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Examining the relationship between Performance Based Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Behavior of Senior Managers

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This study examined the relationship of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as understood by the Ability model of EI with Transformational Leadership behavior (TL) as exhibited by participants in the work leadership role. Two hundred middle and senior level managers completed the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Results revealed that, overall EI and Strategic EI were positively correlated to Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration, Inspirational Motivation and Idealized Influence Behavior components of TL, whereas Experiential EI correlated with only the Intellectual Stimulation, and Inspirational Motivation component.

Key words: Performance based EI, Transformational Leadership

The relationship between EI and Leadership has been of interest for more than two decades now. Specifically, the role of EI in TL has been a subject of intensive research, primarily due to the affect-oriented nature of TL (Divr et al, 2002; Barbuto, 2006; Modassir and Singh, 2008, Dabke, 2011). Examining the relationship between EI and TL was a major goal of the current study.

In the Indian context, past research has studied association between Leadership and EI as understood by mixed models (Jayan,2006; Singh, 2006). Internationally, MSCEIT has time and again emerged as robust measure of ability based EI. While its statistical superiority and predictive ability has been adequately demonstrated there is a paucity of studies reporting the use of MSCEIT for the adult Indian population. Thus the use of MSCEIT and creation of local norms based on the methodology recommended by test authors was another major objective of the study.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Mayer and Salovey (1997) define EI as, the ability of an individual to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to access and generate feelings when they facilitate thoughts; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. The Ability-based model is a four branch model;

- ***Branch 1 (Perception, Appraisal and Expression of Emotions)***

- *Branch 2 (Emotional Facilitation of Thinking)*
- *Branch 3 (Understanding and Analyzing Emotions)*
- *Branch 4 (Reflective Regulation of Emotions)*

Transformational Leadership (TL)

Transformational leadership style is defined in terms of four dimensions as scored on the MLQ 5X (Bass and Avolio, 2000) scale namely:

- *Idealized Influence (II)*
- *Inspirational Motivation (IM)*
- *Intellectual Stimulation (IS)*
- *Individualized Consideration (IC)*

Relationship between EI and TL

There are a number of theoretical arguments made relating EI to effective leadership (Palmer et al, 2001). Barling et al. (2000) have asserted that EI is associated with three aspects of TL (Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration). Hence the hypothesis 1:

- 1. There would be a significant positive correlation between the overall Emotional Intelligence and Transformational leadership behavior*

Strategic EQ measures the respondent's ability to understand emotional information, and be able to use it for planning and self management. Strategic EQ helps the individual to empathize with the followers and help them regulate emotions. Thus the hypothesis 2 states:

- 2. There would be a significant positive correlation between the Strategic Emotional Intelligence and Transformational leadership*

The ability to perceive emotions are captured better in terms of Experiential EQ (EEQ). The EEQ describes the degree to which one "takes in" emotional experience, recognizes it, compares it to other sensations, and understands how it interacts with thought. Mayer,

and Salovey (2002) reported studies indicating that the ability for a leader to identify emotions and feelings within themselves also allows them to accurately identify the emotions of peers and groups. Thus the hypothesis 3 states:

1. *There would be a significant positive correlation between the Strategic Emotional Intelligence (SEQ) and Transformational leadership behavior*

Methodology

The study was based on assessment of 200 middle level/senior level executives from various organizations who were functioning as group leaders. Participants' ages ranged from 35 to 58 years, with the average age of 46.74 years ($SD = 4.14$). Out of the 200 executives, 38 (19 %) managers were female managers and 162 (81 %) were males. The average years of service put in by the participants were 23 years ($S.D = 4.69$).

Measures

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

EI of participants was measured by the MSCEIT V.2 test (Mayer 2002). yields a Total score, two Area scores and four Branch scores.

Transformational leadership style

Transformational leadership style is defined in terms of four dimensions as scored on the MLQ 5X (Bass and Avolio, 2000)

The measures had satisfactory reliability and validity scores.

Procedure

The measures were administrated to the participants.

Developing local scoring for MSCEIT

MSCEIT is scored according to the consensus scoring method. Considering the culture impact on the experience and expression of emotions, the test authors have proposed a local development of scoring pattern. In the current study a general consensus method was followed. The procedural steps as recommended on the web site <http://www.unh.edu/Emotional-Intelligence/index.html> were adhered to in order to be able to score each participant according to the consensus method.

Results

A Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the EQ scores and aspects of Transformational leadership behavior as measured by MLQ 5X.

Table 1: Correlation between EQ and Transformational leadership

	Transformational Leadership Style				
	IDA	IDB	IM	IS	IC
Work Domain	0.11	0.18**	0.2**	0.29**	0.22**

**Correlation significant at $p < .01$ level (1-tailed), * Correlation significant at $p < .05$ level (1-tailed).Note. IDA= Idealized Influence-attributes, IDB= Idealized Influence-behavior, IM= Inspirational Motivation, IS= Intellectual Stimulation, IC= Individualized Consideration

Table 1 presents the correlation coefficient between overall EQ and Transformational style. As seen in table 1, the Overall EQ score showed a significant positive correlation with Intellectual Stimulation ($r = 0.29$, $p < .01$), Individualized Consideration ($r = 0.22$, $p < .001$) and Inspirational Motivation ($r = 0.20$, $p < .002$) and Idealized Influence- Behavior. This signifies that higher the Overall EQ, greater is the likelihood of the leader providing Intellectual Stimulation and problem solving opportunities to the follower. Thus the first hypothesis was supported to a large extent.

Table 2: Correlation between Strategic EQ and Transformational leadership

	Transformational Leadership Style				
	IDA	IDB	IM	IS	IC
Work Domain	0.15*	0.29**	0.22**	0.29**	0.31**

**Correlation significant at $p < .01$ level (1-tailed), * Correlation significant at $p < .05$ level (1-tailed).Note. IDA= Idealized Influence-attributes, IDB= Idealized Influence-behavior, IM= Inspirational Motivation, IS= Intellectual Stimulation, IC= Individualized Consideration

A look at Table 2 indicates that SEQ shows a significant positive correlation with all the components of Transformational Leadership styles. Strategic EQ shows a highest significant positive correlation, with Individual Consideration ($r = 0.31$, $p < .01$) followed by Intellectual Stimulation and Idealized Influence-Behavior ($r = 0.29$, $p < .01$), and then Inspirational Motivation ($r = 0.22$, $p < .01$). Thus hypothesis two was supported to a large extent.

Table 3: Correlation between Experiential EQ and Transformational leadership

	Transformational Leadership Style				
	IDA	IDB	IM	IS	IC
Work Domain	0.06	0.08	0.15*	0.22**	0.11

**Correlation significant at $p < .01$ level (1-tailed), * Correlation significant at $p < .05$ level (1-tailed).Note. IDA= Idealized Influence-attributes, IDB= Idealized Influence-behavior, IM= Inspirational Motivation, IS= Intellectual Stimulation, IC= Individualized Consideration

Table 3 depicts the correlation coefficient between Experiential EQ (EEQ) and Transformational Leadership. It was hypothesized that EEQ will show significant positive correlation with all the aspects of Transformational leadership. In the Work domain, the EEQ showed a positive significant correlation with Intellectual Stimulation ($r = 0.22$, $p < .001$) and Inspirational Motivation ($r = 0.15$, $p < .05$) components of Transformational leadership. However there is a non-significant positive correlation between the EEQ scores and components of Transformational leadership.

On the whole Hypothesis three was only partially supported.

Discussion

As expected overall EQ scores showed a significant positive correlation three out of four aspects of transformational leadership styles namely Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration, and Inspirational Motivation. The SEQ showed positive correlation with all the Transformational Leadership style. Comparatively, EEQ showed a low positive correlation with the Transformational Leadership styles.

EQ and Transformational Leadership

In the current study, Intellectual Stimulation (IS) emerged as a vital aspect of Transformational behavior showing a positive correlation with EQ components.

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation (IS) is a cognitive component of transformational leadership model. The leader helps followers analyze their problems, create their own solution. Worthman (1982) argues that executives at and near the top of the organization must increase their concentration on strategic thinking and on intellectual activities engaging themselves and their followers in the task of analysis, formulation, implementation, interpretation and evaluation. Especially in today's world where innovation is the buzz word it is only fair that an effective leader exhibit

behaviors that enhance followers problem solving. Furthermore, the characteristics of followers have also changed from manual workers to knowledge workers. Today the leadership should appeal to the logic of followers. A high EI person is more likely to be tuned to these shifts in the thought paradigms and adapt to the changing world. Besides SEQ may give the leader an edge over others to exactly understand the feelings and needs of subordinates and address them widely. Thus it can be said that high EI leaders, due to their attunement to changing times and follower paradigms would combine their SEQ capabilities and provide greater intellectual stimulation to followers

Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational Motivation (IM) is the next transformational style which shows a positive correlation with EQ scores. Leaders who understand emotions appear to motivate subordinates to work more effectively and efficiently (Grossman, 2000). Ashkanasy and Tse (2000) claim that Transformational leaders employ emotions to persuade their followers to engage in positive thinking in terms of developing both a positive vision and new ideas. All in all, higher the EQ, equipping a person to use all the emotional information strategically and experientially, greater are his/her chances to engage in IM behavior, as demonstrated by the current sample of managers.

Individualized consideration

Individualized consideration (IC) in transformational leadership model is the sensitivity, interest, understanding and appreciation of the uniqueness of the followers. In the current study IC showed a significant positive correlation with EQ and SEQ. The SEQ is logically a more relevant branch of EQ that would contribute to the use of IC. A good 'feelings' vocabulary and an expressive ability would help the leader to convey authentic feelings to the followers more effectively. The leader would also be in a better position to address each follower's unique needs, desires and even frustrations without getting flustered or overwhelmed by overt challenges.

Idealized Influence

In the transformational leadership model charismatic component is measured in the form of Idealized Influence. In the current study, charisma shows a lower correlation with EQ scores. This is contrary to previous research which have identified Charismatic leadership as being central to the transformational leadership process.

The result of the current study however does not seem to support this proposition. Leader's assumptions about his role expectations are guiding force for his actions in the same role. In the current study, it is very clear that, the agenda of the organizational leaders in question is more of providing intellectual stimulation to followers rather than presenting themselves as role models. As a result they seem to be indulging in more rational, logical problem solving approach than leveraging on an affect oriented approach. This could be one reason why EQ scores are not correlating significantly with charismatic behavior.

Furthermore, Yulk (2006) believes that the presumed scarcity of the charismatic leaders in business and industry may be due to the lack of managers with necessary skills. However, Thus, high EQ leaders seem to be using their emotional capabilities more to stimulate followers, help them to achieve their needs and goals and motivate them rather than focusing on influencing them by role modeling or charismatic appeal.

Conclusions

The findings of the current study can be summed up as follows;

- Overall EQ shows a significant positive correlation with three out of four components of Transformational leadership styles namely, Intellectual Stimulation, Inspirational Motivation and Individualized Consideration
- Unlike earlier studies, Intellectual Stimulation shows greater correlation with EI.
- Relationship between Charismatic component of Transformational Leadership and EI were not as pronounced as earlier research.

Limitations of the study

- While the study makes significant contributions to the field of organizational behavior, it is not without limitations. Following are the inadequacies of the study:
- Nature of the sample
The sample was selected from a number of organizations belonging to varied sectors. Thus the sample lacked homogeneity in terms of exposure, experience and role requirements.

Implications

- The findings further the understanding of Ability model concept of EI and endorse its use in the Indian settings
- The research findings have important implication for Training and Development of Leaders.
- A good understanding of the significance of EI in Leadership role coupled with honing of the Transformational Leadership skills would help future and existing leaders immensely.

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