ROLE OF EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE (ESI) IN WORK SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the pre-eminent and vital characteristics of Emotional and Social Intelligence and their importance in the working environment. The paper approaches to review the application and utility of emotional and social intelligence competencies predominantly in the work settings. It also envisages the psychological impacts of social and emotional intelligence suggesting further developments for working professionals. In present scenario, researchers determine social and emotional intelligence as an important attribute of successful and contented working professionals and also to the growth of the most dynamic organizations. Emotional and social intelligence has garnered due consideration of many employees as a formula for big achievements and professional success. In this respect, this paper can provide useful insights to the organizations and its human capital to comprehend the principles of social and emotional intelligence. The paper can provide useful guidelines to stimulate the application of social and emotional intelligence in the workplace for the well-being of employees and affluence of organizations.

Keywords: Emotional and social intelligence, competencies, professional life, work environment.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI) are relatively new flags to an almost 40 year old research history. This history has evaluated behavioural competencies and its influence on the performance of individuals and organization as a whole. Having its foundation upon extensive and predictive competency data, and a multidimensional approach incorporating psychology, biology and neurology, Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI) has manifested much potential in influencing the effectiveness of present day organizations.

This paper aims to provide: (1) a recapitulation of the Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI) theory, encompassing its present conceptualizations and previous contributions; (2) the effect of ESI on workers' performance along with examples; (3) a plan of action for developing ESI in organizations.

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE DEFINED

Considering that the term "Emotional Intelligence" refers to a wide range of concepts, a scientific definition of it can be defined as "an individual's ability to monitor one's own and others emotions and feelings, to differentiate among them and utilize this information to guide his/her thoughts and actions" Salovey and Mayer (1989). Conceivably the most acclaimed model of Emotional Intelligence has been given by Salovey and Mayer (1997) and it includes four branches viz, perceiving emotions, facilitating thoughts by using emotions, comprehending emotions and regulating emotions. The acceptance towards Emotional Intelligence increased considerably with the works of Daniel Goleman (1995) who illustrated linkages between emotional competencies and pro-social behaviour.

The research into Social Intelligence is not as profuse as of Emotional Intelligence but it has a deeper rooted history than Emotional Intelligence. Thorndike (1920) in his works found that human intelligence is made up of three independent components: abstract, social and mechanical intelligence. Social intelligence can be defined as 'the ability to deal with people' Hunt (1928). He used the George Washington Social Intelligence Test to measure dimensions such as judgement in social situations, recognition of facial expressions, memory for names and faces, recognition of mental states through literature and speech. 'It is a set of diverse and non cognitive skills present in major social settings. Social intelligence is contrived as not merely a network of the IQ and emotional intelligence constructs but an interaction with the degree of ability labelled into two categories; social awareness and social facility' Goleman (2006).

SOCIAL AWARENESS

'Social Awareness refers to a person's internal ability to perceive the other person's inner state of mind to gain a better perspective of social interaction with that individual' Goleman (2006). Social awareness identifies the application of "primal empathy" along with "social cognition" and "attunement" which aids an individual to foresee beyond verbal interactions and make a deeper evaluation of the true intentions of another individual.

SOCIAL FACILITY

The Social Facility is an adjunct to the Social Awareness subscale. It develops the self-image of an individual to have a considerable impact during social interactions. It focuses on the application of synchrony, self presentation and guidance towards developing some real fruitful social interactions. Goleman asserts that having synchronization between both body language and verbal communication is imperative for a smooth social interaction.

Over the years, researchers all over the world have found it tricky to agree upon a common definition of Social Intelligence and establishing it as a construct separate from general intelligence. Once again, Daniel Goleman (2006) argued that social intelligence is not just being intelligent about your people and your surroundings but also about being intelligent in relationships. A latest model of Social Intelligence has been given by Boyatzis, Wei and Gaskin (2015) defining behavioural competencies cropping up from Social Intelligence such as empathy, conflict management, influence, teamwork, pattern recognition and systems thinking.

THE ORIGIN OF EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

The theoretical foundation of ESI includes the early contributions made by Thorndike (1920) in the form of *social intelligence*, McClleland (1973) and Boyatzis (1982) in the form of *competencies*, Gardner (1983) in the form of *personal intelligence* and Sternberg (1985) in the form **of** *practical intelligence*. The credit for establishing a link between Emotional and Social Intelligence goes to Bar-On (1985), whereas the general construct of Emotional Intelligence can be credited to Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Goleman (1995) has been given the credit for bringing acclaim to the Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI) construct.

'The concept of Emotional Intelligence given by Goleman (1996) is frequently used to explain the phenomenon of understanding, processing and applying emotions successfully' Cobb & Mayer (2000). Goleman (1995) asserts that people, who inherit emotional skills, excel more in their life, as compared to people who have high intelligence level. Langley (2000) provided empirical evidences that prove the utility of emotional and social competencies in work settings. Wolff and Druskat (2001) proposed that the development of teams at workplaces depends much upon the collective ability of the team to apply emotional intelligence efficiently. Other authors who believe that emotional

intelligence is immensely important for job satisfaction and favourable outcomes include Mallinger and bank, (2003) and Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel, (2002).

'These days the norms of the workplaces are changing frequently and as a result of it the parameters used to judge people are also changing' Singh (2006). These new judgement parameters predict which person is supposed to be successful and who may probably fall flat in the workplace. Organizations judge their workforce for emotional traits which can be crucial for their future progress and their selection for new assignments. Whatever be the nature of jobs, having an understanding as to how these abilities can be developed, is important for a fulfilling career. These competencies when cultivated rightly can provide a person a competitive edge over others. The efficiency and effectiveness of organizations depends quite much upon the level of acceptance of these competencies. These days, employees need not only their academic qualifications and technical skills but also "marketable skills".

Till now, the degree of research work taken up to evaluate the role of emotional and social intelligence as a prominent element in modern work settings is almost trivial. Research on this topic generally ignores to include the prediction of professional success by seeing beyond the inputs made by an individual employee's personality traits and general intellectual abilities. These competencies are an interesting and insightful area that demands to be explored further. This research paper, consequently, makes an effort to highlight the noteworthy psychological research works that recommend a huge impact of emotional and social intelligence competencies necessary in this fast paced organizational work environment.

OBJECTIVES

- o To bring out the various aspects of Emotional and Social Intelligence Competencies.
- o To review research work that indicates the significance of Emotional and Social Intelligence in various work settings.
- o To determine the association of Emotional and Social Intelligence with the performance, achievement, success and satisfaction of individual in various work settings.
- o To review the model to develop Emotional and Social Intelligence at work places.

ESI AND INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

'Many Organizations consider ESI as a set of emotional competencies that enable individuals to apply emotions to facilitate desired outcomes' Fox & Spector (2000). 'Around two- third of the skills that are associated with superior performance at workplace, come out to be social or emotional in nature' Cherniss (2000). Few examples of workplace behaviours potentially influenced by ESI are Job Satisfaction, Fisher (2000), leadership potential, Higgs & Aitken (2003), positive work related attitudes, Carmeli (2003), change management, Mayer & Caruso (2002) and self efficacy, Gundlach, Martinko & Douglas (2003). Considering such vivid behavioural outcomes, it is worth noting that Emotional and Social Intelligence can be a prominent career success factor for individuals these days.

'Although, the majority of research on ESI revolves around its potential influence on individual performance and decision making, there are indications that prove that ESI is not only limited to individuals in an organization but also to different levels in an organization including work groups and teams' Druskat & Wolff, (2001), economic outcomes of the firm, Tomer (2003) and organizational culture, Gabriel & Griffiths, (2002), Mayer & Caruso (2002). How effectively does a person recognize and manage own emotions and also the emotions of others can explain the significant variation in the overall impact of organizations these days.

'Emotional competencies are believed to be predicting occupational success as they influence an individual's ability to perform well and accommodate with environmental pressures' Bar-On (1997). After reviewing many case studies, Goleman (1998) concluded that the main attributes that distinguish successful and unsuccessful managers were emotional competencies. Unsuccessful individuals had weaker emotional competencies despite strong technical and cognitive expertise. Additionally, Goleman asserts social adaptability is pivotal and those who are unable to develop social intelligence and adjustment skills may not be successful in the workplace.

Emotional and social intelligence is linked with job satisfaction, competence and commitment towards the job. In 1998, Carson and Carson conducted a research which depicted that emotional intelligence positively correlated with career commitment. This research enlisted emotional and social intelligence as internal motivation and it was found to be in positive correlation with various aspects of an individual's career such as identity, career planning and resilience to face

obstacles. This research concluded that most career committed individuals appear to be socially and emotionally intelligent. 'Studies have also revealed that emotional intelligence is strongly linked with academic grades too' Hosseini & Rao, (2013). 'Academic performance and outcomes of students is highly correlated with emotional intelligence' Farooq (2003). The findings of this study also indicate that social and emotional competencies are assumed to be credited for a developed and balanced personality and contribute in an individual's success in life.

Previous researches determine successful individuals having high emotional and social intelligence as the ones have a high degree of self control and can keep disturbing and impulsive emotions under check, and hence, can avoid the negative impact of such emotions. 'Empathy is identified as a foundation skill for all social competencies at work.' Salovey and Mayer (1990). This incorporates being attentive to receive emotional cues, exhibiting sensitivity and understanding other people's perspective. The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations (CREIO, 2005) lists down few examples to demonstrate the development of emotional competence in individuals leading to greater organizational success.

DEVELOPING ESI AT WORKPLACE

As already mentioned, the latent impact of developing ESI competencies in an organization brings in the final vital results for the business. It has been indicated by Schmidt and Judiesch, (1990) that for every one standard deviation increase in performance, there is a 19-48% increase in the productivity of non sales positions and a 48-120% increase in direct sales profiles. While associating ESI to the performance of individuals and organizations, Spencer (2001) proposed that a meta analytical review of 15 years published data reveals that ESIC (Emotional and Social Intelligence based competencies) based management activities such as staffing, training and development, performance management do (or can) enhance the productivity and effectiveness of organizations.

Dwelling upon the submissions made related to economic value, the latest acknowledgement of how crucial ESI is for individual and organizational performance and an enormously growing industry of training and development interventions, the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence has furnished a set of best practices, useful for the development of ESI in the workplace.

Drawing conclusions from a host of available data, Cherniss, Goleman, Emmerling, Cowan and Adler (1998) proposed the following guidelines, categorized into four distinct phases, for the development of Emotional and Social Intelligence in the workplace:

1. **Phase One (Preparation for Change):** This includes the following steps-

   - Assessment of organizational needs by making a systematic and rigorous study to reveal the competencies crucial for organizational success.

   - Assessment of individual strengths and limitations for a realistic awareness by the use of ratings from multiple perspectives (such as 360 degree feedback).

   - Offering feedback through trusted and genuine sources having required sensitivity and skill to avoid defensive behaviours from the receivers.

   - Increase the choices available to learners inclusive of the option not to participate.

   - Encourage participation from all levels of the organization through senior management commitment.

   - Relate learning objectives with an individual employee's personal goals.

   - Modify employee expectations by making them understand the value of enhanced ESI, acknowledging that change is often a complex process and obtain increased involvement from them for the change.

   - Assess the employees' readiness for change and design suitable intervention on the basis of this assessment.

2. **Phase Two (Training):** This includes the following steps-

   - Cultivate empathetic, warm and genuine relationship between the trainer and the learners.

   - Enhance self-directed change as the learners are more probable to respond when they themselves decide the competencies that they want to develop.

   - Set clear and moderately challenging goals.

   - Break down goals into achievable sub-goals.

   - Provide more opportunities for practice through repetition of the learned competencies within the job premises.

   - Provide relevant feedback to the learners to keep them on track with the training program.

- Involve experiential methods such as simulations, role plays and discussions.
- Build support groups to reinforce the change initiatives.
- Introduce models for the learners to study, analyse and imitate/follow.
- Develop insights to create a link among the feelings, thoughts and actions to improve self awareness.
- Mentally prepare learners for the unavoidable and very normal setbacks that may occur when learning new behaviours so as to prevent relapse.

3. **Phase Three (Transfer and Maintenance):** This includes the following steps-
   - Motivate the application of learned skills on the job through reinforcement from supervisors and peers for the utilization of new behaviours.
   - Develop an organization culture that promotes learning by encouraging, promoting and rewarding innovation and development.

4. **Phase Four (Evaluation):** This includes the following steps-
   - Conduct recurring evaluations at frequent intervals assuming that change is an ongoing process wherein mediocre programs can be improved and successful programs can be further enhanced.

THEORETICAL OUTCOMES

This study peeps into the role of Emotional and Social Intelligence in different work settings, by reviewing the current psychological literature. Emotional and Social Intelligence (ESI) seems predominant for the performance assessment and well being of the employees in different phases of their career. Previous researches have indicated that ESI has a latent influence on the performance of employees, their success and behaviour in different work settings. Emotional and Social Intelligence competencies are particularly helpful in preventing and managing the inevitable work stress. The concepts of ESI are also found to be reasonable for assessing the effectiveness and progress of organizations and for the same reason different training interventions are designed and conducted to develop emotional and social intelligence competencies of employees in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

Even though it is a fact that the elements of Emotional and Social Intelligence have an age old acclaimed history, it would be serious injustice with its intellectual legacy and practical possibilities to abandon it as a recycled concept for various reasons. First of all, the initial concepts of Social Intelligence given by Thorndike are still powerful and applicable in present situations also. Secondly, Emotional and Social Intelligence combines together a set of entwined skills under the layout of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and relationship management. Thirdly, the vast literature on ESI has been drawn widely from disciplines like neurology, biology and psychology enhancing the integrity of the derived explanations and predictions. Lastly, the literature evidences vehemently support the inference that the Emotional and Social Intelligence competencies can be nurtured and sustained.

To sum up, Emotional and Social Intelligence is a vital concept with an affluent history in behavioural sciences and huge practical applicability. The credit for its recent popularity among the organizational learners can be given to its immediate and obvious applicability on a variety of internal leadership development programs. The Intentional Change Theory discussed in this paper is a concrete and meticulous pathway for competency building that when applied carefully, holds a greater potential for reviving leadership at individual and organizational level.

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