

EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This paper examines the effect of emotional intelligence (EI) on employees' performance, emphasizing on how its key dimensions self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill- influence workplace outcomes. The study adopts a descriptive and literature- based approach, synthesizing findings from existing research to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee's effectiveness. The review highlights that employees with high EI demonstrate superior communication, teamwork, adaptability and conflict management leading to enhanced productivity and organizational success. It further shows that EI fosters resilience, leadership effectiveness and job satisfaction making it a vital competency in contemporary Organizations. The study concludes that emotional intelligence is a crucial determinant of both individual and Organization performance. It suggests that organizations integrate emotional intelligence training into employee's development programs, include EI assessment in recruitment processes and recognize EI-driven behaviors such as empathy, collaboration and constructive communication to sustain a productive work culture.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Employees Performance, Self- Awareness. Self-Regulation, Empathy, Motivation and Social Skill.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In today's competitive work environment organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) as a key driver of employee's performance. The role employees play in an organization cannot be overemphasized, as he has to perform his job well for the success of the organization, invariably the emotional balance and emotional intelligence of the employee plays an important role in his job performance. The employee needs to have control on his emotions as well as understand the emotions of others, and at the same time behave accordingly in his work environment. It is necessary for employees to be aware of their emotional intelligence to easily handle situations, improve on work efficiently, solve conflicts and improve communication skills.

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to identify, evaluate, control, and express emotions. It helps people understand and use feelings to work through challenges, communicate with others and make decisions (Mamatha & Divyashree 2020). It also involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others. EI can be developed over time and has a profound impact on how employees perform their duties in various organizational roles. Also, it positively impacts employees performance in the workplace by enhancing their ability to understand and manage emotions, both their own and that of others. Employees with high emotional intelligence communicate more effectively, resolve conflicts peacefully and collaborate well in teams. They demonstrate greater adaptability to change, maintain composure under pressure and make thoughtful decisions, even in challenging situations. Emotional intelligence is appreciated in organizations because it exudes self-awareness which most often enhances higher performance (Wells, 2024). EI also fosters empathy and strong interpersonal relationships, which are essential for leadership and teamwork. Furthermore, emotionally intelligent employees are more self-motivated, resilient and capable of handling stress, leading to higher productivity, improved job satisfaction, and overall better performance in their various roles within the organization.

It is in the light of the above that this paper seeks to examine the role of emotional intelligence on employees' performance.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increase in hiring of employees with degrees, they struggle with issues such as low productivity, workplace conflicts, and poor team collaboration which exist on a large scale in the workplace. These issues do not emanate from lack of knowledge but rather from a deficiency in emotional competencies. Low EI is a determinant of high turnover rate of first-line managers (Siddiqui & Hassan, 2013). In contrast, Gandy (2024), argues that employees with bosses that have high EI are four times less likely to quit. According to Landing (2019), workplace conflict and misunderstanding arises for difficulty in managing, expressing emotions and active listening.

Low EI not only affects employees' performance but also the income of the organization (Bradberry, 2022). Miller (2023) asserts that 60% of workers feel emotionally distant from their jobs, and almost one in every five are unhappy, this has huge financial implications for organizations. While on the other hand firms that prioritize EI are 22 times more likely to have high performing employees.

It is in the light of the above that it has become necessary for leaders to acquire strong EI skills since studies have shown that only a few leaders (22% of 155, 000 leaders) have a high EI (Spencer & Barnfield 2021). Despite this understanding, many organizations focus only on technical capabilities rather than developing emotional intelligence. Consequently, this is undertaken to shed insight from current studies on the critical role of emotional intelligence (EI) in enhancing employee's performance in the workplace.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of emotional intelligence on employees' performance.

While the specific objectives includes:

To ascertain the effect of self-awareness on employees' performance.

To examine the effect of self-regulation on employees' performance.

To investigate the effect of motivation on employees' performance.

To ascertain the effect of empathy on employees' performance.

To examine the effect of social skills on employees' performance.

The specific variables used as specific objectives are the proxies of emotional intelligence.

Review of Related Literature

This section consists of what previous authors and scholars have written on emotional intelligence and its effect on employee's performance. It would consist of conceptual review, theoretical and empirical review.

Concept of Emotional intelligence

EI - a tool to manage emotions with intelligence. It is the ability to control one's emotions while understanding the emotions of surrounding persons (Mental Health America, 2025). EI enables individuals to be aware and integrate support for cognition, comprehension and management of emotions which promotes personal and professional development (Sharma et al., 2023).

Many researchers and the general public over the years limited the concept of Intelligence to intelligent quotients (IQ) which they considered to be an especially important part of the individual's adaptability to different life situations, however some scientist noticed that IQ, despite its importance in educational achievement is not enough to succeed in the professional and various social environment, and this is where the need had arisen to look for a new concept of Intelligence which was coined to "Emotional Intelligence " (Eikhader 2006). Consequently,

Mayer and Salovey defined Emotional intelligence as "Organized responses interlinked with many peripheral psychological systems, including physiological knowledge, motivation and trial system" (Mayer and Salovey, 1990). In 1993, the two researchers expanded their definition and considered it "A form of social intelligence which includes the ability to perceive the emotions of the individual and others, to distinguish between them, and to use the emotional information to direct the thinking and actions of the individual" (Mayer and Salovey, 1993).

Goleman defines emotional intelligence as a group of skills and competencies which enable the individuals to identify their feelings and that of others, to motivate themselves, manage their emotions and their relationship with others effectively. These competencies and skills include five areas: self - awareness, management of emotions, self - motivation, empathy, and dealing with others or social skills. He provided an explanation for each of these five areas and considered self - awareness to be the key to emotional intelligence, as it is linked to understanding of feelings (Goleman, 1995).

Alothman and Rizk (2001) after extensive reviewing of the available literature on the subject, concluded that emotional intelligence has four main components:

Awareness of emotion

The management of emotions

The regulations of emotions

Empathy.

They also sorted the various definitions of emotional intelligence into two categories:

The first definition, they considered to be the ability to understand one's own emotions and to control and regulate them according to an awareness of the emotions of others and to behave in life situations accordingly.

The second definition they regards as a group of emotional and social skills such as self-awareness and the ability to control emotions, persistence and enthusiasm, self- motivation, empathy and social skills which the individual possesses and needs in order to succeed in their life and career (Allothman & Rizk, 2001).

An example of how effective people use EI to achieve their goals and manage challenging situations.

A chief executive officer said during an interview, “I know that I have a tendency to cut people off when they speak because I want to get to the end and move on. So when I catch myself doing that, I stopped and said to myself, “wait a minute, I did not even hear what they were saying, let me stop and let them continue. That was my internal cue to also say to myself “settle down, it's you, not them”.

In this example, the executive's awareness of her impatience with others and how it could adversely affect her achievement of important goals helped her to regulate the emotions associated with her impatience (emotions awareness and understanding). Her ability to perceive when she starts to feel impatient (emotion perception) also helped her to regulate her emotions (Cherniss, Roche & Barbarasch 2016).

Effect of Self-awareness on employee's performance:

Self-awareness is a fundamental element of emotional intelligence, which significantly influences how employees perform in the workplace. It refers to an individual's ability to recognize and understand their emotions, strength, and weaknesses, and how these aspects affect their thoughts and behaviors (Goleman, 1995). When employees possess a high level of self-awareness, they tend

to make informed and rational decisions because they can control impulsive reactions and reflect on the consequences of their actions.

Self-aware employees communicate more effectively, when they understand their tone, words and body language may impact others. This reduces misunderstanding and strengthens interpersonal relationships, leading to teamwork and collaboration. It also encourages personal accountability, as such employees take ownership of their actions, admit mistakes and are open to constructive feedback (Boyatzis et.al, 2000).

Furthermore, self-aware individuals are better at setting realistic goals that align with their capabilities and values. They are more adaptable to change because they can monitor and regulate their emotional responses during uncertain or stressful situations (Kerr et.al 2006). Leaders with high self - awareness are especially effective, as they understand the emotional climate of their team.

Finally, Self-awareness contributes to emotional resilience. Employees who recognize signs of stress or burnout early can take proactive steps to manage their well-being, resulting in a more consistent and sustainable performance. In conclusion self - awareness enhances not only individual performance but also positively influences the overall organizational goals through improved communication, accountability and adaptability.

Effect of Self- Regulation on Employees Performance:

Self- regulation refers to an individual's ability to manage their emotions, impulses, and behaviors in various situations (Goleman, 1995). In the workplace, self-regulation helps employees remain calm and focused, especially in high - stress or emotionally charged environments. Employees with strong self- regulation skills think before acting, which leads to better conflict resolution, fewer emotional outbursts, and a more professional demeanor (Cherniss 2010). They are dependable and demonstrate a strong sense of integrity, which earns them trust from colleagues and supervisors.

Additionally, self-regulation supports adaptability, enabling employees to adjust quickly to organizational changes or shifting responsibilities without becoming overwhelmed. Ultimately self- regulated employees contribute to a more stable, respectful and productive work environment, enhancing overall team performance.

Effect of Motivation on Employees Performance:

Motivation in the context of emotional intelligence, refers to an internal drive to achieve goals, improve performance, and maintain a positive attitude towards work (Goleman, 1995).

Highly motivated employees show commitment to their responsibilities and exhibit initiatives in solving problems or pursuing innovation. They are resilient, often pushing through obstacles without becoming discouraged (Boyatzis et.al, 2000). This self- driven attitude enhances productivity, goal attainment and quality of work. Motivated individuals are also more likely to go beyond their basic duties, contributing to organizational growth through extra effort and creativity (Ryan and Deci, 2000). By maintaining enthusiasm and perseverance, emotionally intelligent motivated employees inspire others and elevate the performance of the entire team.

Effect of Empathy on Employees Performance:

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings, needs and perspective of others (Goleman, 1998).

In the workplace, empathy enhances interpersonal relationships by fostering respect, trust and effective communication. Employees who display empathy are better at resolving conflicts, managing client relations and supporting co-workers through challenges (Cherniss, 2010). This emotional sensitivity makes them more attuned to team dynamics and workplace morale, allowing them to act in ways that promote harmony and cooperation.

Leaders with empathy are more effective at managing diverse teams and meeting employees' needs, leading to higher engagement and loyalty (Kerr et.al, 2006). Ultimately, empathy creates a more inclusive and supportive work environment, which positively influences job satisfaction and performance.

Effect of Social skills on Employees Performance:

Social skills are the abilities used to interact effectively with others, including communication, collaboration, conflict management and leadership (Goleman, 1998). In the workplace, employees with strong social skills build positive relationships with colleagues, clients and supervisors. They are effective team players, able to coordinate and cooperate with others to achieve common goals. Socially skilled employees also handle disputes tactfully and can influence or persuade others constructively, making them valuable in negotiation or leadership roles (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). Furthermore, these employees contribute to a positive organizational culture by promoting

inclusion, moral and shared responsibility. Hence, strong social skills enhance team performance, reduce turnover, and support the achievement of strategic goals (Goleman, 2001).

Organizational Training for development of Emotional Intelligence:

Below are effective ways to do this.

Awareness and Assessment

Emotional Intelligence Assessment Tools: tools like the EQ-i, 2.0, MSCEIT, or self - assessment questionnaire can be used to identify employee's strengths and weaknesses in EI.

Practical Training Programs

Skills - based EI Training Modules:

Self-awareness: Teach employees journaling, reflection and mindfulness.

Self-regulation: Role play stressful situations, and stress management strategies.

Empathy: Use storytelling, perspective -taking exercises and feedback sessions.

Social skills: Train on active listening, constructive feedback and non- verbal communication.

Motivation: use goal- setting workshops and growth mindset training.

Simulation and scenario - Based Learning:

Present real workplace situations involving conflict, teamwork or customer service.

Encourage employees to apply EI strategies in handling them.

Offer Coaching and Mentorship

One - on - One Coaching: Provide personal development, support for managers and team members.

Peer Mentoring: Pair employees to practice and reflect on emotional behavior in a self-space.

Integrate EI into Leadership Development

Train managers to model emotional intelligent behavior.

Train leaders to practice empathetic listening, transparent communication and inclusive decision-making.

Encourage feedback culture and psychological safety.

Create a Supportive Organizational Culture.

Recognize and reward EI behavior (e.g teamwork, empathy, conflict resolution)

Promote values like respect, trust, and open communication.

Encourage regular reflection and emotional check -ins during team meetings.

Use of Technology and e-learning

Offer online EI courses and mobile app (like Headspace for mindfulness or Mood meter).

Use gamified learning platforms to make EI training engaging and consistent.

Continuous Learning and Reinforcement

Organize regular follow-up workshops and feedback loops.

Include EI metrics in performance appraisals and team development plans.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Goleman's Emotional Intelligence framework and Maclelland's Competency Theory. The theoretical review proposes that emotional and social competence are critical for high performance in the workplace.

Daniel Goleman Emotional Intelligence (EI) Framework: Goleman's framework expanded the understanding of intelligence by emphasizing the role of emotional competencies in personal and professional success. Building on the work of Mayer and Salovey (1990), Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize, understand and manage one's own emotions and those of others. He argued that EI can be a more important predictor of success than IQ, especially in leadership and workplace context.

Goleman (1998) proposed a model consisting of five key components of emotional intelligence.

Self- awareness: recognizing one's emotions and their impacts.

Self- regulation: managing emotions constructively.

Motivation: using emotions to achieve goals.

Empathy: understanding others emotions

Social skills: managing relationships effectively.

These components are grouped under two broad competencies:

Personal competence (self- awareness, self- regulation, motivation) and

Social competence (empathy and social skills). According to Goleman, individuals with high EI are better at leading teams, resolving conflicts, and adapting to change, making emotional intelligence crucial for workplace performance and leadership effectiveness.

Goleman's Framework has been widely applied in organizational behavior, human resources management and leadership development, reinforcing the idea that emotional capabilities can be learned and developed (Goleman, 1998).

McClelland's Competency Theory:

David McClelland's Competency theory (1973) marked a shift from traditional assessment of job performance based on intelligence and academic qualification to a focus on personal attributes that drive effective behavior. He defined competency as "an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to superior performance in a job" (McClelland, 1973). These characteristics include not only knowledge and skills but also motives, traits and self-concepts.

Central to his theory is the Iceberg model, which illustrates that observable skills and knowledge lie above the surface, while deeper, less visible elements - such as motivation and personality - lie beneath (Boyatzis, 1982). McClelland argued that these deeper competencies are predictive of long- term job success. He also identified three key motivational needs: the need for achievement (nAch) the need for power (nPow) and the need for affiliation (nAff), each influencing workplace behavior differently (McClelland, 1961). For instance high nAch individuals are typically goal-oriented and prefer tasks with moderate risk, making them valuable in roles requiring initiative and self - directions.

McClelland's work has significantly influenced human resources management, particularly in competency based recruitment, training, and performance evaluation. By focusing on what individuals can do and what drives them, rather than on credentials alone, organizations can better identify and develop high performers.

Empirical review

In a study conducted by Santiago (2024), examines the role of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and prevention in Colombia. The overall objective of the study was to analyze the role of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and prevention in Colombia. This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. The findings revealed that power dynamics and organizational justice significantly impact conflict outcomes and satisfaction, Power imbalance, exacerbate conflicts, leading to dissatisfaction. Unequal power distribution can escalate conflict due to perceived unfairness. Other findings also revealed that organizational justice fosters positive outcomes and higher satisfaction levels. Fostering equitable power dynamics and promoting justice mitigates conflict and enhances no satisfaction.

Wong and Law (2017) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on managing interpersonal conflict among health care professionals. Adopting a qualitative approach, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with nurses and physicians, aiming to glean insight into how emotional intelligence influences communication and conflict resolution within healthcare teams. Through thematic analysis of the interview data, Wong and Law (2017), elucidated the critical role of emotional intelligence in fostering empathetic communication, mutual understanding and effective conflict resolution among healthcare professionals. Their findings underscored the importance of emotional intelligence competencies, such as empathy and self-awareness in navigating complex interpersonal dynamics within healthcare settings. Moreover, the study highlights the potential benefits of incorporating emotional intelligence training programs tailored to healthcare professionals to enhance conflict resolution skills and ultimately improve patient care quality and team cohesion.

Methodology

The research is a theoretical study which primarily involves desk research, analyzing existing literature and academic sources related to Emotional Intelligence on Employee's Performance in Organizations. The descriptive research design without conducting a fieldwork survey was used. Data were drawn from published and unpublished sources especially from the internet. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the topic based on the analyses of previous researcher's works.

Conclusion

The study establishes that emotional intelligence (EI) plays a critical role in shaping employee performance and overall organizational success. Through an extensive review of literature and theoretical frameworks, the paper demonstrates that employees who possess high levels of emotional intelligence—particularly in the areas of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—tend to perform better, communicate more effectively, and contribute to a more harmonious and productive work environment.

Emotional intelligence fosters emotional stability, teamwork, adaptability, conflict resolution, and leadership effectiveness, all of which are indispensable to modern organizational performance. The integration of EI within workplace structures enhances not only individual efficiency but also collective outcomes such as job satisfaction, innovation, and employee retention.

Grounded in Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Framework and McClelland's Competency Theory, the study concludes that emotional and social competencies are key predictors of superior job performance, surpassing technical ability and cognitive intelligence alone. Therefore, organizations that prioritize the development of EI through training, coaching, supportive culture, and recruitment practices stand to achieve higher employee engagement, resilience, and long-term success.

In essence, emotional intelligence is not a peripheral skill but a strategic asset that drives productivity, improves interpersonal relations, and strengthens organizational effectiveness in a rapidly changing work environment.

Suggestions

The study suggests that the following practices be adopted to develop and enhance the EI of employees.

Training Programs: Management of organizations should on a regular basis organize workshops on emotional intelligence such as - practical training on self-awareness: teaching employees the habit of journaling, reflection and mindfulness. Self-regulation through role-playing stressful and stress management strategies, etc.

Hiring Practices: EI assessment tools should be included in recruitment processes.

Leadership development: Managers should be equipped with EI tools to improve team engagement.

Feedback Systems: The culture of emotional awareness should be encouraged through continuous feedback.

Recognize and reward EI behavior (e.g, teamwork, empathy, conflict resolution etc).

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