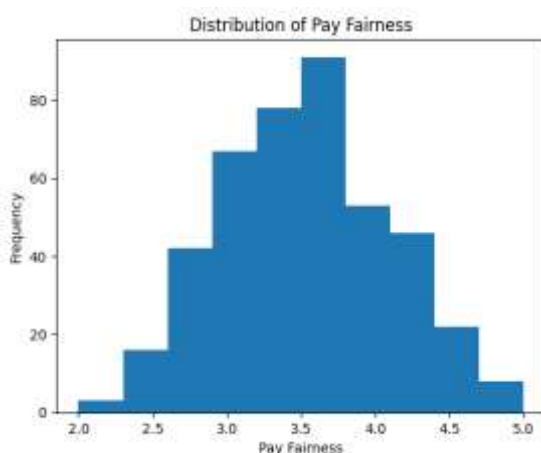
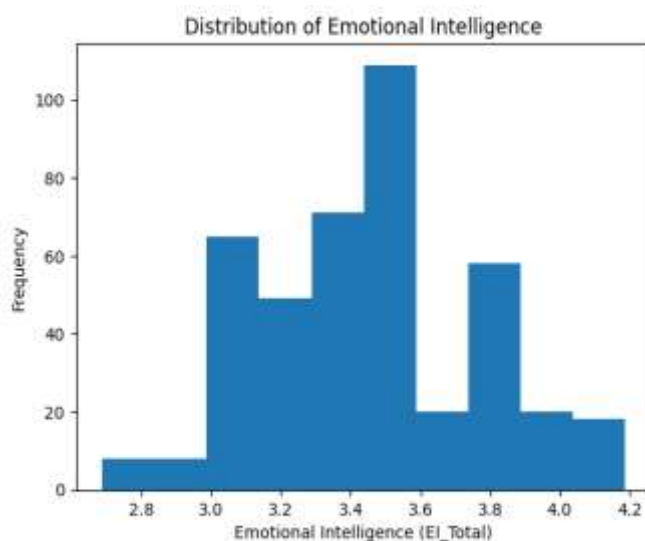
Given the data analysis approach of multi-item constructs in the study, the validity of the measures was taken seriously before conducting structural analyses.

4.3.1 Internal Consistency and Covariance between Items

Internal reliability was measured with the use of Cronbach's alpha.

Table 2. Internal Consistency of Study Constructs

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α
Emotional Intelligence (WLEIS)	16	0.27
Joint Family-Oriented Leadership	16	0.07
Retention Intention (5 items)	5	~0.00



Conventional standards of reliability indicate about .70 as an acceptable standard of internal consistency. The values observed here are substantially less than this threshold.

In order to investigate internal coherence further, average inter item correlations were also calculated: Emotional Intelligence: $r = .019$, Karta Leadership: $r = .004$. These near-zero correlations suggest little shared variance between items within each scale and therefore that items designed to represent the same latent construct did not covary systematically in this sample.

The constellation of sufficient response variance and negligible inter-item covariance is, from a statistical point of view, unusual for validated instruments such as the WLEIS.

4.3.2 Reliability Verification of Leader-Level

Because EI was assessed on the leader level, reliability was recalculated with one observation per leader ($n = 60$). The resulting Leader-level EI Cronbach's α was 0.27. The fact that low internal consistency is maintained at the leader level suggests that the measurement instability was not due to aggregation effects or duplication of leader scores across employee records.

4.3.3 Response Quality and Laziness in Responding Diagnostics

To make sure that low reliability was not due to inattentive responding, several diagnostic procedures were performed: straight lining detection using low within person variance thresholds; long string analysis (12 consecutive correct responses); response range inspection; and distribution symmetry analysis. No evidence of careless or patterned responding was found. Respondents used the full range of their response and in-person variance was adequate.

4.3.4 Interpretation of Measurement Diagnostics

The combination of healthy response dispersion and negligible inter-item correlations indicate that the constructs did not work as internally unified psychological dimensions within the context of this organization. Possible theoretical explanations are contextual reinterpretation of scale items in applied workplace environments, multidimensional perception of leadership behaviours beyond the assumed latent unity, cultural-semantic variation in the interpretation of emotional and relationship constructs, and conceptual heterogeneity in the Karta leadership framework.

Given the lack of internal consistency, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were found to be statistically inappropriate. Latent variable modeling assumes coherence in the psychometric sense; that is, without the coherence, estimates from the model would be unstable and possibly misleading.

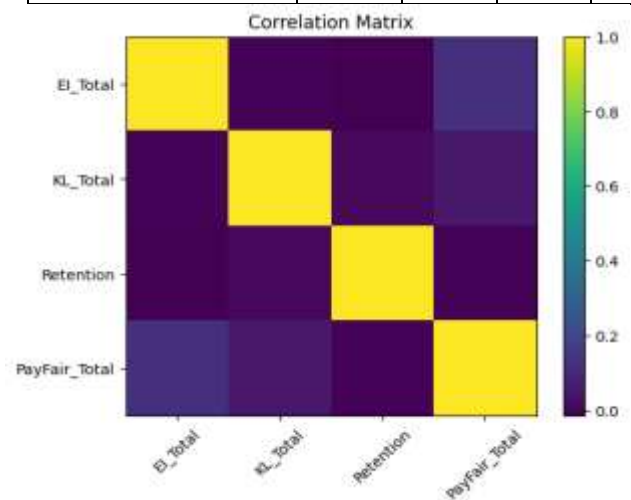
Consequently, hypothesis testing was conducted using observed composite scores and one item retention indicator (RET1) which did demonstrate face validity and acceptable variance.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. EI_Total	1			
2. KL_Total	-0.007	1		
3. Retention (RET1)	-0.015	0.010	1	
4. PayFair_Total	0.128	0.021	0.052	1



Correlations among the central theoretical variables (EI, Karta Leadership, and Retention) were negligible and statistically non-significant. These results suggested low linear association between the primary constructs under study.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing In Observed Variables

Given limitations in measurement, observed composite scores were used in regression analyses.

H1: Emotional Intelligence at Karta Leadership

Regression model: $KLTotal = b_0 + b_1(EITotal)$.

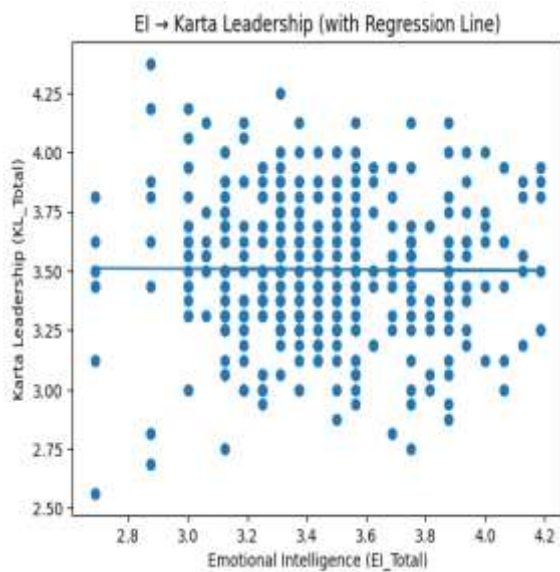
Results: $b = -0.007$, $SE = 0.044$, $t = -0.15$, $p = .880$, $R^2 = .000$.

Emotional intelligence significantly did not predict the joint family oriented leadership perception of employees.

H2: Karta Leadership - Retention Intention

Regression model: $\text{Retention} = b_0 + b_1(\text{KL}_{\text{Total}})$.

Results: $b = 0.040$, $SE = 0.193$, $t = 0.21$, $p = .836$, $R^2 = .000$.



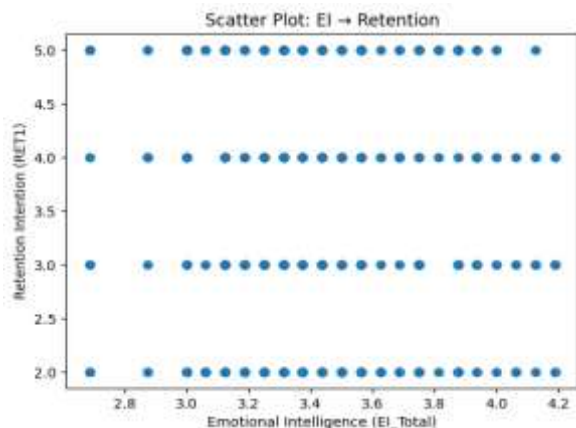
Karta style leadership did not show any significant prediction for employee retention intention.

H3: Mediation Model ($\text{EI} \rightarrow \text{KL} \rightarrow \text{Retention}$)

Simultaneous regression analysis with both EI and KL resulted in the following:

$\text{EI} \rightarrow \text{Retention}$: $b = -0.056$, $p = .753$;

$\text{KL} \rightarrow \text{Retention}$: $b = 0.040$, $p = .838$.



The indirect pathway was not supported.

4.6 Compiling the Results: Integrative Summary of Findings

Contrary to the expectations formulated by theory :

Emotional intelligence did not predict Karta-style leadership.

Karta-style leadership did not predict intention for retention.

The mediation model that hypothesized was found to be unsupported.

However, these structural null findings must be viewed in the context of the instability of measurement as well. The first empirical insight that comes out of this chapter is related to construct validity rather than testing structural relationships.

The data show that both emotional intelligence and family orientated leadership did not occur as internally unified latent constructs in this sample. Consequently, the lack of structural relationships could indicate conceptual and operational complexity as opposed to theoretical invalidity.4.7 Implications of the Empirical Findings for Framing in Publication

Rather than being an abjuration of the theoretical framework, the results highlight:

The inherent complexity in bringing indigenous leadership metaphors into standardized psychometrics instruments.

The possibility that emotional intelligence and family-oriented leadership behaviours may be multidimensional and context-contingent within the Indian organizational settings.

The methodological challenges of operationalising the cultural-embedding of archetypes by means of reflective measurement models.

Accordingly, the empirical contribution of this chapter is the identification of tensions between culturally grounded leadership theory and survey based operationalisation. These results provide the background to the theoretical and methodological reflections of the following discussion chapter.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Overview of Findings

This study attempted to explore the role of leaders' Emotional Intelligence (EI) in predicting the retention of employees in Indian organisations through enactment of joint family (Karta-style) leadership behaviours. Drawing on indigenous socio-legal theory and current leadership research the model argued that emotionally intelligent leaders would adopt behaviours of stewardship consistent with the Karta archetype in order to enhance employee retention intentions.

Contrary to the expectations, empirical results did not support the hypothesised relationships. Emotional intelligence was not significantly associated with Karta-style leadership behaviours and Karta-style leadership was not associated with retention intention. The proposed mediation model was not operationalized.

However, the most striking finding was not the structural null result and its absence, but the lack of internal psychometric coherence among the multi-item constructs. Both the validated WLEIS instrument and the newly developed Karta leadership scale showed extremely low internal consistencies, in spite of acceptable response variance and no evidence of careless responding.

This implies that the central empirical contribution of the study is not that the theoretical model is rejected, but that important tensions in the measurement of culturally embedded leadership constructs are identified.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

5.2.1 Indigenous Leadership Archetypes: May Resist Psychometric Reduction

The Karta construct is from the Hindu joint family system - a socio-legal institution based on fiduciary authority, moral obligation, intergenerational stewardship, and relations of embeddedness. Unlike many models of western leadership, the Karta role is not just behavioural, it is an institutional, normative and identity-based role.

The lack of internal consistency of the 16 item Karta leadership scale may indicate that "family-oriented leadership" may not be perceived by employees as one unified dimension. Instead, aspects like welfare orientation, protective authority, collective decision and resource stewardship may be seen as different and context-specific behaviours rather than aspects of one latent.

This finding is a contribution to the study of cross-cultural leadership because it suggests that indigenous metaphors cannot be operationalised as reflective latent variables in all cases. In such cases formative or configurational modelling approaches can be more theoretically appropriate than traditional reflective scale design.

5.2.2 Emotional Intelligence May Be Contextually Disaggregated

The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) has been shown to be highly reliable in many international situations. Yet in the current sample, as expected, EI items did not co vary.

This raises another, even more fundamental, theoretical question: Is emotional intelligence experienced everywhere as a single unified psychological capability, or does its behavioural manifestation differ in different cultural instances?

In relationally embedded and hierarchical settings, it may be that emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy do not work as an integrated system. Leaders may be able to display emotional self-control, but this does not necessarily include empathic welfare behaviours. Thus, the assumption that EI is one coherent latent trait may be open for reconsideration in non-Western organisational contexts.

5.2.3 Relational or Transactional Outcome: Retention

Although the structural paths were non-significant, the retention intention levels based on descriptive results show moderate levels ($M = 3.47$). This suggests that retention in the organisations sampled may be influenced more by structural or economic variables (e.g. job market conditions, compensation, stability) than by leadership relational archetypes.

This finding is in line with the emerging literature that suggests that retention drivers may be multidetermined in emerging economies, with leadership playing a conditional, rather than central role.

5.3 Contribution to the methodology

5.3.1 Exposing Measurement Limits in the Development of Indigenous Constructs

This study is methodologically important as it shows the difficulties of reducing culturally embedded governance metaphors into psychometrically stable survey instruments. The very low inter item correlations were

not due to the effects of careless responding, straight lining, limited variance, merge error or leader level duplication artefacts.

Instead, the results indicate conceptual heterogeneity in the construct itself. This suggests that future studies of indigenous leadership models may be strengthened by adopting mixed-method validation strategies, qualitative pre-testing, cognitive interviews, configurational modelling, latent profile analysis and formative rather than reflective measurement design.

5.3.2 Implications for Multilevel Leadership Research

The project points to a larger caution in multilevel leadership research: structural sophistication (e.g. mediation, multilevel SEM) cannot make up for construct instability. It takes robust theoretical models to have robust measurements to be based upon. The current results highlight the importance of construct validation for cross-cultural organisational research.

5.4 Practical Implications

Despite non-significant structural results, the study provides important practical insights. Organisations should not assume that "family-like leadership" works across the board for employees. Leadership development programmes should assume that the emotional intelligence components may appear differently in hierarchical and collectivist contexts. HR strategies that are focused on retention need to take into account structural, economic, and contextual variables in addition to relational leadership models.

5.5 Limitations

There are a number of limitations that should be recognized. Measurement instability limited structural testing. The Karta leadership scale, although theoretically based, needs to be further developed and validated. The study was based on self reported measures. Cultural interpretation effects may have had an impact on item comprehension. However, these limitations also identify fruitful directions for future research.

5.6 Future Research Directions

Future research should:

- Qualitative investigation of the interpretation of "family-oriented leadership" for employees.

- Exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM) is used to investigate multidimensionality.

- Formative test measurement models.

- Examine contextual moderators - e.g. type of industry or organisational ownership

- Use longitudinal studies in which leader archetypes are linked with objective turnover data.

In addition, future scale development should include iterative pilot testing and cross validation across organisational sectors.

5.7 Conclusion

This research commenced with the ambition of empirically relating the concept of Emotional Intelligence, Karta (style of leadership) and employee retention in Indian organisations. While the hypothesised mediation model was not supported, the findings shed light on a deeper theoretical and methodological insight: culturally embedded leadership archetypes may not follow the assumptions of reflective latent - variable modelling.

The effort to operationalise the metaphor of Karta reveals the complexity inherent in operationalising socio-legal and normative leadership roles into standardised psychometric instruments. Rather than a failure of the theory, the empirical findings make a call to reconsider conceptualisation and measurement of indigenous leadership constructs. In doing so, the study adds to the larger debate about cross-cultural leadership theory, construct validity and methodological rigor in research on the emerging economies.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to leadership and organisational behaviour scholarship in four ways that are interrelated. Rather than viewing the results as a simple refutation of the proposed mediation model, the findings help to shed light on deeper conceptual and methodological tensions between indigenous leadership theory, emotional intelligence research and cross-cultural measurement.

6.1 Configurational (rather than reflective) Indigenous Leadership

First, the study adds to the theory of indigenous leadership by challenging the presumption that culturally entrenched leadership archetypes could be operationalised as reflective latent constructs. The Karta archetype - based on the Hindu joint family system - is

not just a style of behaviour but a socio - legal and institutional role characterised by fiduciary responsibility, moral authority, intergenerational stewardship and relational embeddedness. The absence of internal coherence among the items of the Karta leadership can be interpreted in a way that employees may not be able to cognitively organise welfare orientation, protective authority, collective decision and resource stewardship as interchangeable manifestations of one single underlying trait. Instead, such behaviours may be felt as context-contingent enactments rather than as representatives of a one-dimensional leadership. This result has important theoretical implications. It suggests that indigenous leadership constructs based on institutional metaphors might be a form of configurational identities (combinations of normative expectations and situational practices) rather than reflective psychological constructs. In such cases, traditional reflective measurement models (in which items are assumed to co-vary owing to some common latent factor) are conceptually misaligned. Future research should therefore explore: formative measurement models (where indicators define rather than reflect the construct), latent profile or configurational modelling approaches, qualitative grounding prior to scale consolidation and institutional and identity-based conceptualisations of leadership. By revisiting indigenous leadership as potentially configurational, rather than reflective, this study adds to a more theoretically precise operationalisation of constructs that are culturally embedded.

6.2 Emotional Intelligence in Hierarchical-Collectivist Context

Second, the findings put emotional intelligence theory at risk by raising the question of its assumed cross-culture psychometric invariance. Emotional intelligence - in the specific form operationalised in the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) - is generally understood as a coherent, multi-dimensional capability that involves: self-awareness, emotion regulation, use of emotion and appraisal of other people's emotions. However, in the current context such dimensions did not co-vary as a whole. This suggests that in hierarchical collectivist environment emotional competencies may play a more independent role than you think. For example, an individual who leads can be regulating her personal emotions well and not necessarily engage in empathic relational behaviours; authority maintenance may go along with emotional restraint but not necessarily with participative

engagement; and emotional self-motivation may not translate into visible welfare-oriented leadership. Thus, EI can be expressed in ways that are culturally contingent and that are not consistent with the reflective assumptions of the Western-developed models. The findings thus add to EI theory by calling for a move from universalist assumptions towards operationalisation that is more contextualised. Rather than taking for granted the psychometric stability of measures across settings, future research should test for measurement invariance as well as investigate whether emotional intelligence is actually experienced as an integrated capacity or as loosely coupled competencies influenced by cultural norms of authority and relational distance.

6.3 Questioning Universalist Assumptions in Research on Leadership - Retention

Third, this study adds to the retention literature by challenging the one-size-fits-all predictive power of relational leadership behaviours. The lack of significant relationships between Karta-styles of leadership and retention intention implies that leadership archetypes may not be consistently influential in a relationship with employee retention. In emerging-economy environments, retention decisions can be affected by labour market considerations, economic security, family responsibilities, stability of organisation, fairness of compensation and industry structure. This suggests that leadership may be a moderating or conditional factor rather than a primary factor in keeping people. The findings therefore lend support for further, more nuanced theorisation of leadership-retention linkages that allow for structural and contextual drivers. Rather than making leadership theory weaker, these results refine leadership theory by identifying boundary conditions under which or when relational leadership may or may not influence turnover intentions.

6.4 Contributing to the Pedagogical Discourse on Cross-Cultural Organisational Research

Finally, the study has a substantive methodological contribution as it shows that the construct validity of transferring culturally embedded metaphors to survey-based instruments cannot be taken for granted. The instability of measurement noted here - in the face of good variance and no careless responding - underscores the importance of cognitive interviewing in scale development, linguistic equivalence testing, iterative pilot validation, multi-method triangulation, measurement invariance measurement and alternative model specification (formative / configurational). This

reinforces a wider methodological principle: theoretical elegance should be accompanied by measurement rigour, especially where the research is cross-cultural. By foregrounding issues in measurement, the study adds to the ongoing debate about the way that organisational constructs cross cultural borders and how one can prevent the reification of constructs for researchers.

Practical Implications

Although the structural hypotheses failed to find support, there are a number of important managerial implications of the study.

7.1 Reconsidering "Family" as a Leadership Metaphor

Organisations often use metaphors of "family" to generate loyalty and belonging. However, this study suggests that metaphors of this kind may not be interpreted in the same way. Employees may distinguish between protective authority, welfare concern, participative decision-making and stewardship orientation. Managers should therefore not assume that by invoking familial rhetoric they will automatically create cohesive perceptions of leadership. Instead, organisations should be clearer about expectations and standards of behaviour that are linked to such metaphors.

7.2 Contextual Adaptation of Emotional Intelligence Training

Leadership development programmes that focus on emotional intelligence tend to draw on standardised competency frameworks. The current results indicate that the components of EI may not naturally co-occur in hierarchical collectivist environments. Training programmes should therefore: emphasise the contextual translation of EI competencies, deal explicitly with the tensions between authority and empathy, and link emotional skills and culturally appropriate enactments of leadership. Rather than bringing in universal EI models, firms should localise leadership development initiatives.

7.3 Multifactorial Strategy Design of Retention

Given the lack of strong leadership - retention relationships, HR practitioners should implement a multifactorial retention approach, which includes: fair compensation systems, transparent promotion pathways, organisational stability signals, work - life balance policies and career growth opportunities.

Relational leadership may be a way to help retain, but it is unlikely to replace structural employment conditions.

8. Limitations

There are a number of limitations to be recognized.

8.1 Measurement Instability

The most common constraint has to do with internal consistency of the major constructs. In spite of comprehensive diagnostics ruling out careless responding and errors of data processing, the constructs did not exhibit psychometric coherence in this sample. Consequently, the robustness of structural inference is reduced, and the need for further validation of scales is highlighted.

8.2 Contextual Specificity

The empirical inquiry was limited to the milieu of Indian organizations. Cultural interpretations of leadership are likely to be variable by region, industry and ownership configuration. Therefore, extrapolation outside the context sampled for should be done with care.

8.3 Perceptual and Self Report Measures

All variables were measured using self-report surveys. Even though a time lagged design was implemented, perceptual bias and common source effects cannot be ruled out.

8.4 Retention Measures (Single Item)

In view of the instability noted using the multi-item retention scale, retention intention was operationalized on a single item. Although face valid and regularly used in turnover research, including a multi item validation would increase the reliability.

Future Research Directions

Future investigations should focus first on methodology and second on clarification of theoretical boundaries. Scholars are encouraged to:

- Interpretation of Employees and Karta-Style Leadership and Leadership Styles Qualitative examination of how employees interpret Karta-style leadership.
- General objectives of the study are: - To use exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM) to assess multidimensional structures.

- Formative and reflective models of measurement - contrast formative and reflective models.
- Objective turnover data: - Gather objective turnover data.
- Contrast family owned and professionally managed enterprises.
- Enhancing cross-cultural validity and validity generalizability: - * Underscore the importance of cross-cultural replications as a means of testing generalizability.
- Measures and Interioi Culture Assessment Materials and Procedures: - Evaluate the measurement invariance of groups across different cultural subgroups.

Such efforts will help to explain the extent to which the instability detected is contextual uniqueness or broader conceptual limitations in operationalization processes for indigenous leadership constructs.

Conclusion

The current study examined the possible role of leader emotional intelligence in employee retention through joint family oriented leadership behaviors in Indian organization. Although the hypothesized mediation model was non-empirically supported, the results provide a more basic insight: culturally embedded leadership archetypes may not be compatible with the presumptions of reflective latent-variance modeling. The attempt to operationalize the metaphor of Karta highlights the complexity of the process of converting socio legal, institutional and identity-based leadership roles into standardized psychometric instruments. Rather than refuting indigenous leadership theory, these results call for an increased level of conceptual precision and methodological innovation in cross cultural research. By foregrounding the issue of measurement validity at the center rather than periphery, the current investigation contributes to developing a more contextually-based and theoretically reflective body of organizational behavior scholarship-one that recognizes the complex interaction between culture and leadership identity and empirical operationalization.

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