

Interrelationship between Emotional Intelligence and Demographic Variables: A Study on Corporate Executives of select Indian Firms

A K Das Mohapatra

Professor, Department of Business Administration

Sambalpur University

Abstract

Prior studies have reported that emotional intelligence results in better stress management; is a useful construct for addressing a broad array of behavioral problems; creates individuals who have morally superior values and are more altruistic; makes better leaders; contributes to better teamwork, better decision making; and contributes to better work performance and life success. With the multiple positive benefits associated with emotional intelligence that organizations have started sourcing competitive advantage in their human resources by enhancing their competencies. Competencies in the workforce again depend on their socio-behavioral character and also how they adjust in their job-role and power-position in the organizations. It is seen that competencies of individuals vary from each other depending upon their cognitive and physical abilities, knowledge and skills, values and interests, their experience and a host of other psychological constructs. Emotional Intelligence is a psychological construct. This study undertaken on 274 corporate executives in 15 private and 15 public sector undertakings in India based on primary data collected using the Self Report EI Scale or SRIES, developed and used by Chadha and Singh (2001) to examine if the demographic profile of gender, age, educational qualifications and experience have any significant effect on emotional intelligence (EI) reveals that (i) EI of female executives is higher than male executives, (ii) EI is not influenced by age of the executives, (iii) higher the academic qualifications, higher is the EI and (iv) greater the experience, higher is the EI.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, emotional competency, emotional maturity, emotional sensitivity, intelligence quotient*

1. Introduction

Progressive organizations use their human resource as a source of competitive advantage. To make human resource as a source of competitive advantage, organizations need to develop competencies in their workforce. Competencies in the workforce again depend on their socio-behavioral character and also how they adjust in their job-role and power-position in the organizations. It is seen that competencies of individuals vary from

each other depending upon their cognitive and physical abilities, knowledge and skills, values and interests, their experience and a host of other psychological constructs. 'Emotional Intelligence' is a psychological construct. Goleman (1998) has defined 'Emotional Intelligence', as *'the capacity for recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating oneself and for managing emotions well in oneself and in one's relationship.'* Emotional intelligence includes the abilities to perceive emotions accurately, to assess and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Emotional intelligence describes one's ability distinct from, but complementary to, his academic intelligence or the purely cognitive capacities measured by Intelligence Quotient.

Executives take decisions crucial to the survival of their organizations. These decisions can make or break their organizations. They take such decisions while confronted with varied organizational stakeholders with different temperaments and expectations. They also handle plentiful communications which more often needs their immediate attention and actions. This puts tremendous pressure on the executives on a continued basis which is likely to put them in a state of anxiety, fear, caution, guilt and depression. Enhanced emotional intelligence (EI) in the executives help them handle these pressure effectively and with courage and passion.

Prior studies have reported that, emotional intelligence results in better coping with stress (Ashkanasy, Ashton-James, and Jordan, 2002); emotional intelligence is a useful construct for addressing a broad array of behavioral problems (Gillis, 2004); emotional intelligence results in individuals who have morally superior values (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997); Emotional intelligence results in individuals who are more altruistic (Cherniss and Adler, 2001); emotional intelligence results in individuals who make better leaders (Goleman, 1998); emotional intelligence contributes to better teamwork (Druskatt and Wolff, 2001); emotional intelligence leads to better decisions (Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel, 2002); and emotional intelligence accounts for 80 percent of work performance and life success (Goleman, 1995).

Research questions

Under the above claims and benefits associated with EI, the questions automatically comes as to how EI is linked to the demographic profile of the executives especially in the Indian industries. More particularly, does EI depend on the gender, age, educational background and experience of the executives? Do female executives have higher EI than their male counterparts; or does EI come with age such as higher the age, higher is the EI; or do employees having higher academic qualification such as Post-Graduation have better EI than the under graduate executives; and/or does EI improve with experience of the executives so that higher the experience higher will be the EI?

Review of literature

Eagly, A.H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M.C. (2001), 'The leadership styles of women and men', found that women leaders adopt more transformational leadership style by relying on consideration and interpersonal skills than the male leaders. Vinnicombe, S. (1987) in a study entitled 'What exactly are the differences in male and female working styles (?)' observed that women leaders are more visionary than male leaders. The studies by Helgeson, S. (1990), entitled 'The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership', and by Rosener, J.B. (1990), entitled 'Ways women lead', arrived at the conclusion that the typical characteristics of women like consensus decision-making, power in relational terms, encouragement for conflict resolution, and development of team-oriented work environment are indicative of female leadership. Eagly, A.H., and Johnson, B.T. (1990), in a study 'Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis', observed that women leaders adopt more democratic leadership style than the male leaders. Brackett, M.A, et.al. (2003) in their work 'Emotional intelligence and its relation to everyday behavior' reported that females scored higher EI than males when EI was measured based on the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test of performance. Goldenberg, I., et.al (2006) in a study 'The assessment of emotional intelligence: A comparison of performance based and self report methodologies' reported a mixed relationship between EI and the demographic profiles of the sample respondents. The study used both the *self assessment measure* of EI, namely, the self report emotional intelligence series (SREIS) and the *performance based* measure of EI, namely, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and found that under both the measures of EI, the total EI score of women respondents was higher than that of the men respondents. As regards 'age', no relationship could be established between 'age and EI' when EI is calculated under SREIS, whereas a positive relationship was noticed between age and EI based on MSCEIT. A similar phenomenon was noticed between 'education and EI'. Margaret M. Hopkins and Diana Bilimoria (2008) in a study 'Social and emotional competencies predicting success for male and female executive' observed that there was no significant difference in the emotional and social intelligence competencies demonstrated by male and female executives. They also found that male leaders were more successful than female leaders, although both the male and female leaders had almost the same competencies. Goldenberg, I., et.al. (2006) in their study 'The assessment of emotional intelligence: A comparison of performance based and self-report methodologies' have found correlation between gender and self-reported EI score with female participants outscoring the male participants. Jemie L. Callahan, et. al. (2005) in a gender specific study entitled 'Perception of emotion expressiveness: Gender differences among senior executives' also reported a mixed result contrary to other research findings that women are better at emotional expressiveness than men (Van Rooy et. al.,2004). The study observed that in several key positions including the CEOs, males are significantly more expressive than females. For certain positions, even no difference in the expressiveness between male and female were observed.

A quick review of literature indicates that there exists contradictory evidence with regard to existence of any definite relationship between EI and demographic profiles of the executives. Some of the prior research studies indicate about existence of an interrelationship between demographic variables and EI, other studies did not find any such evidence.

Objective and Hypotheses

Keeping the above claims and counterclaims in view, the present study aims at finding out the extent to which demographic characteristics of executives influence emotional intelligence in the Indian industries. The demographic parameters are: gender, age, education and experience.

The following hypotheses have been formulated and tested for the purpose of the study:

- H₀1: There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of gender.
- H₀2: There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of age.
- H₀3: There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of educational Qualifications.
- H₀4: There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of experience.

Methodology

Primary data has been used in the study, which has been collected, using structured questionnaires, from 274 respondent executives working in 15 public and 15 in private sector organizations in India. The questionnaires used for measuring EI are a set of 15 self assessment questions, called Self Report EI Scale (or SRIES), which has been developed and used by Chadha and Singh (2001). Further, EI has been measured against the three psychological dimensions, namely, emotional competency (EC), emotional maturity (EM) and emotional sensitivity (ES), as has been identified and propagated by Chadha and Singh (2001). 'Emotional competency' consists of four skills such as tackling emotional upsets, having high self-esteem, giving tactful response to emotional stimuli, and effective handling of ego. The important dimensions of 'emotional maturity' are self-awareness, developing others, delaying gratification, adaptability and flexibility. Emotional maturity is reflexive of managerial behaviour in dealing with his inner self and his immediate environment. Emotional sensitivity consists of skills like understanding threshold of emotional arousal, empathy, improving interpersonal relations and communicability of emotions. Emotional sensitivity is 'the characteristics of being peculiarly sensitive and judging the threshold for various types of stimulations, evoking sensations, feelings and emotions'.

Further, the 274 respondents from whom data have been collected include 165 male, 109 female; 147 up to 35 years of age and 127 above 35 years; 151 graduates and 123 Post-Graduates; and 155 having experience up to 10 years and 119 above 10 year's experience. Statistical tools, namely, t-test and mean have been used in the study for testing the formulated hypotheses.

Result and discussion

The result obtained through analyses of the data has been discussed here under hypothesis wise:

The first hypothesis (H_01) taken was 'There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of gender'. To test this hypothesis t-test has been applied and the result displayed in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: EI in relation to 'gender'

EI components	Gender		t-value	p-level (two-tailed)
	Male N=165	Female N=109		
Emotional competency (EC)	126.78	137.43	-2.744	0.002
Emotional maturity(EM)	54.62	62.16	-1.695	0.003
Emotional sensitivity(ES)	51.65	57.53	-1.248	0.014
Total EI	233.05	257.12	-2.895	0.000

It is observed from Table 1.1 that there exists a significant difference in the mean EI score of female executives and the EI score of male executives. The mean EI score of female executives is found to be 257.12 against the EI of male executives at 233.05. This implies that female executives are able to manage their emotions in workplace better than their male counter parts. This may be because the Indian women have been more tolerant than men going by the tradition and heritage. There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of gender' is rejected. This finding corroborates with the findings of Meyer and Geher (1996); Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (1999); Mandell and Pherwani (2003); Irina Goldenberg, et. al.(2006); and Mishra and Mohapatra(2010).

The second hypothesis (H_02) taken was 'There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of age'. To test this hypothesis t-test has been applied and the result has been displayed in Table 1.2. It is observed from Table 1.2 that there does not exist any significant difference in the EI score of executives of age up to 35 years and that of executives having age above 35 years as the mean EI is found to be 232.94 and 233.52, respectively for the age groups. The mean EI scores being close to each other, it may be inferred that age of the executives does not have influence on their EI at least in the Indian organizations and Indian environment. This

finding is in conformity with the prior work of researchers like Irina Goldenberg et. al. (2006), and Adeyemo (2007), and Mishra and Mohapatra(2010) that age of an employee has no relevance to EI. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of age' is accepted.

Table 1.2: EI in relation to age

EI components	Age		t-value	p-level (two-tailed)
	Age upto 35 years N=147	Age above 35 years N=127		
Emotional competency (EC)	123.24	124.63	-0.237	0.601
Emotional maturity(EM)	58.51	52.46	0.499	0.638
Emotional sensitivity(ES)	51.19	56.43	0.789	0.505
Total EI	232.94	233.52	0.196	0.763

The third hypothesis (H₀₃) taken was 'There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of educational qualifications'. To test this hypothesis t-test has been applied and the result has been displayed in Table 1.3. It is observed from Table 1.3 that the mean EI of executives with educational qualifications Post graduation and above is higher at 251.21 than the mean EI score of executives with academic qualification upto graduation at EI 245.11. The third null hypothesis thus is rejected leading to the conclusion that executives with higher academic qualifications are better in handling emotions at workplace than those with lower degrees. This finding is contrary to the findings of Irina Goldenberg et. al.(2006), and Adeyemo (2007).

Table 1.3: EI in relation to academic qualifications

EI components	Academic Qualifications		t-value	p-level (two-tailed)
	Up to Graduation (N=151)	Post Graduate and above (N=123)		
Emotional competency (EC)	152.89	156.54	1.587	.087
Emotional maturity(EM)	46.94	48.91	0.396	.602
Emotional sensitivity(ES)	46.84	47.94	-0.392	.456
Total EI	246.67	253.39	1.558	.177

The fourth hypothesis (H₀₄) taken was 'There is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of experience'. To test this hypothesis t-test has been applied and the result has been displayed in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: EI in relation to experience

EI components	Experience		t-value	p-level (two-tailed)
	up to 10 years N=155	above 10 years N=119		
Emotional competency (EC)	122.16	143.06	-5.06	0.003
Emotional maturity(EM)	49.22	67.28	-6.67	0.001
Emotional sensitivity(ES)	55.07	62.03	-2.98	0.002
Total EI	226.45	272.37	-5.76	0.004

It is observed from Table 1.4 that there exists a significant difference between the mean EI of executives having experience less than or equal to 10 years (with EI 226.45) and those with experience of more than 10 years in the same organization having average EI of 272.37. The null hypothesis that there is no association between EI and executives' demographic profile expressed in terms of experience is thus rejected. This is in conformity to the finding of Ick (2002), Abraham (2004), Cote and Miners (2006), Adeyemo (2007). It may therefore be inferred that higher the experience, higher is the EI. In other words, a more experienced executive working in the organization will have better ability to ability to handle emotions in the work environment.

Conclusion

Progressive organizations use their human resource as a source of competitive advantage. To make human resource as a source of competitive advantage, organizations need to develop competencies in their workforce. Competencies in the workforce again depend on their socio-behavioral character and also how they adjust in their job-role and power-position in the organizations. It is seen that competencies of individuals vary from each other depending upon their cognitive and physical abilities, knowledge and skills, values and interests, their experience and a host of other psychological constructs. Emotional Intelligence is a psychological construct. It is defined as '*the capacity for recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating oneself and for managing emotions well in oneself and in one's relationship*' and is broadly measured against three psychological dimensions, namely, *emotional competency, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity*. This study which has been undertaken on 274 corporate executives in 15 private and 15 public sector undertakings in India based on primary data collected using the Self Report EI Scale or SRIES, developed and used by Chadha and Singh (2001) to examine if the demographic profile of gender, age, educational qualifications and experience have any significant effect on emotional intelligence (EI) reveals that (i) EI of female executives is higher than male executives, (ii) EI is not influenced by age of the executives, (iii) higher the academic qualifications, higher is the EI and (iv) greater the experience, higher is the EI.

References

Abraham, R. 'Emotional Competence as Antecedent to Performance: A Contingency Framework,' *Genetic, Social and General Psychology Monographs*, vol. 130 (2), (2004),pp.117-143.

Adeyemo, D.A.(2007), 'Emotional Intelligence and the relationship between job satisfaction and Organizational Commitment of Employee in Public Parastatals in Oyo State, Nigeria', *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 4(1),pp.324-330.

Brackett, M. A., Mayer, J. D., and Warner, R. M. 'Emotional intelligence and its relation to everyday behavior', *Personality and Individual Differences* Vol.36, (2003), pp.1387 –1402.

Chadha, N. K., Singh, D. 'How to measure your EQ', in the book by Dalip Singh, *Emotional Intelligence at work: A professional Guide*, New Delhi: Response. (2001).

Cherniss, C., and Adler, M., *Promoting Emotional Intelligence in Organizations: Making training in emotional intelligence effective*, Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development, (2001).

Click, Holly Solomon (2002) , *An Exploration of Emotional Intelligence Scores among Students in Educational Administration Endorsement Programs.*" *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*, (2002), Paper 644. <http://dc.etsu.edu/etd/644>.

Cooper, R. K., Sawaf, A. 'Executive EQ: Emotional intelligence in Leadership and Organizations', Vol.7, pp.81-97, New York: Gosset/Putnam (1997),.

Cote, S. and Miners, C.T.H. 'Emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence and job performance', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 51(1), (2006), pp.1-28.

D.L. Van Rooy, and Viswesvaran,C. 'Emotional intelligence : A meta-analytic investigation of predictive validity and nomological net', *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, Vol. 65, (2004), pp.71-95.

Druskatt, V. U., & Wolff, S. B. *Building the emotional intelligence of groups*, *Harvard Business Review*, 79(3), (2001), pp. 80-90.

Eagly, A.H., Johannesen-Schmidt, and M.C 'The leadership styles of women and men', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57, . (2001), pp.781-97.

Eagly, A.H., Johnson, B.T. 'Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis', *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 108, (1990), pp.233-56.

Gillis, C. 'Rude awakening', *Maclean's*. Vol. 117 (14), (2004),pp. 28-32.

Goldenberg, I., Matheson, K., Mantler, J. 'The assessment of emotional intelligence: A comparison of performance based and self report methodologies', *Journal of Personality Assessment*, Vol. 86 (1), (2006), pp. 33-45.

Goleman, D. *Emotional intelligence: Why it matters more than IQ*, New York: Bantam (1995).

Goleman, D. *Working with emotional intelligence*, New York: Bantam Books (1998).

Helgeson, S. 'The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership', Doubleday, New York, NY (1990).

Jemie L. Callahan, Hasler, M.G., Tolson, H., 'Perception of emotion expressiveness: Gender differences among senior executives', *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 26 (7), (2005), pp. 512-528.

Jordan, P. J., Ashkanasy, N. M., Hartel, C. E. J., and Hooper, G. S. *Workgroup emotional intelligence: Scale development and relationship to team process effectiveness and goal focus*, *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 12, (2002), pp.195-214.

Jordan, P. J., Ashkanasy, N. M., Hartel, C. E. J., and Hooper, G. S. 'Workgroup emotional intelligence: Scale development and relationship to team process effectiveness and goal focus'. *Human Resource Management Review*, 12, (2002), pp.195-214.

Mandell, B., Pherwani, S. 'Relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style: A gender comparison', *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 17, No.3, (2003), pp.387-404.

Margaret M. Hopkins, Bilimoria, D., 'Social and emotional competencies predicting success for male and female executives', *Journal of Management Development*, Vol.27, No.1, (2008), pp.13-35.

Mayer, J.D. and Geher, G. 'Emotional intelligence and the identification of emotion', *Intelligence*, 22, (1996), pp.89-113.

Mayer, J.D., Caruso, D.R., and Salovey, P. 'Emotional intelligence meets standards for traditional intelligence', *Intelligence*, Vol. 27, (1999), pp.267-298.

Priti S. Mishra and Mohapatra, A. K. D., 'Relevance of Emotional Intelligence for Effective Job Performance: An Empirical Study', *Vikalpa*, Vol. 35, No.1, January – March, (2010), pp. 53-61.

Rosener, J. B. 'Ways women lead', *Harvard Business Review*, November-December, (1990), pp.119-25.

Vinnicombe, S. 'What exactly are the differences in male and female working styles?' *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 3, (1987), pp.13-21.