The Effects Of Emotional Intelligence On Counterproductive Work Behaviors And Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

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Abstract

Numerous studies have identified emotional abilities as being strongly associated with success in academic achievement, general life experiences, and a wide range of factors related to people’s jobs. In the hospitality industry, emotional intelligence of an employee plays an essential role in carrying out duties and ensuring organizational outcomes. In order to interact constructively and effectively with others, it is crucial for employees in the hospitality industry to have the ability to manage, regulate and control their emotions. However, research thus far has focused on the positive aspects of emotional intelligence among the non-task related behaviors of employees. No study has used outcome variables in a negative dimension. In particular, since organizational citizenship behavior (OCBs) and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) as voluntary behaviors are non-task related behaviors that appear as employees’ emotional intelligence declines, they will be more significant as outcome variables. Thus, this study identifies the associations among emotional intelligence, CWBs, and OCBs that have not yet been fully explored in the hospitality industry literature. Survey questionnaires were distributed to hotels employees working in the city of Kuala Lumpur. This study will provide a better understanding of emotional intelligence and its relationship to OCBs and CWBs, provide a more informed link between theory and practice and address the gaps currently existing in literature today.

Keywords: counterproductive work behaviors, emotional intelligence, organizational citizenship behavior.

I. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as an interesting topic for research and has drawn the attention of many researchers. Many studies have been conducted extensively to examine how emotional intelligence affects both the
organizational effectiveness (Wong & Law, 2002; Weinberger, 2003) and the non-task related behaviors of employees (Cote & Miners, 2006; Cartwright & Pappas, 2008). With this increasing interest in emotions, the importance of emotional intelligence is emphasized because human relations in organizations are affected by emotional factors more than by rational factors (Jung & Yoon, 2011).

According to Mayer & Salovey (1997), emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion, the ability to access or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, and the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Therefore, the emotional intelligence of employees are crucial as employees with a high level of emotional intelligence will be able to manage their emotions in order to display organizationally desired emotions (Moon & Hur, 2011) and successful organizations require employees who can communicate effectively, control their emotions and demonstrate their technical abilities (Druskat & Wolff, 2001).

When employees fail to control their emotions are likely to fail in social interactions (Lopes et al., 2005) and experiencing negative emotions which resulted in counterproductive work behaviour (Anderson et al., 1995; Fox et al., 2001). Robinson & Bennett (1995) says that counterproductive work behaviors (CWB) are voluntary behaviours that violates significant organizational norms, and in doing so threatens the well being of the organization or its members, or both. Spector & Fox (2002) suggest that CWB resulted from an emotional response and aims either to attack the cause of the situation or to passively cope with the emotion.

Counterproductive work behavior is an urgent concern of the organization because it is assumed to cost organization billions of dollars each year (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Negative emotions are related to counterproductive work behavior because employees who create problem in others’ work and not help others usually have negative emotions (Khan, Afzal & Zia, 2010). Increased in counterproductive work behavior has been linked to decreased productivity, 3 employer dissatisfaction, and greater psychological distress (Dunlop & Lee, 2004 ; Tepper, 2000). Negative employee behavior is related to behavior of employees with others which in turn may reduce other employee performance and cause conflict (Folger & Skarlicki, 2005). Emotional intelligence may contribute to the quality of people relationships at work as communicative and social functions, conveying information about thoughts and intentions and helping to coordinate social encounters (Keltner & Haidt, 2001). If employee emotional intelligence is improved, deviant behavior related to organizational tasks would reduce (Mayer et al., 2000).

Studies in the past have shown that majority of the employees involve themselves in the negative behaviour of the workplace such as withholding effort, reporting late to work,
absenteeism, abusing medical certificates, working slowly and hiding needed resources (Giacalone & Greenberg, 1997; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). In Malaysia, counterproductive work behaviour (CWB) cases has increasingly reported each year and become a serious problem (Naser, 2011).

Despite the prevalence and costs of workplace deviance, our understanding of workplace deviance remains limited and much empirical research is yet to be done (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). In addition, the connection of study in the areas of emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviours is very rare (Azib, 2006).

While considerable evidence of the importance of EI has been acknowledged, research efforts on the effectiveness of emotional intelligence among hotel employees are lacking in the hospitality literature (Jung & Yoon, 2011; Carvelzani et.al, 2003; Langhorn, 2004).

In the Malaysia context, research regarding EI was done in various areas e.g. manufacturing (Tee, 2011) and banking (Noorlaila, 2010) but not the hospitality industry. Hence, there is a gap in literature with regards to understanding emotional intelligence in the hospitality industry in Malaysia and how employees emotional intelligence affects counterproductive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior.

Thus, this study identifies the associations among emotional intelligence, CWBs, and OCBs that have not yet been fully explored in the Malaysia hospitality industry literature.

II. Literature Review

Emotional intelligence, CWBs, and OCBs

Emotional intelligence originated from the concept of social intelligence as introduced by Thorndike (Thorndike, 1920) and it has been studied extensively in the recent years. Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the earliest who introduced the term emotional intelligence to show the ability of the people to deal with their emotions. Wong and Law (2002) explained that EI is an ability to understand one’s own emotions and those of others and to control emotions in diverse situations and they suggested that EI consists of four dimensions: others’ emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), self-emotion appraisal (SEA), and regulation of emotion (ROE). Wong and Law (2002) developed this model based on work developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990).

The first dimension, the others’ emotion appraisal (OEA) is the ability to perceive and understand others’ emotions. It relates to people’s ability to perceive and understand the emotions of those people around them. The second dimension, the use of emotion (UOE) is the ability to use one’s own emotion information in one’s performance and productive activities. A person who is highly capable in this dimension would be able to encourage him or herself to perform better continuously. The third dimension, self-emotion appraisal (SEA) is the ability to understand and express
one’s own emotions. This relates to the individual’s ability to understand their deep emotions and be able to express these emotions naturally. Lastly, the fourth dimension, regulation of emotion (ROE) is the ability to control one’s own emotions based on appropriate behavior in a given situation.

**Emotional intelligence and Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs)**

Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) are defined as “voluntary behavior of organizational members that violates significant organizational norms, and in doing so, threatens the well-being of the organization and/or its members” (Bennett & Robinson, 2000). Voluntary or chosen behavior would indicate that the employee is not motivated to conform and/or is motivated to act against established organizational norms. Bennett and Robinson (2000) identified two forms of deviance that is that are organizational deviance which is non personal and is aimed at harming the organization and interpersonal deviance which is interpersonal and detrimental to individuals. Behaviors within each of these types of deviance vary from relatively slight acts to more harsh acts. Fox et al. (2001) stated that CWBs are negative behaviors of employees toward organizations and colleagues.

Mayer et al. (2000) explained that, if employees’ emotional intelligence improved, deviant behaviors related to organizational tasks would be remarkably reduced, thereby revealing negative relationships between emotional intelligence and employees’ deviating behaviors. Martin et al. (1998) believed that employees’ emotional intelligence plays a role in preventing negative behaviors. Salgado (2002) and Colbert et al. (2004) noted that employees’ emotional continuity would adversely affect CWBs. Deshpande et al. (2005) found that, respondents with high EI perceived counterproductive behaviors to be more unethical than those with low EI. This suggests that people with high EI tend to be better corporate citizens and that better ethical attitudes towards their firm and work.

Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham, (2004) posit that people with high levels of EI engage less in deviant behaviors than those with low EI. Similarly, Eisenberg (2000) states that low trait of EI may be a key factor in a variety of deviant behavior.

This study therefore suggests that the emotional intelligence of employees could reduce CWBs. In conclusion, employees who lack emotional intelligence have a high level of CWBs. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1. Emotional intelligence is negatively related to CWBs.

**Emotional intelligence and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB)**

Since its introduction nearly twenty years back, OCB has been extensively researched on (Bateman & Organ, 1983). The vast majority of OCB research has focused on the effects of OCB on individual and organizational performance. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) are “the maintenance and enhancement of the social and
psychological context that supports task performance” (Organ, 1997). According to Katz (1964), organizational citizenship behavior were voluntary and creative behaviors to performed roles other than officially given duties by the organization, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal award system and are known to be contributing factors of organizational performance. Turnipseed & Rassuli (2005) define OCB as defending the organization when it is criticized or urging peers to invest in the organization; which means that OCB is ‘going beyond the call of duty’.

Organ (1988) identified five categories of OCB:
1) altruism refers to the helping of an individual coworker on a task,
2) courtesy refer to alerting others in the organization about changes that may affect their work,
3) conscientiousness refer to carrying out one’s duties beyond the minimum requirements,
4) sportsmanship refer to refraining from complaining about trivial matters, and
5) civic virtue refer to participating in the governance of the organization.

Each of these dimensions explains the different type of behaviors the employee have.

Modassir & Singh (2008) examined the relationship of EI with transformational leadership (TL) and OCB of the followers. The results indicated that EI of leaders enhances the OCB of their followers.

High emotional intelligence leadership appears to have a strong influence on an employee’s willingness to engage in OCBs (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Cote & Miners (2006) conclude that emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior has been found that is positive relation. The results of the former study supported the higher emotional intelligence get higher task performance and organizational citizenship behavior directed at the organization (Petrides, Frederickson, and Furnham, 2004; Cote and Miners, 2006).

Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed: Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence is positively related to OCB

**Research methodology**

Targeted participation for this study were front-line employees from hotels in the Klang valley area. The researcher uses the method of convenience sampling due to time and budget constraints. A total of 480 employees had been invited to participate in this research; a self-administered written questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The total number of usable questionnaire is 285. Therefore, the response rate for this study is 59%.

**Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)**

This study adopted the work of Wong and Law (2002). Wong and Law developed a self-report EI scale named as the Wong and Law EI Scale (WLEIS) based on the work of Mayer and Salovey (1990). The WLEIS contains 16 items Likert-type self-report statements.
Studies done by Karim (2010), Mulla et al. (2008) and Kim and Agrusa (2011) provided evidence for the reliability and validity of the WLEIS scale. Besides that, the WLEIS was developed through Chinese respondents in Hong Kong, it would be a better starting point for other Asian cultures than EI scale originated in the Western countries (Wong, Law, & Wong, 2004).

Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) measures

Currently, this study adopted the work of Fox and Spector (1999), to measure counterproductive work behavior. The components developed by Fox and Spector (1999) were divided into four dimensions namely minor organizational, serious organizational, minor interpersonal and serious interpersonal. Counterproductive work behavior is measured by using 25 items based on seven point scale (1: strongly disagree to 7: strongly agree). The scales have been found to have sufficient levels of reliability and validity.

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

To measure organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), this study adopted the work of Organ (1988). OCB will be divided by five categories; altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

III. Findings and Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS' PROFILE Items</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of Service in the Current Employment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Less than 1 year</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>• Male</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 to 5 years</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>• Female</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6 to 10 years</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More than 10 years</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working experience:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less than 1 year</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>• 21-30 years</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 to 5 years</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>• 31-40 years</td>
<td>32.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 6 to 10 years</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>• 41-50 years</td>
<td>16.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 11 to 15 years</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>• 51 years and above</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 16 to 20 years</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• More than 20 years</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Departments:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Front Office</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>Education Level:</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housekeeping</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>• Secondary School</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• F&amp;B</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>• Certificate</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human Resources Department</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>• Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Admin &amp; Operations</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>• Master Degree</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Finance &amp; Accounting</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Marketing</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Others</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
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| Table 1: Respondents’ Profile

Most of the respondents are between 21 to 30 years. Respondents with age 21-30 was the highest among others with 44.2%, followed by 31-40 years, which is 32.6 % and the lowest would be 6.3% aged 51 years and above. There were 156 (54.7%) male and 129 (45.3%) female participants. Next, the third demographic is length of current service. The highest percentage of employees had 1 to 5 years (35.4%) while the lowest percent in working experience is 17.9% which are more than 10 years and the respondents is 51 respondents. The highest number of respondents came from the front office department (34%) while the lowest number of
respondents came from the marketing department with 5 respondents (1.8%).
Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Of Variables

Table 2 presents Cronbach alpha value for each dimension used in the study. All of the Cronbach alpha values were more than 0.7 which indicate that the dimensions used for each variable are highly reliable (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2006; Nunnally, 1978).

Table 3: Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWB) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Table 3 showed the results of correlation analysis used to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviors. To further check for multicollinearity, the variance inflation factors (VIF) was examined and the VIF values obtained are all less than 2.0. Hence, there is no multicollinearity problem for multivariate analysis.

The correlation of between emotional intelligence and counterproductive work behaviors is significant at -0.339. Thus, there is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, H1 is accepted. This parallels the findings of Siu (2009) that emotional intelligence is inversely related to counterproductive work behaviors. Jung & Yoon (2011) also reported similar results in which their study was conducted in the hospitality industry in Korea.

The correlation of between emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior is significant at 0.487. Thus, there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, H2 is accepted.

These finding support previous work research by Brief and Motowidlo (1986), Isen et al. (1987), MacKenzie et al. (1991), Wong and Law (2002), and also Cote and Miners (2006). These findings are consistent with MacKenzie et al. (1991) results where employees with higher emotional intelligence showed more OCBs. According to Abraham (1999), employees with high emotional intelligence would better understand colleagues’ feelings than those with low emotional intelligence; as such, they were more likely to exhibit altruistic behaviors. Hence, the results of the current study established that emotional intelligence would result in voluntary and positive behaviors.

Table 4: OLS Regression Analysis

Table 4 reports the OLS regression results. The F-statistics indicates the
overall significance of the models at 0.01 significance level. The empirical evidence of Model (1) depicts a significantly negative relationship between EI and CWB. The value of R² and the value of F-statistics (36.791) confirm a moderate explanatory power of the model. This finding is consistent with hypothesis 1 of this study as well as prior studies (Jung & Yoon, 2011), indicating that employees with high levels of emotional intelligence have a lower level of CWBs. In other words, Emotional intelligence (EI) is negatively related to CWBs.

The empirical evidence of Model (2) depicts a significantly positive relationship between EI and OCB. The value of R² and the value of F-statistics (88.026) confirm a strong explanatory power of the model. This finding is consistent with hypothesis 2 of this study as well as prior studies (e.g. Cote & Miners, 2006), indicating that employees with high levels of emotional intelligence have a higher level of OCBs. In other words, Emotional intelligence is positively related to OCB.

IV. Conclusion

This study is important because it explores the emotional intelligence of employees and verifies the causal relationship between hotel employees’ CWBs and OCBs.

V. Limitations

As stated previously in the document, ours was a cross sectional study in which the respondents rated themselves, which may have an effect on the study due to the difference in perception regarding the questions included in the study.

Secondly, there are chances of the contamination of data due to the self rating procedure, as in case of counterproductive work behavior, the respondents are usually expected to rate themselves low on CWB scale, even if they are assured of confidentiality.

Finally, future research needs to expand this study to samples of staffs. Researchers may also conduct longitudinal study to provide strong evidence of the association between EI, OCB and CWB of same group of respondents. Another interesting area of future research is the impact of some demographics factors as moderators.

References


