

DECISION-MAKING AND INTEGRITY AMONG PUBLIC EMPLOYEES: THE CASE OF ALBANIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of emotions, including anxiety and enthusiasm, on the decision-making of Albanian public administration employees in situations involving legal risk. Grounded in the Theory of Affective Intelligence, the research examines (i) how emotions influence the request for additional information before making decisions in risky situations, and (ii) the factors that shape ethical behavior among public administration employees in Albania. Using pre- and post-experiment questionnaires, the study analyzes the associations between variables such as education, professional background, income, integrity knowledge, and political knowledge with decision-making behavior. Results indicate that employees with comprehensive knowledge of integrity rules demonstrate a heightened propensity to seek information when confronted with workplace rule violations. Further analysis identifies integrity, political knowledge, age, gender, international university experience, income, and reading habits as key determinants of employees' willingness to report ethical violations. The findings underscore the central role of professional integrity in guiding Albanian public employees' responses to high-risk situations. To enhance ethical behavior in public administration, the study recommends targeted integrity training, promotion of an organizational culture that values ethical conduct, and consideration of demographic and knowledge-related factors when designing interventions to encourage the reporting of procedural violations.

Keywords: public administration; corruption; integrity

1. Introduction

The present study applies the Theory of Affective Intelligence ([Marcus and MacKuen, 1993](#)) to investigate how emotions influence decision-making and ethical behavior among Albanian public administration employees. The experiment was designed using a deductive approach, generating data to identify the dominant factors that shape employees' conduct in situations requiring integrity.

The experimental model is based on the premise that emotions elicited by specific events or situations are integrated into the decision-making process. When public servants experience negative emotions, such as anxiety, they tend to limit interactions with individuals outside their immediate group and seek additional information from sources aligned with their perspectives ([Charpentier et al., 2022](#); [Hartley & Phelps, 2012](#); [Dorison et al., 2020](#); [Lerner et al., 2024](#)).

Consequently, employees facing workplace pressures or complex situations require more time both to obtain information and to make decisions that reflect high standards of integrity ([Capraro et al., 2019](#); [Capraro, 2017](#); [Beheshtifar et al., 2011](#)). Existing literature suggests that individuals with higher levels of education and greater knowledge of professional ethics and integrity generally invest more time in information gathering prior to decision-making ([Damanabi et al., 2024](#); [Forester-Miller & Davis, 2016](#); [Beauchamp & Childress, 2019](#)).

The experiment aimed to test whether subjects experiencing anxiety would seek more information and exhibit a greater willingness to report ethical violations compared to those in enthusiastic or neutral states. The study followed three main steps:

1. Pre-experiment assessment: Examining the relationships between variables such as education, professional background, income, and knowledge of ethics and integrity, and participants' workplace decision-making behavior.
2. Post-experiment assessment: Measuring the emotions experienced by participants after exposure to the stimuli.
3. Analysis of relationships: Evaluating how emotions induced by the stimuli interact with education level, integrity knowledge, and political knowledge to influence decision-making and reporting behavior.

The experiment involved sixty-three civil servants from various Albanian state institutions, including the Parliament of Albania, the Information and Data Protection Commissioner, the High Council of Prosecution, the Ministries of Justice, Health and Social Protection, Interior, Finance and Economy, Culture, the Department of Public Administration, the General Directorate of Taxation, and the Institute of Public Health. A partial field experiment model with dynamic process tracking was implemented to capture behavioral responses over time.

2. Affective Intelligence Theory

Marcus and [MacKuen](#) (1993) proposed the Theory of Affective Intelligence (AI), later developed by [Marcus](#) (2000), which posits that emotions stimulate the need to learn and improve decision-making. Their research examined how different emotions influence decision-making processes. According to the theory, the temperament system regulates intense positive emotions, such as joy and enthusiasm, which operate routinely, whereas the surveillance system regulates anxiety and alerts individuals to unexpected dangers. While enthusiasm reinforces existing choices, anxiety promotes intensive information processing, thereby improving decision-making quality.

Despite increasing scholarly interest in the Theory of Affective Intelligence, few experimental studies have directly tested its assumptions. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that negative emotions, such as anxiety, increase the demand for information ([Redlawsk, Civettini, & Emmerson, 2007](#); [Valentino et al., 2008](#)).

When emotions arise from external stimuli, the way they affect decision-making is also shaped by individuals' beliefs and attitudes ([Lodge & Taber, 2005](#)). Research indicates that most people process information in a biased manner, particularly when presented with complex information and strong political opinions ([Taber & Young, 2013](#)). This underscores the importance of assessing the level of political knowledge, a principle that similarly applies when evaluating knowledge of ethical rules in the workplace.

3. Experimental Design

The experiment involved 63 public administration employees who were randomly divided into two equal groups: the experimental group and the control group. Each group was placed in a separate hall to create distinct experimental conditions, exposing participants to two different scenarios. The control group served as a baseline to validate comparisons and highlight differences between the groups. The experiment was conducted in three phases. Before each phase, participants were briefed about the phase objectives and steps to follow. Transitions between phases included a 10-minute break during which participants were not allowed to leave, communicate, or use phones, in order to avoid distractions.

Phase 1: Both groups completed the same pre-experiment questionnaire.

Phase 2: Participants received information via a video. The video content differed between the experimental and control groups.

Phase 3: Both groups completed a post-video questionnaire identical in structure.

The primary difference between groups was the video script and the information presented during Phase 2, while Phases 1 and 3 questionnaires remained consistent. All three phases were conducted simultaneously and under the same conditions for both groups.

3.1. Pre-Experiment Phase

Participants first answered two sets of questions: (i) general demographic and background information; and (ii) knowledge regarding Albanian politics, the political system, and foreign policy priorities.

3.2. Treatment phase

After completing pre-experiment questionnaires, participants were presented with an experimental stimulant in the form of “private information” scenarios. Each scenario elicited different emotional states: anxiety, joy, or a neutral state (control). In the experiment group, the participants viewed a scenario in which a public administration official is asked to accelerate a problematic procurement contract. The employee discovers a potential personal relationship between the superior and the winning bidder, raising concerns about favoritism and integrity. This scenario aimed to test the influence of anxiety on seeking additional information. In the control group, the participants viewed a scenario in which the procurement process and selection of the winning bidder were conducted according to rules, without favoritism. This scenario aimed to test the influence of enthusiasm on information-seeking behavior.

The stimulant was presented via a video combining audio (same voice for both groups), subtitles, and printed text, accompanied by a neutral soundtrack. Visual stimuli have been widely used in neuropsychology research to elicit emotions ([Baumgartner, Esslen, & Jäncke, 2006](#)). The experiment combined multiple modalities—text, sound, and images—depicting real-life situations, including nonverbal expressions indicative of the emotions experienced.

3.3. Post-treatment phase

Immediately after exposure to the stimulant, participants were asked to describe their emotional responses, including joy, pride, hope, anger, sadness, contempt, fatigue, fear, and anxiety. They then reported:

1. The amount of time they planned to spend gathering additional information on the event over the following week.
2. A list of topics they wished to explore further.

The number of topics listed, alongside other survey items, served as an approximate measure of information-seeking behavior. Participants also answered questions evaluating their decision-making, willingness to report misconduct, and perceptions of the institution’s integrity culture.

4. Methodology and Data Analysis

The research was based on the Theory of Affective Intelligence assuming that:

P1: Individuals experiencing negative emotions tend to obtain more information before making a decision, strongly applying integrity rules.

P2: Individuals who experience positive emotions make decisions more easily and do not delve into information, being more inclined to not follow the rules of integrity.

In this study, ANOVA analyzes were used to evaluate the impact of emotions on the level of information and reaction to procurement procedures. Initially, it was analyzed if there are statistically significant differences in the emotions created between the experimental group and the control group after facing the stimulant, in order to evaluate the impact of emotions on the reactions to the received information. Then, the relationship between the generated emotions

and the level of information demand was analyzed, testing the hypotheses that negative emotions lead to the search for more information, while positive emotions influence the making of faster and less detailed decisions. Finally, it has been analyzed how the generated emotions influence the willingness to react to situations with perceived high risk for corruption, also examining the influence of political knowledge, awareness of ethics and other factors.

4.1. Analysis of Emotional Responses to the Stimulus in Experimental and Control Groups (ANOVA)

To examine whether the experimental and control groups differed in the emotions elicited by the stimulus (video), the variable “generated emotions”¹ was analyzed. Responses were categorized as follows: *#Negative emotion*: responses “not at all” and “not much”; *#Neutral*: response “somewhat”; *#Positive emotion*: response “a lot”.

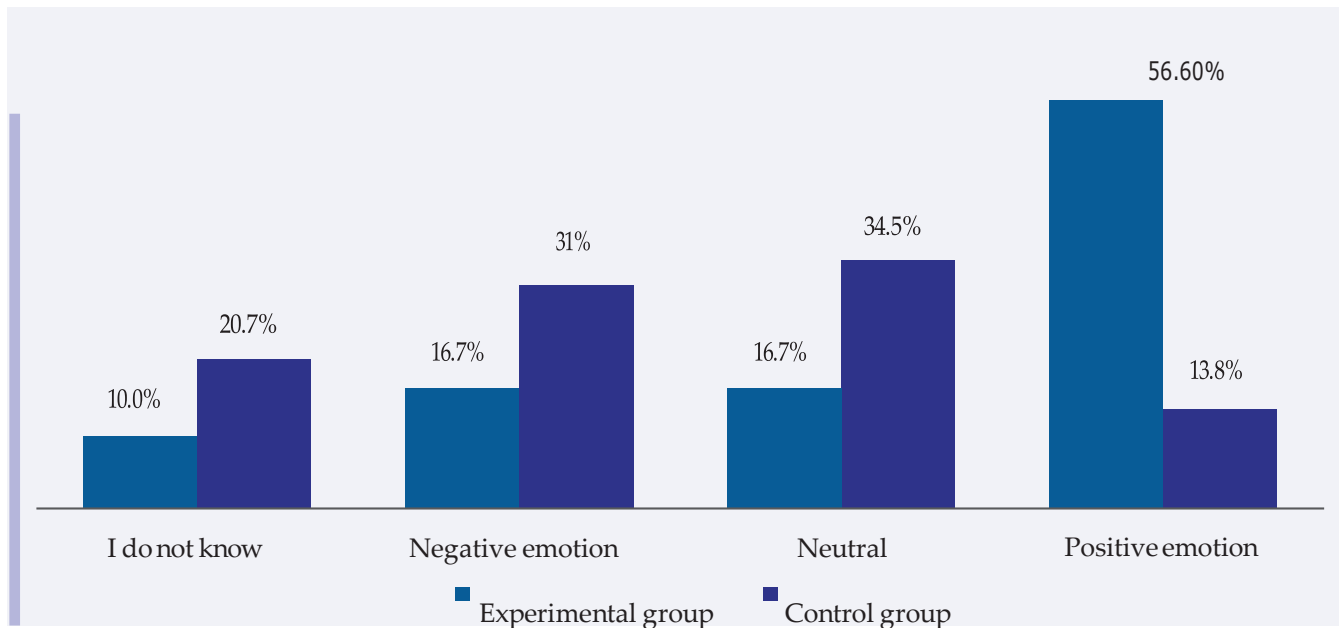
A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the generated emotions between the two groups. The results indicated a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups, $F(1, N-2) = 8.683$, $p = 0.005$, suggesting that the stimulus significantly influenced participants’ emotional responses (Appendix C, Table 2).

These findings are corroborated by Figure 1, which displays participants’ responses in both groups. Specifically, 31% of participants in the experimental group reported experiencing negative emotions following the video, nearly double the proportion in the control group (16.7%). Conversely, positive emotions were more prevalent in the control group, with 56.6% reporting such responses—almost three times higher than in the experimental group, where only 13.8% reported positive emotions. Overall, these results indicate that exposure to the video stimulus significantly influenced the emotional states of participants, with the experimental group demonstrating a higher tendency toward negative emotional responses compared to the control group.

¹ Creation of the variable 'generated emotions': in Appendix B.2/B.5 it was used the question: Would you say that the information about the procurement procedure and the decision made by your superior makes you feel: Worried, Afraid, Anxious, Angry, Disgusted, Bitter, Enthusiastic, Proud, Hopeful Not at all (...) 2) Not much (...) 3) Somewhat (...) 4) A lot (...) 5) Don't know/not sure

* The first three points are used to operationalize the state of anxiety, the second set is used for anger and the last set represents enthusiasm. So, “the generated emotions” come as a result of the analysis of the difference of “the generated emotions” between the two groups after the stimulant.

Figure 1. *How does the information about the procurement procedure make you feel?*



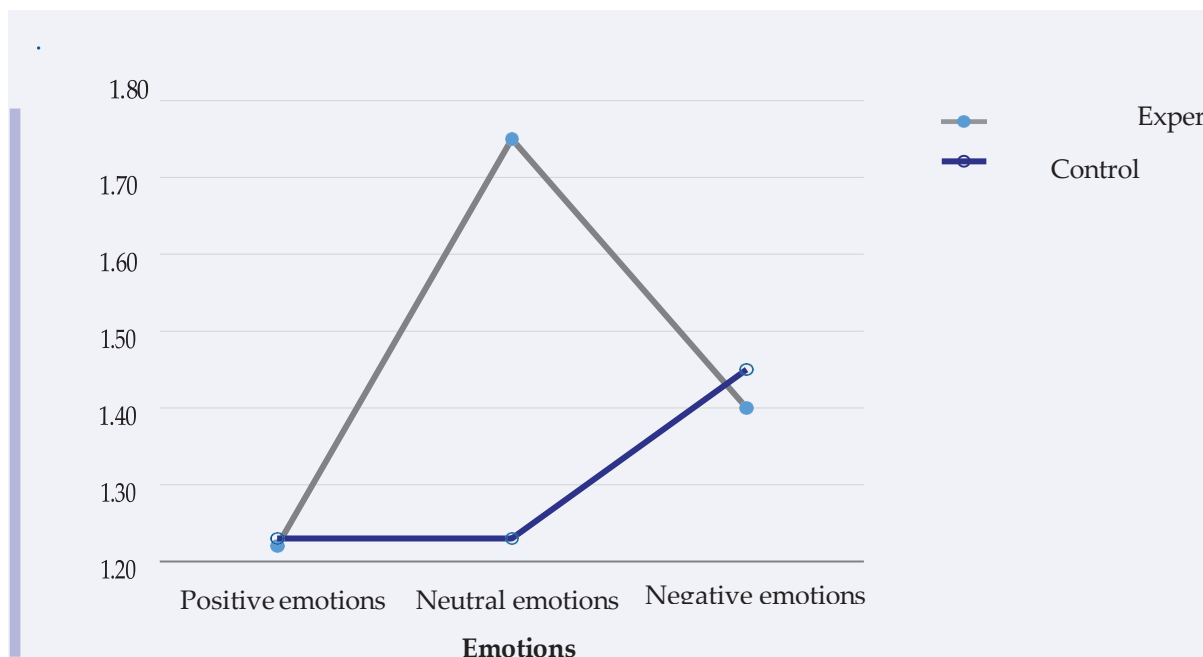
4.2. Relationship between Emotional Responses and Information-Seeking in Procurement Procedures

This analysis examines the relationship between emotional responses and the level of information sought prior to making procurement-related decisions. The hypotheses tested were that negative emotions prompt officials to seek more information, whereas positive emotions lead to faster and less detailed decision-making. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test these hypotheses.

The results indicate a statistically significant relationship between emotions and the level of information requested for a given procurement procedure. The model demonstrates high reliability ($F= 61.918^{***}$, $p<0.001$), confirming differences in behavior between the two groups regarding information-seeking practices Appendix C, Table 3).

When participants reported positive emotions, both the experimental and control groups displayed similarly low levels of information (mean = 1.3; see Graph 2). For neutral emotions (participants claiming they were not affected by the video), the control group maintained a low level of information, whereas the experimental group exhibited the highest average level of information (mean = 1.75). This discrepancy may reflect response bias: some individuals may have underreported concern to avoid admitting anxiety about a procurement procedure potentially linked to corrupt practices, yet still increased their efforts to acquire information. Finally, when participants reported negative emotions—reflecting concern or worry triggered by the news—both groups showed an increase in information-seeking behavior. This suggests that perceived uncertainty and risk elicit stronger efforts to obtain information than confirmed problematic situations. Overall, these findings highlight the role of emotional responses, particularly negative emotions, in motivating proactive information-seeking behavior.

Figure 2. *The difference between the groups in the relationship between the degree of emotions and the need for information*



This model does not account for other potentially important factors influencing the level of information, such as demographic, social, or political characteristics, as well as individuals' awareness of integrity and ethics. To address this limitation, the analysis was extended to include these additional variables, as presented in Models 2 and 3 of the ANOVA analysis.

4.2.1. Analysis Using the Second ANOVA Model (Mixed-Model Univariate)

The second model, a mixed-model univariate ANOVA, incorporates the variable "political knowledge", reflecting participants' involvement with political issues. The variable "political knowledge" was constructed based on 13 items from the pre-experiment questionnaire². Additionally, employees' awareness of integrity and ethics was captured through the Integrity Knowledge Index³. This model tests the relationship between emotions elicited by the experimental stimulus while accounting for the influence of political knowledge and ethical awareness on both emotional responses and information-seeking behavior. The results of this model confirm that emotions remain a significant determinant of the level of information sought. Importantly, political knowledge and involvement emerged as statistically significant factors influencing both emotions and information-seeking behavior, whereas awareness and knowledge of integrity and ethics had a smaller effect (see Table 2, Appendix C). These

² Questions 14 to 27 of the pre-experiment questionnaire have information about political issues (Appendix A). Participants in the study were asked to identify the correct answer from several alternatives. People who give correct answers have knowledge and involvement with high-level policy issues. The correct answers are collected thus creating the indicator of political knowledge.

³ Question 29 of the pre-experiment questionnaire (Appendix A).

findings suggest that public administration employees with higher political knowledge are more likely to seek additional information before making decisions in risky situations.

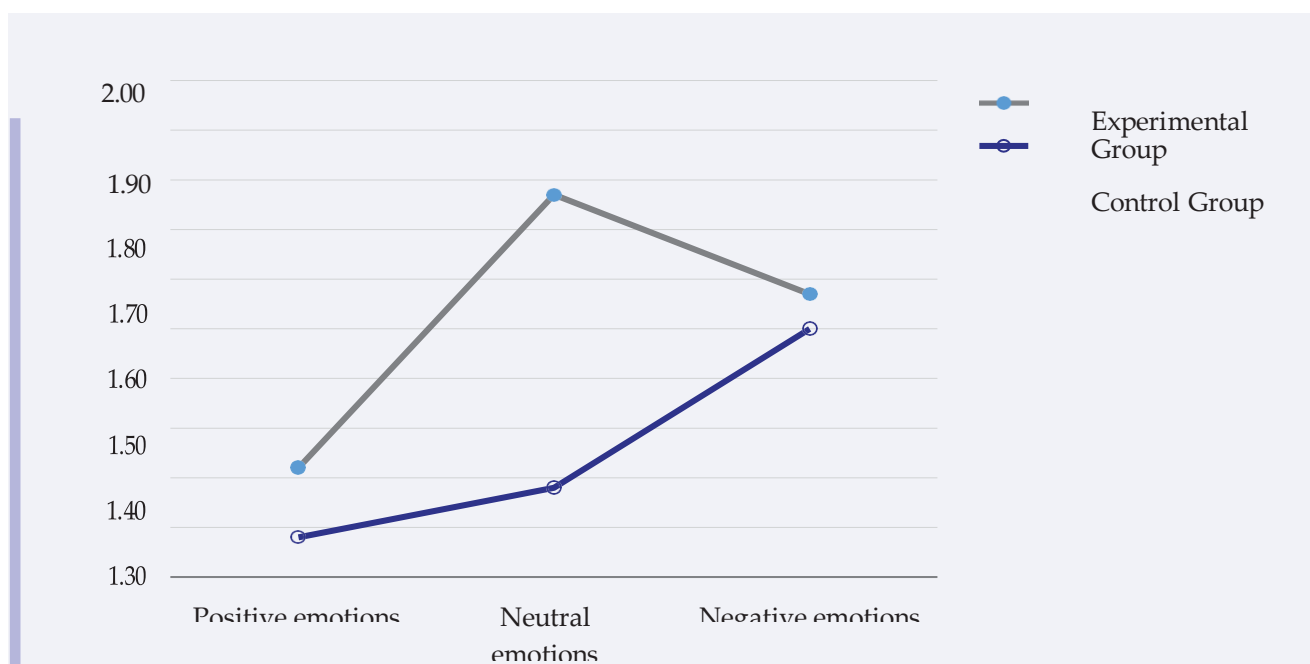
4.2.2. Analysis of the Relationship between Level of Information, Political Knowledge, and Demographic Characteristics

To further investigate the factors influencing public administration officials' behavior in situations perceived as risky, the third model (mixed-model univariate ANOVA) incorporates demographic and social variables as potential determinants of emotional responses and the level of information sought. This model extends the previous analysis by including variables such as age, gender, educational level, completion of higher studies abroad, and income level, based on the assumption that demographic and social factors shape individual behavior and information-seeking practices.

The results of the third model confirm the importance of the political knowledge factor in explaining both emotional responses and the level of information. In addition, demographic characteristics—including age, gender, educational level, studies abroad, and income—also appear to influence these outcomes. It is important to note that the study's objective was not to quantify the causal impact of these factors on information-seeking but rather to identify their potential relevance. Further research is needed to explore the specific relationships between demographic characteristics and information-seeking behavior in greater depth.

Finally, the analysis of emotions induced by exposure to news of corrupt procurement, including these auxiliary variables, highlights differences between the experimental and control groups. As shown in Figure 3, the experimental group consistently demonstrates a higher level of information-seeking compared to the control group, regardless of the demographic or political variables considered.

Figure 3. *The degree of influence of emotions in informing about a procurement procedure*



While exposed to the stimulus, both groups exhibited distinct behavioral patterns. In the control group, participants reporting concern about the procurement procedure demonstrated a

medium level of information (mean = 1.5 out of 3), indicating a tendency to seek and accumulate news and information directly related to the issue. When the stimulus elicited neutral emotions (no noticeable concern), the level of information decreased significantly (mean = 1.2 out of 3). For positive emotions (lack of concern despite the news), the information level was lowest. In contrast, participants in the experimental group showed a different pattern. Those experiencing concern or negative emotions exhibited a relatively high level of information (mean = 1.6 out of 3). Interestingly, even when reporting neutral emotions, the experimental group demonstrated a higher average information level (mean = 1.8 out of 3; see Figure 3). These findings suggest that public administration employees respond more vigilantly when situations are ambiguous or carry uncertainty. Although employees may not explicitly acknowledge concern, they engage in intensive efforts to acquire relevant information under uncertain circumstances.

4.3. Analysis of the Relationship between Generated Emotions and Reporting Behavior

The level of information sought regarding a procurement procedure perceived as risky represents one type of reaction by public administration employees. Another form of reaction is the actions taken, specifically the tendency to report cases with a high risk of corruption. To examine how perceived risk and generated emotions relate to reporting behavior, we analyzed the prevalence of reporting as a function of emotions and explanatory variables including political knowledge, awareness of integrity and ethics, and various demographic factors. The analysis followed the same methodology as previous models. Initially, the effect of generated emotions on reporting behavior was examined, and subsequently, the model was extended to include political knowledge, integrity awareness, and demographic/social characteristics as explanatory factors. The results indicate statistically significant variability in the prevalence of reporting within the experimental group ($F=94.8, p<0.001$; see Table 1). Notably, the tendency to report is more strongly influenced by political knowledge and integrity awareness than by emotions. Specifically, influence coefficients show that knowledge of integrity (0.43) and political knowledge (0.55) have a greater effect on reporting behavior than emotions themselves (0.19). Moreover, the variability of emotions between experimental and control groups is a stronger predictor of reporting prevalence than the absolute level of emotions. Among demographic and social factors, gender, education abroad, and personal income also influence employees' reporting tendencies.

These findings suggest that while emotions play a role in shaping reactions, reporting behavior in public administration is primarily driven by knowledge, awareness of ethics, and demographic characteristics, reflecting a more deliberate and informed response to perceived corruption risk.

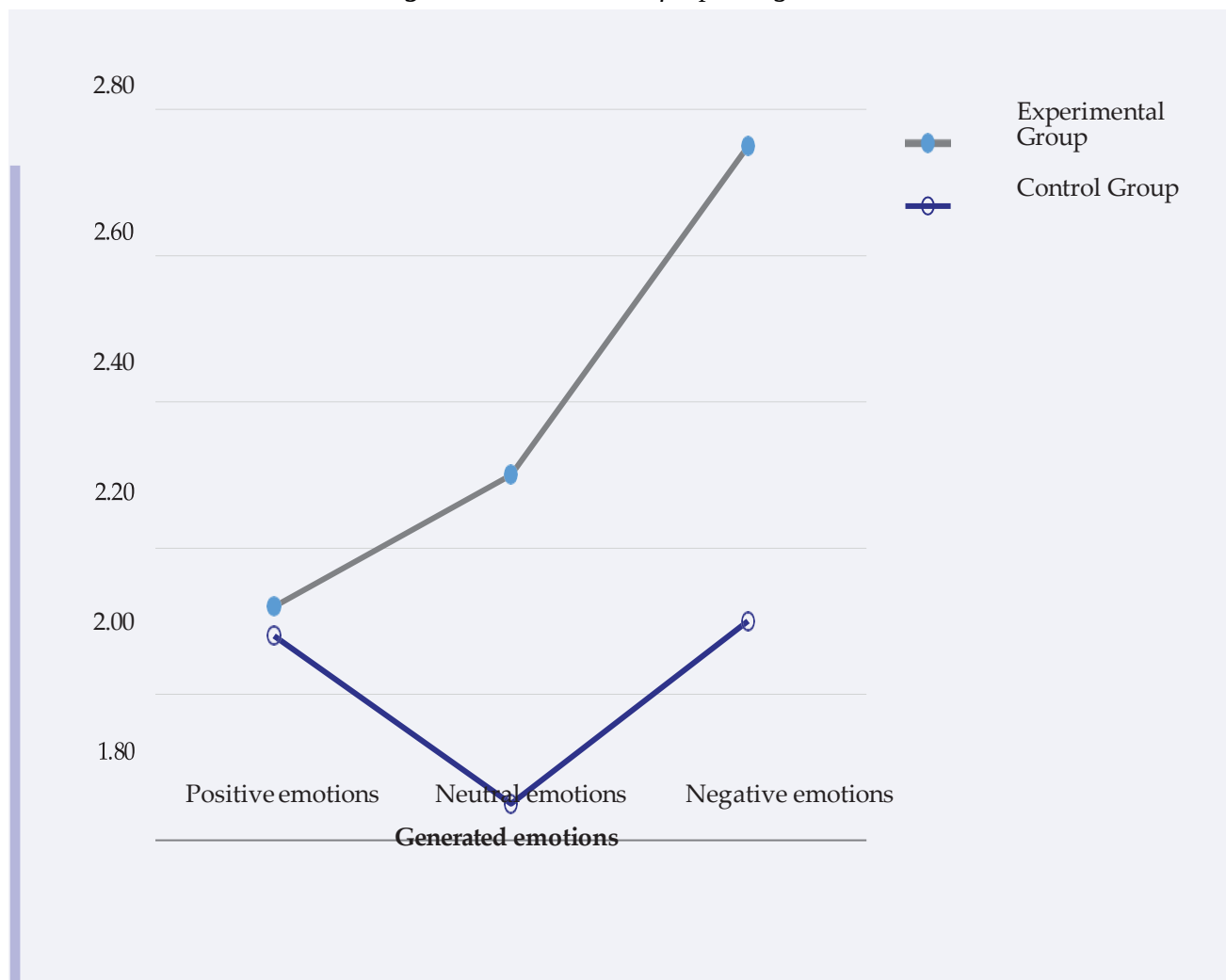
Table 1. Multifactorial ANOV- the relationship between emotion and reporting model

Dependent Variable: Reporting						
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Statistic	P-Value	The influence Coefficient (Partial Eta Squared)
Model	254.31	14	18.165	94.80	.000	.971***

Emotions (factor)	.592	2	.296	2.977	.069	.186**
Integrity (random factor)	1.924	8	.240	2.417	.042	.426**
Political Knowledge (random factor)	3.144	8	.393	3.949	.004	.549**
Co -variates						
Age	.150	1	.150	1.505	.231	.055
Gender	1.402	1	1.402	14.088	.001	.351**
Educational level (Higher education)	.185	1	.185	1.860	.184	.067
Study Abroad (Higher education)	.460	1	.460	4.621	.041	.151**
Income Level	.798	1	.798	8.019	.009	.236***
Number of books	.145	1	.145	1.460	.238	.053
Emotions*Groups	1.131	3	.377	3.789	.022	.304**
Mistake	7.690	40	.192			
Total	262	54				
R Squared = .971 (Adjusted R Squared = .960)						

The data in Figure 4 indicate that the tendency to report is consistently higher in the experimental group compared to the control group. Additionally, employees reported two primary approaches: either reporting the issue to a superior or proceeding without reporting while adhering to procedural rules. Choosing to remain silent was not observed, as neither group showed a tendency toward this option (category 1). When participants experienced positive emotions, both groups exhibited similar reporting behavior, preferring not to report but to complete the procedure in accordance with rules and legal requirements (mean = 2.1; see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Prevalence of reporting⁴



The analysis indicates that factors such as integrity awareness, political knowledge, age, gender, completion of university studies abroad, monthly income, and reading habits significantly influence public administration employees' propensity to report violations in procurement procedures. Employees with greater political knowledge are more likely to report violations compared to those with limited knowledge. Additionally, age and gender appear to affect reporting behavior, suggesting that targeted discussions on these factors could contribute to public debate on promoting ethical practices. Furthermore, monthly income and reading habits also seem to influence employees' sense of responsibility in reporting violations. Addressing these factors in training and policy initiatives may help develop effective strategies to enhance the reporting of rule violations among public administration personnel.

⁴ The prevalence of reporting is created by classifying the answers to questions in the Appendix B.2. The answers according to option 1 and 3 are classified as a tendency to proceed following the procedure without reporting (category 2). The answers according to option 2 is classified as a tendency to report (category 3) and the answer according to option 4 is classified as a tendency to remain silent (category 1).

5. Discussion and Recommendations

This social experiment examined three main aspects: The role of the stimulus—how emotions generated by the experimental stimulus influenced participants' responses, demonstrating that the observed effects were not random. The demand for information prior to making decisions in risky situations, including factors influencing the extent of information-seeking. The relationship between emotions induced by risky situations and the willingness to report potential violations.\

The analysis revealed several key findings. Public administration employees with higher knowledge of integrity and ethics rules exhibited greater responsibility and compliance, actively seeking information when faced with risky situations. This pattern was observed in both groups: those exposed to irregular procurement procedures and those presented with regular procedures. In other words, higher integrity levels corresponded with a stronger motivation to acquire relevant information, confirming that integrity is a primary factor influencing how employees respond to risky situations in public institutions.

Based on these findings, several steps can be taken to strengthen integrity in public administration: (i) Organize workshops and sessions to raise awareness about the importance of integrity in the workplace. These may include case studies, group discussions, and exposure to risk scenarios to help employees understand the value of ethical actions; (ii) Embed integrity and ethical behavior into institutional policies and procedures while ensuring transparency and accountability in all operations.

Beyond integrity, the experiment also identified additional factors influencing reporting behavior. The analysis indicated that political knowledge, age, gender, higher education abroad, monthly income, and reading habits significantly affect employees' propensity to report violations in procurement procedures. Therefore, strategies aimed at encouraging reporting should account for these factors to effectively enhance awareness and responsibility among public administration employees. Initiating structured discussions and programs that address these factors can help develop targeted interventions to promote the reporting of rule violations.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The dataset is not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions.

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Appendix A- Pre-experiment questionnaire

1. Where were you born?

2. How old are you?

3. What is your gender?

1 ☐ Male

2 ☐ Female

3 ☐ Other (please specify)

4. *What level of education have you completed?*

1 ☐ High school

2 ☐ University

3 ☐ Master

4 ☐ Ph.D.

5 ☐ Postdoctoral

5. Did you attend university studies in Albania?

1 ☐ yes 2 ☐ no

6. Did you attend university studies abroad?

1 ☐ yes 2 ☐ no

7. If so, where did you attend university?

8. Have you lived abroad before?

1 ☐ yes 2 ☐ no

9. If so, what kind of work did you do while living abroad?

10. What is your monthly individual (net) income?

1. Less than 70,000 ALL

2. 70,001 up to 90,000 ALL
3. 90,001 up to 110,000 ALL
4. Over 110,001 ALL

5. What is your monthly household income (net)?

- 1 ☐ Less than 70,000 ALL
- 2 ☐ 70,001 up to 120,000 ALL
- 3 ☐ 120,001 up to 170,000 ALL
- 4 ☐ Over 170,001 ALL

6. How many times a year do you travel abroad?

7. How many times a year do you go on vacation?
8.

9. Do you usually read books?

- 1 ☐ yes 2 ☐ no

10. How many books did you read in 2023?

11. What political function does Arben Ahmetaj hold?

12. What is the majority required in the parliament to change the constitution?

- 1 Simple majority in parliament
- 2 Qualified majority in parliament
- 3 Referendum
- 4 Special procedure
- 5 All of them

13. Does the president of Albania have the right to veto the decisions of the parliament?

- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No
- 3 ☐ I do not know

14. How many deputies does the Albanian parliament have?

15. Which electoral system is in force and applied for the election of members of the parliament?

- 1 ☐ Proportional system with closed lists
- 2 ☐ Combined system for elections in one round
- 3 ☐ Regional proportional

4 ☐ None of them

16. *Who is the governor of the bank of Albania?*

- 1 ☐ Elvira Sejko
- 2 ☐ Luljeta Minxhozi
- 3 ☐ Ardian Fullani
- 4 ☐ Gent Sejko
- 5 ☐ I do not know

17. Approximately what was the Albanian annual budget in the last 4 years?

- 1 ☐ 5.3 billion euros
- 2 ☐ 4.5 billion euros
- 3 ☐ 5.6 billion euros
- 4 ☐ 4.8 billion euros
- 5 ☐ I do not know

18. The unemployment rate in Albania is approximately equal to?

- 1 ☐ 11.9 %
- 2 ☐ 12.3%
- 3 ☐ 10.2%
- 4 ☐ 13.00%
- 5 ☐ I do not know

19. Who is currently the minister of defense in albania?

- 1 ☐ Niko Peleshi
- 2 ☐ Arta Dade
- 3 ☐ Taulant Balla
- 4 ☐ Fatmir Xhafa
- 5 ☐ I do not know

20. *Is Albania a member of the council of Europe?*

- 1 ☐ Yes
- 2 ☐ No
- 3 ☐ I do not know

21. *How many members does the European union have?*

- 1 ☐ 28
- 2 ☐ 27
- 3 ☐ 29
- 4 ☐ 26
- 5 ☐ I do not know

22. In which year was Albania granted the EU candidate status?

- 1 ☐ 2013
- 2 ☐ 2014
- 3 ☐ 2015
- 4 ☐ 2016
- 5 ☐ 2017
- 6 ☐ I do not know

23. Please answer by choosing “yes” or “no” for each question.

a	Does your institution have a Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics?	Yes	No
b	Have you participated in trainings for your institution's code of ethics and	Yes	No
c	Have you ever sought guidance or clarification on ethical issues from the human	Yes	No
d	Are you aware of the procedures for reporting violations of ethics or misconduct	Yes	No
e	Have you ever read your institution's conflict of interest policies?	Yes	No
f	Are you familiar with the consequences of violating the ethics and integrity of your	Yes	No
g	Do you know the procedures for handling confidential information and data in	Yes	No
h	Are you aware of the guidelines for accepting gifts, favors or bribes from external	Yes	No
i	Have you received instructions on how to handle situations where your personal	Yes	No
j	Do you know the procedures for reporting ethics and integrity violations in your	Yes	No

Appendix B- Scenarios for the Experimental and Control Group

Appendix B.1- Scenario A for the Experimental Group - Unethical Procurement Process (Anxiety Stimulant)

You are a dedicated employee working in the public administration. Your Directorate is responsible for ensuring that all procurement processes are carried out with maximum integrity and in full compliance with applicable legislation. One day, you receive an email from your superior, who is the authority to approve all procurement decisions. In the email, a request is made to accelerate a procurement contract for a major project. The superior informs you that this contract is of great benefit to the institution and there is great pressure coming from superiors in higher levels to close it as soon as possible as a procedure. However, as you scrutinize the procurement documents and evaluation criteria, you notice some glaring problems:

1. The winning bidder (Company A) does not meet the criteria set for the contract.

2. The tendering process was not open and competitive as required by regulation. Only one proposal was received, which was the one sent by Company A.
3. It appears that your superior has a personal relationship with the owner of Company A, which raises concerns of favoritism to the latter. The proposed contract terms are significantly more favorable to Company A than they should be, potentially costing the public administration a significant amount of money.

****Immediately after the stimulant was displayed on a large monitor, the subjects in the experiment immediately answered a set of questions.**

Appendix B.2- Attitudes of the Experimental Group after the Stimulus

What attitude will you take? (Yes/No)

1. You may decide to follow the prescribed procurement procedures, according to which the proposal made by Company A will have to be rejected due to numerous irregularities.
2. You can inform your superior about your concerns regarding the procurement process and request that this process be carried out in a fair and transparent manner, in accordance with the regulations.
3. You can proceed with the accelerated procurement process as instructed by your superior, overlooking the irregularities and problems. After all, the superior will put the signature, so you have no responsibility.
4. You may decide not to talk about the problems you have identified to avoid confrontation with your superior.

****Each question above was answered as follows: (This section was not shared with respondents)**

Option 1: Observe integrity and follow procedures.

Option 2: Inform supervisor of concerns.

Option 3: Compromise integrity and follow procedures as directed by superior.

Option 4: You don't talk about irregularities.

****This scenario presents a complex ethical dilemma where public servants must make choices that reflect their integrity and commitment to upholding ethical standards in a procurement process. The responses to these options have shown the level of integrity and ethical decision-making of the participants.**

Appendix B.3- Post-experiment questionnaire for the experimental group

1. How does the information about the procurement procedure make you feel? How worried, fearful, anxious, angry, or disgusted, or bitter do you feel?

- ☐ not at all
- ☐ not much
- ☐ somewhat
- ☐ a lot
- ☐ I don't know/ not sure

2. If this situation becomes public, how much time do you intend to spend in the next week to get in-depth information about this issue? (e.g., time spent reading newspapers, watching tv, using the internet, delving into the legal framework).

- ☐ I will watch the news related to this issue every day
- ☐ if I hear news by chance, it would be good
- ☐ neutral

- ☐ I have very little interest in this matter
☐ I have no interest at all

3. Please list some public administration issues that concern you and that you think should be discussed in the media.

4. What attitude will you take regarding the procedure you watched in the video?

- ☐ I will follow the established procurement procedures, according to which i will have to reject the proposal made by company a due to numerous irregularities.
☐ I will inform my supervisor of my concerns regarding the procurement process and request that this process be carried out in a fair and transparent manner, in accordance with the applicable laws.
☐ I will proceed with the accelerated procurement process as instructed by my superior, overlooking the irregularities and problems. After all, the superior will put the signature, so i have no responsibility.

Appendix B.4- Scenario A for the Control Group - Ethical Procurement Process (Enthusiasm stimulant)

You are a dedicated employee working in the procurement department in the public administration. Your Directorate is responsible for ensuring that all procurement processes are carried out with maximum integrity and in full compliance with applicable rules and regulations. One day, you receive an email from your superior, who has the authority to approve all procurement decisions. In the email, a request is made to accelerate a procurement contract for a major project. The superior informs you that this contract is of great benefit to the institution and there is great pressure coming from superiors in higher ranks to close it as soon as possible as a procedure. As you scrutinize the procurement documents and evaluation criteria, notice that everything appears to be in order:

1. The winning bidder (Company A) meets all the criteria set for the contract.
2. The tendering process was open and competitive as required by regulation, where many bids were received, and the proposal sent by Company A was the most competitive.
3. Clearly your superior has followed all procurement procedures rigorously and there is no evidence of favoritism to any competing entity.
4. The proposed terms of the contract are impartial and in the best interest of the public administration.

Appendix B.5- Attitudes of the Control Group after the Stimulus

What attitude will you take?

1. You can decide to proceed with the accelerated procurement process as instructed by your superior, knowing that all procedures have been followed correctly.
2. You can inform your superior that you have reviewed the procurement documents and are satisfied with the integrity of the process.

3. You may proceed with the accelerated procurement process as directed by your superior, but with reservations due to pressure from higher-level executives.
4. You may decide not to talk about the situation to avoid confrontation with your superior, even though you have no ethical concerns.

****Each question above was answered as follows: (This section was not shared with respondents)**

Option 1: Respect integrity and follow procedures as directed by superior.

Option 2: Let your supervisor know how satisfied you are with the process.

Option 3: Compromise integrity and proceed with reservations.

Option 4: You don't talk about the situation.

****In this scenario, the procurement process was conducted correctly, and public servants made decisions based on their integrity and adherence to ethical standards. This version of the scenario can help assess the levels of integrity and ethical decision-making of participants when there are no obvious irregularities in the procurement process.**

Appendix B.6- Post-experimental questionnaire for the control group

- 1 How does the information about the procurement procedure make you feel? How enthusiastic, proud, hopeful, or relaxed you feel?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Not much
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ A lot
- ☐ I don't know/ not sure

- 2 If this situation becomes public, how much time do you intend to spend in the next week to get in-depth information about this issue? (e.g., time spent reading newspapers, watching tv, using the internet, delving into the legal framework).

- ☐ I will watch the news related to this issue every day
- ☐ If I hear news by chance, it would be good
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ I have very little interest in this matter
- ☐ I have no interest at all

- 3 Please list some public administration issues that concern you and that you think should be discussed in the media.

- 4 What attitude will you take regarding the procedure you watched in the video?

- 1 ☐ I will proceed with the accelerated procurement process as directed by my superior, knowing that all procedures have been followed correctly.

2 ☐ I will inform the superior that I have reviewed the procurement documents and I am satisfied with the integrity of the process.

3 ☐ I will proceed with the accelerated procurement process as directed by superior, but with reservations due to pressure from higher-level executives.

4 ☐ I will decide not to talk about the situation to avoid confrontations with the superior, although I have no ethical doubts.

Appendix C - ANALYSIS TABLES

Table 2. ANOVA analysis of the variable “experienced emotions”

Generated emotions					
	Sum of	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.115	1	9.115	8.683	.005
Within Groups	59.884	57	1.050		
Total	68.999	58			

Table 3. Experiencing the news and determining the level of information

Dependent Variable: Level of Information							
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F - Statistic	P- Value	Partial Eta Squared	
Model	110.269	6	18.378	61.918	.000	.875***	
Generated emotions	94.007	3	31.336	105.574	.000	.857***	
Emotions According to Groups (Control/	1.340	3	.447	1.505	.224	.079	
Error	15.731	53	.297				
Total	126.000	59					

Table 4. ANOVA- The index of integrity and political knowledge and the relationship with the emotion scale

Explained Variable: Emotions						
Total	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F - Statistic	P- Value	Impact coefficient (partial eta)
Model	111.480	8	13.935	51.536	.000	.892***
Generated emotions	3.491	3	1.164	4.303	.009	.205***
Political Knowledge Scale	1.099	1	1.099	4.065	.049	.075**
Integrity and Ethics	.075	1	.075	.277	.601	.006
Generated Emotions by	1.876	3	.625	2.313	.087	.122*
Error	13.520	50	.270			
Total	125.000	58				

R Squared = .892 (Adjusted R

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