

Emotions and Performance: Role of Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

Emotions play a key role in employees' performance especially in the case of jobs that involve face-to-face interactions with customers. It becomes necessary that employees maintain balanced emotions in their approach towards work. Despite popular interest, there is a lack of research on how emotional intelligence is related to job performance. As a result, knowledge of whether emotional intelligence is related to employee performance and the mechanisms that may underlie such a relation is partial. This study is on the influence of emotional intelligence on job performance for the automobile industry in Bangalore. In this study, the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on employees' job performance was analyzed. The effect of demographic

variables, e.g., gender, age and academic qualifications on EI score were also explored. The analysis found statistically significant positive correlations between scores on the emotional intelligence scale and the performance scales. This means that higher emotional intelligence scores were closely associated with better performance among executives working in various sectors. The research was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 82 employees who were selected using systematic stratified sampling method.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Self Awareness, Self regulation, motivation, Social skill*

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is evolving at a faster pace. It is very important for individuals, organizations and society to cope with the changing environment and needs. Anyone failing to do so will be disappointed and will be taken over by others. Change is important to organizations, because without adjusting to the present situation, the organization will lose its competitive edge. In order to adapt to change, it is important that everyone manage and regulate their emotions.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has attracted much attention among managers, scholars and educators (Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005) based on the belief that a high level of EI improves the performance of employees. EI can be defined as the ability of emotions and their relationships to recognize the meanings, and to reason and develop a problem-solving attitude, which involves absorption of emotion-related feelings, capacity to perceive emotions, understand information related to emotions and manage them (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000, p. 267).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Managing emotions helps people to stay calm and think in the right context. By doing so, one can enhance their personal as well as social competencies. It is in this context that the concept of emotional intelligence has evolved. Individuals who possess better emotional intelligence can perform better at work, build and maintain good relationships, and have a better social personality. Hence, it becomes important for individuals to understand and regulate their emotions, and develop higher emotional intelligence; organizations can assist them by providing the means to do so.

Before understanding the concept of emotional

intelligence, let us understand the meaning of intelligence and emotions.

'Intelligence' is defined as intellectual/mental ability. It deals with the ability to solve difficult problems, puzzles, etc. Hence, intelligence can be coined as the mental ability of individuals to analyze, interpret and solve complex issues.

'Emotion' is a state of arousal of a feeling; the level of this arousal affects one's behaviour. These behaviours are an expression of emotions by individuals. Emotion is defined as "any agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion, any vehement or excited mental state."

The typology of emotions that are felt at work can be classified into the following:

1. Individual emotions
2. Cognitive emotions
3. Attachment emotions
4. Image and self-image emotions
5. Other image emotions

Further, these emotions are grouped into positive and negative emotions.

All individuals are not the same; they differ from each other in terms of their physical abilities as well as their mental and psychological abilities. Some are introverts while others are extroverts; some are aggressive while others are submissive, etc. Emotions have a crucial role in formulating our behaviour.

The father of emotional intelligence - Daniel Goleman - defines emotional intelligence as 'a potential for mastering the skills of self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management'.

'Social skills' is the ability to understand others' emotional feelings and to draw information out of

these emotions so that the individual can cope with changing social contexts. Research, also suggests that social skills is the ability to enter into a two-way communication with the other person.

The relationship between employees and higher management is significantly correlated with productivity (Saddam Hussain Rahim, 2010). It has a direct impact on organization productivity. Some gender perception also differs when related to job satisfaction and emotional intelligence. Organizational stress factors in the private sector are much higher than in the public sector (Kumar Sunil & K.Y. Rooprai, 2009).

Johnson and Spector (2007, p. 322) stated that “emotional intelligence is the underlying ability that allows an employee to successfully perform emotional labor”. Schneider et al. (2013), in their literature, stated that EI facilitates stress resilience; a higher EI would facilitate stress responses in the direction of challenges, rather than threats. Another study by (Humphrey et al. 2008) stated that leaders who are high on EI may be in a better position to perform Emotional Labour (EL) in order to influence the moods and motivations of their teams.

Different scientists and psychologists have proposed different models of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is framed from one of the following two perspectives:

1. Ability model: In this case, EI is viewed as a pure form of mental ability and thus, pure intelligence.
2. Mixed models: This model combines mental abilities with personality characteristics.

On the basis of mixed models, the following categories are made;

1. Ability model of emotional intelligence (Mayor and Salovey's four branch model)

2. Mixed model of emotional intelligence (Baron's model)
3. Mixed model of emotional intelligence (Daniel Goleman's model)

2.2. Employee Performance

Employee performance is assessed based on whether a person performs the job well or not. Employee performance can be closely related to two aspects; behaviour and productivity of the individual. It is important that employees maintain good behaviour, attitude and interpersonal relationships as much as their productivity.

This study brings out that being familiar with one's own emotions, regulating them and being able to understand others' emotions too - be it colleagues or customers - will improve relationships and enhance performance. Hence, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role for employees to understand their own emotions as well as those of others.

Variable employee performance has many facets for measurement. Employee performance can be measured by using the following factors:

- i. Targets versus achievements
- ii. Labour turnover
- iii. Customer satisfaction index
- iv. Attendance
- v. Immediate supervisor feedback

2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance

Emotional intelligence develops innovational creativity in individuals and as a result, helps in improving people's performance (Ganji, 2011; Hasanzadeh, 2009). In addition, what is of paramount importance in job performance is facilitating communication within the organization, which is another function of emotional intelligence (Ganji, 2011). Emotional intelligence has the power to better

explain people's workplace performance. Its role is to change attempts, improve management effectiveness, training and performance of the organization.

Different factors have been found to contribute to better or worse individual performance among employees in organizations. These factors range from personal issues, personal life to organization culture, job content and tasks, manager's attitude and financial reward (Saeed, Mussawar, Rab Nawaz Lodhi, Iqbal, & Nayaband Yaseen, 2013). Other factors include work engagement, organizational justice and self-efficacy (Korkaew, 2012). Also Job Performance (JP) levels can be affected by the changes in a person's psychological state and mood (Zickar & Slaughter, 1999; Boon, 2012). A meta-analysis of the EI-JP relationship (O'Boyle & Ernst, 2011) found significant effects of EI on JP with the ability to predict an average of 14% of the change in JP.

Usually, cognition and emotion have been considered as two distinct and separate abilities having their own intelligence and areas of influence. Cognitive based performance was always thought to be a function of general intelligence only, which was influenced by emotional intelligence. Law and Wong (2008) studied the impact of EI on job performance among research and development scientists in large computer companies in China. The outcome of the result was that EI proved to be a significant predictor of job performance beyond the effect of the general mental ability on job performance.

Khurram, Sarmad, Abbas, and Amanullah Khan (2011) in their research, focused on the impact of four significant aspects of EI (self-awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management) on employees' performance among telecom employees in Pakistan. The outcome of the research revealed that a positive relationship exists between social awareness and relationship

management and employees' performance while self-awareness and self-management were not found significantly related to employees' performance.

Therefore, recognizing and interpreting emotions, and predicting the outcomes of emotions in relationships to performance are challenging tasks.

3. Proposed Hypotheses

Watkin (2000) has suggested that EI is one of the most important factors to achieve a higher level of job performance. Similarly, Slaski and Cartwright (2002), in their research, suggested that management performance and EI have a significant positive relationship. Furthermore, employees with high EI are more skilled in adjusting their own emotions and managing others' emotions in order to create more positive social interactions, which could lead to better depiction of organizational citizenship behaviour related performance (Mossholder, Bedian, & Armenakis, 1981; Wong & Law, 2002; Higgs (2004)). Recent studies have discovered that emotional intelligence can be predictive of job performance in a variety of organizational contexts and roles (Abraham, 1999; Cavallo & Brienza, 2002; Ryback, 1997; Servinc, 2001; Stagg & Gunter, 2002; Vermeulen, 2004; Weisinger, 1998; Wong & Law, 2002).

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between demographic variables (gender, age, educational qualifications) and EI.

Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence variables (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social skills, social awareness) are related to employee job performance variables (reliability, persistence and rules).

4. Methodology

To achieve the objectives of the research, a descriptive

and explanatory research design was used. During this research, the main dataset was primary data but triangulated with secondary data. The purpose of the quantitative explanatory research study was to conclude the degree to which a relationship exists between emotional intelligence and employee performance. To further substantiate this, it can be explained as a method that is a correlation research technique for use in determining the extent or degree two or more variables co-vary; as one variable changes, the other reflects that change. Explanatory research was the most consistent approach to the subject matter.

This study was built around the purpose of hypotheses testing. The primary data collection was the most

challenging part of the study. For primary data collection, the questionnaire and interview method were used. The questionnaire was made on Google Docs and mailed to 125 respondents; however, only 100 responses were received. After eliminating incomplete responses, the final sample set consisted of 82 responses.

4.1 Analytical Strategy

First, means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities were computed. Following this preliminary analysis, ANOVA analysis was conducted to investigate differences between the different demographics and compare the relationships between employee EI and performance.

Table 4.1: Summary of Sample Characteristics

Gender	Male	30.5%
	Female	69.5%
Age	20-30	81.7%
	Above 30	18.3%
Qualification	Undergraduates	24.4%
	Graduates	62.2%
	Post Graduates	13.4%

Table 4.2: Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics for Emotional Intelligence	
Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
0.827	25
Reliability Statistics for Job Performance	
Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
0.564	10

Table 4.2 represents Cronbach's Alpha test results. This test is performed to identify the reliability of the questionnaire. From the table, Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.827, which opines that the questionnaire is reliable.

In case of the reliability test for job performance questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.564, which is close to 0.6; hence, the job performance questionnaire can be considered as reliable.

4.2 Research Instruments

The data collected for the purpose of the research is primary data. Data is collected by administering two sets of questionnaires to the employees. These two questionnaires were to measure the levels of independent variables of the study.

The two questionnaires were constructed for the study using the following standard questionnaires to match the requirements of the organizations.

- (i) Emotional Intelligence questionnaire by Daniel Goleman

- (ii) Job performance questionnaire by Donald Peterson

Demographic data such as name, age, gender, income, educational qualification was included in the above data. The questionnaire was so designed to get data related to the following dimensions of emotional intelligence; self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social skills, social awareness. And the dimensions of job performance are reliability, persistence and rules.

5. Findings and Discussions

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between demographic variables (age, gender, and educational qualifications) and EI.

The study investigated whether demographic variables have any significant effect on emotional intelligence. T test was used to show the effects of demographics such as gender, age and qualifications on different EI parameters.

Table 5.1: T-Tests to Show the Effect of Gender on EI Parameters

DIMENSIONS	N	Mean under the variable gender		t-value	Sig
		Male	Female		
Self-awareness	82	4.14	4.2	0.153	0.696
Self-regulation	82	3.642	3.472	0.837	0.363
Self-motivation	82	3.983	4.080	0.490	0.486
Social-awareness	82	3.905	4.032	0.577	0.450
Social-skills	82	4.098	4.056	0.063	0.802

Table 5.2: T-Tests to Show the Effect of Age on EI Parameters

DIMENSIONS	N	Mean under the variable age		t-value	Sig
		20-30	Above 30		
Self-awareness	82	4.191	4.0133	0.970	0.328
Self-regulation	82	3.707	3.067	9.251	0.003
Self-motivation	82	4.054	3.828	1.906	0.171
Social awareness	82	4.033	3.547	6.433	0.013
Social skills	82	4.137	3.853	2.061	0.155

Table 5.3: T-Tests to Show the Effect of Education on EI Parameters

DIMENSIONS	N	Mean under the variable education			t-value	Sig
		UG	Grads	PG		
Self-awareness	82	4.400	4.098	4.000	2.098	0.128
Self-regulation	82	3.910	3.616	2.891	7.168	0.001
Self-motivation	82	3.950	4.055	3.927	0.367	0.694
Social awareness	82	3.910	4.063	3.455	3.747	0.028
Social skills	82	4.140	4.082	4.000	0.141	0.868

To get an idea on whether demographic variables have any significant effect on emotional intelligence, T-tests were used. Tables 5.1 – 5.3 present the results of T-tests used to show the effects of demographic variables, e.g., gender, qualifications and experience on different EI factors. Gender (male vs. female) does not have any significant effect on EI parameters; however, mean value of self-awareness for females is highest numbering 4.14, which implies that females are more self-aware of their emotions than males. Age

also does not have a significant effect on EI parameters whereas education has an effect on self-awareness and social awareness. Hence, education helps individuals to enhance their emotional intelligence by influencing self-regulation and social awareness. Similarly, the significance values of self-awareness, self-motivation and social skills are more than 0.05. It can be concluded that a few of the dimensions of emotional intelligence have a significant impact on emotional intelligence levels.

Table 5.4: Correlations of EI Parameters with One Another

EI Variables	Correlation Values	JP Variables	Correlation Values
Self -Awareness Significance	.306** .005	Reliability Significance	.331** .005
Self-Regulation Significance	.262* .017	Persistence Significance	.533** .000
Self-Motivation Significance	.195 .079	Rules Significance	.102 .364
Social Awareness Significance	.259* .019		
Social skills Significance	.387** .000		

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Table 5.4 represents the correlation analysis between each of the dimensions of emotional intelligence with job performance. The Pearson correlation values for each of the dimensions are shown above. As presented in the table, the correlation between job performance and social skills is found to be 0.387, which depicts that there is a high significant effect of social skills on job performance. Also by noting the other values of correlation, it can be depicted that all the dimensions

of emotional intelligence have a significant impact on job performance. The correlation value of persistence with emotional intelligence is highest at 0.533. It means that emotionally intelligent people can perform persistently at work. The other two dimensions also have been influenced by emotional intelligence with the correlation of .331 and .102 respectively for reliability and rules.

Table 5.5: Correlation analysis of emotional intelligence and job performance

	Emotional Intelligence	Job Performance
Emotional Intelligence Significance N	1 82	.382** .000
Job Performance Significance N	.382** .000	1 82

Table 5.5 shows that the correlation between the overall job performance of employees and emotional intelligence is significant at 0.01 confidence level. The study resulted in a correlation value of 0.382 (38.2%) between the two variables. This implies that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence

and job performance of employees. Ashkanasy, N. M., Hooper, G. (1999) in their research, argued that positive emotions are associated with a high likelihood of success at work. Abraham, R. (1999), based on his own earlier observations, came to the conclusion that optimistic insurance salesmen would perform better

than pessimistic salesmen; he proposed that EI is directly related to performance. These studies, together with Goleman's observation that EI is related to job performance, led to the first proposition: Proposition P1: Greater the Emotional intelligence better is the job performance.

6. Conclusion

Obtaining optimum performance is considered as the most important objective of all organizational groups. In such a situation, organizational groups are required to concentrate on emotional intelligence as a challenging variable for the sustenance of high performance and the development of competitive privilege. According to previous studies, emotional intelligence has a key role in enhancing performance. A number of studies suggest that individuals with a high level of EI perform superlatively at their jobs. Therefore, in order to sustain high performance and competitive advantage over competitors, emotional intelligence should be developed through a systematic and consistent approach (Perkins, 1995; Bar-On, 1997; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Cherniss & Goleman, 1998; Goleman, 1998).

7. Managerial Implications

Most jobs include some degree of stress. This increases when an individual faces challenges at work. Individuals with higher EI tend to have better social relationships with people, including management, co-workers and customers. This leads to a wide range of positive outcomes. Having highly-tuned skills in sensing how other people are feeling and being aware of how your own emotions are playing out can be very valuable in managing conflict, dealing with complex social situations and solving problems in team settings. This can help avert escalations of conflict, enable the person to solve problems proactively and enhance employee performance.

This study has indicated a high and positive association of EI with employee performance. Hence, organizations can design EI interventions to train and develop human resources to achieve better performance at work. Sustained investments in training and capability building will create a critical mass of employees with high EI, thereby resulting in better performance. This will provide a platform for change management efforts.

8. Limitations and future research

Though the study provides various inputs, it is not without potential limitations. A number of important limitations need to be considered. Self-reported measures are usually affected by response bias and are sometimes inaccurate, as some of the respondents may not give the right inputs because they are prone to providing socially acceptable responses. Though the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, some of them may not be convinced of the same and may have refrained from giving some vital personal information. Second, like most of the other studies, this study was also cross-sectional. And last, the findings of the study would have been different if a larger number of respondents would have participated in the survey.

The current research leaves certain areas unexplored. The study relates and predicts performance only on the basis of emotional intelligence. Future research may investigate the reasons why EI leads to higher performance. In the light of the results of this study, an increasing amount of work can be redesigned. It would be of academic and practical value to carry out similar studies in various other organizations using EI measures and performance appraisal instruments of a high technical standard to measure performance. An interesting study would include the analysis of the ratings of EI competencies by family and friends. It is possible that the study would yield different significant correlations from the "others'" feedback.

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