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Investigating the Role of Emotional Intelligence in Recruiters and Its Impact on Candidate Assessment and Selection

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ABSTRACT: This study delves into the human element of recruitment processes by investigating the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on recruiters and its subsequent influence on candidate assessment and selection. Through a human-centric approach, the study aims to uncover the intricate ways in which recruiters' emotional intelligence shapes their interactions with candidates, ultimately steering hiring decisions.

Utilising a combination of primary data collected through questionnaires and secondary data from various sources, a sample of 100 individuals aged 21 to 35, predominantly from Bangalore and Pune, was selected using purposive sampling. The research variables include emotional intelligence and quality of hire.

Numerous studies underscore the significance of emotional intelligence for recruiters, enabling them to effectively evaluate candidates' qualifications, potential, and cultural fit. Training interventions have shown a positive impact on enhancing emotional intelligence, indicating its utility for recruiters in refining their competencies. Moreover, emotional intelligence correlates positively with job performance, particularly in roles requiring interpersonal interactions and emotional labour.

Statistical analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between recruiters' emotional intelligence and the quality of candidate assessment, suggesting its pivotal role in recruitment outcomes. Recruiters with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to make informed hiring decisions, thereby contributing to organizational success.

These findings advocate for the integration of emotional intelligence training into recruitment practices to enhance recruiters' competencies and improve candidate assessment quality.

KEYWORDS: Emotional intelligence, Quality of Hire, Candidate Assessment, Job Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of recruitment and candidate selection processes is undergoing continuous evolution, emphasizing not just technical expertise but also the importance of soft skills. Emotional intelligence (EI) stands out as a crucial factor in understanding human behaviour, decision-making, and interpersonal interactions. However, despite its recognized significance in professional success, there is a noticeable gap in comprehending its explicit role within recruitment practices.

This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the nexus between emotional intelligence and the decision-making processes of recruiters during candidate assessment and selection. Understanding how emotional intelligence influences recruiters' perceptions, biases, and criteria could significantly enhance the comprehension of recruitment dynamics. This exploration is crucial in aligning recruitment strategies with a more comprehensive evaluation of candidates, ultimately impacting organizational performance, and fostering fairer and more effective selection procedures.

The problem at hand revolves around the insufficient exploration of emotional intelligence's significance among recruiters during candidate assessment and selection processes. Despite the recognized influence of emotional intelligence on professional success, there exists a gap in understanding its direct correlation with recruiters' decision-making processes. This research aims to investigate and analyse the extent of emotional intelligence's impact on recruiters' methodologies, biases, and decision criteria when evaluating potential candidates. By delving into this area, the study seeks to uncover the potential implications of emotional intelligence in recruitment practices and its subsequent effect on the overall quality and fairness of candidate selection.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of a research study is essential for establishing a solid foundation and guiding its direction. In this section, we delve into the theoretical frameworks that inform our investigation into the role of emotional intelligence in recruitment processes. By exploring various theories, including Emotional Intelligence

Theory and Trait Theory of Emotional Intelligence, we aim to shed light on how emotional intelligence shapes recruiters' assessments of candidates' suitability for organizational roles. Emotional Intelligence Theory, first proposed by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 and later expanded upon by Goleman in 1995, suggests that emotional intelligence involves recognizing, understanding, and managing one's own emotions, as well as influencing the emotions of others. In the realm of recruitment, this theory implies that recruiters with higher emotional intelligence levels may excel at comprehending and evaluating candidates' emotional abilities and how they align with the organization's needs.

Another such theory is the Trait Theory of Emotional Intelligence, proposed by Petrides and Furnham in 2000, views emotional intelligence as a stable trait that varies among individuals. This theory underscores the significance of individual differences in emotional intelligence and posits that recruiters' ability to assess candidates' emotional competencies may depend on their own emotional intelligence levels. Recruiters with elevated emotional intelligence may demonstrate greater proficiency in recognizing and appraising candidates' emotional capabilities during the selection process.

Recruiters with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate changing workplace dynamics, communicate effectively with hiring teams, and make fair and unbiased assessments. **Mattingly and Kraiger (2019)** found that emotional intelligence training had a small but significant positive effect on emotional intelligence outcomes. This suggests that emotional intelligence can be developed through training interventions, indicating its potential utility for recruiters in enhancing their emotional intelligence competencies.

Several studies (**Grant, 2017; Wigglesworth, 2010; Joseph & Newman, 2010; Humphrey et al., 2008**) emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence for recruiters. Emotional intelligence enables recruiters to navigate changing workplace dynamics, evaluate candidates' leadership potential and fit with organizational culture, and contribute to effective leadership and job performance. Emotional intelligence is considered a stable trait that varies across individuals (**Petrides & Furnham, 2000**). Recruiters who possess higher emotional intelligence may be better equipped to recognize and evaluate candidates' emotional intelligence, leading to more effective selection decisions. Social information processing theory suggests that individuals rely on social cues and information to make decisions (**Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978**). Recruiters with higher emotional intelligence may be more attuned to candidates' emotional expressions and nonverbal cues during interviews, allowing them to make more accurate assessments of candidates' fit within the organization.

Person-environment fit theory posits that individuals seek environments that match their own characteristics, values, and preferences (**Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005**). In the context of recruitment, this theory suggests that recruiters may seek candidates who demonstrate a good fit with the organization's culture and values. Emotional intelligence may play a crucial role in assessing candidates' fit with the organization, as recruiters with higher emotional intelligence may be better able to identify candidates who possess the emotional competencies necessary for success within the organization. Lastly, theoretical implications extend to job performance and retention. Research has shown a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance (**O'Boyle et al., 2011**), as well as job satisfaction and retention (**Sánchez-Álvarez, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016**).

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

AIM:

To study the relationship between emotional intelligence levels of recruiters and its impact on quality of hire.

OBJECTIVES:

- To study the role of emotional intelligence in recruiters.
- To study the relationship between intelligence in recruiters and its impact on candidate assessment and selection.

HYPOTHESIS:

Given below are the hypothesis that have been used to get an overview about the relationship between Emotional Intelligence in Employees and its implications on Quality of Hire.

A. Hypothesis 1:

- **H0:** There is no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between recruiters with formal training and recruiters without formal training.
- **H1:** There is a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between recruiters with formal training and recruiters without formal training.

B. Hypothesis 2:

- **H0:** There is no significant difference in Quality of Hire among employees with high level of emotional intelligence and low level of emotional intelligence.

- **H1:** There is a significant difference in Quality of Hire among employees with high level of emotional intelligence and low level of emotional intelligence.

C. Hypothesis 3:

- H0: There is no significant correlation between the emotional intelligence of recruiters and the quality of candidate assessment during the selection process.
- H1: There is a positive correlation between the emotional intelligence of recruiters and the quality of candidate assessment during the selection process.

METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION

- Primary Data: Primary source of data was collected by questionnaire.
- Secondary Data: Secondary source of data was collected from Books, Journals, Internet etc.

SAMPLE AND SELECTION:

A sample of 100 individuals of the age group of 21 to 35 years was selected using purposive sampling. Majority of the participants resided in Bangalore and Pune.

RESEARCH VARIABLES:

- Emotional Intelligence
- Quality of Hire

TOOLS DESCRIPTION:

Emotional Intelligence Scale

This tool is a self-hand measure of which looks to build up a degree of emotional intelligence, which has been characterized as the cognitive processes associated with acknowledgment, comprehension and utilization of one’s and other’s emotional state required in solving problems and regulating behaviour.

The tool is a 15-item questionnaire, the forced choice method has been used on the questions. When one conducts this test, the subject must choose one out of the five options, depending on which option they agree the most.

Questionnaire for Quality of Hire

The Quality of Hire Questionnaire is designed to assess various aspects related to the quality and effectiveness of new hires within an organization. This questionnaire aims to gather feedback from different stakeholders involved in the recruitment and onboarding process to evaluate the overall performance, fit, and impact of new employees. The questionnaire comprises multiple sections covering different dimensions of quality of hire.

The tool contains 15 items, the forced choice method has been used on the questions. When one conducts this test, the subject must choose one out of the five options, depending on which option they agree the most.

Statistical Analysis:

- t-test was used to calculate the significant difference across recruiters with formal training and recruiters without formal training.
- t-test was used to calculate the significant difference in quality of hire across employees with high level of emotional intelligence and low level of emotional intelligence.
- Pearson correlation was used to establish the relationship between the variables Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Hire

Analysis of Result

HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND METHODS

Table 1: The given table shows the descriptive statistic of Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Hire

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional Intelligence	Formal Training	50	3.43	0.435
	No Fromal Training	50	3.50	0.078
Quality of Hire	High EI Level	50	3.86	0.074
	Low EI Level	50	3.85	0.084

With the help of the given table, it can be observed that the mean level of Emotional Intelligence for Formally Trained recruiters is 3.43 and for Not Formally Trained recruiters its 3.50, indicating a relatively high level of emotional intelligence among both categories of respondents. The mean level of Quality of Hire is 3.86 in the case of recruiters with High EI Levels and 3.85 in the case of recruiters with Low EI Levels, which also indicates a good quality of hire. The standard deviation for emotional intelligence is 0.435 in the case of Formally Trained recruiters and 0.078 in the case of Not Formally Trained recruiters, and for quality of hire it is 0.074 for High EI Levels and 0.084 for Low EI Levels. This suggests that there is slightly more variability in the responses for emotional intelligence compared to quality of hire, but overall, the scores are relatively consistent.

HYPOTHESIS 1:

Table 2: The given table shows “t” & “p” values for Emotional Intelligence

Dimensions	t-value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Emotional Intelligence	0.594	98	0.001

Table 2 indicates a positive strong correlation in Emotional Intelligence across employees, with a t-value of 0.594. The p value obtained is 0.001, which is less than 0.05. This means we can reject the null hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence between recruiters with formal training and recruiters without formal training. This is supported by a small difference in mean values (3.43 and 3.50) of this dimension in Formal Training and No Formal Training sample in Table 1. Hence, hypothesis 1 stands accepted. NOTE: (alpha=0.05)

HYPOTHESIS 2:

Table 3: The given table shows “t” & “p” values for Quality of Hire

Dimensions	t-value	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Quality of Hire	0.617	98	0.035

Table 3 shows a positive strong correlation in Quality of Hire across EI levels in recruiters with a t-value of 0.617. The p value obtained is 0.035, which is less than 0.05. This means we can reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference across recruiters with High and Low levels of EI. This is supported by a small difference in mean values (3.86 and 3.85) of this dimension in the High and Low EI Level sample in Table 1. Hence, hypothesis 2 stands accepted. NOTE: (alpha=0.05)

HYPOTHESIS 3:

		Emotional Intelligence	Quality of Hire
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	0.631
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.032
	N	100	100
Quality of Hire	Pearson Correlation	0.631	1

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.032	
	N	100	100

Table 4. *Depicts the relationship between the obtained scores on the Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Hire Questionnaire for recruiters.*

- **Correlation Coefficient (r):**
Both correlations between Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Hire are approximately 0.631. This value indicates a strong positive linear relationship between the emotional intelligence of recruiters and the quality of candidate assessment.
- **Significance (p-value):**
The p-value for both correlations is 0.032, which is less than the typical significance level of 0.05. This suggests that the observed correlations are statistically significant.

With a significance level of 0.05, since the p-value (0.032) is less than the significance level, we reject the null hypothesis (H0) that there is no significant correlation between the emotional intelligence of recruiters and the quality of candidate assessment during the selection process.

Accepting the alternative hypothesis (H1), there is a statistically significant moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.631$) between the emotional intelligence of recruiters and the quality of hire during the selection process.

III. DISCUSSION

The mean level of Emotional Intelligence (EI) for both recruiters with formal and without formal training is relatively high, with the ones with the formal training at 3.43 and without formal training at 3.50. Similarly, the mean level of Quality of Hire (QH) is also high, with recruiters with high EI levels at 3.86 and the ones with low EI levels at 3.85. This suggests that, on average, both formally trained and not formally trained recruiters exhibit a good level of emotional intelligence and contribute to a good quality of hire. While the mean levels of emotional intelligence and quality of hire are quite similar, there are slight variations in standard deviations. The standard deviation for EI is higher for formally trained recruiters (0.435) compared to recruiters with no formal training (0.078), indicating more variability in EI scores among formally trained recruiters. Conversely, for QH, the standard deviation is slightly higher for Low EI Level recruiters (0.084) compared to High EI Level Recruiters (0.074).

Despite this, overall, the scores for both EI and QH are relatively consistent. The higher standard deviation in emotional intelligence in formally trained recruiters suggests more variability in emotional intelligence scores among Formally trained recruiters compared to recruiters with no formal training. This could indicate that there might be a wider range of emotional intelligence abilities among formally trained recruiters.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between EI and QH is 0.631. This suggests a strong positive correlation between the emotional intelligence of recruiters and the quality of candidate assessment during the selection process. The p-value associated with this correlation coefficient is 0.032, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) that there is no significant correlation between EI and QH is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis (H1) that there is a positive correlation. This value indicates a moderate positive linear relationship between the emotional intelligence of recruiters and the quality of candidate assessment.

The analysis indicates that both formally trained and not formally trained recruiters demonstrate a good level of emotional intelligence and contribute to a high quality of hire. Furthermore, there is evidence of a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the quality of candidate assessment, although the correlation is weak.

Scope for Future Research

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of EI training interventions on recruiters' performance and recruitment outcomes would provide valuable insights. By tracking changes in EI levels over time and assessing their impact on recruitment effectiveness, researchers can better understand the sustainability and durability of EI development initiatives.
- **Mixed-Methods Approaches:** Integrating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, with quantitative analyses can provide a more comprehensive understanding of recruiters' experiences, perceptions, and

challenges related to EI and recruitment. Qualitative insights can complement quantitative findings by uncovering nuanced aspects of EI's role in recruitment processes and shedding light on practical implications for organizational practice.

- **Comparative Studies:** Conducting comparative studies across industries, sectors, and geographical regions can illuminate variations in the importance of EI for recruitment practices and outcomes. By examining how contextual factors influence the relevance and effectiveness of EI in recruitment, researchers can identify best practices and tailor interventions to specific organizational contexts.
- **Multilevel Analysis:** Employing multilevel analysis techniques to explore the influence of organizational factors, such as culture, leadership style, and HR practices, on the relationship between EI and recruitment outcomes could enrich our understanding. By considering the contextual factors that shape recruiters' EI development and utilization, researchers can identify organizational levers for enhancing recruitment effectiveness.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is the reliance on self-reported data for emotional intelligence and quality of hire. Self-reported measures may be subject to response bias, social desirability bias, or inaccuracies due to individuals' perceptions of their own emotional intelligence or job performance. Without objective measures or independent assessments of emotional intelligence and job performance, the validity and reliability of the findings may be compromised.

The study may suffer from selection bias, as it focuses on a specific sample of recruiters or employees within certain industries or organizations. The generalizability of the findings to broader populations or different contexts may be limited. The cross-sectional nature of the study design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between emotional intelligence, quality of hire, and other variables. Longitudinal studies would provide a more robust understanding of how changes in emotional intelligence over time may influence recruitment outcomes.

Lastly, the study primarily focuses on emotional intelligence as a predictor of recruitment outcomes, overlooking other potential factors that may influence candidate assessment and selection processes. Factors such as cognitive abilities, personality traits, and situational variables may also play significant roles in recruiters' decision-making processes and should be considered in future research.

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