

Documenting the Impact of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

OVERVIEW

Since its first introduction, the concept of Emotional Intelligence has interested business professionals and academics alike. The objective has been to identify those abilities that account for the difference between star performers and average performers and the determine how to develop those abilities. A study of leaders at Johnson & Johnson was the first rigorous effort in this area, but much research has been conducted since.

This paper gathers together summaries of research in the area of emotional intelligence including a look at Behavioral EQ in leadership, recruiting and sales.

Because the research is ever-developing, readers are encouraged to periodically visit www.behavioraleq.com and the [Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations](http://www.eiconsortium.org) (<http://www.eiconsortium.org>) for the latest information.

EQ skills across cultures and different occupations

Mount, G. (2006). The role of emotional intelligence in developing international business capability: EI provides traction. In Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work: Current research evidence with individuals and groups. Druskat, V. Sala, F. & Mount, G. (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum.

This was an in-depth field study of the role of EQ in five work roles in a major international petroleum company with extensive international operations. The work roles were corporate strategist, international business developer, international negotiator, international business services manager, and international asset construction project manager. This study is notable because the international petroleum industry does not traditionally place value on employee skills that are not technical or financial.

Results showed that 10 core skills differentiated superior from average performers across the five work roles. Seven of these are EQ skills, including self-confidence, self-control, and empathy.

The author proposed that there is an interaction between EQ and IQ (cognitive intelligence). Specifically, he believes the EQ skills create an environment that enables IQ and technical knowledge to be used effectively (traction), resulting in an organizational capability to achieve international business success.

Sala, F. (2006). The international business case: Emotional intelligence skills and important business outcomes. In Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work: Current research evidence with individuals and groups. Druskat, V. Sala, F. & Mount, G. (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum.

The author conducted three field studies relating EQ to work performance in (1) South African insurance call center employees, (2) sales agents in the United Kingdom, and (3) business school graduates from Istanbul University in Turkey, 11 years after their graduation. In each study, performance and outcome measures were significantly correlated with EQ skills. Notably, this was true across cultures and job types.

Behavioral EQ becomes more important over the course of a career

Cavallo, K. & Brienza, D. (2001). Emotional competence and leadership excellence at Johnson & Johnson: The emotional intelligence and leadership study.

A study was conducted on 358 managers across the Johnson & Johnson Consumer & Personal Care Group (JJC&PC Group) globally to assess if there are specific leadership skills that distinguish high performers from average performers. More than 1,400 employees took part in a multi-rater survey that measured a variety of skills associated with leadership performance including those commonly referred to as Emotional Intelligence. Results showed that the highest performing managers have significantly more “emotional competence” than other managers.

Sala, F. (2001). It's lonely at the top: Executive's emotional intelligence self (mis) perceptions.

The author examined over 1,000 individuals from a variety of industries and functions (e.g., finance, human resources, research and development, sales, marketing, technical, manufacturing, executive/general management, etc.). Participants were divided by job level, ranging from entry level individual contributor to senior level manager (six levels were examined). Participants were evaluated using the multi-rater version of the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI).

Results showed that higher level participants consistently rated themselves higher than others, and that lower level participants were more likely to see themselves as others see them. The results of this study demonstrate that higher-level employees are more likely to have an inflated view of their emotional intelligence skills and less congruence with the perceptions of others who work with them often and know them well than lower-level employees. Previous research has established that high performing managers tend to have more accurate self-perceptions. That is, high-performing individuals' self-perceptions tend to match the perceptions/ratings of others. Therefore, helping managers and executives better understand how they are perceived by others can have significant implications for performance improvement.

Goleman, D. 2010 Performance Reviews: It's Not Only What You Say, But How You Say It.

EQ pioneer Daniel Goleman discusses research into performance reviews which found that the way feedback is presented is more influential than the content of the feedback. The research found that negative feedback when presented in a warm, up-beat tone was better received than positive feedback presented in a cold tone.

Behavioral EQ is important for those in non-leadership positions

Elfenbein, H. (2006). Team emotional intelligence: What it can mean and how it can affect performance. In Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work: Current research evidence with individuals and groups. Druskat, V. Sala, F. & Mount, G. (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum.

The author conducted two studies, one that examined EQ as an individual resource that team members bring to a team, and the second examined EQ as patterns of interaction within a team. These studies found that teams with members scoring high in EQ, measured as emotion recognition in this case, performed better than teams whose members had lower EQ. Further, teams with similar levels of EQ performed better than teams whose members had variable levels of EQ.

Joseph, D. L., & Newman, D. A. (2010). Emotional intelligence: An integrative meta-analysis and cascading model. Journal of Applied Psychology, 95(1), 54-78.

This is a comprehensive meta-analysis of research on emotional intelligence. It shows that EQ is related to work performance for people at varying levels within organizations. Notably, it finds that the behavioral skills (e.g., self-control, conscientiousness) are most relevant for performance, versus the emotional skills (e.g., self-awareness, emotion perception).

Predicting the difference between star and average performers in military recruiting

Bar-On, R., Handley, R., & Fund, S. (2006). The impact of emotional intelligence on performance. In Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work: Current research evidence with individuals and groups. Druskat, V. Sala, F. & Mount, G. (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum.

This study reports results from research with the United States Air Force (USAF). In the USAF, groups of recruiters were broken into high performers (exceeded 100% of their annual recruitment quotas) and low performers (met less than 80% of their quotas). High performers had significantly higher emotional intelligence scores than low performers. Prior to this study, the USAF was losing \$3 million per year due to recruitment mismatches. After one year of using an EQ screening tool for hiring recruiters, the USAF cut financial losses by 92%, or \$2,760,000. A more comprehensive study within the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) showed similar results, relating EQ to performance among soldiers, soldiers chosen for elite flying units, and leadership potential.

Behavioral EQ can be learned and developed

Cherniss, C., Goleman, D., Emmerling, R., Cowan, K., & Adler, M. (1998). Guidelines for best practice.

This report presents 22 guidelines that represent best practices about how to promote emotional intelligence in the workplace. They apply to any development effort in which social and emotional learning is a goal. This would include most management and executive development efforts as well as training in supervisory skills, diversity, teamwork, leadership, conflict management, stress management, sales, customer relations, etc.

These guidelines are based on an exhaustive review of the research literature in training and development, counseling and psychotherapy, and behavior change. The guidelines are additive and synergistic; to be effective, social and emotional learning experiences need not adhere to all of these guidelines, but the chances for success increase with each one that is followed.

Sala, F. (2002). Do programs designed to increase emotional intelligence at work – work?

Two samples participated in a Mastering Emotional Intelligence (MEI) workshop. Sample 1 consisted of 20 participants who were assessed twice on a measure of emotional intelligence, with 8 months between assessments. Half of these participants (10) were Brazilian managers from a large consumer retail organization, undergoing the training as part of a developmental process. The remaining 10 participants were Brazilian consultants from a global HR consulting firm, attending the same training session to familiarize themselves with the MEI program. Sample 2 consisted of 19 participants from a large U.S. government accounting organization, with 14 months between assessments.

Although limited in its scope due to a small sample size and lack of control groups, this study found significant increases in EQ scores after participants completed the EQ workshop.

Cherniss, C., Grimm, L.G., & Liautaud, J.P. (2010). Process-designed training: A new approach for helping leaders develop emotional and social competence. Journal of Management Development, 29(5), 413-431.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of an EQ leadership development program. The study was unique in utilizing a random assignment control group design. Participants were 162 managers from nine different companies. There were nine different groups with nine managers in each group. Each group was required to follow the identical process. The outcome measure was the multi-rater Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI). Outcome data were collected before the program started, one year later, and two years later. Results indicated, that after two years, the intervention group had improved more than the controls on all ECI variables.

EQ Linked to critical business measures and individual success

Bar-On, R., Handley, R., & Fund, S. (2006). The impact of emotional intelligence on performance. In Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work: Current research evidence with individuals and groups. Druskat, V. Sala, F. & Mount, G. (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum.

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Intelligence (IQ) and technical skills are often entry level requirements

Mount, G. (2006). The role of emotional intelligence in developing international business capability: EI provides traction. In Linking emotional intelligence and performance at work: Current research evidence with individuals and groups. Druskat, V. Sala, F. & Mount, G. (eds.). Lawrence Erlbaum.

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