



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Psychology

“EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS' FOCUS ON RAISING THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) OF THEIR OFFICERS”

KEY WORDS:

corollary; EI; EQ; mitigative; odds; priority sector; strain; stress; vulnerable

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ABSTRACT

Public sector commercial banks have always been ahead of their private sector counterparts in implementing the various government-sponsored schemes that seek to promote the welfare of the vulnerable sections of society. The returns the public sector banks generate from the implementation of the schemes are way behind what they generate by lending strictly on commercial terms to trade and industry, in value terms. All the same, public sector banks and their officers manage to walk a tight rope, trying to keep every segment of bank customers happy – be they depositors, be they borrowers, be they commercial borrowers, be they priority sector borrowers, be they borrowers from vulnerable sections of society, etc. The corollary is that the bank officers come under a great deal of stress and strain as a result. Bank managements are conscious of this fact but then they can do little in the matter. As a result, bank managements as well as bank officers have learned to grin and bear it. However, it is not beyond the bank managements or the bank officers themselves to look for mitigative measures. The most effective and the cheapest measure is emotional intelligence (EI). Nothing short of this measure can help the public sector bank officers to succeed against all odds.

1.1 Theoretical background of the topic

Public sector bank officers need to have the ability to master a variety of skills. In other words, only well-rounded persons can succeed as public sector bank officers. The reasons are not far to seek: they have to be advisors to depositors; they have to empathise and sympathise with the poor that may seek succour from the bank in the form of soft loans to eke out a living. They have to promote trade and industry by being the spark that ignites the oppressed entrepreneurship in individuals by financing their entrepreneurial activities. It is important for them not to concentrate wholly on the academic but to become well-rounded people, while the academic aspects are also very important. This is where emotional intelligence (EI) comes in handy. It helps the bank officers to emerge as a well-rounded insightful community.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Given the various assignments they entrust their officers with, banks expect their officers to possess a well-rounded social-academic persona. Banks expect their officers to be achievers. But such officers are not available off the shelf. Such officers have to be groomed for the purpose by the banks through serious and dedicated efforts. Banks have to invest resources like time, energy and money to groom such officers. However, relatively simple and relatively inexpensive tools like EI can help bank managements groom these offices. In fact the grooming exercise could start when the officers are inducted into the bank, as part of the induction programme / course. By embracing the right strategies and by exploiting EI, bank officers can efficiently serve all the stakeholders associated with the banks.

1.3 Review of literature

1 The researchers filed a Technical Report, 'Bringing Emotional Intelligence to the Workplace', for the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations (Cary, Daniel, Robert, Kim, & Mitchel, 1998). The Researchers state that social and emotional learning is different from cognitive and technical learning and it requires a different approach to training and development. This report presents 22 guidelines for developing emotional intelligence in organizations over two phases -- the preparation for change phase and training phase. They suggest that it is possible for people of all ages to become more socially and emotionally competent. However, the principles for developing this type of competence differ greatly from those that have guided much of the training and development practice in the past. Developing emotional competence requires that we unlearn old habits of thought, feeling and action that are deeply ingrained, and grow new ones. Such a process takes motivation, effort, time, support, and sustained practice, as the guidelines presented in this

Report make clear. The guidelines also suggest that the preparation and transfer-and-maintenance phases of the training process are especially important. Yet, too often, these phases are neglected in practice. The effect of adhering to the guidelines is multiplicative and synergistic: the more guidelines that trainers can follow the greater and more lasting will be their impact.

- 2 Fabio Sala, Ph.D in his research paper titled 'It's lonely at the top: Executives' emotional intelligence self (mis) perceptions' explores the relationship between self-other discrepancy and job level with a measure of emotional intelligence (Sala, 2001). It is hypothesized that self-other discrepancy scores will be higher for those individuals who have higher level (i.e., more successful) jobs. Although one might assume that higher level managers ought to possess a better understanding of themselves, it is also possible that as managers move up within an organization, there are fewer "sounding boards" that provide opportunities to get feedback from others. Therefore, higher level managers may have less opportunity to calibrate their self-perceptions against those of others.
- 3 The researchers in their paper 'EQ and the Bottom Line: Emotional Intelligence Increases Individual Occupational Performance, Leadership and Organisational Productivity' show that the development of emotional intelligence increases occupational performance, leadership and organisational productivity (Geetu, Reuven, & Adcle, 2007). The Researchers briefly explain what emotional intelligence (EI) is, how it is measured, why it is important and how best to apply it in the workplace to maximise organisational productivity. Studies that demonstrate the bottom line impact of EI interventions, and a case study have been presented to illustrate the design, business relevance and impact of a specific organisational intervention. This paper has been written specifically for HR professionals so that they will be better informed and, thus, feel more confident in influencing key stakeholders in the implementation of EI programmes, processes and interventions. Out of the 22 step process that EI Consortiums called "The Optimal Process for Developing Emotional Intelligence in Organizations", the Researchers have identified 10 steps that are critical to building an emotional intelligence intervention with hard-hitting P&L impact; and it is this constellation of ten steps that was used in the design and delivery of this particular senior leadership development programme.
- 4 Lately, the banking industry has been witnessing many policy changes which can be attributed to the severe competition posed by private sector banks (Pandey & Sharma, 2016). As a result, the workforce is being subjected to a high level of stress and dissatisfaction. The researchers seek to assess the

association between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and isolate the factors of emotional intelligence that have an impact on job satisfaction. They undertake a descriptive and exploratory research for the purpose. Their questionnaire covers three parameters: demographics, emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. They infer that emotional intelligence affects the job satisfaction of bank employees. They recommend that banks undertake emotional intelligence audit at all levels of the organization to assess the emotional intelligence levels of the employees. Banks should organize dedicated programmes to raise the interaction between employees so they gel as a team. Women employees should be provided with additional facilities so they can benefit from a healthy work-life balance.

- 5 In the present study the researchers analyze the impact of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction in NCR banks (Kohli & Singh, 2017). They considered a sample of 150 respondents (bank employees) using the judgement sampling technique. They collected primary data with the help of a pre-tested and structured questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale comprised of : Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). They collected secondary data from research journals, books, websites, etc. For coding and editing the data, they assigned weights in the order of importance, namely, 5 to Strongly Agree (SA), 4 to Agree (A), 3 to Neutral (N), 2 to Disagree (D) and 1 to Strongly Disagree (SD). Further, they used the Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis H-test to test the hypotheses and validate the results. They found that male employees had assigned first rank to policy of reward and recognition to employees (Mean Rank=84.79), whereas female employees had assigned first rank to availability of medical facility (Mean Rank=80.85). Further, respondents in the age group of 31- 40 years assigned the first rank to provision of clear direction and effective feedback to employees (Mean Rank=98.05). Respondents above 50 years (Mean Rank=90.66) and 41-50 years (Mean Rank=89.35) assigned the first rank to the statement that employees have to work overtime. However, respondents in the age group of 21-30 years assigned the top rank to the future of the organisation (Mean Rank=75.60). Further, respondents with other qualifications assigned the first rank to extension of equal treatment to all employees (Mean Rank=110.75), whereas respondents with professional qualification assigned the first rank to availability of medical facility (Mean rank=102.55). The researchers recommend that tests related to EI be conducted and the results used for promotions, staff reviews, recruitment and training, etc. This will render the management practices more reliable and realistic. Development of skills like communication skills, logical skills, creative skills and management skills should be focused on. Programmes to raise the emotional intelligence of employees should be conducted regularly to bring out the best in employees. Job security must be assured to them, and retirement benefits explained to retain them.

1.4 Research gap

The reviewed literature does not ascertain how the respondents view EI. Nor does it say how well or otherwise the respondents have understood the workplace relevance of EI. Importantly, the reviewed literature has not analysed how EI is practised. These have given rise to a research gap which this study seeks to address.

1.5 Scope of the present study

The study confines itself to officers and controlling officers of public sector bank branches operating in and around Bangalore city.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain how the respondents view EI
2. Ascertain from the respondents the workplace relevance of EI
3. Ascertain how EI manifests itself, from the perspective of the respondents

1.7 Hypothesis proposed to be tested

The study proposes to test the following hypothesis:

“Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI”

1.8 Research design

1.8.1 Research methodology

This is a descriptive study, involving investigations and adequate interpretation. Since it is a fact-finding study, data has been collected through personal interviews with the sample respondents. Information so collected from the respondents was documented with the help of structured interview schedules drafted for the purpose.

1.8.2 Sources of data

Data required for the study was collected from primary as well as secondary sources. Primary data was collected from the respondents, namely, officers and controlling officers of public sector banks.

1.8.3 Sampling plan

Controlling officers and officers of public sector banks represent the sampling universe.

Controlling officers of public sector banks: Given the rather limited number of controlling officers and the constraints imposed by time, purposive or judgment sampling under the non-probability method was deployed. Applying the exposure to EI as the criterion, the researcher selected 30 such officers. This criterion, according to the Researcher, is the most appropriate one for the present study. What is important is the typicality and the relevance of the sampling units to the study and not the overall representativeness to the population. Thus it guarantees inclusion of the relevant elements in the sample. Probability sampling plans cannot give such a guarantee.

Officers of public sector banks: Given the rather limited number of officers and the constraints imposed by time, purposive or judgment sampling under the non-probability method was deployed. Applying the exposure to EI as the criterion, the researcher selected 30 such officers. This criterion, according to the Researcher, is the most appropriate one for the present study. What is important is the typicality and the relevance of the sampling units to the study and not the overall representativeness to the population. Thus it guarantees inclusion of the relevant elements in the sample. Probability sampling plans cannot give such a guarantee.

1.8.4 Data collection instruments

Structured interview schedules were drafted and administered to the respondents for collection of primary data.

The interview schedules featured open questions and closed questions. Open questions were incorporated to identify opinions, ascertain the level of exposure to the topic and seek suggestions.

1.8.5 Data processing and analysis plan

Non-parametric statistical units were used to test the association between qualitative characters. Conclusions were arrived at on the basis of formation of Ho and H1. To be specific, chi-square test was applied to test the association.

1.8.6 Limitations of the study

Primary data has at times been inferred through frequent topic-oriented discussions with the respondents. This may have influenced the findings of the study insignificantly. The Researcher is however convinced that the findings of the study will not have been affected significantly, though.

1.9 Data Analysis – Emotionally intelligent bank officers

1.9.1 Respondents' views on the factors that justify banks' focus on raising the EI of their officers through an induction course

With the workplace relevance of EI being increasingly appreciated by organizations across the board, banks too, on their part, have

been focusing on raising the EI of their officers through an induction course. Banks must have their own reasons in addition to the other acknowledged reasons to do so. Hence the researcher requested the respondents to disclose their views on the factors that justify the banks focusing on raising the EI of their officers. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

Table-1
Respondents' views on the factors that justify banks' focus on raising the EI of their officers through an induction course

Views	Number of respondents
Many bank officers lack EI and banks can do more to ameliorate the situation	27
Emotionally healthy bank officers are happier, more co-operative and learn more effectively.	27
Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI	26
Teaching EI will improve bank officers' managerial skills	25

Many bank officers lack EI and banks can do more to ameliorate the situation, according to 27 respondents. Emotionally healthy bank officers are happier, more co-operative and learn more effectively, according to 27 respondents. Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI, according to 26 respondents. Teaching EI will improve bank officers' managerial skills, according to 25 respondents.

1.9.2 Likely impact of the banks' focus on officers and banks through an induction course

With the respondents disclosing their views on the factors that justify the banks focusing on raising the EI of their officers through an induction course, the researcher sought to know from them the likely impact of the said focus on officers and banks. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

Table-2
Likely impact of the banks' focus on officers and banks through an induction course

Likely impact	Number of respondents
It strengthens induction experiences with mentoring	25
It strengthens pre-service banking education	24
It improves the bank officers' operations management efficiency	24

The focus will strengthens induction experiences with mentoring, according to 25 respondents. The focus will strengthen pre-service banking education, according to 24 respondents. The focus will improve the bank officers' operations management efficiency, according to 24 respondents.

1.9.3 Strategies the bank officers should use to enhance their EI levels

On their part, the bank officers too should embrace certain strategies to enhance their EI levels. Hence the Researcher sought to know from the respondents what the said strategies should be. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

Table-3
Strategies the bank officers should use to enhance their EI levels

Strategies	Number of respondents
They should acquire the ability to resolve conflicts positively and confidently	27
They should learn to use humour and play to deal with challenges	26

They should learn to connect with others using non-verbal communication	24
They should learn to reduce stress quickly	24

They should acquire the ability to resolve conflicts positively and confidently, suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to use humour and play to deal with challenges, suggest 26 respondents. They should learn to connect with others using non-verbal communication, suggest 24 respondents. They should learn to reduce stress quickly, suggest 24 respondents.

1.10 Data Analysis – Emotionally intelligent controlling (bank) officers

1.10.1 Respondents' views on the factors that justify banks' focus on raising the EI of their officers

With the workplace relevance of EI being increasingly appreciated by organizations across the board, banks too, on their part, have been focusing on raising the EI of their officers. Banks must have their own reasons in addition to the other acknowledged reasons to do so. Hence the researcher requested the respondents to disclose their views on the factors that justify the banks focusing on raising the EI of their officers. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

Table-4
Respondents' views on the factors that justify banks' focus on raising the EI of their officers

Views	Number of respondents
Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI	27
Teaching EI will improve bank officers' managerial skills	27
Emotionally healthy bank officers are happier, more co-operative and learn more effectively.	24
Many bank officers lack EI and banks can do more to ameliorate the situation	21

Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI, according to 27 respondents. Teaching EI will improve bank officers' managerial skills, according to 27 respondents. Emotionally healthy bank officers are happier, more co-operative and learn more effectively, according to 24 respondents. Many bank officers lack EI and banks can do more to ameliorate the situation, according to 21 respondents.

1.10.2 Likely impact of the banks' focus on officers and banks through an induction course

With the respondents disclosing their views on the factors that justify the banks focusing on raising the EI of their officers, the researcher sought to know from them the likely impact of the said focus on officers and banks through an induction course. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

Table-5
Likely impact of the banks' focus on officers and banks through an induction course

Likely impact	Number of respondents
It strengthens induction experiences with mentoring	27
It strengthens pre-service banking education	25
It improves the bank officers' operations management efficiency	27
It is a HR retention factor for new and novice officers	27

The focus will strengthens induction experiences with mentoring, according to 27 respondents. The focus will strengthen pre-service banking education, according to 25 respondents. The focus will improve the bank officers' operations management efficiency,

according to 27 respondents. The focus will serve as a HR retention factor for new and novice officers, according to 27 respondents.

1.10.3 Strategies the bank officers should use to enhance their EI levels

On their part, the bank officers too should embrace certain strategies to enhance their EI levels. Hence the Researcher sought to know from the respondents what the said strategies should be. Their replies to the query appear in the following Table.

Table-6
Strategies the bank officers should use to enhance their EI levels

Strategies	Number of respondents
They should acquire the ability to resolve conflicts positively and confidently	27
They should learn to use humour and play to deal with challenges	27
They should learn to recognise and manage their emotions	27
They should learn to connect with others using non-verbal communication	26
They should learn to reduce stress quickly	26

They should acquire the ability to resolve conflicts positively and confidently, suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to use humour and play to deal with challenges, suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to recognise and manage their emotions suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to connect with others using non-verbal communication, suggest 26 respondents. They should learn to reduce stress quickly, suggest 26 respondents.

1.11 Summary of findings

In the following paragraphs, a summarised version of the findings arrived at in respect of the two categories of respondents, is furnished.

1.11.1 Emotionally intelligent bank officers

- Many bank officers lack EI and banks can do more to ameliorate the situation, according to 27 respondents. Emotionally healthy bank officers are happier, more co-operative and learn more effectively, according to 27 respondents. Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI, according to 26 respondents. Teaching EI will improve bank officers' managerial skills, according to 25 respondents.
- The focus will strengthens induction experiences with mentoring, according to 25 respondents. The focus will strengthen pre-service banking education, according to 24 respondents. The focus will improve the bank officers' operations management efficiency, according to 24 respondents.
- They should acquire the ability to resolve conflicts positively and confidently, suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to use humour and play to deal with challenges, suggest 26 respondents. They should learn to connect with others using non-verbal communication, suggest 24 respondents. They should learn to reduce stress quickly, suggest 24 respondents.

1.11.2 Emotionally intelligent controlling (bank) officers

- Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI, according to 27 respondents. Teaching EI will improve bank officers' managerial skills, according to 27 respondents. Emotionally healthy bank officers are happier, more co-operative and learn more effectively, according to 24 respondents. Many bank officers lack EI and banks can do more to ameliorate the situation, according to 21 respondents.
- The focus will strengthens induction experiences with mentoring, according to 27 respondents. The focus will strengthen pre-service banking education, according to 25 respondents. The focus will improve the bank officers'

operations management efficiency, according to 27 respondents. The focus will serve as a HR retention factor for new and novice officers, according to 27 respondents.

- They should acquire the ability to resolve conflicts positively and confidently, suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to use humour and play to deal with challenges, suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to recognise and manage their emotions suggest 27 respondents. They should learn to connect with others using non-verbal communication, suggest 26 respondents. They should learn to reduce stress quickly, suggest 26 respondents.

1.12 Conclusions

Conclusions are inferences / generalisations drawn from the findings. They relate to the hypotheses. They are answers to the research questions or the statements of acceptance or rejection of hypotheses.

As explained in a previous paragraph, the study proposes to test the following hypothesis:

"Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI"

Hence H_0 and H_1 are as follows:

H_0 : Changes in the consumption-driven society do not warrant that banks play a role in building EI

H_1 : Changes in the consumption-driven society warrant that banks play a role in building EI

On the basis of the primary data collected from the respondents, vide Tables: 1 and 4, a chi-square test was applied to ascertain the association, if any, between the two variables. The following Table reveals the computation made using MS-Excel:

Observed Values			
Category	Yes	No	Total
Controlling officers	27	3	30
Officers	26	4	30
Total	53	7	60
Expected Values			
Category	Yes	No	Total
Controlling officers	26.50	3.50	30.00
Officers	26.50	3.50	30.00
Total	53.00	7.00	60.00
	Yes	No	
o-e	0.5	-0.5	
	-0.5	0.5	
(o-e)^2	0.25	0.25	
	0.25	0.25	
((o-e)^2)/e	0.00943396	0.071428571	
	0.00943396	0.071428571	
CV	0.01886792	0.142857143	0.161725067
TV			3.841458821
p			0.68757323

The calculated value of χ^0 is 0.161725067, lower than the table value of 3.8415 for an alpha of 0.05 at one degree of freedom. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. $p=0.68757323$ is the inverse of the one-tailed probability of the chi-squared distribution.

1.13 Conclusion & Recommendations

- Public sector commercial bank officers without EI will find the going tough since their level of participation in the social banking space has to be much more than the level of participation of private sector commercial banks. They have to walk a tight rope, trying to keep every segment of bank customers happy – be they depositors, be they borrowers, be they commercial borrowers, be they priority sector borrowers, etc. Familiarity with EI will help them handle the workplace pressure with equanimity. Banks should not relent in their

- pursuit of instilling the EI skillset in them.
2. These are days when even the traditional Indian society is more consumption-driven than ever before. Going by the current trend, there is not likely to be any let-up in the pace at which the society is transforming itself into a consumption-driven society. Mass consumption, stimulative consumer policies, and revolutions in wholesaling and retailing have been only accelerating this pace. More and more people are financing consumption with bank borrowings, with alarmingly minimal productive investment. With governments across the globe believing that stimulating personal consumption is the key to kick-starting demand, workplace pressure on bank officers will be in the ascendant all the time. Hence public sector bank officers would do well to master the art and science of EI in their own interest and in the interest of the bank they work for. In the circumstances, it is obvious that teaching EI will improve the bank officers' managerial skills
 3. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy and this is true of bank officers too. They may not find time to play their favourite sport but Emotional Intelligence can help them meet workplace challenges with the help of humour and play.
 4. Bank officer should also learn to interact and connect with the stakeholders, notably the borrowers and depositors, by using non-verbal communication. In many situations, non-verbal communication based on signing and body language could prove more effective than the verbal mode. Nodding to a customer by way of acknowledgement or smiling one's greetings to a customer goes a long way in forging a relationship with the customer concerned. This is exactly what Emotional Intelligence (EI) renders possible. Such non-verbal communication can often release the built-up tension, brining relief to those engulfed in the tension.

1.14 References

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