
A Holistic Approach for Developing Emotional Intelligence at Workplace

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INTRODUCTION

The pejorative view of emotions as antithesis during the industrial revolution and attempts to control it in work place has ended up as a futile exercise. It is sensible that employees are bound to carry their emotional sides along with them into the office. Organizational researches have given less emphasis to the concern for employee's well-being, unless it is related to their performance (Fox and Spector, 2002). But no organizational studies can be comprehensive without considering the influence employee's emotional aspects on their workplace attitudes and behavior. Instead of exploitation of the employee's emotion in terms of emotional labor for organizational benefits, our study attempts to focus on socialization of employee's emotions to develop their Emotional Intelligence (EI) for better Quality of Working Life (QWL) so as to benefit both employees as well as the organization in a long run.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The objective of the study firstly is to highlight the importance of emotions in workplace.
- The second objective is to develop a framework representing the association between employee's Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Quality of Working Life (QWL), as a holistic approach.

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Research Method

An extensive review of research papers was done from various national and international journals to accumulate different authors' concepts and current knowledge on the positive influence of emotions in employee's workplace attitudes and behaviors. All the available information has been grouped together to develop an EI-QWL framework, represented in a diagrammatic way.

ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN WORKPLACE

Emotions are contagious and a single person can influence the emotional tone of a group by modeling (Cherniss, 2001). This understanding of emotions gives us the rationality that emotions are omnipresent and obviously cannot be excluded from the workplace. All moments of frustration or joy, grief or fear, to an enduring sense of dissatisfaction or commitment, the experience of work is saturated with emotions. Therefore we need a holistic conception for emotional appreciation at work.

Locke (1969), states that "job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job". It is reported that, affective (emotion related) response to job/organization, develops affective commitment and job satisfaction (Saari and Judge, 2004 and Adeyemo, 2007), which increases the employee performance (Jayan, 2006) and reduces stress (Fineman, 1996) turnover rate (Hareli and Tzafrir, 2006). Emotional management modifies the attitudes and behaviors of the employees such as increased trust and loyalty and higher rates of organizational citizenship behavior (Tzafrir *et al.*, 2004). Emotional Intelligence helps in better handling of personal, emotional and social abilities that influences one's skills to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures (BarOn 2002). Emotionally intelligent individuals can perceive, understand and regulate the emotions of self and others, thus making emotional intelligence a significant factor for enhancing interpersonal and intrapersonal effectiveness (Mayer *et al.*, 2000).

Therefore this study suggests a holistic approach for managing emotions in intelligent ways in the work place, to determine better relationship management, stress management and management of other human factors in work atmosphere and to contribute for the improvement of employee's workplace attitudes and behavior for improving their perceptions on quality of working life.

HOLISTIC APPROACH: UNDERSTANDING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EI AND QWL

Emotional intelligence is an individual parameter, whereas quality of working life is an organizational parameter, therefore to understand the association between these two, it is essential to explore both the person and the environment together to understand the person-environment transaction between them (Briner, 1999) and thereby this study explores the connection between the both.

EI-QWL Framework

Thus from the above discussion, an EI-QWL framework is developed based on the employee perspective to streamline his/her emotions within the organizational parameters for enhancing one's perceived QWL. Therefore a process oriented view of EI-QWL framework can be stated in four propositions.

Socialization of emotions in organizational settings:

The four major procedures for socializing emotions in the organizational settings are

- Normalizing- diffusing and reframing of negative emotions
- Buffering- encapsulation and segregation of negative emotions
- Prescribing- experiencing and expressing the positive emotions
- Neutralizing- preventing and substituting the negative emotions (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995; Ashforth and Kreiner 2002)

Emotional behaviors and inner feelings are learned as a part of organizational and occupational socialization processes, by the influence of social norms and cultural prescriptive in organizations. Similarly effective leader can model the emotional display to influence the affective states of the organization as a whole through emotional contagion (Lewis, 2000). On the basis of mood contagion theory leaders can positively influence their subordinates (Sy *et al.*, 2005). So the organizational culture and leadership play an important role in defining the behavior of the organizational members.

Developing emotional intelligence

Socialization of emotions leads to personal and social development by concentrating on the four EI domains of

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Social-management. (Goleman, 2001)

Improving personality traits

EI development brings about necessary positive modifications in one's personality traits for emotional management by the four processes of

- Emotional adaption
- Emotional resilience
- Emotional stability
- Emotional tolerance. (Conrad and Witte, 1994)

Enhancing Interpersonal and intrapersonal effectiveness

Positive modifications in the personality traits contributes for enhancing the effectiveness of the employee in terms of addressing his/her

- Job satisfaction
- Affective commitment
- Stress management
- Performance
- Quality of relationship
- Organizational citizenship behavior (Fineman, 1996; Saari and Judge, 2004; Tzafirir., 2004; Jayan, 2006; Adeyemo, 2007; Lopez and Capehart, 2009)

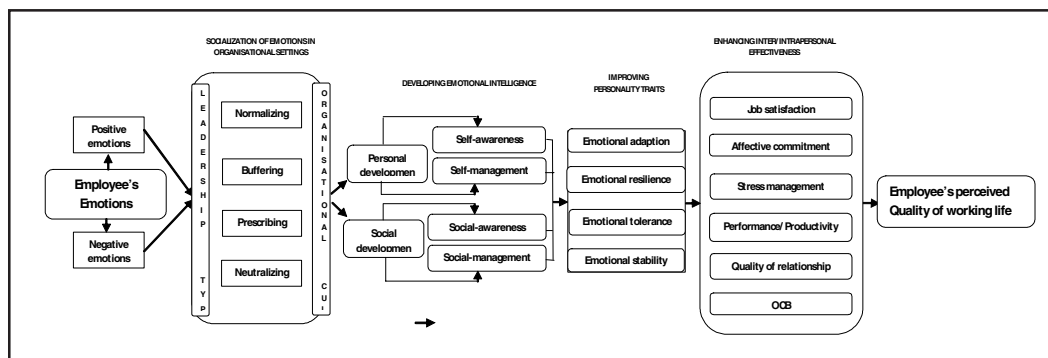


FIGURE 1: HOLISTIC APPROACH – UNDERSTANDING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN EI AND QWL

According to this framework, employees carry their emotions into the organization, where it should be managed rightly by the process of emotional socialization, which is influenced by the organizational parameters like leadership quality and organizational culture. This can promote personal and social development for better awareness and management of self and others, leading to the development of one's emotional intelligence. This in turn can positively modify his/her personality traits, which can influence the employee's workplace attitudes and behaviors in terms of job satisfaction, affective commitment, stress management, performance, quality of relationship and organizational citizenship behavior. This can ultimately bring about considerable impact on the employee's perceived quality of working life.

CONCLUSION

The EI-QWL framework developed tries to outline the process by which the employees can be made to feel comfortable with the system (person-organizational fit), which will automatically accomplish higher perceived quality of working life among the employees. The study also calls for HRD intervention for the development of appropriate socialization techniques to increasing the employees EI and QWL, through inculcating supportive work culture and leadership style.

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