

Doctoral Dissertation

Roles of Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

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(Summary)

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Over the last three decades, EI has become an emerging issue in psychological, organizational, and educational fields because of ongoing debates pertaining to its definition, measurement, research-worthiness, and business value (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Despite such controversies, great efforts have been made to differentiate EI, particularly ability-based EI, from the Big Five personality traits and cognitive intelligence (CI). EI is a specialized domain of emotions (Côté, 2014) that is a unique and independent type of intelligence.

The most widely used definition of EI is as follows: “the ability to accurately perceive emotions; use emotions to facilitate thinking, problem solving, and creativity; understand emotions; and manage emotions for personal growth” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 5). This ability-based model of EI has served as the basis for numerous studies. The other two noticeable streams of EI are the trait- and mixed-models. Corresponding to each stream of EI, different measures have been developed, but these are primarily performance-based or self-report-based assessments (e.g., ability-, trait-, and mixed model-based EI). The former measure is advocated because it is outcome-oriented and objective; however, the latter is easy to administer and inexpensive. Performance-based measures are time consuming and difficult to use with large samples from countries in which the test publisher does not support automatic and professional translation; on the other hand, self-report questionnaires are criticized for entailing a social desirability response bias. In general, each type of measure has its own advantages and

disadvantages. Therefore, researchers have utilized the measure that is best suited to the purpose of their studies. As such, different measures have been utilized in studies that have examined EI and its positive and negative outcomes. Corresponding to each independent research in this dissertation, different measures of EI were used. For empirical studies, the author employed performance-based EI measure. However, in the meta-analysis, it was necessary to include prior empirical studies that have been conducted with all existing measures in order to provide sufficient coverage of the literature.

EI has been proven to be a critical factor that helps explain considerable variance in mental health, academic performance, and success in the workplace, even after controlling for cognitive ability and personal traits (MacCann, Fogarty, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2011; Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2011; Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2007). Despite its importance, one should keep in mind that, similar to "traditional" intelligence, EI is not inherently virtuous and can be considered as a tool that can be used for either adaptive or maladaptive purposes (Bariso, 2018). Indeed, in the last decade, there has been rising academic concerns about the dark side of EI. In other words, EI can be harmful and lead to problems not only among concerned individuals but also among others involved in the specific circumstance. The dissertation provided knowledge from both sides of EI in the working contexts.

Regarding EI's direct effect on job performance, research has reported contradictory

results. Based on previous findings, which found that the three facets of ability-based emotional intelligence (EI) have varying effects on job performance, the research 1 investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence (CI), and job performance. The use of a cascade model suggests a progressive pattern, starting from emotion perception, followed by emotional understanding and emotion regulation, with downstream effects on job performance. Considering the advantages and disadvantages of both measurements, we employed the performance-based ability measurement, the Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and the self-reporting ability EI measurement, Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS). The findings supported the cascade model, but in the case of WLEIS measures, both self-emotion appraisal and others’ emotion appraisal precede emotion regulation, leading to a positive effect on job performance. Moreover, CI moderated the relationship between EI and job performance, such that a decline in CI rendered the relationship more positive. The MSCEIT and WLEIS showed similar results, thus supporting the cascading model and moderating effect.

Besides, very few prior studies investigated a moderating effect from EI on creative process. Research two in the dissertation examined the moderation from EI on the relationship between challenge stressors and creativity at individual level. A field study was conducted with 175 employees from different service companies, followed by a laboratory study with 187 undergraduate students. Findings revealed an inverted-U-shaped relationship between both

types of challenge stressors—namely, work demands and time pressure—and creativity. Furthermore, this relationship was less robust for employees with high EI compared with those with low EI.

The third research assessed the relationship between value diversity and creativity at team level and how EI affected that relationship. Organizations are increasingly adopting team-based workgroup structures to enjoy creativity from diversity. However, empirical studies have reported inconclusive results about the relationship between value diversity and creativity. A cross-sectional sequence design followed by an experiment were used to investigate the moderating effect of EI on the value diversity-team creativity relationship. Findings showed that among teams with high EI, the relationship between value diversity and team creativity was positive and it was negative among teams with low EI.

Last but not least, a meta-analysis was conducted to check a possible dark side of EI. There was evidence of significant correlations between EI and emotional manipulation and narcissism. Moreover, the research examined possible moderators on these associations. Those two issues have not yet been well-addressed in the literature.

In general, the current dissertation provided knowledge about both sides of EI and its various roles at the workplace. Results revealed that EI was important as a moderator in the creative process at both individual and team levels. Further, it also contributed to job performance in general along with cognitive intelligence. Nevertheless, there was also a

possible dark side of EI as a facilitator for emotional manipulation and narcissism. The dissertation employed varying methods to examine hypothesized propositions such as experiments, field surveys, and meta-analysis. From research's findings, implications for both academicians and practitioners were discussed. Together, the dissertation advances knowledge in the field of EI from both academic and practical perspectives.