



EI Training for HR and Enhanced Employee Retention Strategies

Author Name: Majid Nazir

Guide's Name: Dr Dillip Kumar Sharma

Course Name: Research Scholar at SunRise University Alwar

Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the “feelings side of intelligence” and is part of the broader framework of intelligence which recognizes emotional management as a key skill governing personal and professional development. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to regulate one zone emotions as well as understand the emotion of others. It has also been described 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” (Srivastava, 2013, p.1). As such, it is considered as a critical ability for personal and professional development as it influences the interpersonal relationships of the employees and impacts their wellbeing.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, guide thinking and behavior, employee wellbeing

Introduction

Over the years, various models have been proposed to create a framework for explaining and building emotional intelligence. Within the field of organizational behavior, the emotional intelligence model proposed by Goleman (1994) has been the most

influential. The present research study would adopt this model for emotional intelligence.

Goleman (2012) defined emotional intelligence as “the ability of understanding and managing your own emotions and influencing the emotions of others” (p. 8). According to this theoretical framework, there are

five domains of emotional intelligence. These are self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship management, and motivation. These domains can be further divided into 12 critical competencies of emotional intelligence. Table 1 presented the domains and critical competencies associated with emotional intelligence as provided by Goleman and Boyatzis (2023). Thus, the competencies which are most closely related to emotional intelligence includes self-awareness of emotional, self-control of emotions, adaptability to different circumstances, achievement orientation, positive orientation, organizational awareness, empathy, influence, coach and mentor relations, ability to manage conflicts effectively, teamwork, and inspirational leadership.

Importance of Emotional Intelligence for Employees

The importance of emotional intelligence for employees' stem from the critical impact of EI on the interpersonal and intrapersonal wellbeing of the employee. It is more than a contemporary buzzword that has gained traction as there is a large body of research which suggests that EI is positively associated with leadership abilities (Goleman, 2012), creating and maintaining work environments which are positive and productive (Srivastava, 2013). It has also been found to aid in the development of communication abilities (Jorfi et al., 2014), collaboration and teamwork abilities (Luca & Tarricone, 2001) as well as conflict resolution which resolves disagreements through creative and innovative solutions (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2023). High emotional intelligence has also been positively associated with higher resilience which refers to the ability to bounce back from adversity (Schneider et al., 2013). The existing body of literature supports that emotional intelligence (EI) is a global ability which enhances the performance of the individual across numerous domains and leads to personal and professional achievement.

Figure 1
Domains and Competencies of Emotional Intelligence
(Goleman & Boyatzis, 2023)

Self-awareness	Self-management	Social awareness	Relationship management
Emotional self-awareness	Emotional self-control	Empathy	Influence
	Adaptability		Coach and mentor
	Achievement orientation	Organizational awareness	Conflict management
	Positive outlook		Teamwork
			Inspirational leadership

Literature Review

There is a large and growing body of research evidence which supports the link between emotional intelligence (EI) and employee retention at the workplace. There is research evidence which suggests a positive correlation between the EI of managers, especially HR managers and employee retention as employees tend to have higher job satisfaction, lower stress levels, and stronger organizational commitment (Lopes et al., 2007; George, 2000; Cho, 2020).

Lopes et al. (2007) conducted a meta-analysis which found that emotionally intelligence leaders have a small yet significant impact on the satisfaction, trust, and commitment of their employees at the workplace. Cho (2020) found evidence which suggests a relationship between employee self-awareness to reduced turnover and increased engagement. Research by George (2000) found that social awareness plays a critical role in building stronger interpersonal relationships at work and supportive work environments, which enhance employee retention. The importance of self-management for employees has been linked to better stress management and improved job performance which further supports retention (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023)

Goleman et al. (2000) found EI training of HR professionals to help in the development of empathy,

trust, and positive work environments which reduce voluntary turnover among the employees. The ability to understand EI competencies helps HR professionals to attract high-performing candidates who are more likely to stay with the company (Witt et al., 2002). Strong EI skills can also help HR professionals to mediate conflicts at the workplace more effectively, navigate through sensitive situations, and build collaborative relationships with the employees (Day & Harrison, 2007). The integration of EI principles with training programs and company culture can create an employee-centric workplace which boosts morale and retention (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). In a more recent study, Saxena et al. (2023) noted the growing importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace with increased use of artificial intelligence to make decisions driven by data as well as people skills.

Rationale

The modern work environment has certain characteristic features which makes emotional intelligence (EI) as a crucial skill. There is high competition for talent and the job market makes it tough to attract as well as retain top talent (Finn, 2023). Additionally, the changing employee expectations for compensation and benefits associated with their work and the rise of remote working have led to increase in

stress and burnout (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2023). Many employees also complain about the lack of recognition and appreciation for their work, making it more likely for them to leave the organization. As a result, there are high rates of voluntary turnover in most organizations and employee retention is a major challenge for human resources in today's business environment.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) training can help human resource (HR) professionals in addressing these key challenges (Srivastava, 2013). By helping the HR professionals to better understand and manage their

own emotions, EI training can help them build stronger relationship with employees and create a more positive work environment (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2020). Also, by helping them identify and manage the emotion of others, EI training can aid HR professionals to resolve conflicts more effectively. Emotionally intelligent employees create an emotionally intelligent workplace, along with a culture of communication, feedback, continuous learning and development, and recognition of efforts (Jorfi et al., 2014).

Methodology

Design

The present research study has been designed as a quantitative study to understand the relationship between emotional intelligence of human resources (HR) professionals and the employee turnover intention in modern organizations. The data was gathered using anonymous online surveys shared through professional networks which assessed the emotional intelligence skills of the HR professionals and the turnover intention of employees for the organization. It has been designed as a correlational study and seeks to establish the relationship between these

variables. The hypothesis which would be tested states that there is a negative association between emotional intelligence and employee turnover intention.

Participants

The sample for the study were identified through the professional networks by reaching out to the HR professionals of various workplaces having more than 50 employees. They were identified through convenience sampling and asked to recommend other HR professionals leading to snowball sampling in the study. The HR professionals were also asked to share the

online surveys assessing turnover intention

among the employees.

Materials

The data would be collected using online surveys. There were two surveys used in the study, one for the HR professionals which would assess their emotional intelligence (EI) using the emotional intelligence assessment based on Goleman's (1994) model. The other survey was shared with the employees and seeks to assess their turnover intention using the scale developed by Cho et al. (2016). The survey responses were kept anonymous and did not collect any personally identifiable data. The responses were pooled on a spreadsheet.

Results

The data was collected from a sample of 10 HR professionals across 5 organizations with 50 valid responses from employees. The average EI score for the HR professional and

Data Analysis

The gathered data was pooled and cleaned to remove the incomplete and invalid responses. The data was organized according to the name of the organization, type of employee – HR or employee and the resulting survey administered. Statistical software was used to analyze the data based on descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data in terms of sample size, mean, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics were used in the form of correlational analysis and hypothesis testing.

average employee turnover intention were calculated for each organization. It has been presented along with the other descriptive statistics in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Organization	Emotional Intelligence			Turnover Intention		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
A	2	24	2.3	10	9	1.3
B	2	36	1.2	10	10	1.6
C	2	42	1.6	10	6	1.4
D	2	21	1.8	10	7	0.8
E	2	19	2.5	10	15	0.7
Pooled	10	28.4	1.88	50	9.4	1.16

The data shows that the average emotional intelligence was $M = 28.4$ while the average turnover intention was $M = 9.4$ across the organizations. To compare the performance of the different organizations on these variables, Figure 2 and 3 can be used as they visually depict the emotional intelligence and turnover intention across the organizations

included in the study. The bar charts show that organization C had the higher emotional intelligence (EI) in the HR professionals while organization E had the lowest EI. Similarly, it can be observed that organization E has the highest turnover intention among the employees while organization C has the lowest.

Figure 2

Emotional Intelligence Across Organizations

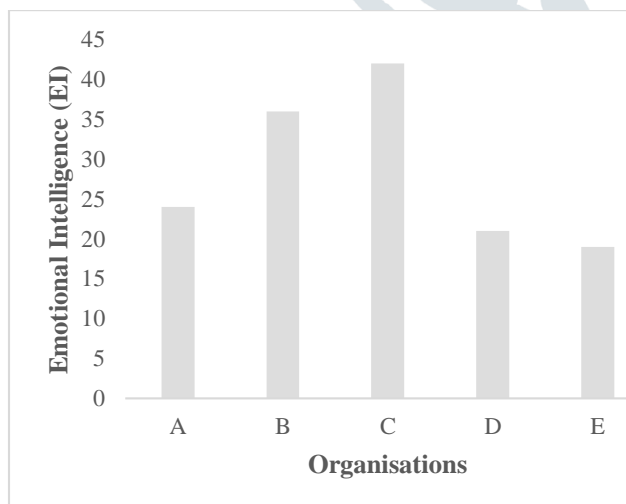
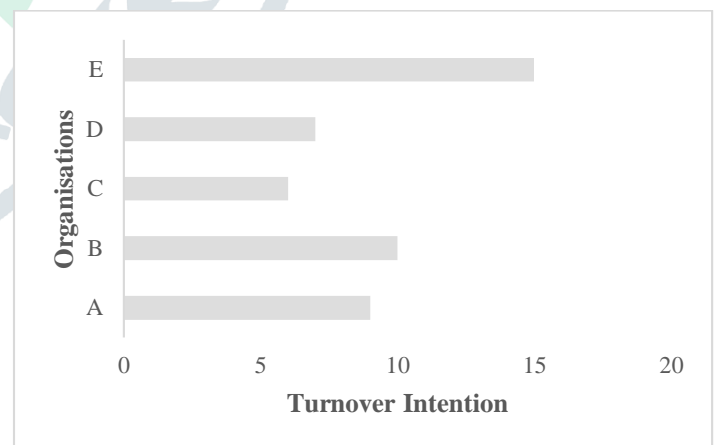


Figure 3

Employee Turnover Intention Across Organizations



To understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee turnover intention, a correlational analysis was conducted. The data was also represented using a scatterplot. It shows that

there is a negative relationship between these variables as $r = -0.8$, $p < .01$. This means that an increase in emotional intelligence in the HR professionals leads to a significant decrease in the employee turnover intention.

Scatterplot for the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Turnover Intention

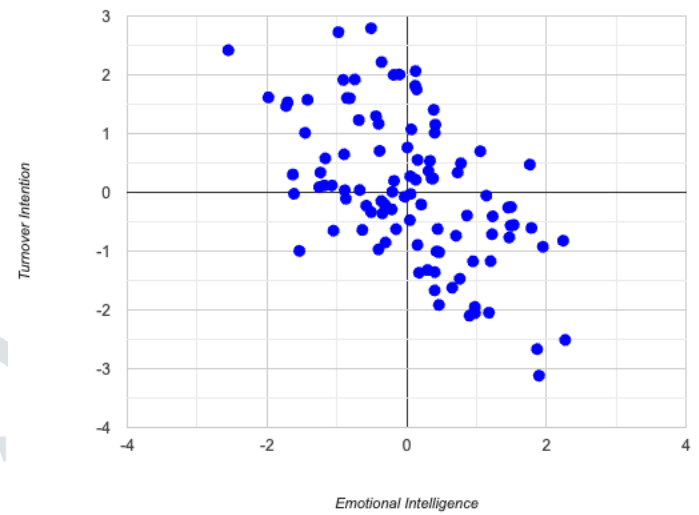


Figure 4

Discussion

The results from the statistical analysis of the data shows that the research hypothesis can be accepted as there is a statistically significant negative relationship between EI and turnover intention (Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023). This supports the existing literature in the field which suggests that increasing the EI of the HR professionals can help in reducing turnover intention among the employee and enhance employee retention. Thus, EI training can be a useful tool to enhance employee retention within modern organizations (Cho et al., 2016).

The implications of the study are that emotional intelligence is an important ability for HR professionals who are responsible for the wellbeing of the employees. It influences the organizational culture

as employees have different levels of turnover intention but these are directly and indirectly influenced by the emotional skills of their managers (Finn, 2023). To create sustained benefits of EI training, existing literature can be used to create a robust EI training framework that values and encourages managers, especially HR professionals to translate the learnings into strategies and behaviors (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2023).

The limitations associated with the present study include a small sample size as only five organizations were studied. It may be too small to develop generalizable insights which can be extended to different organizations across industries. Additionally, the study used an online survey which

can lead to false responses due to anonymity. It is also possible that the non-random sampling method could have led to bias in selection of the participants in the

study. Future studies in this area can work on removing these limitations.

Conclusion

The present research sought to understand the nature of relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and employee turnover. It used a quantitative study involving online surveys to collect data about the EI of HR professionals and turnover intention of employees at five organizations. These were statistically studied and the findings confirm the research hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between EI and turnover intention. This has important implications for HR professionals who may be suggested to develop robust EI training programs.

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