Emotional Intelligence: A Gender Wise Study of Indian IT Professionals with Special Reference to NCR, Pune and Bangaluru

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Abstract

The objective of present study was to investigate the relationship between gender and the Emotional Intelligence of Indian IT Professionals. The study was conducted across India in major IT cities such as NCR (NOIDA, DELHI and GURGAON), PUNE and BANGALURU. The study utilized a structured questionnaire based on emotional intelligence competencies as given by Daniel Goleman (1995, 1998) to assess emotional intelligence of respondents. A sample of 414 IT professionals was used for statistical analysis. Data analysis included frequencies, percentages, mean scores and independent sample t –tests. The statistical data were computed by SPSS 16.0. The findings in this research study support the existence of a relationship between gender and emotional intelligence. Difference in EI was discovered between genders in overall population as well as in certain geographical areas.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Gender, IT industry, IT Professionals.

INTRODUCTION

*E*motional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions. In broader terms it refers to emotional awareness and emotional management skills, which provide the ability to balance emotion and a reason to maximize productivity and happiness. The study of emotional intelligence evolved from works of Gardner (1983); Williams and Sternberg (1988), who proposed broader approaches to understanding intelligence. The term EI was coined by Psychologists Peter Salovey (University of Yale) and John Mayer (University of New Hampshire) in their landmark article, "Emotional Intelligence," published in the *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality* in year 1990. Their article presented the first model of emotional intelligence. But it was Daniel Goleman (1995) who popularized the concept with his best-selling books "Emotional Intelligence Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" (1995). His main premise is that EI predicts life success this has attracted great interest worldwide. The construct has gained further momentum within

organizations, as global organizations no longer being seen as "emotion-free" zones. Emotional Intelligence is now being considered important in organizational factors such as: organizational change (Singh, 2003); leadership (Ashkanasy, 2002; Dearborn, 2002; Gardner & Stough, 2002); management performance (Slaski & Cartwright, 2002); perceiving occupational stress (Bardzil, P., & Slaski, M. 2003); and life satisfaction (Poon, J. , 2004).

The present study uses a sample of IT employees to examine the influence of gender which traditionally has been considered important in organizational behavior researches. The gender has been investigated in relation to emotional intelligence with mixed results in various sectors such as retailing, hospitality industry, medical profession and academics for example no relationship was found between EI and female gender with managerial sample (Langhorn, 2004); while a positive relationship between male gender and emotional intelligence was reported with student samples (Fatt, 2002) , on other hand Bhosle (1999) and Singh (2003) found females to have higher emotional intelligence than

that of males . It may also be noted that there is evidence that women and men may differ on specific EI competencies (Fatt, 2002). The present study is an investigation of gender differences in Indian IT Professionals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Daniel Goleman defined emotional intelligence in his book “Emotional Intelligence Why It Can Matter More Than IQ (1995) as “managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly toward their common goals (Goleman, 1995).” Further in 1998 he refined his definition of EI and defined it as “the capacity to recognize our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman, 1998)”. Goleman (1998) further identified the five elements as the components of emotional intelligence: **Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills**, to them he called as Emotional competencies. These five essential components of emotional intelligence and the competencies based on these abilities are crucial for success in personal, social and professional life. A brief description of them is given in Table; 1.

(INSERT TABLE 1 HERE)

A growing body of research demonstrates that emotional intelligence is a better predictor of “success” than traditional measures of cognitive intelligence (IQ) at workplace. Goleman (1995) theorized that emotional intelligence is more important than Intelligence Quotient (IQ) as IQ contributes only 20 percent while EI accounts for more than 80 percent of success in one’s professional and personal life. Elaborating further on this construct, Goleman (1998) explained that an individual’s emotional intelligence can affect one’s physical and mental health as well as one’s career achievements. The construct has gained further momentum in business world as global organizations no longer being seen as “emotion-free” zones. Emotional Intelligence is now being considered to be important in organizational factors such as: organizational change (McColl-Kennedy J.R. and Anderson R.D. 2002);

leadership (Gardner and Stough 2002); management performance (Slaski and Cartwright 2002); perceiving occupational stress (Oginska-Bulik 2005); life satisfaction & leadership effectiveness (Palmer et al 2002), individual performance, work attitudes and outcomes (Carmelli 2003), job satisfaction, organizational commitment and financial success of an organization (Bradberry and Greaves 2003).

The above mention studies has been conducted in various sectors of business as retailing, services, hospitality, tourism, manufacturing, medical profession etc (Palmer et al 2002; Gardner and Stough 2002, Slaski and Cartwright 2002, Oginska-Bulik 2005). However relationship among, demographic variables, leadership and emotional intelligence in the IT industry is still unexplored. One of the possible reasons for that could be that the image of IT employees had always been stereotyped. They are supposed to possess high IQ. EI has been considered as irrelevant for them. But today’s projects are high performance environments; stress frustration and conflict are more than often permanent features of the daily routine of team members and team leaders in almost all I T organization. Managing expectations, promoting ideas, and negotiating high-quality agreements when conflicting interests prevail are all emerging as key I.T. skills. The ability to influence, drive to achieve, and analytical abilities are main desired competencies in technical professions (Goleman 2000). Now even IT organizations require a cadre of skilled managers and employees to be effective in their global operations. One competency that has received increased attention and is believed to be important to worker effectiveness is that of emotional intelligence (Kelley and Caplan 1993; Sosik and Megerian 1999), as Goleman (1998) has asserted that Emotional Intelligence abilities were about four times more important than IQ in determining professional success and prestige, even for those with a scientific background. Given the popularity of the emotional intelligence construct in both the academics and practitioner literature and its prominence in organizations, little research exists that examines the relevancy of this construct and the implications in IT industry. The present study aims not only to explore the importance of Emotional Intelligence in IT sector but also influence of gender on the same.

OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES

The aim of present study was to investigate the relationship between gender and the Emotional Intelligence of Indian IT Professionals. However the broad objectives of the research include the following:

- I. To find out influence of gender on Emotional Intelligence Level of participants.
- II. To comparative study of Emotional Intelligence with respect to gender for each region namely NCR, Bengaluru and Pune.

Past research has demonstrated that women are generally more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, and are more adept inter-personally though both males and females generally have equivalent abilities to develop their emotional intelligence (Fatt, 2002). Considering it, the main research question of current research work is

H_{o-1} : There is no gender difference in Emotional Intelligence of all participants.

To find out the impact of gender on emotional intelligence region wise following questions were set.

$H_{o-1(a)}$: There is no influence of gender on Emotional Intelligence of participants from NCR.

$H_{o-1(b)}$: There is no gender difference in Emotional Intelligence of participants from PUNE.

$H_{o-1(c)}$: Emotional Intelligence is independent gender of participants from BANGALURU.

These hypotheses consist of two variables; emotional intelligence as dependent variable and gender as an independent variable.

METHODOLOGY

Data from 414 respondents for this study was collected by a well-defined structured questionnaire on site from the employees working in different IT companies in India, mainly in the cities of NCR (Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon), Pune and Bengaluru. Stratified random sampling method was used to collect these responses first IT firms were divided into stratas, based on geographical location of IT firms cluster in India, then individual IT firm within stratas was randomly sampled.

Research instrument (Questionnaire)

The Questionnaire was drafted on the basis of Daniel Goleman's (1995, 1998) parameters of Emotional

Intelligence. And, the main items included were *Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Self Motivation, Empathy and Social Skills*. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, section one aimed to cover specific socio-demographic variables such as gender, educational qualification, work experience, designation etc., while section two aimed to check emotional intelligence level of respondent. This section of questionnaire had 40 items related to emotional intelligence, rated at five point Likert scale, having 1 = strongly disagree up to 5 = strongly agree and 3 = undecided. The higher score represented higher emotional intelligence.

The reliability of scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. It may be mentioned that its value varies from 0 to 1 but satisfactory value is required to be more than 0.6 for the scale to be reliable (Cronbach, Lee J., and Richard J. Shavelson. , 2004; Cronbach, 1951). In the present study the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient has been checked of overall as well as of subscales. The scores are given in table 2.

(INSERT TABLE 2 HERE)

Here the questionnaire had an overall score of *Cronbach's Alpha (0.801)* and those of its 5 sub-scales range from *0.629 to 0.851*. These results indicate that the instrument has a high internal consistency and it could be used in further studies.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

In the line of objective and hypotheses of the study first data was analyzed on the basis of demographic profile of the respondents. Table 3 shows the sample distribution according to gender. It reveals that the majority in the sample constituted 255 (61.60 %) are males and only 159 (38.40 %) females. Region wise profile of respondents shows that 158 (38.20%) respondents in the sample are from NCR while 126 (30.40%) and 130 (31.40%) are from Pune and Bengaluru respectively.

(INSERT TABLE 3 HERE)

Comparison of Means

The data was collected with the help of the questionnaire as mentioned in methodology. All the data

was put into and processed through SPSS 16.0. Table 4 shows the means, standard deviations, and mean differences of male (N= 255) and female (N=159) responses regarding all the five parameters of EI as well as for total EI score.

(INSERT TABLE 4 HERE)

Observations of mean differences of male and female respondents in table 4 reveal that not only in overall score of EI but in all other parameters significant differences were existed, female respondents scored higher than did their male counterparts. The maximum difference was found in self-awareness parameter (2.939) while minimum was in the parameter of self-motivation (1.503) while in overall EI score the difference is 7.950 favoring female respondents. These findings taken together indicate that female respondents, on an average, were more emotionally intelligent-capable in Indian IT industry.

Further the comparison of means was done through independent samples t-test to examine whether the difference in EI scores of female and male respondents is statistically significant or not. The test was applied on overall EI Score as well on each EI parameter. Table 5 shows the results of independent samples t-test regarding influence of gender on EI and its parameters.

(INSERT TABLE 5 HERE)

It is clear from results that the significance value (p-value) is < 0.050 for all the parameters of EI. Even for total EI Score, it is also 0.000 (p value is $0.000 < 0.05$). So, there is a definite difference in means of male and female respondents in overall data set.

Region Wise Analysis of Male and Female Respondents

A region wise analysis of male and female respondents as given in table 6 was done in order to find out the difference in their EI scores.

(INSERT TABLE 6 HERE)

These results explain that in Pune and Bangaluru female respondents scored higher then male respondents (14.39

and 8.54), while in NCR male scored higher (2.260) in comparison to their female counterpart. The maximum difference in mean score of male and female respondents is in data set from Pune (14.39) region. Again independent samples t-test was utilized to examine statistically significant differences between EI score of female and male respondents from these regions.

(INSERT TABLE 7 HERE)

Results show that gender wise respondents from Pune have highly significant difference (as p value is .000) in their scores while as per analysis the difference in male and female respondents NCR is not statistically as the p value is .310 which is higher than set criteria of $p > .05$ being statistically significant. That explains in present study no significant difference is found in the EI scores of male and female respondents in data set of NCR (N=158). The p values for Pune and Bangaluru data set support the rejection of hypotheses $H_{o-1(b)}$ and $H_{o-1(c)}$ though p value of NCR data support the acceptance of hypothesis $H_{o-1(a)}$.

However overall results of Independent sample t-test reveal a statistically reliable difference between the mean EI scores of overall Male and Female respondents not only in total EI score ($t = 4.581, p = .000, \alpha = .05$) but in each parameter (refer table 4 & 5), These findings support the rejection of null hypothesis. A summary of hypotheses testing is given in table 8.

(INSERT TABLE 8 HERE)

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The findings of present research explain that there exists a significant difference with respect to the gender in the emotional intelligence of Indian IT professionals as female respondents scored more on each parameter along with overall score compared to their male colleagues. However NCR region male respondents score higher than female, though the difference was insignificant.

Prior research on gender difference in EI has remained inconclusive. Some research has shown that in terms of total EI males and females do not seem to differ (Bar-On 2000; Saklofske et al 2003); however, females and males

may differ on specific competencies. Other researchers have suggested that females are more emotionally competent than males (Ciarrochi et al 2002).

In the present research results establish a gender difference in EI, favoring women. However when region (NCR, PUNE and BANGALURU) wise analysis of gender difference in emotional intelligence was done then except NCR in other two regions (PUNE and BANGALURU) results have been similar favoring female respondents while in NCR results were in favor of male respondents. This difference agrees very well with findings of previous work (Engelberg and Sjöberg 2004; Petrides and Furnham 2000, 2006; Bhosle 1999; Singh 2003). They all found females to have higher emotional intelligence than that of males. Engelberg and Sjöberg (2004) found that women had both a higher EI than men did, and a higher level of habitual affect intensity, further women reported higher punctuations than men in emotional self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, social responsibility, empathy and happiness (Grossman 2000).

The findings of study say that there is a difference between the male and female segment of the organization with respect to EI in IT industry in India. One possible reason of such findings could be that women react with stronger emotions than men under similar circumstances (Bradley et al 2001; Fujita et al 1991; Grossman 2000) and they recognize more emotions in comparison to their counterpart (Bradberry and Su 2006). It may also be argued that women are more interested than men in emotional relationship, problems, and issues, and share those interests with other women. Subsequently they develop skills and knowledge related to emotional life.

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Table 1: Goleman's (1998) Emotional Intelligence Competencies

EI Competencies	Definition	Attributes
Self-awareness	The ability to recognize and understand one's moods, emotions and drives as well as the effect on others	Self-confidence; realistic; self-assessment; self-depreciating sense of humor
Self-regulation	The ability to control and redirect impulses and moods. The propensity to suspend judgment - to think before acting	Trustworthiness and integrity; comfort with ambiguity; openness to change
Motivation	A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status. A propensity to pursue goals with energy and enthusiasm.	Strong drive to achieve optimism; even in the face of failure; organizational commitment.
Empathy	Ability in managing meaningful relationships and building networks; Skills in treating people according to their emotional reactions.	Expertise in building and retaining talent; cross-cultural sensitivity; service to clients and customers.
Social skill	Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks. An ability to find common ground and support	Effectiveness in leading change; persuasiveness; expertise in building and leading teams

Table-2: Reliability Statistics for Subscales

Name of Subscale	Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)	N of Items
Self -Awareness	.851	8
Self-Regulation	.740	8
Self-Motivation	.629	8
Empathy	.745	8
Social Skills	.848	8
<i>Overall Questionnaire</i>	.801	40

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents

Region	NCR	%	Pune	%	Bangaluru	%	Total	%
Gender								
Male Respondents	94	59.50%	76	60.30%	85	65.40%	255	(61.60%)
Female Respondents	64	40.50%	50	39.70%	45	34.60%	159	(38.40%)
Total No. of Respondents	158	100%	126	100%	130	100%	414	100%
	(38.20%)		(30.40%)		(31.40%)			

Table 4: Comparison of Male and Female Respondents' Means and Standard Deviations

Parameter	Male(N = 255)		Female(N = 159)		Mean Difference
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Self-Awareness	26.513	5.8261	29.452	5.1172	-2.939
Self-Regulation	27.262	6.2756	29.352	4.3894	-2.090
Self-Motivation	29.396	7.0607	30.899	6.0860	-1.503
Empathy	27.541	6.5271	29.553	5.9381	-2.012
Social Skills	29.462	7.3257	31.213	6.6602	-1.749
Total EI Score	133.300	21.6625	141.250	13.6389	-7.950

Table-5: Independent sample t-test to Show the Effect of Gender on EI

Parameter	Category	N	T-value	p-value	
Self-Awareness	Male	255	5.227	.000	
	Female	159			
Self-Regulation	Male	255	3.980	.000	
	Female	159			
Self-Motivation	Male	255	2.297	.022	
	Female	159			
Empathy	Male	255	3.157	.002	
	Female	159			
Social Skills	Male	255	2.448	.015	
	Female	159			
Total EI Score	Male	255	4.581	.000	
	Female	159			

Table 6: Region-wise Comparison of Male and Female Respondents' Means and Standard Deviations

Region	Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference
NCR	Male	94	131.79	15.2667	2.26
	Female	64	129.53	12.4428	
PUNE	Male	76	127.57	13.8451	-14.39
	Female	50	141.96	13.9004	
BANGALURU	Male	85	131.26	12.1549	-8.54
	Female	45	139.80	14.8761	

Table 7: Region-wise Independent sample t-test to Show the Effect of Gender on EI Score

Region	Category	N	t-value	p-value
NCR	Male	94	1.019	.310
	Female	64		
PUNE	Male	76	5.700	.000
	Female	50		
BANGALURU	Male	85	3.522	.001
	Female	45		

Table 8: Hypotheses Test Summary

Hypotheses Test Summary				
S. No.	Null Hypothesis (H ₀)	Test	p-value	Decision
1.	H ₀₋₁ : There is no gender difference in Emotional Intelligence of all participants.	Independent sample t-test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis
a.	H _{0-1(a)} : There is no influence of gender on Emotional Intelligence of participants from NCR.	Independent sample t-test	.310	Retain the null hypothesis
b.	H _{0-1(b)} : There is no gender difference in Emotional Intelligence of participants from PUNE.	Independent sample t-test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis
c.	H _{0-1(c)} : Emotional Intelligence is independent gender of participants from BANGALURU.	Independent sample t-test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis