

Chin & Yusoff, 2017

Volume 3 Issue 2, pp. 2532-2543

Date of Publication: 11th November, 2017

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2017.32.25322543>

This paper can be cited as: Chin, S., & Yusoff, R. (2017). Role of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Contextual Performance. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), 2532-2543.

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ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENHANCING CONTEXTUAL PERFORMANCE

Susan Tee Suan, Chin

Multimedia University, Melaka, Malaysia
tschin@mmu.edu.my

Rosman Md Yusoff

Universiti Tun Hussein Onn, Malaysia
rosmanmy@uthm.edu.my

Abstract

In the light of globalisation and the fast pace business environment, business organisations need to have a powerful source of competitive advantage. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Emotional Intelligence in enhancing the contextual behaviours among the executives in an organisation. The study used a case study approach to examine the research questions. A total of 110 executives took part in this study. The GENOS Emotional Intelligence questionnaire has been used to record the responses. Based on the regression analysis, it was found that 2 dimensions of Emotional Intelligence had significant relationships with the dimensions of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. Emotional Intelligence helps to “build” a robust workforce which is able to withstand the forces of the environment. Future studies could include mediating or moderating analysis of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

Keywords

Social Competency, Valuable, Resilient Workforce, Productivity, Profitability

1. Introduction

There has been much change in the business environment, especially in the 21st century. Globalisation and the advancement of technology have dismantled the traditional hierarchical structures that existed in many organisations (Reilly & Aronson, 2012). Many organisations have opted for the team-based structures to organise their operations. Despite all that, the key aspect of organisational success is employee performance. Many organisation's rewards and recognition systems focuses on goal attainment or output. Contextual performance has been unrecognised or unrewarded by many organisations. Contextual performance looks into actions that would be performed by the employee beyond their normal job scope. In the current challenging business situation, organisations need employees who possess a high level of contextual behaviour such as being conscientious. Employees who are conscientious are more likely to have a higher sense of responsibility and accountability in their work performance. Organisations need employees who are able to perform well, especially to meet the goals of the organisation and to achieve the competitive advantage.

1.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence gained its popularity in the mid-90s (Goleman, 1995) and ever since then, many studies have been conducted to discover more knowledge on the topic (Chin, Raman, Yeow, & Eze, 2013). Research linking Emotional Intelligence to performance increased from the late 1990s (Cartwright & Pappas, 2008). There were many studies of such studies as most organisations are concerned performance and productivity. In this situation, performance would include profitability and growth. The focus of the current study is to study the role of Emotional Intelligence in improving the level of contextual performance. Contextual performance includes the actions of the employees which go beyond what is normally required of them. These would be the type of employees needed by organisations especially during tough economic environment. Organisations need employees who are able to withstand such tough situations.

There are many approaches towards Emotional Intelligence. The current study uses the approach developed in Australia (Chin, Anantharaman, & Tong, 2009), the Genos Emotional Intelligence developed by Palmer and Stough in 2001. There are five dimensions. These dimensions are Emotional Recognition and Expression, Understanding Others Emotions, Emotions Direct Cognition, Emotional Management and Emotional Control. Emotional

Recognition and Expression describes the ability of the employee to identify their own feelings and also to be able to convey these feelings to their fellow colleagues in the organisation. The ability to identify and express the correct emotions in a person does not come easy. Individuals who have a higher level of such ability will be able to contribute more to their organisation. It was suggested that such individuals would be able to display more contextual behaviours such as team work spirit. In Understanding Others Emotions, this competency refers to the ability of the employees to not only identify their fellow colleague's emotions but also to understand and respond adequately to them. This is an important aspect as it improves work place relationship. If colleagues are able to identify and respond in an appropriate, misunderstandings can be reduced. Misunderstandings may disrupt the working environment and may affect the job performance. Emotions Direct Cognition depicts the ability of the employee to combine both emotions and emotional knowledge in the decision-making process and problem solving situations. Some employees based their decisions on their intuition, while there are some that uses facts. In terms of Emotional Management, this refers to the ability of the employee to manage positive and negative emotions that occurred within their own self and of others. It is encouraging if employees are able to manage the negative emotions and have the ability to convert it to positive. Emotional Control refers to the ability of the employee to handle strong or extreme emotional states that is being experienced at the workplace. These extreme emotional states could be due to certain unwanted events that took place at the organisation such as product defect. A defective product needs reworking and many employees will be redeployed to manage the situation. At these moments, feelings of anger and frustration may surface. These extreme emotions may upset the workplace relationship and the performance of the organisation might be affected.

1.2 Emotional Intelligence and Contextual Performance

Contextual Performance refers to the range of behaviours that is displayed by the employees which goes beyond what is required of them for example acts of being conscientious especially when the employees are working on an important projects which requires alertness and comprehensiveness (Okpara, 2017; Saadu, 2016). A few researchers have defined such behaviours as Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). For the purpose of this paper, the construct formulated by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, (1990) would be

used. The construct has 5 dimensions which are Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Civic Virtue, Courtesy and Altruism.

Conscientiousness reflects detailed or alertness workplace behaviour exhibited by the employees in the course of work. Other forms Conscientiousness includes attendance punctuality, usage of time at work and adherence to rules and regulations set by the organisation. Many employees have been caught misusing the internet for their own personal work (Heathfield, 2016). Such misuse affects the productivity of the organisation as the employee is not focusing on the work required by the organisation. IF these employees understood the requirements of the organisation, they would not be misusing the privilege given. Conscientiousness has been suggested to be related to Emotional Intelligence (Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb, 2012). If employees understood the requirements of the employer, they would not be misusing the internet for their personal use. Based on the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence, Understanding Others Emotions suggests a strong and positive relationship.

Altruism shows another side of contextual behaviours which looks into voluntary actions of employees in helping their fellow colleagues while at work. This is considered to be a sacrifice of their own personal interest for the sake of others and the organisation as a whole (Hans, Mubeen, & Humaid Al-Badi, 2015). Altruism was suggested to relate to Understanding Others Emotions (Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb, 2012). Employees who have altruistic values will voluntarily assist their fellow colleagues as and when needed. These action improves the rate of efficiency in the department.

In terms of Sportsmanship, it looks into how well employees manage minor inconveniences such as changes in working hours or area. From time to time, there could be some inconveniences that may take place at the workplace, employees need to understand the situations involved rather than take it from a negative point of view by finding faults with the organisation. Employees with such values are said to have a good level of Emotional Management and Emotional Control (Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb, 2012). With such values, not only the quality of work will improve but also the quantity of output.

In terms of Courtesy, these behaviours includes the act of informing others who would be affected by decisions made by the organisation. These behaviours are said to be related to Emotions Direct Cognition (Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb, 2012). Employees who consult those who are affected by the changes that takes place in the organisation respects their fellow

employees and wants to make sure that those affected would know how to manage themselves when the plan takes place. Employees that have a high level of Courtesy values use feelings and emotions in finalising decisions. Courtesy is suggested to be related to Emotions Direct Cognition (Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb, 2012).

Civic Virtue, the final dimension in the construct discussed the actions performed by employees in keeping up with the latest developments in the organisation. Being civic conscious requires employees to be responsible and constructive individuals to the organisation. Civic virtue is said to be related to Emotional Recognition and Expression (Ahmed, Rasheed, & Jehanzeb, 2012). Employees who are able to identify and correctly expresses these emotions are seen to be acting with full sense of responsibility.

1.3 Research Questions

The study has the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour?
- How is the relationship between the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and the dimensions of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour?

2. Research Methodology

The study focuses on 2 main variables, that is, Emotional Intelligence and Contextual Performance. Contextual performance will be measured by the construct formulated by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, (1990). Emotional Intelligence will be measured using the construct designed by (Palmer & Stough, 2001). The variables can be presented in figure 1, as follows:



Figure 1: *Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour*

2.1 Target Area

For the purpose of this study, a successful organisation was chosen to determine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. There are many view points to define successful organisation. Success to an organisation could be measured in terms of profitability, growth, customer satisfaction and product innovation (Harrington, 2006). The organisation chosen for this current study has been in business for more than 50 years. To date, the organisation manufactures a wide variety of products which is supplied a range of industries such as automobile and supplies of medical equipment.

2.2 Target Population and Sample

The target population of the current study would be executives in the organisation. The organisation has a total of 110 executives, a majority of them are males (63.8%). 46.8 % of the executives are less than 40 years old, while 53.2% of the remaining executives are more than 41 years of age. The fairly equal balance shows that there is a strong management succession planning in the organisation. This is important. If there were to be gaps in this succession plan, the organisation might not have a good direction and lose their stability in the market. 55.3% of the executives have worked in the organisation for more than 10 years, this shows that a majority of them are happy to be working there.

The current study uses a case study approach to analyse the role of Emotional Intelligence towards contextual performance. Contextual performance is measured by Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. All of the 110 executives would be the respondents in the current study. The population is then the sample.

3. Findings and Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the results of the research questions. The first research question was to analyse the relationship between the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. The R square value = 0.497, indicating that 49.7% of the variations in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour has been caused by the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence. From the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence, it was found that all the dimensions had a positive relationship to Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. As seen in Table 1, the p values of

Emotional Recognition and Expression and Emotions Direct Cognition were less than 0.05. This indicates that only these 2 dimensions had significant relationship. These 2 dimensions had a strong t value (ERE = 4.481; EDC = 2.206). A strong value means the particular dimension plays a greater role in enhancing the dependent variable. From this analysis, Emotional Recognition and Expression plays a larger role in enhancing Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

Table 1: Relationship between the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.598	.313		5.114	.000
	ERE	.297	.066	.390	4.481	.000
	UOE	.138	.077	.169	1.784	.077
	EDC	.150	.068	.204	2.206	.030
	EM	.071	.072	.094	.990	.324
	EC	.015	.065	.019	.237	.813

a. Dependent Variable: OCB

Foot note:

ERE =Emotional Recognition and Expression; UOE = Understanding Others Emotions; EDC = Emotions Direct Cognition; EM = Emotional Management; EC = Emotional Control; OCB = Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

The second research question focuses in the relationships between the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and the dimensions in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. The result of the regression analysis has been tabulated in Table 2. Only 2 dimensions of Emotional Intelligence that had significant p values (p value less than 0.05). Emotional Recognition and Expression was found to have significant relationships with Civic Virtue (p < 0.05), Conscientiousness (p < 0.05), Sportsmanship (p < 0.05) and Courtesy (p < 0.05). Emotions Direct Cognition was found to have significant relationships with Altruism (p < 0.05).

Table 2: Relationship between the dimensions of Emotional Intelligence to Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Independent Variable	R value	R square	ERE		UOE		EDC		EM		EC	
			B	p	B	p	B	p	B	p	B	p
Altruism	0.625	0.390	0.036	0.726	0.236	0.053	0.295	0.006	0.173	0.125	0.144	0.156
Civic Virtue	0.635	0.404	0.362	0.000	0.114	0.204	0.114	0.148	0.046	0.580	-0.017	0.822
Conscientiousness	0.623	0.389	0.401	0.000	0.108	0.268	0.142	0.100	0.039	0.666	-0.066	0.421
Sportsmanship	0.632	0.400	0.371	0.000	0.091	0.341	0.163	0.054	0.038	0.670	-0.002	0.985
Courtesy	0.577	0.332	0.314	0.000	0.142	0.128	0.036	0.654	0.061	0.481	0.017	0.827

Foot note : ERE = Emotional Recognition and Expression; EDC = Emotions Direct Cognition; UOE = Understanding Others Emotions; EM = Emotional Management; EC = Emotional Control

Emotions Direct Cognition focuses on intuitive style of decision making, while Altruism looks into voluntary actions of employees in helping their fellow colleagues. It was argued that Emotions Direct Cognition enabled employees to shift negative thoughts to positive moods (Abraham, 1999). Being in a positive mood reinforces the display of altruistic behaviour and it helps them in maintaining this positive state of mind (Staw, Sutton, & Pelled, 1994). Many employees often reject helping their fellow colleagues voluntarily and some of them would only assist when there is an order from the top management. Money-minded employees often hint for extra allowance for these actions. If employees are in a positive mood, they would be able to have better interactions at the workplace. The workplace would then be very conducive. Fellow employees will automatically render assistance to their fellow colleagues without prompting from anyone. Emotions Direct Cognition focuses on the intuitive part of the employees. Fellow employees voluntarily offer their assistance when they know from their gut feelings that their colleagues need the extra help.

Emotional Recognition and Expression focuses on the individual employee itself. It looks into how the employee will respond to the situation by identifying their feelings and to be able to correctly display it to others in the workplace. Acts or displays of being Conscientious, Sportsmans like, Courtesy and Civic conscious (or virtue) looks into the individual itself. They need to be able to identify and recognise the need to display those contextual behaviours. Employees who has high levels of Emotional Intelligence, in particular Emotional Recognition and Expression would know the need to display good working attitude such as punctuality and usage of working time. Also, minor inconveniences may affect the working conditions for example, the need to work on a Sunday which is a rest day. Employees who have a high level of Emotional Intelligence especially Emotional Recognition and Expression would understand the situation better rather than to create uproars at the workplace. Employees with a high level of Emotional Recognition and Expression would have the courtesy to inform their fellow colleagues when they know the colleagues would be affected by the changes in the policy. This display of behaviour is Courtesy. Civic minded employees are those that work with a full sense of accountability and responsibility. Furthermore, when they voice their opinions, they are very constructive rather than destructive. Employees with a high level of Emotional Recognition and Expression would be able to determine the correct response to the situation.

3.1 Role of Emotional Intelligence

From the current study, it was found that Emotions Direct Cognition and Emotional Recognition and Expression played an important role in enhancing contextual behaviours. Emotions Direct Cognition enhanced the altruistic behaviour of the employee. Emotional Recognition and Expression enhanced Sportsmanship, Conscientious, Civic Virtue and Courtesy. These 5 contextual behaviours could create good working attitudes which would improve the workplace environment.

In this tough and dynamic business environment, organisations need to have a powerful asset which is not easily copied or substituted. Having a strong and powerful workforce could provide the necessary pillar to withstand the forces that exists in the environment. Organisations need such employees, employees that understand the tough situation that the organisation is going through. With a strong workforce, the organisation could achieve excellence and effectiveness.

3.2 Area of Future Study

The current study focused on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence as the independent variable and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour as the dependent variable. It was determined that Emotions Direct Cognition and Emotional Recognition and Expression are the more important dimensions that had significant relationships with the dimensions of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. The roles of these 2 dimensions have been noted. It would be a good knowledge exploration if the current study is connected with Organisational Performance, as seen in figure 2. It would be an added knowledge if there is a connection between these variables, for example, if Organisational Citizenship Behaviour is a moderating or mediating variable in the relationship. Results of this intended study would be an added information or knowledge to the organisations. The added knowledge would help improve the training materials.



Figure 2: *Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organisational Performance with Organisational Citizenship Behaviour intervening*

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