



Role of Emotional Intelligence at Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence has become a familiar issue between academicians, counsellors and business leaders due to a considerable role in the workplace. Organizations may be able to increase productivity and improve employee well-being through assessment and training of EI. Successes and failures at work generate emotions that may feedback to influence job performance, health, and other work behaviours. Understanding the interplay between work and emotion requires the identification of emotional competencies. Systematic research matching facets of EI to specific job competencies needed in order to substantiate the relevance of EI to the workplace.

Keyword: *Emotional Intelligence, Emotional competency, Empathy*

INTRODUCTION

Today's work settings have become extremely unstable, bringing unpredictable challenges. One of the biggest challenges for an organization is to attain and retain dedicated employees by boosting their positive work attitude. There are number of factors which determine an employee work behavior like his technical skills, personality, emotional intelligence, work place, perceived organizational support and perceived equity. It is the human capital which can make or mar the organization. Their interrelationships are becoming multifaceted. Today, a new yardstick i.e. emotional intelligence of a person (how effectively an employee can handle his/her relations with other employees and customers of the concern) is used to measure the overall performance of an employee. This paper

discusses about the role of emotional intelligence at work place with special reference to healthcare sector.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The term "emotional intelligence" has been the focus of much research over the past 20 years. What began as a proposed definition for a new construct, "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189), has evolved into a thriving area of multidisciplinary research and practice.

However, it was Daniel Goleman (1995), a science writer for the New York Times, who popularised the term in his seminal books 'Emotional Intelligence: Why it matters more than IQ?' and 'Working with Emotional Intelligence'.

Emotional Intelligence at the Workplace

Emotional intelligence has become a familiar issue between academicians, counsellors and business leaders due to a considerable role in the workplace. Modern organizations are experiencing a variety of rapid changes and transitions, including proliferation of new technological developments; increased privatization; worldwide information exchange; restructuring and downsizing; outsourcing; and an increasingly diversified workforce (e.g., Burke and Cooper 2006). As a consequence of these global trends, organizations are experimenting with a variety of innovative processes at work, including more flexible organizational structures, greater emphasis on creativity, and new leadership styles.

In this evolving business world, people need both cognitive and technical skills, along with a broad arsenal of emotional and social skills, to succeed at work. There are several articles that validate the importance of emotional intelligence and its applicability. Each of those researches highlights the characteristics of emotional intelligence in a specific field. Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been recently validated with about 25 major skill areas that can influence your career and create abilities that improve your worth at work. These EI skills are not readily measured on standard intelligence or expertise tests. In fact, EI is quite different from IQ. People with emotional intelligence have tremendous advantages that far outweigh highly intelligent people. These "emotional intelligence" skills can count for far more when it comes to being a "star performer" or excelling at just about any job. To be outstanding, these EI skills are nearly everything for reaching success and the top of any career ladder. In the USA Today article, "Working Smart," author Dr. Daniel Goleman stresses that emotional intelligence is not just being "nice" or giving free rein to feelings so that it "all hangs out." Instead, successful people use their EI to manage feelings both appropriately and effectively so that the common good and goals of the work group can be readily achieved.

Socio-emotional competencies demanded in the modern workforce include, for example, passion for working effectively toward achieving group goals, communication and negotiation, and effective leadership skills. In fact, because most adults in today's world spend more of their waking hours at work than any other place—with the number of hours spent at work steadily on the rise—the workplace is one of the best settings for examining the role of EI in real-life settings, as well as for reaching adults and fostering their social and emotional competencies (Cherniss 2000a, b). Table 9.2 presents a number of claims (some exaggerated, some plausible, and some clearly unjustified) about the importance of EI in the workplace.

In the healthcare sector, which is characterized by high levels of emotional labour, employee job satisfaction and commitment becomes more vital, because the quality of the services offered cannot be easily standardized and their outcomes are directly affected by nursing staff and doctors. Because of the fundamental aspects of emotional intelligence and the high human interaction in healthcare, the latter could possibly benefit from the former. Many researchers have tried to

identify characteristics of emotional intelligence in the healthcare professionals. The crucial role of EI has been widely recognized for the case of nursing staff working in health-care (Kooker, B. M., et al., 2007). Healthcare staff has to deal, in a daily basis, with events bound with emotions such as birth, illness, death. Thus, staffs have to manage stressful situations imposed by the work environment, and at the same time they are obliged to perform in the most effective way. High responsibility upon patients' treatment is of utmost importance, given that its absence may even cost their life. In addition, these stressful factors within a health care organization have an impact on staff's job satisfaction and invite turnover intentions (Chiu, C. K., et al., 2005). This argument has been empirically supported by many researchers, especially in the last decade (Sellgren, S., Ekvall, G. & Tomson, G., 2007). A study (Trivellas et al, 2012) investigated the impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) at the workplace on Job Satisfaction (JS) and Turnover Intentions (TI) of nursing staff working in hospitals. It was found that employees who can express their emotional state are better understood by their colleagues and in result they can develop themselves. Birks and Watt (2007) have done study regarding emotional intelligence and patient-centred care and found that most of the patients have no complaints on the way they were cured, but on the way they were treated. A healthier understanding of patients' emotional state to prescribed treatments or change in lifestyle may result in a better understanding of the reasons that some treatments are more or less acceptable to some patients.

Emotional Competencies at Work

Typically EI is seen as a fluid (potential) ability from which emotional experiences and learning situations build crystallized ability describing learned competencies (see Matthews, Zeidner, et al. 2002). In practical settings, such as the workplace, actual competencies or skills, including assertiveness, service orientation, and initiative, may be more important than potential ability. Thus it is important to evaluate the actual emotional competencies demonstrated by employees that translate EI into "on the job" capabilities. For example, in order to be able to actually empathize with another's plight, one needs to have learned the specific empathic skills that translate into caring and compassionate pastoral counselling, effective psychotherapy, or bedside nursing (Cherniss and Goleman 2001).

EQ Competencies that Correlate to Workplace Success

The following emotional intelligence competencies have proven to contribute more to workplace success than technical skills, cognitive ability, and standard personality traits combined.

Social Competencies—Competencies that Determine How We Handle Relationships

1. **Intuition & Empathy.** Our awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. This competency is important in the workplace for the following reasons.

- (a) Understanding others: an intuitive sense of others' feelings and perspectives, and showing an active interest in their concerns and interests
- (b) Customer service orientation: the ability to anticipate, recognize, and meet customers' needs
- (c) People development: ability to sense what others need in order to grow, develop, and master their strengths
- (d) Leveraging diversity: cultivating opportunities through diverse people

2. **Political Acumen & Social Skills.** Our adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. This competency is important in the workplace for the following reasons.

- (a) Influencing: using effective tactics and techniques for persuasion and desired results
- (b) Communication: sending clear and convincing messages that are understood by others
- (c) Leadership: inspiring and guiding groups of people
- (d) Change catalyst: initiating and/or managing change in the workplace
- (e) Conflict resolution: negotiating and resolving disagreements with people
- (f) Building bonds: nurturing instrumental relationships for business success
- (g) Collaboration and cooperation: working with coworkers and business partners toward shared goals
- (h) Team capabilities: creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals

Personal Competencies—Competencies that Determine How We Manage Ourselves

3. **Self-Awareness.** Knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions. This competency is important in the workplace for the following reasons.

- (a) Emotional awareness: recognizing one's emotions and their effects and impact on those around us
- (b) Accurate self-assessment: knowing one's strengths and limits
- (c) Self-confidence: sureness about one's self-worth and capabilities

4. **Self-Regulation.** Managing one's internal states, impulses, and resources. This competency is important in the workplace for the following reasons.

- a. Self-control: managing disruptive emotions and impulses
- b. Trustworthiness: maintaining standards of honesty and integrity
- c. Conscientiousness: taking responsibility and being accountable for personal performance
- d. Adaptability: flexibility in handling change
- e. Innovation: being comfortable with an openness to novel ideas, approaches, and new information

5. **Self-Expectations & Motivation.** Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals. This competency is important in the workplace for the following reasons.

- a. Achievement drive: striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence we impose on ourselves
- b. Commitment: aligning with the goals of the group or organization
- c. Initiative: readiness to act on opportunities without having to be told
- d. Optimism: persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks

Conclusion

➤ It is widely believed that emotional competencies are important in the workplace. Organizations may be able to increase productivity and improve employee well-being through assessment and training of EI. However, much work on EI in organizations lacks rigor, and there is a risk that it may prove to be no more than another business fad.

- Work and emotions are reciprocally related. Successes and failures at work generate emotions that may feedback to influence job performance, health, and other work behaviors. Understanding the interplay between work and emotion requires the identification of emotional competencies that determine whether the employee can manage work demands adaptively.
- Hopes are high that a focus on EI will contribute to remediation of many of the problems faced by the modern workforce. However, systematic research matching facets of EI to specific job competencies is needed in order to substantiate the relevance of EI to the workplace.

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