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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI): AN IMPERATIVE SKILL FOR MANAGERS IN THE GLOBAL WORKPLACE**SMARTY MUKUNDAN****RESEARCH SCHOLAR, SCHOOL OF MGT. STUDIES, COCHIN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, COCHIN****ASST. PROFESSOR****FISAT BUSINESS SCHOOL****MOOKKANNOOR****ABSTRACT**

In the present millennium, organisations are going global and companies need managers who can work in a multicultural environment, is aware of the global issues and recognise the need for a diverse workforce to gain a competitive advantage in their global operations. In a globalised setting to outperform and emerge successful, firms need emotionally equipped employees who do not panic or overreact during tough situations but change with the 'changes' in the workplace. The greatest challenge in the global work settings is managing the intellectual capital of the firm. Organizations need to develop a culture that focus on awareness of this challenge and help employees find a deeper meaning and bonding in their work lives. Hence managers of today need to develop not only their core competencies & task oriented skills but their emotional intelligence skills too. They have to manage the emotional climate of their organisation with the same proficiency as they manage their tasks and resources. Hence the need of the hour is to develop a breed of managers who are emotionally competent, who are masters their own emotions and is able to connect themselves to others by considering the emotional elements of decision making and maintaining constructive relationships. Self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills are the basic building blocks of emotional intelligence. Using EI managers can create a link between the top management and his followers through shared understanding and thereby achieve the organisational objectives. This paper discusses the importance of EI skills in workplace in a globalised setting and the imperative of developing those skills for managers. Finally it also discuss how EI skills can be developed by creating an enabling climate in the organisation and imparting EI capability training to managers

KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence, Managerial Skills.

INTRODUCTION

Organisations in the present millennium are reaching out for global customers and facing global competition and therefore companies now need managers with a 'global' mindset. Firms need managers who can work in a multicultural environment, is aware of the global issues and recognise the need for a diverse workforce to gain a competitive advantage in their global operations. To outperform and emerge successful, in a globalised setting, firms need emotionally equipped managers who do not panic or overreact during turbulent times but change with the 'changes' in the workplace. It is opined that the greatest challenge in the global work places is managing the intellectual capital of the firm. There is indeed a greater need for organizations to develop a culture that focus on awareness of this challenge and help the managers who lead and the employees, to find a deeper meaning and bonding in their work lives. Hence managers of today need to develop not only their core competencies & task oriented skills but their emotional intelligence skills too. They have to manage the emotional climate of their organisation with the same proficiency as they manage their tasks and resources. Hence the need of the hour is to develop a breed of managers who are emotionally competent, who are masters of their own emotions and is able to connect themselves to others by considering the emotional elements of decision making and maintaining constructive relationships at their workplaces. Mintzberg in his managerial roles approach theorised ten different roles played by a manager in any organisation. According to him a manager has to play the role of a leader, figurehead, liaisoner, disseminator, spokes person, disturbance handler, entrepreneur, resource person, negotiator and one who monitors. So when managers are expected to take such multiple roles within their work places, they have to develop their emotional competencies. Using EI, managers can perform these multiple roles much more efficiently and also create a link between the top management and his followers through shared understanding and thereby achieve the organisational objectives.

There has been innumerable research evidence over the years to prove that emotional intelligence at workplace is necessary for better job performance, team orientation, to develop interpersonal skills, for effective leadership etc. David Mc Clelland has said that to assess performance one should assess "competence rather than intelligence". Other researchers too have supported this view (Spencer & Spencer, 1993), (Parry, 1998). Apart from job specific knowledge and skills, to be a performer and scale up his performance as a manager one needs knowledge about self but also knowledge on how to use that knowledge and apply those skills. EI helps in self monitoring of emotions and understand others feelings which help the individual to take informed effective decisions in a given situation (Goleman, 1995, Salovey & Mayer 1990, Cooper 1997, Morris & Feldman, 1996, Singh 1998) all have acknowledged this viewpoint in their research findings.

EI is becoming crucial today in global organisations in the context of an individual's role in the organisational context too. Nowadays firms are getting flatter and flexibility is what the organisations are looking for, also the span of control are being larger and managing relationships between the members and the leader is even more challenging. There is a shift now to facilitation-based empowering relationships rather than operating on a control basis. Also the task structure and reward mechanisms are more team oriented which require more accommodating and emotionally intelligent behaviour to be adopted to achieve both individual and organisational goals. Managing negative emotions, frustration and depression and maintaining healthy relationships with peers play a vital role in projecting a positive attitude towards work. Often managers who fail are those who are rigid and maintain poor relationships. They are unable to adapt themselves to changing workplace demands, organisational culture and technology. In global firms the workplace motivation of the employees also has changed. Hence to emerge successful managers need to pay attention to the emotional elements of decision making and leadership. Since a manager interacts with lot of people at the operational level, their interaction pattern, leadership style and communication skills affect the interacting individual employee's motivational needs. The employee's motivation, satisfaction and retention are therefore related to the manager's interaction with them; hence the managers have to play a dual role of both, a nurturing boss and that of a task oriented manager. This demands a high degree of emotional intelligence to remain calm and cool and control their emotions at trying situations with their follower as well as the leaders as the situation is. There is a saying in this regard that "the effectiveness of a decision is directly related to its acceptance by others". Managers should learn to manage the emotional climate of the organisation with great proficiency as they are in getting the tasks done by others.

In this scenario, the construct of EI becomes even more important as it relates to motivation, adeptness in relationships and self regulation of emotions. Managers with high EI are able to create and maintain a competitive advantage by superior performance, enhanced innovation effective use of time and resources, restored trust, teamwork and motivation (Goleman, 2000).

THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) CONSTRUCT

Daniel Goleman (1998) defines emotional intelligence as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. Emotional intelligence describes abilities distinct from, but complementary to, academic intelligence". Mayer & Salovey (1993) defines Emotional intelligence as the ability of a person to manage and monitor one's own emotions, recognise the emotions in others and manage this knowledge of self and others in their relationships and use this information for effective decision making.

Self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills are the basic building blocks of emotional intelligence. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, among others, have researched the “competencies” of the four EI domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management and they claim to have identified 20 competencies or “capabilities” (Figure no: 1). The first component self awareness is described as an ability to be aware of one’s own emotions and to be able to express one’s emotional needs. Self management refers to one’s ability to distinguish among different emotions they may be feeling and prioritize those that are influencing their thought processes .The third component – social awareness, is the ability to understand complex emotions such as simultaneous feelings of loyalty and betrayal. The ability to distinguish the emotions that emerge from perceptions is important in overcoming negative responses to emotions. This also includes the ability to understand other’s emotional expressions and behaviours. Lastly, the social skills are the ability to connect or disconnect from an emotion, depending on its usefulness in any given situation. The last component is actually a natural expression of the other three components. Proficiency in building relationships and networking and maintaining rapport is important here .This also includes efficient leading, initiating change, communicating, persuading, expertise building, influencing and managing conflicts constructively.

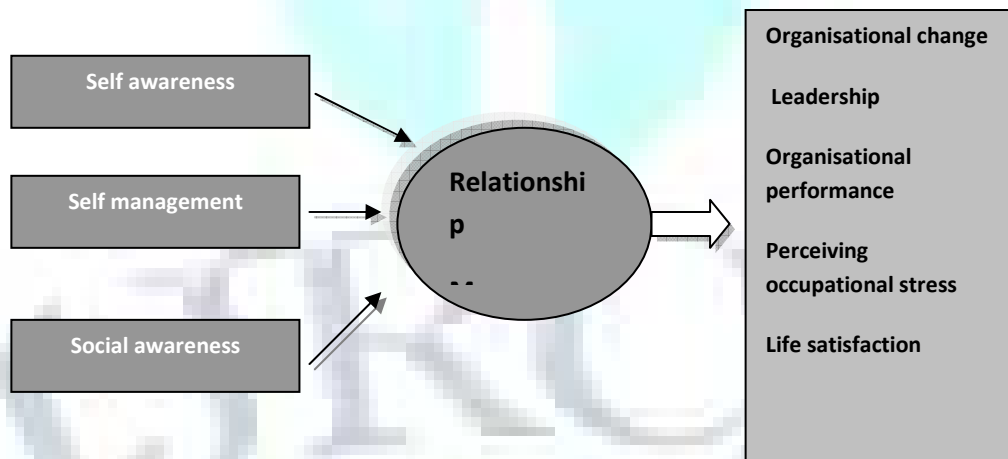
FIGURE NO.: 1



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The relevance of EI on human behaviour has been researched decades ago. Many scholars have theorised the relationship of Ei with the success of ana individual in work and personal life. However the relevance of the same in the context of the workplace, has gained significant interest Goleman’s main premise is that EI predicts life success. The construct has gained further momentum within organisations, with global organisations no longer being seen as “emotion-free” zones. Emotional Intelligence is now being considered to be important in organisational factors (See Figure no:2) such as organisational change (Ferres & Connell, 2004; Singh, 2003); leadership (Ashkanasy, 2002; Dearborn, 2002; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Weymes, 2002); management performance (Slaski & Cartwright, 2002); perceiving occupational stress (Nicklaou & Tsaousis, 2002; Oginska-Bulik, 2005); and life satisfaction (Palmer,Donaldson & Stough, 2002).

FIGURE 2: A MODEL OF THE EI COMPETENCIES TO ORGANISATIONAL



DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

According to UCLA research, just 7% of leadership success is due to intellect. The rest results from trust, integrity, authenticity, honesty, creativity, presence, and resilience all a part of emotional intelligence. The Center for Creative Leadership found that when careers of leaders get derailed, the most common reason (75%) is that people lack crucial emotional competencies they can't deal effectively with interpersonal problems, they can't guide teams through conflicts and other turbulence, and they can't adapt to change or gain trust. There are numerous studies like these which support the view that emotional competencies need to be developed. It is said that Unlike IQ, EQ can be developed in an individual. One can upgrade your emotional skills at any stage of your life. In fact, age and maturity are positively correlated with the EQ. Same is not true with the case of IQ which is more or less static.

Baron (2000) in his study mentions that EQ is generally seen to be on the higher side for older employees as EQ can be developed with life experience over a period of time. However if the EQ is not very high, we cannot generalise that EQ will develop with maturity, unless a sustained effort and attention is given by the employees in developing the four competencies of emotional intelligence. The development of self, social and emotional competencies calls for a lot of persistence, commitment and sustained effort, from the part of the employee. (Cherniss & Adler, 2000; Cherniss & Goleman, 2001; Cherniss, Goleman, Emmerling, Cowan and Adler, 1998; Goleman, 1998; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). A wide range of findings from the fields of psychotherapy (Barlow, 1985); training programs (Marrow, Jarrett, Rupinski, 1981) and executive education (Boyatzis, Cowen, & Kolb, 1995) all provide evidence for people's ability to improve their social and emotional competence with sustained effort and a systematic program. In addition, new findings in the emerging field of affective neuroscience have begun to demonstrate that the brain circuitry of emotion exhibits a fair degree of plasticity, even in adulthood (Davidson, Jackson, & Kalin, 2000). A recent research on "mindfulness" training-an emotional self-regulation strategy-has also shown that training can actually alter the brain centers that regulate negative and positive emotions. Mindfulness training focuses on helping people to better stay focused on the present, thus keeping distressful and distracting thoughts (e.g. worries) at bay, and to pause before acting on emotional impulse. (Boyatzis, Cowan, & Kolb, 1995) in their work reiterates that EI competencies can be developed with an intensive individualised competence building plan. On a personal level too EI competencies can be developed by assessing oneself first and reflecting about oneself and regulating ones positive and negative emotions.

There is a considerable body of research suggesting that a person's ability to perceive, identify, and manage emotion provides the basis for the kinds of social and emotional competencies that are important for success in almost any job. As the pace of change is getting faster day by day and the nature of work beckons greater demands on a person's cognitive, emotional, and physical resources, this particular set of abilities will become increasingly important for the managers in workplaces that meet global standards. Hence it is imperative that organisations try to allocate resources and time for increasing the emotional intelligence of managers. Organisations by introducing capability development training in this domain will ultimately develop a breed of committed emotionally intelligent employees. To conclude it is not lack of managerial prowess alone, but the complexity of individual situations that makes a managers job more challenging and to grapple with these challenges, EI becomes paramount in today's workplaces.

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