

Emotional Intelligence as a Factor of Career Success in an Organization - A Pilot Study

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Abstract:

The work environment, when not managed carefully, has been found to be a source of stress and emotional disharmony resulting in subsequent negative emotional states. Aggressive behaviors between co-workers have individual and organizational consequences such as low productivity and high levels of stress. Employees with less grasp over their own emotions or understanding of others may find it very difficult to handle situations, which may affect their performance over time. This personal and the social competence of employees, which also form part of their role behavior can be understood in terms of varying levels of emotional intelligence.

Today, Emotional intelligence is widely recognized as a valuable skill, and it is also one that researchers believe can be improved with training and practice. While emotional skills may come naturally to some people, there are things that anyone can do to help improve their ability to understand and reason with emotions. This can be particularly helpful in the workplace, where relationships and business decisions often rely on interpersonal understanding, teamwork, and communication. The various studies found that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on managerial effectiveness, leadership, stress management, workplace adjustment, and self-improvement.

This study shall be a pilot study understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and career success which will be carried out in the northeastern region of India. The sample units will be the middle-level managers working in various industrial organizations in the region. The structured questionnaire will be used to measure both emotional intelligence and career success. The result of the study will help to understand the researchers about the feasibility of variables and instrument for the study in the region.

Keywords : Career Success, Emotional Intelligence, Middle-level managers, Organization, Pilot Study.

Introduction:

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the area of cognitive ability that facilitates interpersonal behavior. The term *emotional intelligence* was popularized in 1995 by psychologist and behavioral science journalist Dr. Daniel Goleman in his book, *Emotional Intelligence*. Dr. Goleman described emotional intelligence as a person's ability to manage his feelings so that those feelings are expressed appropriately and effectively. According to Goleman, emotional intelligence is the largest single predictor of success in the workplace. Today, it is believed that a person's emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) may be more important than their Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and is certainly a better predictor of success, quality of relationships, and overall happiness. It's interesting to note how the concept of emotional intelligence has evolved over the years, from its inception as something called "social intelligence" all the way back in the 1930s, to "emotional strength" in the mid-20th century, to its current terminology, "emotional intelligence." Emotional intelligence brings together the fields of emotions and intelligence by viewing emotions as useful sources of information that help one to make sense of and

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navigate the social environment. Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) proposed a formal definition of emotional intelligence as "The ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action." Later this definition was refined and broken down into four proposed abilities that are distinct yet related: perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence (EI) is, in layman's terms, our level of ability to:

- Recognize and understand one's own emotions and reactions (**self-awareness**).
- Manage, self-control, and adapt our emotions, mood, reactions, and responses (**self-management**)
- Harness our emotions to motivate ourselves to take appropriate action, commit, follow-through, and work toward the achievement of our goals (**motivation**)
- Discern the feelings of others, understand their emotions, and utilize that understanding to relate to others more effectively (**empathy**)
- Build relationships, relate to others in social situations, lead, negotiate conflict, and work as part of a team (**social skills**)

In the competitive world, many organization considered employees' and job candidates' emotional intelligence when making human resource-related decisions. Emotional intelligence always matters when it comes to determining efficient leadership and when pay raises are being considered for employees. A person in a leadership position with high emotional intelligence could also be particularly skilled at motivating their teams and maintaining their overall job satisfaction.

Objectives of the study:

- i. To understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective career success.
- ii. To study the other factors that influence career success in an organization.

Literature Review

EI emerged from the realization that it impacts one's success and effectiveness more than raw intelligence (IQ), technical expertise, or even experience (*Luthans, 2002*). Therefore, it will be of help to understand the perception behind this concept for one's career success.

Abraham Carmeli (2003), found that managerial skills in general and emotional intelligence in particular, play a significant role in the success of senior managers in the workplace. This argument, despite its popularity, remains elusive. This can be attributed to the fact that although a few studies have provided evidence to support this argument, it has not received an appropriate empirical investigation. This study attempts to narrow this gap by empirically examining the extent to which senior managers with high emotional intelligence employed in public sector organizations develop positive work attitudes, behavior and outcomes. The results indicate that emotional intelligence augments a positive work attitude, altruistic behavior and work outcomes, and moderates the effect of work-family conflict on career commitment but not the effect on job satisfaction.

June M.L. Poon (2004), in their study, examined the moderating effect of emotion perception – a basic component of emotional intelligence – on the relationship between career commitment and career success. White-collar employees from a diverse set of occupations and organizations in Malaysia were surveyed. Moderated multiple regression results showed that career commitment predicted objective career success (i.e. salary level) only for employees with average to high emotion perception but not for those with low emotion perception. Emotion perception, however, did not moderate the effects of career commitment on subjective career success (i.e. career satisfaction). Implications of the findings and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Wong and Law (2002), found that regardless of the nature of the job, EI has a strong positive effect on job satisfaction. EI concept suggests that EI impacts one's physical and mental health as well as one's career

achievements (Goleman, 1995). In a recent and excellent review of the EI literature, *Dulewicz and Higgs (2000)* demonstrated that EI impacts on one's work success in an organization. Some found EI to be a better predictor of life success (economic well-being, satisfaction with life, friendship, family life), including job attainments, than IQ which leads to the catchy phrase "IQ gets you hired, but EQ gets you promoted." (*Luthans, 2002, p.68*).

Goleman (1998) found that most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way that is they have a high degree of EI. As workplace requires interactions with others, thus, it is essential to sustain a good working relationship with peers, subordinates, and supervisors. Therefore, it is possible that successful individuals may acquire more EI skills and competencies as to get works done through people, as well as to maintain or continue to further increase their career advancement.

Based on the above discussion, EI is certainly playing a significant role in interpersonal behavior at the workplace. As all individuals have moods and feelings which influenced them in daily life, thus, the ability of understanding and managing emotions become important.

Research Methodology

The proposed study shall be a pilot study with an empirical approach to understanding the feasibility of variables for the study. The study shall be carried out in the industrial organizations like bank, PSUs, Telecom industries, Automobiles etc. of the North-Eastern Region of India. The structured questionnaire shall be used to collect the information for the study. The sample frame for the study is given below:

Table 3.1:Sample Frame

Sample Unit	Total Sample	Sample for Pilot Study	Select Organization	Sampling Type	Study Area
Middle-level Managers	300	18 (6%)	Industrial Organizations	Clustered Sampling	North East India

An appropriate instrument was adopted to measure the mentioned variables and modified it accordingly to collect data for the select samples units. Further, the instrument was tested and found to be reliable for the study. The details of reliability analysis for the research instruments are given below:

Instrument Reliability Analysis:

Variables		Adopted from	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Subjective Career Success	Career Satisfaction	<i>Daniel Spurr et al (2011)</i>	.766	5
	Interpersonal success	<i>Gattiker & Larwood (1986)</i>	.706	8
	Life success			
	Job Satisfaction	<i>Greenhaus et al. (1990).</i>	.691	5
Emotional Intelligence		<i>(Wong and Law, 2002)</i>	.836	16

Tools & Techniques Used

The collected information will be tabulated using an appropriate statistical package to perform Descriptive statistics, Parametric & non-parametric test in order to understand and interpret the data set.

Analysis of the data:

Analysis I

The demographic profile of the respondent is given below. From the table, it can be observed that about 83% of total respondent are falling under the age group of 26 years to 35 years whereas about 17% of respondents are from the range between 36 years to 45 years. In the educational level of the respondents, it is seen that most of the respondents are having post-graduation qualification with 50% of total respondents followed by graduation with approximately 28% of total respondents. Also, it is observed that majority i.e. 83% of the sample respondent is having professional qualifications like engineering, management, administration etc. whereas approximately 27% of sample respondents are from the non-professional nature of qualification.

Table 4.1 Demographic Profile- Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 26 Yrs - 35 Yrs	15	83.3	83.3	83.3
36 Yrs - 45 Yrs	3	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	18	100.0	100.0	

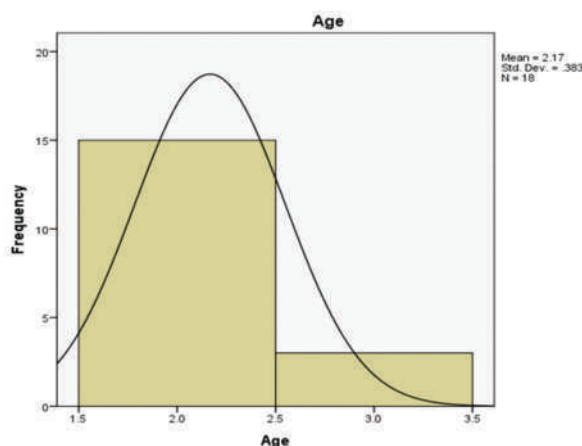


Table 4.2 Demographic Profile- Educational Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Diploma	2	11.1	11.1	11.1
Degree	5	27.8	27.8	38.9
P.G	9	50.0	50.0	88.9
M.Phil	1	5.6	5.6	94.4
Ph.D.	1	5.6	5.6	100.0
Total	18	100.0	100.0	

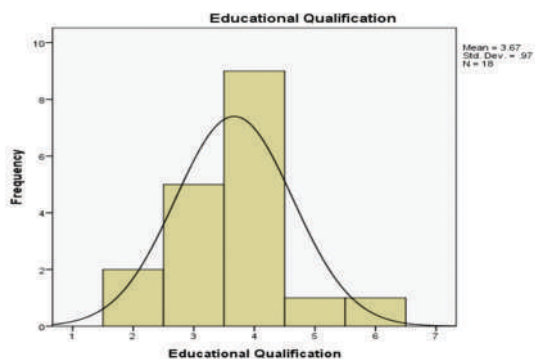


Table 4.3 Demographic Profile- Nature of Qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	General	3	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Professional/Technical	15	83.3	83.3	100.0
	Total	18	100.0	100.0	

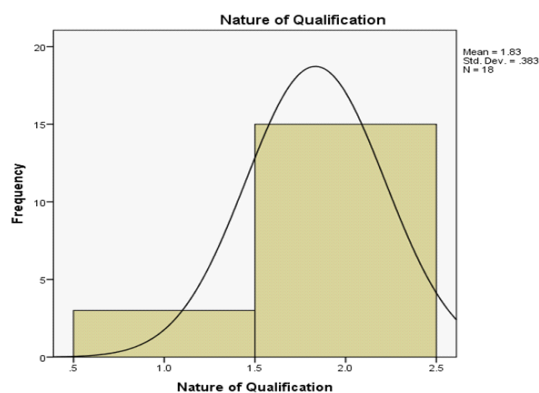


Table 4.4 Demographic Profile- Work Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Upto 5 years	9	50.0	50.0	50.0
	6-10 Yrs	7	38.9	38.9	88.9
	11-15 Yrs	2	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	18	100.0	100.0	



The above table gives the descriptive statistics about the variables viz. subjective career success and emotional intelligence. In the study (n=18), the mean value for variable emotional intelligence = 3.9 and S.D (Standard Deviations) is approximately 0.38 and for the variable Subjective career success, the mean value is 3.7 (n=18), and S.D is approximately .36.

The study shows that there is a significant relationship between career success and emotional intelligence. The resulting outcome reveals that there is a positive correlation between the two variables viz. subjective career success and emotional intelligence. The table shows that the value of $R = .502^{**}$ having a statistical significance between the variables.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Emotional Intelligence	3.8958	.37926	18
Career Success	3.7006	.35860	18

Table 4.6 Correlations

		Emotional Intelligence	Career Success
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.502*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.034
	N	18	18
Career Success	Pearson Correlation	.502*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	
	N	18	18

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the above table, it may interpret that the pilot study gives a clear picture about the feasibility of the study and the variables considered for the study. Both the variables are significant and relevant for the study.

Analysis - II

The various study shows that there are several other factors that influence career success in an organization. Base on various kinds of literature the following variables are responsible for career success.

Table 4.7 Other variables for career success

Sl. No.	Variables	Citations
1	Personality	<i>Seibert, S. E. et al. (1999)</i>
2	Political Skill	<i>Todd, S. Y. et. al. (2001)</i>
3	Gender	<i>Perrewe & Nelson (2004)</i>
4	Self-esteem	<i>Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D. et. al (2008)</i>
5	Mentoring	<i>Ramaswami, A (2010)</i>
6	Human capital	<i>Ballout, H. I. (2007)</i>
7	Networking	<i>Wolff & Moser (2009)</i>

The above table shows about the variables associated with career success in an organizational context. Although, the literature suggests many other variables too for careers success the researcher had taken seven variables in this study as the mentioned variables are considered by the researcher for his study.

Limitations of the study:

The present study is aimed to understand the influence of emotional intelligence on career success. This study is a pilot study to understand the feasibility of the study and its variables associated with it in the study region. The resulting outcome is just a glimpse of the possible outcome only and cannot be generalized as a whole. The study may be taken further to understand the clear picture and impact of the variables among each other.

Scope for further study:

This paper is prepared based on one independent variable i.e. emotional intelligence on career success. The literature suggests that there are several other variables which affect career success. Other researchers may take other variables for the study and find the feasibility of the study. It is also found that the instrument for data collection which was adopted different authors are reliable and may use it for similar kind of study.

Conclusion:

Career success is an important aspect of the lives of an employee in an organization. It is important to understand that which factors are more relevant to them to attain the desired career level and success. The literature show that there are many variables and factors associated with career achievement and success. It may not necessary that all the variables or factors are applicable or related to the careers success of an individual due to regional factors, socio-economic factors, socio-psycho factor or organization culture. So it very important to figure out the appropriate variables for career success. This study shows that Emotional intelligence has a significant relation with subjective career success in the region. The present study may carry forward and explore in the holistic approach to understand the impact of emotional intelligence on career success in a better picture so that. This study also shows that the reliability of the research instrument adopted from various researchers is ideal enough to collect the data for the study and it may be used by other researchers who are interested in the similar area of emotional intelligence and subjective career success.

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