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The Measurement of Emotional Intelligence Using Caliper Traits

For organizations that believe an individual's ability to understand and manage emotions is critical to success on the job, measuring emotional intelligence may be the solution to identifying and developing successful employees, particularly leaders. Caliper's clients may already have the capability to measure emotional intelligence with the Caliper Profile. Based on the academic literature and research studies conducted by Caliper, the evidence indicates that certain Caliper traits are related to one's ability to perceive and manage emotions in oneself and others.

BACKGROUND ON WHICH CALIPER TRAITS RELATE TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

For the past 40+ years, Caliper has assessed personality and cognitive traits that relate to successful job performance in executive leadership, management, sales, service, and technical positions. A number of Caliper traits measure the ability to understand, perceive, and act upon, or manage, emotions in the workplace so that they do not negatively affect project or goal completion.

Unlike more recent inventories (for example, Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002) that focus on deriving a score for emotional intelligence (EI score) or an emotional quotient (EQ score), Caliper does not rely on a single score to measure the ability to perceive, understand, and act upon, or manage, the emotions of oneself or others in the workplace. The workplace is considered a multidimensional environment that, depending upon one's position, requires the motivation and ability to succeed in a number of core competency areas: Leadership; Interpersonal/ Communication; Service Motivation; Problem Solving/Decision Making; and Personal Organization/Time Management. For example, emotional intelligence has been found to be positively related to success in the area of leadership, specifically leadership potential, in a sample of senior managers (Higgs & Aitken, 2003). Specific Caliper traits that are related to one's ability to perceive and manage emotions, and thus to remain disciplined on task and goal completion within these five competency areas, would include, at the very least: Abstract Reasoning; Accommodation; Assertiveness; Ego Strength/Confidence; Empathy; Flexibility; Gregariousness; Self Structure/Self Discipline; Skepticism; and Sociability.

Abstract Reasoning or problem solving involves the ability to understand and solve complex, multidimensional problems. Abstract Reasoning is positively related to emotional intelligence in the workplace, as issues related to emotions at work are often highly complex and thus may rely on strategic, as opposed to simple, solutions. Those higher in problem solving, or intelligence, were more likely to advance within an organization (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000). Additionally, intelligence has been found to be highly correlated with an

inventory designed to measure emotional intelligence, namely the MSCEIT (O'Connor & Little, 2003).

Accommodation measures friendliness and openness in personal interactions. Those who possess moderate or average levels of this trait are likely to seek out situations in which they can demonstrate their helpfulness and compassion towards others.

Assertiveness is the ability to express one's thoughts consistently and in a direct manner. Those with average or above-average levels of this trait should also possess higher emotional intelligence, as they will be better able to express their thoughts, feelings and beliefs in a direct, yet constructive way. Assertiveness has been positively related to career satisfaction in individuals from various occupational groups (Lounsbury et al., 2003).

Ego Strength/Confidence is the ability to handle rejection and accept criticism in a manner that is constructive and growth-oriented. In general, individuals with moderate to high levels of Ego Strength/Confidence tend to have healthy, intact

changes. The more Flexible people are, the more they are likely to modify their approach as changing conditions or circumstances require, consider a variety of possible actions, and develop alternate plans (Caruso, 1999).

Gregariousness, an extroverted, cheerful optimism, also taps into components of emotional intelligence. Individuals who possess some degree of Gregariousness will find genuine enjoyment in social interactions both in their professional and personal lives. Individuals higher in emotional intelligence were more extroverted, or had a stronger preference for social interaction (Saklofske, Austin, & Minksi, 2003), than those scoring lower in emotional intelligence. Those scoring high on certain dimensions of emotional intelligence, such as managing emotions on the MSCEIT, also reported more positive relationships with others, compared to those who scored lower in emotional intelligence (Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003).

Self Structure/Self Discipline. Individuals possessing a moderate to high

higher emotional intelligence possessed stronger social skills and were more likely to report that they had close and affectionate relationships (Schutte et al., 2001).

HOW DO CALIPER TRAITS RELATE TO A MANAGER'S ABILITY TO FOCUS ON PEOPLE?

A recent study investigated the relationships between Caliper traits and job-related behavior, as measured by a competency rating tool, among a sample of 92 store managers (Caliper Report, #03-0321). Several items on the competency tool assessed the store managers' ability to focus on people, which reflects one aspect of their emotional intelligence. For example, the store managers were rated by their supervisors on the degree to which they were motivated to help others and the degree to which they took an interest in the career aspirations of their direct reports. These items were combined to produce a "people focus" factor score for each store manager.

Store managers who had higher scores on the "people focus" factor displayed differences on some of the Caliper traits, compared to those who had lower scores on this factor. Specifically, those with high factor scores had significantly higher levels of Sociability and Accommodation than store managers who had low factor scores. Additionally, store managers with high "people focus" factor scores had somewhat higher levels of Empathy and Flexibility.

Those scoring high on certain dimensions of emotional intelligence, such as managing emotions on the MSCEIT, also reported more positive relationships with others, compared to those who scored lower in emotional intelligence

egos and positive self-esteem. These characteristics increase self-awareness, which is considered to be important for the expression of emotional intelligence. Adults with higher self-esteem have also been found to display higher levels of emotional intelligence (Schutte et al., 2002).

Empathy is an important component of emotional intelligence because it is a measure of your ability to sense the reactions of another person and to adjust your position appropriately in order to deal effectively with others. Those higher in Empathy are more inclined to listen well and to try to understand others' (e.g., clients, supervisors, peers, direct reports) needs and concerns. Thus, individuals higher in empathy have been found to be more emotionally intelligent (Mayer et al., 2002; Schutte et al., 2001) and more successful in the workplace (Cherniss, 2001).

Flexibility involves the ability to adapt and respond to change. A cornerstone of emotional intelligence at work is the ability to perceive and quickly respond to everyday

degree of Self Structure are able to establish and maintain their own agendas at work, and are unlikely to permit distractions, emotional or otherwise, from interfering with completion of tasks and goals.

Skepticism or a pessimistic attitude toward others detracts from one's ability to display emotional intelligence. Having a doubting attitude or state of mind toward others can block one's ability to effectively perceive and respond to people's feelings. Similarly, optimism increases one's mood or motivation to persist despite obstacles and setbacks; thus, optimism is considered to be an important component of emotional intelligence. Optimism has been positively related to career satisfaction of individuals in a variety of occupational groups (Lounsbury et al., 2003).

Sociability measures the ability and desire to be with and work with people. Sociable individuals will be motivated to hone the skills necessary to effectively collaborate with others. Compared to those lower in emotional intelligence, adults with

HOW DO CALIPER TRAITS CORRELATE WITH THE FOUR BRANCHES OF EMOTION AS MEASURED BY THE MSCEIT?

In another recent study, Caliper examined the relationships between Caliper traits and results from an inventory designed to measure emotional intelligence, the MSCEIT (Mayer et al., 2002), among a convenience sample of 73 attorneys (Caliper Report, #03-0243). Previous research had indicated that the MSCEIT was not highly correlated with personality traits (Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2002; O'Connor & Little, 2003).

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Certain Caliper Profile traits were significantly related to MSCEIT branch scores. Specifically, scores on the MSCEIT branch named "Perceiving Emotions" were positively related to Cautiousness, Thoroughness and External Structure, meaning that as the degree to which individuals who possessed these traits increased, their ability to accurately understand how they and others around them were feeling also increased. However, Perceiving Emotions was negatively related to Ego Strength/Confidence.

Scores on the MSCEIT branch entitled "Using Emotions" were positively related to levels of Accommodation. This finding suggested that the stronger the need to be helpful and liked, the better the ability to generate and to use emotion to communicate feelings.

Results on the MSCEIT branch of "Understanding Emotions" were positively related to Abstract Reasoning. Thus, the greater an individual's problem-solving ability, the greater his/her ability to understand emotional information and how emotions transition from one stage to another.

Finally, scores on the MSCEIT branch of "Managing Emotions" were positively related to Assertiveness, Ego Drive and Empathy, and negatively correlated with Skepticism. Thus, those who were more assertive, empathetic, persuasive, and optimistic scored higher on their ability to employ effective strategies that use their emotions to help them achieve a goal.

SUMMARY

Findings from these studies support that specific Caliper traits are related to one's ability to perceive and manage emotions in oneself and others. First, the study among store managers indicated that those with a stronger focus on people (which may be related to higher emotional intelligence) displayed greater levels of certain Caliper traits such as Sociability, Accommodation, Empathy and Flexibility. Specifically, store managers who were more focused on people were viewed as outgoing, helpful and service oriented, and they were generally supportive of others with whom they came into contact.

The study among lawyers showed that certain Caliper traits were related to another measure of emotional intelligence, the MSCEIT. As expected, Abstract Reasoning, Empathy, Accommodation and Assertiveness were positively related to the emotional intelligence branch scores, and Skepticism was negatively related. These findings provided evidence that there is a relationship between Caliper traits, which are related to one's ability to perceive and manage emotions, and the MSCEIT.

Caliper plans to further investigate the relationships between the Caliper traits and emotional intelligence among other samples. In general, the usefulness of emotional intelligence in predicting workplace performance, whether measured by a Caliper assessment or other tool, needs to be further demonstrated. However, the ability of an individual to recognize and appropriately manage his/her own and others' emotions in the workplace is an intuitively desirable skill for employees to have. ■

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