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NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is a fairly new, but rapidly growing, area of research. The concept of emotional intelligence has been developed, adopted and embraced by the business world and more recently, by academics. Research relating to the emotional intelligence programmes indicates an improvement in many academic and personal areas which proves that teaching the subject matter is, in fact, increasing the capacity and ability to be emotionally intelligent. Besides, students graduating from business schools will need to be prepared to integrate their technical competency with their emotional intelligence if they are to be successful in the corporate world. This paper explores the importance and inclusion of emotional intelligence competency areas in the existing business curriculum as envisioned by the business educators. It also outlines how emotional intelligence can be integrated into the business curriculum. The study revealed that teaching emotional intelligence in the business school must be made a priority and should be considered as a core learning experience for all business students.

KEYWORDS

Business curriculum, business education, competency, emotional intelligence, needs assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, business education is known for providing a competitive edge in a variety of industries. In India, business education has a long history dating back to the 19th century. The rapid growth of business schools offering programmes at both undergraduate and graduate levels resulted when the Indian government liberalized the business education market over the 1990s (Gupta, 2003). There are over 950 business schools approved by the All India Council for Technical Education (A.I.C.T.E) in various categories, including the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM's), university departments, and autonomous private institutes (Joshi, 2006). Business education is now one of the most respected and sought after professional educations in the country.

One primary objective of graduate business education is to prepare students to be outstanding managers and leaders. Research has revealed that emotional intelligence skills help to bring about or predict outstanding manager or leader performance (Goleman, 1998b). Besides, emotional intelligence will be of increasing importance to managers and leaders in the days to come because of current changes in the business environment.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is an elusive construct that has been developed, adopted and embraced by the business world and more recently, by academics. It is to be emphasized that it was Aristotle who was the first to mention the importance of emotions in human interaction (Langley, 2000). Aristotle held the view that those who possess the rare skill to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way are at an advantage in any domain of life (Goleman, 1995).

The roots of emotional intelligence can be traced back to 1920 when Thorndike, an influential psychologist in the areas of learning, education and intelligence, proposed the term social intelligence. He defined social intelligence as "the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls - to act wisely in human relations" (Thorndike, 1920, p.228). Later, Gardner (1983) introduced the concepts of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. Intrapersonal intelligence, which is the key to self-knowledge, is the ability to access one's own feelings, discriminate among them and draw upon them to guide behaviour while interpersonal intelligence denotes the capacity to discern and respond appropriately to the moods, temperaments, motivations, and desires of other people. His research focused on the idea that intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences are as important as the type of intelligence typically measured by intelligence quotient (IQ) and related tests (Gardner, 1983).

Ever since the publication of Daniel Goleman's groundbreaking book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* in 1995, the topic of emotional intelligence has witnessed widespread interest. This book brought to the public's attention the importance of a person's emotional lives (Jensen, 1998). However, the emotional intelligence construct was first conceptualized by U.S psychologists Salovey and Mayer in 1990. They defined emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves 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 thinking and actions" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990, p.189). In 1997, they revised their definition of emotional intelligence which is now most widely accepted. Emotional intelligence is thus defined as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotions; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p.10).

Reuven Bar-On (1997) developed one of the first measures of emotional intelligence that used the term Emotion Quotient (EQ). Bar-On's model of emotional intelligence focuses on an array of emotional and social abilities, including the ability to be aware of, understand and express oneself; the ability to be aware of, understand and relate to others; the ability to deal with strong emotions and control one's impulses; and the ability to adapt to change and solve problems of a social or personal nature. He characterized emotionally intelligent people as being optimistic, flexible, realistic, successful at solving problems and coping with stress, without losing control (Bar-On, 1997).

According to Goleman (1998b, p.375), emotional intelligence is "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". He points out that some individuals are born with a general emotional intelligence that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies. Emotional competencies are learned capabilities that must be worked on and developed to achieve outstanding performance (Goleman, 1998b).

Goleman (2001) suggests four fundamental constructs of emotional intelligence and associated competencies that build on those fundamentals. The first construct, self-awareness, is the ability to know one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions. Self-awareness is the vital foundation skill for three

emotional competencies such as emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. The second construct, self-management, involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances. The six emotional competencies of this construct are self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement drive and initiative. The third construct, social awareness, includes the ability to sense, understand and react to other's emotions while comprehending social networks. The three emotional competencies of the social awareness construct are empathy, service orientation and organisational awareness. Relationship Management, the fourth construct, entails the ability to inspire, influence and develop others while managing conflict. The eight emotional competencies of this construct are developing others, influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds as well as teamwork and collaboration. Later, Boyatzis (2007) included only twelve competencies such as emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, positive outlook, empathy, organisational awareness, coach and mentor, inspirational leadership, influence, conflict management and teamwork under the four fundamental areas.

The interest in EQ has grown out of a desire to more fully understand what predicts success. It is seen that high test scores in college do not help to predict salary, productivity, status, life satisfaction, or happiness with friendship, family, and romantic relationship (Ekman, 1992). Hence the traditional constructs of intelligence have little to do with emotional intelligence or success in life (Sutarso et al, 1996). Goleman (1995) has claimed that emotional intelligence predicts as much as 80 per cent of a person's success in life, whereas the traditional measure, IQ, predicts about 20 per cent. The concept of EQ supports the theory that cognitive skills alone do not hold the key to success in life. This theory has been supported by studies comparing the relationship between IQ and EQ on job performance. Even though the majority of studies found no direct correlation between IQ and EQ, they did find significant correlations between specific EQ competencies and successful job performance (Goleman, 1998b). In reviewing EQ, Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) are also of the opinion that a major driver of interest has been the failure of IQ tests to account for sufficient variance in success criteria both in an educational and organisational context.

Goleman and his colleagues further adopted the concept of emotional intelligence to the business world by describing its importance as an essential ingredient for business success (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2002). Emotional intelligence skills have been strongly associated with both dynamic leadership and satisfying personal life experiences (Goleman, 1995). Williams and Sternberg (1988) provided empirical evidence to show the importance of emotional intelligence with respect to effective leadership or team functioning. They found that even one overly zealous or domineering member in a group can significantly inhibit the quality of that group's performance. Research conducted at a large beverage and food company revealed that division heads with strengths in emotional intelligence competencies outperformed their targets by 15 to 20 per cent, while those who lacked them underperformed by almost 20 per cent (McClelland, 1998). Goleman (1998a) reported that truly effective leaders are distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence from his research involving almost 200 large, global companies.

Several authors have stressed that one aspect of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, is vital to transformational leadership effectiveness (Bennis, 1989; Sosik & Megerian, 1999). Multisource data collected from 63 managers (who responded about their emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviour), 192 subordinates (who rated their manager's transformational leadership behaviour and performance outcomes), and 63 superiors of focal managers (who rated managerial performance) indicated that correlations between emotional intelligence aspects, leader behaviour, and performance varied based on the self-awareness of managers (Sosik & Megerian, 1999).

Goleman (2000) demonstrated the link between emotional intelligence and leadership by drawing on the experiences of over 3000 executives and concluded that leaders can increase their quotient of leadership styles by understanding which emotional intelligence competencies underlie the leadership styles they are lacking and working to develop them. Smigla and Pastoria (2000) are also of the opinion that emotional intelligence is crucial to excel at the job or assume a leadership role. Wolff, Pescosolido and Druskat (2002), after conducting a longitudinal study of 382 team members comprising 48 self-managing teams, proved that empathy precedes and enables specific cognitive processes and skills that support the emergence of leadership. Overall, their results suggest that emotional intelligence, particularly empathic competency, is a dominant factor of the leadership emergence in self-managed teams.

The corporate world has been emphasizing the need for higher levels of personal and interpersonal skills among the business school graduates they hire (Porter and McKibbin, 1988). Studies have found empirical data that support the connection between emotional intelligence and adequate interpersonal relationships (Brackett et al., 2006). Staw and Barsade (1993) after examining the relationship between affect and performance found that people who are positive in disposition make more accurate decisions and are more interpersonally effective in a leaderless group discussion. To deal with rapid technological and social change, the interpersonal competencies included in the emotional intelligence construct are required (Schmidt, 1997).

According to Boyatzis (1982) influence is one of the competencies that most strongly distinguishes superior managers from others. It is particularly important for all levels of management (Cherniss and Adler, 2000). Besides this, research studies have demonstrated the contributions of emotional intelligence and trait affect to interview success. Fox and Spector (2000) conducted a study with college students wherein they found that empathy, self-regulation of mood, and self-presentation; affective traits (positive and negative affectivity); and general and practical intelligence were related to job interview performance.

Researchers such as Gardner (1993), Goleman (1995) and Salovey and Sluyter (1997) have all worked to impress upon educators the importance of emotional intelligence. Besides, research also suggests that emotional intelligence is not fixed at birth but can be developed through education and training (Pasi, 1997).

Reiff, Gerber and Ginsberg (1994) contend that components of their model of employment success, which contains many elements of emotional intelligence, can be systematically taught and used in the classroom. Greenberg et al (1995) reported on a programme that led to improved classroom behaviour of special needs students in frustration tolerance, assertive social skills, task orientation and peer sociability. These students also decreased their levels of anxiety and depression. Kelly and Moon (1998) argue that educators have come to realize that academic excellence alone does not contribute to creating a successful life. Emotional and social intelligence of a person is equally important. Research studies have also focused on the importance of emotional intelligence competencies in predicting success of students (Stein and Book, 2000).

Education of the affective domain, while important to all schools or in all spheres of life, is particularly significant in the case of a business school. It is seen that substantial changes made to an entire MBA programme have been found to increase emotional intelligence in students. A series of longitudinal studies conducted at the Weatherhead School of Management of Case Western Reserve University have shown that the complex set of competencies that distinguish outstanding performers in management and professions can be changed and that the behavioural improvements will last for years. After going through the change process, the MBA graduates showed 47 per cent improvement on self-awareness competencies like self-confidence and on self-management competencies such as the drive to achieve and adaptability for up to two years compared to when they first entered the course. When it came to social awareness and relationship management skills, they showed 75 per cent improvement on competencies such as empathy and team leadership. These gains were found to be in stark contrast to those from standard MBA programmes where there is no attempt to enhance emotional intelligence abilities (Boyatzis, 2002).

Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker (2002), after examining the emotional intelligence in a sample of 295 undergraduate business majors, concluded that emotional intelligence should be included within the core skills taught in training and development programmes at university. However, few business school curricula adequately address the requirement of emotional intelligence skills as a means to provide opportunities to the business graduates to better understand how emotions affect their performance and to develop their emotional competencies. This has resulted in calls for the incorporation of emotional intelligence skills in the business curriculum. This study examines the importance and inclusion of emotional intelligence competency areas in the existing business curriculum as envisioned by the business educators and provides suggestions for the integration of emotional intelligence in the business curriculum.

To accomplish the objective of this study, a matrix analysis recommended by Witkin (1984) for assessing needs in social and educational programmes was used. Witkin and Altschuld (1995, p.4) broadly defined needs assessment as "a systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about programme or organisational improvement and allocation of resources. The priorities are based on identified needs". According to Witkin & Altschuld (1995), for needs assessment, three levels of need are taken into account. The first or primary level represents the service receivers. These include the people for which the system ultimately exists such as students, clients, information users, commuters, or potential customers. In this study, the service receivers are the students in the business school. Level two, or the secondary level, represents the service providers and policymakers. Those in level two

provide information, services, training or nurture or they perform planning, technical assistance, or oversight functions that affect those in level two as well as indirectly affect those in level one (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). Business educators belong to this level in this study. The final level is the tertiary level. This level represents the resources or solutions. This includes buildings, facilities, equipment, supplies, technology, programmes, class size, surgical procedures, information retrieval systems, transportation, salaries and benefits, programme delivery systems, time allocation and working conditions (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). In this study, level three is representative of the business curriculum. Although the prime target for needs assessments is level one, needs assessments can also be performed at level two or at level three (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995).

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The participants were business educators, teaching as part of the core faculty members, in the Department of Management of the University of Kerala in India, its extension centres and the business schools affiliated to the University. A list of 76 business educators was compiled for administering the questionnaire. For the selection of business educators, the purposive sampling method was adopted. The questionnaires were sent to 50 business educators. A total of 32 participants responded to the questionnaire (64 per cent response rate). 62.5 per cent of the participants were male. Out of the 32 participants, 12 were female. The average age of the educators was 33 years, with the youngest being 27 years and the oldest being 53 years. The mean years of teaching experience for the participants was 8.12 years.

The questionnaire used for the study comprised of twelve emotional intelligence competency areas to be rated on the level of importance and inclusion using a five point Likert type scale. For the level of importance, the responses on the Likert scale range from 1 = *very low importance* to 5 = *very high importance* and for the level of inclusion, the responses on the Likert scale range from 1 = *hardly ever* to 5 = *almost always*. The participants were instructed to indicate the extent to which they believe that the competency area is important and the extent to which it is being included in the curriculum.

ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

For needs assessment, a matrix analysis is used wherein, initially, the grand mean score for importance and the grand mean score for inclusion are calculated. The scores are then plotted using the "X" and "Y" axis as a point on a four-quadrant graph. The mean of importance and inclusion should be plotted for each of the individual items. Items in quadrant four (critical need) are those of high importance but of low inclusion. Items in quadrant three (low-level need) have both a low level of importance and a low level of inclusion. Items in quadrant two (low-level successful ability) have a low level of importance but have a high level of inclusion. Finally, items falling into quadrant one (high level successful ability) have a high level of importance as well as a high level of inclusion.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the twelve emotional intelligence competency areas such as Emotional Self-Awareness, Emotional Self-Control, Adaptability, Achievement Orientation, Positive Outlook, Empathy, Organisational Awareness, Coach and Mentor, Inspirational Leadership, Influence, Conflict Management and Teamwork.

TABLE 1: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF COMPETENCY AREAS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

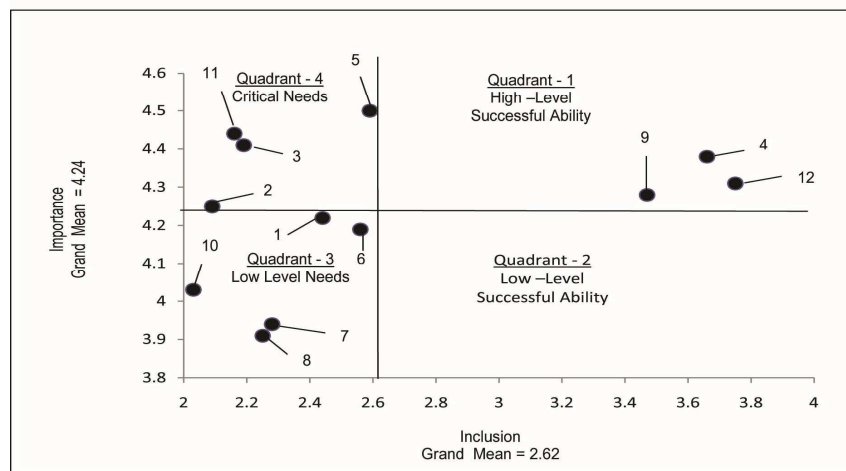
Competency Areas	Importance		Inclusion	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Emotional Self-Awareness	4.22	0.79	2.44	0.56
Emotional Self-Control	4.25	0.62	2.09	0.82
Adaptability	4.41	0.76	2.19	0.74
Achievement Orientation	4.38	0.55	3.66	0.65
Positive Outlook	4.50	0.57	2.59	0.95
Empathy	4.19	0.59	2.56	0.76
Organisational Awareness	3.94	0.80	2.28	0.63
Coach and Mentor	3.91	0.78	2.25	0.76
Inspirational Leadership	4.28	0.63	3.47	0.51
Influence	4.03	0.47	2.03	0.18
Conflict Management	4.44	0.76	2.16	0.68
Teamwork	4.31	0.59	3.75	0.67

Note : N = 32

Source: Survey data

The result of the Needs Assessment Matrix Analysis for determining the curricular needs of emotional intelligence competency areas in business education as perceived by the business educators is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Emotional Intelligence Needs Assessment



1	Emotional Self – Awareness	7	Organisational Awareness
2	Emotional Self Control	8	Coach and Mentor
3	Adaptability	9	Inspirational Leadership
4	Achievement Orientation	10	Influence
5	Positive Outlook	11	Conflict Management
6	Empathy	12	Teamwork

Source: Survey data

By plotting the grand means (GM) for importance and inclusion (4.24 and 2.62 respectively), four quadrants emerged. Using the mean scores for importance and inclusion, the twelve competency areas were plotted on the matrix with Emotional Self-Control, Adaptability, Positive Outlook and Conflict Management being classified as critical needs, Achievement Orientation, Inspirational Leadership and Teamwork being classified as high level successful abilities and Emotional Self-Awareness, Empathy, Organisational Awareness, Coach and Mentor and Influence being classified as low-level needs.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the researchers determined the importance and inclusion of emotional intelligence competency areas in the existing business curriculum as perceived by the business educators.

The business educators identified four emotional intelligence competency areas as critical needs. This indicates that they believe Emotional Self-Control, Adaptability, Positive Outlook and Conflict Management are important but they are not currently included in the curriculum. Three out of twelve emotional intelligence competency areas were identified as high-level successful abilities. This means that the business educators believe Achievement Orientation, Inspirational Leadership and Teamwork are important and they are including them in the curriculum. Five of the twelve emotional intelligence competency areas were identified as low-level needs. This indicates that the business educators do not believe Emotional Self-Awareness, Empathy, Organisational Awareness, Coach and Mentor and Influence are important and they are not being included in the curriculum.

The current study provides evidence that business education as it is currently practiced cannot be expected to increase the emotional intelligence of students. To improve the emotional intelligence of students, appropriate training should be provided to the business educators to help them integrate Emotional Self-Control, Adaptability, Positive Outlook and Conflict Management into their curriculum. The business education students will also be benefited if an emotional intelligence course is incorporated into the study programme specifically to provide growth opportunities in recognizing, discussing and appropriately managing emotions.

The emotional intelligence course should be designed to help students understand the emotional intelligence concepts on a theoretical as well as on a practical level. It should also be made compulsory for all students irrespective of their specialization areas. The course objectives may include discussion of theoretical bases and research relating to the emotional intelligence concept; identifying the importance of emotional intelligence in work, academic success, family and relationships; assessing and understanding own levels of emotional intelligence; and preparing action plans for enhancing selected aspects of one’s emotional intelligence. While teaching emotional intelligence, emphasis should be given to practice, training and improvement and not so much on verbal instruction. The application of emotional intelligence to interpersonal relationships as well as its application on an organisational or institutional level should be stressed upon. During the course, the critical needs identified in this study should be given top priority, the low level needs should be given second priority as they may require action at a later time and the high-level successful abilities should be monitored to ensure continued excellence.

In this course, the students will be required to complete an emotional intelligence assessment, develop a personal plan for intrapersonal and interpersonal improvement, submit weekly journal entries that detail progress toward their plan’s goals and develop their skills through role-practice and discussion. The emotional intelligence assessment will help students to identify their current level of emotional skills and then discuss various steps for improvement with their teacher. Each student should be made part of a “support group,” organized by self-change topics and in which they participate in periodically throughout each session. These support groups should be given time in class to discuss the day’s lesson, report the progress of their plans, and brainstorm strategies together for those students who are facing obstacles in achieving their plans. These groups are designed to give students the opportunity to talk about issues which they feel uncomfortable to discuss in the larger group.

Students can be given scenarios drawn from the workplace to discuss in groups and then role-practice as the characters in the scenario to gain more insight into how emotional intelligence can be applied. Exercises like emotional charades, case studies, rating and describing emotions to each other and discussing the influence of one’s thoughts on feelings can be used in class to train the students. Thus, this course will enable students to explore emotional intelligence concepts both intrapersonally and interpersonally and also lay a foundation to work on the concepts for enhanced long-term memory and application.

Further research should be conducted by taking into consideration other stakeholders such as students, parents and prospective employers. It is also recommended that the research be performed on a larger sample from a wider geographical area. Studies can be also undertaken on a state-by-state basis to determine if there are different viewpoints of teachers based on importance and inclusion. Research can also focus on determining the correlation between various demographics and the level of importance and inclusion of emotional intelligence competency areas in the existing business curriculum. There is also a need to replicate this study with business experts to determine if there is an agreement between the experts and the business educators regarding the importance and inclusion of the emotional intelligence competencies. A study on the costs and benefits of incorporating emotional intelligence into the

curriculum is also warranted. Further research can explore the long-term effects of the emotional intelligence curriculum. Additional research can be conducted placing emphasis on how the course is being taught in the classrooms instead of the content that is being taught.

CONCLUSION

The traditional paradigm of business schools, with its strong focus on analytical models and reductionism, is not well suited to handle the ambiguity and high rate of change facing many industries today (Schoemaker, 2008). Bennis and O'Toole (2005) opine that business schools are graduating students who are ill-equipped to wrangle with complex, unquantifiable issues - in other words the stuff of management. Besides, business organisations are not run as a scientific experiment but rather like a problem solving endeavor which has to take into consideration the social and human factors so as to arrive at a decision. Hence, the onus is on the business educators to begin to create learning experiences for students that address these issues. This can be brought about by incorporating emotional intelligence in the business curriculum so that the emotional intelligence of graduates is improved along with their cognitive skills and technical competence which will ultimately help them to achieve success in the corporate world.

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