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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS AN EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENHANCEMENT OF EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence skills and competencies are ways for creating and maintaining a healthy and productive educational climate. To achieve the educational aspirations of the 21st century, there is an increasing need to develop healthy, responsible, and productive students that ultimately will lead to good placements. Nowadays institutes of higher learning deliver programmes for generic skills but a meagre amount of attempt is seen in developing skills that are explicitly aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence, which is most sought by global employers. In addition to having a pool of skills relevant to a career field, employers are seen looking for candidates with sound emotional balance and intelligence when hiring. The transition phase from higher education to work life often results in challenges for graduates as they are ill prepared for the reality of employment and hence employability. In order to do justice with all these roles emotional intelligence are taken care of, it will ultimately result in producing quality output i.e. students and finally the employability. The current scenario potentially represents a notable gap in skills among graduates. The research understudy would offer potential solutions to reduce this gap through proper educational strategy and efforts in the area of enhancement of employability of graduates.

KEYWORDS

employability, education, emotional intelligence, graduates, employers.

INTRODUCTION

Calculation is an enlightening experience that provides an understanding of something. It is through education which gives us the perspective of the things around us and helps us to look at our life and learn from every experience. Education is fruitless if it does not have quality aspect in it. In today's Global competition it is not only necessary to access education but receiving education of good quality. One of the basic objectives of the implementation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is the learning ability to achieve the employability on the basis of quality higher education. In India, the higher education sector has taken big strides since independence and has contributed tremendously towards producing gualified and skilled human resource, thus enabling it keep human resource ready for all sectors of its economy. However, the quality of output from this sector has continuously been subject of criticism at the hands of academicians, scholars, social leaders and employers both in private and public sector. There is no doubt that India has one of the largest educational systems in the world. The standard of education is rising as the educational sector is undergoing a process of overhaul. There is a rapid change in the current professional requirements and demands. Talking specifically of higher education, it has grown in a remarkable way and academicians of higher education have played a significant role in this growth. The role of academicians is very critical in their institutions as well as shaping the careers of the students. In order to do that, they have to perform in the best way so that the students get benefitted in terms of employability. Employers favour graduates who are highly impressive on quality dimension of education and demand skills for people to learn to act appropriately in the labour market, and one of them precisely being emotional intelligence (Navas 2015). Since the late 20th century, for professional and academic success, the interest in the field of emotional intelligence and employability plays a significant role. Theorists claim that in the 20th century the "driving force of intelligence" was IQ but for the 21st century it will be emotional intelligence (Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts, 2004). Emotional intelligence has been defined as "a set of skills that enables us to make our way in a complex world - the personal, social and survival aspects of overall intelligence, the elusive common sense and sensitivity that are essential to effective daily functioning" (Stein and Book 2011). Nowadays institutes of higher learning deliver programmes for generic skills but a meagre amount of attempt is seen in developing skills that are explicitly aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence, which is most sought by global employers. In addition to having a pool of skills relevant to a career field, employers are seen looking for candidates with sound emotional balance and intelligence when hiring. Leading educators have identified and emphasized the importance of a healthy university climate for student learning and achievement (Goodlad, 1983; McQuary, 1983). Emotional intelligence has a substantial impact on employability and helps in achieving a better personal, professional and social success. Emotional intelligence skills and competencies are ways for creating and maintaining a healthy and productive educational climate. To achieve the educational aspirations of the 21st century, there is an increasing need to develop healthy, responsible, and productive students that ultimately will lead to good placements. In fact, the relevance of emotional education is considered as an index of employability progress. But the current scenario potentially represents a notable gap in skills among graduates. The research understudy would offer potential solutions to reduce this gap through proper educational strategy and efforts in the area of enhancement of employability of graduates.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence has an emotional base and using emotions as a source of energy to accomplish the self-defined goal is what *emotional intelligence* consists of (Chadha 2001). Emotions are not only important but absolutely necessary for us to make good decisions, take optimal action to solve problems, cope with change and succeed (Mayer, Caruso and Salovey, 2004). Emotions affect relations with other people as well as one's self-identity and ability to complete a task. The first term of emotional intelligence is attributed to Wayne Payne(1985) who introduced the term emotional intelligence in his doctoral dissertation entitled "A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence; Self-Integration; Relating to Fear, Pain and Desire." Intelligence has an emotional base and using our emotions as a source of energy to accomplish the self-defined goal is what Emotional Intelligence (EI) consists of (Chadha, 2005). To put this in proper context, Goleman(1995) popularized the concept of Emotional intelligence. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer coined the term 'Emotional Intelligence' in 1990 describing it as "a form of goide one's thinking and action". In the 1990's Daniel Goleman became aware of Salovey and Mayer's work, and this eventually led to his publication of book *"Emotional Intelligence-Why It can Matter More Than IQ"*.

The definition of emotional intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage both your own emotions, and those of the people around you. People with a high degree of emotional intelligence usually know what they're feeling, what this means, and how their emotions can affect other people (Imanzadeh et.al,

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2012).Bradberry and Greaves(2009) identified four essential emotional intelligence skills that can be learnt and categorized them into two types of competencies to deal with them: personal and social competencies. These are:-*Self-Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness and Relationship Management. Self Awareness* is the ability to recognize ones' own emotions and how they affect ones' thoughts and behaviour. *Self Management* refers to the ability to manage your emotions, response according to situations and other people. On the other hand, *Social Awareness* refers to the ability to understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people. *Relationship Management* is the ability to use your awareness of your own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully. Emotional Intelligence is all about teamwork, leadership, partnership and vision.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMPLOYABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education of India has grown in a remarkable way and academicians of higher education have played a significant role in this growth. The role of academicians is very critical in their institutions as well as shaping the careers of the students. In order to do that, they have to perform in the best way so that the students get benefitted in terms of employability. The employability can be achieved by many factors. One of them is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a true intelligence which helps a person to achieve success in every area of life whether it's your workplace, home or society. It gives us foundation to build our emotions in a balanced way so that we can handle different situations in a very effective manner. The notion of emotional intelligence rises out of the search for a set of measurable tendencies and capabilities which, in addition to IQ, may serve as valid predictors of academic, occupational and life success (Fox & Spector, 2000). Apart from teaching they have to perform many other roles like counselling or mentoring the students, supervising their performance, transferring knowledge apart from studies, guiding the students with latest technologies, and many more. In order to do justice with all these roles emotional intelligence can be looked into. If all these are taken care of, it will ultimately result in producing quality output i.e. students and finally the employability.

Many studies (Berrocal 2007) advocate the importance of emotional intelligence in achieving personal and professional success. Studies (Garcia et al 2009) have shown that lack of emotional skills leads to problems in and outside classroom, when a student faces the reality of competition in the global market. Emotional intelligence has a strong bearing on the learning process of students, that improves their leadership and ability to work effectively in teams, which allows better communication and interpersonal relationships having a strong impact on working life later. In addition, the emotional intelligence as an educational strategy promotes learning as a process of understanding, innovation, interaction, recreation, systematization and transfer of knowledge for a better confrontation against the daily challenges and conflicts at all levels of life (Navas 2015). Therefore people who learn social and emotional skills are more employable and successful in all areas of life. The transition phase from higher education to work life often results in challenges for graduates as they are ill prepared for the reality of employment and hence employability. Embedding graduate attributes especially emotional intelligence into curriculum is the need of the hour to develop self awareness, self management and self innovation. According to (Melinde & Christopher 2010) higher levels of trait emotional intelligence lead to greater confidence in display-ing employability related skills and behaviour. (Mayer 1999) view that emotions help individuals to generate multiple future plans, improve their decision making processes, facilitate creative thinking and enhance persistence in challenging tasks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has undertaken data from employers of top listed HR companies from India as per the list compiled by companiesinindia.net in 2017. The paper details a survey of employers' (n=200) opinion on the relevance and current level of competencies displayed by the employees. The survey was completed across Sutra HR, ABC Consultants, Adecco India and Career Net to explore the competencies displayed by graduates during employment. Preliminary findings revealed the management perspective regarding the importance of different competencies (10 listed) and the current levels displayed by graduate employees. Both the primary and secondary data collection methods were considered. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire (Source: Jameson, A., Carthy, A., McGuinness, C., & McSweeney, F. (2016). Emotional intelligence and graduates—employers' perspectives). Questionnaires were received from the total sample of 200. Secondary data was taken from various Journals, websites, Research papers and Magazines. Random probability sampling was adopted for the survey with a sample size of 200 employers, 50 from each company. The sampling was adopted for equal chances of selection from each group. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) VERSION 16.0 was used to analyze the data.

ANALYSIS

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS FROM COMPANIES (Top and Middle)						
Name of HR Companies Top level Middle level Tota						
1.Sutra HR	10	40	50			
2.ABC Consultants	15	35	50			
3.Adecco India	11	39	50			
4.Career Net	18	32	50			

Below is the bar graph showing frequency distribution of sample from the selected organisations

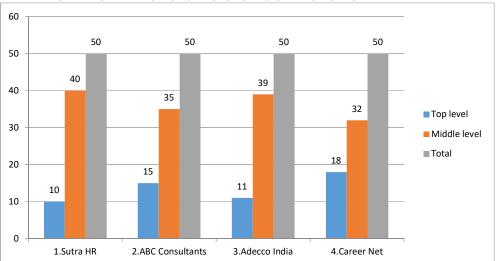


FIG. 1: BAR GRAPH DEPICTING DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS FROM TOP AND MIDDLE LEVEL

Employers were categorised according to the level of management. The survey was carried out by keeping Middle level management more because of direct contact with employees and hence more cognition about their level of competencies displayed at work.

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TABLE 2: NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS FROM TOP AND MIDDLE LEVEL

Level of Management	N=200					
Top level	57					
Middle level	143					

There were a total of 200 responses to the survey which was carried out first for exploring the management ratings of importance of 10 competencies listed in the table below. Employers were given a list of ten social and emotional competencies which were selected from the Emotional Competence Framework proposed by Goleman 1998. These were: (1) emotional self-awareness (recognising one's emotions and their effects), (2) emotional self-control (keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check), (3) initiative (readiness to act on opportunities), (4) motivation (focused and committed to the goals of the team and the organisation), (5) adaptability (flexibility in handling change), (6) positive outlook (persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks), (7) empathy (sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns, (8) communication (listening openly and sending convincing messages), (9) conflict management (negotiating and resolving disagreements) and (10) teamwork (working with others toward shared goals). Employers were, in the first instance asked to rate each competence in terms of its importance for graduates to possess in their workplace, on a scale of 5 (very important) to 1 (not important at all) the degree of importance of the ten competencies.

TABLE 3: MANAGEMENT RATINGS OF IMPORTANCE OF TEN COMPETENCIES

TABLE 5. MANAGEMENT RATINGS OF IMPORTANCE OF TEN COMPETENCIES								
Competency	Very important	Important	Neutral	Somewhat important	Not important at all	Total		
Emotional self awareness	113(56.5%)	61(30.5%)	22(11%)	2(1%)	2(1%)	200		
Emotional self control	124(62%)	45(22.5%)	25(12.5%)	4(2%)	2(1%)	200		
Initiative	135(67.5%)	55(27.5%)	5(2.5%)	4(2)	1(0.5%)	200		
Motivation	143(71.5%)	33(16.5%)	15(7.5%)	6(3%)	3(1.5%)	200		
Adaptability	161(80.5%)	36(18%)	2(1%)	1(0.5%)	0(0%)	200		
Positive outlook	159(79.5%)	31(15.5%)	8(4%)	2(1%)	0(0%)	200		
Empathy	147(73.5%)	35(17.5%)	12(6%)	6(3%)	0(0%)	200		
Communication	155(77.5%)	41(20.5%)	2(1%)	1(0.5%)	1(0.5%)	200		
Conflict management	148(74.0%)	40(20%)	10(5%)	1(0.5%)	1(0.5%)	200		
Team work	168(84.0%)	21(10.5%)	5(2.5%)	4(2%)	2(1%)	200		

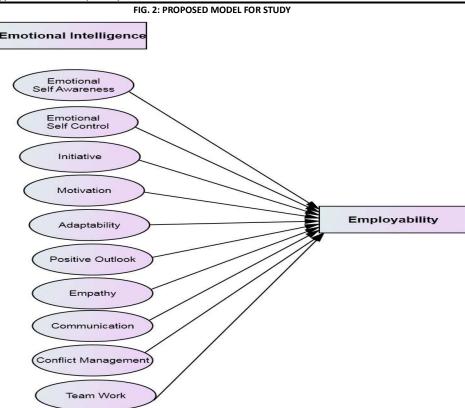
Employers were then asked to rate each of the ten competencies, on a scale of 5 (excellent) to 1 (poor), in respect of the current level of competence demonstrated by graduates. Table 2 presents these findings.

TABLE 4: MANAGEMENT RATINGS OF CURRENT LEVEL OF COMPETENCY DEMONSTRATED BY EMPLOYEES

Competency	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Emotional self awareness	7(3.5%)	45(22.5%)	105(52.5%)	35(17.5%)	8(4%)	200
Emotional self control	6(3%)	51(25.5%)	81(40.5%)	55(27.5%)	7(3.5%)	200
Initiative	10(5%)	48(24%)	98(49%)	37(18.5%)	7(3.5%)	200
Motivation	1(0.5%)	112(56%)	48(24%)	38(19%)	1(0.5%)	200
Adaptability	7(3.5%)	44(22%)	102(51%)	41(20.5%)	6(3%)	200
Positive outlook	35(17.5%)	25(12.5%)	74(37%)	65(32.5%)	1(0.5%)	200
Empathy	4(2%)	89(44.5%)	69(34.5%)	35(17.5%)	3(1.5%)	200
Communication	3(1.5%)	42(21%)	121(60.5%)	32(16%)	2(1%)	200
Conflict management	10(5%)	49(24.5%)	97(48.5%)	35(17.5%)	9(4.5%)	200
Team work	7(3.5%)	109(54.5%)	48(24%)	31(15.5%)	5(2.5%)	200

From the table it is depicted that almost 56.5% (n=113) of employers rated all ten competencies as 'very important', with 84% (n=168) of employers rating team work and 80.5% (n=161) rating 'Adaptability' as 'very important'. In addition, findings also reveal that less than 17.5% (n=35) of employers rated the current level of competence among graduates as 'excellent' across all ten competencies, with highest ratings of 'excellent' found for 'positive outlook' (n=35) and 'initiative' (n=10). Highest ratings of 'good' were found for three competencies, emotional self awareness, adaptability and communication. 32.5% (n=65) rated 'positive outlook' as 'fair' among graduates. Between 0.5% (n=1) and 4.5% (n=9) of employers rated current levels of competence across all ten competencies as 'poor' among graduates.

As per the dimensions identified for the study a model was proposed depicting the variables (Emotional intelligence dimensions) that ultimately lead to employable graduates.



All the ten dimensions that come under the broader element of emotional intelligence lead to employability that is further strengthened by way of testing correlation among the dimensions under study.

	ESA	ESC	IE	MN	AY	РО	EY	CN	СМ	TW
ESA	1									
ESC	0.34**	1								
IE	0.31**	0.39**	1							
MN	0.27**	0.36**	0.25**	1						
ΑΥ	0.23**	0.24**	0.29**	0.43**	1					
РО	0.28**	0.30**	0.49**	0.29**	0.27**	1				
EY	0.37**	0.28**	0.24**	0.25**	0.29**	0.05**	1			
CN	0.34**	0.35**	0.23**	0.27**	0.35**	0.54**	0.32**	1		
СМ	0.40**	0.36**	0.27**	0.39**	0.46**	0.42**	0.27**	0.22**	1	
тw	0.23**	0.40**	0.25**	0.43**	0.37**	0.44**	0.37**	0.26**	0.25**	1

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed).

As all the dimensions ultimately lead to Employability as a whole, correlation was also checked to check the strength among various dimensions under study. It was found that all the dimensions were positively correlated with each other. The maximum co-relation was found to be between CN (Communication) and PO (Positive Outlook) with the r-value = 0.54 and the least co-relation was found to be between CM (Communication) and CN (Conflict Management) with r-value = 0.22.

CONCLUSION

Organizations demand skills for people to learn to act appropriately in the labour market, and one of them is precisely emotional intelligence. This is put forth by summarising the data from perception of employers regarding the importance of competencies at work. Consequently, the emotional components perform an important function in achieving a better and more productive life and student's professional career. The findings reveal that there is a gap between what is considered important and relevant by employers and what is actually displayed by the graduates at work. In order to lessen this gap, emotional intelligence and its dimensions need to be incorporated in the regular curriculum as a part of educational strategy by higher education institutions. Emotional intelligence as an educational strategy contributes to enhancing emotional skills and employability in the labour activity. It has an impact on employability and is a significant factor in achieving a better personal, social and professional success. The socio-emotional learning skills based on the good use of acquired skills through educational strategies supported in emotional intelligence are what will determine, among others, our ability to cope with frustration, or the way we react to adversity. Emotional institutes embed attributes of emotional learning in their programmes and prepare graduates well in advance in terms of emotional intelligence in the world of work. This effort may potentially result in rewards for graduates and employers in terms of career choice, increased job satisfaction, workplace performance, stress management and increased productivity, leading to a workforce who is socially and emotionally competent to skilfully navigate its way in a complex, demanding and dynamic global economy.

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