



ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS WITH **EMOTIONAL** INTELLIGENCE

“If your emotional abilities aren’t in hand, if you don’t have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can’t have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”

~ DANIEL GOLEMAN,
AUTHOR OF “EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE”



WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's ability to be aware of, control, and express his or her emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

Emotional Intelligence skills are believed to be critically important in successfully navigating through all forms of social interaction, as well as the building of strong lasting relationships. This in turn exerts a positive influence on job performance and psychological health.

WHY ASSESS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Emotional Intelligence has been linked to positive outcomes in multiple domains, including job performance and leadership ability.
- Emotional Intelligence also contributes to improving physical and mental well-being, leading to better health, resistance to stress and greater satisfaction at work.
- Emotional Intelligence is distinct from academic intelligence, and can provide unique insights above and beyond standard measures of cognitive ability.
- Combinations of multiple measures (e.g. EI Assessment + Personality Assessment + Cognitive Ability Assessment) would produce superior predictions of job performance compared to utilising only one measure.

There is a growing body of research supporting the link between Emotional Intelligence, Job Performance, Leadership Ability and Well-Being. Some key findings are outlined in the sections below.

JOB PERFORMANCE

OVERALL JOB PERFORMANCE

Several studies suggest that higher emotional intelligence is linked to better overall job performance in a wide variety of contexts.

A study of more than 300 managers at Johnson & Johnson Consumer Companies (JJCC) showed that high performers scored higher in all four clusters of emotional intelligence measured. In particular, peers of these high performing leaders found them to be stronger in self-awareness and self-management.

Another study conducted in military environments found similar results. This second study was conducted by the U.S. Air Force to see if EI assessment could help predict performance in military recruiters. Once again, high performers had significantly higher scores on EI measures than low performers.

This effect has also been found to generalise to the Asian context. Researchers from the Chinese University of Hong Kong conducted a study on research and development scientists from a large Chinese

computer company in Beijing with over 12,000 employees. They found that those who scored high on emotional intelligence were better performers than those who scored lower on emotional intelligence. Apart from showing that the effects of emotional intelligence on job performance also apply to individuals in Asian contexts, this study also shows that emotional intelligence is important even in an industry that places more emphasis on cognitive ability (i.e. research and development).

SALES EFFECTIVENESS

Higher emotional intelligence has been linked to improved overall job performance and greater sales effectiveness.

Emotional Intelligence has also been found to be important for sales effectiveness. Being able to successfully identify and recognise customers' emotions, as well as being able to exercise self-restraint and keep one's own emotions in check, helps significantly in the formation of stronger customer relationships that may lead to better sales performance.

Indeed, in a study on over 200 department store salespersons conducted by Chonnam National University in Korea, it was found that those who scored high on emotional intelligence were better able to address their customers' needs, displayed more positive expressions during interactions with customers, and were rated more highly on service quality by customers.

In addition, a study conducted by the American Marketing Association assessed 500 American real estate agents and found that higher emotional intelligence led to higher sales revenue. These findings were repeated with separate studies conducted on 600 American insurance agents, which not only showed that higher emotional intelligence led to better insurance sales but also stronger customer retention.

Furthermore, American Express Financial Advisors (now Ameriprise Financial, Inc) have used emotional intelligence concepts to great effect through their emotional competence training program, with one study showing that financial service advisors generated increased revenue for a year after undergoing emotional competence training.

As such, it may be useful for organisations to seek out emotionally intelligent candidates to fill positions in sales or other roles that involve a high degree of social interaction. Alternatively, they may wish to employ training programs to develop the emotional intelligence skills of their existing employees to improve their sales effectiveness.

"No doubt emotional intelligence is more rare than book smarts, but my experience says it is actually more important in the making of a leader. You just can't ignore it."

~ JACK WELCH,
FORMER CHAIRMAN &
CEO OF GENERAL ELECTRIC

LEADERSHIP

Emotional Intelligence is positively correlated with leadership effectiveness & performance

OVERALL LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE

Research suggests that there is a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and effective leadership. Strong emotional intelligence skills enables efficient use of different leadership styles to address a myriad of situations, all whilst considering the different people involved, as well as the different emotions experienced in each.

In a study conducted by Minneapolis-based leadership consultancy KRW International Researchers, over 8000 employees rated their CEOs on their character, including aspects of emotional intelligence such as concern for the common good, letting go of mistakes, and showing empathy. CEOs who were rated highly on character were found to have an average return on assets over five times higher than CEOs at the lower ends of the ratings.

Studies at senior executive and managerial levels have found similar findings, where those who scored high on emotional intelligence measures also displayed higher leadership performance and effectiveness.

These results suggest a strong link between empathetic, emotionally intelligent leaders and financial performance.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational Leadership refers to leaders who strive to impart purpose and meaning into work, inspiring their followers to embrace and fight for change and improvement. Transformational Leadership has been linked to many positive workplace outcomes such as improved performance and job satisfaction.

Studies that compare emotional intelligence and transformational leadership have consistently found positive correlations between the two. Leaders who were regarded as more transformational reported that they could identify their own feelings and emotional states, as well as express those feelings to others. Such leaders were also better able to utilise emotional knowledge, understand the emotions of others in their workplace, manage both positive and negative emotions in themselves and others, as well as effectively control their emotional states.

Organisations interested in cultivating high performing, well respected leaders may therefore be interested in looking into assessing emotional intelligence for leadership selection and development.

WELL-BEING & SATISFACTION

GENERAL WELL-BEING

Emotional Intelligence has been found to play an essential part in promoting both physical and mental well-being, contributing to greater overall life satisfaction.

Research has shown that higher emotional intelligence contributes to improved mental well-being through more positive mood, greater self-esteem, stronger social support as well as more adaptive coping styles.

As for physical health, studies have also shown that individuals higher in emotional intelligence are less likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours such as excessive smoking and drinking, and are instead more likely to take better care of their health such as through exercising.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Apart from its contributions to general well-being, emotional intelligence has also been linked to greater resistance to stress in the workplace. Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence, demonstrated by their ability to recognise and express emotions as well as to manage and control them, can better cope with stress.

Supporting this, a study on 212 professionals from mental health institutions in Greece measured their emotional intelligence and occupational stress. Individuals who scored higher on emotional intelligence in terms of their understanding, control, and perception of their emotions were found to suffer significantly less occupational stress than those who scored lower on emotional intelligence.

A separate study conducted by the National University of Kaohsiung using data collected from 571 employees from Taiwan's top 100 financial institutions found that emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between job stress and job performance. While employees low in emotional intelligence experienced a decrease in performance as job stress increased, employees high in emotional intelligence were actually found to experience a slight increase in performance as their job stress increased. This finding suggests that not only are emotionally intelligent individuals better able to cope with the pressure of job stress, but may actually be able to channel it towards improved performance.

Therefore, emotional intelligence has the potential to not only help employees experience lower levels of occupational stress, but it could also enable some of them to thrive under pressure. Organisations could take advantage of these effects by investing in emotional intelligence training initiatives for their employees.

JOB SATISFACTION & ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Strong Emotional Intelligence skills leads to improved overall well-being, more effective coping with stress, as well as greater job satisfaction and commitment.

Higher emotional intelligence has also been found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction and organisational commitment for a wide variety of occupations in many different cultural contexts.

A study published in the Human Resource Management Journal conducted on 193 police officers in Australia found that emotional intelligence led to greater job satisfaction, employee engagement and organisational commitment. This in turn led to decreased turnover intentions in police officers high in emotional intelligence

Another study conducted by I-Shou University in Taiwan on 110 doctors from two Taiwanese hospitals found that higher self-rated Emotional Intelligence was significantly associated with less burnout and higher job satisfaction.

Finally, a study conducted by Pondicherry University examining 208 employees from an international electronic firm operating in India found a very high positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction regardless of their job designation.

Given these findings, developing the emotional intelligence skills of employees can be an effective strategy for organisations seeking to improve workplace satisfaction and retention.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, emotional intelligence has been found to contribute to increased job performance, higher leadership ability, as well as improved physical and mental well-being. Cultivating emotional intelligence can also help individuals become more resistant to workplace stressors and raise job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It can be useful for organisations to consider assessing emotional intelligence both as a criteria for recruitment and selection, as well as a potential target for training and development initiatives.

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