

Study of Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Practices

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Abstract

Emotions are the vital forces for the values and principles each one of us lives for and they drive one's focus, action and its speed. "Intelligence" is understood as "the ability to learn and understand from experience or to respond successfully to new experiences, the ability to acquire and retain knowledge". The concept of emotional intelligence is developed based upon a set of competencies like self awareness, self confidence and self control, commitment and integrity, the ability to communicate the influence, to initiate and accept change- these competencies are highly recognized in today's competitive market. Successful leadership today is about how well leaders manage themselves and how well they manage others. Successful leadership is not about intellectual ability or technical expertise; it is about personal characteristics and human qualities that include empathy and compassion, flexibility, and influence. Today's leaders must have the ability and flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing workforce, and it's these human abilities that set apart successful leaders. Emotional intelligence has become as important as, if not more important than, intellectual quotient (IQ) and cognitive abilities. Today, successful leaders are defined by inspiring and motivating others, promoting a positive work environment, perceiving and understanding emotions, and fostering an organizational climate in which people turn challenging opportunities into successes.

This study is an attempt to examine the level of emotional intelligence through different dimensions of EI on the middle level managers. The data was collected from 150 middle level managers from banks using standardized scale i.e. Bhattacharya Instrument on Emotional Intelligence. Total of 8 banks from Delhi and NCR were targeted. The main objective of the research was to study the level of emotional intelligence with respect to gender and age of the respondents and explore the relationship between different factors of emotional intelligence. The results revealed that all factors of emotional intelligence were significantly correlated to each other except interpersonal conflict management. Level of emotional intelligence does not differ across gender and age of the leaders. The findings of the study strongly recommend improvement in developing leaders' capacity for empathy. If one lacks empathy, they can cut themselves off at the knees in many kinds of negotiations at the time of conflict resolution. This study supports the position that emotional stability and emotional intelligence are important factors for organizational leadership.

Keywords:

Emotional Intelligence, BEIS Instrument, Emotions, Conflict, Empathy.

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a relatively contemporary concept that has strongly emerged in the management field. While psychologists have pioneered in studying and researching emotional intelligence, extensive research on the role of emotional intelligence in the management field has been conducted. Research has confirmed the existence of strong ties between emotional intelligence and leadership. The emotional intelligence has now established roots in the fields of human resource and organizational behaviors. The emotional intelligence was first conceptualized in 1990 by Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer as—a set of abilities to do with emotions and the processing of emotional information. Daniel Goleman, regarded as the godfather of emotional intelligence in his book —Primal Leadership defined the role of leadership in relation to emotional intelligence as —The fundamental task of leaders is to prime good feelings of those they lead that occur when a leader creates resonance- a reservoir of positivity that frees the best in people. Successful leadership today is about how well leaders manage themselves and how well they manage others. Successful leadership is not about intellectual ability or technical expertise; it is about personal characteristics and human qualities that include empathy and compassion, flexibility, and influence. Today's leaders must have the ability and flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing workforce, and it's these human abilities that set apart successful leaders. Emotional intelligence has become as important as, if not more important than, intellectual quotient (IQ) and cognitive abilities.

Emotional Intelligence

Mayer and Salovey in 1990 used the concept of emotional intelligence to describe the emotional intelligence characteristics of individuals to achieve success and these properties were emotional and include: empathy, adjust disputes or mood, to love others and perseverance, compassion and the expression of feelings, independence, and adaptability, problem-solving between people, and the affection and respect. Meyer and Salovey describes emotional intelligence as a set of elements of social intelligence that include the ability of the individual to control his emotions and feelings in himself and others and to distinguish them, and use this information to guide his thinking, his work and his actions.

Emotions

Emotions are the vital forces for the values and principles each one of us lives for and they drive one's focus, action and its speed. It is defined as something in one's mind, sometimes consciously and sometimes subconsciously, balancing, integrating and juggling various different and often conflicting facts, experience and concepts. The eastern wisdom goes beyond the body – mind natural science phenomenon and gets deeper to understand the subtlet aspect above the mind.

Intelligence

“Intelligence” is understood as “the ability to learn and understand from experience or to respond successfully to new experiences, the ability to acquire and retain knowledge”. Its possession implies the use of reason or intellect in solving problems and directing conduct.

Emotional intelligence can be defined as a multifunctional array of

interrelated emotional, personal and social abilities which influence one's overall ability to actively and effectively cope with demands and pressures (Bar-On & Parker, 2000). Dulewicz and Higgs (1999) define emotional intelligence as being aware of, and managing one's own feelings and emotions; being sensitive to, and influencing others; sustaining and balancing one's motivation and drive with intuitive, conscientious, and ethical behavior. The concept of emotional intelligence is developed based upon a set of competencies like self awareness, self confidence and self control, commitment and integrity, the ability to communicate the influence, to initiate and accept change- these competencies are highly recognized in today's competitive market.

Leadership

Leadership is one of the most important aspects of studies of human behavior in organization. It is the leader who creates working environment. The success of an organization depends upon the efficiency of the leader. It is the attributes, positive approach and the ability to solve problems that make a person leader. Leader should be able to turn the hopeless situation in his favor. In the environment of tough competition in the market where it is undergoing financial recession, layoffs is the order of the day, market is facing poor demand for products because everybody has enough and poor or no growth situation persists. In this situation leader should not loose his balance but turn the situation in his favour. He should be able to evolve techniques and lead the organization to win-win strategy. Leader should be able to motivate employees. All leaders are not managers as they have to work in non-organized sectors while the managers work in the organized sectors. All managers should be leaders so that they are able to work efficiently. Leadership has been defined in terms of group processes, personality, and compliance to particular behavior, persuasion, power, goal achievement, and interaction, role differentiation, initiation of structure, and combination of two or more of these leaders has an ability to lead effectively. He is visionary and accomplishes objective by using discretion (authority). It is generally seen that good leader achieves willing obedience of their subordinates. They follow the leader unquestioned because he fulfills their desires, wants and needs.

Leadership can be defined as influence, that is, the area or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards achievement of group goals.

People should be brought to such a pitch of their devotion to duty that they not only work willingly, but also work with utmost zeal. The leader like front line captain, who not only inspires his soldiers by physical presence but also brings down accurate fire from supporting weapons (utilizing skills) and displays high degree of bravery and is not perturbed by danger of enemy fire. Leader instills values of honesty, takes calculated risk and displays concern for employees and customers. He does not stand and wait to see in despair things taking shape.

Review of Literature

Many books and research papers have written on the subject of emotional intelligence and its impact on work performance, satisfaction and team spirit. The construct of EI found its way into academic literature through the scholarly efforts of Salovey and Mayer. They claimed that EI is the indicator of the success of one's professional and personal life and consisted of four dimensions:

perception and appraisal of emotions, facilitation of thoughts using emotions, understanding emotional knowledge, and regulating emotional thought and display towards goals. A review of the literature on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership behavior discloses a number of empirical studies have been conducted on this relationship: Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee; Gardner and Stough; Barling et al.; and Palmer et al., to name a few. Goleman et al. assert it is the level of a leader's understanding of the powerful role emotions play in the workplace that separates the best leaders from the rest. The higher one goes in an organization, technical skills and cognitive ability become less important while emotional intelligence becomes increasingly so. It is competence in emotional intelligence that distinguishes top performers in leadership. Leaders that demonstrate more emotional intelligence than their peers outperform and advance quicker in their careers. George, J.M. deems not only are feelings an integral part of leadership, it is the multiplicity of mood and emotion that influences leadership effectiveness. "Leaders are obviously human beings with the full range of emotions potentially available to them." M. George, proposes emotional intelligence may contribute to leaders' foresight in their organization by using their emotions to boost their thought process regarding internal challenges and opportunities. Leaders will be better equipped to use positive emotions to facilitate improvements and influence followers so that they are receptive to change and supportive of the leader. In addition, leaders high in emotional intelligence will have the ability to manage their emotions and followers so that followers are secure and optimistic about where they are going and their personal contribution to the organization. Vrab posits that individuals with strong emotional intelligence 37 skills assert higher levels of transformational leadership proficiency, consequently leading to higher performance. Higgs (2003) studied possible linkages between emotional intelligence and leadership by developing a framework to uncover a potential relationship between the concepts of both. Reviewing the literature, this study found an "emerging school" of leadership. Along with these new concepts, leadership is being seen as an amalgamation of personal characteristics and areas of competence. Sosik and Megerian found four junctions between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, and suggest these components are necessary both to create and to maintain strong emotional relationships with followers:

- 1) Adherence to professional standards of behavior and interaction, which relates to idealized influence or charisma;
- 2) Motivation, which is related to the inspirational motivation component of transformational leadership;
- 3) Intellectual stimulation;
- 4) Individual focus on others, which is related to individualized attention.

Based on a review of the literature, it has been argued that emotional intelligence is necessary for measuring, selecting, and developing managers. It is assumed that the rudiments of emotional intelligence are among the important attributes required for effective leaders.

Research Objectives and Hypothesis

The main objective of the research is:

1. To examine the level of emotional intelligence through different dimensions of EI on the middle level managers;
2. To study the relationship between emotional intelligence with respect to their age and gender.

The following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

H01 : There is no relationship between leader's emotional intelligence with his age/gender;

H02 : There is no relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness.

Research Methodology

The survey was conducted among 150 middle level managers working in various banks in Delhi and NCR through a specific standardized questionnaire (prepared after pilot study). The better understanding individuals have of their own levels of emotional intelligence, the better equipped they are to become better leaders within their organizations. The questionnaire was made of "Emotional Intelligence Scale", i.e. BEIS-In to ascertain the common and unique variances related to emotional intelligence of managers. The scale comprises of five factors of emotional intelligence i.e. Appraisal of Negative Emotions (E1), Appraisal of Positive Emotions (E2), Interpersonal conflict and difficulty (E3), Interpersonal skill and flexibility (E4), Emotional facilitation and goal orientation (E5). The responses were coded and tabulated and then analysis was done across different demographic variables like age and gender etc. To study the level of emotional intelligence Likert Five point scale was used. The analysis of questionnaire was divided in to two parts- descriptive analysis and statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis indicates frequency distribution and statistical analysis emphasized on Mean, Standard Deviation, t test and ANOVA.

Analysis and Findings

For testing hypothesis, the respondents were viewed according to their age and gender. Out of the total sample, the respondents were found to be in the ratio of 74.6: 25.4 per cent on gender basis i.e. the majority of the respondents were male. 47.3 per cent of the respondents were Post graduates and 27.3 per cent were simply graduates whereas 25.4 per cent were diploma holders in their discipline concerned. Total work experience of the respondents was also divided into three categories with 21 per cent falling into the category of 3-5 years of experience, of which 27 per cent had an experience of between 1-3 years in the same organisation. Further 52 per cent had less than one year experience in the present organisation (**Table 1**). The entire analysis was done using SPSS 17.0 version.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Demographic Variables	Categories	Respondents	
		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	112	74.6
	Female	38	25.4
Age (in years)	Below 30	64	42.6
	31-40	42	28.0
	41-50	34	22.7
	51 and above	10	6.7
Total experience (in years)	Less than one year	78	52
	1-3 years	41	27
	3-5 years	31	21
Qualification	Post Graduate	71	47.3
	Graduate	41	27.3
	Diploma Holders	38	25.4

A significant difference was found between responses of male and female regarding factor **E11 (Appraisal of Negative Emotions)** at 1% level of significance. It is also extracted that significant difference was found between responses of male and female regarding factor **E12 (Appraisal of Positive Emotions)** at 5% level of significance. Whereas in case of other factors no

significant differences has been found between the gender and emotional intelligence of leaders. Null Hypothesis is hence rejected that there is a significant difference between male and female respondents regarding gender of a leader influence emotional intelligence. (Table 2)

Table 2: Gender wise comparison of Emotional Intelligence

Factors of Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Male (N=112)		Female (N=38)		t-value	Sig. Value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
E11	4.24	.56	4.33	.41	2.377**	0.006
E12	4.25	.46	4.25	.48	0.861	0.390
E13	4.21	.45	4.18	.51	1.724	0.086
E14	4.09	.80	4.15	.71	2.268*	0.024
E15	3.89	.76	3.90	.74	0.845	0.399

**t-values are at 1% level of significance

*t-values are at 5% level of significance

Results indicate that while males and females have different profiles of strengths and weaknesses in different areas of emotional intelligence, their overall levels of EI are equivalent. Women respondents have proved better in emotional facilitation and goal orientation and male respondents got better scores on appraisal of positive emotions. But overall, there is no significant difference found between the scores of male and female respondents.

Table 3 shows that out of 150 respondents, 64 belonged to less than

30 years of age group, 42 belonged to 31-40 years of age, 34 belonged to 41-50 years of age group and rest to above 50 years. No significant difference was found between the responses belonging to various age groups regarding all variables of emotional intelligence (E11, E12, E13, E14, E15) and total emotional intelligence (sig. value greater than 0.05 in all cases). So it can be said that the scores of all age groups of respondents are same on the basis of emotional intelligence. The study has revealed that emotional intelligence if also positively correlated with age, it boosts as people grow older.

Table 3: Age wise comparison of Emotional Intelligence

Factors of Emotional Intelligence (EI)	A1 (N=64)		A2 (N=42)		A3 (N=34)		A4 (N=10)		F value	Sig. Value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
E11	4.26	0.45	4.28	0.46	4.26	0.51	3.90	0.60	1.81	.317
E12	3.09	1.32	3.22	1.25	3.30	1.28	2.45	1.13	1.58	.178
E13	2.72	1.46	3.08	1.46	3.00	1.60	2.12	1.55	1.47	.209
E14	4.22	0.45	4.21	0.43	4.10	0.55	4.04	0.73	.83	.506
E15	4.15	0.69	4.01	0.85	4.19	0.76	3.87	0.86	1.45	.217

It can be noted that the scores of respondents of various age groups have same responses regarding analysis of positive emotions, appraisal of negative emotions, interpersonal skill and flexibility, interpersonal conflict and difficulty, emotional facilitation and goal orientation and overall emotional intelligence. High scores in emotional facilitation likely to mean that the emotions are sufficiently vivid and available and they can be generated as aid to judgment. Emotional swings can change the leader's attitude from pessimist to optimist or vice versa. Emotional intelligent leaders encourage problem solving approaches such as happiness, facilitates creativity among employees, generate trust and encourage leaders to the consideration of multiple point of view. Emotional intelligence assists people to adapt and to facilitate changes in receptivity, mobilization, and learning during change. Emotional understanding contributes to coping with stress and change at the workplace.

Conclusion

Emotions play a key role in decision-making. This study supports the position that emotional stability and emotional intelligence are important factors for organizational leadership. Emotions have shown to determine affect driven behavior, such as impulsive acts, organization citizenship behavior, and transient effort. The emotional intelligence measurement can be used as a tool to understand the personality, behavior, perception and attitude of employees as well as leaders towards their professional and personal lives. In the same way, high scores in goal orientation will be likely to pursue their personal and organisational goals with seriousness and commitment. This means that such leaders are likely to be internally motivated even when going gets tough or inevitable hurdles occur along their way. For quite a long time debates are going on about emotional intelligence i.e. people are born with emotional empathy or they acquire it as a result of experience. This research study clearly indicates that it is both way. Research studies also suggest that there is a genetic component attached to it as well as nurture also plays its role. Moreover, talent can be fostered in a better fashion if the emotional needs of the employees are taken in to account to make the other person realize one's full potential.

Limitations and Scope for future research

The study was limited to middle level leaders working in various banks in Delhi and NCR. Time and money constraints were also the reasons behind limited scope of study. For future research purpose researchers can explore the degree of emotional intelligence in leaders and their followers from the employee's perspective. Demographic characteristics could be explored to the degree in which demographic combinations such as education, years of managerial experience could influence leadership. Further research also should focus on emotional intelligence and leadership in other fields, such as the service industry, retail, or financial institutions to name a few.

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