

Emotional intelligence predicts job performance, study shows

October 25 2010, By Tom Gresham

Emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of job performance, according to a new study conducted at Virginia Commonwealth University that helps settle the ongoing debate in a much-disputed area of research.

“The Relation Between Emotional Intelligence and [Job Performance](#): A Meta-Analysis,” which has been published online by the [Journal of Organizational Behavior](#) and will appear in a future issue of the journal, builds upon years of existing studies in the area of emotional intelligence, which is a measure of someone’s ability to understand the emotions of themselves and others. The resulting analysis indicates that high emotional intelligence does have a relationship to strong job performance – in short, emotionally intelligent people make better workers.

The study was conducted at the VCU School of Business by Ernest H. O’Boyle Jr., who received his Ph.D. in management at VCU and is now an assistant professor of management at Longwood University; Ronald H. Humphrey, professor of management at VCU; Jeffrey M. Pollack, who received his Ph.D. in management at VCU and is now an assistant professor of management at the University of Richmond; Thomas H. Hawver, a Ph.D. candidate in management at VCU; and Paul A. Story, who received his Ph.D. in psychology at VCU and is now a visiting professor of psychology at the College of William & Mary.

Humphrey edited a 2008 book in the field, “*Affect and Emotion: New*

Directions in Management Theory and Research,” and is the author of “*Modern Leadership: Traditional Theories and New Approaches*,” which is forthcoming in 2011 from *SAGE Publishers*.

Richard Boyatzis, a professor at Case Western Reserve University and co-author of the bestselling book “*Primal Leadership*,” said the study represented an important step forward in understanding emotional intelligence and its role in the workplace and elsewhere.

“Emotional intelligence is a field of study characterized by contradicting claims, models and methods,” said Boyatzis, who has been studying emotional intelligence (EI) since 1970. “But the meta-analysis by O’Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver and Story lends light where there has been darkness. They took an impressively comprehensive view of EI and amassed a much larger collection of studies linking EI to intelligence, personality and job performance. This will be a source of inspiration to scholars and a guide for those lost in the confusing morass of claims, critiques and posturing.”

The study’s authors summarized all published research in the field of emotional intelligence and used the latest statistical analysis techniques to examine the accumulated data and to control for publication bias. The study explored the three prominent testing procedures of emotional intelligence and found that each reliably predicts job performance based on empirical data.

“Emotional intelligence has attracted considerable attention in business settings as well as in the community at large, but many academic scholars dispute the legitimacy of emotional intelligence, especially some of the more exaggerated claims made about it,” said Neal Ashkanasy, professor of [management](#) at the University of Queensland and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.

“By analyzing the numerous studies of emotional intelligence that have been conducted over the last decade, the authors of this article provide an evidence-based account of emotional intelligence, where it works and where it doesn’t. And, most importantly, which of the various versions of [emotional intelligence](#) work the best. This will prove to be a valuable tool for academic researchers, as well as business consultants and managers.”

More information: For a complete copy of the study, visit the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* website at onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/job.714/full

Provided by Virginia Commonwealth University

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