

ACCEPTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE BY LIBRARY ASSISTANTS: A CASE STUDY AT UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of this study is to examine how library assistants aware and perceive emotional intelligence as a strategic management approach at the university of Peradeniya library Network. Survey research strategy was applied in the study and total 59 library assistants were used. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument to collect data. Data obtained from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results show that emotional intelligence is a new concept to library staff. According to the library staff awareness and perception five most important emotional intelligence attributes were selected. Being able to empathize with staff and self-awareness were considered to be important. Study identified that emotional intelligence leadership approach can be used to develop better relationships with staff and superiors. This study provides insight how library staff accept emotional intelligence as a management approach during organizational change.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Library Management, Peradeniya University, Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a developing leadership paradigm in the Library and Information Science field. It is a leadership concept that “recognizes that emotions and responses to those emotions are at the heart of leadership”(Roberts and Rowley, 2008, P. 44). It involves “the ability to identify, integrate and understand manage their own and others feelings” (Roberts and Rowley 2008, P.42). Libraries can receive benefits by understanding and utilizing emotional intelligence to manage their staff and organizational success. Since the emergence of emotional intelligence as a measurable skill, managers and organizations are now looking more closely at its importance and impact. In order to create positive organizational culture, it is important to have good relationships with staff and superiors. Therefore, feelings of employees about the management are seen as the main facet that creates an improved feeling about the organizational culture (Lyman, 2003). On these ground the organizational leaders are expected to make a serious commitment to develop positive attitudes of the management by the employees in order to develop positive organizational culture (Wijetunge, 2011). In this endeavor, it is important to study how employees accept their management approaches in organizational change. The purpose of the study is to investigate how library the staff is aware and perceive the emotional intelligence approach applied in the context of organizational change. This will provide insights to library managers how successfully to and strategically manage the staff and to accomplish the library goals. The study examined how library staff perceives their superiors management approaches when managing staff.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine how library assistants extend perceived emotional intelligence leadership approach at the working place.
- To identify most preferred emotional intelligence leadership attributes perceived by library assistants.

- To examine how can emotional intelligence leadership approach can be used to develop better relationships with staff and managers

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although research on emotional intelligence in the library and information science field is limited, Porter (2010) discussed that emotional intelligence is significant for librarianship and needed to be researched. He stated that being an emotionally centered manager helps employees to trust manager as they build confidence in what they can expect when they bring an issue to managers attention.

Wijetunge (2011) discussed about the application of emotional intelligence for recruiting new library leaders and significance for the library to have emotionally intelligent leaders who can develop a positive organizational culture.

McKeown (2012) studied which emotional intelligence leadership attributes to be the most important by branch librarians in the public library service in Northern Ireland. Study identified that emotional intelligence was a new concept and majority of respondents were identified top five leadership attributes are communication, teamwork and collaboration, adaptability, integrity and organizational awareness.

Khan & Ullah (2014) investigated emotional intelligence and organizational commitment among Pakistani university librarians. Study used survey research method involving 225 randomly selected librarians from a population of 670 university librarians in Pakistan. The results suggest that three dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely self-assessment, optimism and service orientation significantly predict organizational commitment. However, teamwork and collaboration, despite being correlated significantly with organizational commitment, was not a predictor of organizational commitment among Pakistani university librarians. The findings showed the importance and contributions of emotional intelligence towards organizational commitment.

Preceding literature indicated that emotional intelligence is a significant factor that can be used for effective management in the library; however, there is a dearth in research available on literature how employees accept the emotional intelligence in the library sector. Therefore, it is important to study the application of emotional intelligence perceived by library employees.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology involved in this study was a survey research strategy and the study was carried out in the University of Peradeniya Library Network as a case study. All library assistants (59) used for the study. A questionnaire was administered to collect data and the questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative and qualitative information on the emotional intelligence leadership attributes that library assistants perceived to be important for the management. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data using SPSS version 22.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaires were received by all respondents and 19 of respondents were male and 40 of respondents were female. Respondents were asked to rank leadership attributes that they perceived to be most important according to the Golemans Emotional Competence Inventory. According to findings five most important leadership attributes were ranked by library assistants.

1. Communication (87%)
2. Empathy (85%)
3. Trustworthiness (78%)
4. Organizational Awareness (75%)
5. Self Control (70%)

“Communication” and “Empathy” scored highly when compared to other three attributes. Majority of respondents were perceived that communication is an important management strategy during organizational change and recognize & understanding others emotions are vital during change, library managers should develop empathy and become more familiar how others are feeling during change.

Majority of Library Assistants (78%) were agreed that self awareness is important when managing staff during an organizational change. Further Library Assistants perceived (76%) that understanding the feelings of staff can help librarians to manage conflicts. However, 54% of respondents do not agree that library managers need to be able to handle moods and emotions of staff. More than 80% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that managers should have a role model during change and should have positive and negative emotions about change and it can have an effect on staff performance. Study identified that emotional intelligence leadership approach can be used to develop better relationships with staff and managers. About 81% of Library Assistants believed that recognizing emotions in others can improve relationships with staff during organizational change. Study findings revealed that library assistants have positive perceptions regarding emotional intelligence management approach which can apply to improve relationship with library staff and managers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined how the library staff is aware and perceives the emotional intelligence approach applied in the context of organizational change. The research revealed that emotional intelligence is an accepted management concept in the library sector and it can be used to develop better relationship with staff. The study found that emotional intelligent leadership attributes are essential for successful organizational change. Library assistants selected the five most important leadership attributes that they perceived to be having with their managers. Emotional intelligence leadership skills such as communication, empathy are acceptable which can be applied to organizational success. Study findings concluded that emotional intelligence skills can be use as accepted management approach by staff. Therefore, it is recommended that it is better to develop and enhanced their emotional intelligence skills through professional training programs that could be apply to achieve organizational goals and success.

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