A CASE STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK ATTITUDES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BAU, SARAWAK

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This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK ATTITUDES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BAU, SARAWAK

Evelyn ak Benik

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in today’s organization as we become a globalized society. It is vital to possess a high level of emotional intelligence to ensure that we can function effectively in the organization and society. This study aims to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and work attitudes (job satisfaction, career commitment, job involvement, affective and continuance organizational commitment, and work-family conflict). This is a survey research which involves the use of questionnaires to collect data. The samples of this study are 100 primary school teachers in Bau, Sarawak and are selected through simple random sampling. The Pearson’s Correlation Test is used to test all six hypotheses in this study. After analyzing, five of the null hypotheses are rejected and one is accepted. It is discovered that, the teachers are having moderate level of emotional intelligence but they demonstrate low level of work attitudes. However, for the teachers with high emotional intelligence, high work attitudes are exhibited. Thus, it is concluded that high level of emotional intelligence will ensure that the teachers have high work attitudes, but moderate level of emotional intelligence does not guarantee that teachers have high levels of work attitudes.
ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN ANTARA KEPINTARAN EMOSI DENGAN SIKAP TERHADAP KERJA DI KALANGAN GURU SEKOLAH RENDAH DI BAU, SARAWAK: SUATU KAJIAN KES

Evelyn ak Benik

1.0 Introduction

In the early 1990’s, the concept of emotional intelligence received very little attention. The major focus of researchers at that time was on the importance of cognitive intelligence such as problem solving capabilities.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, identify and manage emotions which provides the basis for the kinds of social and emotional competencies that are important for success in almost any job (Cherniss, 2000). Emotional intelligence is also said to be the determinant of work quality (House & Aditya, 1997).
The five elements of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman, 1998).

High self-awareness refers to having an accurate understanding of how we behave, how other people perceive us, recognizing how we respond to others, being sensitive to our attitudes, feelings, emotions, intents, and general communication style at any given moment and being able to accurately disclose this awareness to others.

Self-management is the ability to be able to keep an emotional perspective such as be able to relax in pressure situations, calm oneself quickly when angry, communicate feelings effectively, and stay calm when become the target of anger from others.

Motivation is the ability to channel emotions to achieve a goal, and to postpone immediate gratification to future gratification. Motivation is also about being productive in low interest, and low enjoyment activities. It is also the ability to persist in the face of frustration and generate initiative without external pressure.

Whilst, empathy is the ability to exchange information on a meaningful level, adept in skills necessary for organizing groups and building teams, negotiating solutions, mediating conflict among others, building consensus and making personal connections.
Finally, social skills is about being aware of other people’s feelings and emotions, and being able to listen to their feelings. It is also about being able to help others deal with their feelings and emotions in productive ways and assist them in increasing their awareness about their own impact on others.

According to Mayer & Salovey (2000), emotional intelligence combines feelings with thinking, and thinking with feelings. Emotional intelligence, then, is the ability to use emotions to help in solving problems and to live a more effective life.

Why is emotional intelligence important in the workplace? First, it is crucial to ensure that employees become more productive and creative, and are able to communicate effectively with members of the society especially their colleagues. Besides, it makes the employees more intelligent and rational. They are able to think wisely before making decisions, understand others’ feelings, and are able to control their emotions in intense situations. In addition, people are motivated not only by the rational exchange approach, but also by the extent to which they are connected emotionally to their work and by the extent to which its contents provides them with experiences such as joy, excitement, surprise, and frustration (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995) cited in Carmeli (2003).

Emotional intelligence helps us to survive in the organization. As Goleman (1998) says, cognitive skills ‘gets you in the door’ of a company, but emotional skills help you thrive once you are hired because emotional intelligence affects just
everything you do at work. Even when we work in a solitary setting, how well we work has a lot to do with how well we discipline and motivate ourselves. As emotional intelligence is an intelligence based on emotions, people who have this capacity are less depressed, healthier, more employable, and have better relationships.

According to Carmeli (2003), individuals with high emotional intelligence experience continuous positive moods and feelings that will generate high level of satisfaction and well-being. People with high emotional intelligence are more likely than less emotionally intelligent people to gain success in the workplace.

Developing emotional intelligence enables individuals to increase personal effectiveness, improve relationships in businesses and social settings. Besides, they are able to manage their own emotions and can effectively deal with the emotions of others, and communicate effectively and can positively influence others. It also enables individual to increase flexibility, and effectively deal with conflict change and growth, and empower individuals to perform, create teamwork, boost loyalty and retention in the workplace.
1.1 Background of the Study

The study focuses on the primary school teachers in Bau, Sarawak. Teachers play a great role in delivering knowledge to their students and ensure that they can act effectively in the society.

The teaching profession is a job that demands high emotional intelligence besides psychiatrists, social workers, medical doctors, human resource managers, nurses, and police officers (Caruso, 1999). This study aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and work attitudes of primary school teachers. It is expected that the teachers are competent in adapting emotional intelligence to augment positive attitudes toward work and positive behaviors.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Some jobs put us in contact with other people, and involve working in informal teams or require us to empathize with, and understand others. If we do not have a high level of emotional intelligence, then we may find these careers to be difficult or perhaps less satisfying.

Primary school teachers deal closely with students, the society and their family. Besides, the teacher’s roles are now so diverse that they have to become counselor, instructor, innovator, manager, organizer, motivator and facilitator to the students
under them. Teachers also need to communicate with other educators regarding their jobs and other areas of concern in enhancing their job. In addition, the diversity makes their job more challenging than the way it should be in the past years.

Thus, emotional intelligence is essential if students and teachers are to be successful in their area. Teachers' role requires that the teacher apply emotional intelligence when dealing with student learning, social life, and family matters.

1.3 Research Objective

1.3.1 General Objective

This study aims to measure the application of emotional intelligence and to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and work attitudes among primary school teachers.
1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objective of this study is to:

1.3.2.1 Identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among the primary school teachers.

1.3.2.2 Identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and career commitment among the primary school teachers.

1.3.2.3 Identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and job involvement among the primary school teachers.

1.3.2.4. Identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and affective organizational commitment among the primary school teachers.

1.3.2.5 Identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and continuance organizational commitment among the primary school teachers.

1.3.2.6 Identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-family conflict among the primary school teachers.
1.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is made up of two components as shown in Figure 1. The first component is the independent variable, which is emotional intelligence. It consists of five elements such as self awareness, self management, motivation, empathy and social skills.

<table>
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<td><strong>Work attitudes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Self-awareness</td>
<td>• Job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-management</td>
<td>• Career commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Motivation</td>
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<td>• Empathy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Social skills</td>
<td>• Continuance organizational commitment</td>
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Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The second component is the dependent variable, which is the work attitude of the primary school teachers, measured through job satisfaction, career commitment, job involvement, affective organizational commitment, continuance organizational commitment and work-family conflict. The dependent variable acts as the primary school teachers’ reaction due to the emotional intelligence that they apply in their job. It serves to determine whether there exists relationship between the emotional intelligence and work attitudes among the primary school teachers.
1.5 Hypotheses

Ho 1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction among the primary school teachers.

Ho 2: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and career commitment among the primary school teachers.

Ho 3: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job involvement among the primary school teachers.

Ho 4: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and affective organizational commitment among the primary school teachers.

Ho 5: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and continuance organizational commitment among the primary school teachers.

Ho 6: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and work-family conflict among the primary school teachers.
1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Significance to the Organization

The findings from this study are especially of importance for organizations to realize the importance of emotional intelligence and its effect on work attitudes of the primary school teachers.

Selecting primary school teachers who have high emotional intelligence may have a positive impact to the extent to which an organization succeeds in retaining its most critical workforce.

1.6.2 Significance to the Primary School Teachers

The findings from this study will also help the primary school teachers to realize the importance of emotional intelligence in their jobs and this will help them to identify their weaknesses and improve their level of emotional intelligence, in order to apply it effectively to enhance their work and effectively manage their stress and responsibility.
1.6.3 Significance to the Future Researchers

Future researchers will benefit from this study by taking teachers teaching in the urban areas as samples to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and work attitude among them and determine if there exist contrasts in the result of the study between rural and urban area.

1.7 Conceptual Definitions

1.7.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, access, and generate emotions, to assist thought, to understand emotions, and to regulate emotions so as to promote better emotions and thought (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are important attributes of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998).

1.7.2 Work Attitudes

Work attitudes refer to the individual’s way of feeling, thinking or behaving in their work (Carmeli, 2003).
1.7.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a complex emotional reactions to the job, whether the job able to satisfy his physical and psychological needs (Carmeli, 2003). Job satisfaction is often considered as a proxy for an employee’s well being at work.

1.7.2.2 Career Commitment

Career commitment is the employee’s attitude towards his profession or vocation. It refers to the identification with and involvement in one’s occupation (Hueller, Wallace & Price (1992) cited in Ria et. al (n.d).

1.7.2.3 Job Involvement

Job involvement is a belief descriptive of the present job and tends to be a function of how much the job can satisfy employee’s present needs (Carmeli, 2003).

1.7.2.4 Affective Organizational Commitment

Affective organizational commitment is the positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in the work organization. Employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to (Allen & Meyer, 1990 cited in Carmeli, 2003).
1.7.2.5 Continuance Organizational Commitment

Continuance organizational commitment is the extent to which employees feel committed to their organizations by virtue or the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (Carmeli, 2003). Employees with strong continuance commitment remain because they need to (Allen & Meyer, 1996 cited in Carmeli 2003).

1.7.2.6 Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family role, and vice versa (Carmeli, 2003).
1.8 Operational Definitions

1.8.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence includes regulating emotions in oneself and others, and using emotions in adaptive ways by knowing when and how to express emotions. This ability is crucial in building hospitality and in generating harmonious relationship among the individuals in the organization.

1.8.2 Work Attitudes

Relevant to this study, work attitudes is related to how an individual feels, thinks and behaves in his/her job. In this study, those factors that show the employee's work attitudes studied are job satisfaction, career commitment, job involvement, affective organizational commitment, continuance organizational commitment, and work-family conflict.

1.8.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the attitude an employee has towards his job.