

A STUDY ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG SALES EXECUTIVES

Dr. P.N.Raghunathan * & S.V.Harshini **

*MBA, M.Phil, Ph.D, PGDCA, M.Com, M.Phil, PGDPM &IR, FDP(IIMK),MISTE –

Asst Professor, Govt Arts College, Guide & Supervisor , Bharathiar University

** MBA, M.Phil, NET, M.Sc(Psy), M.Com, B.Ed - Research Scholar, Bharathiar University

Abstract:

Emotional Intelligence is the new term that has been emerged to regulate the gaps in the intelligence level of sales executives while handling sales or customers. Enhancing the ability and performance of executives has been an area of significance to management philosophers and researchers for a long time and hence this new concept "Emotional Intelligence" (EI) has given a new dimension and drive to the research initiatives relating personality factors with the performance of the executives. The study is focused on the aspect that Emotional Intelligence plays a vital role in increasing the performance of the sales executives to meet the changing and challenging demands in their job. A few attempts were taken to relate that emotional intelligence increases the performances of sales executives.

Keywords: Emotions, emotional intelligence, Sales performance, motivation, self empathy etc.

Introduction

EI has been identified as a significant factor in the performance and achievement of individuals in varying roles in their professional career due to the large number of research publications, and it has become an important consideration in all the human resource activities. The reality is that personal characteristics impact sales performance through mediator variables. Personal variables

included are marital status, experience, education and experience of the sales executives and these personal variables were considered as antecedent variables influencing the salesperson's motivation, aptitude and role perceptions that, in turn, are linked directly to performance and then to satisfaction.

Definition

Emotional Intelligence

Salvey and Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this intonation to guide one's thinking and actions".

Mayer and Salvey (1997) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions, to assess and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotion so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Martinez (1997) refers to emotional intelligence as being: "...an array of non cognitive skills, capabilities and competencies that influence a person's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures" (cited in Len Tischler et al.,2002).In other words Emotional Intelligence as defined by Goleman 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.

According to Goleman (1995) interpersonal intelligence refers to an individual's ability to react to other's emotions, and includes both the ability to empathise and to perceive others' emotions.

Intrapersonal intelligence is a correlative ability, turned inward. It is a capacity to form an accurate, veridical model of oneself and to be able to use that model to operate effectively in life. In other words intrapersonal intelligence relates to perceiving one's own emotions, and comprises self awareness, self-regulation and self-motivation.

Goleman (1998a) suggests that about one-third of this difference in performance is due to technical skill and cognitive ability while two-thirds is due to emotional competence.

Review of Literature

Hunter and Hunter (1984) estimated that at best IQ accounts for about 25 percent of the variance. Emotional intelligence IS also viewed as a form of intelligence but described as non-cognitive in nature. Bar-On et al.,(2000) view emotional intelligence as a non-cognitive intelligence and defines the concept as an array of emotional, personal, and social abilities and skills that influence an individual's ability to cope effectively with environmental demands and pressures.

It has been identified by many researchers that EI is an important possession of successful business leaders (Cooper, 1997; Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000a; Golman 1998b; Sosik and Megerian, 1999). Chen, et al., (1998) has shown that close to 90 percent of success in leadership positions are due to Emotional Intelligence.

EI has been widely used as a popular measure for identifying potentially effective leaders and a tool for developing effective leadership skills. Many investigators including Goleman (1995 & 1998b), Ashkanasy et al., (2002), Caruso and Wolfe (2001), Chemiss (2000), Muchinsky (2000) and Weisinger (1998)) reported the relationship between emotional intelligence and crucial

work-related factors with the help of empirical research and stated that the emotional intelligence of employees is an vital aspect of organizations.

The effective personal selling has become a difficult task due to the demanding competition resulting on the globalisation and development in technology. In Recent years Sales environment has undergone several vital changes and made the job of sales executives very demanding and challenging. Though today's sales executives are equipped with sophisticated technological aids such as laptops, mobile phones, voicemails, emails, fax, etc. to make their sales efforts more effective, the demand for customer satisfaction is also increased. This is due to the awareness among customers. The modern sales executives are expected to deal with a variety of career related issues as a result of increasing difficulty and accountability in the emerging competitive marketing environment. The most important changes that had created impact on the sales field are with reference to four categories; customers, competitors, technology and the ethical and legal environment.

According to Ingram et al., (2005) the following are the major challenges of sales executives in the modern sales environment:

- Working smarter as task difficulty increases due to technology infusions, shorter product life cycles, and more frequent product/service adaptations.
- Coping with increasing role ambiguity which may result from blending of sales, service, and support roles.
- Coping with increasing role conflict, which is likely when company advocate versus customer advocate roles shift.

- Dealing with increasing overall job stress resulting from increases in task difficulty and role stressors.
- Developing greater expertise in problem solving and partnering skills.

Most of the famous theories of selling emphasise the ability of the sales executives to understand the needs, thoughts, emotions and interests of the consumer as the determining factors of the sales success. According to 'AIDAS' theory of selling, during a personal selling process, the prospect's mind passes through five successive mental states: attention, interest, desire, action and satisfaction. Implied in the theory is the conception that the prospect goes through these five stages consciously, so that the sales management must direct the prospect through them in the right sequence if a sale is to result (Still et al., 2007). Hence if the executive is capable of reading the mind and recognising the emotions of the buyer successfully, he would be able to lead the customer through all the stages smoothly and end the presentation with closing the sale. The various Elements of the concept emotional intelligence like empathy, social skills, self-regulation etc. seemed to be quiet relevant in a successful selling situation as explained by AIDAS theory.

It is only natural that a successful salesperson needs to be able to judge feelings well.

Empathy is the ability to understand the feeling of others or in other words putting on others shoes. Salespeople must rely on empathy to read the predictions accurately. This model was conceptualised in 1977 when cognitive intelligence was considered the primary type of intelligence and hence, the role of emotional intelligence as a personal factor was not specifically studied. Sojka and Deeter-SchmeIz (2002) modified the Walker model of sales Performance by putting emotional intelligence as a variable under the personal variables and reviewed the available literature that links between emotional intelligence and sales performance. They assure

the relationships between emotional intelligence and various characteristics of sales performance and propose further testable hypotheses for establishing better relationships between EI and sales performance.

According to Maselli (2002) a major goal of relationship marketing is to help business handle the customer life-cycle by synchronizing sales efforts across all customer touch points.

Goleman (2007: 59) establishes four domains of emotional intelligence and the eighteen associated competences as follows:

PERSONAL COMPETENCE	SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS	Emotional Self-Awareness Self-evaluation Self-reliance
	SELF-MANAGEMENT	Emotional self-control Transparency Capacity for Adaptation Output Capacity Initiative Capacity Optimism
SOCIAL COMPETENCE	SOCIAL AWARENESS	Empathy Organizational Awareness Spirit of Service
	MANAGEMENT OF RELATIONSHIPS	Inspirational leadership Influence Ability to develop others Catalyst for Change Conflict Management Team Spirit and Collaboration

The Research Problem

Review of literature with respect to recent psychological research exposes that people who perform their jobs in a superior manner are differentiated from those whose job performances are average or below in terms of their social and emotional competencies. EI is recognized extensively as relevant to the growth of organisations and its people as its principles provide a

innovative way to understand and assess people's behaviours, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills, and potential. Hence the study is conducted among some of the sales executives. The sample taken for the study is from the sales executives of a private company and the sample size is 50. The respondents were chosen at random and the samples were collected through mails. The limitation was the time factor that some of the respondents were not able to co-operate freely.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the importance of emotional intelligence among sales executives.
2. To study the role of emotional intelligence on the performance of sales executives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data whereby it was served as primary data to respond the research questions and objectives setting up to find out the factors that plays a vital role in bringing performance through emotional intelligence. The survey questionnaire consists of thirty three characteristics each of which contains question pertaining to different parts of the study. Each statements were assessed on Five-point Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Uncertain, Agree, Strongly Disagree)

SAMPLE SIZE

There were total 50 respondents.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A convenience sampling method is used to collect data from the service sector sales executives. Respondents were chosen for data from the major part of the Chennai city.

TOOLS USED

The statements were subjected to factor analysis through SPSS method to find out the factors that are responsible in role of Emotional Intelligence towards performance of employee.

Hypotheses

1. Ho : Sales performance is independent on EI
2. H1 : Sales performance is dependent on EI

Method of Investigation

Samples used for the study are from the sales executives of electronic appliances. The tool used is ANOVA and t test.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
emotional intelligence effect on sales	Between Groups	4.189	2	2.095	38.905	.000
	Within Groups	2.531	47	.054		
	Total	6.720	49			
EI increase performance	Between Groups	4.020	2	2.010	47.235	.000

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
EI increase performance	22.998	49	.000	1.140	1.04	1.24
job satisfaction due to EI	18.205	49	.000	1.320	1.17	1.47
	Within Groups		2.000	47	.043	
	Total		6.020	49		

Results

From the table 1.1 it is inferred that EI has effect on the sales and increases performance. It is observed that the significant difference between the variables is 0.000 which means Highly Significant ie the significance level is 0.05. From the study it is evident to reject Null Hypotheses and to accept alternate hypotheses. Hence sales performance is dependent on Emotional Intelligence. The categories defined by EI effect on sales occur with equal probabilities and impact of sales is normal with mean 1.22 and standard deviation 0.46. The study also reveals the fact that the EI also increases the job satisfaction level of sales executives. It is also found that the sales executives have self control over their emotions while dealing with the customers. The age and experience factors have impact of Emotional Intelligence which also influences the performance level predominantly. The effective implementation of emotional intelligence creates a vast distinction among sales executives in their self control and perception towards handling customers. This brings an ideal solution for any organization to uplift their sales by enhancing emotional intelligence technique among their sales executives. Though it is very difficult task for any sales men to handle the critics of customers while comparing with their competitors, Through Emotional intelligence the solvency level is increased among customers. The above

results show that emotional Intelligence has even effect on the sales and the impact of sales has increased widely. It is obvious from the study that the more challenging job, it brings the more satisfaction to the sales executives and increases the sales effectively.

Suggestions :

The present sales job is burdened with much more responsibility to focus on the relationship between customers and sales executives. They play a dual role of building relationship with care and exchanging values. The process of personal selling and its conventional seven steps involved in the process have remained the same since the *Introduction* early 1900s. The recent studies have noticed the fact that role and responsibility of sales executives have been changing severely and originated as 'Customer Relationship Management' (CRM). The new worlds of customers have awareness about market knowledge, product information and also their rights as consumers etc. Hence the present sales executive is expected to be more empowered both psychologically and professionally to meet all these difficult challenges in an effective manner.

The sales executives are expected to have interpersonal skills to meet the customers demand with the professional standard in the innovative selling environment. When a sales executive applies and handles any situation with emotional intelligence, it facilitates closeness with the customers. This may bring ability to handle any customer with ease and to increase sales effectively. Emotional intelligence in another way brings job satisfaction among the executives, since they face all the challenges smoothly. The stress faced by the sales executives is limited to a large extent and they feel comfortable to work at stressful situations.

Conclusion

The present research was carried out with an objective of that emotional intelligence increases the performance of the sales executives. The researcher scanned a major part of the literature available with respect to emotional intelligence and its impact on performance in order to conceptualise the frame work of this research. It is evident from the study that the influence of emotional intelligence on sales executives enhances sales performance. It can be concluded that Emotional Intelligence is a learnable trait of individuals/executives that can substantially influence their performance effectiveness. EI is increasingly relevant in human resource management and the concept can be well utilised both in recruitment process and training programmes for the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. According to Weisinger (1998) EI involves "the intelligent use of emotions: you intentionally make your emotions work for you by using them to help guide your behaviour and thinking in ways that enhance your results." Intelligent use of emotions in personal selling by the sales executives would definitely make their emotions work for them and would further result in enhanced performance.

References

- Andrasani, P. I., & Nestel, G. (1976). Internal-External control as contributor to and Outcome of work experience. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 156-165.
- Ang, R., & Chang, W. C. (1999). Impact of domain specific locus of control on need for achievement and affiliation. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 139(4).
- Bilhim, João Abreu, (2008). Teoria Organizacional: Estruturas e Pessoas. 6^a ed., Lisboa, Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas.
- Ceitel, Mário (2009). "High tech, high touch, high value", *Human*, n° 4, Abril, 2009, pp. 28.
- Constantine, C. G. (2003). *Emotional intelligence and its relationship with sales success* Depaul University.
- Cooper, R. K. (1997). Applying emotional intelligence in the workplace. *Training and Development*. 51(12), 31-38.
- David, R M. (2003). *Self-Assessment of Social and Emotional Competencies of Floor Covering Salespeople and its Correlation with Sales Performance*.
- Deeter-Schmelz, D.R, & Sojka, J. Z.(2003). Developing effective salespeople: exploring the link between emotional intelligence and sales performance. *The International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, 11(3), 211-220.

- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Galeman, D. (1997). *Beyond IQ: developing the leadership competencies of emotional intelligence*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Competency Conference, London.
- Goleman, D. (1998b). *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Maselli, J. (2002). Better communication leads to more sales. *Information week*, 889,32.
- Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D. R., & Salovey, P. (1999). Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for intelligence. *Intelligence*, 27,267-298.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1989). Emotional Intelligence. *Imagination,Cognition and personality*, 9(3), 185-211.