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Age: A determinant of Management's Emotional Intelligence Competency

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Abstract
Emotional intelligence (EI) is the capacity of an individual to identify his/her own emotions and to become sensitive to those that he/she perceives from the environment and the circle of people he/she is interacting with. It is a particular set of abilities and knowledge-building attitudes. EI enables managers to tap into their emotions as a source of energy to foster intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding. EI is increasingly being emphasized as a leader attribute that managers require to improve the performance of their organizations. The objectives of this study were; to determine the influence of age on management's EI and to establish the moderating effects of gender and managerial experience on the relationship between age and management's EI. A survey research design was used for this study. The institutions studied were selected using stratified random sampling technique. The three strata considered were primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges/tertiary institutions. From each institution sampled, the respondent was the head of the institution. Apart from the data from the managers, each manager was also rated by four subordinates called raters. Emotional Competency Profiler (ECP) was used to determine the EI of the managers. Age was taken as the independent variable while EI was identified as the dependent variable. Manager's gender and managerial experience were considered as the moderating factors. Data was analyzed statistically using SPSS. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were carried out and hypotheses tested. Results showed that the managers exhibited moderate levels of EI. There was a significant positive linear relationship between age and EI (R^2=0.67, F=28.18. t=12.9, p=0.000, β=0.843). It was also observed that the contextual factors had mild moderating effects on the relationship between age of the manager and EI that was not statistically significant. It was therefore concluded age does have a bearing on the EI competency of the manager with older people posting higher EI levels.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, age, gender, experience, emotional competency, profiler.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) has been a popular topic of debate in the field of management. It has been praised as a successful predictor of job performance and leadership ability. Goleman (1998) asserts that emotional intelligence, not IQ, predicts workplace success and who transpires as a leader. The common characteristic that binds those who most influenced our histories, our societies, our cultural traditions, and civilizations is emotion. Throughout history and in cultures around the world, the leader is the one to whom others look for assurance and clarity when threatened with uncertainty or harm Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, (2002). These leaders influence, inspire, initiate, communicate, create, adapt, achieve, empathize, support and serve. They are highly self-confident and optimistic individuals, who possess acute organizational awareness and political adeptness. All of these are EI competencies that guide leadership behaviour and all can be developed over time through accurate self-assessment, reflection and experience (Goleman, 1998). EI enables managers to take better decisions and enjoy better relations in organizations (Reed, 2005).Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to recognize personal feelings and those of others and to manage emotions within themselves and in their relationships with others. The concept of emotional intelligence has roots in social intelligence developed by Thorndike (1990) who proposed multiple forms of intelligence including abstract, mechanical and social intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (1997) characterize

EI as the ability to understand people and deal with people. One skill frequently cited in the literature on leadership as being necessary in a variety of situations is the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills associated with Emotional Intelligence (Dulewicz, and Higgs, 2003). As theorized, a dynamic combination of EI competencies informs cognition and guides managerial behaviour. More specifically emotionally informed cognition drives decision-making processes and regulates a leader's deployment of power and authority. The resulting managerial behaviour is guided largely by an individual's EI capacity (Goleman, 1995). Bar-On (1996) states that all forms of leadership or rather management have an emotional component. Goleman (1995) and Stein and Book (2000) argued that those managers with greater EI will be the more effective. George (2000) suggested that EI plays an important role in managers' effectiveness and proposes that the ability to understand and manage moods and emotions in oneself and in others theoretically contributes to the effectiveness of managers.

In *Working with Emotional Intelligence,* Goleman (1995) argues that our level of emotional intelligence is not fixed genetically, nor does it develop only in early childhood. Unlike IQ, which changes little after our teen years, emotional intelligence seems to be largely learned, and it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experiences-our competence in it can keep growing. In fact, studies that have tracked people's level of emotional intelligence through the years show that people get better and better in these capabilities as they grow more adept at handling their emotions and impulses, at motivating themselves, and at honing their empathy and social adroitness.

Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) asserted that in order for emotional intelligence to be considered a standard intelligence, it should increase with age and experience. But there is no literature that authoritatively asserts that EI and age are related. In a study conducted by Day and Carroll (2004), experience, was positively correlated with three of the four emotional intelligence scales, as measured by the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test. Van Rooy, Alonso, and Viswesvaran (2005) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and age using the 33-item Emotional Intelligence Scale. There was a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and age Rode, Mooney, Arthaud-Day, Near, Baldwin, Rubin, R, Bommer, W. (2007) asserted that individuals with a high level of emotional intelligence are able to direct positive emotions to uphold the energy needed for high performance over long periods of time and to redirect negative emotions into productive behaviors. Despite their prediction, emotional intelligence of managers has not significantly associated with age, however, they did find an interaction of emotional intelligence with conscientiousness a unique variance in management traits. Considering the mixed nature of literature on the relationship between emotional intelligence and management's traits, the concept warrants further research.

Despite these findings, there is a limited amount of research that has examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and work experience. Intuitively, one might assume that emotional intelligence will increase as age increases. However, empirical research is needed to test this hypothesis. This study uses the Wolmarans (2001) model of EI that make use of Emotional Competency Profiler (ECP) to determine the EI levels of managers of academic institutions in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya. There was need also to look at the moderating effects of gender and work experience on the relationship between EI and age of managers.

SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study shows a significant positive linear relationship between age and management's EI. The findings are important to the scholars and readers in general for it contributes to the knowledge pool and does help to understand the critical role EI plays in the management circles.

The target population of the study was the management of academic institutions and hence could be a limitation thus need o extrapolate the study to other management spheres

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H_{o1}: There is no significant linear relationship between the manager's EI and age

H_{02}: The organization factors do not moderate the relationship between EI and age

METHOD

Participants: Stratified random sampling and then simple sampling was used for the purposes of this study so as to obtain a true representation of the population that was heterogeneous. There were 127 academic institutions in the three strata. However for the purposes of this study, using a random table by Krejcie, Morgan, and Daryle (1998) a total of 113 institutions were taken as the sample size which represented 88% of the target population. The sample consisted of 62% primary schools, 21% secondary schools and 17% tertiary institutions. For each institution studied five respondents (The manager and four raters) were chosen giving a total of 565 respondents.

MEASURES

Demographics: The managers indicated their age, gender and managerial experience,

Emotional intelligence: EI of the managers was captured using a modified ECP. This section contained 28 items that identified and measured the key factors of EI. The questionnaire covered factors such as emotional literacy (EL), self-esteem (SE), self-management SMG), self-motivation (SM), change resilience (CHR), interpersonal relations (IR) and the integration of head and heart (IHH). The modified ECP used a five-point Likert scale to measure levels of EI competence. By administering questionnaires to four subordinates/raters per manager this study attempted to obtain a holistic view of each manager's EI.

Reliability and Validity of ECP *Reliability:* Internal consistency of the ECP was tested by computing Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients. The average Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the ECP instrument was found to be 0.8836, which is good as per Sekeran (2000).

Validity: The items in the questionnaire were modeled along the standard ECP and MLQ instruments used in similar studies. Modification was done with due regard to the study objectives and with reference to content and clarity of the items.

RESULTS

Response Rates: The sample consisted of 113 institutions and hence 113 managers and 452 raters/subordinates. Of the 113 managers who were expected to participate in this study, 74 (65.49%) responded by completing and returning the questionnaires.

***Emotional Intelligence*:** The ECP scoring key was used to generate the scores for each factor of EI. The scores were then summed up for all the managers and the mean for each factor computed. The sample sizes, means, standard deviations, standard error, for the managers' self-assessment (M_s) and subordinates' ratings (M_r) of each of the EI factors are given in Table 1. Theoretically, the maximum score of any dimension could be 4 and the minimum 0. The mean between 0 and 2 represented low EI, 2.1 to 3.5 represents moderate EI and between 3.6 and 4, including 4, high EI (Wolmarans, 2001). From table 1, focusing on the mean scores of self-ratings (M_s) versus subordinates ratings (M_r), in general, self-rating mean scores for each dimension, are higher than the subordinates' ratings. This may have been caused by respondents' tendency to see themselves in a more positive light. The overall EI of the male and female mangers were not significantly different (female managers = 2.3626 and male managers =2.3478). Except for some considerable variation in the mean scores of specific competencies. Female managers had higher scores in self management (mean = 2.5385) than males (mean = 2.1667). While for change resilience, male managers scored higher (mean = 2.6444) than female managers (mean = 2.3077).

Correlation Analysis: Correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationship between EI and age and the results are shown in table 2. Results showed a very strong and positive relationship between EI and age at 95% confidence level (R=0.82, and p=0.00).

Regression Analysis: Was carried out to test the null hypotheses.

H_{01}: From the regression analysis and hence the regression parameters obtained (table 3) the hypothesis H_{01} was tested by constructing the following linear model: Ag = B + β*EI where: Ag age is (the independent variable) B is the y-intercept, β is gradient/slope of the regression line and EI denotes emotional intelligence (the dependent variable). Thus the linear equation relating EI and transformational leadership took the form:

Ag = 1.054 + 0.843*EI. This model has a high correlation (adjusted R^2 = 0.67) and is strongly significant (F=28.18 and p = 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05) while ß ≠ 0. In ANOVA, large F and R^2 observed values indicates that most of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the regression model. Hence the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there is sufficient evidence, at 95% significance level, that there is a significant positive linear relationship between EI of the manager and age.

H_{02}: To establish the moderating effects of the contextual factors on the relationship between EI of the manager and age the null hypothesis H_{02} was set and tested.

The determination of the moderating effect of the organizational factors involved conducting independent partial correlation analyses of EI of manager and age using the individual organizational factors as controlling variables. The partial correlation coefficient was then compared with the simple correlation coefficient obtained by direct correlation of EI and age in order to determine the magnitude and direction of the moderating effect of the contextual factors. The results of the partial correlation are shown in table 4 for effects of moderators on relationship between EI and age

Table 4 shows that on the whole the contextual factors considered in this study have slight moderating effects on the relationship between EI of the manager and age that is not statistically significant at 95% confidence level. However degree of moderation varies from one organizational factor to another. For instance years of experience had a mild positive moderating effect on the relationship (r_{xy} = 0.82, $r_{xy.z}$=0.80, p=0.07). Thus indicating that the absence of managerial experience in the

regression model suppresses the relationship between EI and age. On the other hand gender had a slight negative moderating effect on the relationship between EI and age (r_{xy}=0.82, $r_{xy.z}$=0.83, p=0.06). Meaning that the relationship between EI and age is higher when the effect of gender is removed from the relationship.

DISCUSSION

An increasing number of scholars have studied the relationship between EI as a predictor of important traits of management (Ciarrochi, J, Ciarrochi, A & Bajgar (2001)). The findings of this study are closer to the findings of Gardner and Stough (2001) and Mortazavi, Nazemi, & Fakhrabadi, (2005) who found a significant relationship between EI and age with 110 senior level managers. As was predicted, those managers who were identified as "successful" demonstrated high levels of EI. Ciarrochi, *et al*., (2001) was able to establish significant positive linear relationship between EI and age. It was found that as the age of the respondents increased EI also increased in tandem. Emotional Intelligence plays an important role in positive leadership within an organization. Goleman (1998) described leaders best suited to effect change within an organization as having an ability to recognize the need for change, and who are able to remove barriers to change. These are the core aspects of transformational leadership. These leaders will challenge the norms of behavior and enlist the help of others to facilitate the change process. Finally, these leaders will be effective at modeling change behaviors for others to follow. Emotion plays a large part in how a leader will demonstrate competencies that inspire the subordinate to follow the manager's vision.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) found that the organizational contextual factors have moderating effects on the relationship between EI and leadership style.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: Measures of central tendency for EI factors

	Self Rating				Subordinates' rating			
EI Dimension	N	**Mean (M_s)**	Std Error	Std Dev	N	**Mean (M_r)**	Std Error	Std Dev
EL	74	**2.290**	.2462	1.370	296	**2.098**	.2157	1.450
SE	74	**2.323**	.2290	1.275	296	**2.291**	.2104	1.489
SMG	74	**2.355**	.2478	1.380	296	**2.349**	.2574	2.975
SM	74	**2.323**	.2290	1.275	296	**2.312**	.2987	1.202
CHR	74	**2.387**	.2257	1.257	296	**2.402**	.2306	1.309
IR	74	**2.194**	.2472	1.377	296	**2.001**	.2567	1.987
IHH	74	**1.968**	.2723	1.516	296	**1.998**	.2783	1.501

Table 2: Summary of Pearson correlation test coefficients for Age vs. EI

	Age(independent)	EI (dependent)
Age	1	0.82* 0.00
EI	0.82* 0.00	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Regression of Age on EI

Goodness-of-fit

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error
.82[a]	0.672	0.623	0.56542

a. Predictors: (Constant). Age

Overall significance: ANOVA (F-test)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	56.406	1	56.406	28.18	0.000[a]
Residual	9.271	73	.320		
Total	65.677	74			

a. Predictors: (Constant). Age
b. Emotional Intelligence: EI

Individual significance

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	-.370	.235		-1.573	
EI	0.843	.079	.927	12.9	0.000

a. Dependent variable: Emotional intelligence, $R^2 = 0.674$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.623$
Level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4: Summary results of the moderating effects of organizational factors on relationship between Age and EI

Moderator (The contextual factors)	First-order partial correlation coefficient, $r_{xy.z}$	Effect of contextual factors (Compared to zero-order simple correlation coefficient of Age and EI, $r_{xy} = 0.82$)	Sig. (*p*-value at $\alpha = 0.05$
Gender of the manager	0.83	Slightly negative	0.06
Managerial experience	0.80	Slightly positive	0.07