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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF GENERATION X MANAGERS

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ABSTRACT

'Generation X' is a phrase that has gained entry into modern management literature. Generation X managers are expected to shoulder leadership responsibilities to steer future organizations towards excellence. However, not much research work has been carried out in Indian context to study the characteristics and preferences of Generation X and the levels of their emotional intelligence. Hence a study was conducted to measure the levels of emotional intelligence of Generation X managers. Data for the study were collected from 243 Generation X managers from the population of 353 Generation X managers. The respondents were from nine companies that belonged to seven manufacturing industries. This paper presents the profile of Generation X managers, establishes the need of the study, the methodology adapted to collect the data required for the study and discusses the findings of the study.

KEYWORDS

Generation X, Emotional Intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Generation X (Gen X) can be traced back to Douglas Coupland¹ who wrote about late boomers and gave them the title 'Generation X'. The usage of the name can also be attributed to media that popularized the phrase during the mid 1990s. Generation X, also known as 'baby busters,' have grown up in times of rapid changes. Hurt more by parental divorce, and having witnessed corporate downsizing firsthand, they tend to be independent, cynical and do not expect the security of long-term employment.² They began to project an image of a generation of people who were angry, cynical, frustrated and unmotivated.

A review of the literature on Gen X revealed that there is no single accepted age range for individuals born after the Baby Boomers. According to Cannon,³ the label 'Generation X' is coined from the Canadian novelist Douglas Coupland's 1991 novel *Generation X* and Strauss and Howe⁴ put Generation X birth years from 1961 to 1981. Tulgan⁵ reported that the age range of Gen X was from 1963 to 1981. According to Collins⁶ some researchers marked Generation X as people born between 1960 and 1979. Much of the literature, according to McShane and Von Glinov,⁷ accepts that Generation X employees are those born between 1965 and 1975. For this study, the age range between 1965 and 1977 as identified by Cascio⁸ was considered.

NEED OF THE STUDY

An extensive study on the outstanding performers by Moss⁹ revealed that their success depended not on their deep and profound knowledge which challenged the brains of average people but on the simple and more commonplace qualities which pleased the understanding of the common people, and aroused in their hearts a feeling of sympathy. The decade from 1990 to 2000 witnessed the importance of emotional intelligence for leadership and organizational effectiveness. Underlying this development many researchers as established by Goleman¹⁰ concluded that people with high emotional intelligence were more likely to achieve workplace success than people with low emotional intelligence. "Emotional Intelligence," according to Mayer and Salovey,¹¹ "is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own emotions and others' emotions to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions."

A study by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants identified that 'emotional intelligence skills' were extremely important for the success of accounting profession. Professional accounting practices, claimed Akers and Porter,¹² had placed little emphasis on behavioral issues such as emotional intelligence although human behavior underlined most of what was written and taught about professional accounting. This work is on Gen X managers as they are expected to shoulder leadership responsibility for another two decades at least.

METHODOLOGY

Data for the research study were collected from 243 Gen X managers. The respondents were born between 1965 and 1977. The respondents were in four hierarchical levels. The levels were Assistant Managers, Deputy Managers, Managers and Senior Managers. There were representations from six management functions. The management functions were Finance, General Administration, Human Resource, Logistics, Marketing and Operations. 'Developing Emotional Intelligence' instrument by Weisinger was used to measure the emotional intelligence of the respondents. The instrument comprised 45 items with five point responses ranging from 'Very Low Ability' (1 point) to 'Very High Ability' (5 points). Hence, minimum and maximum scores were 45 and 225 respectively.

DISCUSSIONS**TABLE 1.1: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF EI**

	Levels						Total
	Low	%	Medium	%	High	%	
Respondents	52	21.39	156	64.21	35	14.40	243

Frequency distribution, as given in Table 1.1, shows that Gen X managers had medium level of EI. Moreover, percentage analysis also showed the same result. 14.4% of the respondents were with high EI, 64.2% of the respondents were with medium EI and 21.4% of the respondents were with low EI. The number of respondents with medium level of EI - 156 respondents - is close to the expected number 165. However, it could not be concluded that the EI of Gen X managers is medium as these findings were not statistically validated. In order to statistically validate the findings it was hypothesized that 'The levels of EI of Gen X managers are different.'

NH: Gen X managers have same level of EI.

AH: Gen X managers do not have same level of EI.

Chi square test was applied to test the hypothesis. The actual value of their EI, result of chi square test, is: $\chi^2_o = 5.331$. But the expected value (Table value) is: $\chi^2_e = 5.991$ for 2 df at 5% level. Chi square value (5.331) in this case was found to be less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Since $\chi^2_o < \chi^2_e$, it is inferred

that Gen X managers have same level of EI and the null hypothesis is accepted. So Gen X managers have medium level of EI. In a mean difference, that is., 1) 68% at 1σ level, 2) 95% at 2σ level and 3) 99% at 3σ level, majority of the observations are in the middle. The responses fell into normal distribution. Since majority of the observations in this study was in the middle and the null hypothesis was accepted, it is affirmatively concluded that Gen X managers had medium level of EI.

RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE DIMENSIONS OF EI

According to Gibbs,¹³ executives derailed because of emotional problems such as poor working relations, too authoritarian, too ambitious and conflict with the top management. This list of negative qualities of Gen X is an area of concern for the business world of today and that of the next decade. Hence, a study was initiated to find the differences in relationship among the dimensions of EI attribute. EI attribute has five dimensions. They are: Self Awareness, Managing Emotions, Self Motivation, Relating Well and Emotional Mentoring. They are explained here. Self awareness is being aware of one’s feelings and behaviours as well as others’ perceptions of one. Managing Emotions means understanding one’s emotions and using that understanding to turn situations to one’s advantage. Self-motivation encompasses using one’s emotional system to catalyze the whole process and keep it going. Relating Well relates to exchange of information about one’s feelings, thoughts and ideas. And Emotional Mentoring includes helping others manage their emotions, solve their problems and conflicts and communicate effectively.

TABLE 1.2: EI DIMENSIONS WITH REFERENCE TO LEVELS

Dimensions	Levels						Total
	Low	%	Medium	%	High	%	
Self Awareness	40	16.46	155	63.79	48	19.75	243
Managing Emotions	48	19.75	155	63.79	40	16.46	243
Self Motivation	42	17.28	163	67.07	38	15.69	243
Relating Well	46	18.93	163	67.08	34	14.09	243
Emotional Mentoring	43	17.69	162	66.67	38	15.64	243

Frequency and percentage details, as given in Table 1.2, show that there were differences in the levels of EI dimensions among Gen X managers. The number of respondents low in Low was the lowest and high in High was the highest in Self Awareness dimension of EI. It was found, on the bases of frequency distribution and percentage analysis, that there were differences in the levels among the dimensions. These differences had to be statistically validated. Hence, a hypothesis was formulated to test the differences.

H: There are differences in the levels of various dimensions of EI among Gen X managers.

NH: The levels of EI of Gen X managers with reference to various dimensions are the same.

AH: The levels of EI of Gen X managers with reference to various dimensions are not the same.

ANOVA test was applied to verify the significance in mean differences among the dimensions. From the analysis of the result of ANOVA test, as provided in Table 1.3, it is concluded that the presence of various dimensions of EI among the respondents was different. A significant F-value showed that the means were not equal. Though it was known that the means of the dimensions were not equal, it was not distinctively known means of which dimensions were significantly different from the means of which other dimensions.

TABLE 1.3: VARIANCE AMONG EI DIMENSIONS

Dimension	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Result
EI						
Between Groups	125834.12	4	31458.53	1031.45	0.000	<0.05- Null hypothesis is rejected
Within Groups	36903.97	1210	30.49			
Total	162738.10	1214				

Hence, Post-Hoc analysis was conducted to find out the dimensions of EI that had the highest and lowest presence among the dimensions in Gen X managers. This was done as the lowest and highest presence of any dimension of EI would influence EI negatively and positively respectively.

TABLE 1.4: DIFFERENCES IN THE LEVELS OF EI DIMENSIONS- HIGHEST

Dimension	Group	M.D	Sig.	Result
Self Awareness	Managing Emotions	12.10*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant
	Self Motivation	19.45*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant
	Relating Well	8.71*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant
	Emotional Mentoring	13.40*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

From the Post-Hoc analysis, as presented in Table 1.4, it is found that Self Awareness had significantly the highest level of presence in Gen X managers among the other dimensions namely, Managing Emotions, Self Motivation, Relating Well and Emotional Mentoring. Though differences existed in other dimensions, they were not significant.

TABLE 1.5: DIFFERENCES IN THE LEVELS OF EI DIMENSIONS -LOWEST

Dimension	Group	M.D	Sig.	Result
Self Motivation	Self Awareness	-19.45*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant
	Managing Emotions	-7.34*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant
	Relating Well	-28.16*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant
	Emotional Mentoring	-6.04*	0.000	< 0.05- difference is significant

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

From the Post-Hoc analysis, as presented in Table 1.5, it is found that Self Motivation had significantly the lowest level of presence in Gen X managers among the other dimensions, namely, Managing Emotions, Self Motivation, Relating Well and Emotional Mentoring.

CORRELATION AMONG THE DIMENSIONS OF EI

The presence of EI among Gen X managers showed the levels of EI. A study on the correlation among the dimensions of EI would help us understand how significantly the dimensions are related with one another. Interrelationship among the dimensions would display the strength of the instrument and the data that were collected for the purpose of the study. Hence, Correlation analysis was conducted to find the relationships among the dimensions of EI.

The information provided in Table 1.6 gives the correlation among the dimensions of EI under study. It is found that Self Awareness was positively significantly correlated with Managing Emotions, Self Motivation, Relating Well and Emotional Mentoring. Managing Emotions was positively significantly correlated with Self Awareness, Self Motivation, Relating Well and Emotional Mentoring. Self Motivation was positively significantly correlated with Self Awareness, Managing Emotions, Relating Well and Emotional Mentoring. Relating Well was positively significantly correlated with Self Awareness, Managing Emotions, Self Motivation and Emotional Mentoring. And Emotional Mentoring was positively significantly correlated with Self Awareness, Managing Emotions, Self Motivation and Relating Well. From the findings of the research study, it can be safely concluded that all the dimensions of EI were strongly interrelated with one another.

TABLE 1.6: CORRELATION AMONG THE DIMENSIONS OF EI

Dimensions	Self Awareness	Managing Emotions	Self Motivation	Relating Well	Emotional Mentoring
Self Awareness	1				
Managing Emotions	0.639** (0.000)	1			
Self Motivation	0.719** (0.000)	0.626** (0.000)	1		
Relating Well	0.689** (0.000)	0.596** (0.000)	0.650** (0.000)	1	
Emotional Mentoring	0.542** (0.000)	0.552** (0.000)	0.581** (0.000)	0.725** (0.000)	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

COEFFICIENTS AMONG THE DIMENSIONS OF EI

A typical use for canonical coefficient in the experimental context is to take two sets of variables and see what is common among the two sets. By seeing how the dimensions of EI are related to each other, insights can be gained into what dimensions were common among them and how much variance was sheared.

TABLE 1.7: CANONICAL COEFFICIENTS FOR EI

Dimensions	Self Awareness	Managing Emotions	Self Motivation	Relating Well	Emotional Mentoring
Self Awareness	0.006	-0.145	0.177	-0.005	-0.085
Managing Emotions	-0.081	0.173	-0.002	0.179	-0.106
Self Motivation	-0.021	-0.160	-0.280	-0.071	0.077
Relating Well	-0.103	0.092	-0.070	-0.024	-0.051
Emotional Mentoring	0.004	-0.004	0.176	0.095	0.302

The results presented in Table 1.7 give the canonical coefficients among the dimensions of EI. From the information the following relationship is established. EI = 0.006 (Self Awareness) -0.081(Managing Emotions) -0.021 (Self Motivation) -0.103 (Relating Well) +0.004 (Emotional Mentoring). From the analysis it is found that Self Awareness (0.006) had a maximum influence on Gen X managers among all the dimensions of EI. Superior performers intentionally sought out feedback on their emotions; they wanted to listen to how others perceived them as they wanted to be aware of their emotions. That was one of the reasons, found Nilsen and Campbell,¹⁴ that people who were self-aware, high self awareness, made better performers. The finding of the present study is in agreement with the previous research studies that different dimensions of EI influence EI.

CONCLUSION

It was found from the analysis of the data that Gen X managers had medium level of EI. There were significant differences in the presence of the dimensions of EI among Gen X managers. All the five dimensions of EI were positively significantly correlated with one another. Gen X managers were found to be high in 'Self Awareness' and low in 'Self Motivation' of EI dimensions. 'Self Awareness' had the maximum influence on their EI among all the dimensions.

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