



If Work Doesn't make you Happy then Probably your Emotional Intelligence Competencies need to be Polished

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Abstract

Happiness at work has become an arena of concern worldwide to create an environment full of contentment. The relation between emotional intelligence and happiness has been investigated by various researchers and they have concluded that Emotional intelligence competency plays a crucial role and is positively correlated with employees' performance and happiness. It is important to regulate one's emotions to perform to the fullest. There are several strategies that can be adopted by the organizations to enhance employees' emotional intelligence competency that fosters happiness at work. This paper is based on secondary research that presents that employee who adopt the following strategies of staying fit, constant learning, let go emotional stupidity and inclusive attitude result in enhancing emotional intelligence competency. With an extensive literature review, the researchers support the positive correlation between emotional intelligence competency and employees' happiness at workplace.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Workplace Happiness, Staying Fit, Constant Learning, Let Go Emotional Stupidity, Inclusive Attitude.

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Introduction

The impact of emotional intelligence on a person's growth can be determined to a greater extent as researched by various researchers so far. The regulation of one's emotions is crucial for attaining heights of success. One who knows how to react in a particular situation is the who wins. As rightly said by Aristotle *"Anyone can become angry – that is easy.*

But to be angry with the right person to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in *the right way – this is not easy*". [1] Nowadays, organizations are taking care of emotional intelligence of their employees. This skill not only helps in an employee's growth but provides an inner peace too that ultimately leads to happiness.

A person who is not happy, he must be lacking emotional intelligence skill.

1. Emotional Intelligence

According to Peter Salovey & John Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence can be defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior" [2].

"Emotional Intelligence in the simplest words refers to the ability to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and others" [3].

"Emotions are in the way, they keep us from making good decisions, and they keep us from focusing" [4].

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In early 1900s Thorndike describes the concept of social intelligence as “the ability to get along with other people by being able to understand the internal states, motives and behaviours of oneself and others”, seems to be similar with the concept of present day's emotional intelligence. [5]

This concept became popular after the publication of Daniel Goleman's book named Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ [1]. Inspired by the works of Salovey and Mayer, Goleman defined Emotional Intelligence as “*an ability which include self-control, zeal and persistence and the ability to motivate one-self*”. The following are 5 components of Emotional Intelligence as described by Daniel Goleman. [1].

1. **Knowing One's Emotions. Self-Awareness**—recognizing a feeling as it happens—is the keystone of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize oneself concretely. One starts comprehending oneself by monitoring feelings from time to time. People who possess this skill and themselves in truer sense have a deeper sense of regulating their emotions and lead a better life than those who don't. They know each and every aspect of their lives crystal clear from their careers to their life partners.
2. **Managing Emotions.** Self-awareness is the foundation of managing emotions appropriately. This is the ability which keeps one away from dark feelings such as anxiety, depression, hypertension, or irritability. People who can effectively manage their emotions are better at battling with stress. Managing emotions is crucial in every aspect of life as it blow away the blues to a greater extent. One who manages oneself well bounce back quickly from life's setbacks and failures.
3. **Motivating Oneself** – Marshalling emotions is significant when it comes to focus on one's goal, paying attention and self-motivation. One who can control emotions well can motivate oneself too well. People who continuously motivate themselves tend to be more productive and do work effectively. One who gets into the “flow” state performs outstandingly. This skill is quite necessary when you have set a goal to achieve.
4. **Recognizing Emotions in Others. Empathy** – This is the ability which forms the core of self-awareness and is also known as “people skill”. Empathy is understanding others' emotions and recognising what another person is experiencing. Empathetic people understand

others' wants and needs. Undoubtedly, this is an art of living in harmony.

5. **Handling Relationships** – The ability of building healthy interpersonal skills is a step towards success. Almost every profession's requirement is to possess good social skills. These abilities are necessary for effective leadership and interpersonal effectiveness. People who excel at handling relationship are social stars and get their work done whatever they undertake.

1.2. Happiness

Myers & Diener (1995) defined Happiness as “*the experience of frequent positive affect, infrequent negative affect and an overall sense of satisfaction with life as a whole*”. [6]

Veen Hoven (2003) defined Happiness as is “*the amount of positive value that a person considers for himself*”. [6]

Maenapothi defines (2007) Happiness as “*Happiness at the workplace means a situation at the workplace when personnel are happy working and not feeling like it is work, are efficient and achieve targeted goals, both at the personnel and organizational levels*”. [6]

Sonja Lyubomirsky (2007) said that “*the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile*”. [6]

Bakt et al (2008) defines happiness “*as a whole as a complete, durable and convincing satisfaction in life*”. [6]

Hongyi Huang (2016) said that “*happier employees are more productive. Organizations across industry, no doubt, try to improve their employees' happiness with the objective to achieve higher profitability and company value*”. [6]

Happiness at workplace is as important as happiness in life. Happiness can be achieved through various mediums, and it must be achieved to perform well and grow in an organization. A happy mind brings creativity! Happy environment keeps everyone's enthusiasm at peak and focused. Work makes one happy when one possesses sufficient components of emotional intelligence. Being happy does not mean being pleasant all the time. Rather, it is a feeling of overall satisfaction with life. Happiness is achieved when one can aptly face one's mistakes, setbacks & failures. Being happy is crucial as it is associated with mental well-being of an employee. Happiness brings in creativity, authenticity, productivity, innovative



minds and a fast-paced growth. Employees who are happy at work are very much committed to work and always ready to go beyond their daily responsibilities. Happier employees complain lesser as compared to those who are not happy at work and thrive for the solutions. Hence, they are problem solvers. Happy employees cope up with the conflict situations quickly and they are liked by all. Happier employees make workplace positive with positive outcomes for the organizations.

Research Gap

- The available literature review has a scarce of emotional intelligence competency-based studies to enhance happiness at work.
- Happiness at workplace has been a need since long. This void has led us to dive deep into the subject and bring some innovation by studying the impact of emotionally intelligent competency on happiness at work with the advent of new strategies which leads to one's towards the path of happiness.

Research Objectives

- To study about emotional intelligence and happiness.
- To find the factors that enhance emotional intelligence competency of employees.

Literature Review

Deisha Sethi, Preksha Kansal, & Pooja V. Anand did research on entitled topic "*Decoding Happiness: The role of Life Satisfaction, Emotional Intelligence, and Hope*". The objectives set by them were there will be a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness, there will be a significant positive relationship between hope and happiness, there will be a significant positive relationship between happiness and life satisfaction. The findings of the study suggested that there is a strong positive correlation between the three variables i.e., EI, life satisfaction and hope with the variable happiness. [7]

Rituparna Roy, Dr. Juthika Konwar conducted a study on "*Workplace Happiness: A Conceptual Framework*". The study was done with an intention to understand the various components of happiness at work to comprehend the necessity of workplace happiness to maintain work motivation up. The results of this study had shown that employers who keep their employees happy are successful. [8]

Furnhum, A., & Petrides, K.V. did a study on "*Trait Emotional Intelligence and Happiness*". The study was done to understand if there is an impact of emotional intelligence on happiness. Researchers hypothesized that EI is a positive predictor of happiness. The study showed that happiness's variance can be determined by people's emotion related self-perceptions. [9]

Sasanpour M., Khodabakhshi M & Nooryan Kh conducted research on "the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Happiness and Mental Health in Students of Medical Sciences of Isfahan University". The objective of this study was to figure out a relationship between emotional intelligence, mental health, and happiness among college students. The results told that there is a significant and positive relationship between emotional intelligence, mental health, and happiness. Further, it was concluded that students with high EI were happier and more mentally fit. [10]

Antonino Callea, Dalila De Rosa, Giovanni Ferri Francesca Lipari, and Marco Costanzi studied "Are More Intelligent People Happier? Emotional Intelligence as Mediator between Need for Relatedness, Happiness, and Flourishing". The objectives were to investigate if need for relatedness is positively related to EI, if EI is positively related to flourishing and happiness and if relationship between the two i.e., need for relatedness and flourishing is mediated by EI. The findings suggested that need for relatedness is mediated by EI. [11]

Hassan Aminpoor, Leila Mosaferyadegari, Horyeh Bayramnejhad, Sedigheh Salmanpour had conducted research on "*The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Moral Intelligence on Happiness of Payame Noor University Students*". They had investigated the relationship between emotional and moral intelligence on happiness among the students of Payam Noor University of West Azarbaijan. The findings revealed that there is a significant and positive effect of emotional intelligence on happiness of students. [12]

Nasser Bai and Seyed Mohammad Niazi studied the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness in collegiate champions (Case study: Jiroft University). The aim of this study was to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness in athletic university. The results of this study told that a positive and significant relationship exists between EI and



happiness and EI predicts happiness to a greater extent. [13]

Bradberry says that emotional intelligence is a critical skill that is common in happy people. And emotionally intelligent people believe in learning process. [14]

Emotionally intelligent employees are resilient which is one way towards happiness. One who develops this trait is happier than the ones who do not. Resilience enables one to deal negative emotions effectively. Fighting your setbacks and failures is indeed a good choice to learn and grow in life. This is very important tool to widen the horizon of one's emotionally intelligent competency. Hence, employees are happier at work when they are emotionally sound. [15]

There are several aspects of enhancing one's EI constantly and one need should adopt them to overcome work stress or work pressure. Employees who know the 'hows' as stated by Myles Miller are emotionally intelligent and happy. These 'hows' are important to react appropriately in a particular situation and to deal with others. [16]

Elise Proulx has suggested following 5 ways to create happiness to thrive at workplace. Those include strengthening of characteristics, a feeling of being 'capable' is essential, inculcating a feeling that employees' work matters, promoting authentic culture and engagement. Elise said that this is important to know one's organization's mission and vision. This helps employees to comprehend their skills which align with their job profile to meet the organizational goals. If employees have a strong feeling about the mission of the workplace, then even those who are not aware about their strengths start using their them. Employees need to believe in themselves that they are self - efficient as what matters the most is that how much employee are made self - efficient. Organizations should empower their employees to believe in self-efficacy by implementing family - friendly policies, providing flexibility in work, sabbatical leaves and also providing tem opportunity for their jobs scope. Employees tend to be more satisfied at work and life when they know that their work matters. They have better chances to get a promotion and lesser chances to quit. Authenticity is crucial to bring in the organizations. Employees should feel free to put across their views. At times, when they do not express themselves openly, their emotions suppress them become exhausted which ultimately leads them toward quitting. Wilmar Schaufeli says that work engagement is more necessary than

happiness. Employees who find themselves engaged in their work are more satisfied. On the other hand, employees who are obsessed with work stop doing a particular task when they lose interest. Schaufeli has identified 30 resources to enhance engagement at work which include team climate, recognition, participation in decision making, trust in management, value alignment, and more. [17]

Emiliana R. Simon-Thomas has suggested four ways to create happiness at workplace. They are purpose, engagement, resilience, and kindness. Employees need to have a clear purpose with context to their career in a company. Their purpose should serve them in a fruitful manner and should not harm anyone in the organization or society. Their purpose reflects their core values which should align with organizational and their goals. As defined by UC Berkeley in his book *Great at Work* (2018), *when one makes valuable contributions to an organization or society, one has a sense of purpose without harming anyone*". The reports suggest that there is a lack of engagement of employees in work. Work engagement is crucial for employees to bring in happiness at work. Organizations should conduct fun activities at offices to keep the energy high of employees. There are various activities for implementing work engagement, employees should be given ownership for their work. In addition to this, employees should get off-work time to reduce hectic schedules. The ability to solve one's challenges, setbacks, failures, mistakes, or disappointments is of significant value at workplace to inculcate happiness. One who is emotionally intelligent possess this quality which ensure one's happiness. Employees should not avoid the challenges rather should face them with proper tactics, strategy, and vision. Resilience grows with self-awareness which is an important component of self-awareness. Organisations should have sessions on mindfulness periodically to enhance resilience of their employees. The most beautiful quality which a human possesses is kindness. Kindness is when we care and support for our colleagues. Extending a helping hand is a positive attitude and a sign of being empathetic. Kind employees treat others with respect and are empathetic towards them. Empathy is an important element of EI. Being a good listener, sharing credits and resources makes one kind. For leaders, empathy is a must trait as they lead the future leaders and understanding others' emotions is crucial. [18]



Nic Marks in one of his Online Courses' videos on *Why investing in Happiness at work still relevant*. He talked about the happiness at work during Covid-19 when everyone is working remotely. He has suggested following 5 ways to happiness at work which are connect, be fair, empower and challenge. The foremost step to be taken to achieve happiness during pandemic is being in touch with the employees. This emphasizes to nurture collaborations, friendships, laughter, and a sense of belongingness among all employees. Trust, Delegate, Play to Strengths and Self-Organize are the major components of Empowering each other during social distancing. Expectations need to be set which are realistic in nature. There should be learning from each challenge one is facing currently. Learning and enjoyment need to go together. Pride, Purpose, being part of a bigger picture contribute towards inspiration. Employees need to find purpose in their actions and should take pride in their achievements. That's how one inspires and nourishes another to surpass tough times easily. [19]

Nike offers classes of yoga and meditations to enhance productivity and happiness of employees. In a high paced world, they are offering such classes for free, and they have provided their employees with rooms for napping, praying, and meditating. Google is providing its employees with wonderful classes for meditation. This is in function since 2007. Presently, the organization is aiding employees with 7 different meditation classes from which employees can choose any. These courses include self-mastery, self-knowledge and building healthy mental habits. CBRE has taken a very good initiative of redesigning their infrastructure and has turned it into more liveable and natural. The new design serves areas for relaxing oneself. Fresh vegetable juices' stations have been included at workplace. Wellness coaching is accessible to employees. This idea provides employees to be more productive as they are getting an environment where they want to be and feel livelier and more focussed. Facebook believes that happier employees bring in more creativity and are healthier. The organization's environment is designed in a manner which inculcates calmness and creativity. In-house meditations and "No Meeting Wednesday" are the weekly practices which Facebook has adopted to boost the morale of its employees. Sony runs a wellness program for its employees since 1992. They offer free health assessments to the employees in and out of office.

The program assists employees and Sony's domestic partners to live relaxed and healthier lives. [20]

Proposition 1: There is a significant relationship between staying fit & emotional intelligence competency

Zappos is a shoe-retailing organization and has policy of "Wishes list". This came into existence in the organization in 2010. With this program, employees post their things they wish to learn and their fellow employees with those skills make that employee learn that skill. This is how the knowledge spreads and employees enhance their skills. This makes employees happier and more productive with the concept of "Wishes list". [21]

Adobe provides a service to its employees known as "Accelerate Adobe Life". Fresh joiners who are just college passed outs get regular check ins, reviews, and training programs right before they are set to go on the actual job. Employees receive reimbursements for such educational benefits. This program ensures their growth in the organization in the long run. [22]

Culture Amp provides each employee of the organization with a professional coach. One can seek coaching and guidance on personal or professional objectives. Coach assesses an employee, guides where the person currently stands and what one must do to achieve the set goals by the employee. Optoro benefits its employees with Professional Budget on calendar year basis which is kept for each employee in the organization. Employee seeks guidance and suggestions from the managers and head of the department about the programs he should go through. In this way, Optoro is helping in building a competent workforce. [23]

Learning is a never-ending process and one who keeps oneself updated is the one who excels. Constant learning is a domain of self-awareness. Learning new skills and updating existing skills increase employees' happiness and self-confidence.

Proposition 2: There is a significant relationship between constant learning and emotional intelligence competency

Various leaders suffer from emotional stupidity that can be described as an awareness of oneself along with the environment. These employees do not regulate their emotions efficiently. Such leaders are responsible to create toxic work environment. Such employees become angry easily and require attending courses on anger management. They do not give a proper thought while taking any decision



and end up taking poor decisions. They should seek consent from other leaders while taking any important decision. They are also not competent enough to control themselves hence lack self-control for what they should practice mindfulness. They do not have empathy and to learn empathy skill leaders should practice feeling what their employees are going through. They should understand how employees feel. [24]

There are leaders who undergo several courses on EI and still fail to apply the grasped knowledge. They are considered as emotionally stupid. She has mentioned about the psychology of one's perception as self-help books tell people to see a glass as half full instead of half empty. That's their own will to think of a situation in a right manner. The author has also quoted an example of the movie *Anger Management* which depicts that though anger is a common emotion but must be regulated appropriately and managed aptly. [25]

Proposition 3: There is a significant relationship between let go emotional stupidity and emotional intelligence competency

Prakash Singh, Nelson Mandela had conducted a study on "Employees' Use of Empathy to Improve their Job Behaviour". In their study, they had proven

with their quantitative study with schoolteachers that empathy is a strong element of emotional intelligence. The study supports that employee rich with empathy have a much better understanding of another employee's emotions. [26]. Shweta Mehrotra, CHRO at Citi South Asia in an interaction with *People Matters* shared her views on expectations from leaders during pandemic and the foremost requirement is empathy according to her. During lockdown, the workforce was required to work from home and the operations team did a commendable job of redesigning a new operational model. Being empathetic, all colleagues have been working and providing all necessary support as and when needed. The organization has taken many steps to deal with the pandemic. They are reimbursing all data charges for a particular grade of employees, counselling and education is being provided. They have expanded their insurance coverage for all employees. As vacations plans have been dissolved, Citi is carry forwarding the leaves to next fiscal year. [27]

Proposition 4: There is a significant relationship between inclusive attitude and emotional intelligence competency

Proposed Model

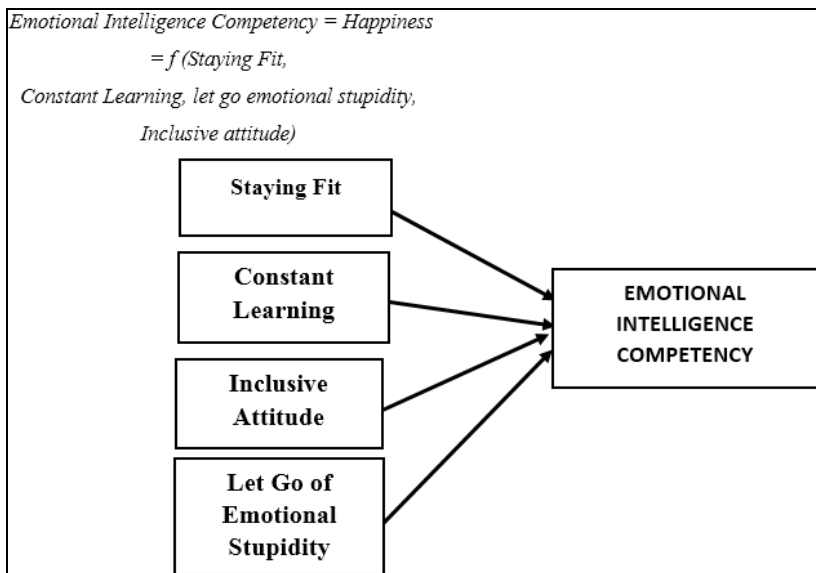


Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework of EI Competency and Happiness

Managerial Implications

The Proposed model shows a Happiness Ladder that is applicable to blue collared employees up to white collared ones. The model can prove to be a best fit in IT sector. As per the report by Capgemini Research Institute, Emotional intelligence is one of

the "must have" skill in the future. Though AI and automation would be impacting all career levels, but EI skills are more required at senior levels. [28] In one of the interesting articles written by Michael McGill, emotional intelligence competency is as important as technical skills. He explained how EI



competencies can tend to be beneficial for IT professionals from an employee who feels frustrated due to improper functioning of mouse to the boss who gets angry when a particular project is not delivered on time. [29] The junior employees (fresher/s/with 2-3 years' experience) tend to focus on their health. Being a junior, they do not hold much power and very limited power is allotted to them. Hence, they concentrate more on their health. If they are not fit, they would not perform. Technology sector is highly dynamic in nature and constant learning is a part of each level hence, constant learning is a major component to perform better. Middle level managers are required to keep an inclusive attitude in IT sector. As the sector has innumerable projects, each employee who works as a manager needs to have good team-work skills so that one can include each employee while working on a project. In case a manager fails to possess an inclusive attitude, his/her team collapses that eventually leads to the failure of the project that ultimately affect the company's performance. One study shows that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and communication adaptability in IT professionals. This showed that there is a strong relationship between EI and communication aptitude that may have positive implications for organizations in building organizational teamwork. [30] An experimental study with IT professionals showed that an employee with high EI competencies can lead several teams and relish higher health as compared to those with low EI competencies in a dynamic business environment like IT. A leader needs to foster positive relationships, collaboration, communicate and influence others. And a leader needs to take a step backwards and allow others to progress. [31] As defined by Abraham Khouris, an emotionally stupid leader is angered easily and impulsive, he/she lacks self-control, self-awareness, empathy, and mindfulness. [32] Such leader would not be able to lead a team effectively and hence, would result in having an unhappy workforce. Therefore, the upper-level management needs to avoid emotional stupidity to hone their emotional intelligence competencies.

Results

The result of this secondary research study shows that there is a significant relationship between all the discussed variables and emotional intelligence competency. Further, employees who successfully

attain emotional intelligence competencies are happy at work.

Doors for Future

Such practices should take place right from one's childhood. These practices may be initiated at schools, colleges, and several strategies to be adopted can be figured out further in the future. The proposed model can be of high importance in organizations where there is work pressure. The same may improve the happiness levels of employees working in the IT sector. Role of emotional intelligence with integrated artificial intelligence needs to be unravelled to a greater extent that can bloom happiness.

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