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An exploration of emotional intelligence across career arenas

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Abstract

Purpose – This quantitative study seeks to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence scores of leaders in non-profit health and human service agencies and profit businesses.

Design/methodology/approach – Director-level leaders in the non-profit ($n = 32$) and profit ($n = 32$) business arenas completed an online emotional intelligence self assessment (Bar-On EQ-i). Descriptive statistics were gathered and comparative analyses explored the differences between leaders in the two groups.

Findings – Results revealed significant differences between leaders in non-profit and profit businesses in overall emotional intelligence, and in the particular competency areas of stress management and adaptability.

Originality/value – This paper identifies a difference in emotional intelligence levels of leaders based on career field.

Keywords Leadership, Non-profit organizations, Profit, Emotional intelligence, Careers

Paper type Literature review

Introduction

With the growing recognition of emotional intelligence (EI) as an essential element of leadership, interest is stirring regarding the demonstration of EI by people at different levels of leadership and in diverse career arenas. Little, if any, research exists which investigates the EI levels of leaders in dissimilar career fields. Researchers suggest that there may be disciplinary differences in those for which the construct of EI has an appeal. Specifically, “teachers, social workers, and parents” as opposed to “business people and tough-minded social scientists” (Gardner, 1999, p. 10) may be more likely to gravitate toward the idea of EI. Perhaps the reverse is true as well, that people with enhanced EI are attracted to particular types of careers.

Alternatively, certain organizational cultures themselves may enhance and in fact promote based in part on employee EI. In such a workplace culture, one may assume that people in top leadership positions will have the highest EI levels. Indeed, initial research (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003; Goleman *et al.*, 2002) suggests that EI levels are higher among workplace leaders, and are even further elevated as leadership levels rise in an organization. Organizational norms described by Kouzes and Posner (1995) that enable people to achieve corporate goals reflect a climate that embraces, supports, and rewards EI. Managers who choose not to follow organizational practices defined by corporate values are less likely to rise to top leadership positions (Langley, 2000). An organization that supports and promotes EI in its corporate values may see more people following established ground rules, and more emotionally intelligent managers rising to top leadership positions.



This study involves a unique look at diverse career climates in relation to EI and compares the EI of leaders in the non-profit and profit business arenas. It stands to reason that emotionally intelligent people may be inherently more drawn to a particular type of career, that certain career fields may more actively recruit and promote with EI in mind, or that certain organizational climates may cultivate EI. The research that follows begins to investigate some of these questions. This author's professional experience generated curiosity and led to the hypothesis that if EI scores of leaders in non-profit health and human service mission-driven agencies were compared with the scores of leaders in profit-driven businesses, there would be a difference. Specifically, it was hypothesized that non-profit leaders would demonstrate higher EI levels than their profit-driven counterparts. In reviewing the groundwork that leads to the research and discussion regarding EI across career arenas, it is important to first look at the construct of EI itself, its link to performance in the workplace, and its link to quality workplace leaders.

Construct of emotional intelligence

Hypotheses on intelligence emerging as early as 1920 (Mandell and Pherwani, 2003) suggest that real intelligence is made up of emotional and social elements, in addition to an intellectual element. In academia and in measurement efforts, however, the construct of intelligence has historically remained closely attached to cognitive descriptors. When Mayer and Salovey (1993) put forth their innovative theory of EI, they specifically chose the term emotional intelligence in order to link the construct to historical literature. They proposed that in contrast to mere attitudes and sentiments, EI is actually comprised of distinct skills, and further offered that individuals less adept at interpersonal relations may experience a lack of ability that could be improved. Their later definition describes EI as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to reflectively regulate emotions in ways that promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, p. 23).

Today, though there is general agreement that EI encapsulates personal qualities commonly held as positive tools toward effective interactions and in conducting daily life events, discussion continues around its actual definition and measurement. Two models of EI have emerged. The ability model describes EI as "abilities that involve perceiving and reasoning abstractly with information that emerges from feelings", and the mixed model defines EI as "an ability with social behaviors, traits and competencies" (Mandell and Pherwani, 2003, p. 389). The ability model is largely upheld by Mayer and Salovey (1993, 1997). This study utilizes the mixed model, which is espoused by Goleman (1995, 1998) and Bar-On (1997). Slight differences in the models aside, EI remains a fashionable current topic of research and debate, with most researchers at least intrigued with the notion of intelligences beyond intellect and cognition.

Emotional intelligence in the workplace

In the ever more competitive world of today's workforce, there is increasing focus on effective practices for staff recruitment and hiring, for training and promotion from within, and for retention of outstanding performers. The importance of conducting

these practices effectively is underscored by the growing costs related to sophisticated recruitment techniques, not to mention the substantial cost of promoting someone with inadequate skills (Langley, 2000). This is particularly crucial for organizations such as not-for-profit agencies where there is no guarantee of fiscal stability. A considerable amount of literature advocates for EI as a key ingredient on which human resource professionals and organizations must focus. Research indicates a correlation between EI and top performers and performance climates in the workplace.

According to such research, EI is supported as a vital element in excellent job performance profiles, in employee behavior and organizational practices leading to an outstanding climate for service delivery, and in employee concern for quality and ability to deal with workplace conflict. Goleman's (1998) analysis of performance profiles from various positions in 121 companies around the world revealed that EI abilities rank as more than twice as crucial for excellence than technical and cognitive abilities. In their tools used to measure performance competencies, worldwide professionals deemed critical excellence skills to be 23 percent based on intellect and technical expertise, and 67 percent clearly centered on EI capacities. Research also links EI with customer satisfaction, quality assurance, and problem solving ability. Organizational policies and procedures that reward employee behavior based on EI and treat employees as internal customers result in a climate for services regarded as excellent by customers (Bardzil and Slaski, 2003). Further, a study of 222 participants resulted in positive correlations between the EI competencies of self-regulation and empathy and manager's concern for product and service quality; and between the self-awareness and self-regulation competencies and effective problem-solving skills during subordinate conflict (Rahim and Minors, 2003).

Research also demonstrates a relationship between EI and individual and team performance. Perhaps due to an enhanced ability to recognize and manage emotions and brace against distracting emotions, EI skills connect both to individual cognitive-based performance and team task performance skills. A study (Lam and Kirby, 2002) of 304 undergraduate students demonstrated a positive influence of EI and the EI competency areas of emotional awareness and management on individual cognitive-based performance. Additional research (Jordan and Troth, 2004) found that teams comprised of members with high EI displayed better task performance skills when compared with teams made up of less emotionally intelligent members. Goleman (1998) suggests that for technical and complex positions in particular, a lack of EI may lead to diminished cognitive performance and an inability to accomplish tasks, especially with others.

Emotional intelligence and leadership

Much research is available which investigates top performing leaders and leadership traits in relation to EI. Many authors (Gardner, 1999; Goleman *et al.*, 2002; Kouzes and Posner, 1995; Wheatley, 1999) recognize the necessary shift from old-school management to true leadership. They describe traditional management as promoting methodical, detached, micro-managing supervisors who have extreme control over an employees' every step and actively separate any emotion from the workplace, similar to the transactional style of leadership. When these same authors turn to describe successful leadership traits, their descriptions portray leaders who are aware and have an understanding of their own and other's emotions, and are able to

use that understanding to effectively motivate, inspire, challenge, and connect with others, an approach aligned with the transformational style of leadership. In Kouzes and Posner's (1995) qualitative illustration of leader's proudest moments, leader reflections were described in terms of feelings, emotions, and challenges. These authors offer that transformational leadership traits and experiences such as these are more highly correlated with employee satisfaction and performance effectiveness than are transactional traits.

Studies (Gardner and Stough, 2002; Kobe *et al.*, 2001; Palmer *et al.*, 2001) show a correlation between EI and leadership experiences as well as between EI and aspects of transformational leadership, the style promoted as most effective and successful. For example, Gardner and Stough (2002) analyzed 110 senior-level managers and found those who were aligned with the transformational leadership style also indicated an ability to identify and apply knowledge of their own and others' emotions when interacting and addressing problems, and an ability to control their emotional states.

Emotional intelligence with rising leadership levels. Knowing that EI is tied to successful leadership, it follows that skills of emotionally intelligent people, like flexibility, conflict management, persuasion and social reasoning, become increasingly important with advancing levels in leadership hierarchy (Mandell and Pherwani, 2003). Initial research in this area compared EI scores of middle and senior level managers to determine promotion readiness, explored EI as an explanation for the advancement of managers, and weighed EI against intellect and managerial skills in assessing outstanding versus average senior level leaders. Specifically, a comparison of senior managers with middle managers targeted for promotion resulted in significantly higher scores among senior managers in EI and the competency areas of innovation, commitment, political awareness, leadership, change catalyst, and team capabilities, supporting EI as a measurement tool for promotion readiness (Langley, 2000). Also, a seven-year longitudinal study (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003) revealed EI as more important than intellect and other management competencies in the advancement of managers. Results indicated that intellect accounted for 27 percent and management competencies for 16 percent, while EI explained 36 percent of the variances in advancement. The same study further analyzed the skills of senior directors and managers. The director group presented significantly higher scores on overall EI and on interpersonal sensitivity and emotional resilience. The authors found no difference amongst the directors and managers at all, however, in intellect or other managerial competencies. Finally, not only is EI an increasingly indicative reason for stellar performance as rank rises in an organization, but as opposed to cognitive or technical abilities, it explains 85 percent of the variance between outstanding and average senior leaders (Goleman *et al.*, 2002).

These initial studies yield telling results that offer support for the relationship between effective leaders and EI, as well as for the theory that with increasing leadership levels in an organization, one will find increasing levels of EI. Further, particular EI competencies appear as especially crucial for directors of organizations; "motivation, interpersonal sensitivity, intuitiveness, conscientiousness and integrity" are undoubtedly relevant for a director's role in "determining the company's vision, mission and values" (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003, p. 206).

Emotional intelligence across career arenas. Theoretical speculations on EI research of leaders in divergent career fields consider the leader's role in driving the

organizational culture, the workplace culture's role in developing emotionally intelligent leaders, and initial career interest by people with high EI. It is estimated that 50 to 70 percent of employees trace the organizational climate specifically to the actions of the leader (Goleman *et al.*, 2002), this demonstrating a direct effect of the leader on workplace culture. Alternatively, the organizational culture may have an effect on the EI levels of employees. Organizational values define ground rules that must be followed in order to anticipate promotion (Langley, 2000), thus, rules based on EI competencies will lead employees to embrace EI if their goal is to attain a leadership position. Leaders in different career arenas may have a greater or lesser amount of EI nurturing by their various organizational missions, visions, values, and cultures. Lastly, people with high EI may be drawn to particular types of professions. Recall the contention that those who are interested in the construct of EI may be defined along disciplinary lines (Gardner, 1999). Some assertions have been made that people who are high in EI may be more likely participants in leadership experiences, and also may be more effective leaders (Kobe *et al.*, 2001). Perhaps just as highly emotionally intelligent people are interested in and more likely to participate in leadership, they may also be more likely to participate in particular types of career fields and professions. This study seeks to begin to infuse initial empirical research into this burgeoning theoretical discussion.

Methodology

This study explores the relationship between EI scores of Director-level leaders in divergent fields, specifically, in non-profit health and human service mission-driven agencies and profit-driven businesses in the State of Alaska. Comparisons were made between the two groups of leaders on their scores of overall EI, as well as on five subscale EI competency areas.

Subjects

A total of 64 participants were involved, representing people in top leadership positions in non-profit and profit business arenas in the State of Alaska. The non-profit leaders ($n = 32$) were 26 Executive Directors and six Senior Managers working in health and social services agencies. These participants were 87 percent female and 53 percent had completed Masters level of education. The profit business leaders ($n = 32$) were 21 Executive Directors and ten Senior Managers working in varying types of profit businesses. This group was 72 percent male and 41 percent had completed Masters level of education.

Instruments

Data were gathered for the study using two tools. A short demographic survey sought responses regarding level of education, position title, number of years in current position, number of supervisees, total number of employees in the organization, and company status (non-profit or profit). The second component was an online self-assessment, the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), published by Multi-Health Systems Inc (Bar-On, 1997). The EQ-i has 133 questions; each posed using a five-point frequency scale. The EQ-i measures 15 conceptual components of EI, which are grouped into five subscale categories. The subscale categories are:

- (1) *Intrapersonal*, including the competencies of self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self actualization.
- (2) *Interpersonal*, including empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship.
- (3) *Adaptability*, including reality testing, flexibility and problem solving.
- (4) *Stress management* including stress tolerance and impulse control.
- (5) *General mood* which includes happiness and optimism.

The scores produced from the instrument include scores for overall emotional quotient (EQ), for each of the five subscales, and for each of the 15 conceptual components (Bar-On, 1997).

Bar-On (1997) reported internal reliability averaging $\alpha = 0.76$, and retest reliability between $\alpha = 0.75$ and $\alpha = 0.85$. Validity findings clearly differentiate between the two constructs of EI and IQ, and show a strong relationship with tests designed to measure work performance and satisfaction, demonstrating the validity of the EQ-i to this study comparing leaders in different work arenas.

Procedures

Participants were initially invited to participate via an e-mail message which gave a brief overview of the purpose of the study, outlined confidentiality information, and also contained the short demographic survey and instructions for the online EI assessment. Follow-up invitations to participate were also mailed via postcard and communicated via telephone. The number of total respondents was 82, a 37 percent response rate of the 222 leaders who received the first e-mail invitation message. Of total responders, 18 were not included in the final calculation of data. Ten responders were not included because the demographic data they submitted did not match the sample group criteria. Specifically, these ten responders were employed by (non-profit) municipal, borough and state government entities as opposed to non-profit health and human service organizations. The remaining eight people who had responded but were not used were removed because their scores indicated overly positive or negative response patterns. The EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997) generates individual validity scores that indicate whether a person is responding to the online assessment in an exaggeratedly positive or negative way. To avoid a positive or negative individual score effect, three non-profit and five profit leaders were omitted using this score validity criteria. Participants were offered their overall EI score, once tabulated.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data from the demographic survey. In testing for significant difference between the two groups' overall and subscale EI scores, two-tailed tests of independent means were conducted. A total of six *t*-tests were conducted, one each for the overall score and five EI subscale scores. Raw data were entered and independent group *t*-tests were calculated using the SPSS Student Version (George and Mallery, 2005). Considering the chosen calculation method of multiple *t*-tests, a modified Bonferroni correction factor was implemented to guard against the risk of incorrectly declaring a difference. With this applied correction factor, significance levels were $\alpha = 0.05$ (2.29) to $\alpha = 0.01$ (2.91) with 62 degrees of freedom.

Hypotheses. The same hypothesis approach was used to compare for differences in each of the six test areas. Thus, the following research hypothesis was applied to the comparisons of overall EI scores and the intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood subscale categories:

If the EI scores for leaders in non-profit health and human service agencies and leaders in profit business are compared, there will be a difference.

Levels of significance: $\alpha = 0.05$ to $\alpha = 0.01$. Following the initial analyses and given the dramatic difference in gender make-up of the two groups, subsequent two-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were also conducted for each of the six score results to test for gender effect and for career arena by gender interaction. For these tests, with 60 degrees of freedom, the levels of significance were: $\alpha = 0.05$ to $\alpha = 0.01$

Findings

For this study, the 15 conceptual component scores produced by the EI assessment were not individually compared across the two groups of business leaders. Rather, the overall EI and five subscale scores were used for comparison purposes. These scores were linked to individual leaders using e-mailed responses from each participant to the researcher, which indicated the participants' career arena as non-profit or profit.

Research results

Comparative calculation resulted in a higher mean score for non-profit leaders than for profit leaders in all six test areas. Mean scores for the non-profit leader group ranged from 103.06 to 107.59 with the highest standard deviation of 11.33. Raw individual non-profit leader scores on the six tests ranged from a low of 77 to a high of 130. Profit leaders displayed mean scores ranging from 97.28 to 102.84 on the six tests and a high standard deviation of 13.71. Raw individual profit leader scores on the six tests ranged from a low of 67 to a high of 122. Bar-On (1997) designed the analysis of the EQ-i to result in scores based on a mean of 100, and offered interpretive guidelines suggesting that scores between 90 and 109 be considered average. All of the mean scores for both groups fell within the range of scores described as average. Table I depicts the mean scores and standard deviations for each of the calculations between the groups.

Mean totals of the overall EI score and each of the subscale EI scores of the two groups were calculated using independent group *t*-tests. Using the modified Bonferroni correction factor, three significant differences were found among the compared scores.

Variable	Non-profit leaders		Profit leaders	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Total EI	106.72	10.38	100.25	10.10
INTRA	107.59	10.46	102.84	8.43
INTER	103.06	11.33	98.72	13.71
STRESS M	106.32	10.80	99.34	12.71
ADAPT	104.28	10.88	97.28	13.49
G MOOD	105.13	8.26	101.66	12.37

Table I.
Descriptive statistics for
emotional intelligence
scores

Notes: TOTAL EI = Overall emotional intelligence; INTRA = Intrapersonal; INTER = Interpersonal; STRESS M= Stress management; ADAPT = Adaptability; G MOOD = General mood; *M*= Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation

A significant difference ($p \geq 0.03$) was found in the overall EI scores, and significant differences ($p \geq 0.05$) were found in the stress management and adaptability subscale scores of the two groups. No significant difference was found between the two groups on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, or general mood subscale category comparisons. The results of each of these tests are presented in Table II.

In the subsequent two-way ANOVA, no findings of significance were found for either gender effect or for career arena by gender interaction. Lack of significant findings in these analyses may be due to the very small sample size when further sorted by gender. In these tests, the calculated observed power indicated no more than a 25 percent chance of finding a significant difference in any of the six tests, given the sample size.

Summary of findings

The investigation and comparison conducted in this study found several interesting results. Demographic findings revealed a gender disparity between the non-profit and profit career fields, with a higher percentage of female non-profit leaders and an alternatively higher percentage of male profit leaders, each when compared with their profit and non-profit counterparts. Disparity was also discovered in the area of education, finding more non-profit leaders with higher levels of education. Comparisons of EI, using a correction factor, discovered non-profit health and human service leaders to be significantly higher than their profit business colleagues in overall EI, and in the stress management and adaptability subscale components.

Conclusions

The apparent overall trend in this research was that leaders in the non-profit health and human service arena scored as more emotionally intelligent than their counterparts in the business for profit arena. The following discussion considers the relationship between EI and career choice and career alignment with EI strength areas, and also organizational cultures in relation to the EI of leaders. Potential implications are outlined for human resource professionals, trainers, and leaders themselves. Insight to limitations of this study and ideas for continued research on the topic of EI are also offered.

Variable	Non-profit <i>M</i>	Profit <i>M</i>	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Total EI	106.72	100.25	2.53	0.03*
Intrapersonal	107.59	102.84	2.00	0.10
Interpersonal	103.06	98.72	1.38	0.35
Stress management	106.32	99.34	2.36	0.05*
Adaptability	104.28	97.28	2.29	0.05*
General mood	105.13	101.66	1.32	0.39

Notes: With 62 degrees of freedom, significance levels with modified Bonferroni correction factor were $\alpha=0.05$ (2.29) to $\alpha=0.01$ (2.91). Abbreviations for this table are as follows: TOTAL EI = Overall EI; INTRA = Intrapersonal; INTER = Interpersonal; STRESS M = Stress management; ADAPT = Adaptability; G MOOD = General mood; *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *n* = sample size; *Significant at least at 0.05

Table II.
Comparison of mean
emotional intelligence
scores

Discussion

One consideration stemming from these study results is the relationship between EI and career choice. Mayer and Geher (1996, p. 110) speculated that people who are very emotionally intelligent may choose occupations accordingly. They suggested occupations of choice would be ones that seem reliant on EI, such as "psycho-therapy, social work, and teaching, or business careers including sales, academic or military recruiting, and personnel". It is interesting to consider whether the highly EI non-profit leaders in this study, in health and human service agencies aligned with "social work", were predisposed to their ultimate career choice.

After overall EI, the stress management subscale revealed the highest level of significance when comparing for difference between the two leader groups. People who score well on this subscale, according to Bar-On (1997), have the ability to handle stressful and nerve-racking tasks without losing control and falling apart. They are not impulsive, and are able to maintain a calm composure even while working in front-line type jobs. Interestingly, the types of front-line positions described as good matches for people with strengths in this area are "police officers, firefighters, emergency medical staff, social workers, and combat soldiers" (Bar-On, 1997, p. 44). Although non-profit "social worker" leaders may recognize a level of stress related to their line of work, they certainly may find it enlightening that this is considered as categorically similar to the stress experienced by a combat soldier. Day-to-day tasks of a non-profit health and human service leader often include the oversight and responsibility for care delivered to hundreds of people, usually in vulnerable life situations, as well as the constant and ongoing uncertainty of fiscal stability, which is usually linked to availability of cyclical grant funding, and service reimbursements through government-regulated programs wrapped in unending bureaucracy. Such are certainly the makings of a position which requires a high capacity for stress management.

The competency area of adaptability was found to be significantly different in the two groups, with non-profit leaders again displaying greater strengths. Bar-On (1997, p. 44) described those who score well in this area as people who "are generally flexible, realistic, effective in understanding problematic situations, and competent at arriving at adequate solutions" and "who can generally find good ways of dealing with everyday difficulties". The non-profit leader, who may oversee service delivery to countless people with life situations repeatedly in turmoil, must be adept at addressing everyday crises. They must have the ability to quickly and realistically grasp problems and issues, often with significant consequences, and address them in a way that is satisfactory and solution-oriented. These are the very makings of an adaptable leader.

Now we return to the question of origination: do the leaders in fact choose their EI strength-based careers, or are particular occupations and workplace cultures more inclined than others to recruit, select, and nurture leaders based on EI? Researchers suggest that emotionally intelligent organizational cultures can act as a training ground, or an incubator, for leaders, such that their EI levels are enhanced (Goleman *et al.*, 2002). Conceivably, this may occur in non-profit agencies. In a recent article, Moore (2004) described some assets of non-profit organizations, many of which directly reflect an agency climate with high EI. According to the author, non-profit strengths include a culture where work and accomplishments are appreciated and celebrated, opinions are respected and communication is open. Moore further described a climate free of micromanagement, where people are given autonomy and responsibility for

their tasks and in their roles. These types of descriptors, particularly when woven throughout organizational policies and procedures, including hiring, evaluation and promotion processes, will surely establish ground rules based on EI and result not only in a more emotionally intelligent culture, but in leadership higher in EI as well.

Implications

A number of implications can be drawn from the research and conclusions of this study. Human resource professionals and trainers might consider implementing policies and procedures that recognize EI as a key ingredient in organizational success. Some researchers (Bardzil and Slaski, 2003; Rahim and Minors, 2003) suggest infusing EI into workplace policies and procedures and conducting EI training for staff will improve organizational service climate, quality assurance of products and services across the board, and enhance manager's problem solving capacity. Studies (Ashkanasy and Dasborough, 2003; Bardzil and Slaski, 2003; Sala, 2004) have shown success in training efforts to increase EI levels, also resulting in enhanced team performance. Mayer and Geher (1996) advised that such training may raise the ability levels of workers low in EI skills, resulting in improved work in their individual occupations. Langley (2000) also noted that focusing on the development of EI and emotional competencies could increase promotion readiness in employees. In terms of cost savings in recruitment and training, and institutional memory, businesses of all types would benefit from enhancing the capacity for promotion of their own employees.

For leaders themselves, consideration should be given to one's individual EI level and the related ramifications on the organizational culture. Leaders who aim for a transformational leadership style rich in EI, one which "generates an awareness of the mission or vision of the organization, and develops colleagues and followers to higher levels of ability and potential" (Mandell and Pherwani, 2003, p. 390) may require some critical reflection. What is it about the leader's organization or the leader himself or herself that may enhance or diminish the culture of EI in the workplace? Leaders may find professional advantage in reflecting on the organizational policies and practices that they oversee, and making a conscious effort to instill EI in those practices.

Limitations and direction for future research

This particular research study has a number of limitations which will restrict the generalizability of the results. The sample size, 32 participants in each leader group, was relatively small. Also, the career field subgroups were somewhat broadly defined. Subsequent research may benefit from using sample groups that are larger and more equitable in homogeneity, such as profit businesses with greater similar characteristics. Additionally, the mixed model of EI used in this study, the self-report method of assessing emotional intelligence, has received some criticism regarding reliability. Further EI research with this focus will be enhanced with the use of skill-based and 360 degree appraisal data, providing information from the participant, and the participant's peers, subordinates, and supervisors. Further considerations on the results of this study and for future research also include the role of gender and education. Mandell and Pherwani (2003) discovered EI levels to be higher in women than in men. Although in this study follow-up ANOVA found no significance in results based on gender, this bears further investigation with larger sample groups. Additionally, advanced education, particularly greater exposure to

theoretical speculation and research, may increase one's appreciation and eventual nurturing of the idea and competencies in the construct of EI. Further empirical research will also be enhanced with the inclusion of a qualitative look into the leadership experiences of people in different career arenas and with differing levels of emotional intelligence. Additionally, research should be conducted to collect data regarding EI competency areas most critical to particular types of positions and particular types of career arenas. Information gleaned from this type of data will be useful not only in selection of employees, but also in forecasting satisfaction in an occupation.

Unanswered questions remain regarding individual EI as a predictor of career choice and success, and emotionally intelligent workplace culture as a predictor of variance in skills displayed by leaders in divergent fields. Further EI research should be conducted in comparing leaders within and the organizational cultures of diverse career fields. Researchers (Bardzil and Slaski, 2003; Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003) have commented on the need for more research into how the leader drives the culture of the organization and the impact of the organizational culture on their leaders. They suggest that such research would be useful to determine if organizations with very emotionally intelligent senior managers indeed have an influence on the overall organizational culture, and to help define how EI is manifested in effective behaviors of top leaders, and in offering support, direction, and promotion of future leaders. To be sure, research is warranted in the ongoing investigation of EI levels of leaders across career fields. If we are able to identify career climates in which the best and most emotionally intelligent leaders are indeed set apart from the rest, imagine what we can learn and share with other business arenas.

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