

IMPACT OF LEADERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: EXPERIENCES FROM BANKING COMPANIES IN INDIA

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Abstract

In this context issues i.e. Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement have their own significance for organizational performance and effectiveness. In the present research paper an attempt is made to examine the relationship between Leader's Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement in Indian Banking Industry. For the collection of primary data proportionate stratified random sampling approach has been followed. Nonstandard unstructured questionnaire was used to measure the Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement of banking employees. Based on total population of 1800 employees, 200 were selected as sample including 100 managers and 100 clerical employees. The method of Principle Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation was employed to discover the structure and convergence of variables in the model. On the basis of results of Factor Analysis, Employee Engagement have been grouped into three strata named Job Autonomy (JA), Job Achievement (JAch) and Job Involvement (JI) having the Cronbach's Alpha of .775, .706, .645 and for Emotional Intelligence 4 groups were made named as Application of Emotion (AOE), Instruction to Emotion (ITE), Self Emotion Appraisal (SEA), and Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA) having the Cronbach's Alpha of .757, .759, .693, .505 respectively. The result of Correlation Analysis shows a significantly low positive correlation between Instruction to Emotion and Employee Engagement ($r=.283, p=.000$), Others Emotion Appraisal and Employee Engagement ($r=.146, p=.040$), Self Emotion Appraisal and Employee Engagement ($r=.065, p=.001$) and application of Emotion and Employee Engagement ($r=.065, p=.359$). Lastly (Cox and Snell) 64.3%, (Nagelkerke) 74.0% and (McFadden) 50.8% indicates highly influence of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Employee Engagement, Banking, and Job Advancement.

1. Introduction

In a rapid developing economy like as India, banks play a vital role for economic growth and development and also work as a financial supplier to enterprises in the entire economy. Banking industry is the most significant and dominant part of the financial sector. Since banking services

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are totally employee oriented services, employee are considered to be the backbone of the banking concerns. Including considerable and precious capabilities with them, human resources are considered as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. The success of an organization depends upon several factors but the most crucial factor that affects the organization performance is its employee.

Human resources play an integral role in achieving an innovative and high-quality product/service. After the Liberalization Privatization Globalization (LPG) policy of 1991, the banking sector of India has been transformed from a slothful and sluggish moving sector to a dynamic, competitive and productive industry. Banks are undergoing a sea change where efficiency and competitiveness holds the key to survival. Emotional intelligence (EI) is an emerging topic for psychological, educational, and management researchers and consultants (**Shapiro, 1997; Weisinger, 1998**). The rules for work are changing and people are being judged by not just how smart they are but also by how well they handle each other and themselves. The essential premise of EQ is that our each and every action is systematically controlled by emotions. In order to be successful, it requires effective awareness, control and management of one's own emotions and those of other people (**Pahuja & Sahi, 2012**). A study of **Kaura (2011)** reveals that there is the strong relationship between the EI and quality of service in case of public and private sector banks. Five explanatory variables i.e. intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management and adaptability and general temperament are found to be significant factors affecting EI of employees of both public and private sector banks. A person with high emotional intelligence will not only understand, manage and accommodate the emotions of self and others but also alleviate emotional disturbances and anxieties, which will contribute considerably to productivity and performance at the workplace on both personal and organizational level (**Seipp, 1991**).

Another crucial factor which is paving its importance for this industry is Employee Engagement. In today's highly competitive structure, organizations can accomplish unexceptionable levels of performance only when workforce reveals persistent commitment towards their tasks. Higher productivity, reliability, higher self motivation, confidence to express new ideas, loyalty towards organization, reduced employee turnover and lower absenteeism are some of the attributes of a wholly engaged employee, who in turn act as valuable assets of an organization. Now-a-days banks being at competitive situation, employee engagement is very much crucial for longer sustainability (**Gowri & Mariammal, 2012**). Employee engagement is closely linked to employee turnover, customer satisfaction, loyalty, productivity, safety and profitability criteria (**Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002**). Employee Engagement is critical to business success. The banks have to focus on this aspect to boost their growth and get a competitive

advantage. In the current scenario the banks have to comprehend those high levels of employee engagement is necessary to improve employee commitment. Highly engaged workforce will definitely make an organization more successful in terms of financial & nonfinancial parameters. **(Mishra et al., 2013)**. Thus, it is so important for the banking organizations to pay attention on such type of emerging and crucial issues i.e. Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement relating to their human assets.

Overview of Literature

(a) Leaders' Emotional Intelligence

“Emotional Intelligence” represents a revolution in the analysis of human beings’ thoughts and emotions. Recently, the idea of Emotional Intelligence had become associated with the business environment. Management may have already been using some aspects of EI without being aware of its importance; but nowadays it is clear that the relation between the development of the business world and the Emotional intelligence (EI) is a “key- lock” relationship; whereby, EI serves as the key to make available the opportunity for management to develop and evolve **(Hejase, et al., 2012)**.

Various management experts found that there is a direct connection between the principles of Emotional Intelligence and that of many management aspects that are related to managers’ effectiveness, **(Freedman, 1999)**, leadership skills **(Bliss, 2005; Cavallo & Brianza, 2004)**, and total quality systems **(Besterfield & Besterfield, 2003)**. “Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” **(Mayer & Salovey, 1997)**. **Goleman (1996)** defines emotional intelligence as “being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope”. In recent leadership literature, the function of Emotional Intelligence is one of the crucial issues of consideration. Most of the relevant articles acknowledge that there is a positive relation between EI and effective leadership **(Goleman, 1998)**.

Recently, increasing numbers of scholars have argued that EI is a core variable that affects the performance of leaders **(Day, 2000; Sternberg, 1997)**. Furthermore, some leadership studies have shown that the emotional maturity of leaders is associated with their managerial effectiveness **(Bass, 1990)**. **Dansereau et al. (1995)** have shown that leaders are able to affect the performance of their subordinates by supporting their feelings of self-worth. A leader with high emotional intelligence shown in stable emotions and desirable interpersonal relationship

performs more successfully than those with only high IQ (**Goleman, 2006**). In addition, there is evidence (**Fisher & Edwards, 1988**) that the supportive behavior of leaders has a positive effect on the job satisfaction, and probably performance of followers.

It is also seen that a leader who is high on emotional intelligence may act on emotional knowledge which suggests that followers are more likely to experience positive emotions and be supportive of the leader's goals and objectives when the leader expresses confidence in followers and serves to elevate their levels of self-efficacy (**Gardner & Avolio, 1998**). Leaders who are high on emotional intelligence may instill in their organizations a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, and optimism as well as an atmosphere of cooperation and trust through their being able to develop high quality interpersonal relationships with their followers. High quality interpersonal relationships between leaders and their followers have been documented to produce numerous advantages for organizations, leaders, and followers (**Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995**).

A study conducted by (**Tsai et al., 2011**) reveals that supervisor's emotional intelligence has a significant positive influence on his/her leadership style, indicating that a supervisor's leadership style perceived by employees is influenced by his/her emotional intelligence. This study has also found that a leader with high emotional intelligence who performs an excellent leadership style is able to improve employee self-efficacy. In another study taking the sample of 349 aircrew and maintenance military team members (**Koman & Wolff 2008**) examined the relationships among team leader EI competencies and team performance. Results show that team leader EI is significantly related to the presence of emotionally competent group norms (ECGN) on the teams they lead, and that ECGN are related to team performance. These finding provides three suggestions. Firstly, employee leaders with better EI competencies not only increase their own personal performance but also of the teams they lead. Secondly, by developing or hiring emotionally competent managers. Finally by developing emotionally competent first line leaders, organizations should develop emotionally competent executive leaders because each individual on the executive management team influences the development of ECGNs on the teams he or she leads.

Gardner & Stough (2002) found that a major component of individualized consideration is the capacity to understand followers' needs and interact accordingly. With emphasis on empathy and the ability to manage relationships positively, leaders having EI are likely to manifest individualized consideration. (**Modassir & Singh, 2008**) postulated that EI in leaders encourages conscientiousness and altruism in followers. Thus, leaders who can identify and manage their own emotions and those of others create more sincere and helpful followers in their organizations. It also demonstrates the enormous impact the EI of a leader has on follower behavior at the work place.

(b) Employee Engagement

In recent decade employee engagement has been a great concern for both practitioners and academic researchers (**Wefald & Downey, 2009**). The concept gain fame after Kahn's famous qualitative study about engagement and disengagement of people at workplace. According to Kahn job engagement is 'the harnessing of organizational member's selves to their work roles where people express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances'. Engagement means to be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organizational role (**Kahn, 1990**). Employee engagement is a type of commitment which is emotional and intellectual in nature (**Baumruk 2004; Richman, 2006**) or it is the extra role behavior exhibited at workplace (**Frank et al., 2004**). A fully engaged employee is intellectually and emotionally bound with the organization, gives 100 percent, feels passionately about its goals and is committed to live by its values. This employee goes beyond the basic job responsibility to delight the customers and drive the business forward.

Research shows that engaged employees perform better, put in extra efforts to help get the job done, show a strong level of commitment to the organization, and are more motivated and optimistic about their work goals (**Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Rich, LePine & Crawford, 2010; Richman, 2006; Macey & Schneider, 2008**). Numerous studies suggest that the presence of higher levels of employee engagement significantly reduces turnover intention (**Maslach et al., 2001; Saks, 2006**). An engaged employee is conscious of business environment, and works with contemporaries to improve performance for the advantage of the organization. The organization must develop and cultivate engagement, which necessitates a two-way relationship between the employer and the employee (**Robinson et al, 2004**). **Swatee et al. (2012)**, in their paper identified key dimensions of organizational culture and communication which can shape employee engagement in bank.

In recent days employee engagement is going a crucial challenge before the organizations and banks are also one of the organizations which are facing this issue. The high rates of the disengaged employee in private and public banks should be cause of worry (**Mishra, Kapse & Bavad, 2013**). In some studies it was found that disengaged employees disconnect themselves from work roles and withdraw cognitively and emotionally (**Pradeep et al. 2011; Vijayashri et. al. 2012**). Disengaged employees display incomplete role performances and task behaviours become effortless, automatic or robotic (**Hochschild, 1983**). Whereas focusing on employee engagement at DCCBS of Maharashtra State there was emphasis that highly engaged workforce will definitely make an organization more successful in terms of financial & nonfinancial parameters (**Vijayashri et. al, 2012**).

(c) Leaders' Emotional Intelligence and its Influence on Employee engagement

Research in the field of emotional intelligence and work engagement is beginning to build a

case that both concepts are related to improvement in individual, leadership, and organizational performance. Individuals who are emotionally intelligent have been found to receive higher performance reviews, have higher rank within a company, and generally outperform those with lower intelligence (**Law, Wong & Song, 2004**). Research in leadership competencies has also been linked to levels of emotional intelligence (**Bar-On, 2006**). Studies in work engagement suggest performance feedback, opportunities to learn new skills, autonomy, and social support from managers and colleagues are positively related to work engagement (**Halbesleben, 2010; Wagner & Harter, 2006**). What is emerging from the research is the critical role leadership may have in building an environment conducive for creating engagement (**Wagner & Harter, 2006**).

The research which has been carried out on Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement shows that there is some potential relationship between a leader's emotional intelligence and the level of engagement in followers. (**Ravichandran et al., 2011**) conducted a study taking 119 information technology employees and examined that there is a weak but positive correlation between emotional intelligence and work engagement. It indicates that emotional intelligence influences engagement of an employee up to a certain limit. **Anand & Suriyan (2010)** studied the relationship between leadership practices (**Kouzes & Posner, 2007**) and the emotional intelligence of leaders and found a positive relationship between the constructs. **Bates (2004)** stated that the engagement challenge has a lot to do with how the employee feels about the work experience, about how he or she is treated. It has a lot to do with emotions. **Parker & Sorenson, (2008)** conducted a similar study using the **Bass & Avolio (1997)** transformational/transactional leader construct and found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership. While these relationships do not directly link emotional intelligence of a leader with engagement levels of their followers an argument can be made that a potential relationship may exist. Arguably, both leadership constructs include elements that may influence the level of engagement in followers, and if the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership exists there may also be a relationship between a leader's emotional intelligence and their follower's level of engagement.

(d) Research objectives and Statement of the Problem

After a comprehensive review of literature, researches and studies conducted concerning the effect of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee engagement it was found that majority study of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee engagement are concerned with international perspective but few studies on Indian orientation. It made a sense that this is the peak time to make a study on these issues which are not only desirable but also necessary to develop literature in Indian context. Hence, the main objective of this study is to investigate the effect of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee engagement in banking companies of Varanasi District and to suggest the managers the way to manipulate their EI for enhancing the employee engagement.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

(i) Sampling Method:

For investigating the effects of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee engagement, the quantitative approach was convincingly adopted using numerical data. The study utilizes proportionate stratified random sampling method for selecting the target respondents. Since the business offices of all banks are located on Varanasi district and moreover the researchers are associated with Banaras Hindu University and it is very convenient to localize the study in Varanasi district. The geographical location of the study is Varanasi district Based on the total population of 1800 employees, and the sample size of this research was 200 banking employees working in Varanasi District, U.P. The sample size of 200 have been decided based on **Yamane (1967) Sample Adequacy formula i.e., $n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$** ,

Where n=Minimum Sample Size,

N= Population Size and e=level of Precision (5%)

The sample size includes 137 public and 63 private banking employees with 100 managers and 100 clerical employees. No. of male respondents were 147 and 53 were female. Total no. of post graduate employees was 119 and 81 were graduates participating in the survey. Moreover, the no. of employees who has 20 years & above working experience were 49 (24.5%), between 15 to 19 years were 29 (14.5%), between 10 to 14 years were 16 (8%), between 5 to 9 years were 15 (7.5%) and finally most of the respondents participating in answering the questionnaire were experienced with up to 4 years of working in concerned organizations, which was 45.5% of the total.

(ii) Questionnaire Design

For the purpose of measuring the Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement of banking employees' nonstandard unstructured questionnaire was used. Emotional Intelligence was measured through 15 items using 4 point Likert scale ranging from 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Often, 4=Always. For measuring Employee Engagement the questionnaire constitutes 12 items with 4 point Likert Scale as 1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3= Satisfied, 4=Very Satisfied. The questionnaire was also tested through pilot study (n=50) before conducting the final data collection (n=200). After proper revision, the questionnaire was finalized into two parts which constitutes 48 items totally including demographic information of employees.

(iii) Factor Analysis and Reliability :

All experiential variables in the measurement scale were tested through Exploratory Factor Analysis. The method of Principle Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation was employed to discover the structure and convergence of variables in the model. The procedure of Exploratory Factor Analysis was applied twice; once for dependent variables in which 13 items were taken and after reducing 12 items were retained and once for independent variables in which 16 items were taken and after reduction 15 items were retained.

Table 1: Reliability Coefficient of Dependent Variables

Sl. No.	Group Name	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Job Autonomy (JA)	6	.775
2	Job Achievement (J Ach)	3	.706
3	Job Involvement (JI)	3	.645

Source: Calculation by authors

Table-1 shows the Dependent Variables group in which 12 items were distributed in 3 groups after factor analysis procedure named Job Autonomy (JA), Job Achievement (J Ach) and Job Involvement (JI) having the Cronbach's Alpha of .775, .706, .645 respectively which indicates an average reliability of the measurement scale for assessing the dependent variable.

Table 2: Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis

KMO Index	Bartlelets Test of Sphericity	Total Variance Explained	Exhaustion Method	Component Extracted	Rotation	Factor Loading
.862	.000	53.464	Principal Component Analysis	03	Orthogonal Rotation (Varimax with Kaiser normalization)	$\geq .4$

Source: Calculation by authors

As shown in the table 2 for the dependent variables, the KMO index was at $.862 > .05$ and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was at $.000 < .05$, this shows that the data of dependent variable was suitable for the Factor Analysis. There were three component extracted for the Employee Engagement concept and all these 12 items in 3 extracted components had factor loading of .4. Moreover, Total Variance explained was 53.46% satisfying the requirements of being greater than 50%.

Table 3: Reliability Coefficient of Independent Variable

Sl. No.	Group Name	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Application of Emotion (AOE)	4	.757
2	Instruction to Emotion (ITE)	4	.759
3	Self Emotion Appraisal (SEA)	4	.693
4	Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA)	3	.505

Source: Calculation by authors

Table 3 shows the independent variables group in which 15 items were distributed in 4 groups after factor analysis procedure named Application of Emotion (AOE), Instruction to Emotion (ITE), Self Emotion Appraisal (SEA), and Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA) having the Cronbach's Alpha of .757, .759, .693, .505 respectively indicates an average reliability of the measurement scale for assessing the dependent variable.

Table 4: Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis

KMO Index	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Total Variance Explained	Exhaustion Method	Component Extracted	Rotation	Factor Loading
.815	.000	54.322	Principal Component Analysis	04	Orthogonal Rotation (Varimax with Kaiser normalization)	≥ .5

Source: Calculation by authors

In the table 4 for the independent variables, the KMO index was at $.815 > .05$ and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was at $.000 < .05$, this shows that the data of independent variable was suitable for the Factor Analysis. There were four component extracted for the Emotional Intelligence concept and all these 12 items in 4 extracted components had factor loading of .5 reflecting the high correlation between each items. Moreover, Total Variance explained was 54.32% satisfying the requirements of being greater than 50%.

III: Results and Discussions

(a) Examining Inter-relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement

Table 5: Correlation between Variables of EI and EE

			AOE	ITE	SEA	OEA	EE
1	AOE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed)	1				
2	ITE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed)	.371** .000	1			
3	SEA	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed)	1.000** .000	.371** .000	1		
4	OEA	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed)	.381** .000	.271** .000	.381** .000	1	
5	EE	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed)	.065 .359	.283** .000	.065 .359	.146* .040	1
		Mean	3.3575	3.0638	3.3575	3.1467	2.9592
		Stand. Deviation	0.50718	0.59573	0.50718	0.60764	0.39725

Source: Calculation by authors

According to table 5, the Emotional Intelligence variables statistically had positive relationship with Employee Engagement. As a result of Correlational Analysis a significantly low positive correlation was found between Instruction to Emotion and Employee Engagement ($r=.283, p=.000$), Others Emotion Appraisal and Employee Engagement ($r=.146, p=.040$), Self Emotion Appraisal and Employee Engagement ($r=.065, p=.001$) and application of Emotion and Employee Engagement ($r=.065, p=.359$). In emotional Intelligence variables there was a positively perfect correlation between Application of Emotions and Self Emotion Appraisal ($r=1.000, p=.000$), Instruction to Emotion and Application of Emotion ($r=.371, p=.000$), Self Emotion Appraisal and Instruction to Emotion ($r=.371, p=.000$). There was also a Low correlation between Others Emotion Appraisal with three aspects of Emotional Intelligence namely Application of Emotion ($r=.381, p=.000$), Instruction to Emotion ($r=.271, p=.000$) and Self Emotion Appraisal ($r=.381, p=.000$).

Table 6: Model Fitting

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Test Ratio		
	-2Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept only	404.327			
Final	198.290	206.037	135	.000

Table 7: Goodness of Fit

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Pearson	255.235	453	1.000
Deviance	196.904	453	1.000

Table 8: Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.643
Nagelkerke	.740
Mcfadden	.508

(b) Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Engagement

The test of relationship between dependent and independent variables i.e., model fitting information in Table VI reveals that the probability of the Model chi-square (206.037) was .000, less than the level of significance of .005 (i.e., $p<0.05$). This suggested that the existence of a relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables was supported. Using Cox and Snell R Square and the Nagelkerke R square value provide an indication of the amount of variation in the dependent variable. These are described as Pseudo R square. In this study, that the values are .643 (Cox and Snell), .740 (Nagelkerke) and .508 (McFadden) respectively, suggesting that between 50.8% and 74% of the variability is explained by this set

of variables used in the model. It can be concluded that all of predictors of emotional intelligence shows high level of influence on employee engagement. The test of Pearson and Deviance goodness-of-fit reveals that the model adequately fits the data, as the significance value being greater than 0.05 and it can be concluded that the data are consistent with the model assumptions.

IV. Conclusions and Implications

Nowadays, Emotional Intelligence is going a big issue and making an attraction in the mind of organizational policy makers, managers and other decision making authorities. In this Context Employee Engagement is another topic of concern for the organizational effectiveness of Banking Industry in India. Prior studies shows that persons which emotional intelligence is high will not only understand, manage and accommodate the emotions of self and others but also alleviate emotional disturbances and anxieties, which will contribute considerably to productivity and performance at the workplace on both personal and organizational level (**Seipp, 1991**). Employee engagement is now considered as a critical indicator for the success of the organizations, it needs to be closely examined by the organizations. Because through engaged employees significant outcomes can be achieved. So organizations should recognize employees as their strong factor then other factors, as a powerful indicator of competitive position in the market (**Rasheed et al. 2013**). On the basis of the results generated from the study it was found that the managers' Emotional Intelligence components such as Application of Emotion, Instruction to Emotion, Self Emotion Appraisal and Others' Emotion Appraisal have significant influence on Job Advancement which is a part of Employee Engagement. Hence, it is suggested to managers to pay more attention in controlling and managing their emotions and develop some effective measures to manage stressful situations peacefully. It is also advisable for managers to remain self aware, be optimistic, set their goals, encourage and motivate them to try their best in achieving those goals. The managers are also advised to develop the ability of sensitiveness towards employees' emotions in the work place environment.

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