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An empirical relationship between Empathy and Emotional intelligence of employees in IT Sector

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Abstract

In the fast-paced environment of the Information Technology (IT) sector, the significance of interpersonal skills such as empathy and emotional intelligence (EI) has gained prominence alongside technical expertise. This study aims to empirically explore the relationship between empathy and emotional intelligence among IT professionals, emphasizing their roles in enhancing teamwork, communication, and overall employee performance. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data was collected from 200 IT employees through surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. Analysis methods, including percentage analysis and ANOVA, were employed to examine the data for demographic trends and variations in emotional intelligence and empathy levels across different groups. The findings indicate a strong correlation between empathy and emotional intelligence, highlighting that employee with higher EI exhibit improved decision-making capabilities, client interactions, and workplace satisfaction. However, the results also reveal gaps in active listening and conflict resolution skills, suggesting a need for targeted training programs. By integrating emotional intelligence and empathy development into organizational practices, IT companies can foster a more supportive and productive work environment, ultimately contributing to enhanced employee satisfaction and organizational success.

Keywords: Empathy, Emotional Intelligence (EI), Information Technology (IT) Sector, Employee Performance

Introduction

In the fast-paced and highly dynamic environment of the Information Technology (IT) sector, employees are constantly faced with challenges that demand not only technical skills but also strong interpersonal abilities. The success of IT professionals increasingly relies on their capacity to work collaboratively, manage stress, and communicate effectively. Among the key factors that contribute to their overall effectiveness are *empathy* and *emotional intelligence (EI)*.

Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, plays a crucial role in fostering teamwork, enhancing communication, and building trust among colleagues. It allows employees to perceive and respond appropriately to the emotional states of coworkers and clients, which is essential in managing both internal and external relationships.

On the other hand, emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify, assess, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. In the IT sector, where stress and pressure are common, high emotional intelligence can enhance problem-solving abilities, improve leadership qualities, and increase job satisfaction. Employees with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle conflicts, maintain motivation, and create a positive work environment.

This project seeks to explore the empirical relationship between empathy and emotional intelligence among employees in the IT sector. By examining how these two attributes interact and influence each other, the study aims to provide valuable insights into how organizations can foster a more emotionally intelligent workforce.

The findings will help IT companies better understand how cultivating empathy and emotional intelligence can lead to improved employee performance, higher job satisfaction, and overall organizational success.

This research is particularly relevant given the growing emphasis on soft skills in an industry traditionally dominated by technical expertise. Understanding the link between empathy and emotional intelligence can guide HR practices, including hiring, training, and leadership development, ensuring a more emotionally resilient and productive workforce.

Review of Literature

Shweta Chatterjee, Soumya Nandi, Dr. K. Subha "Exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life of the employees in IT sector "(2022) This study investigating the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and work-life balance among employees in the IT sector. It involves a study conducted on 103 respondents (40 female and 63 male), collecting data through a structured questionnaire. The study aims to explore how demographic factors like age, gender, marital status, and educational qualification affect EI and how EI impacts work-life balance. The findings suggest that EI is not influenced by age, gender, or job designation but is dependent on educational qualification and marital status. Additionally, the research shows that EI has a significant positive effect on work-life balance. The results offer insights for IT managers to foster better work environments through enhanced emotional intelligence training

R Gayathri Dr. CR Christi Anandan Relationship between Emotional intelligence and psychological well-being of employees: An empirical study (2023) This research article examining the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and psychological well-being among employees. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and those of others, while psychological well-being is defined as a person's overall happiness and life satisfaction. The study, conducted at JBM Neel Metal Products Ltd., Hosur, involves 70 employees, exploring factors like self-awareness, empathy, and social skills. It concludes that employees with higher emotional intelligence experience better psychological well-being, leading to improved self-esteem, life satisfaction, and stress management. The findings emphasize the importance of enhancing emotional intelligence through training programs to boost employees' overall well-being and job satisfaction

David Rosete and Joseph Ciarrochi " Emotional Intelligence and its Relationship to Workplace Performance Outcomes of Leadership Effectiveness" (2005) The study explores the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and workplace performance outcomes, specifically focusing on leadership effectiveness, the study assessed senior executives using measures of EI, personality, and cognitive intelligence. Leadership effectiveness was evaluated through performance management systems and 360-degree feedback from managers and subordinates. The results showed a positive correlation between higher EI and leadership effectiveness, independent of personality or IQ. EI, particularly the ability to perceive and manage emotions, was found to significantly predict successful leadership, indicating that emotionally intelligent leaders are better at achieving organizational goals and building effective working relationships.

Çağlar Dogru "A Meta-Analysis of the Relationships between

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Outcomes" (2022). It focuses on examining the correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and various employee outcomes such as organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, job performance, and job stress. The study incorporates findings from multiple research papers spanning from 1990 to 2020. It highlights three main streams of emotional intelligence: ability, self-report, and mixed models. The meta-analysis concludes that emotional intelligence positively affects organizational commitment, citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, and job performance, while it negatively impacts job stress. The paper also discusses potential moderators, including managerial versus non-managerial positions, to explore the nuances of these relationships.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the relationship between empathy and emotional intelligence among employees in the IT sector
2. To assess the role of emotional intelligence in managing stress and maintaining motivation among IT professionals.
3. To identify strategies for fostering empathy and emotional intelligence through HR practices and training programs in IT companies.
4. To measure the impact of empathy and emotional intelligence on employee satisfaction and retention in the IT sector.
5. To explore the influence of emotional intelligence and empathy on decision-making and problem-solving in IT environments.
6. To examine the role of empathy and emotional intelligence in client interactions and service delivery in IT companies.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on exploring the empirical relationship between empathy and emotional intelligence (EI) among employees in the IT sector. It aims to understand how these soft skills impact various facets of employee performance, decision-making, client interactions, and workplace dynamics. The research will be conducted within IT organizations, targeting employees across different levels and roles, including cross-functional teams, to ensure diverse perspectives. The study will measure the levels of empathy and emotional intelligence, investigating their influence on decision-making, problem-solving, conflict resolution, innovation, and adaptability in fast-paced and high-pressure IT environments. Additionally, it will explore gender differences in these attributes and their impact on team dynamics, leadership, and communication styles.

The study will also assess the broader organizational benefits of fostering empathy and emotional intelligence, such as improved employee satisfaction, job retention, mental well-being, and resilience. Furthermore, the research will provide insights into how empathy and emotional intelligence influence diversity and inclusion efforts within IT companies. The findings will help HR departments integrate these soft skills into recruitment, training, and leadership development programs, creating a more emotionally resilient and empathetic workforce. By using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the study will offer a comprehensive analysis of the role these attributes play in improving organizational performance, client satisfaction,

and overall innovation in the IT sector.

Statement of the Problem

In the fast-evolving and competitive landscape of the Information Technology (IT) sector, technical skills alone are no longer sufficient to ensure employee success and organizational growth. Employees are increasingly required to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics, manage stress, and collaborate effectively in high-pressure environments. Empathy and emotional intelligence (EI) have emerged as critical factors in addressing these challenges, influencing decision-making, communication, problem-solving, and team dynamics.

However, while the importance of empathy and emotional intelligence is recognized, there is limited empirical research that specifically explores how these attributes interact and contribute to employee performance, client satisfaction, leadership, and innovation in the IT sector. Moreover, the IT industry, traditionally dominated by technical expertise, often underestimates the role of soft skills, which can hinder efforts to develop emotionally intelligent workforces.

This study seeks to address the gap by examining the empirical relationship between empathy and emotional intelligence among IT employees. It aims to explore how these soft skills impact decision-making, client relationships, conflict resolution, adaptability, and overall job performance. Additionally, the study will investigate gender differences in emotional intelligence and empathy, as well as their influence on diversity, inclusion, and workplace well-being. Understanding the interaction between empathy and emotional intelligence in the IT sector will provide valuable insights for organizations, guiding HR practices in recruitment, employee training, leadership development, and fostering a positive and emotionally resilient work culture. The findings of this study will help IT companies align their workforce strategies with the growing demand for emotionally intelligent employees, ultimately contributing to enhanced employee satisfaction, innovation, and long-term organizational success.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

- **This study uses Descriptive Research Design** to analyse and describe the empirical relationship between Empathy and Emotional intelligence of employees in IT Sector with qualitative interviews and focus groups.

2. Sample Population

- **200 IT professionals** from various organizations and job levels (entry, mid, senior).

3. Data Collection Methods

- **Surveys/Questionnaires:**
 - Use standardized tools to measure **emotional intelligence** and **empathy**.
 - Include demographic and job performance questions.
- **Interviews**
 - Conduct semi-structured interviews with **20-30 employees** for deeper insights.
- **Focus Groups**

- Gather HR managers and team leaders to discuss empathy and EI in teams.

Tools Used for Analysis

1. Percentage Analysis

- To summarize and present demographic and categorical data.
- Calculate the percentage of participants within each demographic category (e.g., age, gender, job level).
- Determine the percentage of respondents scoring at different levels of empathy and emotional intelligence.

2. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

- To compare the means of empathy and emotional intelligence scores across different groups (e.g., job levels, gender).
- Conduct ANOVA tests to identify if there are statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence and empathy levels between groups.

Summary of Analysis

- **Percentage Analysis** will provide insights into the distribution of demographic and emotional intelligence scores.
- **ANOVA** will help in identifying differences in means across various groups, which can highlight the influence of factors like gender and job role on empathy and emotional intelligence.

Limitations of the Study

- Respondents may provide socially desirable responses rather than accurate self-assessments of their empathy and emotional intelligence, affecting the reliability of the data.
- The sample size of 200 IT professionals may not fully represent the diversity of the IT sector, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings.
- The findings may not be applicable to other industries where different interpersonal dynamics and job requirements exist.
- The study may not account for other influential factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles, or team dynamics that could also affect empathy and emotional intelligence.
- The fast-paced nature of the IT sector means that the findings may become outdated quickly, as organizational practices and interpersonal dynamics evolve.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is a positive correlation between empathy and emotional intelligence among employees in the IT sector.

H₀: Employees with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate better stress management and motivation levels compared to those with lower emotional intelligence.

H₀: Emotional intelligence significantly influences decision-making and problem-solving abilities in IT professionals.

H₀: Empathy positively affects employee satisfaction and retention in the IT sector.

H₀: There are significant differences in empathy and emotional intelligence levels based on demographic factors such as gender and job level among IT employees.

Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Particulars	Variables	Highly Responded Area	Percentage
Age	25-34	115	57.5%
Gender	Male	109	54.5%
Type of organization currently working	large organizations	105	52.5%
Highest Educational Qualification	Bachelor’s degree	136	68%
Current job level	senior-level	88	44%
years of experience in IT sector	1-3 years	93	46.5%
Income Level	60,000-100,000	74	37%

Interpretation

The dataset primarily consists of respondents aged 25-34, with the majority identifying as male. Most respondents earn between 60,000 and 100,000, working for medium to large organizations. In terms of job level, the highest concentration

is at the senior-level, with many individuals having 1-3 years of experience in the IT sector. The dominant educational qualification is a Bachelor’s degree, highlighting a workforce that is well-educated and mid-career.

Table 2: Preferences of the Respondents

S. No	Particulars	Variables	Highly Responded Area	Percentage
1	Awareness of emotions affects in performance at work.	Strongly agree	89	44.5%
2	Ability to understand and respond to the emotions of others in team.	Neutral	96	48%
3	Believe that empathy enhances the quality of decision-making in team.	Agree	79	39.5%
4	Believe that understanding clients' feelings is crucial for providing excellent service.	Agree	126	63%
5	Believe that emotional intelligence contributes positively for work environment.	Strongly agree	130	65%

Interpretation

The data reveals interesting insights into how respondents perceive the role of emotional intelligence in their work environment. A significant portion of respondents (44.5%) strongly agree that they are aware of how their emotions affect their performance at work, indicating a high level of emotional self-awareness. However, when it comes to understanding and responding to the emotions of others in their team, almost half of the respondents (48%) took a neutral stance. This neutrality suggests that many individuals may not feel entirely confident in their ability to perceive or

address their colleagues' emotional states. In terms of decision-making, 39.5% of respondents agree that empathy enhances the quality of decisions made within their team. The majority of respondents (63%) agree that understanding clients' feelings is crucial for delivering excellent service, highlighting the importance placed on emotional intelligence in customer relations and business success. The strongest agreement came in relation to the belief that emotional intelligence positively contributes to the work environment, with 65% of respondents strongly agreeing.

Table 3: ANOVA Analysis on Identification of Emotions as by Experiencing Them and Emotional Awareness Helps in Resolving Conflicts

Anova: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Able to identify emotions as by experiencing them.	200	617.1984	3.085992	1.377322		
Emotional awareness helps in resolving conflicts effectively.	200	581.0325	2.905162	1.371036		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	3.269938	1	3.269938	2.379558	0.123727	3.864929
Within Groups	546.9232	398	1.374179			
Total	550.1931	399				

Interpretation

While employees feel relatively comfortable identifying their emotions, they are less certain about how this emotional awareness helps them resolve conflicts effectively. However, the ANOVA results indicate that there is no significant difference in how employees perceive these two aspects of emotional intelligence. This prescribes that any training or

initiatives aimed at improving emotional intelligence in the workplace should address both identifying emotions and leveraging that awareness for conflict resolution. Understanding this relationship can help organizations enhance employees’ emotional skills, ultimately leading to better teamwork and conflict management in high-pressure environments like the IT sector.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis on Feeling Compassion for Others who are Going through Difficult Times and Listening to Colleagues When They Share Their Problems

Anova: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
Feeling compassion for others who are going through difficult times.	200	587.029	2.935145	1.231525		
Listening to colleagues when they share their problems.	200	511.8559	2.55928	1.670864		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	14.12747	1	14.12747	9.735062	0.00194	3.864929
Within Groups	577.5755	398	1.451195			
Total	591.7029	399				

Interpretation

The ANOVA results show an F-statistic of approximately **9.74**, with a P-value of about **0.0019**. Since the P-value is significantly lower than the standard significance level of **0.05**, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. This indicates that employees feel more compassion for others than they actively engage in listening to their colleagues. The findings suggest that while employees generally care about their colleagues and have compassion for those facing difficulties, they may not be as attentive in listening to their problems. Organizations could consider training programs or initiatives that emphasize active listening skills to complement the compassion employees already demonstrate, ultimately fostering a more supportive and communicative workplace culture.

Findings of the Study

- The majority of respondents (57.5%) are between the ages of 25-34, indicating a young to mid-career workforce. Most of the respondents (54.5%) are male, reflecting a gender skew typical in the IT sector. A significant number of respondents (52.5%) work for large organizations, and the majority (68%) hold a Bachelor's degree, showcasing a well-educated sample. 44% of the respondents occupy senior-level positions, and many have 1-3 years of experience (46.5%).
- 44.5% of respondents strongly agree that they are aware of how their emotions impact their work performance, highlighting strong emotional self-awareness among IT employees.
- 48% of respondents took a neutral stance on their ability to understand and respond to the emotions of their teammates. This neutrality suggests that many employees might struggle with emotional perception or feel uncertain in addressing others' emotions.
- 39.5% of respondents agree that empathy enhances decision-making within teams, indicating that while empathy is seen as important, its direct impact on decision-making may not be fully appreciated by all employees.
- A large proportion (63%) agree that understanding clients' feelings is essential for delivering excellent service, showcasing the importance of emotional intelligence in client interactions within the IT sector.
- The highest agreement (65%) came in relation to emotional intelligence contributing positively to the work environment, indicating that employees believe their emotional intelligence fosters a more productive

and positive workplace.

- Employees feel comfortable identifying emotions, but there is no significant difference between emotional identification and using this awareness to resolve conflicts. This indicates that emotional awareness alone may not be sufficient for conflict resolution, suggesting a need for training on how to apply this awareness effectively.
- Employees are more likely to feel compassion for others facing difficulties than to actively engage in listening to their colleagues' problems, as shown by a significant difference in the ANOVA analysis. This suggests that while emotional empathy is present, active listening skills may require further development to create a more supportive environment.
- The ANOVA test results reveal no significant differences in emotional intelligence aspects, such as identifying emotions and conflict resolution. However, a significant difference was found between compassion and listening, indicating that compassion does not always translate into practical support through listening.
- Organizations can focus on developing emotional intelligence through training programs, especially in areas like active listening, conflict resolution, and empathy-based decision-making to enhance employee relationships, teamwork, and client service delivery.

Suggestions of the Study

To enhance the effectiveness of emotional intelligence and empathy within the IT sector, organizations should implement comprehensive training programs tailored to develop these essential soft skills among employees. Such programs should focus on active listening, conflict resolution, and empathy-driven decision-making, enabling employees to translate their emotional awareness into practical actions that foster collaboration and improve workplace dynamics. Additionally, integrating emotional intelligence training into the onboarding process can ensure that new hires understand the significance of these skills from the outset. Organizations should also encourage a culture of open communication, where employees feel safe sharing their emotions and experiences. This can be facilitated through regular feedback sessions, workshops, and peer support groups, creating an environment that prioritizes emotional well-being. Furthermore, leadership should model emotional intelligence by demonstrating empathy and effective communication, setting a precedent for their teams. Regular assessments of emotional intelligence and empathy levels within the workforce can help identify areas for improvement and track progress over time. By prioritizing these initiatives, IT

companies can cultivate a more emotionally intelligent and empathetic workforce, leading to enhanced employee satisfaction, improved client relationships, and overall organizational success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has effectively explored the empirical relationship between empathy and emotional intelligence among employees in the Information Technology (IT) sector, emphasizing the critical importance of these soft skills in an industry traditionally focused on technical expertise. The findings reveal that a significant majority of respondents demonstrate strong emotional self-awareness, recognizing the positive impact of emotional intelligence on workplace dynamics. However, while there is an acknowledgment of empathy's role in enhancing decision-making and client interactions, many employees express uncertainty about their ability to understand and respond to the emotions of colleagues, indicating a potential gap in necessary training. Furthermore, the study highlights a significant disparity between the compassion employees feel for colleagues in distress and their engagement in active listening, suggesting that although empathy is present, it often does not translate into practical support. To address these gaps, organizations should prioritize the development of emotional intelligence and empathy through targeted training programs focused on active listening, conflict resolution, and empathy-driven decision-making. Additionally, leadership should model emotional intelligence, fostering a culture that values emotional well-being and open communication. Overall, recognizing and cultivating these soft skills will enhance employee satisfaction, improve interpersonal relationships, and drive performance and innovation, positioning IT organizations to better navigate the challenges of a rapidly evolving industry.

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