

Recruiting the best: using Emotional Intelligence as a selection criteria.

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Every business person knows a story about a highly intelligent, highly skilled executive who was promoted into a leadership position only to fail at the job. And they also know a story about someone with solid-but not extraordinary-intellectual abilities and technical skills who was promoted into a similar position and then soared (Goleman 1998, p.93).

Many libraries have encountered this experience. Highly intelligent, highly skilled individuals were recruited but some of them were significantly less than successful as leaders. This paper will discuss a novel approach to be taken in recruiting the new staff to libraries at executive level who will not only be skillful and intelligent but also will be successful leaders.

Introduction

Right leadership is believed to have a strong influence on the perceptions and attitudes of the employees towards the organization which is defined as organizational Culture (Momeni 2009)). There is also a strong association between the leader's ability to arouse the motivation of the employees by appealing to human needs for achievement, affiliation and power. Business organizations try to achieve a favourable organizational culture because it has been proved that it decreases cost of turnover and employees' resistance to change and improves quality and turnover (Ayers 2005). For instance, research has proved that between 1990 and 2000 the 100 best US public companies rated as best places to work realized 70% higher returns than the other companies (Goleman et.al 2001). They argue that such returns are influenced one third by a positive organizational Culture and Chen et.al (1998) also argue that 90% of the business success is attributed to the organizational culture of the company.

While organizational culture is considered as a significant factor in the company returns, *feelings of employees about the management* is seen as the main facet that creates an improved feeling about the organizational culture (Lyman 2003). On these ground the organizational leaders are expected to make a serious commitment to develop a positive attitudes towards the management by the employees in order to develop a positive organizational culture. In this endeavour, the leaders' mood and behaviours are the most influential in affecting the employees. Effective managers with *appropriate moods and behaviours* who can create positive organizational cultures conducive for high returns are a vital asset for any business organisation. This *appropriate moods and behaviours* were defined as emotional intelligence (Salovey and Mayer 1990). They concluded that smart decision-making requires more than the intellect as measured by traditional IQ.

This leads us to another major drive for increasing recognition of emotional intelligence - the failure of IQ alone to account sufficiently for differences in success levels in individuals in both education and organizational contexts. When IQ test scores were correlated with how well people performed in their

careers, analyses proved that the difference that IQ accounts for no higher than 10% and as low as 4%. For example in a 40 year longitudinal study of 450 boys in Massachusetts, IQ had little relation to their work or rest of their lives. The biggest difference was made by their emotional abilities (Sternberg 1996). Cherniss (2000) also mentions a study of 80 science PhDs which proved that their social and emotional capabilities were four time more important than IQ in determining their professional success and prestige. However it is does not mean that the cognitive ability of individuals is irrelevant for success but that cognitive and non-cognitive abilities are very much related.

Contemporary libraries are not different from business organizations as far the organisational culture is concerned. Librarians, the organizational leaders of the libraries are expected to make a serious commitment to develop positive attitudes towards the management by the employees in order to develop a positive organizational culture. At the same time Librarians are expected to develop a positive attitude among the Chief Executives, Funding bodies and the user communities in order to develop an optimistic work environment for the library staff. Effective librarians with *appropriate moods and behaviours* who can create positive organizational cultures conducive for high returns are a vital asset for any library and emotional intelligence therefore cannot be ignored in recruiting future leaders of the libraries.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence is “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s own thinking and actions.” (Salovey and Mayer 1990, p.189).

Origin of studies on emotional intelligence can be traced back to John Mayer and Peter Salovey who invented the whole field according to Goleman (2005). Later Goleman adopting the work of Solvey and Mayer (1990), published an international best seller “Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ” (1995) which really brought the concept of emotional intelligence to the world. This was followed by his “Working with Emotional Intelligence” (1998).

There are several theoretical definitions of emotional intelligence (Bar-On 1997, Goleman 1995, 1998a, Meyer et.al 2000) but they all share several conceptual underpinnings which include an awareness of one’s own emotions and of others’ emotions, an understanding of the emotions and the ability to manage emotions of self and others.

However, Cherniss (2000) comments that the suggestion “emotional intelligence is important for success” is simplistic and misleading. Goleman (1998) and Meyer et.al (1998) also agree that emotional intelligence is not a strong predictor for job performance but it provides the bedrock for competences that are. Goleman (1998) further clarified this making a difference between *emotional intelligence* and *emotional competencies*. Emotional competencies are personal and social skills that lead to superior performance in the world of work and a certain level of emotional intelligence is necessary to learn the emotional competencies. Goleman (1998) discussed extensively five emotional competencies;

- *Self awareness* – knowing what we are feeling in the moment and using those preferences to guide our decision making.
- *Self regulation* – handling our emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand
- *Motivation* – using our deepest preferences to move and guide us towards our goals, to help us take initiative and strive to improve and to preserve in the face of setbacks and frustrations.

- *Empathy* - sensing what people are feeling, being able to take their perspectives and cultivating rapport and attunement with a broad diversity of people.
- *Social skills* – handling emotions in relationships well and accurately reading social situations and networks.(Goleman 1998 p.318)

Goleman (1998) further identified 25 related competencies that help one to identify the existence of particular competencies and these are depicted in Appendix 1 for further clarification. Carrochi et. al (2001) too agreed that emotional intelligence consists of four under mentioned branches of mental abilities similar to that of Goleman (1998);

- *Emotional perception and expression* – the ability to accurately assess and respond to emotions in oneself and others
- *Emotional facilitation of thought* – the ability to accurately associate emotions to other sensations such as colours and textures.
- *Emotional understanding* – the ability to analyse emotions in to parts, understand the transition from one feeling to another and understand complex feelings in social situations.
- *Emotional management* – the ability to manage feelings in oneself and others (Ciarrochi et.al 2001).

Bar-On et.al (2002) also presented a similar set of competencies after a factor analysis of a survey which involved over 4000 people;

- *Optimism* – the ability to be positive and look at the brighter side of the life.
- *Self actualization* – the ability and drive to achieve goals and actualize one's potential.
- *Happiness* – the ability to feel content with oneself, others and life in general.
- *Independence* - the ability to be self-reliant and free of emotional dependency on others.
- *Social responsibility* – the ability to identify with and feel part of one's social group (Bar-On et.al 2002).

Application of Emotional Intelligence

Since early 1990 from which emotional intelligence started receiving attention of the psychologists and management trainers a wide range of research proving a positive relationship between high emotional intelligence scores and effective performance of leaders has been conducted. Goleman (1998) established after analysing 188 companies that emotional intelligence as twice as important for excellent performance as technical skills or cognitive abilities. He also established that higher the rank of the star leader more emotional intelligence capabilities showed up as the reason for his/her effectiveness. Mendell and Pherwani (2003) used 32 managers in northeastern section of USA and established that transformational leadership style of managers could be predicted from their emotional intelligence scores. Considering the appropriateness of transformational leadership style over the transactional leadership style and the research findings that prove organizations with transformational leaders are not only better at handling change but are also more effective and profitable (Bass 1985 and 1997, Hater and Bass 1988, Keller 1995, Seltzer and Bass 1990) Mendell and Pherwani (2003) concluded that emotional intelligence measures would be valuable tools in hiring, promotion and development of organizational leaders. Kerr et.al (2006) studied the relationship between EI of managers and the subordinate ratings of leadership effectiveness

using 38 supervisors and 1258 subordinates in a British manufacturing organization. The findings established that individual's emotional intelligence is a key determinant of effective leadership and the employee perceptions of supervisor effectiveness are strongly related to the emotional intelligence of supervisor. Based on the findings they suggest that manager's level of emotional intelligence need to be included in the recruitment, selection and training process of managerial personnel. Momeni (2009) using 30 managers and 140 others from car manufacturing industry in Iran confirmed that higher a manager's emotional intelligence, the better the manager's organizational climate and recommends that organizations should focus on emotional intelligence when recruiting especially the managers. Stein et.al. (2009) used 180 executives of an executive mentoring organisation to study the emotional intelligence of leaders and the results showed that the top executives differed significantly from the normative population on the EQ-I and executives who possessed high levels of emotional intelligence were more likely to generate high profits in their companies. Considering these research findings and also the failures of highly trained executives with analytical minds recruited by the company in previous occasions to become successful leader I strongly recommend that the company considers adding an assessment of the emotional intelligence of the future managers recruited to the company.

There is a plethora of other evidence that prove the positive relationship between the emotional intelligence and business success. Yet, literature on emotional intelligence in the library context is scanty and does not indicate any existence before 2000. Eidson (2000) has discussed the significance of EI for the successful performance of Reference Librarians. While Hopper (2005) established that EI is a relevant tool for characterizing effective library leaders, Hernon and Rossiter (2006) have investigated the recruitment efforts to hire staff with EI skills. Importance of EI skills for mid-level managers has been discussed by Kreitz (2009). Both Porter (2010) and Maxwell (2010) have proved that EI helped them to perform well as library managers and Schachter (2009) has suggested that EI can be learned and transferred to employees by the library managers. However these papers indicate that application of EI in the library domain is still to be substantiated with more empirical research.

Measurement of EI

If emotional intelligence is important and the researchers recommend that it should be tested as recruitment criteria the question of how to assess and measure the emotional intelligence arises. There are two prominent models of emotional intelligence measurements; the ability-based model and skills-based model. Ability-based models focus exclusively on cognitive aptitudes that reflect the ability to process emotional information. The skills-based incorporate a diverse range of abilities, behaviours and personal traits within the emotional intelligence framework. This is also referred to as mixed models (Kerr et.al 2006).

Daus and Ashkanasy (2005) further refined the different emotional intelligence measurement models in to three streams. Stream 1 measures emotional intelligence by rating an individual's ability to perform emotional intelligent related tasks. Stream 2 models also measure the same abilities but they adopt a self or peer report format. Stream 3 comprises the broader mixed models that contain variables beyond what is meant by emotion or intelligence or what reasonable people would infer from the phrase Emotional Intelligence." (Mayer et.al. 2000 p. 415). They also adopt a self or peer report format.

The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence (CREI) ¹ lists a range of measures which are indicated below and provides a brief status report of the validity of each of these methods.

1. Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory - EQ-I (Bar-On 2006)

¹ <http://www.eiconsortium.org>

2. The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) (Petrides, K. V. & Furnham, A. 2003).
3. Emotional & Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) (Goleman 1998)
4. Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Genos EI) (Palmer and Stough 2001)
5. Group Emotional Competence (GEC) (Koman and Wolff 2008)
6. Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (Mayer et.al 2003)
7. The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et.al.1998)
8. Work Group Emotional Intelligence Profile (WEIP) (Jordan et.al 2002)
9. Wong's Emotional Intelligence Scale (WEIS) (Wong 2007)

Nevertheless, EQ-i of Bar-On (1997), MSCEIT of Meyer et.al (2002) and ESCI -360 of Goleman (1998) are the more frequently used than the others. There are evidence of using MSCEIT (research of Kerr et.al.2005), EQ-i (research of Mendell and Pherwani (2003) and Stein (2009)) and ECI-360 (research of Momeni 2009) measurements in some of the above quoted empirical research. However ECI-360 or ESCI of Goleman (1998) is not allowed to be used for hiring people. As Bar-On (2006) explains the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) is the first scientifically validated and most widely used Emotional Intelligence assessment in the world². Based on more than 20 years of research worldwide, the EQ-i examines an individual's social and emotional strengths and weaknesses. More information and the technical manual can be obtained on-line through this web site but at a price. If anyone is keen to measure their Emotional Intelligence an online test is available at <http://www.queendom.com/tests> (Accessed on 17.02.2011). This test consists of 146 multiple choice type questions which will take about one hour to complete. At the end scores of test will be given with a brief analysis and the full analysis is available for a price.

Conclusion

In this paper the concept of Emotional Intelligence and how it has become important in the library domain were discussed using a considerable amount of evidence from business domain. This should lead the policy makers and senior executives in the profession to understand how significant it is for the library to have emotionally intelligent library leaders who can develop a positive organizational culture which leads to higher turnover. Preceding sections also discussed what measures are available to assess emotional intelligence and how they can be accessed. It is expected that with this information and skilful application, the recruitment of the new library leaders would be a productive endeavour for any organization.

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² Early versions of the EQ-i were completed by 2,868 subjects in six countries. In addition to providing cross-cultural norms for the inventory, this preliminary piloting of the inventory was important for item selection and modification, continued scale development and validation and establishing the final response format.

The final 133-item version of the EQ-i boasts a normative database of nearly 4,000 participants, ranging widely in age and ethnicity. Collecting normative data is an important part of test development. Norms establish a baseline against which all subsequent results are compared, and they enable the test developer to capture the characteristics of an 'average' respondent. Norms indicate the average performance on a test and the frequency of deviation above and below the average. The larger and more representative the normative database, the more accurate and indicative the results (Bar-On 2006).

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Appendix 1

The Emotional Competence Framework

Personal Competence

These competencies determine how we manage ourselves.

Self Awareness (Knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions)

- Emotional awareness: Recognising one's emotions and their effects.
- Accurate self-assessment: Knowing one's strengths and limits
- Self-Confidence: A strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities.

Self-Regulation (Managing one's internal states, impulses and resources)

- Self-control: Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check.
- Trustworthiness: Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity
- Conscientiousness: taking responsibility for personal performance
- Adaptability: Flexibility in handling change
- Innovation: Being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches and new information

Motivation (Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals)

- Achievement drives: striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence
- Commitment: Aligning with goals of the group or organization
- Initiative: Readiness to act on opportunities
- Optimism: Persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks

Social Competence

These competencies determine how we handle relationships

Empathy (Awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns)

- Understanding others: Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns
- Developing others: Sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities
- Service orientation; Anticipating, recognizing and meeting customers' needs
- Leveraging diversity: Cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people.
- Political awareness: Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationship

Social Skills (Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others)

- Influence: Wielding effective tactics for persuasion
- Communication: Listening openly and sending convincing messages
- Conflict management: negotiating and resolving disagreements
- Leadership: Inspiring and guiding individuals and groups
- Change catalyst: Initiating or managing change
- Building bonds: Nurturing instrumental relationships
- Collaboration and cooperation: Working with others towards shared goals
- Team capabilities: Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

(Goleman 1998, p. 26-27)