



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF GENDER

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Abstract

In the present research, the effort has been made to study the difference between the gender for relation and impact of Emotional intelligence on Workplace behavior in the banking sector in Mumbai. For this purpose, 4 banks were taken- 2public sector banks (PNB, Canara) and 2 private sector banks (ICICI, Axis) as sample covering Mumbai. Goleman's emotional intelligence framework 1995 was used for data collection from employees of above said leading banks. Different attributes of emotional intelligence were taken into consideration to analyze its relationship with workplace behavior. SPSS 20 was used for data analysis. Personal Information Sheet was used to obtain the demographic information of the gender. The empirical analysis revealed that there is a difference of the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior between males and females working in banks. An analysis conducted derives meaningful conclusion for furthermore of research.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Workplace behavior, Banks, Males, Females*



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INTRODUCTION

The work environment, when not managed carefully, has been found to be a source of stress and emotional disharmony resulting in subsequent negative emotional states. Aggressive behaviors between co-workers have individual and organizational consequences such as low productivity and high levels of stress (Hulin, 1991). Employees with less grasp over their own emotions or understanding of others may find it very difficult to handle situations, which may affect their

performance over time. By the same logic, understanding one's own moods and impulses and those of others in any situation helps one to respond and behave in accordance with the expectations. This personal and the social competence of employees, which also form part of their role behavior, can be understood in terms of varying levels of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence was established by Salovey and Mayer in 1990's. From then, the popularity of the notion within industrial and organizational psychology, as an integral psychological factor which determines the success of an occupation is increasing (Palmer et al., 2003; Ciarrochi et al., 2000). The notion has been defined as "being a component and a part of social intelligence which is about being able to monitoring one's own along with the other's feelings and emotions, and having the ability to discriminate them and make use of all the information they find in guiding their thinking and actions" by Salovey & Mayer (1990). This scientific definition of emotional intelligence is probably one that has been widely accepted (Zeidner et al., 2004).

Emotional intelligence (EI) has proven to be a relevant construct in different domains of daily life, including mental and physical health, social functioning, and academic and workplace performance (e.g., Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011; Hervás, 2011; Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008; O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2010). Numerous studies have examined the mechanisms by which EI functions in individuals. At the same time, several authors have analyzed differences in emotional abilities as a function of sociodemographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, age and socioeconomic or educational level (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000; Day & Carroll, 2004; Kafetsios, 2004; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999; Palmer, Gignac, Monocha, & Stough, 2005).

In the workplace, many people come together and express different behaviors. Each of these behaviors has different consequences to the individuals working in the organization and to the whole organization. In the ideal case scenario, these behaviors coincide with the norms of the organization; the organizational norms being a construct consisting of "expected behaviors, languages, principles, and postulations that allow the workplace to perform at a suitable pace" (Appelbaum et al. 2007). But since reality is not always the ideal case, work behavior can also range outside the norms of the organization. Employees either lack the motivation to conform to normative expectations of the social content or become motivated to violate those expectations.

A review of the literature on emotions and EI also gives a clear idea of the significant differences between men and women in aspects related to the emotional world. In particular, the emotional dimension of human beings has traditionally been linked to a greater extent with the female gender, which experiences positive and negative emotions more intensely than the male gender (Grossman & Wood, 1993). These data, in fact, have fed the stereotype, still widely held, that the female gender is more emotional (Grewal&Salovey, 2005).

The banking industry is among the most dynamic sectors, where productivity, adaptability and competitiveness are considered to be key factors for growth of employees as well as organizations. It is important therefore, to have management recognition that if the work environment is a source of stress and emotional disharmony resulting in subsequent negative emotional states, the probability of negative outcomes also rises. The purpose of investigation was to discover a) if there is a significant impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior of the employees in the banking sector; and b) whether the impact varies across gender.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Certainly, emotional intelligence plays a considerable role in the workplace. Within the past 30 years research investigating factors that contribute to success in workplace have resulted in distinguishing factors that are affiliated to workplace intelligence. These researches used quantified data on performance from countless organizations and industries and have contributed to the knowledge base in emotional intelligence (Lynn, 2002).

Moreover, The 1990s showed increasing attention on the part of researchers and practitioners on the construct of emotional intelligence. This interest reflects the theoretical proposition that individuals who are high in emotional intelligence are seemingly more successful in work-related and non-work aspects of life than low-emotionally intelligent ones. Wolfe and Caruso (2004, p.3) asserted emotions include essential information that assists us —to be better at what we do.

Emotional Intelligence, however, did not enter into the mainstream until Goleman's seminal book in 1995, which examined the roles that emotional intelligence plays in our lives its impact on one's success. The major thrust of Goleman's theory lies in its address of the capacity we have "for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 1998a: 317). The most significant aspect of Goleman's model comes out in the linkage it creates between EI and

performance – the direct applicability of the model to the field of work and organizational effectiveness and in predicting excellence.

Emotionally intelligent individuals are “optimistic”, a trait that enables them to focus on the resolution, rather than the reasoning (who is at fault). The work in any given organization imposes difficulties that may result in feelings of frustration. Emotionally intelligent individuals would know not to hold the organization responsible for every feeling of frustration (Abraham, 1999), as they are adept at placing themselves in positive affective states, and are able to experience negative affective states that have insignificant destructive consequences (Salovey and Mayer, 1989-1990). This is especially true for senior managers who have to reconcile the feelings of frustration of conflicting interest groups within and outside the organization. This can be done effectively only when they are able to place themselves in a positive state of dysfunctional emotions and use them in adaptive ways to alleviate feelings of frustration. Furthermore, on the fundamental level, people are motivated not only by the rational exchange approach (Vroom, 1964), but also by the extent to which its contents provide them with such experiences as joy, excitement, surprise and frustration (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). Thus, emotional intelligence is expected to augment a higher level of affective commitment to the organization, and diminish the level of continuance commitment.

On the other hand, gender differences in emotional regulation, although small on average, have been reported. Compared to men, women use more emotion regulation strategies (Gornefski, 2004; Kafetsios, 2010), express their emotions more often (Kring, 1994) and experience their emotions more intensely (Gross, 1998; Williams 2003)

According to the previous studies which concerned gender differences in emotional intelligence, findings are very different. Some of them, disclosed that there is no significant differences in emotional intelligence amongst women and men (Aquino, 2003; Bar-On, 1997; Bar-On, Brown, Kirkacaldy&Thome, 2000; Brackett, Rivers et al., 2006; Brown &Schutte, 2006;Brackett & Mayer, 2003; Dawda& Hart, 2000; Devi &Rayulu, 2005; Depape et al., 2006; Lumley et al., 2005; Jinfu&Xicoyan, 2004; Palomera, 2005; Schutte et al., 1998; Tiwari&Srivastava, 2004), while some scholars claimed that women are more skillful in conducting their both own as well as other people’s emotions (King, 1999; Sutarso, 1999; Wing & Love, 2001; Singh, 2002).

Literature review on emotional intelligence gives a clear idea of the significant differences between men and women in aspects related to the emotional world. In particular, the emotional

dimension of human beings has traditionally been linked to a greater extent with the female gender, which experiences positive and negative emotions more intensely than the male gender (Grossman & Wood, 1993). These data, in fact, have fed the stereotype, still widely held, that the female gender is more emotional (Grewal&Salovey, 2005).

The biological and the social factors explain the “feminist vision of emotions” (Nolen-Hoeksema& Jackson, 2001). The biological explanation proposes that women's biochemistry is better prepared to consider one's own emotions and those of others as an important element in survival. In support of this idea, certain areas of the brain dedicated to emotional processing can be larger in women than in men (Baron-Cohen, 2002; 2003; Gur, Gunning-Dixon, Bilker, &Gur, 2002), and cerebral processing of emotions differs between men and women (Craig et al., 2009; Jausovec&Jausovec, 2005).

The explanation centered on social aspects indicates that whereas women receive an education biased towards the emotional, men are taught to minimize certain emotions related to sadness, guilt, vulnerability and fear (Brody & Hall, 1999; Hall, 1978; Sánchez, Fernández-Berrocal, Montañés, &Latorre, 2008). In addition,women spend more time socially in contact with the emotional world (Candela, Barberá, Ramos, &Sarrió, 2001) and are more preoccupied with maintaining the positive tone of their and others' emotions in order to prevent the deterioration of interpersonal relations and to construct satisfying social networks (Nolen-Hoeksema& Jackson, 2001)

Some studies have reported gender differences fundamentally in experiential aspects of EI such as perception and emotional facilitation (e.g., Castro-Schilo&Kee, 2010; Farrelly& Austin, 2007, Study 1; Kafetsios, 2004; Livingstone & Day, 2005), others have found gender differences in strategic aspects of EI such as understanding and emotional managing (Farrelly& Austin, 2007, Study 2; Goldenberg, Matheson, &Mantler, 2006). A third set of studies has found mixed results in which women are superior in diverse aspects of EI, namely, perception, facilitation, understanding and total score (McIntyre, 2010). A fourth group of studies has found women to be superior on all dimensions of the MSCEIT (Day & Carroll, 2004; Extremera&Fernández-Berrocal, 2009; Extremera et al., 2006; Lumley, Gustavson, Partridge, &Labouvie-Vief, 2005; Palmer et al., 2005).

In addition to this disagreement about the dimensions of EI on which women perform better, the magnitude of women's superiority ranges from one study to another. The size of gender differences in EI has been reported to be small (e.g., Day & Carroll, 2004; Livingstone & Day, 2005; Lumley et al., 2005) or medium (e.g., Farrelly & Austin, 2007; Palmer et al., 2005). A meta-analysis of EI that included gender differences concluded that women obtained higher scores than men on all EI dimensions with an effect size ranging from .29 to .49 (Joseph & Newman, 2010).

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior of the employees working in the Indian banking sector
2. To investigate the difference across gender of the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior in the Indian banking sector

Hypothesis:

1. To examine the relation and impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior of the employees' working in the banking sector
2. To examine if gender differences in emotional intelligence will affect their workplace behavior
3. To examine if gender will mediate the relation between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior

Research Methodology

Research Design

The nature of the study calls for an exploratory & descriptive research. Exploratory research tends to analyze the research with varying levels of depth by tackling current problems on which no previous research has been done (Brown, 2006: 43). On the other hand, the main essence of descriptive research is to portray a definite representation of persons, situations or groups. (Polit & Hungler 2004:716). Thus, to gauge the relation between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior and a comparison of the same between the genders, the above two research designs were appropriate for this study.

Sample

The objective of the study aims at employees working in Banks in India. Four banks were randomly selected for data collection i.e. 2 private (ICICI, Axis) and 2 public (PNB, Canara) in Mumbai.

Out of the sample of 200 questionnaires distributed, 170 filled in questionnaires were received; out of which 150 were complete, remaining 20 were abandoned on account of incomplete information. Hence, with the explicit support of bank authorities, data was collected conveniently from employees working in the selected banks.

Instrumentation

Survey methods were largely used for efficient and sound data collection. Survey method is considered to be the most extensively used technique for data collection specifically in behavioral sciences (Angus & Katona, 1953:15). To extract the most relevant information and help in better analysis of data, survey method was used.

For effective use of the survey method, a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was designed to gauge the comparison of impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior between the genders with the help of Personal data sheet.

The instrument was divided into Personal data sheet and the other two major parts- personal competence and social competence, which were further scaled down into various competencies. According to Goleman's model, Emotional intelligence is divided into personal and social competence. The ability to manage oneself is called personal competence, whereas social competence determines how one handles one's relationships.

Personal data sheet of the sample was obtained by collecting demographic information namely age, sex, occupation, monthly income, family system (nuclear/joint), number of years served in an organization and educational qualification.

For this purpose, a Five Point Likert scale was created to gauge the feedback. The bracket of the scale ranged from almost never to almost always. Likert type or frequency scales use fixed choice response formats and are designed to measure attitudes or opinions. (Bowling, 1997; Burns & Grove 1997).

Rationale of Part A: Personal Skills

The respondents were asked to rate themselves on their self- awareness, self- confidence, emotional self- control, responsibility, adaptability, commitment and working conditions.

Rationale of Part B: Social Skills

The respondents were asked to rate themselves on their empathy, service orientation, tolerance, communication, teamwork and coordination, development of others, conflict management and leadership.

Analysis and Interpretation

The hypotheses were tested through the use of the following:

1. Pearson Chi-square
2. Bivariate analysis (Correlation)
3. Regression analysis
4. T-test

1. Pearson Chi-square analysis

The association between all the variables of emotional intelligence with all the variables of workplace behavior was computed using the Pearson chi-square method. A sample of 150 employees was taken into consideration.

**Table 1: Chi-Square test of Emotional Intelligence and Workplace behavior
Case Processing Summary**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
EQ * WB	150	100.0%	0	0.0%	150	100.0%

	N	Percent	Assymp Sig. (2 sided)
EQ*WB	150	100%	.000
EQ*WB(Males)	75	100%	.000

EQ*WB(Females)	75	100%	.000
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2. Correlation Analysis

The relationship between all the variables was determined using Pearson correlation. The variables that assessed were emotional intelligence and workplace behavior. A total sample of 100 employees out of which 75 males and 75 females from the banking sector were taken into consideration.

Table 2: Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients among Emotional intelligence and Workplace behavior

	N	Sig.	EQ	WB	
EQ	150	.000	1	.626	
WB		.000	.626	1	
EQ	75	.000	1	.349	Males
WB		.000	.349	1	
EQ	75	.000	1	.490	Females
WB		.000	.490	1	

Emotional Intelligence was positively correlated with workplace behavior ($r=.626, p<.01$). Further, correlation was computed for both males and females. There was a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior across gender (Males $r=.349, p<.01$) (Females $r=.490, p<.01$)

3. Regression Analysis

Linear regression of the impact of independent variable that is emotional intelligence on the dependent variable which is workplace behavior of the employees was found to be statistically significant. Emotional intelligence was found to have a significant impact on the workplace behavior of the employees which explained that 76.4% of the variation in the behavior of the employee by a change in emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	Workplace behavior		Significance level	
	.764 (N=150)		.000	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	.677 (N=75)	.813 (N=75)	.000	.000

Table 3: Summary of the Regression analysis of Emotional intelligence in Relation to workplace behavior

Dependent variable: WB

Further, regression was analyzed separately across gender. Linear regression of the impact of Emotional intelligence on workplace behavior was found to be significant for both male and females. Findings revealed that one percent change in emotional intelligence leads to 81 percent change in workplace behavior in females whereas on the other hand one percent change in emotional intelligence leads to 67 percent change in the workplace behavior in males.

This implies that emotional intelligence has a significant impact on workplace behavior of the employees which varies across gender.

4. T-test analysis

The t-test were computed to determine the significance of difference between genders on the impact of Emotional Intelligence on workplace behavior

Table 4: Means, Standard deviation, standard error means and t-value showing differences in scores between gender

Gender	N	M	SD	SEM	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	75	419.16	52.63	5.88		
Female	75	380.88	54.45	6.09	4.522	.001

**p<.01

The result shows that males scored high than females in Emotional intelligence. High scores on this scale indicates the higher level of Emotional Intelligence, so the above findings clearly suggests that males are emotionally intelligent than females. A significant difference ($p < .01$), among males and females was found. The present study was designed to investigate the emotional intelligence male and female. The sample consisted of one hundred and fifty ($N = 150$) employees. The findings suggest that a significant difference exists across the gender in emotional intelligence and its impact on workplace behavior.

Research Findings

This research study is guided by the analytical framework which explores the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior of the employees working in the Indian banking sector, gender being a mediating variable. The statistical analysis supports the relevancy of the research problem and regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis in order to assess the relation as well as the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior of the employees in the banks chosen for the study. The findings in table no 1 respectively shows significant positive association between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior of the employees and further segregating it across gender. This implies that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior. Correlation analysis was depicted for all the variables of emotional intelligence with all the variables of workplace behavior which exhibited that all the variables had a positive relation with each other with 100 percent significance level. Supporting the chi-square which states a positive association between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior; the study displayed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior as shown in table no. 2 ($r = .626$, $p < .01$). Hence, it can be rightly said that high emotional intelligence results in positive work attitudes which further contributes to higher engagement and organizational commitment. As the study is directed towards the Indian banking sector which was further narrowed down to comparing the impact of emotional intelligence and workplace behavior across gender. The banking sector is considered to be a dominant sector in the economy as it plays a very crucial role in the overall economic development of the country. Different people from different backgrounds come on a common platform and work together for a common goal. Hence, they have different perceptions

and styles of working. Similar is the case in terms of gender. The popular belief is that, women are more emotionally intelligent than men. They are, however, emotionally intelligent in different ways. An analysis of emotional Intelligence was found in thousands of men and women which showed that women, on average, are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, and are more adapt interpersonally. Men, on the other hand, are more self-confident, optimistic, and adaptable. It was found that men are also able to handle stress better than women. In general, however, far more similarities exist than differences. Some men are empathetic as the most interpersonally sensible women are, while some women are just as able to withstand stress as the most emotionally resilient men. After taking into account overall ratings for men and women, the strengths and weaknesses average out, so it is a competition between both sexes. Findings of studies reported by King (1999), Sutarsso (1999), Wing and Love (2001) and Singh (2002) revealed that females have higher emotional intelligence than that of males. But this can be contradicted as women portray different behaviors in different situations of the life depending upon the environment. In other words, women have a challenge to maintain a work life balance. Hence, different behaviors are portrayed in different scenarios. Since, the present study demands the workplace behavior, hence, emotional intelligence leadership is essential for the employees especially for the banking sector as business performance of this particular sector largely depends upon the high quality services.

As per the findings, there was a distinct difference of correlation between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior in females ($r=.49$, $p< .01$) and males ($r= .34$, $p< .01$). This implies that the work attitudes of the female employees are more related by emotional intelligence as compared to the males which depicts a weak correlation. Supporting the above results of chi-square analysis and correlation analysis, linear regression was calculated keeping emotional intelligence as independent variable and workplace behavior as dependent variable to find out to what extent emotional intelligence impacts the workplace behavior of the employees.

Further regression analysis was done across gender which depicted that for every one unit increase in emotional intelligence score, there is corresponding increase in workplace behavior of .813 in females as compared to .677 in case of males. Results of regression analysis and correlation explain the association between emotional intelligence level of employees and its impact on workplace behavior encouraging us to accept the first and second hypothesis ***“There is a difference of Emotional Intelligence states & its impact on Workplace behavior among***

employees and across gender.” Since the hypothesis is validated hence it is concluded that there is a significant difference of the impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior in males and females. Positive correlation among emotional intelligence competencies and workplace behavior attributes has also been observed. Anova output shows that all coefficients are positive, so it could be interpreted that the relationship is direct or positive between these two variables. Lastly, t-test output shows that males scored high than females on Emotional Intelligence. High scores on this scale indicate the higher level of Emotional Intelligence, so the above findings clearly suggest that males are emotionally intelligent than females. A significant difference ($p < .01$), among males and females on EQ is found. **Hence, this encourages us to accept third hypothesis “gender will mediate the relation between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior.**

Conclusion and implication

To conclude the above observations and obtained results, it can be affirmed that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and workplace behavior which varies across gender. In other words, due to certain factors for example the working environment, adaptability, stress, family pressure, communication etc. there is a difference of impact of emotional intelligence on workplace behavior. Future research can take up how to nurture the emotional intelligence of employees in the banking industry, given the high pressures involved in their jobs. Also the future research can take into account how national culture can affect the emotional intelligence and workplace behavior of the employees depending upon the type of industry as different organizations have different contextual factors as well as expectations.

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