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Do Emotionally Intelligent People Express Their Faith at Work? An Empirical Investigation

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May 2, 2018

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Literature Review and Hypotheses Development.....	4
Spirituality and Religion.....	4
Generational Differences.....	5
Emotional Intelligence.....	5
Hypotheses.....	8
Measurement Scales.....	9
Faith at Work Scale.....	9
Emotional Intelligence Scale.....	10
Methodology.....	10
What We Hoped to Learn Through This Study.....	11
Appendix.....	13
Tables.....	13
The 20-item emotional intelligence scale.....	13
Faith at Work Scale Core Dimensions and Items.....	14
References.....	15

Abstract

The question posed is: “Do Emotionally Intelligent People Express Their Faith at Work?” This study will use self-reported measures of emotional intelligence (EQ), Faith at Work, and Religious Commitment to determine the degrees to which individuals who are members of the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce express a level of EQ as well as faith in the workplace. The current study will test each hypothesis to determine if there is a significant relationship between the four factors of EQ and faith in the Workplace. The four factors of EQ are: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and its connection to Spirituality and or Religiosity, among other items, has been previously studied by scholars Paek and Tischler et al (2006). The study conducted by Paek examined religion and perceived EQ among Christians in various churches where Tischler et al. studied spirituality and EQ in relation to workplace performance. In the first study, emotional understanding, the ability to comprehend and distinguish emotions, was a prominent result of a correlation between factors (Paek, 2006). It looked at both attitudinal and behavioral factors of religion, and found that attitudinal factors, such as intrinsic religious orientation, were revealed to be more predictive of EQ than behavioral factors, such as church attendance. In the second study, it was established that both factors were positively correlated to increased workplace performance (Tischler et al., 2002).

Spirituality and Religion

The authors of the book *Reaching for the Stars: Effective Tools for the Creation of a More Spiritual Workplace* discuss positive benefits of spirituality and the workplace because the belief that money is the highest motivational factor for a job is incorrect. When HR and top management become too focused on the monetary side of what a job is, they miss important opportunities to grow their most valuable asset—their people. When workplace spirituality is well-implemented, there is a soul-sensing trust between employee and employer that can lead to a bounty of benefits for both parties. The major challenge is defining in the workplace what spirituality means and how it can be realistically applied (Gross-Schaefer, 2009). Spirituality is noted in Tisdell's work as one way that people can make sense of life (Tisdell, 2000). Hill et al. (2000) describe spirituality as a personal seeking of a higher power, or the sacred. They also describe religion as a personal seeking of a higher power, or the sacred, in addition to the

“validation and support of an identifiable community” (Lynn et al., 2009). This work further distinguishes religion from spirituality in that religion is the framework that supports the quest for meaning and substance that is spirituality (Lynn et al., 2009).

Generational Differences

In the early stages of developing this study, it was determined that, when measuring EQ and faith, age may become a significant factor. Barker et al. (2015) says that people are becoming more spiritual and it is influencing the culture of business in a way that the younger generations and the era they are living in can be described as “post-secular”. This means that businesses will need to acknowledge this new “spiritual capital” (Barker et al., 2015). However, Bengston et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative study via interviews with intergenerational families and examined their religious traditions between cohorts. The results show that as an individual grows with age, they also grow in depth of spirituality. It also shows that the younger generations view God as distant and that the terms religion and spirituality become less closely related with younger generations (Bengston et al., 2015). Wuthnow (2007), in a book titled *After the Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion*, notes that religion and spirituality are developed within the context of the current culture standards and society in which they are discovered. This means that different generations express varying expectations and understandings of faith based on their personal context (Wuthnow, 2007).

Emotional Intelligence

“Social and emotional intelligence is the ability to be aware of our own emotions and those of others, *in the moment*, and to use that information to manage ourselves and manage our relationships,” according to the Institute of Social and Emotional Intelligence website (2017).

Emotional intelligence is a concept that is intriguing to many business people as it is claimed to be significant to the betterment of personal and professional skills, abilities, and competencies. This claim of statistical significance is made throughout the book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* written by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves in 2009. The authors are known for their many books on the topic of emotional intelligence and their research and consulting company, TalentSmart. Their book defines emotional intelligence, or EQ, as “the ability to identify, consider, and control emotions in oneself and recognize them in others” (Bradberry and Greaves, 2009). An intentional pursuit heightens the ability to develop the four components of EQ. The four components are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

Self-awareness is the foundation of EQ. It is the awareness of one’s own emotions and the understanding of the reasons they were formed as they arise. A key phrase to devote attention to is “as they arise”, or, perhaps, in the moment. A person who displays high EQ does not only reflect on their emotions at the end of the day, but understands them in the moment and changes them according to the situation they are in. The first hypothesis formulated in this study will examine the degree of self-awareness with the degree of faith at work expression to determine whether individuals who are more inclined to share their faith in the workplace are better able to reflect on their emotions in the moment. The rationale is that many of the questions determining the degree of faith at work expression ask about the individuals inner beliefs and views and self-aware individuals are very aware of their inner thoughts and emotions. This brings us to the next component which is self-management.

Self-management is the control of one’s emotions which helps the individual manage their behavior and reactions to different events in life. The second hypothesis formulated in this

study will examine the degree of self-management with the degree of faith at work expression to determine whether individuals who are more inclined to share their faith in the workplace are better able to manage their emotions based on different circumstances in life. The rationale is that some of the questions determining the degree of faith at work expression consider the concept of “Meaning” and, more specifically, growth and diligence; individuals who have a high degree of self-management may also rate themselves as having a greater tendency to express faith at work in the areas of personal growth and diligence. While some individuals may exhibit a low level of self-awareness and poor self-management, they could still have a high level of social awareness.

Social awareness is the devotion of attention to one’s surroundings rather than oneself. An observance of one’s surroundings allows the individual to be aware of the emotions of others. By developing this awareness, the observer further understands their own emotions and begins to attempt to understand the emotions of others. The third hypothesis formulated in this study is that individuals who have a greater tendency to express faith in the workplace will also regard themselves as being more socially aware. The rationale is that a portion of the faith at work expression scale considers the aspect of community and relationships and shows that those who express faith at work are observant of the people they work with and are aware that those coworkers are observant of them.

In the final component, relationship management, all other components are combined to carefully navigate interpersonal interactions (Bradberry and Greaves, 2009). Another piece of literature that refers to Greg Steffensen, the human resources adviser at an insurance company in Canada, says that “[emotional intelligence] is about competency...these are the competencies we are looking for, the people skills” (Michelle, 1997). The fourth hypothesis formulated in this

study is that individuals who have a greater tendency to express faith at work will also regard themselves as having better relationship management. The rationale is that faith at work expression is relational in nature and individuals of faith are called to community; because these individuals hold community and relationships in such high regard, one could hypothesize that those individuals would also express a higher degree of relationship management as a factor of EQ. The fifth and final hypothesis formulated in this study is that individuals who have a greater tendency to express faith in the workplace will regard themselves as having a higher overall EQ. This hypothesis considers all the previous rationale at once to determine whether the four components of EQ are a stronger indication of the relationship between EQ and faith at work when they are tested as a whole as opposed to being tested separately.

Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: There is a significant and positive relationship between Self-Awareness and Expression of Faith in the Workplace.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a significant and positive relationship between Self-Management and Expression of Faith in the Workplace.
- Hypothesis 3: There is a significant and positive relationship between Social-Awareness and Expression of Faith in the Workplace.
- Hypothesis 4: There is a significant and positive relationship between Relationship Management and Expression of Faith in the Workplace.
- Hypothesis 5: There is a significant and positive relationship between total Emotional Intelligence and Expression of Faith in the Workplace.

Measurement Scales

There will be three measurement scales used in this study. The first, Faith at Work scale, was developed by Lynn et al. (2009). The second scale is a condensed version, created by Dr. Tom W. Moore (Moore et al. 2011), of the measure of EQ developed by Schutte et al. (1998) based on the original model developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The third scale is a Religious Commitment Inventory—10 (RCI-10) scale which is also used by Worthington et al. 2003.

Faith at Work Scale

The Faith at Work scale (FWS) is a measure of the “degree to which Judeo-Christian belief and practice are integrated with one’s work” and is an advancement on the research in “workplace religion” (Lynn et al., 2009). The scale focuses on questions assessing the individual’s self-perceptions to measure beliefs and behaviors, and broad terminology which address laborers in several settings to make questions open to multiple traditions, occupations, and demographics. The fifteen questions posed in the survey uses a five-point Likert-scale range with five equaling *always* and one equaling *never or infrequently*, across five dimensions. These dimensions were: relationship with God, meaning of work, community of workplace, holiness in the face of ethical dilemmas, and giving of resources. Only one respondent was classified as international and the majority, 222 out of 234 or 95.3 percent, of respondents were ethnically classified as white; this means that the study is not globally or ethnically generalizable. Most respondents, 60.3 percent, were Evangelical and attended religious services once a week, 35.0 percent (Lynn et al., 2009). The FWS will be used in the current study in the same way as the original study.

Emotional Intelligence Scale

The purpose of the 33-item measure of EQ developed by Schutte et al. (1998) was to present “validated measures of [an individual’s current self-reported level of] EQ based on a cohesive and comprehensive model of EQ” (Schutte et al., 1998). The framework for the model used by Schutte et al. was the original instrument developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Respondents were asked to identify themselves with EQ descriptors on a five-point Likert-scale where five equaled *strongly agree* and one equaled *strongly disagree*. Three of the questions in Schutte et al.’s (1998) scale were reversed scored to give respondents different question phrasing and help increase their accuracy in the self-reported measures. The scale used in the current study will be the condensed version, a 20-item measure, which was created and validated by Dr. Tom W. Moore, a professor at East Tennessee State University (Moore et al., 2011). Moore’s study also includes three reverse scored questions. The purpose of using the condensed questionnaire is to provide the same value of measurement in a fewer amount of questions.

Methodology

This study will be conducted via online survey including questions from a version of the Emotional Intelligence scale originally developed by Schutte et al (1998). and is a condensed 20-item measurement found to be reliable in previous research (Moore et al, 2011). The original questionnaire was a 33-item measure based on the model developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The validation study conducted by Schutte et al. tested the measure for internal consistency replication, test-retest reliability, predictive validity, and discriminant validity. The online survey will also include questions from the FWS developed by Lynn et al (2009).

The survey will be sent to the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce (JCCOC) list. Participant qualifiers are as follows: (1) Respondents must be at least 18 years of age and (2)

have at least two years of work experience. Demographic variables will include: (1) age range, (2) ethnicity, (3) gender, (4) geographic location of adolescence, (5) level of education, (6) marital status, (7) working hours per week, (8) annual income, (9) years of total work experience, and (10) religion. Individuals must first agree to the terms of participation and make it known that they are at least 18 years of age and have a minimum of two years of work experience before Survey Monkey, the online survey creation platform, will allow them to proceed to the rest of the survey. Through the rest of the survey respondents will be asked the questions for the faith at work and EQ scales.

Once the platform has received a significant amount of responses, the researchers of this study will begin to evaluate the responses. The first test that will be ran on each hypothesis is a t-test. The t-test will measure the means of the two variables being compared to each other in each hypothesis to show whether they increase or decrease in similar or different directions to determine if any connection can be made between the two variables. If there is a significant and positive relationship between the variables in the t-test, a regression analysis will be used to determine which of the demographic variables had the most effect on the significance of the relationship.

What We Hoped to Learn Through This Study

The researchers hoped to, by the methods of this research, determine a correlation between EQ and faith expression in the workplace. This could mean that people who have a higher level of EQ are more likely to express the five measured dimensions of faith in their workplace. Knowing the results of this research can help business owners and managers understanding their employees. A better understanding of employees will influence decisions made in all aspects of the business environment, primarily decisions about organizational

policies and other human resource functions. Possible future implications are the development of religious accommodation policies in the workplace, gaining a greater understanding of religious diversity in the workplace, implementation of possible EQ training, and further personal and organizational understanding of how faith is expressed in the workplace.

Appendix

Tables

The 20-item emotional intelligence scale

- 1) I know when to speak about my personal problems to others
- 2) Other people find it easy to confide in me
- 3) I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people*
- 4) Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important
- 5) I am aware of my emotions as I experience them
- 6) I seek out activities that make me happy
- 7) I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others
- 8) When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me
- 9) By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing
- 10) I know why my emotions change
- 11) When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas
- 12) I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them
- 13) I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on
- 14) I compliment others when they have done something well
- 15) I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send
- 16) When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail*
- 17) I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them
- 18) I help other people feel better when they are down
- 19) I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice
- 20) It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do*

This is a 7-point scale from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree

Items with a * at the end are reversed coded. Ex: if you chose a 7 then count it as a 1, if a 6 then 2, etc.

Compute **socaware** = SUM (EQ1, EQ3, EQ7, EQ9, EQ15, EQ17, EQ19, EQ20).

(SUM of Socaware Score – 8) * 2.083 = Total Percentage Socaware Score (rounding up)

Compute **selfaware** = SUM (EQ5, EQ6, EQ10, EQ12).

(SUM Selfaware Score – 4) * 4.16 = Total Percentage Selfaware Score (rounding up)

Compute **selfmgmt** = SUM (EQ4, EQ8, EQ11, EQ16).

(SUM Selfmgmt Score – 4) * 4.16 = Total Percentage Selfmgmt Score (rounding up)

Compute **relmgmt** = SUM (EQ2, EQ13, EQ14, EQ18).

(SUM Relmgmt – 4) * 4.16 = Total Percentage Relmgmt Score (rounding up)

Compute TOTAL EQ = SUM (EQ1-EQ20)

(SUM of TOTAL EQ – 20) * .833 = Total EQ Percentage Score (rounding up)

Faith at Work Scale Core Dimensions and Items

Dimension	Item	
	Abbreviation	Complete Wording
Relationship	Aware	I sense God's presence while I work
	Partnering	I view my work as a partnership with God
	Meaningful	I think of my work as having eternal significance
	Integrated	I see connections between my worship and my work
Meaning	Coping	My faith helps me deal with difficult work relationships
	Called	I view my work as a mission from God
	Equipped	I sense that God empowers me to do good things at work
	Diligent	I pursue excellence in my work because of my faith
Community	Growing	I believe God wants me to develop my abilities and talents at work
	Accepting	I view my coworkers as being made in the image of God
	Witnessing	My coworkers know I am a person of faith
Holiness	Caring	I sacrificially love the people I work with
	Moral	When I am with others and alone, I practice purity in my work habits
Giving	Just	I view my work as part of God's plan to care for the needs of people
	Stewarding	I view myself as a caretaker not an owner of my money, time and resources

This is a 5-point scale where a value of five indicates the statement is always or frequently true and a value of one is never or infrequently true of the respondent. This scale will determine the degree to which individuals of faith express their faith in the workplace based on the dimensions of relationships, meaning, community, holiness, and giving which comes from the study conducted by Lynn et al. (2009).

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