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Relationship between emotional intelligence and self-actualization in managers of a trading company

KEYWORDS

emotional intelligence;
emotional awareness;
self-motivation;
empathy;
emotion understanding;
self-actualization;
self-esteem

ABSTRACT

Introduction. The relevance of studying the emotions of employees in organizations is due to the economic and psychological crisis, as a result of which many managers are trying to cope with their stress at work and, in some cases, their job duties remotely.

The study *aims* to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and individual characteristics of self-actualization in managers of a large trading company.

Materials and methods. Forty employees from various trade organizations took part in the study. The following methods were used: the emotional intelligence assessment technique (N. Hall) and the self-actualization test (SAT) (E. Sjostrom). Spearman rank correlation method was used.

Research results. A reliable direct relationship between self-motivation and contact was obtained ($r_s = 0.460$; $p \leq 0.05$). Self-motivation, defined as managing one's emotions, determines a person's ability to quickly establish contacts with people and communicate.

The feedback of self-motivation and self-esteem was revealed ($r_s = -0.555$; $p \leq 0.05$). According to the respondents' evaluations, social success is not affected by a person's ability to manage emotions and feelings.

An inverse relationship of empathy and self-esteem was also revealed ($r_s = -0.463$; $p \leq 0.05$). Respondents believe that empathy with others can hinder the achievement of social success, recognition, and self-esteem.

Conclusion. Emotional intelligence of employees: contributes to developing their leadership skills, increases stress resistance at work, job satisfaction, motivation, interest in organizational learning, reduces emotional exhaustion and fatigue, and is a means of conflict resolution. All this has a positive effect on the company's efficiency.

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INTRODUCTION

The global health crisis (COVID-19), which is as much an economic crisis as a psychological one, obliges managers to be even more aware of their own emotions and those of their subordinates, many of whom are anxious and struggling to cope with their stress at work and, in some cases, with their work responsibilities remotely.

The changed conditions of labor activity due to dynamic societal transformations place new demands on the professional's competence. In addition to being well oriented in the modern information space and their professional field, young people today for successful self-fulfillment in the profession are required to be skilled organizers of dialogic communication, effective stress managers and risk managers, capable of managing conflict and stressful situations, overcoming difficulties and preventing professional risks. In this regard, the structure of professionally important qualities should include special abilities of emotional intelligence.

The study of emotional intelligence and its relationships with various properties of personality, in particular the processes of self-actualization, is a new and understudied problem in modern psychological science. Several modern theories view emotion as a special type of knowledge [1; 2]. In accordance with this approach to understanding emotions, researchers have introduced the concept of "emotional intelligence," which is defined as the ability to interact with the inner environment of their feelings and desires (R. Busk); the ability to understand personality relations represented in emotions and to manage the emotional sphere based on intellectual analysis and synthesis (P. Salovey, J.D. Mayer [3]); a set of emotional, personal and social abilities that influence someone's overall ability to effectively deal with environmental demands and pressures (R. Bar-On, 2000) [4]. Summarizing the available approaches, we can note that individuals with highly developed emotional intelligence have a pronounced ability to understand their own emotions and the emotions of others, to manage the emotional sphere, which leads to higher adaptability and efficiency in life and profession [5].

The impact of emotional intelligence on improving business performance is widely represented in contemporary management research.

According to Dr. Monalisha, who studied the level of emotional intelligence among 250 managers from the corporate, banking, and sugar industries, the majority of respondents defined their level of emotional intelligence as above average. The higher the level of the position in the organization, the greater the values demonstrated by the subjects [6].

Christopher K. Gransberry writes that emotional intelligence contributes to developing leadership and managerial qualities [7].

L. Melita Prati, Yongmei Liu & Ken Bass found that the higher the emotional intelligence, the better employees cope with depression, are less stressed at work, and enjoy it [8].

According to S. Stoyanova-Bozhkova, T. Paskova & D. Buhalis, emotional intelligence positively impacts staff job satisfaction, motivation, and overall performance of the hotel business. The authors relied on data from in-depth interviews conducted in tourism and hospitality organizations in the UK [9].

Kara Wolfe & Hyun Jeong Kim, studying the relationship between emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and length of service among hotel managers working in the United States, got some pretty interesting results. They show that some components of emotional intelligence are predictors of job satisfaction (communication, rewards), and the interpersonal component of emotional intelligence is a predictor of the duration of work in the hospitality industry [10].

Vietnamese researchers Huong Trang Kim and Pantea Foroudi investigated the impact of managers' emotional intelligence (EQ) and cognitive abilities (IQ) on company performance. They found that employees' emotional intelligence and cognitive abilities have a positive impact on company performance. In their view, organizations can benefit from hiring, encouraging, and promoting emotionally intelligent managers with good cognitive abilities and managerial skills to improve company performance [11].

Abhishek Shukla & Rajeev Srivastava, on a sample of 564 retail workers, studied the extent to which employees' emotional intelligence and socio-demographic characteristics influence their stress levels. According to scientists, emotional intelligence has a greater influence on stress levels than gender, age, marital status, education, income, and work experience. Researchers rightly note that it is necessary to reduce the number of external stressors and develop the emotional intelligence of employees [12].

According to Harriette Bettis-Outland et al., low levels of emotional intelligence can hinder the acceptance of new information, leading to a decrease in interest in learning in the organization [13].

According to Li Liu et al., the development of emotional intelligence through education and emotional work training in Chinese doctors can partially reduce their fatigue [14].

Kwang-Hi Park & Dae-Kwan Kim interviewed receptionists at 12 five-star hotels in Seoul. Their goal is to identify the relationship between emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and employees' emotional intelligence. It has been found that the higher workers' emotional intelligence, the lower their emotional exhaustion [15].

Michael A. Winardi et al. conducted a systematic review of research on emotional intelligence. According to a team of scientists, emotional intelligence can be a key tool for conflict resolution [16].

Gabriel A. Adetula compares emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence as indicators that influence work performance among 300 law enforcement officers in Nigeria. He confirmed that emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence together have a positive impact on performance. These indicators, in their opinion, should be used in the selection of police officers and other security agencies [17].

Thus, we can conclude that employees' emotional intelligence contributes to the development of their leadership skills, increases stress resistance at work, job satisfaction, motivation, interest in organizational learning, reduces emotional exhaustion and fatigue, and is a means of conflict resolution. All this has a positive effect on the company's efficiency.

According to our assumption, emotional intelligence affects the individual manifestations of self-actualization of the individual. Self-actualization is a multifaceted and complex

phenomenon, first described by K. Goldstein and studied in more detail by humanistic psychologists (A. Maslow, K. Rogers, et al.). It has been studied in various forms in allied and close to humanistic psychology directions – the socio-cultural psychoanalysis of C. Horney and E. Fromm, Gestalt therapy by F. Peirles, existential psychology by D. Buchental and R. May, philosophical works by M. K. Mamardashvili. Nowadays, socio-psychological aspects of personal growth and self-actualization (L.A. Korosteleva, E.E. Vahromov, et al.) are increasingly considered. Self-actualization is the process and result of the fullest expression of one's abilities, the development, and realization of one's personal full potential [18].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study *aims* to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and individual characteristics of self-actualization in managers of a large trading company. The sample consisted of 40 men and women, with an active professional age of 22 to 41 years.

The following psychodiagnostic techniques were used: the emotional intelligence assessment technique (N. Hall) and the self-actualization test (SAT) (E. Sjostrom).

The reliability of the obtained data was determined by the Spearman rank correlation method using the computer program for statistical data processing SPSS.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The first stage of the study examined the abilities of emotional intelligence: emotional awareness, self-motivation, empathy, the ability to recognize the emotions of others. The results showed that 35% of managers have an average level of emotional intelligence. They can voluntary control activity and communication employing certain emotional-volitional efforts: self-control and adequate emotional response. The rest (65%) had a low level of emotional intelligence. It is characterized by involuntary emotional reactions: low self-control and high situational conditioning (i.e., not the person influences the situation, but the situation influences the person and provokes certain actions and emotional reactions). Management of activities occurs through the external motives of obedience to leadership, the desire to earn approval.

When analyzing the structural components of emotional intelligence, it was found that the highest values in managers have qualities of emotional awareness, empathy, recognition, and understanding of the emotions of others. They believe that being aware of true feelings helps to better manage life. High values of empathy indicate a developed ability to empathize with and understand others. Recognizing the emotions of others helps to respond appropriately to moods, urges, and desires. Test subjects believe that they can improve other people's moods and be consulted about relationships between people. Low levels of self-motivation and

management of one's emotions indicate a lack of self-control skills. Respondents answered that they were unable to remain calm when they experienced pressure from outside, they found it difficult to cope with feelings in situations of difficulty and failure, and for a long time, they were all filled with negative emotions. Based on the above, we can conclude that managers have knowledge of their own emotions and the emotions of others and are capable of empathy and sympathy, but have difficulty in regulating and controlling their emotional states and dealing with problematic situations.

Then we studied the following indicators of managers' self-actualization: time competence; self-support; the value of self-actualization; behavioral flexibility; reactive sensitivity; immediacy; self-esteem; self-acceptance; acceptance of human nature; acceptance of own aggression; contactivity; cognitive needs; creativity. The results indicate a high level of need for self-actualization in the managers of the company. The study of personal potential showed that the highest values were found on the factors of self-esteem, recognition of the value of self-actualization, sensitivity to their experiences, the immediacy of feelings and behavior, time orientation, and self-support. The last place in ranking the qualities of a self-actualizing personality in the subjects is occupied by cognitive needs. According to the revealed indicators, it is possible to make a psychological portrait of a self-actualized person, according to managers' assessments, as a socially successful and active person who lives in the present, feels independent in own actions, tries to be guided in life by own goals, beliefs, attitudes, and principles, is free in choice, but has average cognitive interests and creative orientation.

Next, we studied the influence of indicators of emotional intelligence on the manifestation of self-actualization in managers. Correlation analysis of the data revealed a significant direct correlation between self-motivation and contactivity ($r_s = 0.460$; $p \leq 0.05$). The results obtained give reason to believe that self-motivation, defined as the ability to manage one's emotions, determines the ability of a person to quickly establish contacts with people and communicate.

The feedback of self-motivation and self-esteem was revealed ($r_s = -0.555$; $p \leq 0.05$). According to the respondents' evaluations, social success is not affected by a person's ability to manage emotions and feelings.

An inverse relationship of empathy and self-esteem was also revealed ($r_s = -0.463$; $p \leq 0.05$). Respondents believe that empathy with others can hinder the achievement of social success, recognition, and self-esteem.

DISCUSSION

Thus, the ability to manage emotions positively impacts establishing contact with employees and successful communication. Consequently, it can make a positive contribution to improving the overall performance of the business of employees.

The results of our study are consistent with those of Xue Li et al., who found a significant positive correlation between well-being at work and communication satisfaction, emotional

intelligence, and empathy. Emotional intelligence had a mediated relationship with well-being at work [19].

We also agree with V. Gholam et al., who found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational effectiveness and their manifest variables (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) on the example of a small trading company [20].

We also agree with Dirk Lindebaum & Peter J. Jordan, who rely on data from a survey of 55 project managers in the UK construction industry. Researchers argue that the benefits of emotional intelligence should not be exaggerated in the context of some industries, particularly construction. In their view, emotional intelligence is just one of the many competencies needed by successful construction project managers. Thus, according to scientists, project managers' emotional intelligence indicators did not correlate with their cognitive indicators related to professional effectiveness [21].

CONCLUSIONS

1. The majority of the subjects were found to have average values of emotional intelligence. Managers have some emotional awareness and can understand emotions but have difficulty managing their emotional states.

2. The results indicate a high level of need for self-actualization in the managers of the company. The highest values were found on the factors of self-esteem, recognition of the value of self-actualization, sensitivity to one's experiences, the immediacy of feelings and behavior, time orientation, and self-support. The last place in ranking the qualities of a self-actualizing personality in the subjects is occupied by cognitive needs.

3. Correlation analysis of the data allowed us to establish that a reliable direct connection between self-motivation and contactivity was obtained. The inverse relationship of self-motivation and self-esteem, empathy, and self-esteem was revealed. According to managers, contactiveness in communication directly depends on the ability of the professional to motivate himself, causing the emotion, adequate to the situation. A reliable inverse relationship between self-motivation, empathy, on the one hand, and self-esteem was revealed. This means that, according to the subjects, the higher the social success and self-esteem, the lower the ability to manage emotions and empathy for the feelings of others.

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