ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
In last two decades huge amount of researches have been done which have largely increased the knowledge about Emotional Intelligence (EI). These researches have shown that EI plays an important role in professional success and performance related to workplace. Several of organizations of various industries are accepting the importance of EI and training their employees to become more emotionally intelligent. It results in increasing performance and productivity. In Construction projects various professionals like clients, architect, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, engineers etc. have to work together to achieve the organizational goals. Due to this complexity it becomes a challenging environment to organize the people in a better way so that the goals of the organization can be achieved. It requires a good interaction between the participants of the project by which the construction activities can be managed successfully. This clearly means that high level of emotional intelligence (EI) is necessary in participants of project. Many organizations are realizing that their employees should also have non-technical or soft skills like team work, leadership, communication and management. These all skills are the part of emotional intelligence (EI) and it has been found in various researches that high level of these skills results in better performance, management and success in various professions. This paper provides a better understanding of emotional intelligence and shows how it is related with the performance of construction project management. Literature on emotional intelligence is studied deeply and organized in such a way that it becomes easy for construction management authorities to understand emotional intelligence and its importance in the construction industry or construction management programs.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Construction Industry.

http://www.iaeme.com/IJCIET/issues.asp?JType=IJCIET&VType=7&IType=4

1. INTRODUCTION
It is one of the most important aspect in any industry to manage the people in most effective way so that the organizational and project goals can be achieved. Construction industry is considered as the industry which has the most challenging conditions to manage the workforce in a better way to achieve organizational success (1). As construction activities are the project based in nature so it has the
combination of different professionals like designer, contractor, suppliers etc. and they work together for a short period of time to bring the success in achieving organizational goals. And generally they all focus on motives of their own organization. It becomes a challenge for the project manager due to multidisciplinary nature of his project team to appoint right staff for different stages of project (1). And for project managers various skills and traits are essential in order to manage the whole activities of the construction project. There are mainly five general skills which are the base for enhancing the skills of project management, i.e. communication, leadership, negotiation, problem solving and marketing (2). All these skills are known as non-technical or soft skills and these are dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (3). Since last two decades project Managements are paying more attention towards creating an environment where there is more collaboration and team work. Better interaction between the participants is necessary for this. When we focus on better interaction it becomes clear that Emotional Intelligence is the key factor. In order to increase the basic components of better interaction, it is essential to investigate for Emotional Intelligence.

Emotional skills which deals with Emotional Intelligence are: perfectly becoming aware of the emotions and expressing them; harmonizing emotions in rational way: understanding various emotions and their inference in different situations; and controlling emotions (4). To improve the productivity at workplace and to improve the management performances new concepts are being discovered. Many studies regarding this have proven that EI plays a major role in improving productivity at workplace, management performance and success of an individual also depends upon EI (5). This study aims at providing a clear view of need of exploration of emotional intelligence in construction project management.

Confirming Studies
Repeatedly it has been found in several studies that EI has effect over capacity and personality of a person (6). Studies show that EI has the direct connection with the success in social relationships and one’s capability to achieve the goals (7). There are a lot of research studies that have proven that EI has positive impact on leadership of individual (8); performance in interview (9); better academic performance (10); and benefaction in the team performance (11). Most importantly several studies are done in order to find out the impact of EI on job performance and leadership ability of the individual (12). Researches reveal that leadership has a great influence on the various features of an organization such as efficiency, quality, flexibility, production, satisfaction, competitiveness, and development (13).

Large amount of researches have been done in regarding EI and management but still a few empirical studies have conducted which show the link between EI and construction (e.g. Chinowsky and Brown (2004), Butler and Chinowsky (2006), (Songer and Walker 2004). All these studies demonstrated that, there is an urgent need of introducing EI in construction domain.

Emotional intelligence
Emotional intelligence is gaining more attention since last decade. It has improved the traditional view of intelligence by focusing the personal, social and emotional contribution to intelligent behavior (14) (15) (16). Salovey and Mayer (1990) firstly give the definition of EI as the ability of persons to handle with different emotions. After this more interest of the people was drawn towards the EI. There is a common view about EI that it is the capability of a person to perfectly perceive, regulate, evaluate and express one’s own emotions (17). Concept of Emotional Intelligence became more popular after the book ’Emotional Intelligence ’written by Daniel Goleman (1995). He strongly claimed that EI has major contribution in workplace success and also in individual’s personal success. Goleman (1998) defined EI is the ability of the person by which he identifies his own emotions and also of others, so that one can motivate himself and also can control the emotions in himself and in relationships also. After his research he found out that intellectual intelligence plays 20 percent part in life success and Emotional Intelligence plays rest of 80 percent part. EI is the how a person faces the challenges and find out the opportunities from the situations that he encounters (18).
Now organizations are paying more attention towards EI because it has been strongly claimed that EI has the major role in the managerial effectiveness. Such as it has been shown that EI effects the workplace performance and success in life (19); team work (20) (21) (22).

According to the Goleman EI contains four parts: Self Awareness; Self-Management; Social Awareness; and Social Skills. He further divided these four dimensions in twenty emotional abilities like teamwork, leadership, conflicts management, collaboration, communication etc. and these all important emotional components in the Construction Project Management.

The necessity of the exploration of the role and importance of EI in Construction Project Management

It has been stated earlier that construction industry has more complicated and dynamic workplace environment. In order to achieve the organizational goals and personal success, the construction project manager and other participants are required to have the high level of EI. Construction industry contains the large amount of workers and it has the important role in the economy of the country (23). Construction industry has the project based nature due to which people from different groups with difference in opinion, goals, are brought together for a short period of time. They insist for establishment of a co-operative contacts with everybody (24). For managing all these variations in order to achieve the target of the project the project managers need to have high levels of interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, personal characteristics (25). These all skills are the part of Emotional Intelligence. There are many studies which show that there is a positive impact of manager’s high level EI on the output of the workers. Managers who have high level of EI interacts positively with the workers and which leads to better co-operating environment (26), coordination (27) and better relationships in the organization which improves the performance (28) (29). Employees having high EI perform well and they feel much more satisfaction from their job (29) (30).

Butler and Chinowsky (2006) have demonstrated from their research that EI is very much relevant in the construction sector. Their work effectively showed that EI has a positive impact on the construction participants and concluded that construction project management should make the managers aware of the value of EI and other construction executive’s performance. A survey was conducted by the Jagger and Connor (1998:463) which explored that the employees particularly want more soft skills among the professionals like: interpersonal skills, teamwork, communication skills, flexibility, business awareness etc. (31). one more survey was conducted by Davis (1996) in which it was found that the employers want candidates who have more interpersonal skills such as: problem solving skills, language ability, team players who can also lead the team (32). All these surveys provide the clear evidence that how much EI in important in Construction Project Management. Organizations at every level are now asking for the employees who have more non-technical skills or soft skills such as teamwork and trustworthiness (33). ABET (2005) set criteria for the engineering graduates of 2020 as they should have more analytical skills, leadership, creativity, professionalism and ingenuity (34).

Love et al. (2011) review the literature and they demonstrated that EI is essential in construction industry. Construction industry is one of the fastest growing industry. Research done by Love et al. (2011) has found out that since last two decades industry has progressed only marginally, in fact new technologies are being used in all area of construction process. They suggested that more attention should be given towards the project teams and the participants which are working at every level as they are the ones who are using new tools and methods. For better skills, personal characteristics they suggested for an effective CPM and it is easy to understand that CPM is much concerned with the current EI research. Team and individuals with high EI provides a better platform for the CPM to manage the Human resources of the project (35).
Role of Emotional Intelligence in Workplace Success

Construction industry deals with a different work context as it is generally associated with the aggressive management styles (36). There is huge amount of competition and there is extreme pressure at work. Studies are carried out in order to find out the ways by which the workplace performance can be improved. Many studies which have been discussed and tested several time have suggested the performance dimensions for managers such as: project resources should be managed effectively; good coordination; handling of information; conflict handling and motivating. These aspects play significant role in achieving workplace success (37).

A number of studies have shown that job performance has direct relationship with EI, Tests like WLEIS were carried out to measure this relation (7). Various organizations are now coming to realize the value of using EI to improve leadership abilities and also for effective human resource management (38). Studies depict that those employees having high level of EI have been found as of better job satisfaction and they were found to have much better job performance than those who have low EI. Love et al. (2011) demonstrated that employees at workplace always act emotionally to the situations but not institutionally and these emotions effect their workplace performance. EI is the more accurate forecaster of success than the conventional measures of rational ability (39).

Emotional Intelligence has significant effect on Team Effectiveness, EI helps in better decision making, EI plays an important role in resolving the conflicts, EI enhances the management, leadership, communication and other interpersonal soft skills which are essential in order to achieve the organizational goals.

2. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From material presented above, it can be stated that EI is essential for the construction participants to successfully achieving their goals. It is very much clear that EI has a positive impact on the construction professional’s performance. EI is the key to managing the people in most effective way in construction industry. In this paper previous EI studies conducted in different organizations and industries were reviewed and it was found that EI is the one of the most important factor in construction project management and a powerful tool for one to succeed in job. The review of EI studies, surveys, researches in various fields made the context of work to be established. The EI studies which were conducted previously on construction domain clearly show the importance of exploring the role and importance of EI in construction project management. This paper has reviewed the EI literature and has expressed its importance in construction domain. It aimed at providing a basic understanding of emotional intelligence, explore the areas where emotional intelligence is applicable specially in construction project management.

It is very much understood to everyone that to work in workplaces where the tasks have to perform in more and more teams is becoming difficult day by day. And to that point this study shows that how EI at team level and individual level helps in working more effectively. Individual’s performance and also of team’s performance increases with EI. In the present scenario of construction industry where almost all tasks are performed in teams and where there is always a pressure on employees which lead to emotional outburst, the findings of this study have a practical application.

REFERENCES


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