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Emotional Intelligence and Its Relationship with Job Satisfaction of Software Engineers

Dr. R. Anand., MBA., Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor cum Liaison Officer, DDE Study Centre, Annamalai University, Bangalore.

Abstract

In this paper author explored the role of emotional intelligence in the job satisfaction of the software engineers. Software engineers were selected through convenient sampling method and administered the Bar-On emotional intelligence and Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire of Weiss David along with the personal data. The present results of the study reveal that age of the software engineers are significant for the most of the dimensions of emotional intelligence along with emotional intelligence total and not significant for the job satisfaction. Also discussed how emotional intelligence dimensions associated with the job satisfaction of the software engineers in this study.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Satisfaction, Information Technology, and Bangalore

INTRODUCTION

The role of emotions in the workplace has been so dynamic and extensive that it has been characterized as a paradigm shift in organizational behaviour (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003). One such area covers the multitude of skills and behaviours that stem from individual differences relating to emotions. This study investigates the effect of one such individual difference--Emotional Intelligence. The aim of this study was to address the relationship of emotional intelligence with job satisfaction using a sample of software engineers who works in information technology sector.

Emotional Intelligence helps individuals to recognize and identify emotions being elicited at the workplace. Once emotions are identified, individuals should then be able to use their ability to facilitate their thoughts and priorities at the workplace using those emotions. As soon as an emotion is identified and used in thoughts, the individual may also use their ability to understand the finer details of emotions

Emotional Intelligence is the capacity to effectively perceive, express, understand, and manage your emotions and the emotions of others in a positive and productive manner. According to the Bar-On (1997) emotional intelligence is an emotional competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how well we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands, challenges, and pressures.

In the present study author has focused on the relationship between one of the most widely used and validated measures of emotional intelligence and with job satisfaction. The purpose of this research is to better understand the correlates of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The goal of this study was to enhance our knowledge regarding emotional intelligence by examining its possible attitudinal with job satisfaction and demographic (age, length of service, marital status, salary, and occupational level) antecedents.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The Bar-On (1997) describes emotional intelligence as an array of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators that impact intelligent behaviour. Identifying and logically clustering various emotional and social competencies, skills, and facilitators thought to impact human effectiveness and well-being; defining the individual clusters of competencies, skills, and facilitators that emerged.

JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is a phenomenon which can be explained as having both cognitive and affective character. The cognitive component is made up of judgments and beliefs about the job, while the affective component comprises of feelings and emotions associated with the job. Job satisfaction is defined as the attitude and feelings people have about their work: positive and favourable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction while negative and unfavourable attitudes toward the job indicate job dissatisfaction (Armstrong, 1996).

Employees' satisfaction and retention have always been important issues. Job satisfaction is based on one's feelings or state of mind regarding the nature of work. For an organization to be successful, it must continuously ensure the satisfaction of their employees. Satisfied employees tend to be more productive, creative, and committed to their employers.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Today's Information Technology sector has phenomenal and increasingly rapid change due to the environmental pressures in the industry. The life expectancy of their products is getting lesser day by day, because of continuous re-engineering, outsourcing, and technological breakthrough. The demands from the customers and competition have an impact on the well-being of employees need not only technical skills but other skills commonly known as emotional skills. Hence, it is imperative to study the emotional intelligence skills among the software engineers and its relationship with the job satisfaction, based on selective demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

The sample comprises of 134 software engineers who working full time and resides in the Bangalore area completed self-report surveys containing items assessing the variables described follows. Weiss David, Dawis, George, and Lofquist (1977) developed the Minnesota job Satisfaction Questionnaire (short-form). This tool is a self-report measure, which consists of 20 items. There are five response categories for each item such as "very dissatisfied," "dissatisfied," "neutral," "satisfied," and "very satisfied." Weiss David et al. (1977) have established the reliability of the tool based on the internal consistency coefficient of the job satisfaction. The average Cronbach's alpha coefficients were high with an overall average of 0.75. This tool possesses content validity and face validity. The criterion validity of the tool is 0.69 for the job satisfaction.

The emotional intelligence of the software engineers was measured by Bar-On (1997) Emotional Quotient Inventory in ten dimensions viz., empathy, assertiveness, flexibility, reality testing, stress management, problem solving, interpersonal relationship, impulse control, emotional self awareness and self-regard by sixty six items. There are five response categories for each item ranging from not true (zero point) to true (four point) for positive item and true (zero point) to not true (four point) for negative items. The average Cronbach's alpha coefficients were high for all of the sub-scales, ranging from 0.69 to 0.89, with an overall average internal consistency coefficient of 0.76. Bar-On (1997) established the validity of the tool by conducting studies in six different countries (India is one among the six countries). This tool possesses content and face validity. Moreover, the criterion group validity was established as 0.82.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses are framed to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction the software engineers

1. There is a significant difference in emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of software engineers on the basis of their age, length of service, salary, and occupational level.
2. Emotional intelligence (and each of its ten components such as interpersonal relationship, problem solving, stress management, self regard, reality testing, flexibility, assertiveness, and empathy, impulse control and emotional self awareness) will positively relate to job satisfaction of the software engineers.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The 't' test was used for testing the significant difference between the means of demographic variable viz. marital status. The 'F' test was used for testing the significant difference between the means of demographic variables viz. age, length of service, salary, and occupational level. To find out the relationship between the emotional intelligence and job satisfaction linear correlation analysis was used and the correlation values were calculated.

Hypothesis: "Age of software engineers has a significant influence on their emotional intelligence and job satisfaction"

From the Table – 1, it is observed that "F" values are significant for the most of the dimensions of emotional intelligence along with emotional intelligence total and not significant for the job satisfaction. Hence the hypothesis is accepted for emotional intelligence and rejected for job satisfaction. It is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the age of the software engineers and emotional intelligence.

Table: 1 - Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction of Software Engineers Based on Their Age

	AGE				F – value	Scheffe Posthoc
	1 Mean (S.D)	2 Mean (S.D)	3 Mean (S.D)	4 Mean (S.D)		
Job satisfaction	84.47 (5.08)	82.86 (5.59)	82.60 (5.59)	81.28 (5.81)	1.378	-----
Emotional ntelligence dimensions						
Problem Solving	17.23 (2.08)	18.86 (2.29)	18.77 (2.58)	18.22 (1.63)	3.369*	2 Vs 3 Vs 4 Vs 1
Stress Management	23.07 (3.23)	25.03 (2.54)	25.77 (2.20)	25.06 (1.66)	7.266*	3 Vs 4 Vs 2 Vs 1
Emotional Self Awareness	17.13 (1.74)	18.37 (2.07)	18.91 (1.73)	18.56 (2.12)	5.624*	3 Vs 4 Vs 2 Vs 1
Reality testing	17.80 (2.33)	19.40 (2.26)	19.17 (1.98)	17.22 (2.24)	4.852*	2 Vs 3 Vs 1 Vs 2
Self Regard	26.03 (2.80)	27.49 (3.00)	27.45 (2.83)	27.56 (2.01)	2.098	----
Impulse Control	14.43 (2.47)	15.26 (2.23)	15.60 (1,78)	15.44 (1.92)	1.983	----
Flexibility	22.27 (3.07)	24.71 (2.84)	24.77 (2.22)	25.06 (2.53)	7.104*	4 Vs 3 Vs 2 Vs 1
Assertiveness	17.47 (2.34)	18.37 (2.00)	18.55 (2.04)	18.11 (1.64)	1.874	----
Empathy	14.20 (2.35)	15.69 (2.15)	15.43 (1.87)	14.67 (2.06)	3.399*	2 Vs 3 Vs 4 Vs 1
Inter Personal Relationship	20.33 (2.89)	21.00 (2.25)	21.77 (2.58)	21.72 (1.99)	2.334	----
Emotional Intelligence _Total	190.00 (14.40)	204.17 (7.06)	206.17 (6.30)	202.11 (6.90)	21.313*	3 Vs 2 Vs 4 Vs 1

1. Less than 25 years – 30
2. 26 to 30 years – 35
3. 31 to 35 years – 47
4. Above 35 years – 18

[*] Significant at 0.05 level
[NS] Not Significant

More than 35 years of software engineers were high in flexibility dimension of emotional intelligence. It may be due to the years of experience in the information technology sector makes them to understand the pattern of working in the task assigned to them. Further, availability of the flexible working hours helps to manage the work life which leads to high in flexibility dimension of emotional intelligence.

The software engineers whose age was in between 31 to 35 are high in stress management and emotional self-awareness dimensions of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total. The better management of mental processes with the poignant or repelling situations helps this age group people to be high in the stress management. The positive appraisal and reappraisal to deal with the stressful challenging situations offers opportunities to enhance quality of decisions.

High in emotional self awareness is quite understandable that the individual beliefs, attitudes and inner side of them tuned their self better. The individuals who understand the self can avoid the negative emotions and immediately return to favourable conditions.

High in emotional intelligence total than the other age groups due to the ability of the individuals to perceive emotions, uses them in thought, understands their meanings, and manages them better than others can.

The software engineers whose age was in between 26 to 30 are high in empathy, problem solving and reality testing dimensions of emotional intelligence. High in empathy may be due to the individual ability to aware of others' feelings, needs, and concerns, understanding and sympathising with theirs' emotions, and responding to theirs' unspoken feelings. The confidence and ability of the young software professional's to appraise and solvability of the problem makes them high in the problem solving dimension of emotional intelligence. Moreover the conscientious and disciplined nature of software engineers makes them to learn the capacity to generate alternatives and selection of choices while handling the issues and problems in the real life situations. It is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the age of the software engineers and emotional intelligence, whereas no relationship between the job satisfaction.

Hypothesis: "Length of service of software engineers has a significant influence on their emotional intelligence and job satisfaction"

From the Table – 2, it is observed that "F" values are significant for the stress management and emotional self-awareness dimensions of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total and not significant for the job satisfaction. Hence the hypothesis is rejected for both the dimensions. It is concluded that there no significant relationship between the experience of the software engineers with emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

The software engineers who have more than six years of experience in the information technology sector are high in emotional self-awareness dimension of emotional intelligence. It may be due to the ability to aware of the one's own feeling and intensity of the affect externally makes them to deal with the unconscious or automatic emotional expression. The software engineers who have four to six years of experience in the information technology sector are high in stress management dimension of emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence total. The ability of the individuals to cope up with the problems and difficulties experienced in adjustment processes in the stressful events in the work life makes them to be high than the other group of experienced people.

Table: 2 - Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction of Software Engineers Based On Their Length Of Service

	LENGTH OF SERVICE			F – value	Posthoc
	1 Mean (S.D)	2 Mean (S.D)	3 Mean (S.D)		
Job satisfaction	83.87 (5.51)	82.52 (5.47)	81.17 (5.42)	2.202	----
Emotional Intelligence dimensions					
Problem Solving	18.15 (2.31)	18.70 (2.55)	18.30 (1.99)	0.725	----
Stress Management	23.95 (3.04)	25.80 (2.16)	25.30 (1.73)	7.333[*]	2 Vs 3 Vs 1
Emotional Self Awareness	17.80 (2.02)	18.74 (1.73)	18.78 (2.13)	3.885[*]	3 Vs 2 Vs 1
Reality testing	18.59 (2.46)	19.22 (1.95)	18.04 (2.23)	2.263	----
Self Regard	26.79 (3.03)	27.37 (2.88)	27.65 (1.90)	1.018	----
Impulse Control	14.85 (2.30)	15.52 (2.00)	15.57 (1.75)	1.705	----
Flexibility	23.59 (3.13)	24.74 (2.43)	24.83 (2.50)	2.892	----
Assertiveness	18.00 (2.13)	18.39 (2.03)	18.30 (1.92)	0.516	----
Empathy	14.97 (2.44)	15.37 (1.70)	14.96 (2.16)	0.524	----
Inter Personal Relationship	20.82 (2.66)	21.32 (2.44)	22.09 (2.25)	2.176	----
EI_Total	197.51 (13.40)	205.17 (6.35)	203.83 (7.65)	7.847[*]	2 Vs 2 Vs 1

1. Less than 3 years - 61
2. 4 to 6 years - 46
3. Above 6 years - 23

* Significant at 0.05 level
NS Not Significant

Further, it is supported that from the studies of Bar-On (2001), Bar-On & Parker (2000), and Mayer et al (2000) that the higher levels of emotional intelligence are directly associated with better stress management. It is concluded that there is significant relationship between the stress management and emotional self-awareness dimensions of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total with the experience of software engineers.

Hypothesis: "Salary of software engineers has a significant influence on their emotional intelligence and job satisfaction"

From the Table – 3, it is observed that "F" value is significant only with the stress management, emotional self-awareness and flexibility dimensions of emotional intelligence along with emotional intelligence total. Hence the hypothesis is rejected for both the dimensions. It is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the salary of the software engineers with emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

From the table it is found that the software engineers who draws salary between Rs. 40001 and Rs. 50000 per month were high in stress management and emotional self-awareness dimension of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total. High in stress management dimension may be due to the awareness and practice of the stress management activities.

This helps them to manage the stress situations in the day to day work life. The one of the interesting outcome of the study is the ability individuals to identify the self-reported stress and avoid unnecessary stress, altered the situation, explained the reasons, and managed their time better by selecting the appropriate stress management activity.

Table: 3 - Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction of Software Engineers Based on Their Salary

	SALARY					F – value	Posthoc
	1 Mean (S.D)	2 Mean (S.D)	3 Mean (S.D)	4 Mean (S.D)	5 Mean (S.D)		
Job satisfaction	86.33 (2.99)	84.04 (5.40)	83.16 (5.47)	82.09 (5.64)	81.92 (5.75)	1.481	----
Emotional Intelligence dimensions							
Problem Solving	17.67 (2.66)	17.60 (1.94)	18.63 (2.56)	18.74 (2.39)	18.33 (2.22)	1.187	----
Stress Management	22.67 (3.50)	23.48 (3.08)	24.88 (2.83)	25.84 (2.180	25.00 (1.77)	4.558*	4 Vs 5 Vs 3 Vs 2 Vs 1
Emotional Self Awareness	17.67 (1.37)	17.24 (1.90)	18.21 (2.15)	18.93 (1.86)	18.58 (1.79)	3.392*	4 Vs 5 Vs 3 Vs 1 Vs 2
Reality	18.33 (1.21)	17.96 (2.51)	19.06 (2.35)	19.26 (1.99)	18.17 (2.39)	1.931	----
Self Regard	25.33 (2.07)	26.36 (2.77)	26.91 (2.81)	27.86 (3.06)	27.46 (2.28)	2.002	----
Impulse Control	14.17 (2.48)	14.92 (2.64)	15.09 (2.05)	15.40 (1.90)	15.63 (1.91)	0.811	----
Flexibility	21.67 (3.14)	22.76 (3.05)	24.69 (3.07)	24.49 (2.32)	25.25 (2.23)	4.413*	5 Vs 3 Vs 4 Vs 2 Vs 1
Assertiveness	17.67 (1.75)	17.60 (2.29)	18.28 (2.19)	18.65 (2.02)	18.00 (1.62)	1.236	----
Empathy	14.17 (2.31)	14.24 (2.37)	15.72 (2.03)	14.83 (1.98)	14.83 (1.83)	2.409	----
Inter Personal Relationship	21.17 (2.56)	20.32 (2.97)	21.06 (2.33)	21.63 (2.55)	21.67 (2.22)	1.290	----
EI_Total	190.50 (14.02)	192.48 (14.26)	202.53 (10.26)	206.23 (6.63)	202.92 (5.92)	10.085*	4 Vs 5 Vs 3 Vs 2 Vs 1

1. Less than Rs. 20,000 – 6
2. Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000 – 25
3. Rs.30,001 to Rs.40,000 – 32
4. Rs. 40, 001 to Rs. 50,000 – 43
5. Above Rs. 50,000 – 24

* Significant at 0.05 level
NS Not Significant

From the table it is found that the software engineer who draws salary more than Rs. 50000 per month were high in flexibility dimension of emotional intelligence. High in flexibility may due to the working conditions, competitive salaries, employment security and autonomy. Further, financial aspects especially salary is the most important variable which is the lifeblood to them. It is concluded that there is significant relationship between the salary of the software engineers and stress management, emotional self-awareness and flexibility dimensions of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total.

Hypothesis: "Occupational level of software engineers has a significant influence on their emotional intelligence and job satisfaction"

From the Table – 4, it is observed that "F" value is significant only with the flexibility, emotional self-awareness, and stress management dimensions of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total. Hence the hypothesis is rejected for both the dimensions. It is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the occupational level of the software engineers with emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

From the table it is found that the senior software engineers were high in stress management and emotional self-awareness dimension of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total. High in stress management may be due to their ability to influence events and persevere through challenges with confidence. This happens because of the awareness about a stressful situation, including how long it will last and what to expect, the easier it is to cope up.

Table: 4 - Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction of Software Engineers Based on Their Occupational Level

	OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL			F – value	Posthoc
	1 Mean (S.D)	2 Mean (S.D)	3 Mean (S.D)		
Job satisfaction	83.71 (5.42)	82.41 (5.51)	81.28 (5.81)	1.680	----
Emotional Intelligence dimensions					
Problem Solving	18.17 (2.33)	18.72 (2.59)	18.22 (1.63)	0.787	----
Stress Management	24.08 (3.02)	25.87 (2.10)	25.05 (1.66)	6.673*	2 Vs 3 Vs 1
Emotional Self Awareness	17.83 (2.01)	18.89 (1.74)	18.56 (2.12)	4.218*	2 Vs 3 Vs 1
Reality	18.67 (2.39)	19.17 (2.00)	17.72 (2.24)	2.741	----
Self Regard	26.83 (2.96)	27.43 (2.86)	27.56 (2.00)	0.841	----
Impulse Control	14.88 (2.34)	15.61 (1.79)	15.44 (1.92)	1.748	----
Flexibility	23.59 (3.15)	24.78 (2.24)	25.06 (2.53)	3.447*	3 Vs 2 Vs 1
Assertiveness	18.03 (2.21)	18.46 (1.95)	18.11 (1.64)	0.598	----
Empathy	15.06 (2.39)	15.35 (1.82)	14.67 (2.06)	0.678	----
Inter Personal Relationship	20.74 (2.58)	21.71 (2.59)	21.72 (1.99)	2.454	----
EI_Total	197.88 (13.13)	206.00 (6.25)	202.11 (6.90)	8.294*	2 Vs 3 Vs 1

1. Software engineers – 66
2. Sr. Software engineers – 46
3. Software Architect – 18

* Significant at 0.05 level
NS Not Significant

High in emotional self-awareness may be the ability to recognise emotions that they experience and understand the feelings associated with it and have the power to control them. High in emotional intelligence total may be due to the ability to cope up with the environmental demands and pressures by emotional recognition abilities.

From the above table it is found that the software architect were high in flexibility dimension of emotional intelligence. This may be due to the flexible working hours and flexible solutions to their problems, further this happens because of individuals' openness to change and being able to adapt quickly. It is concluded that there is significant relationship between the occupational level of the software engineers with flexibility, emotional self-awareness, and stress management dimensions of emotional intelligence along with the emotional intelligence total.

Hypothesis: "There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of software engineers"

From the Table - 5, it is found that the correlation co-efficient are not significant for stress management dimension of emotional intelligence. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that the emotional intelligence of software engineers have not significant impact on their job satisfaction.

The result of the correlation analysis shows that there is positive relationship between the stress management dimension of emotional intelligence and job satisfaction of the software engineers who works in the information technology sector. It is contrary to the findings of the Livingstone (2001), Muhammad (2006), and Hosseinian et al. (2008). However, many studies have not arrived at a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

Table: 5 - Emotional Intelligence Vs Job Satisfaction: Co-Relational Analysis

Emotional Intelligence Dimensions	Job Satisfaction
Problem Solving	0.099
Stress Management	-0.183*
Emotional Self Awareness	-0.076
Reality	0.049
Self Regard	-0.017
Impulse Control	0.000
Flexibility	0.089
Assertiveness	-0.072
Empathy	0.132
Inter Personal Relationship	-0.156
Emotional Intelligence Total	-0.032

*Significant at 5% level

Hendee (2002), Villard (2004), Millet (2008), and Casper (2007) came to the conclusion that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. It is concluded that the emotional intelligence of software engineers have not significant impact on their job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The main objective of this study has been to find the relationship between the emotional intelligence with job satisfaction among the software engineers who works in information technology sector. Few studies supported that there is significant relationship between the emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Carmeli (2003) states that people with high emotional intelligence are constantly in a good mood and that they experience a higher level of job satisfaction and well-being (in comparison with people with lower emotional intelligence). Busso (2003) concluded that there is a significant difference relationship between emotional intelligence and career performance as well as job satisfaction. Hasankhoei (2006) reported that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Gardner and Stough (2003) observed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

A probable rationale for such an inconsistency between the results could be attributed to the different measurement materials used for measuring emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. In most studies, emotional intelligence has been measured using Bar-On test, while the common test for measuring job satisfaction in the mentioned research studies is the Job Description Index (JDI). In this study the researcher had adopted the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. Another justification for the differences in the results could be that the population studied in different research has been different.

Future studies could be done to understand the specific targets of the information technology sector or software engineers tasks that would need emotional skills to be used to succeed. Because software engineers face substantial emotional situations, it will be immensely valuable to understand the mechanisms through which emotional intelligence skills are used by them to deal with the effects of those emotions.

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