

## Emotional Intelligence on Job Performance: A Study of Kota Kinabalu Imperial Hotel

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**Abstract:** This study reports an exploratory investigation of the affects of emotional intelligence on employees' performance in Kota Kinabalu Imperial Hotel. All Heads of seven departments of the hotel were taken as the sample of respondents for this study. Emotional intelligence is a considerable factor that is capable of affecting the hotel's productivity and benefiting individuals in the hotel and the hotel itself. The study concluded that emotional intelligence is the ability to manage personal feelings as well as others. The ability is important in order for a person to really understand workmates. The finding also suggested that low degree of emotional intelligence will affect people in not capable to perform their job at their best and working uncomfortably. Performance may decrease due to the non-optimized performance. Therefore, organization should efforts on emotional intelligence as a way to improve its productivity and quality of performance.

**Key words:** Emotional Intelligence % Job performance % Personal feelings and competitive advantage

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### INTRODUCTION

Research suggest that people with high levels of emotional intelligence are efficient job performer, engaged in organizational citizenships behaviors [1], satisfied with their job [1], experience more career success [2] and feel less job insecurity [3] with less withdrawal intentions [1]. Other research also shown that emotional Intelligence enhanced customer satisfaction [4, 5]; productivity [6]; and profitability [5] which is all are important in service industry, particularly hotels. Organizations require proactive approach to deliver great service to success [7].

**Literature Review:** Emotional Intelligence (EI) was firstly defined by Salovey and Mayer [8] as a type of social intelligence, separable from general intelligence involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them and use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. Boyatzis [9] also cited Salovey and Mayer [8] that the expression of emotional intelligence was described in the dimensions of the ability to recognize one self's and others' feeling, the ability to generate an emotion and reasoning it, the ability to understand complexity of emotions of own and others' and the ability to manage emotions of a self and in others. Performance is the underlying basis of many

organizational and human resource program and practices that affect the hotel and its employees' self-development as well. One of many factors that may affect employees' job performance is known as employees' own emotional intelligence. Dulewicz and Higgs [10] demonstrated that emotional intelligence impacts on work success and aligned with the concept of competencies. Emotional intelligence can promote effectiveness at all levels in the organizations [11]. Mayer *et al.* [12] hypothesized that employees with high level of emotional intelligence have smoother interactions with members of the team. Emotional intelligence also contributes to job performance by enabling people to regulate their emotions, perform well under pressure and adjust to organizational change [13]. Mandell and Pherwani [14] observed that emotional intelligence linked competencies of people in leadership positions is increasingly important with an advancing career levels in organizations [15]. Hence, this research paper aims to explore the affectivity of emotional intelligence on employees' job performance in Kota Kinabalu Imperial Hotel, newly established in less than 6 years with a strategic location in the heart of Kota Kinabalu city. All seven departments are included in this study which is marketing, accounting, administration, front office, operational, human resource with food and beverage department. The objective of the study was to

examine the importance of emotional intelligence in the organization and its affect on employees' work performance and organizational performance. Research done by His An Shih and Ely Susanto [16] indicated that emotional intelligence is an antecedent of conflict management styles that be linked as the direct effect on job performance.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is guided by the question of "*How does emotional intelligence affect employee's performance in organization?*" Structured interview was used to obtain data from the respondents. The sampling technique for this research is purposive sampling technique as the researchers chose the heads of the seven departments mentioned earlier for interview due to the roles of them of leading and managing the departments of the hotel. Thematic analysis was applied to analyze the data, the respondents were asked to comment on real events than giving generalizations which will enable the respondents to reveal more of their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. The analysis of the data has been done by focused on identifiable themes and patterns of living or behavior.

**Findings:** From the data obtained, it is shown that most of the heads of departments are at the age group of 35 – 45 years old, except for one only at the age of 29 years old. One head of department possess Masters in Human Capital Management, others with bachelor degrees. It is also concluded that all heads of departments graduated with absolute related field of study to their current departments. Respondents are all managerial level. The first finding of the research on the hotel shown that all respondents were agreed emotional intelligence should be possessed by manager as it involved in managing personnel's feelings. The manager with emotional intelligence is capable to work successfully with his employees. As quoted by the Marketing Department Head, he stated "*The inability to notice his own feelings as well as the subordinates' feelings leaves the workers at their mercy due to the failure of manager to recognize their feelings*". The second finding was all of the respondents agreed that job performance is related to productivity, quality and quantity of job at workplace that is used as a measurement for a job evaluation. Job performance is related to individuals' performances, productivity, quality and quantity of the job at workplace are usually used as the measurements for job evaluation. Head of Accounting Department mentioned in the

interview, "*Job performance is sometimes used by the management to evaluate a person performance at the office*". On the other hand, Head of Marketing Department stated, "*Job performance reflects the subordinates quality and quantity expected from the employers in a particular job*". The third finding suggests that all respondents agreed that emotional intelligence is important at workplace as a competitive advantage to the hotel. Interaction on high degree of emotional intelligence workers has created a competitive advantage for the hotel. Without proper interaction, workers might find it hard to work together due to lack of understanding among each other. As quoted by the Operational Department Head, "*emotional intelligence is being recognized as important issue because of the management and the employees are becoming more interested in their search for competitive advantage*". The fourth finding suggests that all agreed that the ability to manage and recognize feelings, the working environment as well as other people's behavior and attitude are affecting their degree of emotional intelligence. The inability of managers to manage and recognize employees' feelings will result on uneasy working environment for people working together. Front Office Department's Head mentioned that he is working with employees with different personalities, workers having different personalities and he has to be careful with his subordinates. Managers are also required to be effective interpersonal managers that integrate the workplace relationships. Harmonized workplace relationship of course will increase the commitment, organizational citizenship, teamwork and synergy toward high performance team in organization. The fifth finding suggests that all respondents agreed that maintaining a good relationship with people at workplace, personal health and emotions, degree of stress and pressure at workplace are capable to affect performance. As agreed by all the respondents, maintaining a good relationship with people at the workplace, staying fit at work as well as the degree of stress and pressure at workplace are the factors that are capable of affecting their performance at the hotel. Subordinates' personal health give impact to the employees' performances, as poor health will hinder employees to perform. High degree of stress is also leads to negativity in performance. The sixth finding suggests that all respondents agreed that high degree of emotional intelligence involved positive impacts to the hotel due to the awareness and ability to manage own feelings and others'. Having a high degree of emotional intelligence has always had a positive impact to the individual and organization. Working environment plays an important

role in affecting the subordinates' performance at workplace. An easy working environment must be created to carry the job successfully. The ability to understand will enable a manager to work well with the others. It is claimed by the Front office Head, "*high level of emotional intelligence is beneficial to the hotel*". Carmeli A., Yitzhak – Helevy M. and Weisberg J. [17] stated that individuals reporting higher EI reported higher levels of life satisfaction, self-acceptance and self-esteem. A manager with high emotional intelligence may understand the working conditions of a workplace and providing safe and comfort workplace environment. The seventh finding is that all employees agreed that a drop in performance of individual and organization is due to the negative impacts of having low degree of emotional intelligence. Subordinates may experience a heavy workload due to jobs not finished on time. Apart from that, people who work around the subordinate may have uneasy feelings due to the inability of the subordinates to understand the peoples' feelings. A low degree of emotional intelligence will only hampers the manager and the hotel as well from achieving its goals and objectives. "*When you don't understand them, you will find out that it is difficult for you to work with them*", stated by the Head of Accounting Department. The final finding suggests that there is a high degree of emotional intelligence is capable of improving the individuals' and organizational performances. A high degree of emotional intelligence is considered important to the hotel as well as to the individuals themselves. Emotional intelligence has been recognized as the source of competitive advantage, with the high degree of emotional intelligence, workers are working at comfortable surroundings and easy working environment. Such situations arose as due to the ability of both parties in managing and recognizing everybody's feelings, discriminating it and using it in making decisions. Workers are said to perform better when they are comfortable with their partners. "*One of the benefits by having a high degree of emotional intelligence workers is the ability to make good decision*", the Head of Administration Department was quoted.

## DISCUSSION

Throughout the interview, few questions on emotional intelligence were posted to the respondents by the researcher. It is reported that four out of seven respondents agreed that emotional intelligence is about recognizing personal feelings as other three perceived it as interaction at the office, emotional management and

social intelligence, similar to the findings by Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson [18]. Emotional intelligence contributes to the quality relationship at work because emotions serve communicative and intentions and helping coordinate social encounters [19]. Such competency will enable managers to have capability in understanding employees. Understanding employees' emotion is crucial as it is the main and first element in managing emotion. Without knowing employees' emotions, managers would be unable to project employees' behavior at workplace. Datu Razali, Roselina and Fumitaka, [20] stated that managerial counseling is an increasing need in managing employees to cope with stress. To practice managerial counseling, managers must have emotional intelligence. Five out of seven respondents also agreed that job performance reflects the subordinates' productivity at the workplace. The rest of the respondents agreed that performance, quality and quantity of a particular job are used as a measurement for job evaluation. In agreeing to emotional intelligence importance in daily work, four out of the all seven respondents agreed that emotional intelligence serves as the competitive advantage and others are make better decisions and interact better with people, similar to the findings of Dulewicz and Higgs [10]. The respondents agreed that the ability to manage and recognize personal feelings and others' are the factors that influence their degree of emotional intelligence. Two respondents agreed that working environment that affects their emotional intelligence and only one respondent stated that people's behavior influence the degree of emotional intelligence. It is believed that the ability of a person to manage feelings is one of the factors that influence someone's degree of emotional intelligence. For factors affecting performance, two respondents agreed that human's behavior is affecting their performance in workplace while others stated that their relationships with the management team, personal health and emotions, with the degree of stress and pressure are the factors that can affect the performance at workplace. On the discussion for high level of emotional intelligence, two respondents agreed that high degree of emotional intelligence could have positive impacts to the hotel. One agreed that high degree of emotional intelligence involved an awareness and abilities to manage feelings. There is also one respondent that agreed a high degree of emotional intelligence could create a comfortable feeling for other workmates. The other two said that by having a high degree of emotional intelligence, subordinates could have better decision-making skills. Respondents believed that low degree of emotional intelligence are able to affect a person's performance due to the inability of the person to

manage their personal feelings and others. Five of the seven respondents agreed that a high degree of emotional intelligence is capable of improving the hotel's performance. Two respondents agreed that high degree of emotional intelligence involved the ability.

### CONCLUSION

Overall, the research suggested that factors such as people's behavior, working environment and ability to manage personal feeling and others are the factors in affecting their degree of emotional intelligence in workplace. Maintaining a good relationship with colleagues at the workplace, personal health and emotions and keeping the degree of stress and workplace pressure to a manageable level, would capable to affect any job performance positively. For future research, it is suggested to relate the emotional intelligence with self-awareness, self regulations, self-motivation, social awareness and social skills as the outcome competencies of the employees in organizations. A study in [21] also was done by Goyal and Akhilesh which linked cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence and social intelligence. The interrelation of the few types of intelligences is providing a more comprehensive framework for team performance assessment.

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