

Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Style: A Comparative-Gender Study

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Abstract

*This study involved Russian managers, extending a US investigation into the possible relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and leadership style; with special attention to that of the 'transformational' leadership style. As such, the findings from the US study are compared with the researcher's Russian investigation. The research further addressed any possible differences in overall EI between genders, as well as differences in preferred leadership style. The results of this investigation found no significant relationship **between** EI and the leadership style of the Russian manager sample (n=152), nor did it find any significant variances in the overall EI scores, or preferred leadership styles of the managers, according to gender. However, supporting seminal literature, the Russian manager-sample were assessed as clearly preferring a 'participative' style of leadership.*

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence (EI; EQ); leadership style; emotional competencies; transformational leadership; cross-cultural.*

JEL classification: M16; M19; M10.

1. General Framework

The studies carried out at Ohio State and the University of Michigan into leadership styles, (Katz, Maccoby & Morse, 1950; Katz, et al., 1951 ; Katz & Kahn, 1952; Fleishman, 1953; Halpin & Winter, 1957) during the 1950s, changed the direction of leadership research - moving away from one touting the identification of traits as being the most logical approach to understanding and replicating effective leadership - which had dominated thought on leadership since the ancient Greek philosophers.

Stogdill (1974) reviewed 163 trait studies conducted from 1949 to 1970, compiling a list of the most likely traits relevant to leader success – intellect amongst them. Trait theory received strong criticism from not only the Behavioral school of leadership, but also “situationalists” and proponents of more complex ‘contingency’ models (Fiedler, 1964; 1967), for failing to include variables such as the context of the situation, the source of the leader’s authority, the nature of the leader- member relationship, and the level of structure facilitating the task at hand.

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The 'New School' of leadership promoted more integrated leadership theories, of which Bass' 'full range' model of transformational leadership emerged as one of the most prominent approaches within organizational leadership studies. Burns (1978) first introduced the basis for Bass' model, employing the term 'transforming', which Bass later adapted to 'transformational', a concept he adapted to the organizational context.

The essence of Bass' theory on transformational leadership is that the transformational leader 'elevates the desires of followers for achievement and self-development, whilst also promoting the development of groups and organizations' (Bass and Avolio, 1990). The transformational leader inspires and fosters followers to look beyond their own self-interest for the sake of the group or organization, by way of vision and understanding of key issues defining the business context. The process 'transforms' followers from being self-centric to being group-centric simultaneously addressing their personal 'existence' needs to 'concern for achievement, growth and development'. Nearly two decades later, Bass (1990) updated Stogdill's 'field book' on leadership, and added support that IQ was related to leadership success.

Studies into the role of emotions were conducted well before the development of IQ testing (i.e., Darwin in 1872). In 1930, Thorndike proposed that overall intelligence was comprised of emotional and social intelligences – in addition to the traditional cognitive concept. More recently, opponents to the establishment of IQ as the deciding factor in life have highlighted its failure to withstand the scrutiny of empirical research (McClelland, 1973; Gardner, 1983; Sternberg, 1985; Goleman, 1995). Such antagonists to the status quo; proponents of cognition being the sole defining factor for predicting personal and professional success, countered with the critical nature of emotions in the formula of success. Additional research identified, defined, and conceptualized the existence of multiple intelligences (Guilford, 1967); with 'academic intelligence' (IQ; mathematical and verbal alacrity) comprising only two of a human being's various intelligences (Gardner, 1983). Gardner (1983) identified multiple intelligences; initially eight.

For decades the Skinnerian perception that only that which can be observed can be measured scientifically (thus excluding emotions) dominated and impeded the acceptance of the role of emotions in determining one's success in life and work (Goleman, 1995). That said, nonconformists to the zeitgeist attempted to identify the existence of non-cognitive intelligence. 'Social intelligence' represented an early attempt in examining interpersonal competency, but like other early conceptualizations of 'social' and 'emotional' intelligence failed due to either vague and/or overly broad definitions (Mayer, 2001).

Having reviewed a plethora of literature assembled from research into intelligence and emotions, aesthetics, artificial intelligence, the brain, and clinical psychology (Mayer, 2001), Salovey & Mayer presented their concept of Emotional Intelligence to the public (1990), defining it as 'a type of emotional information processing that includes accurate appraisal of emotions in oneself and others,

appropriate expression of emotion, and adaptive regulation of emotion in such a way to enhance living' (Mayer, DiPaolo, & Salovey, 1990).

Since 1990 and the initial definition offered by Mayer and associates, Emotional Intelligence has developed into three related - but distinct - approaches: the ability-based model (trait-based; Mayer and associates, 1990), Goleman's popular personality-based model, defined in competency terms (personal competency-based; 1995; 1998); which significantly reinterpreted and redefined the work of others (e.g., Gardner, Sternberg, Salovey & Mayer), and a more practical competency-framed "mixed" (personal factors – based model; (Bar-On; 1988; 1997; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2001; 2003).

This research reports findings from the comparative-gender study conducted by the researcher employing the 'mixed' personal factors – based model of Emotional Intelligence (EI; aka Emotional Quotient, EQ). The study extends an investigation conducted in the United States (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003), examining the predictive relationship between EI and leadership style, in addition to comparing the EI scores and preferred leadership styles of the Russian male and female manager sample.

Goleman (1998) shifted the focus of EQ from personal success to organizational success with his second publication. Goleman's popular writings on the subject of Emotional Intelligence initiated a myriad of research queries, perpetuating further interest into EQ and organizational leadership (e.g., Cacioppe, 1997; Chaudry, 2001; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2001: 2002: 2003: 2004), with much of the leadership literature in the 'transformational' school strongly insinuating the need for leaders to possess high levels of Emotional Intelligence (Higgs and Rowland, 2001) e.g., 'individualized consideration' one of the four behaviors displayed in Bass' 'transformational' leadership style. Individualized consideration is a 'socio-emotional' oriented leadership style characterized as being attentive to followers' personal and environmental needs acting as a coach, supporter of morale, active listener, source of empowerment, and mentor – developing individuals to reach their personal/professional potentials (Bass, 1999). Bass' 'transformational' model of leadership has embedded itself into the literature as one of the most studied approaches to effective organizational leadership. Claims have been made that the transformational leadership style is the most effective style within any dramatically changing environment – without regard to culture or nation (Bass, 1999).

The internationalization of markets and companies (i.e., globalization) has highlighted the growing need for greater understanding of the similarities and differences between foreign cultures, managers, and their business environments. Hofstede's IBM study laid the groundwork for further inquiry into cross-cultural (and comparative) studies of leadership within the context of the influence of societal cultures. Recognizing the need for current data and more rigorous research methodologies (Javidan, et al., 2006), the GLOBE project set out to create a universal theory based on seminal comparative-cultural scholarship (House et al., 2001).

Regrettably, well-established experts have accused them of falling afoul of their own stated misgivings concerning the lack of rigor within the research methods employed by earlier cross-cultural research (Gratchev, et al., 2001; Graen, 2006). Furthermore, neither Hofstede nor the GLOBE researchers included EQ within their leadership models, making the author's study both exploratory in nature, whilst at the same time, representing the largest study of emotional intelligence and leadership styles of Russian managers - to-date.

The growing pool of research focusing on the role of EI in successful organizational leadership appears to be admirably consistent, and has gained the support of many prominent leadership scholars (Bass, 1999; Goleman, et al., 2001; Yukl, 2002). Unfortunately, in a world embracing globalization and increased cross-cultural interaction, relatively few studies of this kind have been conducted outside of North America and Western Europe. That said, a limited number of cross-cultural studies into EI (utilizing Bar-On's well-established EQ-I self-report test) have been carried out; one involving North Americans, Dutch, and Israeli respondents (Bar-On, 1997) presented persuasive evidence that EQ varies across national cultures, whilst a smaller investigation was conducted in the US, involving managers from medium- and large-sized organizations, concluded that 'a significant predictive relationship existed between the participants' overall Emotional Intelligence and the transformational style of leadership', and that the EI scores of the female participants were significantly higher than those of their male counterparts' (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). The author's inquiry extends the findings of this latter US study, assessing Russian managers working for MNCs within the Russian Federation.

2. Methodology

This study was designed to build on the seminal work in the areas of leadership style and EQ – extending an investigation conducted in the US linking the two (Mandell & Pherwani, 2003). Investigating the research thesis, the researcher analyzed a possible predictive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and the leadership style – with special attention given to the transformational style. The statistical analysis techniques employed for testing the research thesis was a standard linear regression to assess any predictive relationship between the dependent and independent variables (i.e., EQ and leadership style, respectively), followed by an independent *t*-Test.

2.1 Participants

With the assistance of a business directory from the American Chamber of Commerce in Moscow, Russia, the researcher made personal contact with HR executives, detailing the nature of the study and requesting their participation. Positive responses were overwhelming (>90%), resulting in a large sample (n=152) of Russian managers from varying levels (front line, middle, and senior managers), representing 28 multinational organizations.

2.2 Measurement Instrument

The researcher applied the Leadership Dimensions Questionnaire (LDQ) for gathering both the emotional intelligence and leadership style data underpinning the research presented herewith. The LDQ is a norm-based psychometric measurement instrument designed at Henley Management College (Oxford, UK), by Professors Dulewicz & Higgs (2003). The Leadership Dimensions Questionnaire (LDQ) contains 189 questions grouped into 3 competency areas: IQ, EQ (Emotional Intelligence), and MQ (Managerial competence).

The LDQ allows managers to measure their leadership styles based on their responses to the 3 broad constructs. The results provide an assessment of the respondent's dominant leadership style, in accordance with the following three distinctive styles identified by Dulewicz & Higgs (2003; 2004): 'Engaging Leadership' (transformational); 'Involving Leadership' (participative), and; 'Goal Leadership' (transactional).

Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) report an alpha coefficient of .65-.82 (i.e., good – very good levels of reliability; Hair et al., 2003) for the EQ competencies, and an alpha coefficient of .77 for overall EQ; obtained from its seven elements. . The authors claimed to have tested for three types of validity 'face, content, and construct' (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003, p. 25).

Dulewicz and Higgs (2000) demonstrated content validity through the feedback from two pilot tests (n = 222) of managers from various organizational levels, 'in addition, the EQ factors (derived from the EIQ measurement tool; Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000) were identified through an extensive literature review of the existing scholarship on the subject, ensuring that all factors of the concept were covered (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2001).

Construct validity for the LDQ was demonstrated through 'convergent' and 'discriminant' validity testing in relation to the Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ), 16 PF personality questionnaire, Belbin Team Roles derived from the 16PF, and the Meyers Briggs Type Inventory (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2001; 2002). Appropriate correlations and differences were found by the authors, establishing the self-report version of the LDQ's construct validity.'

A study of team leaders (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2002) provided clear evidence of the concurrent/criterion-related validity of the EI section of the LDQ, against measures of current performance. The total EIQ score was highly significantly related to the performance measures. A rigorous concept mapping exercise demonstrated highly significant relationships and strong correlations between the EQ factors of the LDQ and the well-established EQ-I (Bar-On, 1997).

The author of the EQ-i reports internal consistency alpha coefficients for the EQ-I subscales as ranging from .70-.89; very good (Bar-On, 1997). Furthermore, test – retest reliability has also been determined to be very good, with alpha coefficients ranging from .78 - .92; one-month study, and .55-.87;

4-month study (Bar-On, 1997). The self-report version of the LDQ has been employed in several major studies (Dulewicz & Higgs,2001; Young & Dulewicz, 2003; Wren & Dulewicz, 2005; Hawkins, 2007;Van Genderen, 2011).

2.3 Procedures

As mentioned previously, target organizations were identified through a directory donated by the American Chamber of Commerce in Moscow, Russia, of both Russian and foreign multinational organizations operating within the Moscow region of the Russian Federation. The researcher then proceeded to contact each and every enterprise within the directory, via faxed invitation letter and follow-up phone calls. Organizations were only eliminated from the master directory once they had either accepted the offer to participate in the research, or formally declined participation. In the end, a total of 28 organizations (Russian and foreign) comprised the researcher's sample.

The researcher then identified a 'liaison officer' within each of the participating firms (usually an HR professional), who identified qualified managers from within the firm, and facilitated the data collection process. Additional data was collected by the researcher via executive development programs at Thunderbird's Center for Business Skills Development (CBSD), in Moscow. The sample for this investigation comprised Russian managers, identified based on the criteria of being: a). Russian nationals; b). having at least one direct report, and; c). having sufficient facility with the English language so as to enable them to competently complete the questionnaire.

As a safeguard against potential language and technical problems, the researcher conducted a pilot test of Russian managers ($n = 40$), which showed no signs of compromise, thus leading to the full investigation. Online versions of the LDQ were made available to the participating managers, as well as paper-based assessments, offering flexibility and convenience to the executives. The data gathering process required 13 months to complete, resulting in a large sample size ($n=152$) of managers ranging from front-line to senior executives. The data was then screened and cleaned for the data analysis process.

2.4 Statistical Analysis

Linear regression analysis was employed so as to determine any possible predictive relationship between the group's Emotional Intelligence and leadership style (with specific attention to the 'transformational' style). A further independent *t*-test was conducted in order to examine any possible statistically significant relationship between the respondents' EI score (mean) and the variable – leadership style.

3. Results

This research was designed to investigate the possible predictive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and the 'Transformational' leadership style. The researcher further examined possible relationships between EI and transactional and participative leadership styles.

152 Russian manager-respondents were assessed within this investigation (68 male, 84 female). The mean age of the sample was 32 (age range was 19 – 56). 66% of the respondents reported having higher degrees, 20% held professional qualifications, 12% reported first degrees, and 2% had not pursued higher education.

The group can be categorized into the following functional areas: marketing/sales 33%; finance/financial management 28%; general management 13%; human resources 8%; technical/IT 6%; manufacturing/operations 4%; R&D 2%, other 6%. 140 respondents described their positions as ‘managers’, with 6 in ‘technical support’, 4 in ‘administration’, and 2 in ‘business training/development’. Of these, 89 were junior/middle managers, and 63 were senior executives.

Based on a similar investigation conducted in the US (Mandell and Pherwani, 2003), the researcher postulated that there would be statistically significant differences in the overall Emotional Intelligence and demonstrated leadership styles of the two genders represented within the Russian manager-sample; the corresponding null hypotheses maintain that no statistically significant differences exist. Descriptive statistics are presented in table 2 for the purpose of illustrating characteristics of the Russian sample.

Table 3 reports the EI means for the group, presented by gender, with no significant differences identified. In order to determine possible predictability of leadership style by Emotional Intelligence, a regression analysis was employed (tables 4-6). $R=.047$, showing very slight correlation, with the variable EQ (EI) contributing very little to the model ($R^2 = .002$). The ANOVA further reveals that the model does not significantly predict the outcome variable (sig. = .561). Finally, the coefficient results (table 6) confirm that in this model, the variable EQ (EI) does not predict leadership style (‘Engaging’ transformational, ‘Involving’ participative, or ‘Goal Leadership’ transactional).

Table 2 Descriptive Gender

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|------------------|----------------|
| Male | 68 | 44,74 |
| Female | 84 | 55,26 |

Table 3 Summary of Independent t-Test Comparing EI Mean

| | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------|---------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| EQ Mean | Male | 68 | ,003 | ,579 |
| | Female | 84 | -,003 | ,647 |

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the statistical analyses conducted by the researcher, no significant relationship was found to exist between Emotional Intelligence and transformational leadership style; or either of the other two leadership styles measured by the LDQ.

**Table 4 Summary of Regression Analysis
for Variable (EI) Predicting Leadership Style**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .047^a | .002 | -.004 | .245 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), EQ Mean

Table 5 ANOVA Summary for Ei Predicting Leadership Style

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------------------------|
| Regression | .020 | 1 | .020 | .339 | .561^a |

a. Predictors: (Constant), EQ Mean

b. Dependent Variable: Style Preference

Table 6 Summary of Coefficients for EI Predicting Leadership Style

| | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|------------|-------|------------|-------|---------|-------------|
| (Constant) | 1.993 | .020 | | 100.483 | .000 |
| EQ Mean | -.019 | .032 | -.047 | -.582 | .561 |

a. Dependent Variable: Style Preference

The author employed chi-square analysis to examine any possible differences between the two groups (male and female) based on 'leadership style preference' (tables 7&8). The chi-square tests also showed no support for the proposal (sig.=.200) that any significant differences are present between the leadership styles of the male and female managers comprising the Russian sample. Therefore, the proposition is not supported; and the null hypothesis cannot be discarded.

Table 7 Style Preference * Gender Cross-Tabulation

| | | Gender | | Total | |
|------------------|---|----------------|----------|---------|-----|
| | | Male | Female | | |
| Style Preference | 1 | Count | 3 | 8 | 11 |
| | | Expected Count | 4,921053 | 6,07895 | 11 |
| | 2 | Count | 65 | 74 | 139 |
| | | Expected Count | 62,18421 | 76,8158 | 139 |
| | 3 | Count | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | | Expected Count | 0,894737 | 1,10526 | 2 |
| Total | | Count | 6 | 8 | 15 |
| | | | 8 | 4 | 2 |
| | | Expected | 6 | 8 | 15 |
| | | Count | 8 | 4 | 2 |

Table 8 Chi-Square Tests

| | Value | Df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|--------------------|-----------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 3,2067827 | 2 | .200 |
| | 8 | | |
| N of Valid Cases | 152 | | |

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has been in a state of social, political, and economic transition. Moreover, there are more Russian managers displaying a ‘transactional’ leadership approach (goal oriented; 7.2%) than ‘transformational’ (engaging; 1.3%). The 152 managers comprising the overall sample represent the various levels of managerial seniority within their respective companies. In addition, the companies were diverse as to their industries and sectors.

The author offers the following explanation. It was previously noted that the Soviet manager was characterized by a more transactional style of leadership (Blazyca, 1987; Aage, 1991; Laszlo, 1992; Elenkov, 2002). This was later highlighted by studies conducted directly after the fall of the Soviet Union, at which time managers/employees recognized a *highly* transitional environment (Holt, Ralston and Terpstra 1994).

Whilst many Western studies have stressed the importance of transformational leadership as a style suitable for organizations wishing to inspire their employees, and align them with a shared corporate vision (Burns, 1978; Tichy and Devanna, 1986; Bass and Avolio, 1996), experts have also recognized that more ‘authoritarian’ cultures in transition towards democracy, move – over time - from ‘transactional’ to more ‘democratic’ (‘participative’) styles of leadership (Bass, 1999).

Concerning differences in leadership styles and behaviors between men and women, there may well be cultural aspects to consider, acknowledging that the literature on this subject is largely drawn from the UK and United States. Hofstede (1993) noted dramatic differences between the UK/US and Russia based on the dimension ‘Masculinity’ (the polar opposite being ‘Femininity’); Russia scoring low.

The GLOBE study found a significant difference between Russia and its Anglo peers based on ‘Gender Egalitarianism’ (Javidan et al., 2006). Again, indicating that organizations in Russia do not differentiate to a great degree between the genders based on professional roles; whilst their Anglo counterparts were significantly more inclined to discriminate based on gender and position.

Therefore, the gender findings from the author’s study are broadly supported by key research. According to rather limited literature comparing the Emotional Intelligence of women versus men, there have been claims that significant differences exist between men and women, based on personality profiles (Goleman, 1995) and overall EI scores, with, in a few cases, women scoring higher than men (Mayer and Geher, 1996; Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey, 1999; Mandell and Pherwani, 2003).

High levels of EI have been purported as being essential for successful leadership (Cacioppe, 1997; Chaudry, 2001; Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2001; Dulewicz and Higgs, 2001: 2002: 2003: 2004; Yukl, 2002), even more so than IQ (Goleman, 1995; 1998). Furthermore, seeming overlaps within the bodies of literature have initiated proposals that Emotional Intelligence may be linked with the transformational style of leadership (Bass, 1999; Higgs and Rowland, 2001) e.g., the dimension of ‘individualized consideration’, ‘inspiration’, and the ability to motivate others, all central to transformational leadership.

Goleman (1998), found no significant differences in the overall EI scores of men and women; in line with this study, whilst also proposing that differences amongst variables comprising the overall EI of a gender can differ (Mandell and Pherwani, 2003). However, the data from this investigation of Russian managers did not support these claims. Whilst the author acknowledges that more research is needed in this area, in line with a meta-analysis conducted across cultures, differences in the level of EI have been noted between cultures; samples were from the USA, the Netherlands, and Israel (Bar-On, 2001).

The ultimate value of the dissemination/interpretation process is created by the inferences drawn from the data, and the accuracy of those inferences (Trochim, 1991). There are several implications that can be drawn from this study. Although Emotional Intelligence has been identified as a key element in supporting leadership success (), any differences existing between men and women may only manifest itself within certain EI variables – as opposed to representing clear variations in overall EI. Moreover, any overall levels of EI (across genders), which appear above or below the norm, may well represent a variance in EI norms based on that culture; perhaps a social superiority or deficiency in social development.

Although propositions have been made that men and women have ‘lead differently’ i.e., have different leadership styles, for Russian organizational leaders – at all levels – this was not the case. Uniformly, from junior- to senior management, the male and female respondents’ leadership style preferences were consistent. Furthermore, Russian managers, at all levels, both male and female, preferred a more ‘participative’ approach to leading, indicating a shift away from the Soviet ‘transactional’ approach, in favor of a more democratic one.

The LDQ allows organizations to assess the leadership styles of its managers; “goal oriented” (transactional), “involving” (participative), or “engaging” (transformational), in addition to their Emotional Intelligence. Limitations associated with the use of separate EI and leadership style instruments are not inherent to the LDQ, as they are embedded within the psychometric construct of the instrument.

The revised MLQ (Bass and Avolio, 1995), favored for assessing leadership style, based on Bass and Avolio’s ‘transformational and transactional’ leadership style model, has the constraint of not offering a clearly defined leadership style i.e., a respondent can be assessed as having a transformational style, transactional style, or both. What’s more, there is no alternative or ‘middle ground’. The styles of transformational and transactional are viewed as opposites on a leadership styles continuum.

The business world is international, and by all accounts headed in the direction of 'Globalization'. This study focused on replicating a US study of managers (n=32) that found Emotional Intelligence (EI) to be predictive of the transformational style of leadership, and further concluded that women had a significantly higher level of EI than their male managerial counterparts. This investigation into Russian managers (n=152) failed to support these hypotheses. Further research is needed concerning the possible relationship between EI and styles of leadership. Such investigations would add great value if they were to be designed as 'etic' comparative cultural studies, as the body of current knowledge overwhelmingly biases our knowledge of Western cultures.

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