



## **NEXUS OF RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE EXPERTISE, PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTIVENESS AND INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR: A RESEARCH IDEA**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Innovation has been identified as the major facilitator of growth performance & competitiveness. Scholars emphasize the importance of innovations for gaining and sustaining competitive advantages that ensure long-term organizational success (Si & Chen, 2020; Feng, 2020). Organizational innovativeness is essentially rooted in Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) of its members (Samur, 2011). IWB is defined as individual's behaviour that aims to achieve the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work group or organization) of new and useful ideas (Farr & Ford, 1990). Unlike creativity, IWB is explicitly intended to provide some kind of benefits. It is framed in the context of how individuals could facilitate the achievement of initiation and intention of introduction of new & useful ideas, processes & procedures (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010; Farr & Ford, 1990). IWB is a multi-layered process of problem recognition, idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization (Janssen, 2000, p.288). Griffin, Neal & Parker (2007) suggest that the diverse nature of IWB is contributed by the three types of individual's behaviour, namely, proficiencies, adoptability, and proactivity. IWB of organizational members is usually originates in the innovative culture (Wynen, Boon, Kleizen & Verhoest, 2020). Innovative culture in general is powered by technological advancements that result in improved business processes. Organizational-wide innovative culture leads the optimum return on investment, boosts productivity and profitability, improves market response ratios, increases market share, and, importantly, unlocks the Emotional Intelligence Expertise (EIE) where seeds of innovative ideas are nourished (Laforet, 2013). Additionally, knowledge sharing, human capital, management practices, innovation climate, absorbing capacity, and organizational learning are often regarded as the other main impetus of IWB of employees (Baharuddin, Masrek, & Shuhidan, 2019).

In today's highly competitive business environment, only the dynamic organizations with innovative products & services and processes can survive (Liao, Kickul, & Ma, 2009). In the global context, the countries with more innovative cultures with government interventions, supportive policies, mechanisms have achieved the developed status and are thriving in terms of economic growth. Hence, investigating the IWB of any industrial setup is growth-critical, particularly for a developing country like Sri Lanka. A few studies have focused on the IWB in the Sri Lankan context, particularly in the financial sector (Madhuwanthi, 2020), health sector (Asurakkody & Kim, 2020), public sector (Rathnayake & Zhixia, 2018), and in the middle managerial level (Niranga, 2020). However, no recent study as per the best knowledge of the researchers, has investigated the nature of IWB in the context of the manufacturing sector, specifically in the biscuit manufacturing industry.

### **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Golman's theory (1998) of Emotional Intelligence (EI) suggests that the individual's EI can open up the door for the generation of innovative ideas targeting problem solving (Golman, 1998). EI is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). As for Mayer and Salovey (1997), EI sources on self-awareness, self-regulations, internal motivation, empathy, and social skills (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). With the deep elaboration of the concept of EI, the expertise of the above concept which is developed internally and how it contributes to urging the IWB has not received much attention (Measer & Nezal, 1991; Bonger & Menz, 2008; Malik, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2021).



In 1962, Roger, proposing the Diffusion Of Innovation theory (DOI), posits the pressing need to have a supportive organizational culture in order that innovative ideas may flourish. The DOI is one of the earliest social science theories that explains how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread (Rogers, Singhal & Quinlan, 2014). There, Perceived Organizational Supportiveness (POS) appeared to be creating a favourable environment within the organizations. Indeed, the theoretical support that has established a causality between IWB and POS is seldom presented in existing literature. Moreover, the argument of Creative Destruction Theory basically assumes that long- standing arrangements and assumptions must be destroyed to free up resources and energy to be deployed for innovation (Schumpeter, 1912; 1942). To Schumpeter (1912, 1942), economic development is the natural result of forces internal to the market and is created by the opportunity to seek profit. The researcher argues that the technological orientation of an organization would act a glass-breaker to conventional business processes, thus unleashing the innovative potentiality of an organization. In lieu of such theoretical support in the existing body of research, the present study proposes technological orientation to strengthen the innovative mindset both at individual and organizational levels to affect POS and IWB (Janssen, 2005; Agarwal, 2014). In addressing the theoretical lapses about the nexus of relationships among the said drives of IWB, the present study is proposing a promising research idea with critical theoretical and managerial implications to examine the collateral behaviour of EI, Perceived Organizational Supportiveness and Technological Orientation to affect the IWB of employees.

According to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) latest Global Competitiveness Report, which reports the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) that ranks 141 economies on their innovation capability, Germany has reached the top innovative economy status, with highest scores for research & development and having more than 290 patent applications per million of the population. The US and Switzerland gained 2nd and 3rd (World Economic Forum, 2020) rankings. Sri Lanka is in the 85th place (World Economic Forum, 2020). They have accounted for both the business outcomes of the innovation and government's ability to encourage and support innovation through public policy. The index measured both innovation inputs and outputs. Innovation inputs included government fiscal policy, educational policy and innovation entrant. Output included patents, technology transfer, other R & D rates, various performance (i.e., labour productivity, total shareholder returns, impact of innovation on business upgrading and economic growth). Additionally, Apple, Alphabet, Amazon, and Microsoft are leading as the most innovative global brands (World Economic Forum, 2020). Compared to the neighbouring countries (India – 43, Indonesia – 40, Thailand – 29), it is evident that the Sri Lankan is lagging behind in terms of innovations. Furthermore, many other Asian countries were able to achieve a growth in the ranking despite the common challengers towards the economies of the entire globe (WEF, 2020). The development of innovative-friendly organizational culture and national infrastructure has been identified as mission-critical for achieving higher ranks (WEF, 2020). It is evident that the countries with innovative cultures have comparatively higher per capita income which is increasing gradually. Sri Lankan brands are rarely seen reaching the world standard of innovative brand in its history (Pilapitiya, De Silva & Miyazaki, 2020). Additionally, it was reported that the contribution of science and technology for national development was insignificant. Hence, it is very clear that the lack of innovativeness has to be conceptualized from national and industrial perspectives.

In addressing the theoretical and practical lapses about the nexus of relationships among emotional intelligence expertise, perceived organizational supportiveness, and technological orientation and the innovative work behaviour, the present study is proposing a promising research idea with critical theoretical and managerial implications to examine the collateral behaviour of Emotional Intelligence Expertise, Perceived Organizational Supportiveness and Technological Orientation to affect the Innovative Work Behaviour from an industrial perspective (Malik, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2021).



Thus, a study is proposed to analyze how the EIE of employees can contribute to inculcate the IWB of employees with the facilitation of POS and TO of the organization. Based on the preliminary review of the literature, the following propositions were made upon which the proposed conceptual model is suggested (Figure 1).

Proposition 1: Emotional Intellectual Expertise predicts the Innovative Work Behavior of employees

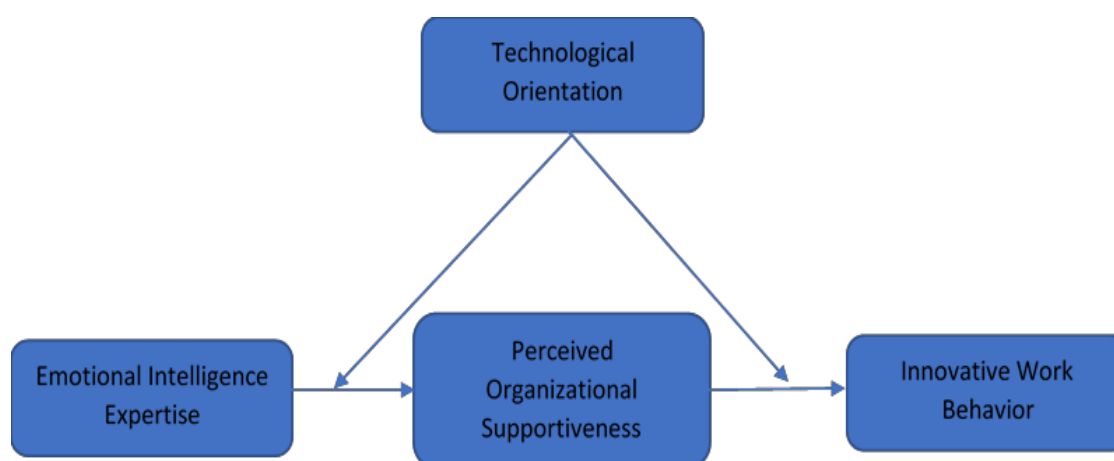
Proposition 2: Emotional Intellectual Expertise affects the Perceived Organizational Supportiveness

Proposition 3: Perceived Organizational Supportiveness affects the Innovative Work Behavior of employees

Proposition 4: Perceived Organizational Supportiveness mediates the relationship between Emotional Intellectual Expertise and the Innovative Work Behavior of employees

Proposition 5: Technological Orientation moderates the relationship between Emotional Intellectual Expertise and the Perceived Organizational Supportiveness

Proposition 6: Technological Orientation moderates the relationship between the Perceived Organizational Supportiveness and the Innovative Work Behavior of employees



**Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model**

## METHODOLOGY

For the development and testing of the arguments of the proposed research study, the deductive research paradigm is suggested as it involves testing theory rather than developing new theories (Sekaran, 2003). The research redesign will be basically the casualty design as it will test the nexus of relationships among four main constructs namely Emotional Intelligence Expertise, Perceived Organizational Supportiveness, Technological Orientation, and Innovative Work Behaviour. The quantitative approach is suggested as the main research arm in deriving the conclusion where survey method is proposed for collecting data. Thus, the research approach can be claimed to be quantitative, and the research method can be the survey method. Data collection from the sample will take place at one time, which will qualify the study, a cross-sectional one. Sample items will be the individual employees of the biscuit manufacturing industry whose attitudes will be measured against the standardized instruments developed by previous researchers. The data analysis will be supported by the appropriate statistical techniques through which conclusions will be derived.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

For a country, innovations are growth critical, particularly for a county like Sri Lanka that is on its way towards achieving economic development. The government has to lead several policy initiatives to facilitate the innovative infrastructure of the country. Where the journey of Sri Lanka towards innovativeness is concerned, one can note how it has slipped to lower levels over the past years (WEF, 2020). Out of the 12 broader pillars of Global Competitiveness Index



(GCI), Sri Lanka had improved in terms of infrastructure, health, ICT adoption, skills, and market size, but lagged behind in other factors, such as institutions, macroeconomic stability, product market, labour market, financial system, business dynamism, and innovation capability (WEF, 2020).

Importantly, Sri Lanka suffers from lower innovative capability which is an essential drive of country-wide innovations. The emerging market complexities too are pressing the economy for innovations. As a country, there is a huge demand for policy reforms to enrich the innovative culture of the country. Thus, the study on determinants of IWB at organizational level would spot green lights on the road map for macro-level capacity development policy initiatives. For a country to reach upwards in terms of innovativeness, development and inculcation of the IWB across the state and private sectors is paramount. Hence, this concept paper suggests examining how emotional intelligence expertise can contribute to inculcate organizational innovation with the facilitation of organizational support and the technological orientation.

For the survival of an organization, innovations are critical. The survival of any organization at the focus of dynamic, competitive business environment totally depends on how the organization can gain and then sustain the competitive advantage over its competitors. Organizational level innovations are a function of the IWB of its members. Innovativeness and technological orientations were theorized to spell out the IWB of employees. Human resources must be characterized by emotional intelligence expertise in their respective functional domains (Weinberger, 2002; Sy & Côté, 2004; Wilson-Wünsch et al., 2016). Therefore, from an organizational perspective it is very important to create innovative culture as supported by organization with its structures and budgets. Thus, the present study proposes to address the untapped theoretical significance of establishing the associations between the IWB and the potential predictors of it (Malik, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2021). The practical significance of the proposed study is counted as the creation of avenues for improving IWB of employees at diverse scales by means of manipulating mainly the internal trait of individuals; EIE. This is an ideal low or no-cost alternative to enhance the innovativeness of employees as opposed to expensive attitude change and/ or know-how delivery trainings. Organizations can further benefit by the implications of the study in which the organizational supportiveness and technological orientation of them can be effectively blended in to the innovative culture. As such, the proposed study on the nexus of relationships among the emotional intelligence expertise, perceived organizational supportiveness, and technological orientation to affect the innovative work behaviour of employees will be highly important for organizations in terms of its theoretical and practical implications (Measer & Nezal, 1991; Bonger & Menz, 2008 (Malik, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2021).

Additionally, self-awareness of the power of EIE will aid employees in paying much attention to developing their EIE by voluntary participation of challenging workplace demands. In addition, they would realize the arms of organizational supportiveness and technological orientation as the facilitators of their innovativeness rather than the constraints that block their journey towards innovativeness.

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