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Shadab Ahamad Ansari^{1, *}, N. Hasnain²

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Differential Effects of Organizational Commitment on Emotional Intelligence across Public and Private Sectors

Shadab Ahamad Ansari^{1, *}, N. Hasnain²

^{1, *} Research Scholar, Dept. of Psychology, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi-110025
E-mail: directorshri@gmail.com

² Professor, Dept. of Psychology, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi-110025

Abstract

The present study focused on the differential impact of organizational commitment on the Emotional Intelligence of managers working in public and private sector banks. In the study, emotional intelligence was one of the variables. Similarly, a factorial design was employed. A 2 × 2 factorial design was employed with type of organization (public vs. private).

The sample was 160 managers (80 public, 80 private) evenly divided in to committed and non- committed. Emotional Intelligence scale constructed by Pant and Prakash (2004) and Organizational Commitment Instrument of Balaji (1979) were used to assess emotional intelligence and organizational commitment respectively. The type of organization and commitment strongly impacted emotional intelligence, the results showed. Directors and managers of private sector organizations scored significantly higher than their public sector counterparts on total emotional intelligence assessment as well as on its different dimensions. Managers who are committed have much more emotional intelligence. Expression and regulation of emotions and empathy had significant interaction effects. The results reveal that organizational emotional competencies and the role of the sectoral context and commitment matter.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, organizational commitment, public sector, private sector, managers

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Introduction

In organizational psychology, emotional intelligence (EI) has become a critical construct because of the demonstrated relevance of EI for leadership effectiveness, interpersonal functioning and organizational performance. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) have conceptualized emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive-emotional abilities that involve the perception, assimilation, understanding, and regulation of emotion. Emotional intelligence (EI) is related to better decision making, conflict management, stress tolerance and team coordination in workplace settings (Cherniss, 2001; Prati, 2004). A manager with good emotional intelligence knows how to handle the complexities of a relationship and deals with the motivation of subordinates as well as an adaptive response to the demands of the organization.

Affective attachment to an organization is referred to as organizational commitment. It defines a state of mind whereby an employee identifies with an organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Employees with commitment to the organisation are more aligned with goals, persistent and intent to stay. According to the attitudinal commitment framework, emotionally skilled people would have a higher propensity to internalize organizational values and develop affective attachment (Carmeli, 2003).

Theoretical link between emotional intelligence and organizational commitment are based on social exchange processes. People who have control on their emotions and can regulate them are more likely to have good interaction at work which allows them to attach to the organization reciprocally. Research has shown a link between emotional intelligence (EI) and organizational commitment (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Rozell et al., 2004). Employees who are emotionally intelligent are more engaged and committed to the organization.

Nonetheless, emotional expression and behaviour are shaped by the organizational context and its norms. Public and private-sector firms differ structurally, culturally and administratively. Bureaucratic processes, formalized hierarchies and multiple accountability pressures characterize public sector organisations (Bozeman & Kingsley, 1998; Farnham & Horton, 1996). On the other hand, the private sector focuses on competitiveness, innovation, and performance (Hood, 1991). Environmental conditions may influence the commitment levels and emotional functioning.

Contexts in the private sector that entail competition may be helpful in developing emotional adaptability, persuasive communication and customer orientation, which are deeply associated with emotional intelligence. On the other hand, bureaucratic systems confined by rigid rules may limit emotional expression and autonomy.

Even though research on EI and commitment has been growing, these two being studied together and separately is limited. The current study fulfils this gap by analysing.

1. Does emotional intelligence vary between managers in the public and private sectors?
2. Do engaged managers exhibit a greater level of emotional intelligence than their disengaged counterparts?
3. Do the sector type and commitment influence emotional intelligence?

Hypotheses

H1: Organization type (public vs. private) will have a significant effect on emotional intelligence and its dimensions.

H2: Organizational commitment (committed vs. non-committed) will have a significant effect on emotional intelligence and its dimensions.

H3: There will be a significant interaction effect between organization type and organizational commitment on emotional intelligence and its dimensions.

Method

Sample

Initially, 200 managers—100 from public banks and 100 from private banks—were chosen from different sectors. After the screening with commitment scores, the final sample consisted of 160 managers, namely 80 from public banks and 80 from private banks, wherein 40 committed and 40 non-committed from each bank. The ages of the professionals were in the range of 35 to 50 years. The professionals possessed work experience of 10 to 25 years.

Design

The research used a 2 × 2 factorial design to study how the type of sector and level of management commitment influenced emotional intelligence. The independent variables were type of organization i.e. public sector or private sector institution and level of commitment of manager's committed or non-committed. Emotional intelligence was the dependent variable, measured both in overall score and by each dimension of the emotional intelligence. The organization context and managerial commitment uniquely enhance emotional intelligence outcomes, facilitating further exploration between the two.

Measures

Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment Instrument devised by Balaji (1979) was used to measure organizational commitment. The scale contains fifteen items rated on a five-point Likert-type Scale starting from strong disagreement and ending with strong agreement. The higher the score, the greater the organizational commitment.

Emotional Intelligence

The Emotional Intelligence Scale, created by Pant and Prakash (2004) was used to measure emotional intelligence. The tool includes 40 items divided into four dimensions: (a) Expression and Regulation of Emotions, (b) Analysing, Relating and Using Emotion, (c) Empathy and (d) Perception and Identification of Emotions.

The responses are obtained on a Likert-type format, where higher scores indicate a higher level of emotional intelligence in the respective domain.

Results

A 2×2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to see the impact of Organization Type Public Vs Private and Organisational Commitment Committed Vs Non Committed on Emotional Intelligence and its dimensions.

According to the descriptive statistics, overall emotional intelligence of managers in private sector was more than public sector managers. In the same vein, non-committed managers received lower scores than committed managers on all dimensions.

Managers in private organizations who are committed got the highest overall mean for emotional intelligence ($M = 159.97$) and that of committed managers in public organizations ($M = 152.45$). Both Sectors have experience a dip in scores.

Expression and Regulation of Emotions

Table 1.1: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the dimension of emotional intelligence expression and regulation of emotions'

Source of Variations	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance
Organization (A)	126.02	1	126.02	3.80	<0.05
Commitment (B)	1221.02	1	1221.02	36.85	<0.01
A x B	342.22	1	342.22	10.32	<0.01
Error	5168.50	156	33.13		
Total	280264.00	160			

The results of the ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of type of organization, $F(1, 156) = 3.80$, $p < .05$, indicating that private sector managers scored higher than public sector managers on expression and regulation of emotions. A significant overall effect of commitment was also found, $F(1, 156) = 36.85$, $p < .01$, showing better performance of committed managers over non-committed managers.

The outcome showed that interaction between organization type and commitment was significant, $F(1, 156) = 10.32$, $p < .01$, which means that positive impact of commitment was stronger in the private sector.

Analysing, Relating, and Using Emotions

Table 1.2: Two-way ANOVA on estimating, organizing, and using emotion dimension of emotional intelligence.

Source of Variations	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance
Organization (A)	455.62	1	455.62	8.46	<0.01
Commitment (B)	2924.10	1	2924.10	54.31	<0.01
A x B	176.40	1	176.40	3.27	>0.05
Error	8398.25	156	53.83		
Total	904470.00	160			

There was a significant main effect for type of organization, $F(1, 156) = 8.46$, $p < .01$, with private sector managers scoring higher. There was also a strong main effect of commitment, $F(1, 156) = 54.31$, $p < .01$.

The interaction effect was not statistically significant, meaning that commitment had a similar effect on this dimension across sectors.

Empathy

Table 1.3: Results of ANOVA on the dimension of 'empathy' of emotional intelligence

Source of Variations	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance
Organization (A)	26.40	1	26.40	4.86	<0.05
Commitment (B)	339.30	1	339.30	62.51	<0.01
A x B	23.25	1	23.25	4.28	<0.05
Error	846.77	156	5.42		
Total	40267.00	160			

The findings of the study have confirmed that organization type showed a significant main effect, $F(1, 156) = 4.86$, $p < .05$. In other words, the empathy score of public managers was

significantly different than that of private sector managers.

The results of the study showed a highly significant main effect of organizational commitment, $F(1, 156) = 62.51, p < .01$, as committed managers had much higher empathy scores than non-committed managers.

Notably, organization type and commitment also interacted significantly, $F(1, 156) = 4.28, p < .05$. Based on the finding, we can see that the relationship of commitment and empathy varies from sector to sector. This suggests that commitment may enhance empathetic capacity to a greater extent in one sector rather than the other. The type of sector and the level of commitment are independently and interactively influencing the empathy among the managers.

The statistical analyses demonstrate three central findings;

1. Managers in the private sector have much more emotional intelligence than their public sector counterparts
2. The dimensions of emotional intelligence get enhanced due to strong positive impact of organizational commitment.
3. Commitment interacts with type of sector in particular in influencing emotional regulation suggesting an effect to amplify because of context in case of private organization.

The structural context and psychological attachment independently as well as interactively influence emotional intelligence of a manager.

Discussion

The current research paper attempts to differentiate the impact of organizational commitment on emotional intelligence in Public and Private Sector. The results show three principal findings.

It was found that private sector managers had greater emotional intelligence than public sector managers. May represent structural and cultural differences between the sectors. Adaptability, customer orientation and performance efficiency are rewarded in competitive environments of private organizations. In those situations, you have to control your emotions more. According to Hood's (1991) managerial perspective, the private sector governance lays emphases on results and responsiveness and may lead to emotionally intelligent behaviours amongst public sector managers.

Second, organizational commitment was found to strongly predict emotional intelligence. Managers who were committed attained consistently superior scores across the various dimensions of EI. It shows that emotional intelligence helps produce a beneficial work attitude, as well as some psychological attachment (Carmeli, 2003; Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002). Employees who are emotionally intelligent can integrate personal and organizational goals and strengthen emotional ties.

Third, the interactive effect of the sector and the commitment was significant for expression and regulation of emotions. This implies that commitment enhances emotional competencies, especially in a private sector context. Private institutions may offer more freedom and performance incentives than state-owned organizations, enhancing positive behavioural effects of commitment. Conversely, public organizations (Bozeman & Kingsley,

1998), through bureaucratic rigidities, may limit the expression of emotional competencies even among committed workers.

The lack of significant interaction effect for analysing and using emotions suggests that some emotional competencies may be structurally robust. The cognitive component of emotional intelligence may be less affected by sectorial conditions than the regulatory and expressive components.

Implications and Limitations

These findings contribute to the literature on organizational behaviour by integrating emotional intelligence and organizational commitment in a sectorial comparative framework. Based on the results, social exchange theory is supported, which means the emotional competencies strengthen reciprocal psychological attachment.

The research shows that organizational structure shapes the way emotional capacities are expressed due to contextual moderation.

Organizations—particularly public institutions—should;

- Conduct programs aimed at developing emotional intelligence.
- Encouragement and commitment through participative leadership and recognition systems.
- Cut back on excessive bureaucracy that restricts feelings.

Strengthening commitment can be an indirect way of enhancing emotional intelligence which can enhance managerial effectiveness.

The study focussed on banking managers in a particular geographical area. Self-report measures probably introduce response bias. Future studies must use longitudinal designs and multiple sources.

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