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Emotional Intelligence and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the effect of training some aspects of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on job satisfaction and productivity of employees. The results can help organizations to realize human capabilities and the way to improve them by paying more attention to psychological issues. We used a quasi-experimental method using a pre-test and a post-test designed with control group and a four-month follow-up. Study population consists of employees of Marine Installations and Construction Company. Considering variables like age, education and job rank, we selected 28 employees who earned the lowest score for EI. They were then randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Each employee got job satisfaction and productivity questionnaires and their managers were given employee evaluation questionnaire. Then some aspects of EI were taught to the experimental group once a week for 10 sessions. Four months later, both groups were evaluated by managers. The results show that education did not increase employees' job satisfaction nor did it improve managers' evaluation. However, employees' productivity score after training sessions and managers' evaluation improved in the long run. The results reveal that training EI by further controlling the above-mentioned variables is effective and essential to improve human resources.

Key words: Training, emotional-intelligence, job satisfaction, productivity

INTRODUCTION

Organization leaders in the 21st century tend to provide educational facilities for their employees so that they improve their physical, psychological, emotional and mental capabilities (Ashkanasy *et al.*, 2002). That is why emotional aspect of employees should be emphasized in addition to cognitive aspect. EI can create a pleasant workplace and affect employees' job satisfaction, efficient management and organization development (Patra, 2004). EI, as a stress easer at work, has a positive effect on employees' productivity. Studies show that EI is extremely important in productivity and job satisfaction (Jordan *et al.*, 2002; Mallinger and Banks, 2003). Once directed correctly, emotions create assurance and commitment, which in turn increase job satisfaction and productivity (Cooper, 1998). Most people respond uncommonly when they are under stress. In these circumstances, their emotions override their mental performance. By developing EI, individuals learn to study their reactions and control their emotional patterns. This self-knowledge enables the individual not to let anger and other emotions interfere in their life. As people's knowledge increase, they will be more sensitive to signs that might disturb their intellectual performance. Gradual learning of skills to control and to respond correctly to

emotions, improves communication at workplace, increases productivity and decreases interpersonal problems (Caruso *et al.*, 2002). In general, in training EI, setting an effective emotional goal, choosing a suitable strategy to reach the goal, conducting the strategy effectively and the adjustment of emotion is important for the organization (Cote *et al.*, 2006).

Seligman (1990) found out that training some components of EI increases employees' productivity. Catholics Health Association did a survey of its 1200 members to recognize more efficient ones. The results showed that emotional abilities were their distinctive characteristics. Goleman (1998) showed salespeople of a national insurance company who had strong emotional skills sold \$ 60,000 more than the weak ones. Bellamy and Bellamy (2003), Sy *et al.* (2006), Wong and Law (2002) and Villard (2004) found the significant relationship between EI and job satisfaction and job performance. Jordan *et al.* (2002) showed EI was associated with job productivity.

Slaski and Cartwright (2003) studied the role of EI training and its implications for managing stress, mental health and performance. To eliminate Hawthorn effect, post-test was given 6 months after the training sessions ended. The results showed EI training significantly improved mental health and stress management, but did not affect productivity. Meanwhile, qualitative study of

productivity showed EI training was affective on worker productivity. They believed some emotional aspect did not affect factors which measured productivity. Ashkanasy *et al.* (2003) showed emotional response related to stress affects employees' performance. Gardner and Stough (2003) assessed the relationship between workplace, EI, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Emotional self-regulation and emotional control were the strongest predictors. Day and Carroll (2004) found a significant relationship between emotional perception and job performance but emotional management, emotional understanding and emotional complexity did not have a meaningful relationship with job performance. Luskin *et al.* (2005) selected four groups from 2 financial institutes to attend a training course of emotional intelligence. Their productivity and quality of life were measured before and after training. The results showed that their productivity increased 25% and their stress level decreased 29%. Sporrle and Whelp (2006) hypothesized adaptive emotions result from logical cognition and vice versa. Therefore, they used rational emotive behavior therapy to show how job satisfaction increases. Employees with higher EI can effectively recognize frustration and stress-related emotions and hence control them in order to reduce stress. Such employees can also realize their professional needs and control them, so their job satisfaction increases. These employees have the ability to control their emotions and have better relationship with others. Therefore, managers assess their performance more positively. Butler and Chinowsky (2006) studied the relationship between EI and organizational behavior in jobs that are constantly changing and found out that emotional knowledge, interpersonal skills and empathy are the most essential components of EI in organizational behavior. Amelang and Steinmayr (2006) studied the relationship between EI and different aspects of job performance and productivity in two groups. They found no significant relationship between those variables in both studies.

The present study aims to investigate the effect of training of some components of EI on job satisfaction and productivity of employees so that organizations realize human capabilities and ways to develop them by paying attention to psychological issues.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This quasi-experimental study was designed using a pre-test, a post-test with control group and a four-month follow-up. The study population was the employees of Marine Installations and Construction Company with the average age of 31 holding B.Sc. degree and of equal job rank. After administration of the Bar-On emotional intelligence in pre-test, 28 employees with the lowest

score were randomly assigned into two groups; experimental and control. Both groups filled out a job satisfaction questionnaire (JDI) and productivity questionnaire. At the same time, their managers filled out an employee evaluation form. Four months after their training course finished, one employee from the experimental group had left the company. Therefore, one employee was randomly checked off the control group. As a result, 13 people were left in each group. Ten 2 h training sessions were held to teach EI components such as self-knowledge, self-regulation, reality testing, stress tolerance, problem-solving, impulse control, empathy and communication.

Bar-On EI questionnaire has 90 items, 5 scales and 15 subscales (Bar-On and Parker, 2000). Its components are as follows: (1) Intrapersonal skills: emotional self-knowledge, assertiveness, self-respect, self actualization and independence, (2) Interpersonal skills: interpersonal relations, social responsibility and empathy, (3) Adjustment: problem-solving, reality testing, flexibility, (4) Impulsivity control: stress tolerance, Impulse control and (5) General mood: happiness, optimism. Answers are set in a 5-degree Lickert scale. The range of total scores is from 60 to 450 and for each component from 6 to 30.

Job satisfaction questionnaire (JDI) was designed by Smith *et al.* (1969). It has 71 items and 5 components, which are: job nature, supervisor, salary, promotion and coworkers. Job interest and 4 questions were added to it later. Answers are set in a 3-degree Lickert scale.

Productivity questionnaire has 25 items and 7 components; answers are set in a 5-degree Lickert scale. The range of total score is between 25 and 125.

Employee evaluation: To evaluate employees' performance, we used employee evaluation sheet, which was designed for the employees of that company. Since it was based on company needs, the researchers used it without any modification. The questionnaire has 15 components: work ethics, amount of work, work quality, following rules, commitment to given duties, team work morale, eagerness to increase skills, innovation, following organizational hierarchy, flexibility, responsibility, ability to analyze and diagnose related problem, attempt to reduce expenditure, communication skills and risk taking behavior. Answers are set in a 10-grade Lickert scale. Therefore, the lowest total score is 15 and the highest is 150. The questionnaire has face validity and is used every year for employees' promotion.

To analyze the data, the mean differences scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test were designed for experimental and control groups and t-test for independent groups was used to find out the differences between two groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean age was 30.7 with 5.1 SD years for the experimental and 31.4 with 5.23 SD years for the control group. Sixty four percent were male and 36% female. As shown in Table 1, there is a significant difference between the two groups in regard with EI and productivity but not with satisfaction scores.

As it is shown, there is no significant difference between score mean differences of managers' evaluation before and after training in both groups. However, results at follow-up show a meaningful difference with those before training ($p < 0.01$) (Table 2).

The results show that training some components of EI does not affect job satisfaction of employees while their EI and productivity mean scores are significantly different when we compare both groups at pre and post-test. Meanwhile, Wong and Law (2002), Bellamy and Bellamy (2003), Gardner and Stough (2003), Villard (2004) and Sy *et al.* (2006) found a significant relationship between EI and job satisfaction. The difference in results may lie firstly on the fact that both groups had a high score on job satisfaction and secondly, that honest response of the experimental group and the mistrust of the control group at pre-test caused the effect of training to be less prominent i.e., their attitude changed at post-test.

Furthermore, integrating one's acquisition into his life takes more time. Attending training sessions and being away from workplace may affect managers' and coworkers' attitude and also job satisfaction. On the other hand, however, employees' productivity increased after training session which is in agreement with findings of Jordan *et al.* (2002) and Luskin *et al.* (2005).

In addition, Seligman (1990), researchers at Catholic Health Association (1994), Goleman (1998) and Amelang and Steinmayr (2006) showed people with more

productivity had better emotional skills. The present study found the same results. As productivity mean stepping ahead with interest and satisfaction without force or fear of punishment through the path to reach higher productivity and efficiency. To move through this path, one needs to have knowledge of cognitive skills plus emotional skills such as emotional self-knowledge, self-regulation, effective communication, motivation and self-actualization. Without question, one's improvement in emotional skills can affect one's behavior because his self-image improves as a result of self-knowledge. Also training of self-regulation, impulse control and some other components of EI increase productivity.

This study showed training some components of EI does not affect managers' evaluation of employees. Jordan *et al.* (2002) and Luskin *et al.* (2005) showed the improvement of productivity as a result of training EI components but they measured productivity from employees' point of view. Maybe managers did not notice employees' improvement. Slaski and Cartwright (2003) collected data 6 months later and showed that managers noticed employees' improved quality of work, but not amount of work. That is what we found in this study. The results of this study show 4 months after the last training session, there is a meaningful difference between managers' evaluation of the experimental and that of the control group. This proves the need for a more precise evaluation method because the improvement someone feels in himself may not be perceived through a questionnaire by others. Furthermore, the members of the experimental group were not present at office regularly and did not attend meetings during the training session, which could affect a managers' evaluation. So, it is important to follow up the effects of training especially from managers' point of view in the long run.

Table 1: Mean score difference of emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and productivity of pre and post-test in experimental and control groups

Variables	Groups	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Dif.	t-value
		M	SD	M	SD		
Emotional intelligence	Experimental	330.00	11.50	401.50	34.98	71.50	19.18**
	Control	318.71	28.02	318.14	44.55	-0.57	
Job satisfaction	Experimental	10.52	5.52	11.22	5.29	0.70	1.52
	Control	10.99	5.52	11.00	6.10	0.01	
Productivity	Experimental	79.21	17.13	107.57	13.93	28.36	10.49**
	Control	80.71	16.35	73.00	14.58	-7.71	

** : $p < 0.01$

Table 2: Managers' evaluation means score of experimental and control groups before and after training and at follow-up

Variables	Groups	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Dif.	t-value
		M	SD	M	SD		
Managers' evaluation before and after training	Experimental	99.07	27.28	97.00	29.37	-2.07	0.26
	Control	105.07	21.51	108.79	20.02	-3.72	
Managers' evaluation at follow-up	Experimental	97.54	31.15	128.69	13.24	31.15	4.45**
	Control	109.77	21.72	111.85	18.40	2.08	

** : $p < 0.01$

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the results of this study showed the importance of psychological issues, especially emotional intelligence and job satisfaction in productivity. This is accomplished by organizing training courses for employees and then for managers.

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