

Understanding Emotional Intelligence - A Study on Romanian Manages and Their Grasp of what EI is

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Abstract

Validating the new paradigm, that there are other types of intelligence besides cognitive intelligence, it took some time. Like any paradigm, emotional intelligence has gone through several phases, of organizing and developing the paradigm, criticizing the paradigm, reorganizing and consolidating the paradigm. Emotional intelligence has been accepted in the social sciences and enriched, mainly due to the fact that studies have shown that many outcomes in organization performance.

To follow the next step, we have to see to what scale at understanding and knowledge to emotional intelligence is conscious, assumed and used. This is the idea from where this study came to understand whether people have the ability to distinguish between types of intelligence, not just to measure the emotional intelligence of employees, in this particular case of managers.

This paper is about identify the ability to distinguish and understand the concept of emotional intelligence of managers from public and private organization, and if the managers hold a good knowledge and understanding of emotional intelligence construct.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, understanding emotional intelligence, cognitive intelligence, managers, employees, organization, public sector, private sector*

JEL classification: D91, J29, J59, O15

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1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence is a modern term retrieved mainly from organizational environments, which apparently brings a sparkle, that know-how, when it is used regarding the capability and ability of employees. However this contemporary concept, frequently used in all kinds of organizations, has a fuzzy shadow on the empirical and theoretical definition of the concept, its measurement and applicability.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the extent of which managers from public and private organizations have the ability to distinguish and understand the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) by comparing it to the characteristics of cognitive intelligence (IQ). The usefulness of this research has corresponded in the long-term policies of organizational management and sustainability in the use of

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emotional intelligence in a proper way, to achieve results and enrich employees' engagement with work and work performance.

Cote and Miners (2006), were settle that a common misunderstanding comes from the overlap of the three types of intelligence and the understanding of these mechanical constructs, starting from the most well-known type of intelligence, specifically cognitive intelligence.

Boyatzis (2008), distinguishes between cognitive intelligence, social intelligence and emotional intelligence, starting from considering competence as an ability or capability. Then by using a competency construct, he defines the three forms of intelligence in correlation with performance as follows (Boyatzis & Ratti, 2009):

- “emotional intelligence competency is an ability to recognize, understand, and use emotional information about oneself that leads to or causes effective or superior performance”;
- “social intelligence competency is the ability to recognize, understand and use emotional information about others that leads to or causes effective or superior performance”;
- “cognitive intelligence competency is an ability to think or analyze information and situations that leads to or causes effective or superior performance”.

2. Literature review: Emotional intelligence

Literature reveals a wide range of types of intelligence studied over time. Among the first mentions of the current meaning, the concept of emotional intelligence is linked with social intelligence, a notion described by Edward Thorndike, in the manuscript "Intelligence and its uses", 1920, who illustrated it as being “the ability to understand and manage individuals so as to act wisely in human relation” (Lievens & Chan, 2010).

Howard Gardner (1975) studied intelligence beyond cognitive aspects and introduced the term "multiple intelligence", thus introducing different types of intelligence such as: linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, musical intelligence, body-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, existential intelligence, spiritual intelligence and moral intelligence. Claiming that the mentioned non-cognitive concepts are equally important and complement rational intelligence, Gardner's studies contributed to the subsequent conceptualization of the concept of emotional intelligence, particularly with a description of interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey 1999; Goleman 2001b). This was followed by the work of Wayne Payne (1985), who analyzed self-integration in relation with pain, desire and fear, a research that led to the apparition of the concept “emotional intelligence” and the development of this new paradigm (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In an article published by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990, they claimed that emotional intelligence is a branch of social intelligence that involves the human ability to visualize and understand personal and surrounding emotions to guide actions and thinking. According to their work, the processing and usage of emotional information is the first step in understanding and solving problems, even if their nature is intellectual. After this research, Mayer and Salovey, along with other collaborators, advanced theories that contributed to the expansion of knowledge and operationalization of the concept of emotional intelligence, as well as measurement techniques (Mayer & Salovey 1997; Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000).

At the same period, Daniel Goleman's work led to the recognition of the concept, his book "Emotional intelligence", published in 1995, being the most notable and important publication, that also became a bestseller. Goleman gave the concept of emotional intelligence an unparalleled interest, developing competency-based models, and he was the first to make an analogy between this subject and work performance in an organization (Goleman, 2001a; Goleman, 2001b).

The definition of emotional intelligence has taken many forms, but regarding both similarities and differences, we can say that all definitions converge and identify with one established statement: "the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion and regulate emotion in self and others" (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000, 396). Even if there are lots of common elements between Salovey, Mayer and Goleman regarding the definition of emotional intelligence, there is a difference concerning the paradigm, Goleman conceptualizing EI as an individual skill that you acquire over time, while Salovey and Mayer define it as an individual's ability or as a hybrid of personal factors (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000).

Going back to Gardner, the researcher emphasized that humans have certain multiple and different talents, using the term "multiple" to highlight the different categories of skills that people use, which without realizing, they can be familiar to some and unknown to others (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999).

Additionally, emotional intelligence was linked to employees performance (Goleman, 2001a; Bar-On et. al., 2006; Cote & Miners 2006), job satisfaction (Sy, Tram & O'hara, 2006), work attitudes (Lopes et. al. 2006), leadership effectiveness (Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). The research that analyzed the connection between job performance and emotional intelligence acknowledged the importance of a strong link between the two constructs (Cote & Miners 2006; Sabie et al., 2020). In the process of achieving performance in a workplace, an important element is the ability to communicate and maintain relationships within the organization, representing skills specific to emotional intelligence.

3. Emotional intelligence and its influence in organization

In order to perform at work, individuals increase the productivity of their tasks by inducing certain moods, as well as by ignoring, at the same time, the

negative feelings that could distract them from their daily tasks. Most of the time, relationships with others can affect them emotionally, causing them to become stressed and anxious about their professional failures, as well as the lack of social recognition from office colleagues or even their superior.

The significance and importance of the EI construct in an organizational environment is primarily due to scientific evidence that validates the impact of emotional competence in increased productivity (see Goleman, 2001a; Bar-On et al., 2006). Associated to this construct, there are many other concepts that have traditionally characterized productivity and work environment, such as motivation, efficiency, management, effectiveness, performance, evaluation, and so on. As emotional intelligence was developed, the operationalization of the construct included (see Table 1) the following competences: self-awareness; self-regulation; self-motivation; social awareness and relationship management.

Table 1. Emotional and Social Competency Inventory

Self-awareness	Emotional awareness Accurate self-assessment Self-confidence
Self-regulation/Self-management	Emotional self-control Achievement orientation Positive outlook Adaptability
Self-motivation	Achievement Commitment Initiative Optimism
Social awareness	Empathy Organizational awareness
Relationship management	Influence Coach and mentor Conflict management Inspirational leadership Teamwork

Source: Adapted by author from: Bar-On, 1997; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000; Goleman 2001a; Boyatzis & Ratti 2009.

Cherniss et al. (1998) brings up the motivational factors in an organizational environment and management strategies, as learning about emotions and emotional intelligence, which are two different things and build a person's identity, many people may be resistant to change when told to comply. Maintaining skills can be achieved through social support and support from the work environment, policy and procedures of the organization that support the development of emotional skills.

Also, in order to achieve the desired results of organizations, it is more than necessary a process of change among employees by preparing them for the transition. Senior management needs to assess established competences as the most

critical to the organization and the effectiveness of people, while working to convince the workforce that improving their own emotional competence will lead to productive consequences and sustainability (see Webb, 2009; Pîrvu, 2000), for both parties. There must be an art of trust between managers and executors, so that most decisions made within the organization are made through compromise while also maintaining transparency.

Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) emphasized the importance of emotion management as a tool for determining a successful life. Life performance and success are related to the role of civil servants in state institutions and authorities. They must be prepared to manage and make decisions regardless of the context in which they find themselves in.

Emotion management should be permanently included in the assessment and development of employees' emotional skills. For example, just by recognizing emotions, it can lead to interpersonal interaction and decision-making, as well as performance at work, and evaluation (Cherniss et al., 1998).

4. Emotional intelligence measurement

To measure emotional intelligence, the research methodology started from the operationalization of the EI construct (see Table 1), and framework of several measuring instruments which have been validated: Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002), the Emotional Quotation Inventory (EQ-i) by (Bar-On, 1997), Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) (Goleman, 1995) and Emotion Assessment Scale (Schutte et al, 2009).

The measurement of emotional intelligence experienced self-report inventory, interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, stress management, adjustment and mood of individuals, thus assessing how effectively respondents can identify, understand, regulate and exploit emotions on themselves and others when used.

Salovey's and Mayer's (1990) model of early emotional intelligence has three branches, thus proposing an evaluation of the dimensions and expression of the aspect of exploitation of emotions, in order to develop the individual, which appears in isolated problem-solving situations, respectively the interpersonal aspect of the same component of emotional intelligence that is consistent within the social skills of individuals.

For level understanding of the emotional intelligence concept, there were adjusted 11 clustered items which defined the characteristics of EI and characteristics of cognitive intelligence. The aim was to see if the respondents can distinguish between the two sets of attributes. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree regarding the association between the following attributes with emotional intelligence: understanding words, control of negative feelings, identification of numerical categories, understanding feelings, three-dimensional interpretation, empathy, human relations management, stress management, visual processing, memorizing and analytical competences.

Table 2. Cluster items to measures level of understanding of emotional intelligence

Which from the following characteristic do you think are associated with emotional intelligence? (Agree or Disagree answer)	Type of intelligence
Understanding words	IQ
Control of negative feelings	EI
Identification of numerical categories	IQ
Understanding feelings	EI
Three-dimensional interpretation	IQ
Empathy	EI
Human relations management	EI
Stress management	EI
Visual processing	IQ
Memorizing	IQ
Analytical competences	IQ

Source: Adapted by author from: Boyatzis & Ratti 2009

5. Research design, sample profiles and hypothesis

Data analysis and processing for this article was collected from the following research: “Assessing the Impact of Emotional Intelligence on the Performance of Employees in the Public and Private Sectors”. The research explored several dimensions in order to analyze the impact of emotional intelligence in organizations, as follows: EI measurement, perceived performance, level of understanding of the EI concept, organizational culture, life satisfaction, type of organization and employees experience, socio-demographic variables. The approach of the research was quantitative and the research team conducted an online survey, applied between April and June 2020, to collect the data. The questionnaire was developed to be applied face to face and online, however, the application period overlapped with the Covid-19 pandemic and the data was in fact collected online only.

For the collection of empirical data, a convenience sampling was used, more precisely a sampling based on a predefined purpose, used to study a certain subcategory within a population, because the members of this category are easily identifiable. This type of sampling was used because it was much more suitable for studying a subcategory consisting of managers working in the public and private field in Romania, by correlating and interpreting significant data to achieve the purpose of the research paper.

The volume of the sample was 270 managers, structured in 101 managers from the public sector and 169 managers from the private sector, where we used three categories to differentiate the level of responsibility of managers, managers from top management level (68 respondents), managers from middle management (100 respondents) and managers from the management team with at least 5 coworkers in the team (102 respondents).

Fifty-two percent are female manager and forty-eight percent are male manager, this validating a balance sample, the age average of respondents is 37

years, and they have in average 7.69 years of experience in management position (see Table 3). We can observed that managers has a high level of education, comparing with a general sample.

Table 3. Sample profiles on demographic variables (N=270)

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Feminine	128	52,2%
Masculine	117	47,8%
Not reported	25	
Age of the respondent		
Minimum 21 years – Maximum 64 years	<i>Mean = 36.72</i>	
Educational level		
High school and professional	51	18,9%
Bachelor degree	94	34,9%
Master degree	99	36,7%
PhD and post-university	15	5,6%
Not reported	11	
Organization type		
Public	101	37,4%
Private	169	62,6%
Size of organization		
Between 1-49 employees	103	42,8%
Between 50-250 employees	61	23,1%
More than 250 employees	90	34,1%
Not reported	16	
Management level		
Top management	68	25,2%
Middle management	100	37%
Team management (at least 5 coworkers)	102	37,8%
Years of experience in position		
Minimum 1 years – Maximum 26 years	<i>Mean = 7.69</i>	
Total	270	100%

Source: Data analysis from the IEIPA research, processed by author

To analyze how the concept of EI is understood among managers in both private and public organizations, we have established three hypotheses through which we can understand better depending on what variables are varied within their responses. The variation of answers distinguished between emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence can be determined by the level of emotion intelligence, education, experience, or gender.

H1. The more emotionally intelligent the managers are, the better they will understand what emotional intelligence is.

H2. Managers with higher education will be better able to tell apart normal IQ from Emotional Intelligence.

H3. Respondents with higher experience in positions of management are more likely to have a better understanding of the concept of Emotional Intelligence.

6. Data analysis and results

Data analysis was carried out by using SPSS Statistics 22.0 package, through which we processed descriptive frequency and correlation analysis. To test the three hypotheses we processed variables that measured the understanding of EI in a computed index, called understanding emotional intelligence (UEI) and for measured the competences and level of emotional intelligence of managers we compute an EI index. As a result of processing the variables we have the UEI index with 11 items and the EI index with 33 items.

The understanding emotional intelligence coefficient was recoded to have either a score of 0 code, which means that the managers (respondent) indicated an incorrect answer, or a score of 1, for correct answers. Recoding the variables allowed us to identify the understanding level of managers to the construct of emotional intelligence and their ability to distinguish between the characteristics of cognitive intelligence and emotional intelligence.

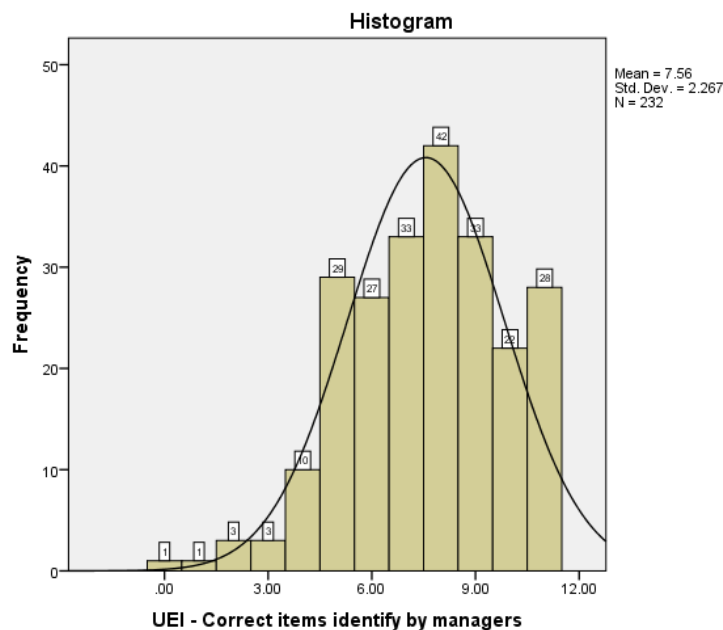


Figure 1. Distribution of correct answers at understanding emotional intelligence

Source: Data analysis from the IEIPA research, processed by author

We see in figure 1 that on average managers succeed to identify 8 attributes out of 11, and the standard deviation is 2.26. Most of the managers chose

correctly, 6, 7 or 8 items out of a total of 11. We do not have data with which to compare these results, because there is no previous research to have analyzed the level of understanding of the emotional intelligence construct. Analyzing the frequency of responses for each of the 11 items, data indicated a different variation, we noticed that the lowest averages were highlighted for the items: understanding words, visual processing, memorizing.

In order to test the hypothesis, we will further analyze the correlation coefficients between the main variables and we will follow if there are statistically significant associations so as to support or invalidate the assumptions from which we started.

Fist hypothesis “The more emotionally intelligent the managers are, the better they will understand what emotional intelligence is” it is invalidated by the weak and statistically insignificant correlation coefficient, being null due to the probability of error. This show as that managers' ability to differentiate between the attributes of cognitive intelligence and emotional intelligence is not determined by the emotional competence that they possess. This result demonstrates the premises of Goleman (1995), Salovey and Mayer (1990), that the stock of emotional intelligence is a mixture of behaviors and competence of which the individual is not necessary aware, and knowing about emotional intelligence is not the same as having it, and vice versa.

The second hypothesis “Managers with higher education will be better able to tell apart normal IQ from Emotional Intelligence”, is a good fit with significant coefficient at 0.01, and Pearson correlation 0.242. The positive correlations is validating the hypothesis and being statistically significant, demonstrating that is a relation between level of education and manager`s capacity to understand emotional intelligence.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrices testing the hypothesis

	Mean	S.D.	UEI	EI	G	Age	EDU	PO	EXP
Understanding EI (UEI)	7.56	2.26							
Emotional intelligence (EI)	25.03	6.37	.095						
Gender (G) (<i>1 female, 2 male</i>)			-.157*	-.167*					
Age	37.2	10.96	.046	.097	-.135*				
Level of education (EDU)	7.47	1.66	.242**	.094	-.061	.183**			
Position in organization (PO) (<i>from team-manager to top manager</i>)	2.13	0.78	.133*	.114	-.060	.172**	.231**		
Years of experience in management position (EXP)	7.69	6.78	-.030	.111	-.045	.661**	.068	.236**	
Income	4.12	1.27	.199**	.120	.103	.311**	.493**	.224**	.183**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). $p < .01$

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). $p < .05$

Source: Data analysis from the IEIPA research, processed by author

Taking in consideration the volume of sample ($r = .242$, $p < .000$) for the positive correlation between education level and understand emotional intelligence,

it suggest that managers are more likely to correctly attribute the characteristics of emotional intelligence when they have several years of study. Moreover, the correlation matrix (Table 4), point out that in no significant correlations between level of education and construct of emotional intelligence. That indicators are consistent with the evidence of Boyatzis, Ratti (2009) and Cote, Miners (2006), who noted that there is no statistical correlation between education level, IQ and emotional intelligence.

Level of education in sample of managers is a predictor for position in organization, level of management ($r = .231, p < .000$) and managers income ($r = .493, p < .000$). In other word managers with master degree and PhD occupy positions at the top management level and have a higher income.

The last hypothesis "Respondents with higher experience in positions of management are more likely to have a better understanding of the concept of Emotional Intelligence", just like the first one it is also insignificant statistic and null. Invalidating this hypothesis shows us that there is no statistical link between a manager's experience and his ability to understand the construct of emotional intelligence.

7. Conclusion

The main results of the statistical analysis emphasize that the stock of emotional intelligence is a mixture of behaviors and competence of which the individual is not necessary aware, and understanding emotional intelligence is not the same as having it, fist hypothesis being invalidated. Level of education is a good predictor to discriminate between level and capacity to understand emotional intelligence of managers. And even if the level of education is positively associated with the leadership position, the level of understanding of the concept of emotional intelligence is not determined by the position occupied by managers.

Nowadays, although organizations focus their area of interest on developing the emotional intelligence of their employees, the employees are evaluated at work not only by their professional training and expertise, but also by how they control and behave, strongly emphasizing self-control (Boyatzis & Ratti, 2009), perseverance and the ability to lead their emotions and feelings (Burcea & Sabie, 2020) and get along with others.

Gibbs (1995) pointed out, innovatively, that the IQ is used in the recruitment process hiring, but that the emotional intelligence is used to promote at workplace, that way it is essential that managers to have the capacity to distinction between meaning of cognitive intelligence and emotional intelligence.

Professional career success involves the use of emotional intelligence, so that once individuals have learned to control their frustration, emotions, and maintain good relationships with other co-workers, they can get where they set out by eliminating their own emotional limits. Furthermore, emotional intelligence can be trained and developed over time, through various activities aimed at stimulating and controlling emotions, performing various tasks that can put them in the

situation of facing their own impulses, fears or negative thoughts. This is another aspect that supports how important it is that managers hold a good knowledge and understanding of emotional intelligence construct.

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