

## **A Pragmatic Appraisal of Emotional Intelligence : The Impact of Demographic Variables**

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### **Abstract**

The proposed research paper is an introspection of the impact of the demographic variables on the emotional intelligence levels of the executives working across different sectors in India. Emotional intelligence (EI) works upon the philosophy that knowledge and skill may help someone get into the position, but it takes an emotional understanding of oneself and those around to emerge triumphant. And demographic variables like age, gender, experience and type of industry, definitely influences the EI level of an individual. For the purpose of this study, managers have been defined as those individuals who have been assigned direct supervisory responsibility. To measure the emotional intelligence of the respondents, the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Hyde, Pethe and Dhar (2002) was used. The results show that emotional intelligence does not vary across the gender, whereas age and experience influence the EI levels of an employee.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The last four decades of the 20th century witnessed a dramatic change in the nature of work. There was a massive introduction of new technology, particularly the use of computers, into the workplace. This was followed by a huge shift towards globalization, with many organizations undergoing mergers, acquisitions, strategic alliances and privatizations. A steady rise in short-term contracts, as a result, possibly, of the deregulation of long-term contracts and the limited requirements on permanent employment in many countries was witnessed. Other changes included new patterns of working, such as tele-working, self-

regulated work and team work, an increased reliance on computerized technology and a move towards a more flexible workforce, both in number of employees and in their skills and functions. In response to these adjustments by industry, the conditions of work and employment also changed significantly. Supervisory conditions too changed with the introduction of teamwork, evaporation of the middle management, and the trends towards flexible place of "at - home" work arrangements. In other words, we can say that transformation at workplace had set in, both in terms of nature of work and employees. The present day organisations take for granted that their employees have enough intellectual abilities and technical know-how to do their jobs. They are alongside laying emphasis on personal qualities, such as initiative, empathy, adaptability, persuasiveness, openness to change and willingness to diversify.

In a time when there are no guarantees of job security, and when the very concept of a 'job' is rapidly replaced by 'portable skills', these are prime qualities that make and keep an employee employable. Talked about loosely for decades under a variety of names, from 'character' and 'personality' to 'soft skills' and 'competence', there is at last a more precise understanding of these human talents, and a new name for them: Emotional Intelligence (EI), measured in terms of Emotional Quotient (EQ). Emotional intelligence works upon the philosophy that knowledge and skill may help someone get into the position, but it takes an emotional understanding of oneself and those around to emerge triumphant. Emotional intelligence influences the overall ability to cope with the environmental demands and uncertainties. When one understands the circuit of feelings, thoughts and reactions they can blossom into mature individuals. This helps in handling irrational fears, stressful situations, understanding strengths and overcoming weaknesses to cope up with challenges. Then the individuals can transcend self-imposed limitations and actualize their potentials. They become adaptable, constructive, creative, productive and effective in their tasks. Goleman (1998) opined that an emotionally intelligent person is likely to be skilled in two key areas namely - 'personal competence' - how one manages the self and 'social competence' - how one manages relationships. He explains that emotional intelligence is nothing but the ability to understand one's emotions and those of people around us. It enables us to modify our feelings and influence what happens in the world around us

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Shanker and Sayeed (2006) conducted a research on 139 managers working in various organizations in Western India. The purpose of the study was to establish a relation between emotionally intelligent managers and managers'

professional development. The managerial scores on various dimensions of emotional intelligence were correlated with professional development indicators of managers, conceptualized in terms of number of promotions attained and the rated job success. The assumption that the emotionally intelligent managers would tend to attain greater professional development than those who are less emotionally intelligent was tentatively supported in the findings.

Salami (2008) investigated the relationships of demographic factors (age, marital status, gender, job tenure, and educational level), emotional intelligence, work-role salience, achievement motivation and job satisfaction to organizational commitment of industrial workers. Participants were 320 employees (170 males, 150 females) randomly selected from 5 service and 5 manufacturing organizations in Oyo State, Nigeria. The results showed that emotional intelligence, work-role salience, achievement motivation, job satisfaction and all demographic factors except gender significantly predicted organizational commitment of the workers.

Khokhar and Kush (2009) in their study explained the performance of executives on different levels of emotional intelligence and provided a link between emotional intelligence and effective work performance. 20 Male executives (out of 200) within the age range of 40 to 55 yrs from BHEL (Haridwar) and THDC (Rishikesh) of Uttarakhand State (India) were selected. T-tests for independent groups were used to measure the mean difference between groups. The findings of the study revealed that executives having higher emotional intelligence showed better quality of work performance as compared to their counterparts.

Godse and Thingujam (2010) examined the relationship between personality, conflict resolution styles and emotional intelligence among 81 technology professionals in India. The results revealed that emotional intelligence was significantly correlated with the integrating style of conflict resolution (i.e. involving the exchange of information and differences toward a solution favourable to both parties), negatively correlated with the avoiding style (i.e. withdrawal from the situations) and not correlated with the dominating, compromising or obliging style. The results indicate that IT professionals with higher perceived emotional intelligence are likely to adapt better styles of conflict resolution in order to deal effectively with the situations.

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The utility of emotional intelligence has been found manifold penetrating into personal productivity, work / life-balance, career-success, team performance, stress-management, motivation, leadership, talent retention, conflict resolution, customer satisfaction and so on. Further development of emotional intelligence

skills can benefit a broad range of people within an organization, namely business executives, team leaders, sales professionals, technical professionals, customer service representatives, etc.

The purpose of this research paper is to delve into the demographic influence (age, gender, job experience and type of industry) on the emotional intelligence of business executives. The implication is that there is need for organizational/industrial or counseling psychologists and managements to design staff development programmes to incorporate fostering of emotional intelligence keeping in view the age, job experience and type of industry. For example, younger, inexperienced workers need more involvement from their seniors who in turn need to have more emotional intelligence to be able to patiently deal with such employees.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **SAMPLE**

For surveying the research, Stratified Random Sampling Design was chosen. The sample consisted of 400 managers working at the middle level managerial positions with a minimum of three years of experience and post graduation as their minimum level of education spread over 2 major sectors, namely, Service (Banking, Insurance, Information Technology, Retail and Telecom) and Manufacturing (Garment, Pharmaceutical, Automobiles, Electronics and Steel industries) from the area covering Delhi and National Capital Region, Haryana and Punjab. The sample of 400 executives was further distributed equally between the Service and Manufacturing Sectors.

Out of the 200 managers chosen for the survey from the service sector, 40 managers each were categorized into each of the 5 sub sectors (Banking, Insurance, Information Technology, Retail and Telecom).

But where manufacturing sector was concerned, negligible response could be generated from the Steel sector and the Electronics sector. Hence, the results obtained from Garment, Pharmaceutical and Automobile Manufacturing / Assembling industries, were clubbed together under one head, and the analysis was done in sum total for manufacturing sector, unlike the service sector.

Maximum responses were received from the banking sector as compared to the other sectors. The reason for this skewness is probably due to the time period in which the data collection was made. Sectors like Retail, Telecom, IT, Insurance generated less business due to recessionary trends that had set in the Indian markets during the period of data collection. This was the most likely

reason for the responses being skewed more towards banking majorly. For purpose of this study, managers have been defined as those individuals who have been assigned direct supervisory responsibility.

## **TESTS / SCALES USED**

### **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE**

To measure the emotional intelligence of the respondents Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Hyde, Pethe and Dhar (2002) was used. The scale consists of 10 factors having 34 items with reliability of 0.88 and validity 0.93, standardized on the Indian population.

### **DEMOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE SAMPLE**

To study the demographic impact of the respondents on their Emotional Intelligence levels, 400 Business Executives were included in the study. The classification of the business executives on the basis of Gender, Industry, Age, Experience and Area is presented below:

The total sample size was 400. The group comprised of 321 Males (80%) and 79 Females (20%) representing executives from various industries: Banking (55%), Insurance (7%), IT (17%), Manufacturing (14%), Retail (6%) and Telecom (1%). Though the inclusion of more women in the workforce has been strongly promoted in recent times, it has been observed that that very few women occupy middle and the top tiers of management in Indian organizations. This research also supports this view as only 20 % females were found occupying managerial level positions.

The executives were divided into four age groups, less than 35 years, 35–40 years, 40–45 years, 45–50 years and above 50 years. It was found that majority of the respondents (35%) were above 50 years of age followed by those falling in the age group of less than 35 (27%). Similarly the executives were divided into six categories on the basis of their experience, those with experience upto 5 years, 5–10 years, 10–15 years, 20–25 years and more than 25 years. Majority of the executives had more than 25 years of experience (27%) followed by those having 10–15 years of experience (24%) drawn from the regions of Punjab (48%), Delhi (21%) and National Capital Region and Haryana (33%).

### **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO GENDER**

Emotional Intelligence was compared across Genders. It was observed that males and females do not vary much where exercising emotional intelligence is concerned. (Table 1). Total emotional intelligence scores in males ( $M = 135.05$ )

and females ( $M = 135.68$ ) did not differ significantly ( $t = -0.54$ ). But on certain dimensions males and females revealed gender specific profile of strong and weak points.

Males were found to be more Self Motivated ( $M = 24.55$ ) than females ( $M = 23.92$ ) and the difference between males and females was found to be significant ( $t = 2.49$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Females are better at Managing Relations ( $M = 17.13$ ) as compared to males ( $M = 16.41$ ) and the difference between males and females was found to be significant ( $t = -2.86$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Females also exhibited higher score in Value Orientation ( $M = 8.86$ ) as compared to males ( $M = 8.48$ ) and the difference was significant ( $t = -2.67$ ) at 0.01 level.

**Table 1**  
**Means, SDs and T-Values of Subscales and Total Scores of Emotional Intelligence in Relation to Gender**

	Males		Females		t-value
	Means	SDs	Means	SDs	
SELF AWARENESS (SA)	16.40	1.62	16.42	1.82	-0.11
EMPATHY (EM)	15.83	2.19	15.68	1.69	0.54
SELF MOTIVATION (SM)	24.55	1.86	23.92	2.48	2.49*
EMOTIONAL STABILITY (ES)	16.42	1.63	16.13	1.43	1.48
MANAGING RELATIONS (MR)	16.41	2.11	17.13	1.33	-2.86**
INTEGRITY (IN)	12.22	1.39	12.48	1.37	-1.51
SELF DEVELOPMENT (SD)	8.14	0.97	8.24	1.33	-0.78
VALUE ORIENTATION (VO)	8.48	1.19	8.86	0.96	-2.67**
COMMITMENT (COM)	8.40	1.05	8.53	0.84	-1.02
ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOUR (AB)	8.21	0.97	8.29	0.58	-0.73
TOTAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	135.05	9.53	135.68	8.97	-0.54

\*\* $p < 0.01$  (significant at 0.01 level)

\* $p < 0.05$  (significant at 0.05 level)

The t-values did not attain significant difference on the other dimensions of emotional intelligence between males and females. (self awareness ,  $t = -0.11$ ), empathy ( $t = 0.54$ ) , emotional stability ( $t = 1.48$ ), integrity ( $t = -1.51$ ), self development ( $t = -0.78$ ), commitment ( $t = 1.02$ ) and altruistic behavior ( $t = -0.73$ ).

Competing evidence exists surrounding whether or not males and females differ significantly in general levels of emotional intelligence. Studies by Mayer and Geher (1996); Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (1999); Mandell and Pherwani (2003)

have found that women are more likely to score higher on measures of emotional intelligence than men, both in professional and personal settings. One reason that has been advanced for this is the traditional socialization of females to more readily acknowledge and express their emotions than males.

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO AGE

To judge whether emotional intelligence increased with age, ANOVA was applied between Emotional Intelligence scores and Age. Table 2 shows that high emotionally intelligent behavior is witnessed in the age group 40 - 45 years ( $M = 143.08$ ) years as compared to other age groups ( $F = 8.64$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Young business executives tend to demonstrate less emotional intelligence ( $M = 134.19$ ).

**Table 2**

**Means, SDs and F-Ratio of Subscales and Total Scores of Emotional Intelligence in Relation to Age**

Age Group	Means	SDs	F-Ratio
Less Than 35 YEARS	134.19	9.22	8.64**
35-40 YEARS	137.96	10.25	
40-45 YEARS	143.08	11.24	
45-50 YEARS	136.34	9.17	
50 YEARS AND ABOVE	132.94	7.99	

\*\* $p < 0.01$  (significant at 0.01 level)

The results also corroborate the study done by Fariselli, Ghini and Freedman (2006). They conducted a study on 405 American people to shows that emotional intelligence increases with age. They found the relationship to be slight, but significant ( $r = 0.13$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The study confirmed that emotional intelligence develops with increasing age as age progression increases experience with life and henceforth, increases interpretation of human expression and responding to them with sensitivity and empathy.

However, Emotional Quotient score showed a decline in the 45 - 50 age group ( $M = 136.34$ ) and 50 and above age group. This result is in contradiction to many studies which otherwise propose that emotional intelligence increases with age.

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO WORK EXPERIENCE

To analyze whether experience plays any role in enhancing emotional intelligence ANOVA was applied on Emotional Intelligence scores and Experience of executives. (Table 3)

**Table 3**

**Means, SDs and F-Ratio of Subscales and Total Scores of Emotional Intelligence in Relation to Work Experience**

Experience	Means	SDs	F-Ratio
LESS THAN 5 YEARS	136.24	7.73	2.33*
5-10 YEARS	135.75	11.41	
10-15 YEARS	135.29	8.69	
15-20 YEARS	140.28	7.97	
20-25 YEARS	134.10	10.67	
MORE THAN 25 YEARS	133.75	8.51	

\*p < 0.05 (significant at 0.05 level)

High emotional intelligence was witnessed in business executives who have a work experience between 15 - 20 yrs (M = 140.28) as compared to other groups (F = 2.33, p < 0.05). Emotional intelligence and experience are found to be positively and significantly related to each other. The finding suggests emotional intelligence is a developing ability; it is likely that accumulated life experiences contribute to emotional quotient. The experience may be defined as having more years of service in terms of years, maturity gained over a period of time and the experience gained during the training activities.

#### **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO TYPES OF INDUSTRY**

To have a comparison over the levels of emotional quotient of the business executives working across different corporate sectors ANOVA was applied on Emotional Intelligence scores and the Type of Industry (Table 4)

**Table 4**

**Means, SDs and F-Ratio of Subscales and Total Scores of Emotional Intelligence in Relation to Types of Industries**

Type of Industry	Means	SDs	F-Ratio
BANKING	131.90	7.51	21.21**
INSURANCE	134.24	11.47	
IT	139.87	8.97	
MANUFACTURING	143.24	9.55	
RETAIL	135.13	7.79	
TELECOM	133.00	0.00	

\*\*p < 0.01 (significant at 0.01 level)



High emotional intelligence was demonstrated by the executives working in the Manufacturing units ( $M = 143.24$ ) as compared to those from IT ( $M = 139.87$ ), Retail ( $M = 135.13$ ), Insurance ( $M = 134.24$ ), Telecom ( $M = 133.00$ ) and Banking ( $M = 131.90$ ). The difference between all of them is found to be significant ( $F = 21.21, p < 0.01$ ).

This is an unusual finding as the utility of emotional intelligence has been demonstrated for many occupations, specially the service sector but in this study the executives from the manufacturing organizations have established the highest score on emotional quotient.

A shop floor manager, in a manufacturing concern, does not only deal with machines but also with men. He needs to be emotionally intelligent also in the respect that he has to liaison with other departments in the organization. Maintaining a good network and rapport with sister concerns and related departments is very necessary for the smooth functioning of the production department. Interaction with the marketing department can often be quite stressful for the manager working in a manufacturing unit. Such a manager needs to have high empathy, as his staff is always under pressure from the ever-increasing targets imposed by the marketing department. Shop floor managers also require patient dealing with vendors and suppliers and for this also emotional competencies play an important role as relationship management is an important cluster of emotional intelligence. Maintaining 3 working shifts, round the clock, manufacturing 24 hours - 7 days a week, requires high mental and emotional stability. Only an emotionally intelligent manager would be able to develop initiating skills in his employees and nurture them to be at their creative best.

Lowest score on emotional quotient was found in the banking executives ( $M = 131.90$ ). In their profession, rules and regulations are well-defined which cannot be changed or modified. Their job is impersonal, involving monetary transactions and financial matters. But now the scenario has changed. There is a cut-throat competition in the banking industry. Customer handling has become the focus point of all the bankers. That is why Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is religiously practiced in the banks. Banking organisations need to focus on developing their personnel in the arenas of empathy, initiativeness, relation building, and trustworthiness. These are the competencies that would make the executives more emotionally intelligent.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH & LIMITATIONS**

This study took into consideration the impact of only demographic variables on emotional intelligence. Future studies can incorporate psychological

variables like work-life balance, job satisfaction, achievement-motivation, etc. amongst many others. Sufficient response could not be generated from the insurance, retail and telecom sector. Future research may target these industries and environments in order to test the possible generalizations of this study.

## CONCLUSION

The focus of the present day organisations has shifted towards understanding and developing the behaviour of their employees so that they can really prove to be generative for the organisation. Emotional intelligence seems like a logical framework to help build such behaviours and relationships. An endeavor had been made through this research paper to investigate whether the demographic variables have any impact on the emotional intelligence levels of the employees. The results of the study show that males and females do not vary much where exercising emotional intelligence is concerned. Age and experience are also influential factors in enhancing an individual's emotional intelligence. The findings of the study can provide a stepping stone to the organisations in identifying the different levels of emotional intelligence in their employees by working upon their demographics and then create individualized training and development interventions, as each employee is different in terms of age, experience, gender and the industry he or she is working in.

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