Emotional intelligence and the workplace – An increased importance during covid times


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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the different facets of Emotional Intelligence (EI), particularly its relevance in the context of the workplace. The paper further looks at different models that have been used to explain Emotional Intelligence, including mixed models, ability models and trait models. The use of Emotional Intelligence at the workplace in the areas of performance, leadership, assessment and culture are underlined. The paper concludes with the need to conduct more research on Emotional Intelligence to build a robust road model for the use of EI for predictability leading to success so as to maximize the utilization of EI at the workplace, particularly keeping in mind the challenges faced by organizations during Covid times. Emotional intelligence and the workplace – An increased importance during covid times

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the context of the workplace is based on behavioral research in the commercial world. The ability to identify the emotional aspects of an individual refers to Emotional Intelligence as it helps to manage one's own as well as other's emotional feelings (Navas & Vijayakumar, 2018). The three sets of skills represented in the concept of EI or Emotional Intelligence includes the following:

• Tasks reminiscent of thinking and solving of the problem are applied after harnessing those emotional ability

• The aspect of an individual to identify and develop an ability to name his/her own emotions thereby having emotional awareness

• At the time of necessity, the ability of an individual to manage and control individual feelings by including both the aspects of instigating others as well as helping them.

As commented by Rathore et al. (2017), EI joins different academic quests of psychology that consolidates theories of emotional neuroscience, theories of balance,
metacognition, and attempt to explain human achievements that are beyond only academic achievements.

Emotional Intelligence can be used as a technique to foster change in employees, to help propel training at the organization and strengthen workplace assessment thereby showing the centrality of the EI in the workplace (Dirican & Erdil, 2019). The importance of emotional intelligence is multifold, particularly when we take into consideration the impact of the pandemic on people and organizations as a whole.

**Models of Emotional Intelligence**

Scholars tend to distinguish “mental ability models” from those of the “mixed models”. As the first one being refers to the processing of affective information by focusing on aptitude and the next represents the use of EI as in the form of a diverse construct. Mixed models include a personality aspect that includes the perseverance ability to assimilate, and understand, the ways to manage emotions by including factors of motivation and affective dispositions. As stated by Livesey (2017), conceptualizing EI through objective, performance tests are considered as in the form of an emotional skills processing set. On the other hand, others view EI with an aim to subject it throughout self-report protocols that tend to encompass multiple personal functioning aspects.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dimension and model of EI</th>
<th>Mixed model</th>
<th>Ability model</th>
<th>Trait model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conception</td>
<td>As explained by Goleman, EI is viewed as a blend of versatile individual skills and general competencies to address personal limits and environmental needs.</td>
<td>As explained by Salovey and Mayer, EI is seen as characterized by the cognitive capacities for the handling and management of emotional data and feelings to be better adaptive in the environment.</td>
<td>As explained by Petrides, EI refers to a person’s self-perception of their own emotional abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The main EI constructs are –</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>The individual utilizes four types of abilities which are – Perceiving Emotions, Using Emotions</td>
<td>It is also known as trait emotional self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Relationship management</td>
<td>Self-management</td>
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Table 1: Mixed and Ability Models (created by the Author)

Table 1 illustrates in a glance the contrasts between Ability based models of EI, Trait based models of EI and Mixed models of EI.

Goleman’s Performance Model in context to EI (Faltas, 2017)

As mentioned by Goleman, EI is considered as in the form of a skill cluster and comprise of competencies, focused toward the capabilities that are four in number: it includes the aspect of self-awareness, the contextual relationship management, and awareness that are based on social aspects (Goleman, 1995). In this context, Goleman said that all these are the basis of 12 ‘subscales’ of EI which led to the formation of the four capabilities (Livesey, 2017). His suggested the below mentioned subscales from his researched work as known to be “EI in the workforce”. It helps in the management of conflict during teamwork, through the implementation of an empathically mentoring process (Goleman, 2008). The subscales are as follows:

- achievement orientation
- teamwork
- organizational awareness
- inspirational leadership
- positive outlook
- emotional self-awareness
- emotional self-control
- adaptability
- conflict management
- influence
- coaching and mentoring
- empathy

Bar-On’s Competencies Model in context to EI (Faltas, 2017)

As the aspect of emotional competencies tend to influence the employee performance and relationships, EI is considered as a method of interrelated behavior that arises from social and emotional competencies as put forward in the form of a suggestion by Bar-On. It consists of five scales namely the self-expression, interpersonal, stress management, decision-making, and self-perception along with the following subscales associated with the concept of EI:
self-actualization
emotional expression
problem-solving
emotional self-awareness
reality testing
impulse control
flexibility
stress tolerance
assertiveness
independence
empathy
social responsibility
self-regard
interpersonal relationships
optimism

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso’s Ability Model in context to EI (Faltas, 2017)

This model puts forward that information from our understanding and managing of emotions is used to facilitate thinking and to guide us in the process of making decisions. In the year 2004, Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso were instrumental in developing a four-branch model based on the ability of EI associated with the areas of:

• Understanding of emotions
• Perceiving of emotions
• Managing emotions
• Using the understanding of the above to guide and help us in decision making

Emotional Intelligence and the workplace

As commented by Jain (2018), many organizations in the western world use EI for the purpose of gathering momentum in finding the right fit amongst numerous candidates through their internal recruitment and selection and process. Many corporations associated with management philosophy are incorporating EI skills to attain sustained success. The notion of EI as being helpful when evaluating ongoing performance of
employees is seen through the incorporation of EI in the recruitment, selection, assessment, training and promotional processes.

The use of EI in context to social awareness based on the understanding of others through communication proved to provide a successful performance index in context to the managerial positions. Furthermore, in context to the including emotional considerations and social competencies for the attempt of predicting the effectiveness, EI has been identified among characteristics that discriminates between successful managers and unsuccess managers. EI also considers and includes optimism based on socio-emotional competencies Apart from communication and relationship skills, EI in the form of an achievement need has been identified as many competencies based on social predictive successes quotient of managerial aspect. A proven practical and powerful framework for individual team based on leadership development is provided by EI (Jain, 2018).

Prior to putting EI into practice at the workplace, there are numerous distinct aspects in the context of effective performance at a job. Three major categories in this regard are:

Task Performance: Operations related to the technical delivery of a company's production (such as a product or service) - generally, these will be their requirement of job (Razzaq, 2016).

Contextual Performance: Supports the social and psychological functioning of any organization with behavior - these are often discreet. For example, going to that extra mile and being persistent in tasks with enthusiasm, volunteering for additional responsibilities, providing support and being collaborative with colleagues, and supporting the organization's values and goals (Razzaq, 2016).

Counterproductive performance: The voluntary behavior of an individual that damages a company's intentions and hurts the well-being of employees or customers. These include being aggressive, threatening, blaming others, committing a crime, or intentionally duping.

For a counterproductive performance, many organizations use full questionnaires based on personality traits to assess a candidate's potential by providing a source of data. EI is considered to be more competent than that of the intelligence quotient (IQ) instrumental in regulating employees' senses and emotions while performing a given task. EI places a vital role in carrying out an empirical comparison associated with emotional intelligence as it includes behavioral analysis of the employee's psychological state. The aspect of self-awareness, and self-realization, based on the Social competencies act as a parameter to EI analysis and develops the capacity to control and understand the other's feelings by regulating one's emotions. It addresses the problem of the MNC's and is figure out the aspects of reluctance, irresponsibility, and those of the procrastinate approach undertaken by the employees. It, in the long run, hampers the overall performance and efficiency of the organization toward its goals. The need for emotional stability can only be understood by the implementation of various test processes in context to the organizations focused mainly on the development and training skills. The training need analysis of the employee must be ascertained so that the organization is able to pinpoint the areas of development of the employee and actively arrange for the gaps to be filled through training and
mentoring. An innovative approach to quantify emotional Intelligence in context to the recruitment and selection process helps HR managers in the understanding of the candidate's behavioral emotions (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019).

The effect of emotional intelligence in context to the workplace

As stated by Saini (2018), leaders can use powerful emotions to direct the notice their team towards the issues that need instant attention and helps by the prioritizing of the demands by anticipating the reactions of the followers toward hostile circumstances, leading to organizational changes. In accordance with this model, EI leaders are to produce enthusiasm, optimism and excitement in the work environment and to maintain the trust-based cooperative atmosphere by developing interpersonal relations of a high-quality. Leaders effectively need to instill an appreciation in others toward the significance of activities of work and to be optimistic about their contributions (Singh, 2003).

Leaders can enlist the use of high EI individuals should convey their thoughts and objectives in a persuasive manner with the intention to win over others. They can particularly identify these individuals based on their social abilities. They can also involve them while structuring ventures to infuse style and feelings into the task. Leaders can work with higher EI associates to help develop a healthy work culture and create a positive impact on the workplace. EI additionally helps team development by ensuring a smooth collaboration wherein people perceive each other's qualities and shortcomings. In essence, EI helps us to adapt to the challenges that our environment places on us. Time and again EI has influenced all our work practices to help us to perform better. Individuals with a high level of EI experience more career achievement and go on to build more on the grounded connections and are appreciated and preferred over those individuals with lower EI (Saini, 2018).

Use of emotional intelligence in context to organizational assessment

As stated by Anwaret al. (2017), the concept of EI comprises of four main dimensions that includes the aspect of conducting a self-emotional assessment (SEA), second being the other's emotional assessment or the (OEA), next comes the aspect of regulating our own emotion or the (ROE), and lastly comes the fourth that refer to the use of emotion (UOE).

Self-assessment involves the ability to understand and display emotions. Self-assessment in the service sector involves many interactions with clients in the workplace. It is advisable to understand your feelings before understanding the feelings of others. OEA concerns the ability of everyone to detect and understand the person's sensations in the surroundings. The capability to understand and perceive emotions directly influences social interaction, as it imparts individuals to understand social and internal sources. An individual's ability to direct their emotions is even greater. It also affects social relations and the quality of work in the workplace. This can affect the performance when dealing with customers. Lastly, UOE subjects to individuals' ability to use their emotions by linking sensations with productive activities. Subjecting positive emotions and prospect is an essential part of consumer service. Thus, it is important that service staff effectively create emotions and create a positive service environment that contributes to customer satisfaction and future
loyalty. Researchers have discovered that service workers need to manage emotions and administer clients’ emotions (Anwaret al. 2017).

As stated by Lopes (2016), leaders have a direct impact in context to the culture of the work settings. The extent to which a leader’s positive behavior affects the functioning of employees and the organization remains the most important question to be addressed. In this context, the selection and recruitment process, in addition to all HR functions, including training and development aspects, and the performance index process related to management, which has a significant impact on leadership aspects. Leadership has a direct impact on the level to which HR functions can help organizational members improve their EI. A high level EI will help identify talents, delegate roles accordingly, and resolve conflicts amicably. A review of the literature has revealed the integration of EI mechanisms and leadership.

Recognize Others’ Feelings: A good social conscience imparts individuals to gain sufficient knowledge of the attitudes, interests, and goals of other team members. This practice influences members by understanding, identifying, and responding to unstable needs and creating goals that can be accepted.

EI being integrated into the workplace is an important factor for determining leadership efficiency, mostly when leaders work with teams in the workplace. The application of EI has a subject of importance, in the role of contribution within the organization. There has also shown a growing interest in EI at the workplace. Leaders in their interaction with their team are able to take decisions without delay and ambivalence. The leaders are also able to focus on helping the subordinates in helping themselves through managing their own emotions. Thus the attributes of emotional intelligence is instrumental in helping leaders to achieve results through their team. Overall, EI leaders encourage team members to work effectively to achieve organizational goals. There is a need to do more research on the relationship among EI and its positive impact in the business world (Lopes, 2016).

Conclusion

As discussed in this review paper, the importance of emotional intelligence at the workplace is evident as can be seen from the benefits it accrues to the organization, particularly in the area of leadership and team performance with respect to achievement of the organizational goals. In progressive organizations, performance evaluations inspired by the concepts of EI are now among the key tools available for leading to an eventual increase in job satisfaction of the employees (Gangai & Agrawal, 2018). Emotional Intelligence is also being used by organizations to bring about change through the training of employees. The process of assessment and the use of EI for predictability leading to success are areas which require further in-depth research. Finally, in these covid times when organizations are under additional pressure due to the effects of the pandemic, it is the use of our understanding of emotional intelligence which is the way forward to again reach the heights of success that had been achieved earlier.
REFERENCES


