EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION

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This article adopts a system approach to analyze the Porter-Lawler model. This model synthesizes two important motivational models: the expectancy and the equity models. The expectancy model describes the influence of worker's expectation about the jobs and the rewards gained via the motivation process. The equity model describes workers' comparison of rewards and effort ratios with others. The Porter-Lawler model suggests workers are motivated if they believe their effort will result in rewards they deem important and that the effort-reward ratio must be equivalent to their referents. This model implies workers operate solely on economic rationale. The researcher describes emotion as a significant determinant of worker's judgement about referents, rewards, and equity. Emotional intelligence (EI) is proposed as an influential intervening variable in the Porter-Lawler motivation process model.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most important devices for organizations to compete in the modern day environment. Contemporary organizations need to develop and adjust themselves to keep up with competition. In the past, organizations had the luxury of time to spend in all aspects of running businesses. Companies could spend as much as 5-20 years in research and development of new products (Boone & Kurtz, 1996). With the emergence of the digital era, such luxury is becoming too costly to afford. Those who move slowly will be left behind and eventually dropped out from the market.

Organizations are driven to improve their efficiency through investing more in equipment and technology. However, advanced equipment or technology cannot operate without people. Hence, employees are the most important elements of organizations. Employees are the real forces in organizations that get all jobs done. When an organization improves its efficiency, it is actually the employees who exert more efforts to get things done faster and better. Managers must understand the motivation process to motivate employees to exert their efforts toward organizational objectives.

Two popular contemporary theories of motivation are the expectancy model (Vroom, 1964) and the equity model (Adams, 1965). These models explain the motivation process. The expectancy model suggests that employees view rewards in an absolute term while the equity theory does not take into con-

sideration various expectations employees have in mind. Porter and Lawler (1968) proposed that each theory alone was insufficient to cover the full complexity of the motivation process. The two models are combined for a better picture of the motivation process in an organization context. This new model suggests that the probability in attaining rewards and the value of rewards, derived from the perceived equity of employees' input and output of a job, are important elements of the motivation process.

Fincham and Rhodes (2005) defined satisfaction as feelings or affective responses workers experience in a job and that there are several dimensions of job satisfaction, i.e., satisfaction in the job itself, in co-workers, in the company, and with rewards. Satisfaction with rewards is a major theme in the Porter-Lawler model. Porter and Lawler (1968) suggested that valence is not determined from the absolute value of rewards. The value of rewards is comparative. Workers' valuation of rewards, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is derived from comparison of theirs against other peo's rewards. The satisfaction in the comparative value of rewards determines the level of effort employees will put into jobs. If their perceived rewards are comparatively less than others, they will be dissatisfied and will lose enthusiasm and hence, become less productive.

Since satisfaction is involved with the faculty of feeling or affection, the ability to maintain appropriate feeling or emotion toward rewards is essential. Employees' satisfaction with the value of rewards is assumed to be rational and based solely on economic

reasons. In reality, a human mind functions in a more complex manner. Goleman (1995) suggested that a human mind includes the rational mind and the emotional mind. People's judgement is influenced by both. The researcher proposed that, apart from economic reasoning, workers' assessment of the equity and expectancy in rewards is also influenced by emotion. Salovey and Mayer (1990) suggested the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) as the ability to identify and manage emotions. The proposition made in this study is that emotional intelligence (EI) is an important mediator for workers' assessment of value of rewards to them and hence the perceptions of equity and valence of rewards.

The expectancy model

The expectancy model (Vroom, 1964) is one of the most widely accepted theories of motivation. This model suggests that motivation involves a series of expectations in the mind of employees. It proposes that employees assess three sets of job-related expectancy to determine the level of effort they should invest in their jobs. These are the expectation that their effort will result in the accomplishment of the job (effort-performance linkage), the expectation that the completion of the job will result in rewards (performance-reward linkage), and the attractiveness of rewards to them (valence). Employees ask themselves a series of questions i.e., what is the likelihood they can succeed in performing the job, what will they get if they succeed in the job, and finally are rewards desirable. These expected rewards can be intrinsic or extrinsic or the combination of both (Cameron & Pierce, 2004).
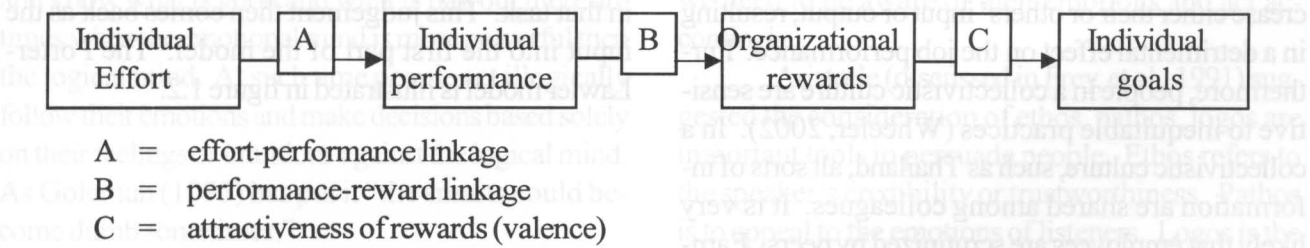
Individual employees give a different priority to each of the three sets of expectation. Some may

consider the rewards attractive before assessing their ability to accomplish the task. Some may assess their ability first and assess the attractiveness of reward later. If an employee perceives the job is difficult, he/she will weigh the rewards against the effort needed to determine whether he/she should extend his/her effort to work for those rewards. If an employee perceives that he/she does not have the necessary ability to perform the job, he/she will back off and is not motivated to perform that job from the beginning. The relationships of these expectations are illustrated in figure 1.1.

Employees perceive valence in different ways. An attractive reward for one employee might not be attractive to others (Hales & Gough, 2003). Employees' perception of rewards is dependent on their experience and background. Some employees prefer intrinsic rewards such as recognition, praise, or job variety while others prefer extrinsic rewards such as pay, work condition, peer group. Those who need job security will value extrinsic factors as more favorable than those who feel secure with their jobs (Herzberg, 1982). Culture also influences the perception of rewards, i.e., people in a collectivistic culture have a stronger desire for affiliation needs (Yamaguchi, 2003). Leaders must assess the perceived importance of each type of rewards for each individual employee. A combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards is preferable.

The expectancy model provides a clear explanation regarding employees' motivation in job. However, this model assumes people only aim at maximizing their rewards but, in fact, they compare their rewards with one another. They compare the ratio of input and output they give and receive from the organization with others to determine the degree of satisfaction they get from the reward.

Figure 1.1 The Vroom's Expectancy Model


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Individual    A    Individual    B    Organizational    C    Individual
Effort    →    performance    →    rewards    →    goals
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A = effort-performance linkage
B = performance-reward linkage
C = attractiveness of rewards (valence)

Source: Adapted from exhibit 10-10 in Stephen P. Robbins & David A. DeCenzo, **Fundamentals of Management** (NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), p. 332.

The equity model

The equity theory (Adams, 1965) suggests that people consider the amount of work they perform and the amount of output or rewards they receive in a proportionate manner. Absolute value of rewards is not the only determinant of motivation. Employees might prefer to work less and spend more time with something else and receive lower amount of rewards. Those who exert higher level of effort would expect to receive higher rewards. Moreover, each individual employee compares this input-output ratio with others (Bordia & Blau, 1998). The sources they compare their ratios with could be their own records in the past or previous job, the company implicit and explicit system, and other people (Kulik & Ambrose, 1992). The situation of inequity exists when the employee's ratio is more or less than their referent. When an employee perceives he/she receives higher input-output ratio than his/her referent, he/she are in a situation of being over-rewarded. When an employee perceives that he/she receives lower input-output ratio than his/her referent, he/she is in a situation of being under-rewarded.

Shore (2004) reported that employees are satisfied being over-rewarded than being equitably rewarded and they are distressed when under-rewarded. People prefer to gain more rather than less in comparison to others. However, they feel uneasy in both over- and under-rewarded situation (Taris, Kalimo, & Schaufeli, 2002). The over-rewarded employee, especially in a collective culture, feels uneasy because he/she is different from the group. He/she earns more while others earn less. These inequitable practices have a negative impact on employee's motivation, quality of work performance, and job satisfaction. The impact can be both overt and covert resulting in a lose-lose situation for both worker and employer (Weller, 1995). Employees can adjust their ratios by behaving in certain ways to decrease or increase either their or others' input or output, resulting in a detrimental effect on the job performance. Furthermore, people in a collectivistic culture are sensitive to inequitable practices (Wheeler, 2002). In a collectivistic culture, such as Thailand, all sorts of information are shared among colleagues. It is very likely that employees are scrutinized by peers. Earning more than others, while working less, is close to committing a crime.

Although many companies prohibit revealing information regarding one's remuneration to others, the input/output ratio is no secret to people in a collectivistic culture. In addition, equality among peer groups is considered important. Those who gain more or are outstanding from the group will feel separated from the group. This is against the harmonious practices in society. The under-rewarded would not like it and would have negative feelings against the over-rewarded. The over-rewarded might like it but they would feel guilty if their colleagues know they work comparably less but earn more. Hence, the over-rewarded would try to adjust the ratio and help the under-rewarded to increase their ratio to maintain harmonious relationships in society.

The Porter-Lawler model

The expectancy model does not consider the perceived equity of rewards and the equity model neglects the relationship between effort and performance. Porter and Lawler's model (1968) provides a comprehensive employee motivation model that incorporates both theories. They suggest that the attractiveness of rewards or valence, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is subject to the perceived equitability of the rewards. Employees' determination of the level of effort they will invest in the job is dependent on the effort-reward expectancy together with their satisfaction with the rewards. Employees assess whether the accomplishment of a task will lead to rewards that they not only value but also deem equitable. They will be motivated only when they believe they can succeed in the task and that the rewards are equitable. Once they are interested to perform the job, they move on to consider whether they possess the ability to perform the task. If that is acceptable, they proceed to perform the job resulting in rewards. Then, employees assess the equitability of rewards to determine their level of satisfaction from investing effort in that task. This judgement then comes back as the input into the first part of the model. The Porter-Lawler model is illustrated in figure 1.2.

32

Figure 1.2 The Porter-Lawler model of motivation
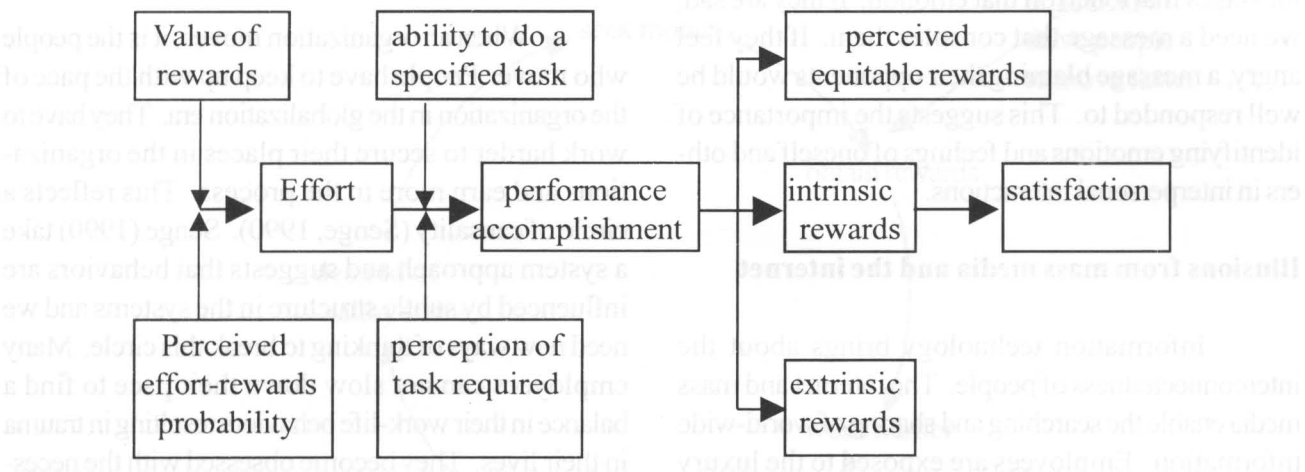
Source: L. W. Porter & E. E. Lawler (1968). Managerial Attitudes and Performance. IL: Richard D. Irwin.

Emotional Intelligence

Employees' behavior in the motivation process implies a logical judgement. Goleman (1995) argued that emotions could seize control over behaviors. He used the terms feeling and emotion interchangeably. He suggested that emotions have a strong influence over rational judgement. Most researchers in the field of emotional intelligence focus on anger and rage (see for example, Frost, 2003, Goleman, 1995, Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2004, Salovey & Mayer, 1990). However, temptation is also an emotion that is very influential in people's lives and worth a close examination.

Goleman (1995) explains that people's mental life consists of two parts, the rational mind and the emotional mind. The rational mind is the mode we comprehend phenomena through logical reasoning. The emotional mind does not follow logic but rather feeling or is often called heart. These two minds operate in harmony intertwining their ways of knowing to guide us through the world. Most of the time, these two faculties work in balance and we think logically and know what is good and what is bad but there are times when the emotional mind is more powerful then the logical mind. At such time people act illogically follow their emotions and make decisions based solely on their feelings or intuitions against the logical mind. As Goleman (1995) has put it "the smarts could become dumb sometimes."

Salovey and Mayer (1990) developed Gardner's (1983) interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence concepts and coined the term "Emotional Intelligence (EI)." They argue that emotional intelligence involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action. Mayer & Salovey (1997) proposed four components of emotional intelligence as the ability to:

1. identify emotions - the ability to recognize how one and others feel

2. use emotions to facilitate thought - the ability to reason with emotion

3. understand emotions - the ability to understand complex emotions and their transitional stages.

4. manage emotions - the ability to manage one's and others' emotions

In order to manage emotions, we need to understand such emotions and their unstable nature. In a collectivistic culture such as Thailand, harmonious relationships are considered essential in dealing with others. Those who can not manage their emotions are unable to be in harmony with others. People in contact with those whose emotions are unpredictable will find it a constraint in forming a relationship. Moreover, in order to deal with others successfully, we need to be aware of their emotions and act accordingly.

Aristotle (discussed in Frey, et al., 1991) suggested the consideration of ethos, pathos, logos are important tools to persuade people. Ethos refers to the speaker's credibility or trustworthiness. Pathos is to appeal to the emotions of listeners. Logos is the logic used in persuasive message organization. In order to appeal to the emotions of listeners, we need to observe and understand their feelings. To persuade

others, we need to identify their emotions and use messages that touch on that emotion. If they are sad, we need a message that consoles them. If they feel angry, a message blaming their opponents would be well responded to. This suggests the importance of identifying emotions and feelings of oneself and others in interpersonal interactions.

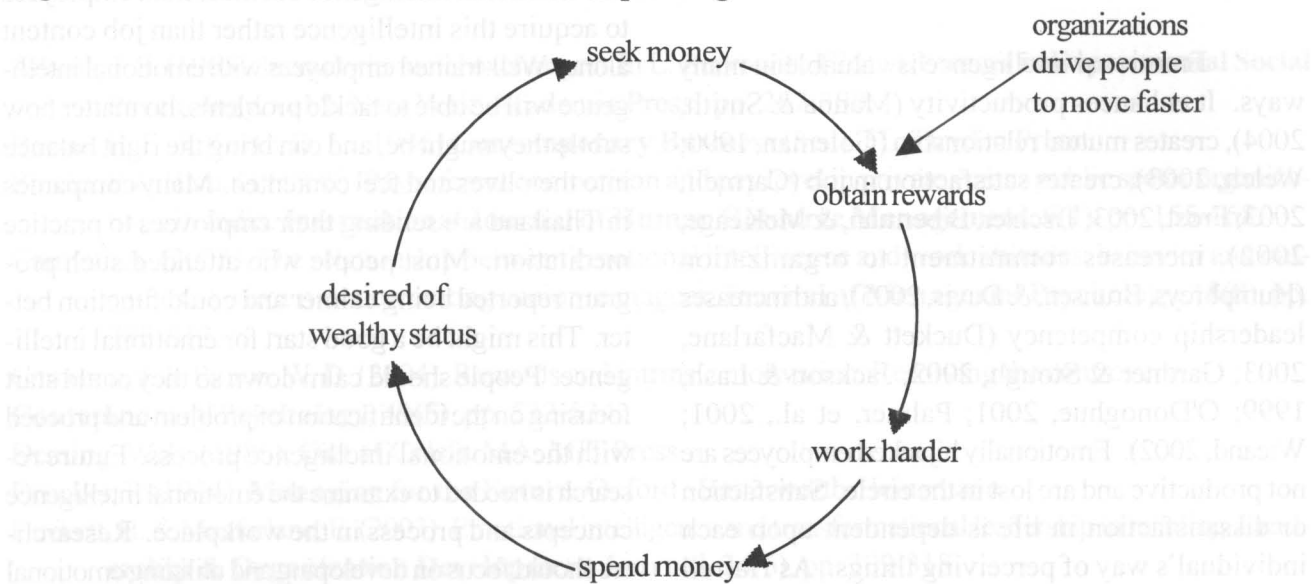## Illusions from mass media and the internet

Information technology brings about the interconnectedness of people. The internet and mass media enable the searching and sharing of world-wide information. Employees are exposed to the luxury and glamorous lifestyles of the affluent all over the world. Success in life, in terms of wealth, is considered a desirable western value (Hofstede, 1984), and nowadays Thai people, especially in urban areas, also aim at success in life and have become more materialistic (Komin, 1991).

Employees see in the media, specimens of those who become rich overnight, win huge fortunes from lottery, work a little but earn a lot, buy exorbitant priced watches and other products, and many other examples of pampered lives obtained through wealth. We see advertisements appealing to lifestyles of the rich and famous everywhere. In Thailand, the leading characters in television dramas eventually live their lives rich ever after. This affects the behavior of workers. An affluent lifestyle filled with all kinds of luxury and comfort is tempting. This pattern of thinking drives them to use products that the actors, and actresses in seen on television and in commercials use. Employees' behaviors are increasingly sophisticated and informed and result in the demand for more varied and complex products (Sparrow, Brewster, & Harris, 2004).

The circle of causality

When an organization moves, it is the people who move. People have to keep up with the pace of the organization in the globalization era. They have to work harder to secure their places in the organizations and earn more in the process. This reflects a circle of causality (Senge, 1990). Senge (1990) take a system approach and suggests that behaviors are influenced by subtle structure in the systems and we need new ways of thinking to break this circle. Many employees can not slow down their pace to find a balance in their work-life behaviors resulting in trauma in their lives. They become obsessed with the necessity to work because they are driven blindly in the circle. In return, companies have to keep up and provide matching products and services for profits of the shareholders. These shareholders are also in the circle in that they invest and work to generate profits to keep or spend to satisfy their needs. Some people work very hard and once they accumulate a sum of money, they will buy something expensive to "reward themselves" for their hard work. This puts them in a vicious circle of working and spending. Many employees are actually trapped within this circle without being aware of it. Senge's (1990) experiment suggested that people panic, or are emotionally swayed, when things do not go as planned. The result is that employees make illogical decisions. The system is so subtle that these employees do not realize the cause-and-effect of the phenomenon and they are obsessed by the emotion of wanting to be rich. They look at people who are rich as their role models. This circle is illustrated in figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3 The cause-and-effect of work and spending

organizations
drive people
to move faster

seek money

obtain rewards

desired of
wealthy status

work harder

spend money

There is a big problem with the desire to be wealthy. Many people have no limit in this regard. An unsatisfied need drives people to behave in a certain manner (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2005) but obtaining a product is not the answer. When one need is fulfilled by one product, people have the urge for a better product, better TV set, better and tastier foods, etc. This circle of causality affects the choice of referent in the Porter-Lawler model. The choice of referent becomes those who are better than themselves in terms of wealth.

Referent in the globalization era

Workers' referent groups (Kulik & Ambrose, 1992) in the globalization era are dynamic. Workers are exposed to a lot more referents via the internet and mass media. With countless examples of people who are rich, their determination of equity, both input and output, are very likely to be swayed. People watch TV, surf the net, go to shopping centers to see what is happening in the world. They buy everything they can afford to keep up with other people in the world, and worse yet many buy, through debt financing, which they can not afford. Shaw Yun and Tanchaisak (2005) surveyed Thai undergraduate students in a private university and reported that students see success in life, or wealth, as the most important terminal value but they do not really work for it. This illustrates an instance when emotion hijacks logical minds. Many workers use the riches as their milestones and compare themselves with the affluent without working toward that goal. These referents are unreasonably created from emotions.

Many workers' logical minds are captured by emotion and their choice of referents becomes illogical. Hence, their determination of equity is based on dramatized standards. They can never feel contented with any rewards. This impairs their judgement regarding motivation to work. If a person is emotionally intelligent, he/she will be aware of emotion, in this case, the temptation to be wealthy. That person could manage it through the components provided by Mayer and Salovey (1997). With emotional intelligence, employees can select appropriate and more realistic referent. Then their determination of equity will be logical and their logical minds can regain strength and they can determine the right level of effort to put into jobs leading to an appropriate work-life balance.

Moreover, the 21st century management literature advocates the use of teamwork and collaboration (Drucker, 1994; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Deming, 1986). When the thinking process is controlled by emotions outside of awareness, humans have a strong tendency to display attitudes and behaviors that destroy trust and relationships (Drucker, 1994). Lack of emotional intelligence would not only destroy a person's life but is against every concept of modern management. Emotional intelligence can help a person to identify his/her emotion and deal with it in a more effective manner. Once workers understand their subtle emotions, they can manage them in a more effective manner. Thus, they could break the circle of causality for a well-balanced life and the motivation model can function properly.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is valuable in many ways. It enhances productivity (Manna & Smith, 2004), creates mutual relationship (Goleman, 1990; Welch, 2003), creates satisfaction in job (Carmeli, 2003; Frost, 2003; Tischler, Biberman, & McKeage, 2002), increases commitment to organization (Humphreys, Brunsen, & Davis, 2005), and increases leadership competency (Duckett & Macfarlane, 2003; Gardner & Stough, 2002; Jackson & Lash, 1999; O'Donoghue, 2001; Palmer, et al., 2001; Wieand, 2002). Emotionally hijacked employees are not productive and are lost in the circle. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction in life is dependent upon each individual's way of perceiving things. As Harrell (2003) put it, "attitude is everything." Those who have positive thinking can respond to events in their lives in a positive way resulting in a happy life. Those who have negative thinking respond to events in their lives negatively, hence, they feel dissatisfied in every circumstance they face. Leaders should not only prac-

tice emotional intelligence but must train employees to acquire this intelligence rather than job content alone. Well-trained employees with emotional intelligence will be able to tackle problems, no matter how subtle they might be, and can bring the right balance into their lives and feel contented. Many companies in Thailand are sending their employees to practice meditation. Most people who attended such program reported being calmer and could function better. This might be a good start for emotional intelligence. People should calm down so they could start focusing on the identification of problem and proceed with the emotional intelligence process. Future research is needed to examine the emotional intelligence concepts and process in the workplace. Researchers should focus on developing and utilizing emotional intelligence for employees in general. Moreover, an effective emotional intelligence training process should be devised. Most importantly, without leaders' commitment, the development of emotional intelligence in the work place can not be successful.

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