

MEDIATION OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR ON IMPACT OF EMPLOYMENT IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION WITH RESPECT TO PERFORMANCE: THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The current study aims at understanding socially responsible behaviour of employees and understanding its impact performance as well as the relationship with whether an employee belongs to a public or private sector. Impact of other demographic variables has also been studied*

Design/Methodology: *Borrowing from social identity theory theoretical model is proposed and tested on 154 employees from Indian organizations*

Findings: *Employee performance is influenced by socially responsible behaviour that mediates the impact of employment in public or private sector organizations on performance.*

Practical & Social Implications: *Practices that evoke socially responsible behavior from employees can be benchmarked by organizations for better performance. It can also help categorize employees in terms of desired social behaviour.*

Originality/value: *Conclusions give a new perspective to individual social responsibility and the effect this has on performance. It provides a demographic breakup of impact on socially responsible employee behaviour on parameters that have not been explored before.*

Keywords: Performance, Social Responsibility, Employee Behaviour, Mediation, Sector

INTRODUCTION

The world is witnessing that growth of any organization depends upon their employee behaviour and their communication style. The three styles of aggressiveness, assertiveness and passiveness are quite common among employees with the presence of all the three in everyone except that one facet may dominate at different points of time. This is typically true at workplace settings (Robbins et al., 2019). Whatever, the employee behaviour and communication style, it should be socially responsible for employee performance in organizations (Whilton, 2019) which they can utilize for organizational commitment (Brammer et al., 2007), engaging employees (Tucker, 2017; Tsourvakas, & Yfantidou, 2018) and resilience in organizations (Andersson et al., 2019). The socially responsible behaviour of employees gives way to positive HR practices which in turn may lead to socially responsible human resource management (Shen & Zhang, 2019). This also has an effect on employee wellness and well-being (Zhang et al., 2021). It may provide a kind of trust in social terms that provides more inclusivity to individuals culturally leading to better performance (Deng et al., 2022).

With so many positive effects, socially responsible behaviour of employees has become quite important and this is more so evident in the Indian society (Chatterji, 2020; Rajesh, 2021) where even movie characters, particularly heroes are shown to be level headed and socially

responsible (Singh & Azeez, 2021). Among Indians, it is a result of compassion and positive emotions as evident from a study on Indian banking sector employees (Subba & Kumar, 2018). Indian employees also display better commitment when employed in public sector (Singh & Malla, 2021) as well as indulge in organizational citizenship behaviour (Gahlawat & Kundu, 2021) as a result of social responsibility initiatives and encouragement of such behaviour from organizations.

It becomes evident there is a tendency among Indian employers to encourage socially responsible behaviour of their employees due to the various advantages listed above. This is even formalized by integrating it with different HR practices and overall human resource management. In the light of all this, the socially responsible behaviour of Indian employees becomes an interesting and important topic of study. While the consequences of socially responsible behaviour appear in extant literature (Shen & Zhang, 2019; Zhang et al., 2021), what are the influences upon it appear scant. One issue that arises here is whether demographic characteristics influence socially responsible behaviour at workplace and also if employment in public or private sector influences the socially responsible behaviour of employees.

Socially Responsible Employee behaviour & Social Identity Theory

Organizations expect their employees to be socially responsible in their behaviour (Krkac, 2019). In order to make employees socially responsible, organizations try to make employees learn these values (Illes & Vogel, 2018). Several other factors for inculcating socially responsible behaviour can be considered which include conducive strategies and communication channels (Jiraskova, 2014), linking it to spirituality at workplace (Belwalkar et al., 2018; Do, 2018) and the organizational responsiveness to social needs (Greening & Turban, 2000). Actually more and more employees are getting attracted to social responsibility and the root lies in social identity theory (Brammer et al., 2007). The theory explains how people have a tendency to identify to the group which they belong to (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Rashid & Rashid, 2012; Al-Qatawneh, 2014) and this is true for both positive and negative behaviours. This theory also explains the performance of individuals (Bruner et al., 2014; Lin, 2015). Extending this theory, we can say when individuals find their team members and other employees are behaving responsibly and for a social cause, they might indulge in a similar type of behaviour which leads to better performance at workplace. Thus the socially responsible behaviour of employees can be theoretically linked to employee performance through social identity theory. Introducing the sector in which individuals are employed, the theoretical framework for the current study can be seen through (Figure 1).

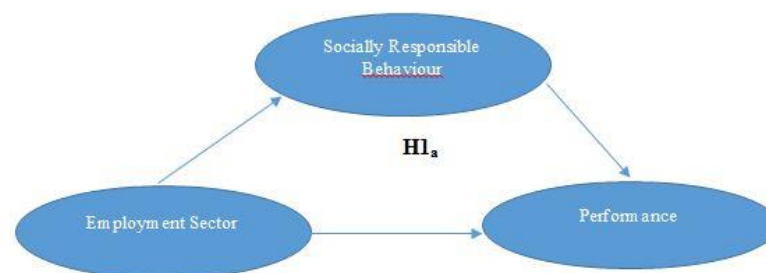


FIGURE 1
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR,
EMPLOYMENT IN PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SECTOR & PERFORMANCE

The scales of socially responsible behaviour have been constructed for study (Vveinhardt & Andriukaitiene, 2014). The items include leaving job (Kuusio et al., 2013; Kundu & Gahlawat, 2015) well-being both physical and psychological (Ryff, 2014; Cazzuffi & Lopez-Moreno, 2018) opinion of employees about their organizations (Griffin et al., 2000), organizational corruption and indulgence in nepotism (Rosenblatt, 2012) and employees being critical of social behaviour (McNealy, 2018).

Performance of Employees across Organizations & Hypothesis Development

There seems to be an increased focus on performance of employees working in organizations operating in public sector (Goh, 2012). Globally, balance score card approach is being used to study employee performance in public sector (Northcott & Taulapapa, 2012; Ljungholm, 2015). Several factors have been found to influence employee performance in public sector including styles of leadership (Ljungholm, 2014; Zeb et al., 2015) and organizational factors (Ahyaruddin & Akbar, 2016). Similarly, performance has been studied in private sector organizations (Abdalkrim, 2013). A comparative analysis of employee performance in private and public sector organizations has been made in studies conducted globally (Chawla & Joshi, 2010; Vanhala, & Stavrou, 2013).

The concept of mediation has been described as “*Carrier or transporter of information along the casual chain of effects*” (Little et al., 2007; Bergman et al., 2019). The role of all round environment is necessary in studying any mediation effect (Gumpert & Cathcart, 2019). Considering this we find, the mediating effect of job related attitudes (Rahimian & Abedini, 2017), engagement of employee (Griesel, 2016), organization culture and commitment (Nerowati et al., 2018) and citizenship behaviour (Sayuti et al., 2019; Goh, 2012; Northcott & Taulapapa, 2012; Ljungholm, 2015; Hanif et al., 2020) on employee performance appears in literature. While the impact of socially responsible behaviour on performance does appear in extant literature (Whilton, 2019), the socially responsible behaviour of employees with respect to the impact on performance in public and private sector organizations has not been covered so far. Thus the following set of null and alternate hypothesis is proposed:

- H₁₀:** *There is no role of employee's socially responsible behaviour in the relationship between their Performance and the organization where they are employed*
- H_{1a}:** *Employees socially responsible behaviour mediates the relationship between the organization where they are employed and their performance*

Additionally, the relation of gender with general philanthropy at workplace has been studied (Saxena et al., 2009; Testa & D'Amato, 2018), the impact of age on general employee behaviour and social responsibility has been reported (Lee et al., 2017) as well as the cultural context has been explained (Merkin, 2018; Nadeem & de Luque, 2018). However, the impact of various other demographic features like gender, designation and length of service have not been studied with respect to socially responsible behaviour of employees in organizations. Accordingly, the following set of null and alternate hypothesis is proposed:

- H₂₀:** *There is no relationship between employee's socially responsible behaviour and their length of service, designation, gender and age.*
- H_{2a}:** *There is significant relationship between employee's socially responsible behaviour and their length of service, designation, gender and age.*

METHODS & OBJECTIVES

The objective of current study is to fill the gap found in literature as pointed out above. The

objectives to be attained by the study can be listed as follows:

1. To study the mediation of behaviour that is socially responsible on employee performance with respect to their employment in private or public sector.
2. To find out the differences in socially responsible behaviour with respect to different demographic characteristics namely; length of service, designation, gender and age.

The study was based on a sample size of 154 people who were employees of organizations in both public and private sector. Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used for sampling the respondents. Employees were categorized as junior staff & trainees, clerical, lower & middle level management (Bruner et al., 2014; Lin, 2015). The junior staff and trainees included two different categories of employees; one being those who were in the training process lasting up to two years and second those who were into manual work like carpenters and electricians. 20.8% of the total respondents (n=32) were drawn from this category. The clerical staff comprising 29.9% (n=46) included office assistants, head clerks and senior clerks. The lower management covered people working as technicians, assistant and deputy managers and formed 35.1% (n=54) of the total sample while the middle level of management included managers and senior managers. They were 22 in number making up for the remaining 14.3% of the respondents. Employees from all the four categories were selected at random from both Indian public and private sector organizations. These employees were from all the geographical regions namely; North, East, South, West, North East and Central India.

The socially responsible behaviour was measured using the scale designed by Vveinhardt & Andriukaitiene (2014). An example of an item from the scale is “*My opinion about the organization is generally positive*”. The six items in the scale find support from literature as given in the relevant section. These were inculcated into a questionnaire where demographic information was also sought from the respondents. This included gender, age group, length of service and yearly income (details can be seen in Table 1). The yearly income was mostly left blank or inaccurately reported and moreover was not relevant to the current study. This variable was therefore dropped and not considered further. The performance of employees was obtained from their managers and supervisors who rated them on a Likert scale. The five point scale designed (Likert, 1932) has been used in studies and found to be valid (Li, 2013; Joshi et al., 2015; Brammer et al., 2007; Fatma et al., 2019).

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The data was fed into SPSS and analyzed with the help of statistical tools. A brief sample profile is shown in (Table 1).

Table 1		
BRIEF SAMPLE PROFILE		
Variable	N	%
Organization		
Public Sector	76	49.35
Private Sector	78	50.64
Designation & Levels		
Junior Staff & Trainees	32	20.8
Clerical	46	29.9
Lower Level Mgmt.	54	35.1
Middle Level Mgmt.	22	14.3
Gender		

Male	79	51.30
Female	75	48.70
Age group (in years)		
<30	40	26.0
30-40	32	20.8
40-50	34	22.1
50+	48	31.2
Length of service (in years)		
<3	30	19.5
3-8	28	18.2
8-15	24	15.6
15+	72	46.8

The hypotheses was tested through Regression Analysis while mediation of employees socially responsible behaviour on the relationship between performance and the organization where they are employed was tested through the process propounded by Hayes (2017). The mediating effect has been tested in several studies through regression (Chaudhuri & Ligas, 2017; Nishiguchi et al., 2018; Bergman et al., 2019; Maric, 2009; Li, 2013; Gupta & Gupta, 2019; Bapat & Upadhaya, 2021; Islam, 2021).

In order to test hypothesis one, performance of employees with respect to their employment in private or public sector was analyzed using Regression. The results obtained are displayed in Table 2. It can be seen performance is dependent on employment in private or public sector since the relationship is significant at 5% level. A very significant relationship was found with the value of β equal to 0.9 and p equal to 0.00. When socially responsible behavior was introduced, the result became even better. Shows the results obtained (Table 2).

Table 2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT AND PERFORMANCE: REGRESSION ANALYSIS								
	R²	Adjusted R²	Beta	t	Sig	F	B	Std. Error
Employment	0.924	0.923	0.961	38.048	.000*	1447.666	0.124	0.003
Dependent Variable: Employee Performance				*Significant at 5% level				

Further, Model 4 of process macro in SPSS as suggested by Hayes (2017) was used to test the mediation of socially responsible behaviour on relationship between performance and employment in private or public sector. Shows the results obtained (Tables 3-7).

Table 3 MEDIATION EFFECT OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR ON NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOME VARIABLE: SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE						
R	R²	F	MSE	Sig.	-	-
0.3422	0.1171	15.7798	416.9406	0.0001	-	-
Model	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	Co-eff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	194.4522	5.0053	38.849	0	184.5411	204.3633
employment	0.8492	0.2138	3.9724	0.0001	0.4259	1.2725

Table 4 OUTCOME VARIABLE: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE						
R	R²	F	MSE	Sig	-	-
0.9684	0.9378	890.0899	0.0796	-	-	-
Model	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	coeff	se	t	Sig.	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	2.0811	0.2559	8.1326	0	1.5744	2.5879
employment	0.1182	0.0031	37.602	0	0.112	0.1245
SR behaviour	0.0065	0.0013	5.1167	0	0.004	0.009

Table 5 DIRECT EFFECT OF X ON Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
0.1182	31	37.602	0	0.112	0.1245

Table 6 INDIRECT EFFECT(S) OF X ON Y				
	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
SR behaviour	0.0055	0.0043	0.0004	0.0167

ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS

Confidence Level: 95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5000

Table 7 SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR WITH RESPECT TO DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES			
	F	Adjusted R Square	Sig. p*
Designation & Level	8.23	0.124	0.000
Age	6.33	0.095	0.000
Length of Service	5.30	0.078	0.002

Designation, age, length of service and gender had a significant relationship with socially responsible behaviour of respondents as in all cases the value of p is found to be less than 0.05. Thus hypothesis 2_a is accepted.

H_{2a}: *There is significant relationship between employee's socially responsible behaviour and their length of service, designation, gender and age.*

Table 8 shows the difference between various sub groups and their mean ranks showing the difference between each category of respondents.

Table 8 MEAN RANKS		
Designation	Mean	Std. error
Junior Staff & Trainees	47.50	0.85
Clerical	44.30	0.71
Lower Management	45.78	0.66

Middle Management & Above	50.18	1.03
Age	-	--
<30	45.30	0.77
30-40	44.31	0.87
40-50	46.00	0.84
50+	48.75	0.71
Length of Service (in years)	-	-
<3	45.87	0.90
3-8	43.21	0.94
8-15	46.92	1.01
15+	47.53	0.58
Gender	-	-
Male	46.69	0.45
Female	44.54	0.94

Socially responsible behaviour was found to be best among the middle level management (mean rank=50.18) and among the senior most age group of 50+ with mean rank of 48.75 and those with 15+ years of experience (mean rank=47.53). Similarly, males with a mean rank of 46.69 were found to be higher on their socially responsible behaviour as compared to females whose mean rank was 44.54.

DISCUSSIONS

The behaviour of employees is influenced not only by the organization where they are working but also to the sector where they belong and the surroundings where the individuals grows. This is typically true for socially responsible behavior. The socially responsible behaviour of an employee working in a particular sector results in better performance. As per social identity theory this can be explained because the theory suggests employees tend to identify with their peers and teams at work place. This becomes all the more true when the individuals find their colleagues and workplace friends indulging in socially responsible behaviour. Going a step further, it also helps them connect more with the society and humanity as whole. This creates a dominos effect prompting individuals to become socially responsible, identifying better with their organizational goals and resulting in their enhanced performance. The findings of previous studies have also suggested when employees are better in their socially responsible behaviour, they identify more with the organizations where they are employed which makes them give their best. This, in turn, translates into better performance at workplace. Thus, the finding is supported from literature as well.

Another finding of the current study is relationship between performance and employment in private or public sector is extremely strong. This implies the sector in which respondents are working influences their performance. As evident from literature, public sector is resorting to strong performance management practices. This, in turn, might be influencing employees to perform better. Also a comparison with private sector shows employers may be motivating employees working in public sector towards better performance. The mediation of socially responsible behaviour in the relationship proves both the sectors are quite focused on making employees socially responsible for better performance. In India, the amendment in Companies Act, 2013 under section 135, has made it mandatory for all organizations to invest at least 2% of their net profits recorded in the previous three years to be invested in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. In other words, all Indian organizations irrespective of their sector have been brought within the purview of law in relation to their social responsibility. Both public and private sector have to keep in mind their socially responsible behaviour while transacting business. This

has been extended further last year by providing specific guidelines in the context of social responsibility and results in providing “*Value propositions*” to employees. Indulging in corporate social responsibility has been found to increase the amount of engagement with organizations among Indian workers across public and private sector. This engagement may spread over to as per social identity theory and result in better performance. In Indian public sector compliance levels are much more than private sector and this remains true for social responsibility levels as well. This explains the higher impact of social responsible behaviour on performance among those employed in public sector. Thus, type of employment is a factor that determines performance through the socially responsible behaviour. This dimension is added to social identity theory through the current study.

The respondents who have more work experience and senior in designations are more socially responsible. They are followed by the people at the opposite end of the spectrum namely those who are junior most in designation and least in terms of experience. Possibly, people new to jobs and younger in age are more socially complaint due to influence of education and value for jobs. Since many of the respondents in the current study taken in junior staff category, are trainees, they might be getting lessons and training on corporate social responsibility. Their work must be providing them a practical chance to implement these learnings. Moreover, such socially responsible behaviour may also be to get a good image in the eyes of the originations and getting confirmed in their jobs. During COVID times, young Indians have shown a tendency to incline towards social work. This trend may be continuing once they have joined back post COVID. Similarly, with advancing age and progression in career employees may be returning to this socially responsible behaviour, since most of them have people working under them. These respondents expect their subordinates and juniors to be socially responsible in their work and hence display such behaviour themselves. Age wise, this trend is repeated with the 30-40 age group being least socially responsible. Indians, in this age group, have a tendency of earning and saving for themselves with an eye on future. Since family responsibilities are at the peak during this age group for most Indians, they may be more concerned about their growth and career at this stage and may prefer behaving accordingly as compared to being socially responsible. With advancing age there is tendency among Indians to “*Mellow down.*”

CONCLUSION

The findings also show males to be more socially responsible as compared to females. Traditionally, Indian society has placed the onus of working with males while the females have been entrusted with family responsibilities. Even though this is fast changing, lesser number of females are receiving education or working even today. Thus social interaction is limited for females to their immediate and extended family. The opportunities for displaying socially responsible behaviour are much more available with males while working. Yet another reason is the larger number of males involved in jobs related to CSR giving them a chance to be more socially responsible.

PRACTICAL & SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Since employees are expected to be socially responsible and perform to their optimum levels, the conclusions obtained can be utilized for organizations across both private and public sectors. Practices that evoke socially responsible behavior from employees can be benchmarked by organizations for better employee performance. These should not be limited only to human resource ones but can also be strategic in nature. This in turn can lead to desired organizational

performance. It can also help employers categorize their employees demographically in terms of desired social behaviour and assign work accordingly. This categorization may come in useful during performance appraisal or training and promotion related decisions. Developing employees who are socially responsible for leadership roles would mean better compliance with mandatory corporate social responsibility activities as prescribed by Indian law. This would also result in long term goodwill for the organization.

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