



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & ROLE EFFICACY: A CASE STUDY ON CUSTOMER RELATION MANAGEMENT AMONG SALESPERSONS IN MALABAR REGION

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Abstract

Today the service employees who are working in the organized retail sector have been evaluated with a new yard stick which none other has or her emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence of a person has been known as the key determinant of individual behavior mainly in the performance aspects. When a salesperson entered in an organized retail outlet, he or she is about to appraise of the duties and responsibilities which he or she has to perform at the service counter. The performance of a salesperson in any organized retail outlets depends on the way the role he or she performs is assigned. There comes the importance of studying the role efficacy of the salesperson. Although role efficacy has been incorporated into the work of the many jobs in the hospitality sector, minimal research has been conducted to assess the influence of emotional intelligence on role efficacy in the retail outlets. In this study the researcher had taken samples from those salespersons who were working in the Jewellery sector. 72 salespersons working in the organized retail outlets in Malabar region in Kerala was taken as the respondents in this study. Primary data was collected by using a structured questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from various journals, books, and websites etc. The study reveals that there exists a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and role efficacy. The findings of the study have helped the researcher to provide some suggestions to the management which might help the salespersons to perform better in their work environment.

Key words: Role Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence, Salesperson

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Introduction

The Indian retail sector is poised for a major growth in the coming days. Its journey from the current \$672 billion industry to a \$1.3-trillion industry will be completed within three years, according to a study by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) (*Article from Dhanam Magazine Feb 2017*). The local players in India would have to learn a new life to co-exist with giant sellers. So, the opportunity holders have their own challenges. Kerala is not an exception to overall national trend. In the early decade of this century, the people in Kerala were preferring to buy gold ornaments for their marriages and other festival seasons, but now the trend has changed that the people prefer to buy diamonds for their marriages and other occasions. This demand made the seller to sell both gold and diamonds under one roof with separate sections. Even though silver ornaments are there in the Kerala from the starting point, their demand seems to have constant flow in the market. People prefer to buy gold not as an ornament but also have an investment. This shows the highest demand for gold in Kerala. The customers are also very keen and careful in purchasing the ornaments. This shows the importance of salespersons' contribution at the service counter. The lower middle class and lower class people in Kerala prefer to buy gold ornaments whereas upper middle class and high class people prefer to buy diamonds. In jewellery, most of the cases customers are expecting a customized way of approach from the sellers. This makes the sellers to face more challenges at the service counter. In Malabar region the people prefer to buy the products during festival season. So during the festival season the sellers try to attract the buyers with offers, gift coupons and rewards. Moreover, Kerala has a higher percentage of exchange of gold ornaments rather than purchasing new ones. That accounts for almost 60% of a day's business. The frequency of exchange is almost once in six months for a middle class customer. The salespersons have to give an impression that the customers are getting best prices for their old gold and low value addition for their new ornaments.

Almost all the top Jewellery sellers have opened their operations in Kerala. The leaders in this business include Malabar Gold and Diamonds, Allukkas Jewellers, Josco Fashion Jewellers, and Chemmannur Jewellers among many others. Each of these Jewellers can be considered as retail chains as they have outlets in different parts of the State. Organized retail sectors are one of those organizational types where issue of human resource plays a significant role. The management of the retail outlets is trying their best to attract the customers to the showrooms through their advertisement and other public relative activities.

But once the customer reached the showroom for purchasing their final decision will be based on the dealings of the salespersons at the sales point. The behavior at work, work feeling and perception, personality factors in particular, have an important effect to the retail outlets especially in jewellery sector. One of the main issues about managing human resources in the organized retail is about the sales jobs. In the present retail scenario the main task of the salesperson is to manage the customer at the service counter. Many research scholars recognize that analyzing the factors that influence the salespersons' performance is very important. Salesperson's contributions influence the customer satisfaction and customer decision making which in turn influence the overall performance of the retail outlet. Personal care and customer satisfaction issues become more interesting in service professions and in this context emotional intelligence and role efficacy had a great proportion to explain the quality of customer service.

Emotional Intelligence- A tool for success in the work place

The area of emotional intelligence has captured the imagination of researchers and a growing number of research works are going in the area of emotional intelligence. Even though people will say that organizational activities should be based on rationality, logical reasoning and systems, it is obvious that the work is an arena in which a person experiences the emotional dimensions like anger, surprise, happy, sadness, disgust, fear etc and is displayed in varying intensity and frequency as elsewhere in their everyday work life. In the modern HR perspective employees are working not only for the money but also for the social and emotional benefits that they are expecting from the organization. According to the modern management scholars and work place testimonials, the

emotional intelligence of an individual will increase performance and productivity in occupational settings. In older days a person can succeed in his life if he is good in intelligent quotient, but now a day's a person can succeed in his life only if he is good in his emotional intelligent. Many management scholars and psychologist are interest in this area because emotional intelligence is one of aspect that could boost individual performance. It is one type of intelligence that used to increase individual success in the organizational context. In the present retail scenario a salesperson should understand his/her own emotions and those of other people. This plays a vital role in accomplishing a successful life in the organization.

Goleman 1995, pointed out that in the modern management era emotional intelligence is more needed than the intelligent quotient in predicting success in the work place. The term emotional intelligence covers the cutting edge areas of psychological science including the neuroscience of emotions, self regulation theory and the search for mankind cognitive abilities beyond traditional intelligence quotient. According to *Salovey 1990*, emotional intelligence has four main elements. They are emotion perception, emotion regulation, and emotion understanding and emotion assimilation. The emotion perception represents ability of a person to identify his own emotions. Emotion regulation represents the ability of an individual to regulate emotion in both self and others. Emotion understanding represents the understanding the knowledge of different dimensions of emotions and emotion assimilation identifies the capability of a person to use his emotion in order to shape the judgment and behaviors. *Goleman* highlighted that there are five pillars for measuring emotional intelligent. All the dimensions of emotional intelligent mentioned are vital for a salesperson for the successful performance in the retail outlets.

The concept of emotional intelligence is stated to be based on extensive qualitative and scientific research in European countries. It was also observed by the researcher that very few research studies have been conducted in retail context in India. This research aims to review the emotional intelligent to examine its usefulness in the organized retail settings.

Role Efficacy-Making an employee meaning to the organization

Today a salesperson's job is not to transfer the product to the customer. For successfully selling the product to the customer he/she should have to take the role of a mentor, opinion leader, a product wizard etc. This complexity of modern life is reflected in the multiplicity of roles that a salesperson has to perform in the work area. For any employee the potential effectiveness to do a task depends on two aspects. One thing focus on the technical competencies and the other one is the managerial knowledge for carrying out the job. Every employee has certain expectation about the role he/she has to be performed in the organization. If it is not tackled properly it will leads to job dissatisfaction. Thus it becomes crucial to the management to provide a defined role to employee such that he/she has a clear role perception. *Pareek 1987*, point out that there is a significant relationship between role efficacy and job satisfaction. This study was conducted in a service sector in which the employee contribution has a significant value. In service sector perceived service quality has been used as the only indicator for customer satisfaction. However growing body of literature indicates that the role efficacy level of an employee clearly defines his job satisfaction.

The role efficacy of a person has three dimensions they are role making, role centering and role linking. All these dimensions together assess the efficiency of an individual in his role. The role making depends on the capability of an individual in utilizing his strength for the better performance of his role. For example a salesperson who is having a good communication should use this strength for impressing the customer at the service counter. More over a salesperson's job is full of creativity, proactive because each and every customer he has to deal at the service counter is different from each other. Role efficacy can be seen as the psychological factor underlying role effectiveness. Heart of the retail outlet is the salesperson. If a salesperson feels that he occupies the central point in the organization, his role efficacy will be high. This factor comes under role centering. Salesperson in the organized retail outlet should feel that what he contribute to the management is likely to be of value to a larger group. But if a salesperson feels that he does not get an opportunity to be of help to a larger group, the role efficacy is likely to be low which might result in customer dissatisfaction.

Objective of the Study

- To assess the emotional intelligence level of the salespersons.
- To assess the role efficacy level of the salespersons.
- To assess the relationship between Role Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence of the salespersons working in the organized retail outlets in Malabar.

Scope of the study

Emotional and social intelligence of an individual consists of an array of emotional, personal and social knowledge and abilities that influence the individual's overall ability to succeed in coping with environmental tasks and pressures. In the modern retail context, the management are expecting emotional intelligent salespersons at the service counter because these people are efficient at empathize, understanding others, good at working with others. A salesperson that has low emotional intelligence experiences negative emotions. They might feel weak, under-appreciated and/or powerless. Salespersons with low emotional intelligent are usually too closed off and self-centered to understand customers, colleagues and management. They have difficulty expressing themselves. But actually salespersons should be best in interaction and dialogue. On the other end the performance of a person working in the organized retail outlets depends on his potential effectiveness as a salesperson, his product knowledge, his customer relationship management skills etc. All these factors come under the umbrella of role efficacy. A salesperson with high role-efficacy will work hard to learn how to perform with new tasks, because they are confident that they will be successful. Role-efficacious beliefs influence the physiological experience of stress. Individual's sense of efficacy has an impact on his job performance. Employees with lower role efficacy may experience a more intense physiological stress reaction in the face of challenges than those who have higher levels of role-efficacy. This in turn can affect their performance on their task which they preserve in the face of challenge. Both role efficacy and emotional intelligent can be seen as the psychological factor underlying the performance effectiveness of an employee. The purpose of this study is to find out the existence of positive or negative relationship between emotional intelligence and Role Efficacy among the salesperson who was working in the organized retail outlets in Malabar region in Kerala.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive studies aims at portraying accurately the characteristics of a particular group or situation. Here the researcher attempts to present the existing facts by collecting data.

The study aims to assess the relationship between emotional intelligent and role efficacy of the salespersons working in the organized retail outlets. The study was conducted in leading retail outlets operating in Calicut, Kannur, Malappuram and Wayanad districts in Kerala. The researcher had visited two outlets in each district for getting samples for the study. The outlets were selected based on the number of employees in the retail outlet. Questionnaire for the emotional intelligent had prepared with the help of HR Manager and the standard scale for measuring emotional intelligent. Pareek scale has been used for preparing the questionnaire for role efficacy. The researcher distributed eighty questionnaires and got seventy two completely filled questionnaires. Purposive sampling has been used by the researcher for collecting information from the respondents. Purposive sampling is a simple method for drawing samples from a given population or universe. The data collected were analyzed through different statistical tools.

Analysis

Emotional Intelligent assessment of the salespersons

Factors	Total Value Of Respondents	Average Value= Total Value Of Respondents/72
Recognize others feelings	240	3.33
Enthusiastic	232	3.22
Recognize feelings through voice and tone	254	3.52
Control mood when depressed	266	3.69
Recover soon	288	4
Love to celebrate	289	4.01
Handle the situation	286	3.97
Forget bad things	260	3.61
Don't lose hope	225	3.12
Encounter anything	227	3.15
Console and comfort others	282	3.91
Total		$\sum x=39.53$

Interpretation

From the study it is clear that, the least value goes to the factor “The respondents don't lose hope when things don't go well” and the corresponding value is 3.12. And the highest factor observed in the questionnaire is “They love to celebrate with the success related to colleagues”, and the corresponding value is 4.01. By taking an average it is clear that the emotional intelligent of the salespersons working in these retail outlets are good ($39.53/11= 3.593$).

Assessment of Role Efficacy of the Salespersons:

Factors	Total Value Of Respondents	Average Value= Total Value Of Respondents/72
Importance of role	276	3.8
Ability to use knowledge and training	290	4.0
Permission to act on own	275	3.8
Working with others	345	4.7
Ability to create effect on society	287	3.9
Opportunities for growth	288	4
Contribution rate	295	4.1
Enjoyment in role	154	2.1
Helping nature	338	4.6
Way of doing job	298	4.1
Experiencing Help	301	4.2
Total		$\sum y=43.3$

Interpretation

From the above table it is clear that, the least factor is ‘Only some parts of role is enjoyed and not others’ and the corresponding value is 2.1. The highest cost factor is ‘Working in close collaboration with colleagues’ and the corresponding value is 4.7 and this indicates that there is a good relationship existing between the salespersons the customers. By taking an average it is clear that the role efficacy of the salespersons working in these retail outlets are good ($43.3/11= 3.936$).

Assessing the relationship between role efficacy and emotional intelligent:

The researcher had used coefficient of correlation to assess the relationship between the role efficacy and emotional intelligent of the salespersons working in the organized retail outlets. Correlation analysis helps in determining the degree of relationship between two or more variables. To determine the relationship between inventory and sales, the Karl Pearson's method, popularly known as Pearson's coefficient of correlation is used. The Pearson's Coefficient of correlation is denoted by the symbol;

$$r = \frac{\sum xy}{\sqrt{\sum x^2} \times \sqrt{\sum y^2}}$$

Here "x" denotes the various average values of emotional intelligence and "y" denotes the various average values of role efficacy.

Interpretation

The calculated value of r is 0.98. From this it is clear that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligent and role efficacy. In short it is clear that there is a positive relationship emotional intelligent and role efficacy. When the role efficacy of an employee increases the emotional intelligent of the employee will also increase.

Recommendations

It is clear through several research studies that an employee should have high in emotional intelligent and he should be good in role efficacy because all these factors have a deep consequence in customer satisfaction especially to those salespersons who were working in the organized retail outlets.

- The management of the various retail outlets have been organizing emotional intelligent seminars, education programs to their salesperson in tie up with external experts. These types of programs should be designed in such a way that a salesperson must be employed to teach how to control, recognize and facilitate their emotions and their jobs.
- While looking to aspects of role efficacy, role Clarity and role Centrality can be improved by effective apprenticeship training. This means that salespersons should be given an opportunity to better understand working environment and their job by working under the supervision of senior working staff. This suggestion was put forward by one of the HR manager working in a leading Jewellery outlet in Calicut.
- Some of the respondents state that they are not given sufficient training to enhance emotional intelligence. Therefore the management should provide such training programs that could help the staff to improve their emotional intelligence.
- Motivation plays an important role in improving the emotional intelligent and role efficacy of the employs. It is therefore advisable for the management by giving freedom in talking or dealing with the customers. Employee empowerment can be worked out in this situation for better job satisfaction of the employees. Some of the salespersons pointed out that they were closely watched by the floor manager while dealing with the customers. This might negatively affect the emotional intelligent and role efficacy of the salespersons.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to give a complete analysis of Emotional Intelligence and Role Efficacy of salespersons working in the organized retail outlets in Malabar region in Kerala. At the service counter there will be emotional transformation between the salesperson and the customer. These situations highlight the necessity of studying the emotional intelligent of the salesperson. Emotional Intelligent is an individual's capacity to perceive emotions, regulate and manage and utilize those emotions in more constructive cognitive thought. Emotional Intelligent has been found to

be an important predictor of various enviable organizational outcomes, such as job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. It also provides a new way to understand and assess people's behavior. Individuals with high emotional intelligence experience continuous positive moods and feelings that generate higher levels of satisfaction and well-being. Emotionally intelligent individuals are optimistic, a trait that enables them to focus on the resolution, rather than the reasoning. Employees do not get involved in the job only for self-rational interest fulfillment; they also get involved in the job because they let their emotions play a role. Becoming highly involved in the job is oftentimes a response to emotional rather than rational needs. Emotional intelligent individuals are able to manage the work and family together.

Likewise employees with high role-efficacy will work hard to learn how to perform with new tasks, because they are confident that they will be successful. Role-efficacious beliefs influence the physiological experience of stress. Salespersons with lower role efficacy may experience a more intense physiological stress reaction in the face of challenges than those who have higher levels of role-efficacy. Thus the study helps to find out the how emotional intelligence and role efficacy are related. This will be very helpful for the organization since it is based on real time data. The study might bring some changes that will help the salespersons to improve their level of emotional intelligence and role efficacy which in turn can improve their attitude towards customers. Moreover the study in the area of emotional intelligent and role efficacy are very important in the present context as such if monitored, may serve as a direct source of information with respect to how the other feels.

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