

An Exploration of Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Job Satisfaction among Employees in the Hotel Industry in Cochin, Kerala.

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Abstract: In today's corporate arena of value based practices, organizations are looking at a holistic development of their employees. The main objective of this study is to evaluate the relationship between emotional intelligence of employees and their job satisfaction in the hotel industry in the district of Ernakulum. Jack Mayer and Peter Salovey (1990) define Emotional intelligence (EI) as the subset of social intelligence that involves 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 actions. Job satisfaction (JS) is based on individual's experience which is associated with their needs, expectations and benefits from the jobs. Smith et al (1969) suggested that job satisfaction is positively associated with the construct of emotional intelligence. This study is based on a random sample size of 50. It was found that there exists a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The study is useful as it enables the assessment of the EI levels such that it can be enhanced so as to increase JS which will eventually contribute to the better performance of employees.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Job satisfaction, Performance

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I. Introduction

Human resource is the pulse of the business concern and is considered as a critical function of management. It is a field where a lot of research is carried out each day. Among them, Emotional Intelligence is a concept that is closely being monitored as it contributes significantly to performance of an individual. The major challenge faced by most of the organizations today is the shortage of people having emotional maturity to adjust with the continually and rapidly varying business environment. Inability to handle ambiguity and stress due to emotional immaturity negative aspects such as attrition, demotivation and dissatisfaction in the job are on the rise. These negativities are bound to have an adverse effect on the overall business performance in the long run.

Studies say that one of the most effective ways to ensure a healthy and high performance workforce is to find and place people who are emotionally intelligent. With the realization of the importance of EI, most companies are coming forward to take up identifying and improving the EI of their employees as a part of their value addition in order to survive in this tough competitive world. It has gained importance because, people are the non-depreciated asset of any organizations and they are the bona fide epitomization of the company image.

People meet, and through this interaction, business progresses. But it depends on how well they manage their own emotions as well as that of others. This fact underscored that criticism, when delivered destructively causes emotional fallouts. This consciousness highlights the verity that criticism should be used constructively, so that both the person giving it and the person receiving it gain something useful from the experience. Several organizations have met with the predicament that employees undermined their efforts by not being able to understand and defuse their anger. The rapidly growing research on this topic reveals that most individuals have impenetrability in managing situations that are emotionally volatile, particularly when the emotions aroused are anger and anxiety. When this difficulty is coupled with poor communication skills, the results can be quite catastrophic. The inability to manage emotions and communicate effectively often led to unresolved and repetitive conflicts among employees, low morale, and diminished productivity.

Considering the growing importance of Emotional Intelligence, its advantages and scope, this study is an attempt to measure Emotional Intelligence and its relationship with Job Satisfaction. This study is conducted among the employees of the Hotel Industry in Cochin, Kerala.

II. Conceptual Framework

In this section we discuss the variables being studied, the rationale of the study and introduce the relationship between the variables through the development of the hypothesis.

2.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job. The happier people are within their job, the more satisfied they are said to be. Job satisfaction is simply defined as the affective orientation that an employee has towards his or her work (Price, 2001). In other words, it is an affective reaction to a job that results from the comparison of perceived outcomes with those that are desired (Kam, 1998). Porter and Lawler (1968) collect the influences on job satisfaction in two groups of internal and external satisfactory factors. According to them, internal satisfactory factors are related to the work itself (such as feeling of independence, feeling of achievement, feeling of victory, self-esteem, feeling of control and other similar feelings obtained from work), whereas external satisfactory factors are not directly related to work itself (such as good relationships with colleagues, high salary, good welfare and utilities). So, the influences on job satisfaction can be also divided into work-related and employee-related factors (Glisson and Durick, 1988).

One of the consequences of job dissatisfaction is to stimulate thoughts of quitting, or at the least, other forms of withdrawal such as absenteeism or low effort (Mobley, 1977). Perhaps job satisfaction can be increased with emotional intelligence training; whether through improving interpersonal relationships, improving performance and employee effectiveness, or by increasing stress management skills. In sum, the benefits of increasing an employee's emotional intelligence will increase the likelihood of job success and satisfaction, resulting in lower absenteeism and turnover. Mood and emotions while working are the raw materials which cumulate to form the affective element of job satisfaction (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Moods tend to be longer lasting but often weaker states of uncertain origin, while emotions are often more intense, short-lived and have a clear object or cause. There is some evidence in the literature that state moods are related to overall job satisfaction.

Positive and negative emotions were also found to be significantly related to overall job satisfaction. Frequency of experiencing net positive emotion will be a better predictor of overall job satisfaction than will intensity of positive emotion when it is experienced

2.2 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI), often measured as an **Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ)**, describes an ability, capacity, or skill to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. It is a relatively new area of psychological research. Emotional Intelligence is increasingly relevant to organizational development and developing people, because the EQ principles provide a new way to understand and assess people's behaviours, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential.

Salovey and Mayer, who coined the term emotional intelligence in 1990, prefer the aptitude-oriented definition—"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" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 5). Goleman (1995, 1998), who views EI from the trait perspective, popularized the concept and applied it to the workplace. He discussed the importance of EI for success and claimed that the impact of emotional intelligence is even greater within top levels of leadership. The popular and influential account offered by Goleman (1995) appears to define emotional intelligence by exclusion: as any desirable feature of personal character not represented by cognitive intelligence. His theory has been criticized as not having empirical support (Zeidner, Matthew, & Roberts, 2004). Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) described EI as comprising four levels of abilities that range from basic psychological processes to more complex processes integrating emotion and cognition. The model is developmental. The complexity of emotional skill grows from the first tier to the fourth, and skill in the first is required to possess the skills of the next levels.

Daniel Goleman, the pioneer in Emotional Intelligence has identified the five 'domains' of EQ as:

1. Self awareness (Knowing your emotions).
2. Self regulation (Managing your own emotions).
3. Self motivation (Motivating yourself).
4. Empathy (Recognizing and understanding other people's emotions).
5. Social skills (Managing relationships or emotional mentoring)

The first three competencies are intrapersonal emotional competencies (personal competencies) and the last two are interpersonal and are called social competencies.

2.2.1 Self-awareness: This is the ability to recognize how our emotions affect our performance, and the ability to use our values to guide decision making. Self awareness is the vital foundation skill for emotional awareness, accurate self assessment and self confidence.

2.2.2 Self regulation (Managing your emotions): Managing your emotions means something quite different from stifling them. It means understanding them and then using that understanding to turn situations to your benefits. Self regulation is managing one's internal states, impulses and resources being self control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability and innovation.

2.2.3 Self-motivation: Self-motivation means, using our emotional system to catalyze the whole process and keep it going. Self motivation consists of four major competencies such as achievement drive, commitment, initiative and optimism.

2.2.4 Empathy: It involves, recognizing and understanding other people's emotions and managing relationships with others. It involves the competencies of understanding others; developing others, service orientation, leveraging diversity, and political awareness.

2.2.5 Social skills: Social skill is defined as the adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. The major competencies involved here are influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation and team capabilities.

2.3 Rationale of the study

In this complex and competitive scenario, organizations, both public and private sector have to manage change in an effective way. Emotional Intelligence plays an important role in helping the managers and employees to cope with this dynamic change in the business environment. Dalip Singh, (2001) mentioned that application of emotional intelligence supports the managers and employees to recognize and understand emotions and using emotional intelligence to manage oneself and his/her relationship with others. The application of emotional intelligence in the organization includes the areas like personnel selection, development of employees, teams and the organization. The organizations must coach their employees in developing their interpersonal skills and coach them to perform effectively on the job with other employees in the organization. (Reuven Bar-On et al, 2007). Employees need to enhance their emotional intelligence skills, apart from technical skills, which in turn will enhance their productivity on the job. Management of emotional intelligence by the team members will help in developing interpersonal skills of the team members. Organization's to be successful, need to develop employee's emotional intelligence skills to work effectively in the organization. (Bob Wall, 2008). Many organizations are now exploring the contribution of EI to customer service excellence through enhanced human resources management (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso 2002; Guy and Newman 2004; Kernbach and Schutte 2005). The continued expansion of service industries has resulted in a shift towards the provision of high quality customer service as the number one source of competitive advantage (Leidner 1993; Fuller and Smith 1991; Dulewicz and Higgs 2000; Korczynski 2002). In relation to the enhancement of behavioural outcomes in customer service, EI has been identified as a potentially important construct, given that customer service providers are required to be both receptive and adaptive to consumer demands in order to facilitate service interactions which create value for the consumer (Cherniss and Adler 2000; Cook and MacCaulay 2002; Korczynski 2002; Bardzil and Slaski 2003).

The hotel industry being a service oriented industry depends a lot on the behaviour of the employees towards the customers. Any negative dealings with clients will result in an irreparable loss to the organization. Positive dealings with clients are of utmost importance in the hotel industry. Positive and negative emotions were also found to be significantly related to overall job satisfaction. (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This study will help the industry identify how emotionally strong their employees are and whether there exists a relationship between JS and EI

2.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis being tested in this study attempt to answer the following questions:

- Is Job Satisfaction linked to Emotional Intelligence?
- What is the relationship between JS and intrapersonal competencies?
- What is the relationship between JS and interpersonal competencies?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and emotional intelligence.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and intrapersonal competencies.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and interpersonal competencies.

III. Data Collection And Methods

3.1 Setting

To test the hypothesis the study was carried out on employees in hotels in Cochin in the district of Ernakulam. The size of the sample was 50. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: one to measure the job satisfaction of the employee and the Bar-On EQ Questionnaire to measure the EI of the employees. The response rate was 100%.

3.2 Measurement

3.2.1 Variable Selection

The study considers two types of variables namely: Job satisfaction (JS) and Emotional Intelligence (EI). The dependent variable in this study is Job satisfaction and the independent variable is Emotional Intelligence.

A high score on the JS questionnaire indicates a high level of job satisfaction and vice versa. The Bar-On EQ Questionnaire is interpreted as per the guidelines recommended for analysis.

The reliability of the instruments was assessed by computing the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The criterion for reliability is 0.60 and above for scales to adequately meet the standards for such research. Both scales have greater reliability alpha so they are retained in the analysis. (JS = 0.86; EI = 0.92)

3.2.1 Abbreviations used in the study

JS – Job satisfaction

EI – Emotional Intelligence

3.3 Model – Testing Approach

The model has been tested using regression and the results are presented in the following table:

Table 1: Model Summary- Impact of EI on JS

Hypothesis	Constant	R	R ²	t-value	Sig
H ₀₁ DV* -Job Satisfaction IV**- Emotional Intelligence	51.009	0.508	0.258	4.085	.000
H ₀₂ DV* -Job Satisfaction IV**- Intrapersonal Competencies	62.021	.444	0.197	3.4353	0.001
H ₀₃ DV* -Job Satisfaction IV**- Interpersonal Competencies	41.192	0.513	0.264	4.145	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total EI, Intrapersonal competencies, Interpersonal competencies

IV. Findings

H₀₁: Null hypothesis is rejected as there exists a significant relationship between JS and EI. Results (see Table 1) shows that the model is significant (t = 4.085; p < 0.05, R² = 0.258)

H₀₂: Null hypothesis is rejected as there exists a significant relationship between JS and Intrapersonal competencies. Results (See table 1) show that the model is significant (t = 3.435; p < 0.05 ; R² = 0.197)

H₀₃: Null hypothesis is rejected as there exists a significant relationship between JS and Intrapersonal competencies. Results (See table 1) show that the model is significant (t = 4.145; p < 0.05 ; R² = 0.264)

V. Discussions

From the above stated hypothesis and results obtained, we can conclude the following:

There is a moderate correlation (R=0.508) between Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction. The coefficient of determination R² of 0.258 explains that 25.8% of variability in job satisfaction can be explained by emotional intelligence of the employees. It is also concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and emotional intelligence of employees (t = 4.085; p < 0.05).

There is a moderate correlation (R= 0.444) between Job Satisfaction and Intrapersonal Competency. The coefficient of determination R² of 0.197 explains that 19.7% of the variability in JS can be explained by Intrapersonal competencies. It is also concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and intrapersonal competencies of employees (t = 3.4353; p < 0.05).

There is a moderate correlation (R=0.513) between Job Satisfaction and Intrapersonal Competency. The coefficient of determination R² of 0.264 explains that 26.4% of the variability in JS can be explained by Interpersonal competencies. It is also concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and interpersonal competencies of employees (t = 4.145; p < 0.05)

As the success of the Hotel Industry depends largely on how the clientele are treated. Respectable and good interpersonal skills are a must for every employee in a hotel as this differentiates a good hotel from a better one. It is imperative that the client feels important and wanted during his or her stay at the hotel. This will not only ensure that the client will return to the hotel at a later date, but will to a great extent warrant a good review of the hotel and recommendation to others. The hotel industry is sensitive in nature as its success largely depends on the unpredictability and dynamic human behavior. Hence unless an employee is satisfied with his job there is little chance that he will match up to the expectations of the industry. This study has been able to bring to light that job satisfaction is dependent on overall emotional intelligence. The study also indicates that interpersonal skills have a greater impact on job satisfaction. Thus it is recommended that emotional intelligence and in particular interpersonal skills be honed to safeguard the business and cope with competition in the Hotel Industry.

VI. Limitations And Future Research

6.1 Limitations

- The study was restricted to employees in Hotels in the district of Ernakulam. only. The effect of EI on JS of employees in other districts and industries may vary.
- Information was collected through schedules and direct interaction. Hence there is chance of bias in both these methods as the freedom to interpret the information collected from the consumer lies with the enumerator.
- Actual perception of respondents may differ. The respondent's answers may be subject to various influencing factors like peer evaluation, lack of interest and the like.

6.2 Future research

Emotional intelligence is more than a set of skills or competencies. It is a learned ability that helps to identify, experience, understand and express human emotions in healthy and productive ways. A higher EQ benefits work, relationships and health. Higher emotional intelligence improves service quality meted out to clientele, promotes diversity of ideas among individuals in the workplace, increases ability to cope in times of transformation, builds teams that are more respectful, effective and focused, prevents inappropriate behaviour, develops leadership/coaching skills and also supports the ability to learn since managed emotions give you better access to your IQ. Emotional intelligence promotes self-accountability and a strong belief system anchored in human values. In that sense, emotional intelligence is a way of life.

The research is of importance as, in the future, comparisons can be made based on the different districts, hotels or other industries. It will also help in understanding how value addition in the form of EI training can go a long way in the betterment of employees.

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