

## **IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON QUALITY OF SERVICE IN SOFTWARE INDUSTRY OF PAKISTAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Most of the software organizational trainings are focused on improving the technical skills and rightly so. Contemporary training curriculum needs to encompass programs which are focused on improvement in interpersonal relationships classified as soft skills. The importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) becomes eminent when we consider the businesses which mainly depends upon knowledge workers, lets say; Software People. Since EI is important for recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, for self motivation and for managing emotions in ourselves and in our relationships. The research has been conducted to see the link between organizational EI and their quality of service.

### **PURPOSE**

Rationale behind the research is to underline the importance of Emotional Intelligence in software industry of Pakistan and how it can contribute positively towards organizations quality of service, which ultimately leads to organizational success. Unfortunately anything which is related to improving the social / interpersonal skills is given low-priority and usually paid little attention. Management has to realize the fact that investing on developing soft skills and Emotional competencies among the employee's would certainly give them strong financial gains in the longer run. Organization has to exhibit long term dedicated commitment in order to gain the constructive outcome from these trainings.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

EI related questionnaires targeting job related EI and general EI awareness were circulated in different organizations. Personal interviews to assess Knowledge, Awareness and Practices (KAP) were also conducted to evaluate the impact of EI on the Quality of Service.

## **FINDINGS**

This research has explored the following core areas:

- I. EI has meaningful impact on the performance of Human Resource
- II. Higher the level of awareness greater the performance
- III. Increased EI correlates with profitability via Customer Satisfaction
- IV. EI can inculcate quality that improves customer satisfaction

Detailed findings can be found under the Analysis and Finding section.

## **VALUE OF THE PAPER**

This research aims to add value by instilling the EI culture in software organization by proposing this model; improved EI culture, better the quality of service, greater the customer satisfaction.

## **KEYWORDS**

Emotional Intelligence, Quality of service, Communication Gap, Motivation, Software Engineer, KAP.

## **PAPER TYPE**

Research Paper

## **RESEARCH SCOPE**

The scope of our research is limited to Export Focused Pakistan based and Foreign Software organizations located in Pakistan.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The discipline of Software is considered more of a science than an art where the word “Software Engineering” is still debatable. Being more of an intellectual activity a Software engineer has the utmost need of sound personal EI skills to use the proposed frameworks and techniques.

Being relatively younger than other disciplines and its distinctive nature there are many intrinsic issues such as absence of accurate estimations strategies. Usually software engineers spend more time with their computers which results in a decreased interpersonal communication. Such communication gaps result into de-motivated human resources exhausting all their efforts in an un-optimized way just to meet the unrealistic goals. Issues like lack of motivation, inability to work along with others, lack of trust, increased dysfunctional conflict, Turnover, decreased loyalty are a result of the prevailing low EI culture at workplace.

Improved quality of the process results in customer satisfaction leading to profitability (benefiting the stakeholders of the company including the employees). Being emotionally intelligent improves not only self-awareness but also harmonizes and organizes the surrounding environment. Good team communication, being able to empathize, intrinsically motivated, self-managed and refined social skills come handy in such environments.

Hypothesis examined in this research study are as follows:

**H1** Higher the level of Emotional awareness at organizational level greater will be the performance.

This hypothesis intended to reveal the awareness regarding emotional capacities of employees within the software organizations.

**H2** Increased Emotional awareness correlates with high financial gains through customer satisfaction.

The intent of this hypothesis is to study the influence of emotional intelligence culture in the form of customer satisfaction that ultimately results in monetary gains.

**H3** Emotionally intelligent culture results in employee satisfaction, which results in better Quality of Service.

This hypothesis intended to correlate the level of QoS achieved by the organization with the level of emotional intelligence employees of that organization possess.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This research intends to judge employee satisfaction by calculating the EI level of employees working in the software organizations. Usually the level of Quality of service of an organization is judged by the customer satisfaction surveys, but this research approaches the measurement of organization's service quality by measuring the employee satisfaction level in the organization. The idea is that organizations having satisfied employees due to better EI level will have relatively better QoS. In other words, this research will discover the active correlation between Organization's EI level and its QoS.

### **INDIVIDUALS EMOTIONAL INTELLECT DEVELOPS ORGANIZATION'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE CULTURE.**

Individuals are key resources of any service sector organization. State of the art technology alone cannot guarantee for organizational success. Major contributor is human resource. Right people doing desired jobs in likable work environment generate unexpected levels of performance (judged by quantity and quality) reflected in terms of market standing of the organization.

Studies over the last decades have proved that only IQ alone does not ensure success in life. Five components of Emotional Intelligence (SELF AWARENESS, SELF REGULATION, SELF MOTIVATION, SOCIAL AWARENESS, SOCIAL SKILLS, and RELATIONSHIP BUILDING) as identified by Goleman address initially about the individual's self. Once the emotional stability is achieved that will automatically result in the development of social skills for the purpose of survival "*EI is not a journey with a clear path, not one that should be embarked upon lightly,*" (Smewing, 2004, p. 67). An individual who understands his/her own emotions and knows well how to reflect them can successfully judge the emotional status of the other people around. While working in intellect-based industry like software organizations, people work in teams to bring an idea to reality from something which can not be touched and felt, but was only perceived by human mind. Translation of what an individual thinks about/of an application can be possible only if the individual is expressive. Requirement elicitation is important part of Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) where customer requirements are translated by the (Business Analysts) software professionals. Communication skills of the software

professional here are of utmost importance to communicate, understand and translate what the customer wants and then get the satisfaction of the customer on “what’s translated is actually what’s needed”. This communication ability is deeply impacted by the state of mind of the communicating party (customer services, business development) on whom the whole business deal relies in terms of attracting a new client for the business or retaining the already existing clientele.

One aspect of organizational success is the level of communication skills its employees reflect apart from providing the state of the art product and services. These communication skills mainly involve the profound understanding of dealing with human minds through the art of convincing, Understanding (capturing actual requirements), and then properly translating them to actual product or service.

The skill of handling people resides on the Emotional Intellect of the individual. Higher the EI level better is the communication abilities. Luckily, unlike the IQ, EI can be improved through training.

Mental satisfaction plays an important role in having stable emotional state. While working in software organizations late sittings, stretched deadlines, feature creep due to change requests and their accommodation in the developing product in limited available time is a norm nowadays. Such hectic and demanding work routines can easily stress out individuals who are part of this whole SDLC. This could bring disturbed emotional state of mind, which finally impacts the performance and quality of the work produced. Even very unnoticeable stress, situations greatly impact the quality of the product and services delivered. Therefore, this can be taken as a ripple effect; where every single factor affecting every single individual involved since the initiation of the software product till the marketing and customer dealings piles up to impact the quality of the outcome.

Social Interaction in the work environment is part of day-to-day organizational life. These social interactions are among the peers, manager and the team members, top management with the technical resources.

Mutual interactions desire understanding and coordination. Managers can play an important role to keep their task force motivated and devoted. As the people grow to be at supervising positions in organizations, the need of understanding people becomes stronger. “*Many managers are not aware of how to assess emotional intelligence of their staff members or the job applicants,*” (Fleming, 1999, p. 26). A Workplace where people communicate well, understand each other, empathize and work along in strong bonds has its name in top organization lists.

Factors like de-motivation, dissatisfaction with job and turnover usually arise when people feel themselves as a misfit in their surroundings or when they are not acknowledged for their work, they feel that their contribution is worthless for organization. Managers have to consciously consider the soft skills, emotional intellect and personality type of the individuals apart from their technical expertise, academic performance and analytical abilities while inducting them into the organization. “*It all might seem a bit too ‘New Age’ for hard-nosed business executives focused on the bottom line, but emotional intelligence is increasingly being regarded as a valuable people skill*”

*that distinguishes the top-performers from average staff,” (Beagrie, 2004, p. 1). Individual’s assertive behavior, learning attitude and sufficient IQ indicates if they can be emotionally developed. According to Goleman “Simply being high in emotional intelligence does not guarantee that a person will have learned the emotional competencies that matter for work; it means only that they have excellent potential to learn them” (Goleman, 1998, p. 25)*

For Emotional awareness to become a part of organization’s culture it has to be actively practiced by the Top management “EQ starts at the top. The mind of an organization is really an amalgam of the mind-sets of the people who work there. It’s a collective mind. If an organization has people in leadership roles who display emotional intelligence that generally will make the organization more that way” (Miller, 1999, p. 29)

### **JUDGING QUALITY OF SERVICE THROUGH EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION OR EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS IMPROVED QUALITY OF SERVICE**

Quality gurus like Deming, Juran and Crosby emphasize quality improvement in terms of institution of Training and Leadership, driving out fear, optimization of team efforts, pride in workmanship and encouragement of education as self-development among the employees are among the keys to achieve quality in its totality.

It can be very well mapped from the perspectives and philosophies of quality gurus that quality is not a destination it’s a journey towards continuous improvement since nothing is perfect.

In order to satisfy the customers, the devoted involvement of employees serving the organization is as much important as understanding the customer’s needs and desires and there proper translation. Quality of service is usually gauged by the response of customers. Customer satisfaction is the striving factor causing improvements in the service. But in order to achieve that customer satisfaction level organization must define quality standards that need to be achieved. Availability of established criteria against which quality of work can be judged and evaluated ensures quality. Therefore, this calls for the involvement of Top management in instigating and cultivating quality standards within the organization. In this case, employees know what are they expected to do and what’s the quality desired of their work, so they automatically strive to achieve it. Anything not communicated and pre assumed by the management does not help to improve, since individuals and teams remain unsure what’s asked of them, so this may cause variety of standards to exist in the organization, varying from team to team. As all the departments are directly or indirectly involved in the development of the software, every department’s output is input to another department so it’s a cyclic process. The incompatibility of the quality standards and evaluation criteria in various departments ultimately impacts the outcome; product or a service.

## ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

We circulated an online survey to different organization targeting general EI and EI standing at organizational level. All of the respondents were part of the SDLC in different capacities. Below are the brief survey details

Total No. of Respondents	100
Male to Female Ratio	80 : 20
Total No. of Organizations	9
Average respondent Experience	4.5 Years

- I. Handling human emotions is not simple job because each individual have their own attitude and values. Retaining a knowledge worker is the supreme challenge that every software organizations are facing nowadays. This Significance increases as the nature of the business becomes more technical. It is clearly visible from results that clashes with immediate supervisor turn out to be one of the foremost issue software organization are currently struggling with.
- II. Apart from technical and analytical abilities, significance of EI becomes utmost important when working in team environment. Results validate that even though a technically sound individual with high IQ but having Low or average EQ can certainly never be a good team player.
- III. The terms of Emotional intelligence is even though a buzzword now days in international arena but in the software industry of Pakistan, we found that the awareness of emotional intelligence is comparatively far across. Majority of the Managers and Team leads we interviewed unfortunately had a misconception regarding the definition of Emotional Intelligence. They think EI and common sense are two different names of a single entity whereas when compared with fresh graduates or person having 2 to 3 years of experience they were well aware of the subject.
- IV. Our research is based on the hypothesis that Emotional Intelligence has a direct correlation with employee satisfaction. Respondents endorsed the hypothesis that inculcating EI culture in the organization can effectively help in achieving overall job satisfaction. When an individual is contented enough, mentally relaxed with his/her job and surrounding environment only then he/she innovates. Majority of the respondent of our survey agreed that EI can drive innovation and Innovation comes from investing in EI. It has been concluded, "Innovation is the by-product of a motivated employee". Although some thought that, other resources are also required by a person to become innovative. By and large they considered EI to be an important factor in encouraging innovation.
- V. Personality of individuals do influence the roles assigned to people like lead, project supervisor and manager. Motivating supervisor or Lead having grasp on five components of Emotional Intelligence (mentioned by Daniel Goleman) can

easily instigate an EI culture where team members feel self-motivated and capable enough to deliver the optimum quality of services to the end customer.

- VI. Personal emotions of an individual influence on moods and behaviors of other people greatly. Understanding of personal emotions and emotions of others at workplace is must for smooth communication. Individual's assessment for possessing these soft skills should be an important part of recruiting process. Apart from technical trainings, trainings on Emotional awareness, soft skills enhancement, and organizational ethics must also be conducted by the organization. It can actually play an essential role for software engineer to understand how to handle themselves under stress situations at work place.
- VII. Analysis of gathered data also shows that the EI level of fresh graduates and/or persons having 6-8 years is better than those with experiences around 11-17 years. It is visible from the data that since emotional intelligence is much emphasized in education industry since past couple of years in management and customer oriented courses, cause of this graduates having industrial experience of 4-5 yrs are aware of this buzz word and its substance. Professionals having industry experience of more than 7 years doesn't show relatively better EI because they might not have encountered EI during their schools when psychology never crossed ways with industry.
- VIII. Almost two third of respondents endorsed author's research hypothesis. Figurers are mentioned here.
  - o Higher the level of Emotional awareness at organizational level greater will be the performance.

Yes	No	To Some Extent
45%	8%	47%

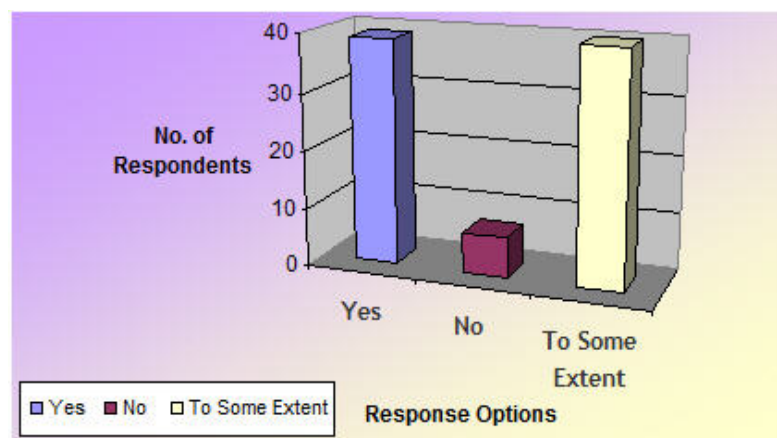


Figure 1 Respondent results over Hypothesis 1

- Increased Emotional awareness correlates with high financial gains through Customer Satisfaction.

Yes	No	To Some Extent
42%	10%	48%

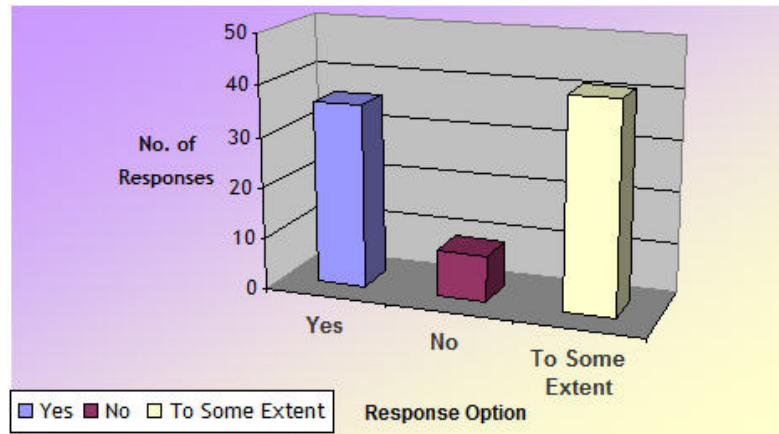


Figure 2 Respondent results over Hypothesis 2

- Emotionally intelligent culture results in employee satisfaction which results in better Quality of Service.

Yes	No	To Some Extent
52%	6%	42%

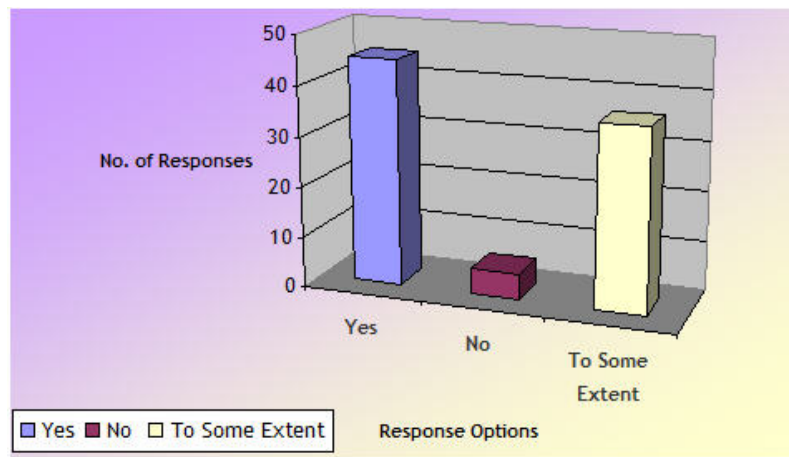


Figure 3 Respondent results over Hypothesis 3



## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE CORRELATION WITH QUALITY OF SERVICE FOR ALL ORGANIZATIONS

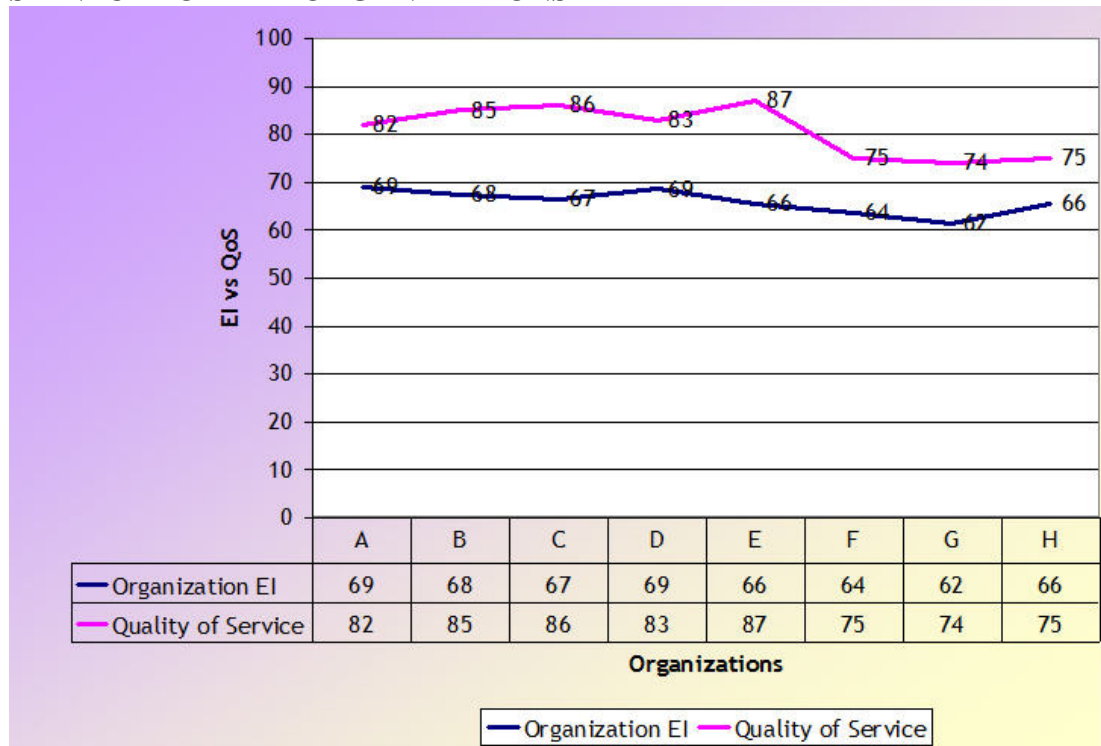


Figure 4 Graph of EI vs. QoS in all organizations.

The trend lines in the above figure representing Organization's EI and QoS show that EI of the organization positively correlates with QoS level provided by the organization. Only one deviation can be seen in the graph which was sorted out for its behavior in detail. It has been found that the Organization E is working in a domain that has only one business competitor; due to the development in the state of the art technology they attract professionals. So even with normal EI level of the organization it provides relatively better QoS.

### CONCLUSIONS

Through this research study it is visible that emotional intelligence is only unknown in terms of EI buzz word, but workforce is aware of its application in one way or the other. Managers mix it up with 'common sense' and think that it can be achieved through experience within the industry. While a good number of respondents actually understand its importance and practice its implementation. It has also been observed that being emotionally intelligent is not good enough until and unless individuals are able to learn and develop emotional competencies as well. The research actively reveals the fact that employee satisfaction majorly contributes to improvement of QoS.

In software industry of Pakistan EI and soft skill trainings are not included in the organizational development programs, since top management is more interested in investing for the monetary gains in terms of ROI. Major targets are short term goals instead of long term strategic planning towards continuous quality improvement. So at

workplace usually EI competencies are neglected area to be worked upon, people who learn it; do so for their own individual development. If EI trainings are actively instigated and endorsed by top management, they will introduce notion like self directed jelled teams which are self motivated and produce quality outcomes. All of this will result in achievement of better quality of service.

There is no doubt that only those organizations will outshine others in the future who not only understand the gravity of this matter but also nurture a culture where high EI is encouraged at the highest level.

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