



Management Arts

Elixir Mgmt. Arts 31 (2011) 1950-1956

Elixir
ISSN: 2229-712X

Importance of emotional intelligence in the organisational context

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Article history:

Received: 24 January 2011;

Received in revised form:

18 February 2011;

Accepted: 23 February 2011;

Keywords

EI & Alexithymia,
EI & Leadership styles,
EI & self regulation,
Stress coping.

ABSTRACT

The filed of Emotional Intelligence is attracting attention of researchers, journalists, academicians, and corporate trainers across the world. Emotional intelligence is quintessentially inseparable a component for success in career. Though considerable amount of research is done in the field of Emotional Intelligence all over the world, there is a paucity of research in this field in India owing to the fact that this field of study is still in the nascent stage in India. This article draws inputs from various scientific studies conducted in the field of emotional intelligence and its implication on career success of employees from Indian perspective. A conceptual model is proposed for measuring predictive ability of Emotional Intelligence for career success using simple regression.

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Introduction

Until the last two decades, it was strongly believed that IQ is all it takes to be successful in life. Gardner's multiple intelligence theory in the early 1980s brought in a different perspective and outlook towards intelligence and brought inter personal and intra personal intelligence to the fore front. Emphasizing Gardner's view point, Steven Covey in 1990 wrote a book, "7 habits of highly effective people" wherein he said that verbal and reasoning ability form a very small spectrum of human intelligence and inter and intra personal skills are most important for being effective and successful. Slowly, many more researchers added on to the body of research, where they concluded that non cognitive ability is equally or more important than IQ.

Researchers of 21st century from the fields of psychology, education and business are converging on the concept of Emotional Intelligence, which is deemed as a sure pathway for success in personal and organizational life. "IQ gets you hired, but EQ gets you promoted" is the claim made by some journals and magazines. Emotionally intelligent people can perceive, understand and regulate the emotions of others, thus making Emotional intelligence a significant factor in the success of inter personal interaction in work context. Increasingly employers all over the world are actively seeking people with high emotional intelligence.

History of Emotional Intelligence

There is a large body of research on Emotional Intelligence across various nations. But the very concept of Emotional Intelligence was understood and studied by many in earlier days. The first recorded concept of Emotional Intelligence can be traced back to Charles Darwin. The first book on emotions was published in 1872 by Charles Darwin-

The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals. In this book, Darwin talks about various primary emotions and emphasizes the theory of Survival of fittest that talks about adaptability to the surrounding, which is the key to success. In 1930s, Edward Thorndike describes the concept of the

"social intelligence" as the ability to get along with other people. During 1940s, David Wechsler defined intelligence as aggregate of global capacity to act purposeful, think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment. Wechsler proposed that no intellectual abilities are essential for predicting one's ability to succeed in life. David Wechsler suggests that affective components of intelligence may be essential to success in life. Gradually there came a shift in the concept of intelligence, where intelligence included a broader array of mental abilities. Howard Gardner (1983) pioneered the concept of Multiple Intelligence. He proposed that Interpersonal and Intra personal Intelligence are as important as the type of intelligence typically measured by IQ tests. He advised educators to appreciate students with varied skills and learning styles. In 1985, the first use of the term "Emotional intelligence" was attributed to Wayne Payne's doctoral thesis "A study of emotion: developing emotional intelligence; self-integration; relating to fear, pain and desire (theory, structure of reality, problem-solving, contraction/expansion, tuning in/coming out/letting go)." In 1985, Dr Reuven Baron coined the term "Emotional Quotient" to describe his approach to assess emotional and social functioning. In 1987 in an article published in *Mensa Magazine*, Keith Beasley uses the term "emotional quotient." It has been suggested that this is the first published use of the term. Rigorous research in this field was done by psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer and later in 1990 they published an article titled, "Emotional Intelligence," in the journal *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*. The two psychologists concluded seven years later that emotional intelligence comprised four mental processes. Though a lot many researches were undertaken and published in this field, the term Emotional Intelligence did not gain popularity and momentum till 1995, when a cover page article by Nancy Gibbs et al appeared in *Times magazine*, which read "What is your EQ?" (*Time Magazine*, October 1995). Daniel Goleman, psychologist and New York Times journalist, through his best sellers "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" (1995) "and

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"Working with emotional intelligence" (2000) brought the word "Emotional Intelligence" "as a common term, even understood by a layman. In the year 1997, Reuven Baron created EQ-i, the first test to measure Emotional intelligence, published by a psychological test publisher. In the year 2000, American dialect society chose the term "Emotional Intelligence" "as the most useful new word of the decade.

Definition, models and measures of Emotional Intelligence:

There are varied definitions of emotional intelligence and considering any one as a standard definition has become virtually impossible. Some of the following are most popularly used definitions of Emotional Intelligence, used by majority of the scholars and researchers in the field of Emotional Intelligence.

Salovey and Mayer's Definition: (1997) "Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth." They proposed ability model of EI where it is considered that individuals vary in their ability to process emotion laden information and it can be measured. Ability based model outlines 4 basic constructs: perceiving, assimilating, understanding and managing emotions. The most popularly used ability based measure of Emotional Intelligence is Mayor Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) with a chronbach alpha of 0.68- 0.71.

Dr. Reuven Bar-On's Definition(1997): "Emotional -Social Intelligence is a cross section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands (Bar-On, R. (1997). Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQi) is the tool used to measure Baron's Emotional Intelligence. It has a chronbach alpha of 0.85.

Daniel Goleman's Definition: "Emotional Intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and our relationships. Goleman proposed mixed model of EI which focuses on EI as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. Mixed EI model consist of 4 main EI constructs: Self awareness, Social awareness, Self management and relationship awareness. Goleman's Emotional Intelligence measure is Emotional Competency inventory (ECI) by Boyatzis, Goleman and Hay Mcber (1999). It has chronbach alpha of 0.71- 0.85.

Petrides and Furnham (2000): proposed Trait EI (or 'trait emotional self-efficacy'), which refers to "a constellation of behavioral dispositions and self-perceptions concerning one's ability to recognize, process, and utilize emotion-laden information". They proposed Trait EI model which consists of 15 facets of EI. Trait EI refers to an individual's self-perceptions of their emotional abilities. Trait Emotional Intelligence is measured using TEIQue developed by Petrides, Perez and Furnham (2003). It has a chronbach alpha of .85.

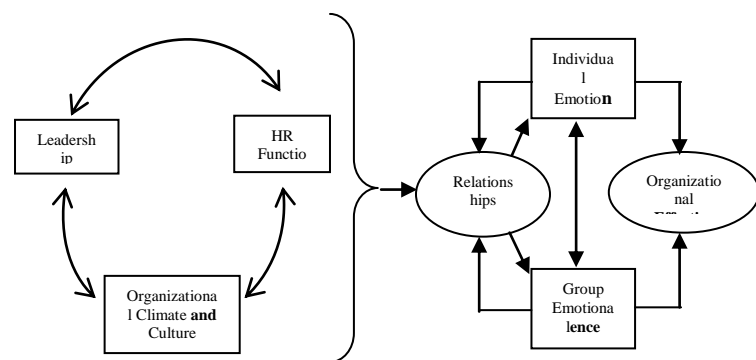
In all the above mentioned models of EI one common feature is that the models bifurcated the EI competency with respect to self and society. It is difficult to rate any of the measures of EI to be superior over the other. According to Salovey et al (2007), mental ability model can only be called aptly as emotional intelligence model, the others being more generic. Mental ability model is empirically tested and it meets the criteria of standard intelligence. Due to the presence of too

many models, definitions, tests and books on EI, the research in the field of EI has become highly diverse. It is too early to come to a consensus on a universal definition, model and test of EI, considering the fact that even the most widely accepted test for IQ, The Wechsler intelligence scale was coined after over 100 years of clinical assessment and research. (Salovey .P. 2007). Researchers in this field should judiciously choose the tool to measure EI of respondents based on the research purpose and context.

The model of Emotional Intelligence and organizational effectiveness by Cherniss et al (2001) highlights the importance of EI for organisational improvement. The model describes how Emotional intelligence can impact organizational effectiveness. The organizational factors on the left hand side of the model, viz Leadership, HR functions and organizational climate and culture influence emotional intelligence through its impact on relationship and each of these three factors influence the other two.

For instance, Emotional Intelligence of organizational leadership influences the organization's climate and thereby impacts organizational effectiveness. Different HR functions like recruitment, selection, training, succession planning etc will impact organizational leadership, thereby affecting the organizational effectiveness. Leadership in turn can influence the HR functions thereby deciding the extent to which employees can improve their Emotional Intelligence by deciding the extent of Emotional Intelligence training. This explains the interconnectivity of organizational factors, individual and team Emotional Intelligence and ultimately, organizational effectiveness. By correct and timely deployment of resources, organizational effectiveness can be improved to a great extent.

A model of Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Effectiveness (Cary Cherniss and Daniel Goleman 2001)



Research objective:

1. To understand the direction of research in the field of Emotional Intelligence so as to identify a research gap.
2. To propose a conceptual model for predicting career success using Emotional Intelligence score.

Literature Review:

The study of emotion in the workplace has evolved from two different perspectives: the sociological perspective through emotion management and the psychological perspective through emotional intelligence (Weinberger, 2002). Emotional Intelligence is relatively a new concept and hence the body of research in the field of Emotional Intelligence is not very large. Empirical studies in this field are not even two decades old, (Salovey, 2007), though it has attracted the attention of psychologists, educators, HR professional and corporate trainers. An overwhelming claim by many researchers that Emotional Intelligence has practical application in the work place makes

the study of Emotional Intelligence mandatory to be empirically verified. To understand this intriguing field of research, secondary literature review is done to get a direction for future empirical research. For easy comprehension, secondary literature review for the current research is presented under separate but interconnected concepts.

EI & Alexithymia

Alexithymia is a communication disorder where in the individual is not able to feel and express an emotion. Significance of alexithymia stems from the fact that an individual who fails to understand and experience an emotion also fails to reason out his work behavior.

Work situations demand correct expression of emotions, for instance, appreciation for outstanding work done by a junior employee. If an individual fails to express emotions at the right context, it can create a dent in his career progress.

Researches reveal that EI is inversely correlated to Alexithymia. Low values of Emotional Intelligence may be used to predict Alexithymia.

a) Moira Mikolajczak, et al (2006) conducted a study in which Alexithymia was measured using French version of Toronto Alexithymia scale (TAS-20, Bagby et al 1994), which has 20 items on 5 point rating scale, that covers core dimensions of the construct like difficulty in identifying the feeling, difficulty in describing the feeling, and externally oriented thinking. Alexithymia was found to be inversely correlated ($r = -0.55$) to Trait EI measured using TEIQue.

b) In a study conducted by Elizabeth J (2005) in Canadian (N=500) and Scottish (N=204) groups on EI, Alexithymia, personality and life satisfaction, EI was found to be negatively associated with Alexithymia

c) Donald H. et al (2003) conducted a study wherein a short self-report emotional intelligence (EI) measure was completed by a sample of 354 students and relationship between EI and alexithymia was investigated using structural equation modeling and factor analysis. The results indicated that the two constructs are strongly negatively correlated.

Alexithymia impedes the growth of career of an employee and higher EI score is inversely proportional to alexithymia. Hence further study on this topic has high relevance.

EI & Leadership styles

It is a leader's duty to foster a positively charged work place so that the employees are motivated to perform better. There is an increased emphasis on transformational leadership style in organizations.

Companies that hire and promote people to leadership positions may find the positive relationship between transformational leadership style and emotional intelligence useful.

a) A study conducted by P.D. Harms et al (2010) to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational and other leadership behaviors, (N= 62) showed a validity estimate of .59 when ratings of both emotional intelligence and leadership behaviors were provided by the same source (self, subordinates, peers, or superiors).

Trait emotional intelligence measures showed higher validities than ability EI measures

b) Study conducted by Lisa Ann Weinberger (2009) on the relationships between emotional intelligence and leadership style, (N=151) using MSCEIT, an ability-measuring instrument of emotional intelligence, the results showed that there are no relationships between a manager's emotional intelligence and leadership style or the leader's perceived effectiveness

c) According to Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel, and Norman (2008), high emotional intelligence can transform a good sales manager into an exceptional leader.

d) In a study conducted by Singh S. K (2007) on EI and leadership style among software professionals in Indian context, (N=340), showed a positive correlation between EI and leadership styles. Study also showed that EI can predict leadership effectiveness.

e) In a study conducted by Byrne et al (2004) using a set of self-assessment instruments including the Emotional Competency Inventory, the NEO-FFI and a demographic questionnaire, (N=325), results showed that the ECI was predictive of leadership and related work behavior

f) Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003 conducted a study on leaders and arrived at a conclusion that EI levels are higher among workplace leaders, and increase as leadership levels rise in an organization

g) In a study conducted by Julian Barling, et al (2000) on emotional intelligence (EQ) and transformational leadership (N= 49 managers, N=187 subordinates, multivariate analyses of covariance showed that three aspects of transformational leadership differed according to level of emotional intelligence.

h) Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) posit that leaders who have a good mix of IQ and emotional intelligence tend to be more successful than those who do not.

i) According to Daniel Goleman (2004) "Most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: They all have a high degree of what has come to be known as *emotional intelligence*. It's not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant... But my research, along with other recent studies, clearly shows that emotional intelligence is the *sine qua non* of leadership "

j) Transformational leadership style is deemed superior to transactional styles. Positive correlation of transactional style of leadership style with EI is an important finding that can have larger organizational repercussion.

EI & self regulation & Stress coping

Self regulation is a very essential virtue an employee must possess for harmonious functioning in the work place. Self regulation helps in clarity in decision making during crisis situation. A high EI individual handles stress in the most productive way, without reaching the level of burn out. The word "stress" has received a lot of attention due to the negative connotation attached to the word.

a) A meta-analysis of research (Mikolajczak & Gross, 2008) concluded that high trait EI individuals regulate their emotions in a flexible manner & trait EI is positively linked to functional coping strategies like problem-solving, social support seeking, and reappraising and negatively linked to dysfunctional strategies like inhibition of emotional expression and substance abuse.

b) A study was conducted by Samuel et al (2010) using Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale by Law, Wong, and Song (2004) known as Wong and Law EI scale (WLEIS) (N= 420) on secondary school teachers. The results from this study showed that occupational stress was negatively related to psychological well-being, which is a trait EI facet

c) A study conducted by Moira Mikolajczak, et al (2006) on a sample of 80 respondents using TEIQue- SF to measure Emotional Intelligence, it was found that high EI people handle stress better than their low EI peers, thus experiencing low chronic and residual EI.

d) A study conducted by Veneta A. Bastian, Nicholas R. Burns and Ted Nettelbeck (2005) on first-year tertiary students

(N=246) concluded that higher EI correlated with higher life satisfaction, better perceived problem-solving and coping ability and lower anxiety.

e) AK Pau and R Croucher (2003) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and perceived stress (PS) in dental undergraduates. (N=213) The mean score for EI was 117.54 (S.D. 14.90) and PS was 17.73 (S.D. 6.49). Correlational analysis showed an inverse relationship between EI and PS.

f) Individual stress has got organizational consequence too in terms of absenteeism, tardiness and turn over. This essentially brings in to the forefront, the relevance of research in this topic EI & Gender difference

g) There have been many recent studies on gender difference of Emotional Intelligence. Application of the results of such researches will help in work place especially considering that more and more women employees join work pool. It is important to study gender differences with this proposed study because organizations are seeing demographic changes with an increase of women taking on significant career roles (Offermann & Gowing, 1993)

h) A study conducted by Leslie A. Burton (2007) in a sample of 134 (93 female, 41 male) university students using Bar-On EQi for measuring Emotional Intelligence showed women scoring higher in Bar-On Interpersonal overall factor scores, including higher scores for the components like Empathy, Social responsibility etc.

i) In a study conducted by Saima et al (2007), in Pakistan using Self Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SREIT) developed by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, and Golden (1998), no gender difference was found in EI of 100 employees (55 males and 45 females) of a cellular telecom organization of Lahore, Pakistan.

j) In the doctoral thesis Jesse W. Davis (2006) it was found that the female respondent group (M = 67.1) outperformed the male respondent group (M = 60.1) in mean emotional intelligence rating although the noted differences were not statistically significant.

k) A study conducted by Natalio et al (2006) examined the reliability of the Spanish version of the MSCEIT, with a sample of 946 college and high school students (426 males, 520 females) ranging from 16 to 58 years and it was found that higher scores are obtained by women on overall scale and branches scores than scores obtained by men.

l) In a study conducted by S. Katyal (2005), among 150 adolescents (75 boys and 75 girls) studying in Xth standard in 3 randomly selected government high schools in Chandigarh, India using Emotional Intelligence test by Codaty (2001), found girls having more emotional Intelligence than boys.

m) A study of 224 (82 men and 138 women and 4 who did not report their gender) by K.V. Petrides, et al (2004) on post graduate and undergraduate students at two British universities found no gender difference in total EI scores except in "Emotional Awareness" which was significantly high in women.

n) A study conducted Mandell and Pherwani (2003), among 32 managers (13 males & 19 females) using EQ-i (Bar-On) in a varied sample of organizations in northeastern section of the United States found a significant difference (p .05) in the emotional intelligence scores of male and female managers. The mean total of emotional intelligence scores of females was higher than that for males.

o) In a study conducted by James Poon Teng Fatt, (2002) using the Emotional IQ Test (N=100) on undergraduates from various fields of studies from the National University of Singapore and

Nanyang Technological University, it was found that males have higher EI scores than females.

p) In a study conducted by Kathleen Cavallo, (2001) on three hundred and fifty eight Managers (55 % male and 45 % females) across the Johnson & Johnson Consumer & Personal Care Group (JJC&PC Group) using Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), some gender difference was found, with Supervisors rating females higher in Adaptability and Service Orientation, while Peers rated females higher on Emotional Self-Awareness, Conscientiousness, Developing Others, Service Orientation, and Communication. Direct reports scored males higher in Change Catalyst

q) In a study conducted by Joseph Ciarrochi, et al (2001) 131 students (aged 13 to 15) completed a self-report measure of emotional intelligence (SEI), and it was found that EI was reliably measured in adolescents and was higher for females than males.

r) Study conducted by Ciarrochi, Chan, and Caputi (2000) found that women performed higher than men on the overall intelligence score of the MEIS with undergraduate psychology students.

s) In a study by Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999), it was found through the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) that women put more effort into their emotions and are more sensitive when expressing emotion.

t) A study conducted by Porter and Stone (1995) reveals that women are better at coping with problems and have more potential to develop their emotions.

u) A study conducted by Trobst, Collins, Embree (1994) found that women tend to be more supportive and possess more empathy than men.

v) It is important to study gender differences with this proposed study because organizations are seeing demographic changes with an increase of women taking on significant career roles (Offermann & Gowing, 1993). Moreover, gender studies also has implications specially now when the thrust is on diversity management. Empirical findings of the study can help while HR policies are formulated by companies.

EI and career success

a) In a study by Cavallo & Brienza (2004) of the Johnson & Johnson Consumer & Personal Care Group (N=1400) in thirty seven countries, it was found that emotional competencies differentiate successful leaders and that emotional intelligence, as one of a broad spectrum of skills which managers have in varying levels.

b) Len Tischler et al (2002) examined the RELATION OF emotional intelligence, spirituality and work place performance and studies displayed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work place success.

c) A study conducted at a large, international organization by Collins et al (2001), using a personality-based measure of EI and an ability-based measure of EI (N= 91), it was found that EI may not directly play a significant role in the success of the executive participants.

d) Bachmann, et al (2000) conducted two studies which compared more and less successful account officers (debt collectors) in terms of their emotional intelligence, measured using the BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory. The findings support the view that higher levels of emotional intelligence lead to enhanced job performance.

e) As quoted by Exley (2000), in a study on a group of 100 British managers participating in HMC courses, Henley Management College (HMC) researchers, Dulewicz and

Higgs, were able to show a strong correlation between rapid career progression and a combination of emotional intelligence and high IQ.

f) McClelland conducted an analysis (1998) of the competencies that distinguish star performers from average ones. He found a "tipping point" effect when people exhibited excellence in six or more competencies. McClelland (1998) argues that a critical mass of competencies above the tipping point distinguishes exemplary from average performers. The typical pattern shows that the highest performers are above the "tipping point" on at least six EI competencies and demonstrate strengths in at least one competency from each of the four clusters.

g) In a research done by Snarey and Vaillant, (1985) it is found that in determining the success, IQ had little relation to workplace and personal success. More important was the ability to handle frustration, control emotions and get along with others. Among the secondary review topics selected by the researcher, the most interesting area is the contribution of EI to career success. There are diverse view points on the relevance of EI for career success. Some inflated claims of EI contributing to 80 percent of career success needs empirical testing and verification.

Identification of Research gap

Most of the researches in the field of Emotional Intelligence is conducted post 1995, thanks to the popularization of the concept by Daniel Goleman. This makes the literature review partially limited to past 15 years. More over, researches in the field of Emotional Intelligence is still picking up momentum. Existing researches contribute to very small percentage of body of research in EI. The topics considered for literature review for this research was in the context of the current objective of this research. As evident from the literature review, most of the researches, barring a few are conducted outside India. There are contradicting research findings by researchers in the topics showing relation of Emotional Intelligence with Leadership style, Gender, Alexithymia, Stress coping and Career success. Interestingly no published research is available in India in the field of Emotional Intelligence and career success as a comparative study for knowledge based industries of India. With increased emphasis on service industry in India, the research gap is identified for finding out whether Emotional Intelligence really contributes to career success of knowledge based employees. The findings of this study will be an original contribution to the field of research in Emotional Intelligence for industries like IT, BPOs, KPOs, Academics.

Research framework

An analytical study is proposed to identify the correlation of Emotional Intelligence and career success of employees of knowledge based industry. Since information Technology industry in India is growing at a fast pace, with one of the Indian cities, Bangalore proclaimed as "Silicon valley of India", target population can be identified as IT companies of Bangalore. Stratified sampling technique is proposed to divide the companies into strata of small, medium and large sized companies based on the number of employees. Simple random sampling technique is proposed to select the company from each strata. Data need to be tested for normality and in case found to be non normal, outliers are to be removed and data need to be brought to normal distribution using log method. Standardised tool with reasonably good Cronbach alpha value of reliability is to be chosen for measuring Emotional Intelligence and career success of employees. An executive interview is also proposed to be conducted among top management to understand the

awareness and utilization of EI in various functional areas in HR department of the company. Pilot study is to be conducted to know the direction of research as well as to make corrections in the questionnaire based on the feedback of the respondents. Hypothesis testing is to be done to empirically prove the relationship EI and career success. Some of the proposed hypotheses for the study could be:

Ho1 : Demographic variables have no impact on Emotional Intelligence of an employee.

Ho2 : Emotional Intelligence can not predict career success of employees.

Statistical tools like correlation, simple regression, multiple regression using dummy variable, Chi square test, ANOVA, Factor analysis etc can be used for testing the hypotheses. Regression model is to be made that shows the predictive ability of emotional intelligence and career success.

Conclusion:

Emotional Intelligence is an emerging field of study. Relatively less research has been done in this field in India. Emotional intelligence is yet to capture the attention of HRD practitioners as tool for managerial development. Since it is evident from the secondary literature review that emotional intelligence can impact career success positively, efforts should be made to popularize and practice the concepts of emotional intelligence.

Limitations of the study:

The study has some delimiting points. Since this is a concept of recent origin there is lack of previous research in this area. Another issue a researcher will face in this field is difficulty in choosing a EI model for study as there are multiple models and definitions of Emotional Intelligence. More over, there is no consensus over a single model which could be universally applied. Lack of awareness of the importance of EI among the respondents is another challenge that the researcher will have to face. Possibility of the response distortion due to "Hawthorne effect" (respondents giving more favorable responses because of the attention given by researcher) can not be ignored. Another delimiting factor is the inherent problem connected to self report devices used to measure Emotional Intelligence. Any of the self report measures used for gauging Emotional Intelligence is not free from "Pygmalion effect" or self fulfilling prophecy wherein the respondent gives most ideal responses irrespective of the true response.

Scope for future research:

Emotional Intelligence competencies that differentiate the most successful employees from their typical peers need further study. Since economy has opened up for IT and academics, percentage of expatriates functioning out of India have seen an increase. A future study of EI of expatriates can help the management in choosing the right candidate for successful expatriation. Another improvement on this study can be made by using an intervention program for an experimental group by training employees on EI and measuring their improved career performance.

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