

# Chapter 35

## Emotional Intelligence of Employees in the Hospitality Sector: Exploring Its Effects on Job Satisfaction and Performance



Konstantinos Koronios, Athanasios Kriemadis,  
Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, Ioannis Douvis, Andreas Papadopoulos  
and Genovefa Manousaridou

**Abstract** The aim of the present research is to explore the associations among the Emotional Intelligence, Job satisfaction and perceived job performance in hospitality industry. A survey instrument that included measures of job satisfaction, emotional intelligence and job performance was used to collect information from hotel employees. A case study method was used for the purpose of this research and 166 questionnaires from a hospitality organization were collected and analyzed. The findings revealed that the ability of an individual to regulate emotions and his mood has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction as well as on his performance. Moreover, appraisal of emotions in others and social skills had also a positive impact on job satisfaction and performance.

**Keywords** Hospitality industry · Emotional intelligence · Job satisfaction  
Job performance

**JEL Classification** M12 · Z30

### 1 Introduction

During the past twenty years (Joseph and Newman 2010), among the most prominent concerns in the fields of management and psychology has been Emotional Intelligence (EI). Various studies that were carried out showed that emotional intelligence is connected in a positive way with job performance

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K. Koronios (✉) · A. Kriemadis · P. Dimitropoulos · I. Douvis · A. Papadopoulos  
Department of Sport Management, University of the Peloponnese, Sparta, Greece  
e-mail: [konskoron@hotmail.com](mailto:konskoron@hotmail.com)

G. Manousaridou  
Business Administration, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

(O'Boyle et al. 2011), successful leadership (Goleman 2000) and expediency (Stein et al. 2009). Regarding service sector, a good interpersonal interaction between customers and staff is of high importance for customers' satisfaction, eventually affecting the company's bottom line (Ashkanasy et al. 2002). Customers could develop a positive impression, if service employees maintain a positive attitude during encounter (Lee and Ok 2012).

Organizations concentrate more on providing "service with a smile" in order to boost quality in service and consumer satisfaction, since competitions in the industry of hospitality have expanded. One very significant factor in caring for loyal customers is handling the emotional demonstration of service staff (Kim et al. 2012). It is crucial for customers to feel pleasant and human attended. Customers should feel unique and need to have positive emotions. Within this context, for the development of positive interactions among several people, emotions should be known and positively handled (Cavelzani and Esposito 2010). The capability one possesses to identify one's own emotions and the emotions of other people, and, also, to stimulate and handle his/her own feeling in an acceptable way regarding other people (i.e., emotional intelligence – EI) is crucial for his/her performance. People that possess emotional intelligence are impressionable and compassionate to the feelings and emotions of other individuals (Cheung and Tang 2009). The positive characteristics of EI could differentiate the emotional behavior of staff and, consequently, could result in increasing job satisfaction and, also, job performance.

Customers have turned to value-for-money-seekers, especially during the last years with the economic crisis, and service providers go all the way for the provision of quality service at low cost. Customers expect quality service leading to higher work expectations from staff, especially in the hospitality industry nowadays where competition is strong. Furthermore, service organizations employees are occupied with different service encounters with customers and there is a necessity to handle uncertainty on the workplace. Thus, it is certain that these employees have to handle their feelings and maintain a high performance. Emotions are significantly valuable in the hospitality industry, since employees acquire various roles, usually contradicting ones, as boundary spanners of the firm and the customer (Kim et al. 2009).

Previous research has demonstrated that there is an important association among emotional intelligence and job performance (Jennings and Palmer 2007; Law et al. 2008; Rojell et al. 2006). Nonetheless, preceding studies have shown that the linear effect model regarding emotional intelligence on job performance could be simple and inadequate (Brunetto et al. 2012; Cote and Miners 2006). As a result, there is an inadequate comprehension of the ways that emotional intelligence is connected with job performance. Moreover, there is few understanding of the relationship between employee job satisfaction, job performance and their emotional intelligence. Moreover, a lack of effort exists in the examination of these factors within the hospitality context. The aim of this research is to investigate the links among satisfaction, performance and emotional intelligence among hotel employees,

contributing in the extension of prior and current work. The following part studies the literature concerning emotional intelligence and its adverse effect on the job satisfaction and performance of employees. The research methodology description and the study's empirical findings are provided. The last section provides discussion for future research implications and management policies.

## 2 Literature Review and Testable Hypotheses

Social intelligence showcased emotional intelligence (Lee and Ok 2012). Salovey and Mayer (1990) were one of the first people to suggest the term “emotional intelligence” and are often cited as the creators of emotional intelligence model. Their outlook of genuine emotional intelligence assimilates both intelligence and emotion and their most recent definition (Mayer et al. 2001) constitutes the most vastly accepted regarding emotional labor research (Carmeli and Josman 2006): “... the capability to recognize emotions, to approach and create emotions in order to aid thoughts, to fathom emotions and emotional knowledge, and thoughtfully manage emotions in order for someone to achieve development emotionally and intellectually” (Mayer et al. 2001). The aforementioned definition has been vastly accepted in the academic study. Mayer et al. (2001) categorized EI in four dimensions: (1) judgment of emotion in self, (2) judgment and identification of emotions in others, (3) managing of emotion in self, and (4) application of emotion to assist performance. Self-emotion judgment mirrors the ability to meticulously perceive and judge one's own emotions and to express them naturally. Judgment of other people's emotions is the ability to meticulously distinguish and fathom the internal and external emotions of other individuals. Managing emotions concerns the regulation, control or alteration of emotions in particular directions to aid positive feelings, to improve pleasant affective states during psychological distress. Emotion application concerns the capability to ascertain emotion for productive activities and for personal performance (Mayer and Salovey 1995).

Organization theory (Moore et al. 2006) showcased the concept of job satisfaction and innumerable research has demonstrated the results of job satisfaction in various disciplines (Wild et al. 2006). From the moment job satisfaction emerged as a concept, researchers and experts have shown abundant attention and interest. The term “job satisfaction” describes the pleasant emotional state that emerges from a person's subjective experience with his/her work (Locke 1976). It depicts the level to which an individual desires or meets his/her expectations at work (Cranny et al. 1992). Spector et al. (2000) described satisfaction at work as “the level to which individuals feel pleasant at their jobs”.

According to Herzberg (Herzberg et al. 1959), there is a theory consisting of two aspects, one of the most popular theories in analyzing external and internal factors using affected job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. External factors are the ones

relating to the environment of the job and commonly result in employee dissatisfaction in the work environment. Significant exterior factors are wage, firm's policies, job security, relationships with other people and physical working surroundings. Internal factors result in the satisfaction of the employee at work and consist of opportunities for promotion, acknowledgment, accomplishment and accountability.

The relation among emotional intelligence and job satisfaction has not been widely investigated by research in the hospitality sector. Nonetheless, literature in the social and industrial psychology has supported that EI could improve job satisfaction, since it boosts emotions of good physical condition, higher confidence and positive feelings, as it lessens non-positive affective emotions (Goleman 1995; Mayer and Salovey 1995; Salovey and Mayer 1990; Salovey et al. 1995; Schutte et al. 2002). The capability to self-manage actually gives the chance to employees to handle in a more effective way the unfavorable emotions and, as a result, avert the negative influence that would, alternatively, decrease job satisfaction, as stated by Mayer and Salovey (1995). Likewise, Schutte et al. (2002) supported that since individuals that possess emotional intelligence have the ability to notice, fathom, manage and harness emotions, are in a place to maintain or enhance pleasant moods and higher confidence and, also, to withstand negative conditions that could unfavorably influence their pleasant feeling and confidence. As a result, taken into account that job satisfaction is the disposition or emotional reactions that are connected with work situation evaluation (Mottaz 1988) and is usually acknowledged as an agent for the good physical condition of an employee whilst at work (Grandey 2000), employees that possess emotional intelligence and experience constantly pleasant disposition or contentment at the job environment could achieve a greater degree of accomplishment and job satisfaction.

Firms can also be delineated as locations in which individuals are "arranged" to work. Up to the level that work demands personal interaction between people, various emotions, such as enthusiasm, annoyance and angst are an essential part in assisting collaboration. As a result, individuals who are "emotionally intelligent" shall be more dynamic and productive within work environment interactions and along with their co-workers, consequently expanding their performance while working. Organizations as well as individuals who work, regard job performance to be exceptionally significant. Organizations demand staff that can perform very well and can commit to the ambitions of the organization, to satisfy customers' needs and expectations, and moreover, to ensure that they are continuously provide wonderful results in order to stay competitive. Researchers (George and Brief 1996) have hypothesized that the ability that an employee possesses to use emotions in order to ease performance impacts job performance, which is one of the EI defining dimensions. Some past studies have suggested the link between EI-performance. Lam and Kirby (2002), for instance, used student sample and concluded that emotional intelligence contributed to cognitive-based performance. Wong and Law (2002) concluded to the positive link among emotional intelligence and job

performance when examining the relationship in work environments. In order to enhance performance, employees could either use positive or non-positive emotions. For instance, pleasant emotions, like incitement, can provoke staff to provide higher client service, accomplish their job responsibilities, or provide to the firm. Contrariwise, non-positive emotions, like angst, could assist in the employees' capability to concentrate on their job assignments. Individuals that are emotionally intelligent could be more capable of handling their own emotions and those of others in order to promote a more pleasant interaction, which could result to higher work performance (Wong and Law 2002).

The link among job satisfaction and performance is commonly explored by the organizational sciences, even though unsuccessfully determined. Subjective well-being research has proposed that work experience is versatile (Hochwarter et al. 1999). In order to fathom the motions of the job satisfaction-performance relationship within the context of hospitality industry, more productive efforts could assist in understanding the complicatedness and, maybe, the versatile nature of this relationship. Instinctively, it is reasonable to assume that those who are satisfied the most with their job would be the best performers and those who are the most satisfied would serve as an example to the best performers. Researchers have paid a widely close attention to the relations of these factors. Notably, analysis of these findings have shown inadequate reports about these relations with some research supporting that satisfaction results to performance (Herzberg et al. 1959), other results stating that satisfaction is affected by performance (Lawler and Porter 1967), and others support that the versatile relationship among these two factors is anemic to absent (Hochwarter et al. 1999). Researchers have abstained from the belief that satisfaction and performance, excluding other additional factors, entail significant effect on each other, taken into account the ominous aforementioned results.

The scope of this present research is to explore, if the EI of the employees working in the hospitality industry is connected with their job satisfaction and performance, and to which level. Based on the previous discussion the following research model and hypotheses are suggested Thus (Fig. 1):

H<sub>1</sub>: Emotional Intelligence is positively related to job satisfaction

H<sub>2</sub>: Emotional Intelligence is positively related to job performance.

Fig. 1 Proposed model



### 3 Data Selection and Research Design

A case study method was used for the exploration of the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction and employees' performance. A sum of 166 successfully completed questionnaires was gathered from a hospitality organization. Additionally, secondary data from the company's website were collected and an interview with the director of the human resources department was carried out. Emotional Intelligence was measured with 33 questions developed by Schutte et al. (1998) and used also in past researches (Gignac et al. 2005; Saklofske et al. 2003). For the measurement of Job satisfaction the short form of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist in 1967, was utilized (Gunlu et al. 2010). Finally, performance measurement consisted of four items adapted from Yoke and Panatik (2016). The original scales were translated into Greek utilizing the back translation technique (Yoshida et al. 2014). Initially, the questions were translated into Greek by the researchers and the disparities were discussed. The final form was translated back in English by a bilingual professional and the verification was made by two experts in management. All questions of the central variables were assessed on a five point Likert scale and data were analyzed with SPSS software.

### 4 Empirical Results

At the beginning, all key variables were examined for normal distribution by estimating kurtosis and skewness. In fact, results of kurtosis and skewness between -2 and +2 are sufficient indicators of normality (George and Mallery 2003). All except for one item, which was marginally above 2, were normally distributed.

The majority of the participants were male (55.4%), engaged or married (55.4%) with monthly income from 1000€ to 2000€ (38.0%). The average respondent was 38.06 years old and he has been working in the organization for 9.54 years. In terms of education almost half of the participants held a bachelor degree (44.6%), while 26.5% had also completed postgraduate studies.

Emotional intelligence was measured utilizing 33 items developed by Schutte et al. (1998). However, recent studies contend a four factor model (Petrides and Furnham 2000) while attempts have been made for a six factor model (Gignac et al. 2005) as well. As a result an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was utilized to explore the dimensionality of EI in the sample of this research. The questions were factor analyzed using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation. The items with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and communalities more than 0.5 were retained (Hair et al. 2006). Eleven of the initial items were dismissed and the analysis of the twenty two resulted in seven factors, explaining a total of 66.21% of the variance. The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) index was 0.821 and the factor

loadings varied from 0.5 to 0.815. In fact, mood regulation was resulted in two sub dimensions. Finally, Cronbach’s a score was calculated, excluding three factors due to low results.

The final model of EI consisted of four factors labeled based on previous studies (Gignac et al. 2005; Petrides and Furnham 2000) mood regulation (Cronbach’s a = 0.824), emotional regulation of self (Cronbach’s a = 0.700), appraisal of emotions in others (Cronbach’s a = 0.760), social skills (Cronbach’s a = 0.712).

Initially, bivariate correlations were conducted to test the relations between the four dependent factors of emotional intelligence, job satisfaction (Cronbach’s a = 0.942) and employees’ performance (Cronbach’s a = 0.823). All relationships were significantly correlated (Tables 1 and 2).

In order to test the combined effect of the factors of EI on job satisfaction and job performance two regression analyses were conducted (Tables 3 and 4).

**Table 1** Pearson correlations (Dependent: Job satisfaction)

		MR	ER	AE	SS	JS
Mood regulation	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Emotional regulation	Pearson Correlation	0.469**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Appraisal of emotions	Pearson Correlation	0.442**	0.416**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
Social skills	Pearson Correlation	0.544**	0.440**	0.417**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.483**	0.378**	0.258**	0.316**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table 2** Pearson correlations (Dependent: Performance)

		MR	ER	AE	SS	PERF
Mood regulation	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Emotional regulation	Pearson Correlation	0.469**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Appraisal of emotions	Pearson Correlation	0.442**	0.416**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
Social skills	Pearson Correlation	0.544**	0.440**	0.417**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.415**	0.415**	0.268**	0.281**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Table 3** Multiple regression (Dependent: Job satisfaction)

Model DV: Job Satisfaction	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1478	0.355		4.161	0.000
Mood regulation	0.424	0.096	0.381	4.401	0.000
Emotional regulation	0.198	0.086	0.188	2.316	0.022
Appraisal of emotions	0.000	0.082	0.000	0.005	0.996
Social skills	0.025	0.082	0.026	0.306	0.760

**Table 4** Multiple regression (Dependent: performance)

Model DV: Performance	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2182	0.303		7.189	0.000
Mood regulation	0.255	0.082	0.273	3.098	0.002
Emotional regulation	0.243	0.073	0.274	3.325	0.001
Appraisal of emotions	0.029	0.070	0.034	0.421	0.674
Social skills	-0.002	0.070	-0.003	-0.035	0.972

The proposed model was found to significantly account for 26.4% of the variance in the job satisfaction ( $p < 0.001$ ). Mood and emotional regulation had a significant and positive effect on the dependent variable (Table 3).

The second proposed model was found to significantly account for 23.6% of the variance in the performance ( $p < 0.001$ ). Mood and emotional regulation had also a significant and positive effect on the dependent variable (Table 4).

## 5 Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on employees' job satisfaction and performance in hospitality sector. The results indicate that the ability of an individual to regulate emotions and his mood has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction as well as on his performance. Additionally, appraisal of emotions in others and social skills had also a positive impact on job satisfaction and performance even if in multiple regressions the impact was not significant. Moreover trying to examine the dimensionality of emotional intelligence a multi facet construct was formed which is in consistence to previous studies (Gignac et al. 2005; Petrides and Furnham 2000). However, the



study did not result in the exact constructs to previous research stressing the need for potential improvement of emotional intelligence measurement.

As far as job satisfaction is concerned, the results indicate that emotionally intelligent workforce may feel more satisfied with his/her job which is line with Yoke and Panatik (2016) study. Emotional intelligence helps individuals to decrease their stress and enhance their well-being when performing their job (Brackett et al. 2010). Therefore, it is important especially for managers in hospitality sectors to recruit emotionally intelligent employees or to develop employees' competences regarding emotional intelligence. Finally, the positive outcomes of emotional intelligence regarding performance are in accordance to Sy et al. (2006) study, who stressed that employees' emotional intelligence was positively linked to job satisfaction and performance.

## 6 Limitations and Future Research

Various limitations of this study must be taken into consideration. First of all the research was conducted on a single organization and as a result awareness should be raised regarding the generalizability of the results. Moreover, the questionnaires were self-reported and this could lead to biased answers. Hence, future research could be conducted on different organizations taking into account multiple responses especially regarding employees' performance.

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