

ing how well EI predicts performance (often to disappointing effect), without paying sufficient attention to what EI might uniquely predict. To understand this, one has to work from the criterion backward. Shouldn't EI better predict empathetic behavior on the part of social workers than predict whether a bank teller's cash drawer will balance?⁶² Second, for many researchers, it is not clear what EI is. Is it really a form of intelligence? Most of us would not think that being self-aware or sensitive to others' emotions is a matter of intellect. Beyond this definitional ambiguity, different EI researchers have studied a dizzying array of concepts—including emotion recognition, self-awareness, empathy, self-control, interpersonal skills, stress management, well-being, and self-discipline. One reviewer noted, "The concept of EI has now become so broad and the components so variegated that . . . it is no longer even an intelligible concept."⁶³ Finally, some critics argue that because EI is so closely related to intelligence and personality, once you control for these factors, EI has nothing unique to offer. We noted earlier evidence showing that controlling for personality and cognitive ability does indeed detract from the validity of EI.⁶⁴

Still, among consulting firms and in the popular press, EI is wildly popular. For example, one organization's promotional materials for an EI measure claimed, "EI accounts for more than 85 percent of star performance in top leaders."⁶⁵ To say the least, it is hard to validate this statement with the research literature.

Summary

Although few would deny that emotional awareness and regulation are important for many jobs, EI has proved hard to measure in a way that is valid. Weighing the arguments for and against EI, it is still too early to tell whether the concept is useful. It is clear, though, that more and more organizations are using EI measures in selection decisions. If an organization wishes to use an EI measure in selection decisions, we urge a certain amount of caution. At the very least, it should be restricted to jobs with exceptional emotional demands, and the construct and empirical validity of the EI measure used should be investigated before it is used in actual selection decisions.

Performance Tests and Work Samples

Performance tests are mechanisms to assess actual performance rather than underlying capacity or disposition. As such, they are more akin to samples rather than signs of work performance. For example, Chrysler asks applicants for its assembly-line jobs to try assembling auto parts, and applicants for executive-level positions undergo a "day in the life" simulation in which they play the role of plant manager, a process that has been followed by Hyundai and Mitsubishi.⁶⁶ Exhibit 9.6 provides examples of performance tests and work samples for a variety of jobs. As can be seen in the exhibit, the potential uses of these selection measures are quite broad in terms of job content and skill level.

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