

A Critical Evaluation of a Program developing Emotional Competence using Psychophonetics for IT Team Leaders and Specialists at a Financial Services Company (2011)

Keriesa Botha. MSc in Leadership & Change Management, Faculty of Business & Law, Leeds Metropolitan University (UK)

This work based project is an evaluation of a program for developing Emotional Competence using Psychophonetics and the Seven Principles for Sustainable Personal Development. The program was presented for IT team leaders and specialists at a Financial Services Company. It is a qualitative pilot study based on the Design and Development Research Model. This pilot study intends to find out whether the Seven Principles program can develop Emotional Competence of participants in a business environment. The research will draw mainly from semi-structured in depth interviews with 10 participants.

In the literature on Emotional Intelligence there is a debate about the precision and objectivity of the conceptualisation of EI. However, there is growing body of research that argues that developing Emotional Competency in people improves their work performance, work relationships and shapes effective leadership.

In the analysis of the themes quotes from interviews are used extensively in order to show the integrity of the findings and to follow the chosen research strategy which is to strive for contextual understanding and to produce rich, deep qualitative data rather than measurable quantitative data. The majority of the participants demonstrated development in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and relationship management. The course structure, coaching and learning methodology enabled participants to integrate and apply the learning of EC. However, the peer learning was not as effective. Furthermore, in order for experiential learning to be supportive in a corporate setting, learning styles need to be accommodated and issues of confidentiality need to be addressed more stringently. The majority of the participants felt that the course could stand as an independent program and that it was appropriate for the corporate setting. However, in order for this program to build on the impact it had as a pilot study, more attention would have to be given to the implementation of motivational strategies.