Sustainable development goals and organizations: exploring the role of employee emotional capital

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to understand the association between employee emotional capital, organizational commitment and implementation of the targeted sustainable development goals (SDGs) by businesses. It explores how the various emotional competencies possessed by employees of an organization and accumulated in the form of a capital, can be utilized to ensure effective pursuit of SDG implementation by businesses.

Design/methodology/approach – This study is based on extensive literature exploration to identify competencies crucial for SDG attainment by a business. The conceptual model built on the same is then tested by conducting a survey on working professionals. Subsequent statistical analysis is conducted to establish the relationship as defined in the theoretical model.

Findings – The results of our analysis indicate a relationship between organizational commitment and emotional capital of the employees. In line with our conceptual framework, the statistical analysis also corroborates to the idea that emotional capital can improve the SDG attainment by an organization by influencing the organizational commitment. This study also identifies the specific emotional competencies which can play an important role in this direction.

Originality/value – This study connects the dots to establish a micro-meso-macro framework which can facilitate active participation of individuals and the businesses in achieving the SDGs. This study presents strong managerial and academic implications by identifying specific intervention areas which can and be focused upon by managers and academicians to focus on SDG implementation.

Keywords Emotional capital, Sustainable development goals, SDGs, Organizational commitment

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The year 2015, witnessed a milestone declaration when “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” was put forth by the United Nations General Assembly. The aim of the agenda was to initiate a global-level contribution toward attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and to proactively address the related concerns. The Agenda-2030 lists 17 SDGs at the core, supported by 169 subsidiary targets which align with the ideas of social, environmental and economic development and collectively, form the idea of sustainability at global level. Establishing a sustainable society is a globally accepted priority, consequently efforts are made by governments and international institutions to think, design and implement methods which can integrate sustainability and economic development at global level but, as Dlouhá, Mulà, Henderson, Salgado, and Henderson
(2019) assert, sustainability is complex and normative in nature and requires contribution from stakeholders who bring their experiences, tools and expertise and facilitate the achievement of SDGs.

The involvement of governments, corporations and non-government organizations in the framing of SDGs aimed to increase the engagement of various sectors in the adoption of its goals. A substantial contribution in achievement of SDGs can undoubtedly, be made by the businesses irrespective of their country, size or nature of operations. Studies have indicated that pursuing SDG attainment reduces risks and enhances market reputation (Engert, Rauter, & Baumgartner, 2016), reduces labor and financial costs (Eccles, Ioannou, & Serafeim, 2014) and creates mutually advantageous outcomes (Kramer & Porter, 2011). However, this “win-win” situation has been questioned by researchers (Dyllick & Muff, 2016; Crane, Palazzo, Spence, & Matten, 2014). These studies have questioned, empirically challenged the premise and have highlighted that corporate sustainability although a vital starting point, may not ultimately lead to the achievement of SDGs. The idea of private organizations being committed to achievement of SDGs is still in a nascent stage. It requires dedicated efforts, time and commitment to engage in the initiative and generate desired outcomes. As a result, it merits an in-depth analysis of what concrete steps can be taken by the organizations in this direction to ensure implementation of SDGs in a comprehensive manner.

Even though various aspects in this context have been addressed, still, many others remain unexplored and unanswered. For instance, presently, why only few businesses are actively pursuing SDG attainment? What prompts the organizations to engage with the idea? and how can companies engage their employees in SDG attainment efforts? It must be noted that involvement of businesses in implementation of SDGs globally, can be a highly effective tool because the governments alone cannot complete the gigantic task on their own. Unprecedented involvement from all stakeholders on the planet is needed for SDGs to be truly achieved. However, this is not an easy task and requires a multi-level framework involving the national governments, monitoring agencies, businesses and employees and an inclusive problem-solving approach. In this paper we have attempted to identify and address the existing gap in SDG implementation through active involvement of the organizations. We attempt to highlight how businesses can engage their employees in SDG attainment by capitalizing on their emotional assets.

2. Literature review
2.1 Sustainable development goals and business organizations
2.1.1 Conceptualization of SDGs. This study is based on the idea of sustainable development as outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, which states “The SDGs reflect an understanding that sustainable development everywhere must integrate economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection” (United Nations, 2015). This ideation of sustainable development is based on triple bottom line approach (Elkington, 2004) which reflects a strong association between the economic, social and environmental dimensions used in the TBL philosophy and the economic, social and environmental development components of SDGs. Although historically, sustainability as an idea was perceived as a financial viability, which was later broadened to include social impact (Pfeffer, 2010; Dempsey, Bramley, Power, & Brown, 2011; Vallance, Perkins, & Dixon, 2011) and environmental impacts of business activities (Ekins, 2000; Brennan, Binney, McCrohan, & Lancaster, 2011). For this study, we concur with the views suggested by Colbert and Kurucz (2007), Embry, York, and Edgar (2022), Esquivel and Sweetman (2016), Griggs et al. (2013), Nilsson, Griggs, and Visbeck (2016) who assert that SDGs are a road map for advancing sustainable development on economic, social and environmental dimensions
which in turn provide guidance for long term global prosperity. The five pillars of SDGs namely, Prosperity, People, Planet Peace and Partnership also align with the three aforementioned dimensions of sustainability. Therefore, the aim of the SDGs is to achieve economic development without compromising welfare of the future generations. However, it must be noted that for attainment of SDGs, conscious and continuous efforts must be made by the governments, businesses and individuals at all level of their functioning.

2.1.2 Organizations and their role in SDG attainment. The involvement of governments, corporations and non-government organizations in the framing of SDGs aimed to increase the engagement of various sectors in the adoption of its goals. Globally, there has been a tremendous focus capitalizing the pervasiveness of organizations and to embedded sustainability-oriented goals in an organization such that they ensure its own growth and benefit the society at large. Dylick and Muff (2017) assert that this embedding is not easy and can be achieved only if the organizations are capable of syncing their strategies, processes, practices and above all their culture with the idea of sustainability. These challenges arise due to multiple reasons. As Van der Waal and Thijsens (2020) empirically identified that not all companies are clear on the reasons for their engagement with the SDGs. Few researchers believe in UN's idea that businesses must play a vital role to achieve a sustainable society; others see SDGs as a guiding tool to align business strategy and activities to counter global challenges. Moreover, as Heras-Saizarbitoria, Urbieta, and Boiral (2022) have identified that the number of organizations which are disclosing information pertaining to SDG indicators, specific targets, actions and subsequent results is very low, indicating a lack of sincerity in their engagement with the idea of these goals. Many companies remain silent about their specific actions and explicit business cases in context of SDG implementation. Additionally, they do not report their SDG outcome and the ways in which SDGs can be operationalized (Van der Waal & Thijsens, 2020) indicating an obscure embedding of SDGs in the organization processes.

Heras-Saizarbitoria et al. (2022) in their study have mentioned that it is primarily institutional pressure which prompts organizations to engage in SDG attainment activities implying that achieving organizational legitimacy becomes an important focus as compared to actual practice of sustainability goals. Organizations can prioritize achievement of specific SDGs based on internal reflection as well as their integration with existing organizational activities. Here, SDG integration or operationalization means the use of SDGs to guiding companies’ actions in their sustainability strategies (Mhlanga, Gneiting, & Agarwal, 2018). Undoubtedly, when SDGs are integrated into organizational processes, it evaluates and implements the idea with a more precise direction, sharper focus and improved understanding. Thereby, ensuring a more concrete contribution by the businesses in the direction.

2.2 Organizational commitment and SDG attainment
The 2030 Agenda does not address the governments of the UN member states exclusively. It also urges private businesses to come forward, take onus and participate actively in realizing the goals. Acknowledging their role in productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation, the 2030 Agenda appeals to businesses “(…) to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges” (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, p. 25).

As active involvement of private businesses in SDG implementation is a relatively new phenomenon, there is a dearth of research literature on the same. Some studies on the topic explore how companies are influenced by SDGs (Fleming, Wise, Hansen, & Sams, 2017; Pedersen, 2018) some other have indicated how SDGs can be achieved by sustainable accounting practices (Al-Htaybat, Hutaibat, & vonAlberti-Alhtaybat, 2019; Elalfy, Weber, & Geobey, 2021; Di Vaio & Varriale, 2020) whereas in few other studies, researchers have talked
about the relation between SDGs and sustainable investments (Doni, Gasperini, & Soares, 2020; Bauer, Ruof, & Smeets, 2021; Martins, Santos, Eugénio, & Morais, 2022). Thus, when organizational processes are integrated with the SDGs, the focus on their achievement gains precision. Subsequently, establishment of strategic management processes is necessary to foster sustainability actions at all organizational levels (Galpin, Whittington, & Bell, 2015). However, even this does not ensure acceptance of SDGs by the employees in true sense.

This indicates the need of a supporting factor which can boost efforts of the employees toward the organizational goals related to SDG attainment. In this context the role of organizational commitment of employees becomes vital. As Daniar, Putrawan, and Artanti (2021), mention, "organizational commitment is a person’s attitude or behaviour towards the organization in the form of loyalty to achieve the vision, mission, values, and goals of the organization, a committed employee will recognize with the mission of his organization and is more likely to strive in the direction of its achievement". Indicating, that an action-oriented collective approach from the organizations and their employees can ensure SDG attainment.

For this study conceptualization of organizational commitment is considered as proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) and is based on its three dimensions namely affective, normative and continuance commitment. Affective commitment implies that the employees have an emotional connection with the organization and therefore desire to continue working for the same. Normative commitment exists because the employees feel obligated to the employer and hence stay committed to the organization due to moral imperative. Finally, continuance commitment arises because employees perceive a cost attached to switching the job to another organization. These dimensions together reflect the commitment an employee has for his organization. Cao, Liu, Liu, Yang, and Liu (2019) found that committed employees have a strong inclination toward achievement of organizational objectives. They have a strong desire to be a part of the organization and make considerable efforts toward the achievement of its goals. Additionally, it is asserted that organizational commitment increases the trust of an employee on his organization and brings congruence between workers’ goals and organizational objectives. The committed workers subsequently not only stay with the organization but also strive to attain its goals (Khan, Masrek, & Nadzar, 2015). Similarly, Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) in their study asserted that employees with higher level of organizational commitment display higher devotion and consistent efforts to achievement of its goals. Decades earlier also, Blau (1986) has identified that in organizations where organizational commitment of employees is high, productivity also moves up and the employee, the organization and the society all are positively impacted.

Thus, studies have established that higher organizational commitment promotes positive behavior and attitude among the employees and strengthens their organizational citizenship behavior (Ha & Lee, 2022, O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; LePine, Erez, & Johnson, 2002). It is therefore imperative that in order to achieve SDGs organizations must first focus on aligning their human resources with the organization’s vision and mission (Daniar et al., 2021).

2.3 Emotional capital, organizational commitment and SDG attainment

The success of SDGs requires a large-scale shift in perspective to drive the significant transformation and ensure commitment from organizations to adhere to the goals. Such changes however, cannot be driven by the governments from the top only. Instead, they tend to emerge when all stakeholders are mutually engaged through extensive dialogues and comprehensive learning processes. As Sachs, Schmidt-Traub, Mazzucato, Messner, Nakicenovic, and Rockström (2019) have highlighted in their study, a significantly monumental change is often achieved first in the hearts and minds of the people and only
afterward accepted in legislation and economic policies. A significant argument in the context is made by Shrivastava (2012) who asserts that primarily, it is the emotional connections which bring about this behavioral transformation; and cognitive or scientific understanding alone is not sufficient in driving the same. For attainment of SDGs at global level, behavioral changes are to be promoted. Higher pro-environment behavior and diminished degree of environmentally endangering behavior is desirable for sensitization, acceptance and implementation of SDGs by organizations. Brosch and Steg (2021) in their study said that emotions influence and drive our thoughts and actions at many different levels, and far from being irrational, they translate our values and concerns into action. Therefore, although emotions have a great potential to contribute to SDG attainment by driving behavioral change, currently they remain underexploited. If utilized with prudence, they may become a crucial instrument in attempts to promote pro-environmental action.

UN also has emphasized on the relevance of having necessary competencies among individuals for SDG attainment. The SDG target 4.7 aims to “ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development” (United Nations, 2015). This idea was further developed by a Working Group for GECD and global citizenship competencies were identified which included empathy, problem solving, communication, collaboration, understanding others, conflict resolution, social-orientation, self-identity, self-knowledge and optimism among others. Additionally, studies (Demssie, 2021; Silvestri, Sannella, & Esposito, 2021) have also identified that competencies like communication, adaptability, collaboration, team work, problem solving, self-management, integrity, passion and an ability to understand others are key competencies which future generation must possess to be active contributors of SDG attainment. In another study, Rosati and Faria (2019) have also identified that organizations which address the SDGs actively, are likely to have higher levels of intangible assets and therefore, more competences that can be used to target their implementation. These intangible assets are present in the organizations mainly in the form of employee emotional competencies which are termed as employee emotional capital.

Gendron (2004) defined emotional capital as “the set of resources (emotional competencies) that is inherent to the person, useful for personal, professional and organizational development, and participates to social cohesion and has personal, economic and social returns”. The relevance of emotional capital in generating social benefits has been studied by Froyum (2010) and the importance in developing tools and approaches to manage emotions in various private and socially contextual situations, has been highlighted by Heaney (2019), Cottingham (2016), Candea and Candea (2010). Additionally, researchers Liu, Chen, and Liao (2015) also believe that emotional capital of any organization is a collective resource which if managed, enhanced and used optimally, can generate unprecedented returns for the organization. Emotional capital as a concept has seen limited exploration and, its relation with sustainability or with organizational commitment, is even lesser explored. As a result, there are very few studies which have talked about the idea theoretically or empirically. In their studies, Arif and Rehman (2017) and Karim and Rehman (2019) have empirically established that organizational commitment is affected by the employee emotional capital and that it can be used to create a sense of bond and affiliation among the two. Further, Gendron (2013) asserts that smooth adoption and wider acceptance of sustainability approach can be achieved by the managers if they are able to utilize the emotional capital embedded in their organization. In their study, Bilal and Rehman (2017) also indicate that emotional capital is to be developed as a shared capability for successful implementation of sustainability-oriented targets. Implying further, that the organizations competent enough in harnessing individual and collective emotional capital embedded with them, will be better at achieving sustainability on economic, social and environmental dimensions in the long run (Gupta, Bakhru, & Shankar, 2022). Given this connection between employee emotional capital and sustainability is tapped, the goals of the company are not only accepted wholeheartedly
by the employees but their efforts to achieve the same intensify. As mentioned by Thomson and Hecker (2001), to engage their employees, organizations must focus on winning their hearts and minds. This further prepares a strong base of emotional capital and promotes a sense of ownership among them; resulting into strong and profitable relationships with external stakeholders and successful achievement of business goals.

We can therefore posit that employee emotional capital has the potential to impact the attainment of SDGs globally. It can be very a powerful tool if the organizations which are committed to SDG implementation, have a team of committed employees, who are emotionally invested in achieving the goals of the organization. Based on the above reviews and discussion, we propose a conceptual idea detailing the relationship between employee emotional capital and organizational commitment. We seek to establish a relation between the two and empirically test whether emotional capital accumulation can strengthen the commitment of employees toward the organization and ultimately contribute to the attainment of SDGs.

3. Conceptual model and hypothesis development
This study is based on the premise set by systems thinking which offers an integrative approach to understand and solve complex issues. The central idea of systems approach is that the processes and outcome of a system depend not only on its individual parts but also on the interaction between them. It focuses on clusters, sub-systems and interrelationships and provides an opportunity to engage all stakeholders relevant for attainment of SDGs (Valero-Silva, 2020). Researchers (Hoffman, 2000; Valerdi & Rouse, 2010; Žalėnienė & Pereira, 2021) have also advocated the use of systems approach to create favorable conditions for sustainability to emerge. Based on this premise, this study explores the interrelation between employee emotional capital and organizational commitment as a sub-component of entire system of SDG attainment. The connection between emotional capital and organizational commitment implies that employee emotional capital comprising of various competencies and present in the form of intangible assets, impact organizational commitment by influencing its three components. Therefore, in this study we have focused on how organizations can tap into their employee emotional capital and contribute to the greater goal of SDG attainment. This not only channelizes the emotional capital of individuals into a collective asset but also provides a more productive action-approach on the global priority of sustainable development. The following hypothesis are therefore being tested in this study:

\[ H1. \] Self-awareness and leadership has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment.

\[ H2. \] Transcendental orientation has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment.

\[ H3. \] Adaptability and resilience has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment.

\[ H4. \] Communication has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment.

\[ H5. \] Collaboration has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment.

4. Methodology
4.1 Sample size technique
For calculating the sample size, the formula given by Cochran (1977) was used.
Sample: \( Z^* \frac{P \times (1 - P)}{E^2} \) where.
- \( Z \) at 95% confidence level = 1.96.
- \( P \) is probability of selecting a sample = 0.5.
- \( Q \) is probability of selecting a sample = 0.5.
- \( E \) is margin of error = 4%

This formula for calculating sample size is recommended when the population size is unknown and the number is high (Uakarn, Chaokromthong, & Sintao, 2021). The number of responses was therefore calculated at 601. The number of responses collected was around 656, out of which 633 were found suitable for further analysis.

### 4.2 Sample

The attainment of SDGs is closely related to the performance of service sector and out of 17 SDGs, 11 explicitly state (or refer indirectly) one or more service sector as means of attaining the said goal directly depend on the performance of specific services (Fiorini & Hoekman, 2018).

The service sector of India has more than 50% contribution to India’s Gross Domestic Product and 2022. (IBEF, 2024). Hence, the researchers selected the respondents for this study from the service sector. Additionally, the National Capital Territory of Delhi has one of the highest concentrations of various industries of service sector (Economic Survey of Delhi, 2023). Thus, the study is based on the responses of 633 working professionals from service sector across Delhi NCR. The demographic profile of the respondents is represented in Table 1.

### 4.3 Instruments

The study was conducted using a questionnaire that consisted of three major parts: demographic details, emotional capital and organizational commitment. The demographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>Below 20 years</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-30 years</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-40 years</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-50 years</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-60 years</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 60 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>High School or less</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>37.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral Degree or Higher</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>259</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5–10 years</td>
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<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>10–15 years</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15–20 years</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of industry</td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>25.1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>13.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Information and Technology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-Commerce</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Source(s): The authors
part inquired primarily about the age, gender, industry, work experience, education and organizational hierarchy level of the respondent.

The organizational commitment was measured by using the three-factor organizational commitment scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997). It consisted of 24 items with eight items each measuring three components of commitment namely: affective, normative and continuance commitment on a seven-point scale. An average score across all items was obtained for each respondent.

Finally, as there is no well-established scale available for measuring emotional capital, we have used a self-developed questionnaire of 24 items. It comprised of five factors which assessed the level of various emotional competencies present in an individual. These factors are self-awareness and leadership (F1)-comprising of competencies like self-motivation, passion, self-confidence, leadership, initiative and integrity. Second factor is transcendental orientation (F2)-including competencies of purposefulness, pro-social orientation and transcendence orientation. Third factor being adaptability and resilience (F3)-including competencies like conflict management, adaptability. Fourth factor named as communication (F4)-comprising of competencies pertaining to communication abilities and finally, fifth factor (F5)-based on competencies like emotion understanding, synergistic orientation and encouraging others. These competencies were measured with the help of items on a five-point scale. An average score across every factor was obtained for each respondent.

4.4 Common method bias
The common method bias was checked through Harman single factor technique. The results indicate that the variance explained by one single factor is 38% which is lower than the required value of 50%. Thus, the measurement model can be taken as free from the problem of common method bias implying that the conclusion drawn from the hypothesis testing will also be free from biasness.

5. Results
For measuring emotional capital, extant literature review was conducted and 24 competencies which form emotional capital were identified. Factor analysis was conducted (on a data set of 225 samples) to group them into unidimensional clusters. Exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used for the purpose. The values of Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure (0.810) and Bartlett test of sphericity (Approx Chi-Square value of 1,283 with degrees of freedom 325) indicated that the variables are not unrelated and there is adequate degree of common variance thus factor analysis could be performed. The competencies were grouped into five factors which together explained 64.53% of total variance. These factors were named as self-awareness and leadership (measured by eight items), collaboration (measured by four items), communication (measured four items), adaptability (measured by five items) and transcendental orientation (measured by three items). The dimensions of organizational commitment are as mentioned in Section 2.2, as the scale proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) is a standardized scale subsequently, this study has not resorted to factor analysis.

First, internal reliability analysis of the individual scales was conducted. The values of Cronbach’s alpha as listed in Table 2, indicates reliability of the chosen instruments.

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted (on a data set of 408 samples) for emotional capital and results indicated that convergent validity was achieved as Cross loading of all constructs >0.6; Composite reliability of all the constructs >0.7 and Average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs was >0.5 (Table 3). The discriminant validity was calculated to check for the validity of the model. Square root of AVE of latent variables were
found to be higher than squared inter-construct correlation which between items of two constructs (Table 4). Thus, discriminant validity was achieved.

6. Discussion
In regression analysis, organizational commitment is used as dependent variable. B coefficient value more that 0.3 is significant to prove any hypothesis (Pallant, 2020). Table 5 exhibits that out of the five factors, self-awareness and leadership, communication, transcendental orientation and adaptability and resilience have a significant positive impact on organizational commitment. Collaboration as a factor of emotional capital has no significant impact on the organizational commitment of an employee. The F statistic for the regression model (Table 6) is 68.502 (with a \( p \)-value of 0.000). Value of \( R^2 \) is 0.353 (Table 7), indicates that 35.3% of organizational commitment is explained by emotional capital.

The results indicate that-

1. Hypothesis H1, self-awareness and leadership has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment, is supported \((t = 5.539; p = 0.000)\).
2. Hypothesis H2, transcendental orientation has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment is supported \((t = 3.036, p = 0.000)\).
3. Hypothesis H3, adaptability and resilience has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment is supported \((t = 10.832, p = 0.002)\).
4. Hypothesis H4, communication has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment is supported \((t = 8.049, p = 0.000)\).
5. Hypothesis 5 collaboration has a significant and positive relation with organizational commitment is rejected \((t = 0.28; p = 0.780)\).

These results are supported by the existing studies as well. Various studies have identified employee emotional competencies which are relevant for organizational commitment. For instance, studies (Acar, 2012; Akinbode & Fagbohungbe, 2012; Arif & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2017) reported that competency related to leadership skill has a direct relation with organizational commitment. Similarly, Khan et al. (2015) in their study stated that competencies related to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three-factor organizational commitment</td>
<td>0.908</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-developed questionnaire for measuring Emotional capital</td>
<td>0.910</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Source(s):</strong> The authors</td>
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Table 2. Reliability analysis of the instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>Composite reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness and leadership</td>
<td>0.934</td>
<td>0.565</td>
<td>0.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendental orientation</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>0.609</td>
<td>0.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>0.632</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>0.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td>0.564</td>
<td>0.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.531</td>
<td>0.939</td>
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<td><strong>Source(s):</strong> The authors</td>
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Table 3. Convergent validity
Table 4. Discriminant validity analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-awareness and leadership</th>
<th>Transcendental orientation</th>
<th>Adaptability</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Organizational commitment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self-awareness and</td>
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<td>0.142</td>
<td>0.708</td>
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<td>0.705</td>
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<tr>
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**Note(s):** Regression analysis was used to examine the impact of all factors of emotional capital on organizational commitment independently.  
**Source(s):** The authors
inter-personal communication, cooperation, leadership are vital determinants for organizational commitment. Further, Anwar & Muhammad Havidz Aima (2020) in their study have also pointed that organizational commitment is influenced by competencies like conflict resolution, organizational awareness, pro-social orientation, team support, communication and cross-cultural sensitivity as strong influencers for organizational commitment. Additionally, competencies like problem solving orientation, pro-social behavior, understanding self and others and taking initiative have been identified as determinants of employee commitment to the organization (Kim & Liu, 2017). Hasanah and Mujanah (2020) have also discussed the impact of competencies like leadership and self-awareness on employee organizational commitment.

In line with our conceptual framework, the statistical analysis also corroborates to the idea that as one of the most powerful stakeholders, employees of an organization can contribute to its higher commitment toward SDG attainment with maximum impact. Implying, that sustainability committed organizations can strengthen employee association with the organizational vision and goals by capitalizing on employee emotions. Emotional capital of the employees consisting of various competencies, can act as a potent medium for instigating SDG implementation by the organization. The results of our analysis indicate a relationship

<table>
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<th>Coefficientsa</th>
<th>Unstandardized coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
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<td>Std. Error</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CollAvg</td>
<td>0.030</td>
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</table>

Note(s): a. Dependent Variable: OCOAVG

Source(s): The authors

| ANOVAa | | | | | |
| Model | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | Sig |
| 1 | Regression | 416.355 | 5 | 83.271 | 68.502 | 0.000b |
| | Residual | 762.184 | 627 | 1.216 | | |
| | Total | 1178.539 | 632 | | | |

Note(s): a. Dependent Variable: OCOAVG
b. Predictors: (Constant), CollAvg, AdaAvg, TOavg, SALavg, CommAvg

Source(s): The authors

| Model summary | | | | |
| Model | R | R-square | Adjusted R-square | Std. Error of the estimate |
| 1 | 0.594a | 0.353 | 0.348 | 1.102544837302059 |

Note(s): a. Predictors: (Constant), CollAvg, AdaAvg, TOavg, SALavg, CommAvg

Source(s): The authors

In line with our conceptual framework, the statistical analysis also corroborates to the idea that as one of the most powerful stakeholders, employees of an organization can contribute to its higher commitment toward SDG attainment with maximum impact. Implying, that sustainability committed organizations can strengthen employee association with the organizational vision and goals by capitalizing on employee emotions. Emotional capital of the employees consisting of various competencies, can act as a potent medium for instigating SDG implementation by the organization. The results of our analysis indicate a relationship
between organizational commitment and emotional capital of the employees. Emotional capital competencies categorized under the five factors are significant predictors of organizational commitment. These results align with the recent studies which explores the relation between competence and SDG attainment. As identified by Giangrande et al. (2019) individuals possessing competencies like self-awareness, communication, resilience, critical thinking, leadership are better equipped to contribute to the achievement of SDGs. In another study (Beagon et al., 2023), critical thinking, communication, team work, resilience, social motivation has been identified as critical competencies which individuals must develop for SDG achievement in future. Similarly, studies by Dias, da Silva Onewetch, dos Santos, and da Cunha Lopes (2022) and Krstikj et al. (2022) acknowledge that collaboration, critical thinking, self-awareness and problem solving are among the key competencies which will help individuals to contribute to SDG implementation.

Finally, we propose the conceptual model (Figure 1), depicting the relation between components of emotional capital, organizational commitment and SDGs. As asserted by Revuelto-Taboada, Canet-Giner, and Balbastre-Benavent (2021), employees play a vital role in addressing the challenges faced by the company during implementing initiatives for SDG attainment. Therefore, the micro-meso-macro framework proposed by our study addresses the gap which exists in understanding how organizations can have more active participation in SDG attainment by capitalizing on the relation between employee emotional capital and organizational commitment.

7. Academic and managerial relevance
The idea of emotional capital is a highly under-utilized tool with immense latent potential for bringing about monumental positive changes across the globe. Once employed accurately, it can enable and augment the returns generated by individuals collectively for themselves and for the society as a whole. As there are limited studies which explore and establish relation between employee emotional capital, organizational commitment and SDG implementation, this study adds insights to the currently scant research domain. Griggs et al. (2013), pointed in their study that our limited and uncertain knowledge of global environmental risks prevents us from becoming resource-efficient, sustainable and wealthy society. This study therefore, lays the groundwork for future research on the implementation of SDGs.

Additionally, this study presents vital futuristic managerial implications by bringing to notice how organizations can be better at contributing to the achievement of the SDGs by harnessing the individual as well as collective employee emotional capital present as a latent organizational resource. As decision makers in an organization may not necessarily be

Figure 1.
Conceptual model for relation between employee emotional capital and SDG attainment

Source(s): The authors
trained to identify and deal with sustainability issues holistically or from a systems-perspective, their strategies are isolated and narrowly focused and largely remain ineffective. Our study therefore tries to bring to the forefront, a micro-level sub-component and interrelationship of the entire sustainability system. This idea being the concept of employee emotional capital and its relation with organizational commitment. We posit that the impact of emotional capital competencies in organizational commitment can be leveraged to achieve the sustainability related goals of the organization. This study also highlights that improvement in one area (relation between emotional capital and organizational commitment) can impact another area (Sustainable goals) of the entire system. It also paves way for a much-needed shift of policymakers and stakeholders from a traditional and siloed decision-making toward integrated planning scenarios.

Further, this study also points that the development of cognitive and normative factors requires training and practice rather than a theoretical approach. Dlouhá et al. (2019) in their study pointed that the idea of sustainable development depends on not only motivational but cognitive and normative factors as well. These factors aid informed decision making which facilitate planning of interventions toward organization’s contribution in sustainable development. In the same direction, our study also prompts the managers and leaders to design interventions which can consciously build and tap into the employee emotional capital, thereby ensuring returns for the society as well as for the organization itself.

Furthermore, this study also serves as an indication and reaffirms the attempts by the Governments and international agencies to actively involve organizations from grassroot level in order to actually drive the world-wide attainment of SDGs. Undoubtedly, it is evident that the involvement of all stakeholders at micro-meso-macro levels is paramount for achievement of SDGs and this study attempts to highlight the starting point of making the idea a reality. The paper can also serve as a reference for the researchers and authorities engaged with the idea of SDG attainment by ensuring active involvement of businesses in the plan of action.

8. Limitations and futures scope of study
The research is limited in the sense that it considers only the work available on the various online databases. This indicates a need to consider various other sources of literature like doctoral thesis and conference papers to further strengthen the arguments of the study. Also, an in-depth analysis of relation between organizational commitment and SDG attainment can be conducted with supporting in-depth quantitative analysis. Further, although this study has taken into account the service sector professionals, we recognize that there is a scope of exploring other sectors of an economy as well.

Understandably, the participation of businesses in SDG implementation is desirable, vital and also unavoidable. This study has thus opened a new avenue for research in SDG attainment by utilizing employee emotional capital. Further studies can explore other factors which affect this relationship and add vitality to the proposed idea. Lastly, a theoretical perspective can also be built around the idea of SDG implementation by connecting the micro-meso-macro elements operating in the dynamics which shall serve as the foundation for future research in the direction.

References


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