

Emotional Intelligence As a Significant Tool in IT Industry

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Paper Code : JCT-A18-BG-10

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.26703/JCT.v13i1-10>

Web Address : <http://jctindia.org/jct/april2018-v13i1-10.pdf>

Archive : <https://ideas.repec.org/a/jct/journal/v13y2018i1p69-75.html>

<http://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:jct:journal:v:13:y:2018:i:1:p:69-75>



Citation: Gupta, Bhavna. Emotional Intelligence as a significant tool in IT Industry. Journal of Commerce and Trade, April 2018; 13 : 1; Pp. 69-75.

<https://doi.org/10.26703/JCT.v13i1-10>.

Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has attracted increasing attention and enjoyed a robust resurgence across a wide range of disciplines of psychology, education, and human resources over the last decade. The present decade has seen an ongoing interest of professionals and academicians toward the value of emotions at workplace. Tall claims have been made on one hand, while, on the other hand, the validity of such claims have been severely questioned

Keywords : Emotional Intelligence, Self awareness, Information Technology

Classification-JEL : O33, O34

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship of Emotional Intelligence (EI) with factors that may be indicative of an overall adjustment and satisfaction level of an individual.

“Emotional Intelligence is defined as the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions to discriminate among others, and use this information to guide one's thinking and action. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to access and /or generate feelings when they facilitate thoughts, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and intellectual growth. (Mayer and Salovey 1993)

On the basis of various definitions many sub dimensions have evolved of Emotional Intelligence. Therefore emotional intelligence can be defined in terms of sub dimensions like: Self Awareness, Empathy, Self Motivation,

Emotional Stability, Managing Relations, Integrity, Self Development, Value Orientation, Commitment and Altruistic Behaviour. Emotional Intelligence means the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions to discriminate among them and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. It involves

self awareness (ability to understand one's own emotions), self management (ability to keep negative emotions and impulses under control), self motivation (the drive to achieve despite setbacks, developing skills to attain target and taking initiative to act on opportunities).

According to Goleman (1998), customer service providers with EI skills are very adept at influencing positive responses in the people with whom they interact.

The increasing interest in emotions and the growing awareness of its role in organizations and in personal life has great

impart due to the proliferation of research over the past decade on emotions generally and EI specifically. Daniel Goleman's analysis of 181 jobs in 121 organizations found that emotional competencies were the best differentiator between star performers and typical performers.

A growing body of organizational and occupational studies point more generally to the important role of emotions at work. It is empirically found that, while IQ accounts for only about 10% of the variance in job performance, the biggest difference is made by abilities such as being able to handle frustrations, identifying others' emotions, control own emotions and get along with other people which are certainly, the characteristics of Emotional Intelligent people. Hence, EI helps to: (a) enhance communicating skills, (b) adjust with others, (c) build team, and (d) manage conflict.

A person employed in any sector like IT, insurance, retail, pharmaceutical need to have excellent communication skills, listening skills, questioning skills and ability to handle a lot of objections, queries. They need to have the ability to give presentations and offer a product based on the need of the client. Hence, he/she should have a both technical and people knowledge and the ability to understand others i.e their needs, priorities at different stages of their life. These jobs are high pressure job and the process involves a high level of persuasion and a sustained effort for a long period of time. A lot of people succumb to such pressures and finish their careers and a lot of people soar through these rough and tough patches and excel in their careers and also efficiently handle their personal lives. EI has a well understood role to prove this difference.

Not only do most of us spend the largest portion of our day at work but our identity, self esteem and well being are strongly affected by our work experiences. It has been reinforced by many management thinkers of the world that social and personal competencies are vital for self awareness, optimism, and empathy which can enhance satisfaction and productivity at workplace. The workplace is the ideal setting for

the promotion of these competencies which are ultimate combination of Emotional Intelligence. It is evident that there is direct relationship between these skills and productivity of employees.

Multi-Health Systems publishes The Bar-On Emotional Quotient inventory (EQ-i) that measures 15 factors, often regarded as the building blocks of complex working skills. They are:

- Intra-personal skills such as emotional-self awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization and independence.
- Inter-personal skills such as empathy, interpersonal relationships and social responsibility.
- Stress management skills such as stress tolerance and impulse control.
- Adaptability such as problem-solving, reality testing and flexibility.
- General mood such as happiness and optimism.

By pinpointing these underlying skill sets, individuals can work to improve their performance both in their personal and professional lives.

Corporate world have begun to recognize the importance of this direct relationship and emphasis is led to increase the employees' emotional intelligence. In the workplace, this ability can greatly enhance interpersonal communication and people skills. So, it is important to understand what emotional intelligence is, how it can best be used at workplace to increase productivity and satisfaction and how this strength of individual can turn around his life.

2. BASIC COMPONENTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

EI is distinct from but complimentary to academic intelligence, the purely cognitive capacity measured by IQ. Unlike IQ that does not significantly change over one's life time, emotional intelligence can be taught and

learned. It requires commitment to develop one's competencies and skills through repeated application, practice, and feedback. EI has basic components such as:

a) Self-awareness : Self-awareness is the heart of emotional intelligence. It is the foundation on which most of the other elements of emotional intelligence are built, the necessary first step toward exploring and coming to understand yourself, and toward change. It is the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives as well as their impact on others. Emotional self-awareness is also about knowing what motivates you, what brings you fulfillment and what lifts your heart and fills you with energy and aliveness.

b) Self-regulation : Self-regulation or impulse control is the ability to regulate your emotions and behavior so that you act appropriately in various situations. It involves resisting or delaying an impulse, drive, and temptation to act, responding versus reacting.

c) Interpersonal skills : Interpersonal effectiveness involves being empathetic (i.e., being aware of, understanding, and appreciating the feelings of others); being a constructive, cooperative, and contributing member of your social group; and, establishing and maintaining mutually satisfying relationships.

d) Adaptability : Adaptability is the capacity to cope with environmental demands by effectively and realistically sizing up and flexibly dealing with problematic situations. It is the ability to adjust your emotions, thoughts, and behavior to changing situations and conditions.

e) Stress Tolerance : Stress tolerance is the ability to withstand adverse events, stressful situations, and strong emotions without falling apart but by actively coping with stress.

f) General Mood and Motivation : Two factors that facilitate emotionally intelligent behavior are optimism and happiness. Optimism is the ability to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude even in the face of adversity. Happiness is the ability to feel

satisfied with one's life, to enjoy oneself and others, and to have fun and express a positive mood.

3. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AT WORKPLACE

A manager is a person who has to manage the mood of their organizations. The most gifted corporate leaders accomplish that by using a mysterious blend of psychological abilities known as emotional intelligence. They're self-aware and empathetic. They can read and regulate their own emotions while intuitively grasping how others feel and gauging their organization's emotional state.

Intelligence (EI) has been recently validated with major skill areas that can influence your career and create abilities that improve your worth at work. A very recent and excellent review of the EI literature (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000) demonstrates clearly that EI impacts on work success.

Studies of close to 500 organizations worldwide, reviewed by Goleman, indicate that people who score highest on EQ measures rise to the top of corporations. 'Star' employees possess more interpersonal skills and confidence, for example, than 'regular' employees who receive less glowing performance reviews.

'Emotional intelligence matters twice as much as technical and analytic skill combined for star performances,' he says. 'And the higher people move up in the company, the more crucial emotional intelligence becomes.' Bosses and leaders, in particular, need high EQ because they represent the organization to the public, they interact with the highest number of people within and outside the organization and they set the tone for employee morale, says Goleman. Leaders with empathy are able to understand their employees needs and provide them with constructive feedback.

Different jobs also call for different types of emotional intelligence. For example, success

in sales requires the empathic ability to gauge a customer's mood and the interpersonal skill to decide when to pitch a product and when to keep quiet.

“Don't bring your personal problems to work” is one variation of the argument that emotions are inappropriate in the workplace. Business decisions, so the argument goes, should be based on information, logic and calm cool reason, with emotions kept to a minimum. But it is unrealistic to suppose that emotions can be checked at the door when you arrive at work. Some people may assume, for a variety of reasons, that emotional neutrality is an ideal, and try to keep feelings out of sight. Such people work and relate in a certain way: usually they come across as rigid, detached or fearful, and fail to participate fully in the life of the workplace. This is not necessarily bad in some situations, but it is usually not good for an organization for such people to move into management roles. The same would be true for people who emote excessively, who tell you how they feel about everything. Simply being around them can be exhausting.

Developing emotional intelligence in the workplace means acknowledging that emotions are always present, and doing something intelligent with them. People vary enormously in the skill with which they use their own emotions and react to the emotions of others—and that can make the difference between a good manager and a bad one. It's not overly egalitarian to suggest that most professionals, managers and executives are fairly smart people (of course there can be glaring exceptions), but there can be a huge difference in how well they handle people. That is, the department manager may be a genius in technical, product or service knowledge—and get failing marks in terms of people skills.

4. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE- BACKGROUND

The research or studies in Emotional Intelligence may be dated back to the studies of

Charles Darwin, an English anthropologist (1809-1882). In his work on the 'importance of emotional expression for survival and second adaptation', he says emotions are an inert remnant of the primordial bodily preparation for action. In 1930s, Edward Thorndike has put forth the concept of 'Social Intelligence', as the ability to get along with people. In 1940s – David Wechsler suggests that affective components of intelligence may be essential to success in life. 1950s – Humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow describe how people can build emotional strength.. Psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990) published their landmark article, "Emotional Intelligence," in the journal *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality* . The concept of emotional intelligence got popularized after publication of psychologist and New York Times science writer Daniel Goleman's book (1995) *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* .

Daniel Goleman explains that Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is considered to account for approximately 20% of the factors that determine life success, and he argues that EI can account for the remaining factors. EI can thus be considered as a significant factor in success at home, at work, and in the school. In the same year, EI appeared on the cover of *TIME* magazine (Gibbs, 1995), and the corresponding article claimed that “Emotional Intelligence may be the best predictor of success in life, redefining what it means to be smart”.

Accumulating evidence portrays EI to be associated with greater work satisfaction, increased ability to cope with stress, a better change orientation or propensity and stronger organizational commitment (Carmeli, 2003; Vakola et al., 2004).

Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2003) found that cognitive ability accounts for approximately 25% of the variance in job performance. Their study posits EI as a valuable predictor of work performance and suggests the overall predictive validity of EI to hold fairly constant across all

performance domains, including work, group and academic performance.

Bar-On and Parker (2000) similarly describe EI competencies as critical for effective performance in most jobs, and Goleman (1998b) found out that 67% of the abilities regarded as essential for effective performance were emotional competencies.

According to Boyatzis (2009), EI competencies predict effectiveness in professional, managerial and leadership roles. Consequently, competencies like EI, conflict management, teamwork, interpersonal sensitivity and negotiation skills are considered much more crucial than academic competence, technical expertise and professional education (Singh, 2010). Naqvi et al. (2011) reported that the factor of compatible personality takes precedence over qualification and experience fulfilling the job specification of that position.

The first book written in India on emotional intelligence was written by Dalip Singh in 2001 and revised in 2003. He defines Emotional Intelligence as, "The ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli being elicited from the inner self and immediate environment."

Krishnaveni, R., & Deepa, R. (2008):- Today's workplace is dynamic in nature and is characterized by time deadlines, cross-cultural teams, work pressures, and work-family conflicts, which in turn result in a highly stressed work force. These factors have a negative impact on the well-being of employees and the effectiveness of an organization. The individual competencies of the workforce are strong determinants of an organization's success. It is in this context that this paper explains how Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be used as a soft tool, to enhance the competencies of individuals and teams in Indian organizations and help them to gain competitive advantage.

- Emotional Intelligence in the work place: A Qualitative Analysis
- Dr. Veena Tucker & Ms. Neera Pant, Gargi College, University of Delhi.
- The research focused on the role of emotions in Indian
- Organisations and thus attempts to understand the concept of Emotional Intelligence (E.I.).

Several studies identified that the person who is having high level of intelligence will develop the positive attitude and varieties of emotional dimensions. Some people have severe difficulty in expressing their emotion and understanding emotion of others. Psychologists call this Alexithymia, meaning 'lack of emotions'. People who suffer from this rarely cry or smile. Thus, such people are not suitable to sales and managerial positions.

5. CONCLUSION

However, we have observed that in the same working conditions some employees excel professionally and keep themselves and their families happy and on the other hand some employees either succeed professionally and their families remain dissatisfied or some are neither good performers nor are able to maintain Quality of Work Life.

Here, is where Emotional Intelligence is linked to professional success. Research says that 90% of top performers are highly emotionally intelligent. EI is the foundation of critical skills like stress tolerance, time management, decision making, change tolerance, communication, customer service, flexibility, accountability, assertiveness, trust, anger management, empathy, team work, social skills, presentation skills. Hence, professionally emotional intelligence is the biggest predictor of performance in the workplace.

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