

The importance of emotional intelligence



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The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in the Public Sector.

Introduction

Since the early 1990's, emotional intelligence (EI) is on the verge of becoming the number one topic in the public sectors and human resources agenda. EI in today's society is the forefront the tools utilized in the selection recruitment process. The assumption is made that many public sectors and human resources may expect external potentials employer should have this ability we call emotional intelligence (Huy, 1999). Moriarty (2009) stated public managers sometimes need to ask themselves big questions. Why didn't last year's initiative turn out the way we expected? Does the latest trend represent a real change in direction or a stage in an eternal cycle? Why is it such a struggle to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality? Moriarty (2009), went on to state it is good to encouraged to see the less-than-linear progression of previous policy development; however, if this is to only remind us that saying " if I do x then y should happen" which isn't sufficient to make it so.

In today society we all want to be encourage, congratulated, acknowledge, have a job security, love or like the job/career we are working in, effect of commitment, effect of communication, emotional understanding and we all want someone to understand who we are, what we are and why are we in the organization that we are in today. Whether an employee works at McDonalds', Wall Street, Car wash, playgrounds, Waste Management, house keeper/cleaner, General Motors and etc, everyone should have a voice in their organization. Furthermore, employee's voices should make a difference because they are the foot soldiers who deal with customers services and

know what the customer's questions and concerns are. Overall, employees emotional intelligence can build great leaders and can be a big difference whether organization have progression or retrogression, which will be address later in this research. Consequently, EI also have some imperfections that raise some questions that will be address later in this research.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relative importance of emotional intelligence, to determine the role that emotional intelligence has for employees as individuals and to determine if there are any discernible difference between males and females. Furthermore, this research will investigate how emotional intelligence will benefit organizations.

Background

The concept of emotional intelligence goes far back to early studies in the 1920s. In the early 1980s, scholars began to systematically conceptualize the idea of EI (Carmeli, 2003). It was not until the 1990's that the concept of emotional intelligence began to receive more research attention. The major focus of researchers, prior to this, was on the importance of cognitive intelligence for gaining workplace success. In this day and age, however, researchers and participants alike are more likely attribute to emotional intelligence a significant power of explanation of variance in performance (Dimitriades, 2007). Two leading individual researchers, John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, first introduces the concept of EI as a type of social intelligence, separable from general intelligence, which involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and

to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. There are many scholars that define emotional intelligence to the best of their knowledge; however, many of these definitions tend to be remarkably similar to one another.

The literature reveals a diversity of opinions on the definitions that defines emotional intelligence as followed:

Berman & West (2004) states at the heart EI is define as a process of recognizing and bringing into awareness (consciousness) emotions that are experienced by oneself and others and then using this awareness (information) skillfully (indeed, intelligently) in subsequent decision making and action.

Dimitriades (2007) defines EI as the ability of an individual to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Carmeli (2003) defines EI as an array of emotional, personal, and social abilities and skills that influence an individual's ability to cope effectively with environmental demands and pressures.

Given that even the scholars had their own multiple definitions, researchers decided to gather information and create a definition of its own that best fit EI. Researchers define EI as the conscious awareness of ones and others self-emotions with the ability to cope effectively with organizational demands

and pressures; furthermore, exceeding emotional, personal, and social abilities and skills that influence an individual's ability to cope by using the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Therefore, emotional intelligence can be seen as having the ability to manage emotions and to understand the complexity relationships that can occur between emotional and like emotional transitions is an important feature in the understanding of human nature and human interactions. Although there are many definitions that define emotional intelligence; researcher have found differences between individual level and organizational level. In Huy (1999) the individual and organizational level of emotional intelligence addresses the areas of receptivity, mobilization, and learning, which be touched on briefly.

At the individual level, receptivity denotes a person's willingness to consider change. Correspondingly at the organizational level, receptivity refers to organization members' willingness to consider individually and collectively proposed changes to recognize the legitimacy of such proposal. Individuals seek to develop a meaningful framework to understand the nature of the proposed change and to influence each other toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality (Huy, 1999). In order for positive change to take place in an organization, the employee should be aware of change to come. Informing the employees of change and building a foundation for change will trigger the emotional mindset of your employees in the sense that they feel that they matter to the organization. When it comes to being receptive, one of the main issues to address is ego. Huy (1999), stated resistance to change represents the alter ego to receptivity and can range from moral outrage,

which can translate into such extreme actions as vandalism and sabotage, to quiet cynicism and withdrawal behavior. Some degree of receptivity to change is necessary for mobilization and learning to occur.

Mobilization at the individual level refers to the concrete (actions) taken by a person in the direction of change; however, the organizational level of mobilization refers to the process of rallying and propelling different segments of the organization to undertake joint action and to realize common change goals (Huy, 1999). Mobilization involves collaborative wide capacity of the organization to implement change that cuts across departments, individuals, and time; furthermore, it requires active collaboration among team members that goes beyond simple agreement or compliance. Collaboration as an individual or as an organization working as a team means that one must take a leap faith in to a situation in which they will be rather unfamiliar but that has an emotionally unifying purpose that serves to minimize large divergences among groups. Having people committed to realizing a vision is more important for its success than a well thought-out tactic, because concentration and passionate dedication are necessary to achieve distinctive competence and success (Huy, 1999). Individuals are motivated to acts only if they perceive they can bridge the discrepancy between goals and performance. On the other hand, both receptivity and mobilization can learn from the enact outcome of change.

Learning provides both on the individual level and organizational level a feedback loop from the outcomes of behavioral change back to receptivity. On the individual level, a person learns by thinking and then acting, and then by using the outcome of those actions to revise his or her belief system.

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However, at the organizational level an analogous process takes place according to the organizational goal-action-outcome-learning feedback framework. Organizational learning takes place when successful individual learning is transferred to an organization's shared belief system (Huy, 1999). Organizations can have great leaders as long they are aware and practicing EI.

Strengths and Weakness

In the gender sense, both males and females have equivalent abilities to develop their EI, men and women as groups tend to have shared gender-specific profile of strong and weak points. Specifically, women are generally more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, and are more adept interpersonally. On the other hand, men are more self-confident and optimistic and can handle stress more effectively (Dimitriadis, 2007). There is much strength to practicing emotional intelligence; furthermore, Mayor, Roberts & Barsade (2008) have clinically discover that one's emotionality could become more positive by reframing perceptions of situations, as well as from the idea that when at work, individuals often exert considerable emotional self-control. Consequently, there are a few issues that set the positivity aspect of emotional intelligence and have made a lot of scholar's ponder about this topic that is now on the up rise than ever before. The first strength of emotional intelligence is helping leaders lead more effectively. However, some scholars contemplate is there enough information to support emotional intelligence. Although many scholars may question EI, some still believe that EI is effective in many ways. Furthermore, research has shown

that for star performance in every field, EI is twice as important as cognitive abilities.

Carmeli (1999), Daniel (2003), Dimitriades (2007), Hicks & Dess (2008) & Jordan, Ashkanasy & Hartel (2002) have argued that employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped than employees with low emotional intelligence to deal with the affective and behavioral implications of job security. Furthermore, job satisfaction is often considered as a proxy for an employee's well being at work. Intelligent individuals with high emotional intelligence, through the set of three conceptually related mental processes described above, experience continuous of positive moods and feeling generate higher levels of satisfaction and well-being, compared to individuals who experience such feelings and moods as disappointment depression and anger, because they can reach high level of general satisfaction and fulfillment. Moreover, these individuals are committed both to their career and to their employing organization, which job security and commitment no longer becomes an issue (Carmeli, 1999 & Dimitriades, 2007).

According to Jordan et al. (2002), the perception of job insecurity during organizational change can lead to increased organizational effectiveness on the part of employees. Thus, organizational members who feel insecure in their jobs are motivated to work harder because security is usually accompanied by complacency and employees under threat need to work harder to secure their positions and to maintain access to contingent rewards. Consequently, Jordan et al. (2002), however, argue that job insecurity has negative consequence for employees, including reduced work

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effort, reducing organizational commitment and reduce work satisfaction. In addition, job insecurity can lead to wellbeing (health) issues, owing to the stress involved in coping with ambiguity and that these problems act to reduce of employee performance. When insecurity starts to take a toll on the emotional intelligence of an employee, then the individual will start to build commitments to more than one organization.

The concept of organizational commitment incorporates three distinct construct: affective, continuance and normative commitment. Continuance commitment is defined as the extent to which employees feels committed to their organization by virtue of the costs that feel are associated with leaving. Affective commitment is positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in the work organization. Employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to; furthermore, employees with strong continuance commitment remain because they need to. Overall, employees with strong normative commitment remain because they feel must to do so (Carmeli, 1999).

Like (Carmeli, 1999), Jordan et al. (2002), who also speak on effective commitment state that many employees now do not seek career within one organization; nonetheless, they seek instead to maximize their external marketability. As a consequence, organizational member's loyalty which was once primarily pledged of internal career advancement must now be balanced between organizational outcomes and career goals and have also shown that security of employment is a precursor of organizational commitment. Given the fact that job insecurity has many different aspects, it can create job related attention and behaviors.

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The links between job insecurity and job related tension also have been well established that job security is negatively related to employee physical health and well-being. Nonetheless, elimination of all sources of workplace stress and maybe also inappropriate because moderate stress can produce positive behaviors as long as the level of stress does not become unbearable. With negative emotion terrible outcomes can take place (Jordan et al., 2002).

The negative emotion-focus coping behaviors with potential negative outcomes including withdrawal, self-blame, wishful thinking and emotional avoidance. These behaviors may alleviate short-term concerns, but they may fail to deal with the underlying stress. Coping behaviors are intended to reduce job-related tension through amelioration of experienced stress (Jordan et al., 2002). Jordan et al., (2002) discusses the two types of coping strategy. The first type, problem-focus coping, is intended to address the source of the job-related tension directly. The second type is emotion-focus coping, which it is to aim at minimizing the emotional ramifications of stress. Researchers also give an alternative that the employees can seek to establish constructive social networks that provide emotional support. In addition to this, the support that emerges from these networks contribute to positive emotion-focused coping, the actions required to set up these networks directly addressing the problem of job insecurity perceptions and therefore can be consider positive problem-focus coping (Jordan et al., 2002). Despite how effective emotional intelligence can be with the public sector, there are some downfalls of EI.

In some cases, a surplus of EI can result in inappropriate behaviors and actions. Effective leaders have empathy for others, but leaders must know when to make a tough decision. They must be able to apply the logic and reason and acknowledge the feelings people feel the decisions are correct. Ineffective leaders can make the mistake of into the confusing of empathy and sympathy, which will cause the leader into making a harder decision than need be (Hicks & Dess, 2008). One of the biggest cons of emotional intelligence is when people who use their leadership roles solely to gain formal or informal power, which is not displaying leadership at all. In fact, such leaders may be manipulative, selfish and dishonest. Therefore, the ineffective leaders are using EI to grasp what people want and to pander to those desires to gain personal authority and influence (Hicks & Dess, 2008). Despite the positive impact and progress of emotional intelligence, there is no consensus about the exact nature of EI since different scholars postulate differing numbers of factors that should be included in the construct (Dimitriades, 2007).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to identify the benefit of EI and tools that assist EI to be affective. When managers and others feel accepted and understood, for example, commitment, security and enthusiasm increase in ways that promote performance. Relationship management involves effective communication, teamwork, conflict management skills, as well as the ability to help people work towards common objectives. Mentoring will further EI skills by allowing managers to reflect and discuss their actions in situations that require a high degree of judgment, as “ people issues” usually do.

Expecting managers to model appropriate behavior for employees increases awareness of EI skills and top managers who do so may become models for lower-level managers (Berman & West, 2008).

Another benefit to public sectors is training employees to target EI. Training has long been used to set standards for behavior and cultivate competencies for those seeking managerial and leadership positions. A variety of training is being offered that targets EI including emotional literacy. Evaluations show that participants increase their self-reported familiarity and competency in EI skill sets, though the long-term impacts are still unknown. In addition, other existing training topics, such as teamwork, change management, anger management, addressing EI competencies, and personality assessment (Berman & West, 2008).

Demonstrating care and concern for one for one another constitutes the basis for affect-based trust and is found to lead to better work performance, possibly owing to better coordination under discontinuous condition. Focus on affective interpersonal cues is essential for quality of decision making and implementation solidarity among team members engagement (Huy, 1999). The term engagement has acquired new meanings in recent years with the emergence of concepts like democratic engagement and public engagement. In models of influence, commitment “ engagement” generally implies going beyond one-way or even two-way communication to give people real influence over decision-making, whether the public or members staff. In the private sector, companies with high levels of employees’ engagement have better financial results than companies with lower levels. The public sector has no such universal measure of success.

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Although correlations employee of commitment with lower staff turnover rates, lower absenteeism, higher customer satisfaction and loyalty, fewer safety incidents and higher quality; overall, more efficient production points to its importance for public services as well (Moriarty, 1999). The critical factors in improving engagement are empowerment and control, trust and confidence, growth and security, connection and affiliation, recognition and value. With EI comes engagement and the key drivers of that engagement turned out to be job stretch, career development and opportunities for creative thinking (Moriarty, 1999). With opportunities for creative thinking comes along better customer services.

Employees who have been with their employing organizations for a long time are more likely to develop to rich understanding of customers' varying expectations and needs, consolidating this information into meaningful categories to effectively guide their behaviors. Besides the diversity of customer types and situations that contact employees encounter implies the importance of having multiple customer interaction strategies (Dimitriades, 2007). Contact employees, high in organizational tenure, can be assumed to have developed useful ways of interacting with specific customer types, resulting in increased effectiveness of employee interactions with customers and their ability to offer constructive insights into services problems and opportunities. Organizational tenure, on the other hand, is likely to be related to emotional intelligence among service employees (Dimitriades, 2007).

Emotional intelligence is an important element in shaping people's individual success and the quality of their contribution to the organizations where they

work. EI training aims to develop people's sensitivity and bring them new understanding of emotional dimension. An important element to developing EI training programs is that the participants must be ready to determine which EI elements are crucial for excellence in particular job context and continuous reinforcement (Dimitriadis, 2007).

Application

Goleman (1998) stated that EI is the skill that distinguishes star performers in every field from entry level jobs to middle-level to top executive posts. EI is not about IQ's, advanced degrees or technical expertise; however it is about possessing the potential to improve our emotional intelligence at any stage in our careers as individuals or as team members in organization. There are five dimensions of EI: self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy and adeptness in relationships (social skills). The way to apply these practices is listed as follows:

Emotional Awareness: Recognizing ones emotions and their feeling. People with these competences know which emotion they are feeling and why, realize the links between their feelings and what they think, do and say, recognize how their feelings affect their performance and have a guiding awareness of their values and goals (Goleman, 1998 & Hicks & Dess, 2008).

Motivation: Motivated people have a high level of energy directed at doing things better and are restless with the status quo. They also are driven by a need for achievement instead of external rewards (Hicks & Dess, 2008).

Self-Regulation: Self-regulation means managing impulse as well as distressing feelings. It depends on the working of the emotional centers in

tandem with the brain's executive center in the prefrontal areas. These two primal skills handling impulse and dealing with upset are at the core of five emotional competencies (Goleman, 1998):

1. Self-control: Managing disruptive emotions and impulses effectively.
2. Trustworthiness: Displaying honesty and integrity.
3. Conscientiousness: Dependability and responsibility in fulfilling obligations.
4. Adaptability: Flexibility in handling change and challenges.
5. Innovation: Being open to novel ideas, approaches and new information (Goleman, 1998).

Empathy: This dimension can be seen as being divided into three parts. The first part revolves around that understanding others. People with this competence are attentive to emotional cues and listen well. Furthermore, they show sensitivity and understand of others' perspectives and helping out based on understanding other people's needs and feelings. The second part is devoted to the art of listening. Listening well and deeply means going beyond what is said by asking questions, restating in one's own words what you hear to be sure you understand, which is active listening. The final part concerns the politics of empathy meaning that those with little power are typically expected to sense the feelings of those who hold power, while those in power feel less obligated to be sensitive in return. In other words, the studied lack of empathy is a way power-holders can tacitly assert their

authority. But this may hold less truth today, given the fact more organization are becoming more team oriented (Goleman, 1998).

Adeptness in relationships (social skills): Social skill may be viewed as friendliness with a purpose: moving people in the direction you desire, whether it's agreement on a new marketing strategy or enthusiasm about new product. This involves recognizing that a person gets nothing done alone. People with social skills have a network in place when the time for action comes. There is no doubt about the benefits of emotional intelligence, but as with any attribute, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Individuals need to avoid the overuse or abuse of EI (Goleman, 2003 & Hicks & Dess, 2008).

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