
Emotional Intelligence – A Prerequisite for Sustainable Growth and Employability

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Abstract

E.I is an integral part of achievement for success in any field, academic as well as job/workplace achievement. An Incendiary dichotomy is at play in India today. 600 million people are below the age of 25, incidentally the Indian workforce although distended with young and aspiring workers have a dearth in the skills required to remain globally competitive. The current paper explores the Emotional Intelligence of 81 MBA students at the verge of first year who will be appearing for placements in the next session. A random sampling method was used and data were processed with SPSS. The research proves that students are not competent to face the job market having low scores in the five parameters of E.I. There is a gap in the Business Communication syllabus as students do not show significant potential levels in E.I after nearly ten months of course progression. Therefore the “youth bulge” need to be trained through collaborative teaching methods and innovations in their syllabus and teaching techniques to remain internationally competitive.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Globally Competitive, Youth Bulge, Collaborative Teaching

Introduction

The creation of jobs is an integral part of development. The visionary transformation of a developed India from its developing stage evokes certain questions like:-

- Can Indian students fill up the universal requirement of skilled labour force having more than 50% of its population below the age of 25?
- Can training be adequately imparted to the burgeoning youth workforce making them employable?
- Can the skill and training keep up with our quickening economic growth?

These significant queries can be answered by rapidly and efficiently taking up the cudgel and empowering the youth with necessary skill and training which is the key driving force behind economic expansion and social development. India has more than 600 million people who comprise nearly half of its population as “youth bulge” but unfortunately without adequate employability skills or training. About 13 million youngsters join the workforce in India annually, the labour ministry reports that one in every three graduate’s upto the age of 29 remain unemployed. India has a goldmine of raw talent which can be honed for the utilization of the countries benefit.

The Indian working population is estimated to grow at least till 2040 according to the World Bank report. The Public as well as private sector has become conscious and risen to the task of equipping the youth with expertise and training to make them employable, confirming that there is no gap between demand and supply. An overall increase of 23% has been forecasted in hiring for the coming year. The government has already started taking up initiatives by relaxing FDI norms thereby encouraging both domestic and multinational companies to manufacture in India and trade abroad. The government initiatives include inclusion of modern technology at work place which means the workers will require highly skilled training.

According to the Financial Express, “As the government builds industrial corridors, it needs to recognize that it is the classrooms where the leaders will be created to herald these industries”. The government has started various skill development programs but it is high time that classroom teaching should be geared up in nurturing young talents especially in soft skills. The 21st century which is highly infused with the spirit of competition, successful placements become a yardstick for management students. Student’s selection in the campus placement is highly dependent on soft skills out of which

emotional intelligence is surging out as the most popular skill trait in the business world. The focus has altered from Intelligent Quotient (I.Q) to Emotional Quotient (E.Q) and research proves that Emotional intelligence is essential for all fields; academic as well as job/workplace success (Corning, 2002; Snow, 2001; Bar-on, 2005).

The shift in companies hiring strategy is attributed to the notion that emotional intelligence is a strong indicator of how an employee will perform on the job and what will be his leadership behavior (Downey, Papageorgiou, & Stough, 2006). The past research has further established that high level of emotional intelligence is associated with lower levels of stress & anxiety and higher levels of job satisfaction (Sherafat mandyari et al., 2012 and George, 2000) Despite the predominance of literature on emotional and social intelligence and team building, little research has been done on the Indian Management students Emotional intelligence in relation to the Business communication syllabus and enhancing effective teaching module.

Review of Literature

Goleman (2005) states that emotional intelligence (E.Q) accounts for 80% of success and it outperforms intelligence quotient (I.Q) in predicting achievement. Incorporating social and emotional skills (EQ) training into the business communication curriculum is an important step in preparing our students to function effectively in a global workplace with its complex informal networks, teams, and participatory leadership, where they must constantly learn new skills and adapt quickly to changing technology (Lopes & Salovey, 2004; Johnson, 2003; Johnson & F. Johnson, 2003) Many

business schools recognize the value of team skills training and have implemented such programs for their students (Moriarity & Buckley, 2003; Thomas & Busby, 2003; McGraw & Tidwell, 2001; Greenan et al., 1997; Mills et al., 1991). Proponents agree that information should not be conveyed solely in lecture format, but that emotional skills should be taught in an emotional and experiential context as well (Kremer & McGuinness, 1998; Dwyer, 2001). Some practitioners urge the use of a team approach to teach interpersonal skills (McGrew & Lewis, 1998). A study conducted by Rozell, Pettijohn, & Parker (2002) found mild but significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success, as measured by grade point average. Yahaya et al. (2012) found the significant relationship of self-awareness, emotional management and empathy with academic achievement. Petrides, Frederickson, and Furnham (2004) attempted to find the relationship between trait emotional intelligence, academic performance, and cognitive ability among British education students. The study found that emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between academic performance and cognitive ability. The above researches have proved that there is a significant relation between Emotional intelligence and students overall wellbeing where emotional skills need to be incorporated into business communication courses; however no researcher has tried to find out the outcome of emotional intelligence in pre-placement students who are on the verge of appearing the job interview process and suggesting means to overcome the shortcomings. Therefore the gap in literature is evident.

On the basis of the gaps in review of literature following conceptual model (Fig. 1) was framed

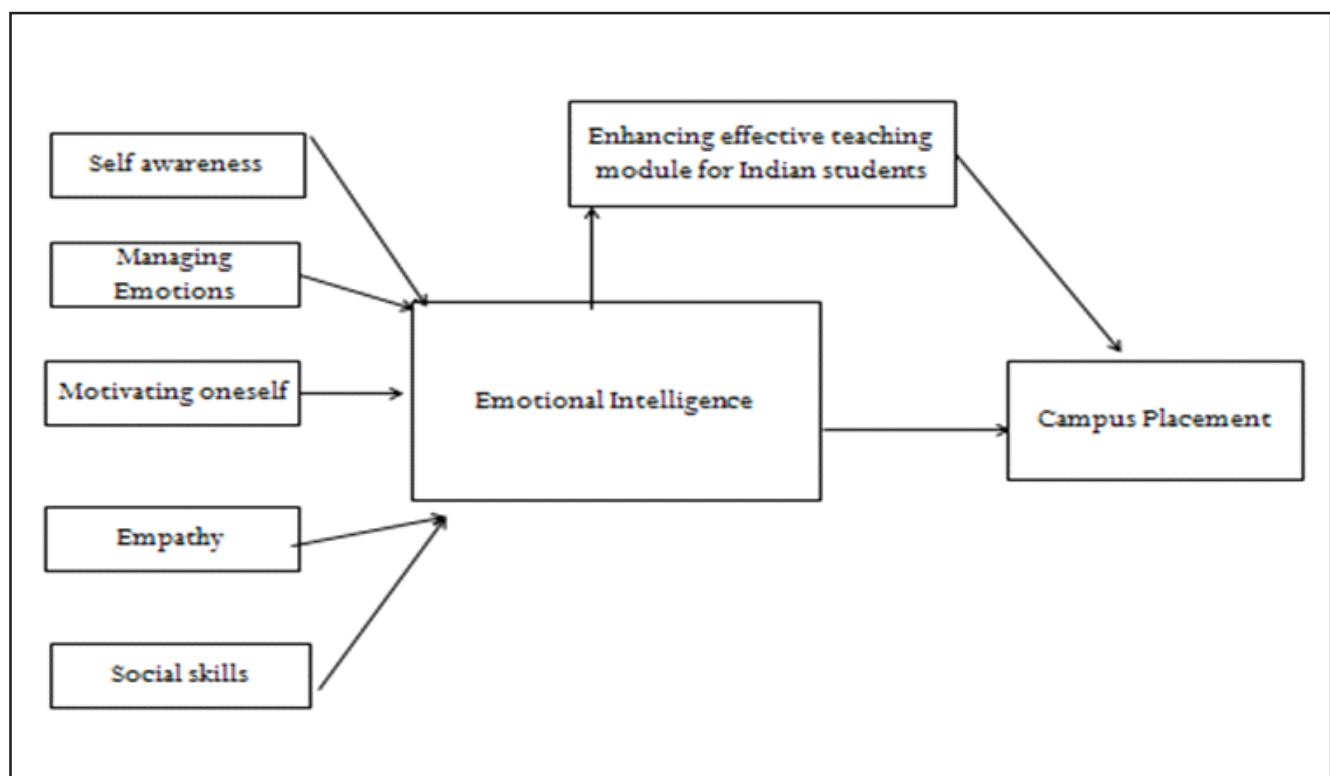


Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework for Emotional Intelligence in Relation to Effective Teaching Module

Objectives of the Study

- To study Emotional Intelligence of the MBA students preparing for placements.
- To study the means how the Indian “youth-bulge” lacking in the skills can become globally competitive.

Emotional Intelligence and the Business Communication Syllabus

In comparison to I.Q which is considered relatively more constant and unalterable, Emotional intelligence indicates that it can be improved through learning (Cherniss Goleman, 1998; Goleman 1995).

Because social and emotional learning is processed differently than is cognitive or technical learning, it necessitates a different training and development approach (Cherniss & Goleman 1998). Including Emotional Intelligence training into the Business Communication Curriculum can give students a more holistic approach towards life and career thereby gaining skillfulness in utilizing their knowledge than just regurgitating it. A very pertinent demarcation between teaching about management and teaching to manage is advocated by a variety of these writers (Mintzberg, 1975; Miner, 1973; Pfeffer 1981).

The necessity of training students in this area gains more priority basing on the analysis of pre-placed MBA students (sample size 81) who were found lacking in this area.

Study Method

A Simple Random Sampling method was used and Data were collected through a Structured Questionnaire. Descriptive statistics like Mean, Standard deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis has been used to analyze the data. Sample size taken was 81 MBA students of a B-School in Bhubaneswar.

Research Approach and Design

Quantitative research approach with descriptive design was used for the present study.

Target Population

Target population consisted of first year MBA students of a B-School in Odisha.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data from students. The sample size is 81 (pre-placed MBA students).

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used to measure the emotional intelligence (EI) was a questionnaire. The scale consists of 50 items. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on given items on five-point Likert scale ranging

from (1) Does not apply to (5) Always applies. The five dimensions on which the scores were given are 1) Self awareness 2) Managing emotions 3) Motivating oneself 4) Empathy 5) Social skills.

Dimensions

Self awareness: comprised of questions 1,6,11,16,21,26,31,36,41,46.

It is the ability to recognize ones own feeling and to understand own habitual emotional responses to events and the effect on behavior and performance.

Managing emotions: Managing emotions comprised of questions 2,7,12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47. Managing emotions dimensions is the ability to stay focused and think clearly even when experiencing powerful emotions.

Motivating oneself: Motivating oneself consists of questions 3, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 43 and 48, Motivating dimensions consists of the ability to use your deepest emotions to move and guide you towards your goal.

Empathy: Empathy comprises of questions 4, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, 34, 39, 44, 49. It is the ability to sense, understand and respond to what other people are feeling.

Social Skills: This dimension consists of questions 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50. Social skill dimensions are the ability to manage, influence and inspire emotions in others.

Criterion Measure

The level of emotional intelligence has been defined as “High” (Mean score <4), “Average” (Mean score <3) “low” (Mean score >3).

For the purpose of data collection a structured questionnaire was distributed randomly to second semester students who were about to appear their university examination. The students who were the respondents had completed nearly one year of their course and would appear placements within a short span of time.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS 20. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the result.

- The instrument used to measure the Emotional Intelligence (E.I) in the present study was a structured questionnaire. This scale consists of 50 items having five dimensions i.e. Self awareness, Managing emotions, Motivating oneself, Empathy and Social skills.
- Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on given items on five point – Likert scale ranging from ‘completely disagree’(1) to ‘completely agree’(5).

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Self Awareness	3.8492	.43648	-.924	.267	2.020	.529
Managing Emotions	3.3975	.44693	.022	.267	-.178	.529
Motivating Oneself	3.6222	.53502	.146	.267	-.620	.529
Empathy	3.7314	.45407	-.016	.267	-.325	.529
Social Skills	3.8111	.47958	-.857	.267	1.053	.529
Valid N (list wise)						

- For Self awareness the score is 3.84 which is just above average conveying that the self awareness of the respondents is not very satisfactory. It also has a standard deviation of 0.43 which is quite low. It has a negative skewness of -924. For Managing Emotions the mean value is 3.39 which is even lower than self awareness. The standard deviation is 0.44 and its skewness is 0.22. For Motivating oneself the score is 3.622, which is not satisfactory. The standard deviation is .45 and has a negative skewness of -016. The empathy measured is 3.73, just above average. The standard deviation .45 and negative skewness of -016. The mean for social

skills is 3.811 and the standard deviation is .479 with negative skewness. The study found that the E.I of pre-placed students is very low. All five parameters – Self Awareness, Managing Emotions, Motivating Oneself, Empathy and Social Skills prove to be unsatisfactory. The mean score for Self Awareness and Social Skills has been ranked higher among the other factors where as Managing Emotions and Motivating oneself has been ranked lowest. It is a matter of real concern for the MBA students preparing for jobs because E.I has a great bearing on their performance in Campus Placements.

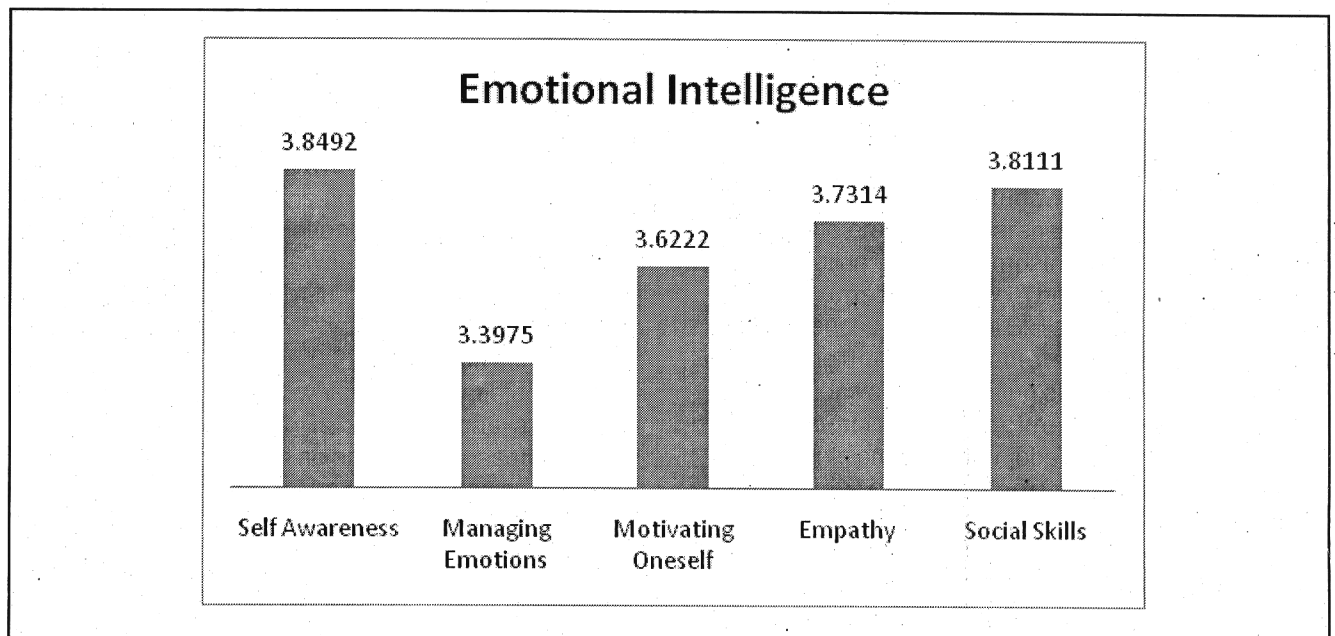


Figure 2: The Mean Chart

Training Business Management students

In order to encourage social and emotional learning we have banked on contemporary studies of finest practices (Fabio Sala 2002) and (Cherniss & Goleman, 1998). The four models for training students are divided into four stages (1) Preparation (2) Training (3) Transfer and maintenance (4) Evaluating.

In the Preparation phase it is vital to assess student's strengths and limitations, providing feedback and

motivation especially for those who have lower level of confidence. Learners can also take up the self-evaluation method to rate their own abilities. The instructor should play the role of a facilitator in tuning the minds of students to undertake a new dimension and accept changes in the behavioral process. In the next stage of training the Instructor gauges each student's readiness fostering a positive relation between them, communicating goals emphasizing self directed efforts, allowing the practice of new skills and finally providing feedback. In the third

phase of transfer and maintenance the students are expected to utilize their emotional skills, a lot of which depends upon the organizational culture and motivating

environment provided for them. Finally the evaluation phase is necessary for assuring that learning outcomes are mastered and continuous improvements are taking place.

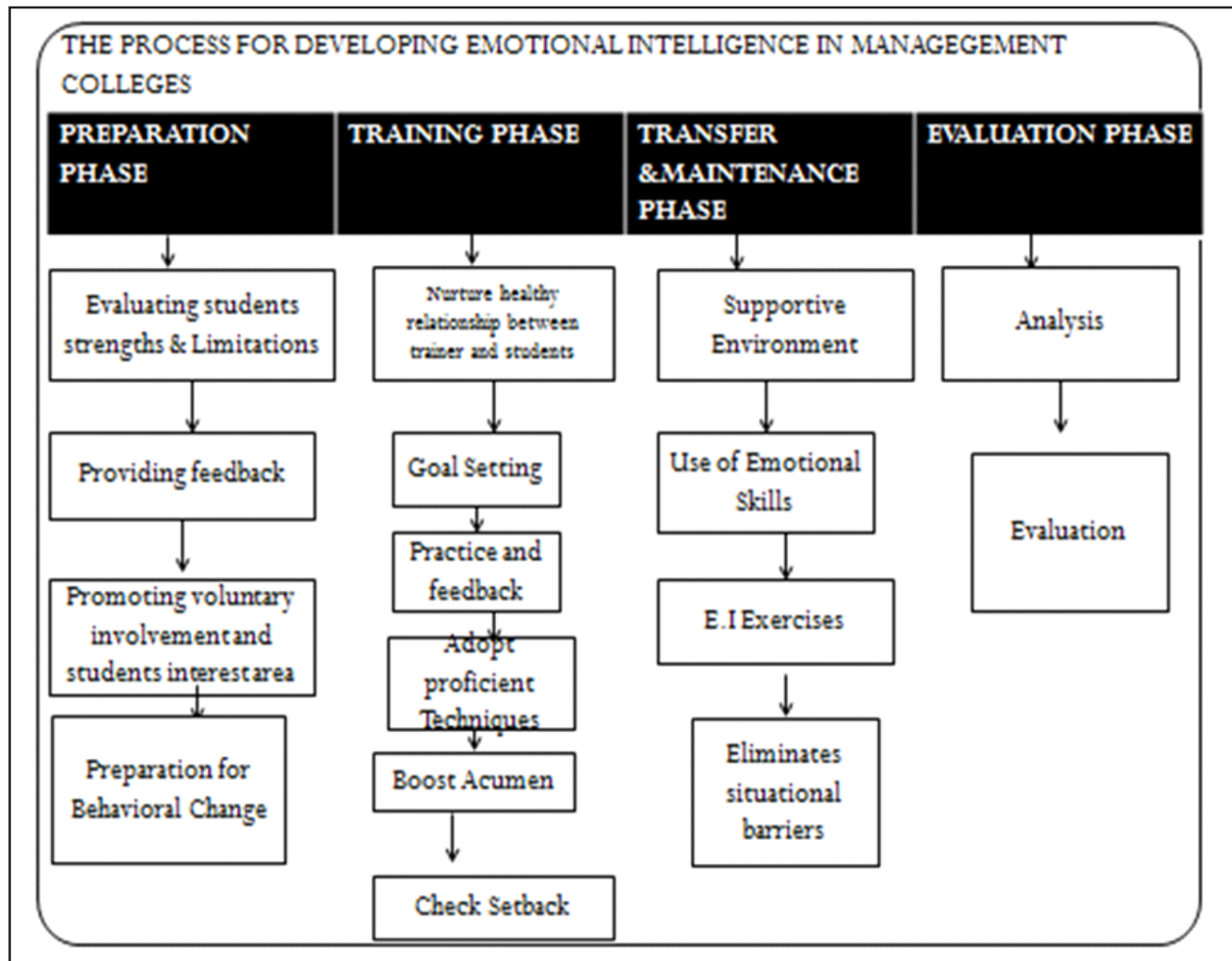


Figure 3: On the basis of the Proposed Teaching Methodology a Model has been Prepared

Conclusion

As business educators it is our moral and national obligation to make our students employable by providing them with a strong foundation in the knowledge and skills they require to be effective leaders and capable managers both. A holistic approach to teaching will be promoted on the inclusion of EI theory and practices in the business communication syllabus. This is an important area where students are found to be lacking. Students should be given assignments and evaluation should take place to find out the improvement level as well as performance. Students should use tools to compare and measure their own performance in the past and the present. Basing on the four phases (1) Preparation (2) Training (3) Transfer and maintenance and (4) Evaluating, a good syllabus can be constructed and implemented as a part of the Business course. Such a model should be introduced into B-schools as a part of its outcome assessment program for accreditation. This will enable the Indian “youth-bulge” to cater to the needs of the domestic as well as international job market and make its presence felt as of the leading countries in manpower and skills both.

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