

# Learning orientation, emotional intelligence and job success: an empirical research of automobile industry in Thailand

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## Keywords

Learning Orientation, Emotional Intelligence, Job Success

## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between learning orientation and job success, via emotional intelligence as the mediating influences. This was adapted from various researches including organizational behavior, managerial accounting and applied psychology. This should succeed in highlighting how to gain job success in the accounting field. The results indicate that commitment to learning has a significant positive influence on emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, whereas inter-personal knowledge sharing has a significantly positive influence only on emotional intelligence. For the emotional intelligence, the result shows a significant positive influence between emotional intelligence and job success. However, in-depth interviews were not used, there are some constructs that do not have significant influences. Future research may also investigate other variables to extend the relationships between learning orientation on job success via emotional intelligence as a mediating influence.*

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## 1. Introduction

In the fiercely competitive business world, organizations need to operate hard in order to reach required goal. Therefore, it is essential for human development to improve employees' efficiency substantially, because human resource is one of the main mechanics for organizational driving. Brands and Holtzblatt (2015) stated that the implementation and the analysis of business knowledge application are an important function for managerial accountants in organizations because accounting analysis were based beyond traditional and transaction. So the analysis of management accountants and data interpretation would be transformed by this emerging trend for companies. In addition, organizations could not operate efficiently without efficient accountants. Coad (1996) stated working hard and smart in projects are required for related persons. Evidence which shows that accounting in strategic management requires a learning orientation which is provided by methods of case study to explain its use in a situation of tendering competitively. Martinette et al (2014) suggested that as learning orientation and business performance scores have been increasing in public accounting firms, results in competitive advantage increasing as well.

However, there is high tension in accounting careers for several reasons, such as coordination within the organization, communication errors and loss of emotional control etc. This leads to a decreasing job performance. Cook et al (2011) said emotional intelligence may assist accountants build up better leadership in operation, team building, decision-making, as well as a good relationship with clients. Therefore, it would be useful for both organizations and employees to learn orientation and emotional intelligence harmonization for achievement of goals.

Furthermore, organizations both public and private cannot deny that confronting many concerns need to be addressed. People management is one of the main concerns. So, emotional intelligence ought to become an important factor for determination of effective management in handling every case practically. Because of the process of organizational corporation dealing with changing plentifully of emotions, can be either positive or negative. Therefore, the ability of both the employers and the employees perceptions are required to understand the emotional impact of change on the individual and others. In addition, Bunker (1997) stated that leaders should realize that management of anxiety and uncertainty of wage-earners, helps organizations management to change effectively. Furthermore, organizations should be able to appreciate the reaction of employee emotionally and support them in dealing with changes.

However, there is limited empirical research formally available which involves learning orientation and emotional intelligence in the context of accounting. This may be because learning orientation and emotional intelligence are not the first priority of corporate interests. Thus, this research examines the effect of learning orientation and emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. The results may lead to the empowerment of employees and be used as a guideline to develop themselves and to ultimately maximize benefits of work

performance. In addition, it would enhance the organizations awareness of the importance of emotional intelligence and learning orientation in the context of accounting professions to establish a good working relationship, improving the performance of individuals, reducing stress and leads to better team work.

## 2. Literature review and Hypothesis development

To examine the relationships between learning orientation and job success, via emotional intelligence as the mediating influences. The conceptual, linkage, and research model presents the relationship of the mentioned above, as shown in Figure 1

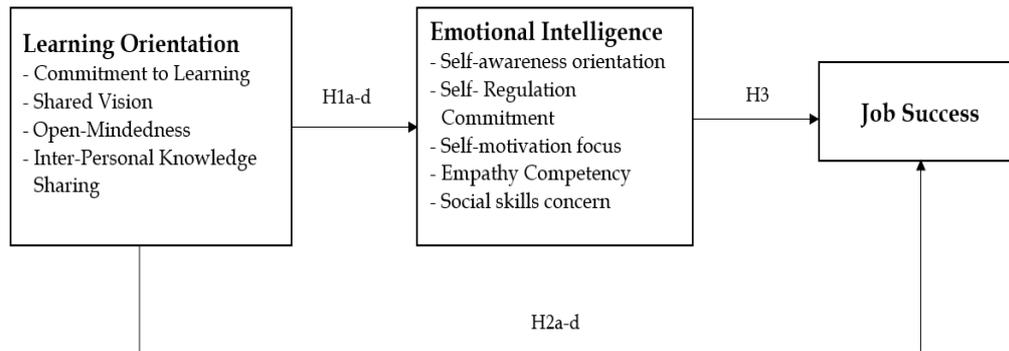


Figure (1) Conceptual Model of Learning Orientation, Emotional Intelligence and Job Success

### 2.1 Learning Orientation

**Sinkula et al (1997)** have conceptualized learning orientation in terms of commitment to learning, shared vision and/or purpose, and open-mindedness. The conceptualization of the learning orientation construct (Sinkula et al, 1997) is described as follows:

- Commitment to learning is when companies recognize the value of understanding the cause and effects of their actions.
- Open-mindedness is related to the concept of “unlearning”, which is when organizations are proactive in rethinking long-term processes and beliefs about how they do business.
- Shared vision provides a window into expectations, outcomes and theories in use that an organization has defined. Shared vision also provides an organization with the ability to adapt around consistent and shared assumptions that enhance the potential of focused and positive responses to changes in the market environment leading to better business performance over the long-term.

**Wang (2008)** conceptualizes learning orientation as firm values which affect means of information acquirement of the firm. Moreover, the important of planned procedures are emphasized in accepting firms learning, in order to reach the achievement of ordinary organizational aims. Similar to **Fiol and Lyles (1985)** and **Garvin (1993)** stated that taking a strict approach results in significant behavioral change.

**Senge (1990)** posted that the basics of a learning organization influences the expansion of its capability consecutively and creates its future by considering the four disciplines of learning organization, which consist of:

#### 2.1.1 Commitment to Learning

Commitment to learning refers to the degree to which an organization values and promotes learning. Sinkula et al (1997) said that a commitment to learning is an important factor for surviving in organizations, because the higher the learning concentration, the higher the knowledge obtained. Furthermore, creating learning opportunities enhance a clearer decision making process, so that self-assessment would be better for personal-weakness and strength improvements and this leads to greater opportunities in career progression. In addition, learning commitment improves emotional intelligence in on the part of self-regulation and self-motivation. For example, research psychologist **Keith et al (2005)** findings highlight the potential of promoting self-regulatory processing during learning from training. **DeLillo and Houghton (2006)** indicate that the one who has a self-motivated focus will be likely to a higher potential creativity, especially enforces strong workplace support. In addition, knowledge acquisition can be found not only in textbooks, but also from sharing discussions consistent with **Slater and Narver (1994)** managers expect their employees to attempt various knowledge focuses from outside. This may lead to interaction opportunities increasing among colleagues, thus increasing more sympathy each other so that cooperation is facilitated in overview. Carden

(2007) found increased understanding regarding the importance of learning impact on pathways to individual career success. Therefore, it can be claimed that individuals who have high learning determination are more likely of higher achievements due to fruitful knowledge and adaptation in working. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 1a: The higher the commitment to learning the more likely individuals will gain greater emotional learning.

Hypothesis 2a: The higher the commitment to learning, the more likely that individuals will gain greater job success.

### 2.1.2. Shared Vision

Shared vision between individuals in the organization also enhance understanding of people's attitudes in the organization, working directions more accurately, also increasing work confidence for employees, so that changing attitudes to a more positive working motivation and higher work quality. This leads to an eventual increase in job satisfaction in the workplace. Calantone et al (2002) said that learning with clear direction tends to develop individual strength or essential capability. Boyatzis (2012) found that using emotional intelligence models, through shared vision, assists people to reach their best level and obtains positive results. Boyatzis et al (2013) found that the more discussion by executive coach, the more the idea developed and enthusiasm grew. Therefore, the importance of shared personal vision enhances positive mood. This study revealed that shared vision affects emotional intelligence. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 1b: The higher the shared vision the more likely individuals will gain greater emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 2b: The higher shared vision the more likely individuals will gain greater job success.

### 2.1.3 Open-mindedness

A learning organization requires open-mindedness to past practices and move forward with the capability to change. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) indicated that the knowledge gained from learning represents only half of the solution, with the other half coming from unlearning. Senge (1990) suggests that learning is a natural occurrence, but it is most effective when knowledge gained from learning is systematically and thoughtfully applied. Openness, new ideas and being agreeable reflect an understanding upon the emotions and ideas of others. So, individuals who are willing to listen to the opinions of others, considering all possibilities in a positive manner will be capable of more recognition leading to less tension in working environment. In addition, opening new perspectives allows individuals to improve their emotional management as opening new perspectives encourages individuals to obtain either knowledge or view information in a different way, which is a likely cause of more thorough thinking. As a result, they can deal with self-emotions better and be able to see in diverse perspectives. This increases the possibility of creative motivation for job achievement. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 1c: The higher open-mindedness the more likely individuals will gain greater emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 2c: The higher open-mindedness the more likely individuals will gain greater job success.

### 2.1.4 Inter-personal Knowledge Sharing

Inter personal knowledge sharing refers to the increase in learning which involves behavioral routines or beliefs of community onto different organization divisions. The knowledge and information are gathered from various derivations and serves as a citation for future operation. For example, Sathitsemakul and Calabrese (2013) proposed employees' attitudes have obtained the influence of emotional intelligence for knowledge sharing in organizations. Hsiu (2007) presented the influence of trust and self-efficiency in the employees' willingness to share their knowledge and how that affects knowledge sharing behavior. Lin (2008) suggested that the strong motivation factors for knowledge sharing consist of characteristics of organizational structure, collaboration and culture. Almahamid et al (2010) found giving Jordanian managers a concept of how to increase employees' job satisfaction by setting up practices in knowledge sharing and assuring that learning processes are progressed in order to prepare rethinking and response of employees in new choices without fear. Thus, there could be a possibility of job success eventually. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 1d: The higher inter personal knowledge sharing is the more likely individuals will gain greater emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis 2d: The higher inter personal knowledge sharing is the more likely individuals will gain greater job success.

## 2.2 Mediating of the relationship between Learning Orientation and Job Success

The mediating in this paper is Emotional intelligence which consist of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation focus, empathy, and social skills concern.

### 2.2.1 Emotional intelligence

Boyatzis et al (1999) stated that Emotional Intelligence (EI), is an essential for many areas of growing research in fields such as business and management which focuses attention on human talent. Zeidner et al (2004) considered that EI consist of mental ability models and mixed models. Mental ability models focus on capacity of effective information processing, whereas mixed models focus more on various constructs, including personality aspects, perception ability, adaptation, emotional management and understanding. EI is "the ability to monitor one's own and others emotions, to discriminate between them and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). Mayer, et al (2000) defined the set of emotion-processing skills to evaluate EI with testing of objective performance, such as problem solutions or emotional identification. Bar-On (1997) describes EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demand and pressures". EI is thus described in five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation focus, empathy and social skill concern.

Self-awareness is the ability of perception and understanding ones dispositions and impulses which can affect others. Self-confidence, realistic self-assessment and a self-deprecating sense of humor are included in self-awareness.

Self-regulation is the ability of handling or controlling disruptive emotions, the propensity of unsettled determination and to "look before you leap", trustworthiness and integrity; comfort with ambiguity; openness to change; a passion to work for internal reasons are included in self-regulation.

Self-motivation focus is crucial for work achievement as well as in individual life. Human needs and motivation which drive people toward accomplishing objectives are a well-known aspect of human behavior. Unsatisfied needs will remain until satisfaction has been reached, is behind key concept of needs theory. When needs are satisfied or higher, confidence of future satisfaction is increased.

Empathy is the ability of perceiving the emotional level of others. The appropriate treatments, according to emotional responses, include building skill and maintaining those special capacities of caring, wishing to diminish negative emotions of others.

Social skills concern is the ability of relationship management and networks building, as well as the capability in building good relations with others. Bringing of effective transformation, cajoling, skill building, and team leadership are included in social skills concerns.

Several prior researches illustrate the correlation between emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and career success. For example, Gunavathy and Ayswarya (2011) found that among emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and job performance statistically significant effects on positive relationships. Adyasha (2013) showed that corporate employees currently always look for career progression through training or through management mentoring. Although primary enthusiasm is motivated by compensations, sustainability of employee's performance should be highly driven. Trehan and Shrivastav (2012) Summarize that EI is necessary for professional achievement, because effective capability results in accomplishments in working life. Singh (2008) states that people who can recognize and identify the emotions of others will have more opportunity to success both in work and social lives. Therefore, it can be claimed that emotional intelligence is an essential, the same as combination of both technical and analytical skills for performance. This is because the higher people are promoted in the organization, the more important emotional intelligence becomes to encompass errors, thus leading to job success. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis 3: The higher emotional intelligence is the more likely individuals will gain greater job success.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Sample and Data Collection Procedure

In this study, the sample data comprise limited companies in the automobile industry in Thailand. Firms listed obtained from The Thailand Company Directory database total 980 limited firms. Questionnaires were distributed to all companies in the database, 241 questionnaires returned, including 2 incomplete

questionnaires. A total of 239 questionnaires were used for statistical testing. Response rate was 24% .The questionnaire was evaluated by an academic professional in view of terms of content and face value. A mail survey process via questionnaire was used for data collection.

### **3.2 Test of Non-Response Bias**

To test non-response bias and to detect and consider possible problems with non-response errors were investigated by t-test that adhered to Armstrong and Overton (1977).The research compared early and late responses. There were no significant differences between early and late responses. Therefore, it was determined that these received questionnaires show insignificant non-response bias for the analysis in this study.

### **3.3 Variable Measurement**

To measure each construct in the conceptual model, all variables are anchored by five-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) excluding control variables. In addition, all constructs are improved for measuring from definition of each construct, determining the relationship between theoretical framework and previous literature reviews. Therefore, the variables measurements of this study are described as follows:

#### **3.3.1 Dependent Variable**

Job success refers to the positive psychological and work related outcomes accumulated from one's work experiences, including income and future salary prospects, personal happiness and satisfaction, career development and career balance.

#### **3.3.2 Independent Variables**

Learning orientation refers to organization-wide activity of creating and using knowledge to enhance competitive advantage. There are four components of learning orientation which consist of a commitment to learning, shared vision, open-mindedness and inter- personal knowledge sharing.

Commitment to learning is defined as the degree to which an individual values and promotes learning and generates new knowledge.

Shared vision defined as an organization-wide focus on learning. A positive learning climate requires individuals to focus when new knowledge is implemented.

Open-mindedness defined as the willingness to critically evaluate the organization's operational routine and to accept new ideas

Inter- personal knowledge sharing defined as a collective belief or behavioral routines related to the spread of learning among different individuals, keeping alive the knowledge and information gathered from various sources and serves as a reference for future action

#### **3.3.3 Mediating Variables**

Emotional Intelligence in this study is defined as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to understanding and analyzing emotional information, employing emotional knowledge and regulation of emotions. This construct is developed as a new scale including a five-item scale.

#### **3.3.4 Control Variables**

Gender (Dsex), previous research indicates that differences of gender are composed of impersonal qualities from the argument of lack of women in senior management positions. This is due to female character and behavior patterns which produce more men than women suitable for leadership positions (Hull and Umansky, 1997). Thus, this research shows that gender is one important factor which impacts on learning orientations and emotional intelligence. For analysis, gender is represented by a dummy variable including 0 (male), and 1 (female).

Work experience (Dexp) refers to both direct experiences and indirect experiences, including individual learning from the success and misconceptions that can develop and the persuasive knowledge of the manager for an increase in the value of working experience. For analysis, work experience represented by a dummy variable including 0 (less than or equal to 10 years), and 1 (more than 20 years).

### **3.4 Reliability and Validity**

The researcher used Cronbach's alpha to test the reliability of the measurement. Coefficient alpha indicates the degree of internal consistency among items in questionnaires that should be greater than 0.70 (Nunnally and Berstein, 1994). In this study, convergent validity was tested by the factor loading, each

construct should be greater than the 0.40 cut-off and all factors are statistically significant (Nunnally and Berstein, 1994).

Table (1) Result of Measure Validation

Variable	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Commitment to Learning (CL)	0.60-0.83	0.81
Shared Vision (SV)	0.79-0.87	0.86
Open-mindedness (OM)	0.75-0.87	0.88
Inter-personal Knowledge Sharing (IKS)	0.86-0.90	0.92
Self-awareness orientation (SWO)	0.42-0.83	0.69
Self-regulation Commitment (SRC)	0.45-0.85	0.84
Self-motivation focus (SMF)	0.76-0.84	0.86
Empathy Competency (EC)	0.81-0.86	0.89
Social Skills Concern (SSC)	0.74-0.87	0.87
Job Success (JS)	0.66-0.88	0.84

### 3.5 Statistical Techniques

All dependent and independent variables in this study are the metric scale. Therefore, OLS regression is the appropriate technique to test all hypotheses. From the conceptual model and hypotheses, the following three equation models are formulated:

$$\text{Equation 1: } EI = \beta_0 + \beta_1CL + \beta_2SV + \beta_3OM + \beta_4IKS + \beta_5Dsex + \beta_6Dexp + \varepsilon_1$$

$$\text{Equation 2: } JS = \beta_7 + \beta_8CL + \beta_9SV + \beta_{10}OM + \beta_{11}IKS + \beta_{12}Dsex + \beta_{13}Dexp + \varepsilon_6$$

$$\text{Equation 3: } JS = \beta_{14} + \beta_{15}EI + \beta_{16}Dsex + \beta_{17}Dexp + \varepsilon_7$$

### 4. Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for all variables. Correlation coefficients of variables are ranging from 0.238-0.811. With respect to potential problems relating to multicollinearity, variance inflation factors (VIF) were used to test the inter correlations among independent variables. In this study, the VIFs range from 2.123 to 4.218 well below the cut-off value of 10 (Hair et al., 2010) meaning the independent variables are not correlated with each other. Therefore, there are no substantial multicollinearity problems found in this study.

Table (2) Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variables	CL	SV	OM	IKS	SWO	SRC	SMF	EC	SKC	JS
Mean	4.49	4.41	4.36	4.30	3.89	3.40	4.05	3.73	4.01	4.02
S.D.	0.46	0.53	0.50	0.55	0.45	0.49	0.51	0.56	0.49	0.50
CL	1									
SV	.625**	1								
OM	.665**	.811**	1							
IKS	.554**	.652**	.720**	1						
SWO	.330**	.183**	.276*	.238**	1					
SRC	.301**	.273**	.270**	.267**	.433**	1				
SMF	.445**	.292**	.375**	.315**	.517**	.605**	1			
EC	.265**	.166*	.218**	.247**	.579**	.437**	.520**	1		
SKC	.357**	.350**	.406**	.405**	.422**	.604**	.551**	.615**	1	
JS	.415**	.301**	.300**	.268**	.422**	.492**	.595**	.512**	.499**	1

\*\* p<.01, \* p<.05

Table 3 shows the results of regression analysis for three equations. The results indicate the relationship between learning orientation dimensions, emotional intelligence dimensions, and job success.

Table (3) Results of Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables		
	EI (1)	JS (2)	JS (3)
CL	.257*** (.070)	.378** (.089)	
SV	-.084 (.078)	.085 (.099)	
OM	.136 (.093)	-.048 (.118)	
IKS	.117* (.062)	.034 (.079)	
EI			.792*** (.062)
Dsex	-.024 (.077)	-.006 (.097)	-.014 (.079)
Dexp	-.014 (.050)	.124* (.063)	.133** (.052)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.470	0.145	0.387
MaximumVIF	4.218	4.218	2.123

\*p<0.1, \*\*p<.05, \*\*\*p<.01, <sup>a</sup> Beta coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis.

For the learning orientation dimensions, the results show that commitment to learning (CL) has a significant positive influence on emotional intelligence ( $\beta_1 = 0.257$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and job satisfaction ( $\beta_1 = 0.378$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, hypothesis both 1a and 2a are supported.

The second and third dimensions of learning orientations, shared vision (SV) and open-mindedness (OM) has no significant influence on emotional intelligence. Thus, hypothesis 1b, 1c, 2b, 2c are not supported.

The last dimension of learning orientation, inter-personal knowledge sharing (IKS) has a positive significantly influence on emotional intelligence ( $\beta_5 = 0.117$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ), whereas job satisfaction has no significant influence. Thus, hypothesis 1d is supported, but hypothesis 2d is not supported.

For the emotional intelligence, the result show that there is significant positive influence between emotional intelligence and job success as  $\beta_1 = 0.792$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Thus, hypothesis 3 is supported.

In summary, the results indicated that there are two dimensions of learning orientation include commitment to learning and inter-personal knowledge sharing that have direct effect on emotional intelligence. Consistent with prior research indicated that learning commitment and inter-personal knowledge sharing encourage not only individual of emotional intelligence, also promote job success outstandingly. Especially, the person who has both learning orientation and emotional intelligence would be achieve in career goal conveniently as working hard and smart is needed in corporation.

## 5. Contributions

### 5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This research extends the holistic view of learning orientation that attempts to examine the relationship of learning orientation, emotional intelligence and job success.

### 5.2 Managerial Contribution

This research provides the first empirical evidence that accounting managers use novel constructs of learning orientation that could be significant in the emotional intelligence. This research adapted various researches include organizational behavior, managerial accounting, and applied psychology. This maybe lead to highlighting how to gain job success for accounting field.

## 6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of learning orientation on job success via emotional intelligence as a mediating influence. Data were collected from automobile and auto part industry in Thailand. The results indicated that commitment to learning has a significant positive influence on emotional intelligence and job satisfaction whereas Inter-personal knowledge sharing has a positive significantly influence only on emotional intelligence. For the emotional intelligence, the result show there is a significant positive influence between emotional intelligence and job success.

This study has some limitation that is the measurement is not in-depth interview from firm's practitioners. As a result, some constructs do not have significant influences. Future research may also investigate other variables to extend the relationships between learning orientation on job success via emotional intelligence as mediating influences.

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