

## Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Personality: A Study in Indian Context

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**Abstract:** The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Personality among middle level management in India. For this purpose data was collected from 200 randomly selected managers both male and female from various organizations in India. An 18 items questionnaire DKEIT, concerning EI and 50 items questionnaire MPI, concerning personality was used to collect the data for the study. The findings of the study suggest that empathetic and self-confident individuals are more emotionally intelligent than the introverts, pessimists, neurotics and dominant individuals.

**Key words:** Emotional intelligence, personality, multivariable personality inventory, behavioral studies, management studies, psychometric tests, middle management

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### INTRODUCTION

Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behavior and thought. Every individual possesses a unique set of traits, behavior, attributes and features that separates him from rest of the population which we usually name as personality. Emotions are the part of human personality; they play a pivotal role in success and failure of any individual's life. There has been an increasing interest in the role of emotions in organizational life (Fineman, 1993; Higgs and Dulewicz, 1999). In this global era human resource is taken seriously and their wellness is considered as a key element of success in their personal life and professional life. The concept of emotion intelligence goes parallel with this thought. Emotional intelligence is said to be an ability to understand our own emotions as well as the emotions of others. An individual who is emotionally intelligent can manage and direct his feelings and emotions in such a manner that they can achieve higher level efficiency. The most essential proposition in the papers and research on EI is that it explains more variance in the success of individuals in their professional life than traditional measures such as IQ (Goleman, 1996, 1998; Higgs, 2001). Nowadays, most of the organizations have to face the challenges to manage with the rapid changing environment. Many organizations are influenced by instability associated with globalization, rapid

development, constant innovation and rapid changes in stakeholder's expectations, etc. Many studies have shown significant differences of human behavior, when there are changes in the surroundings (Piderit, 2000). Many of these changes connect to the personality and Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the individuals. Empirical evidence suggests that personality and EI have been essential keys to achieve organizational goals and to succeed in changing environment (Beer and Nohria, 2000). The enormous growth in interest in the concept of EI and personality is perhaps one manifestation of this trend. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and personality among middle level managers, particularly in the Indian context.

### Literature review

**Emotional Intelligence (EI):** Salovey and Mayer were the first to propose a theory of EI in academic literature. In their model, EI is defined as the ability to: perceive and express emotions, use emotions to facilitate thoughts, understand and reason with emotion and regulate emotion in the self and others (Mayer and Salovey, 1997, 1995). Mayer and Salovey's model is different from other models which define and measure EI as a set of self-perceived skills, competencies and personality traits which include optimism and self-esteem (Bar-On, 1997; Bar, 2005). On the other hand, the importance of the term emotional intelligence was accelerated by Daniel Goleman and it attracted attention of scholars, practitioners and

academicians around the globe. According to Goleman (1996, 1998), EI is an important factor in determining personal success as a student, teacher, parent and leader. Wong and Law (2002) developed Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) that supported the model developed by Mayer and Salovey (1997). Since, then various tools have been developed to measure EI based on these three models.

**Personality:** For most of the theorists personality of an individual includes all of its social, physiological and psychological aspects. In 1998, Ewen (1998) defines personality as an extensive collection of individual behavior. According to his belief in his era, there is no absolute definition of personality presented by anyone that is accepted by every researcher and academician. According to Weiten (1992), personality is defined as a human beings distinctive collection of constant behavioral characteristic. Every individual possesses different behavioral characteristics that may not be similar to anyone else. Rothbart (2004) recommends personality of an individual concerns with his intellectual abilities and his attitude about himself, his attitude about people around him and about the entire universe. With the help of remuneration and retribution, we can shape an individual's behavior, his aims and his standard of living. Funder (2001a, b) explains that according to the psychoanalytical theorist view personality is defined as a continuous cooperation between various autonomously working psychological units. Maddi (1996) defines personality by stating Carl Jung's personality theory as a psychic conflict that arises within an individual and assumes that human behavior is regulated by opposing strength of an individual and it provides the foundation of his personality (Muthayya, 1973).

**Emotional Intelligence (EI) and personality:** The relationship between EI and personality traits are interlinked because as EI is related to understanding and control of emotions which are very important in personality formation. The relationship between EI and personality has been widely investigated however the level of relationship between these two constructs depends on the measures used to assess them for instance, Brackett and Mayer (2003) found that EI is significantly correlated with extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness but fairly related to openness to experience. Sala (2004) examined that if Goleman's emotional competence inventory is used to measure (Even, 1998) then it was significantly related to extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to

experience. However, if the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test was used to access EI, only agreeableness and openness to experience were found to relate to emotional intelligence (Brackett and Mayer, 2003). The relationships between EI and personality traits have been heavily discussed in the literature. Several models of EI are closely related to personality theory, specifically the mixed models (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1996). Even the model of EI, proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) has shown statistically significant correlations with personality measures. In comparing the pure measure of EI the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test in 2002 and the NEO-PI-R, significant correlations were found between the openness and agreeableness factors of personality and EI (Brackett and Mayer, 2003).

**Objective:** The objective of the current study is to find whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and personality. Although many studies have suggested a relationship between emotional intelligence and personality however, no study has been conducted to find a relationship between DKEIT and MPI according to the researcher's knowledge. Various studies are done in India to find the relationship between EI and personality on the models developed in the western countries however no research covers the relationship between models developed in India. Therefore, the researchers conducted a study on the Indian Managers using the models developed in India.

**Conceptual framework:** Based on the literature reviewed, the study adopted the conceptual framework as indicated.

**An abstract framework illustrating the connection between emotional intelligence and personality**  
**Independent variable (emotional intelligence):**

- Emotional perception
- Emotional appraisal
- Emotional regulation

**Dependent variable (personality):**

- Empathy
- Ego ideal
- Pessimism
- Introversion
- Neuroticism
- Need achievement
- Self confidence
- Dogmatism
- Dominance

Based on the review of previous literature, the subsequent hypotheses are developed:

- H<sub>1</sub>: there is no relationship between emotional perception and personality
- H<sub>2</sub>: there is no relationship between emotional appraisal and personality
- H<sub>3</sub>: there is no relationship between emotional regulation and personality
- H<sub>4</sub>: there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and personality

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study examined the relationships between emotional intelligence and personality traits of managers from numerous industries.

**Participants and procedure:** The respondents were middle management employee's, i.e., assistant managers, managers, senior managers, team leaders, etc., from varied organizations throughout India. The sampling technique applied was disproportionate stratified sampling. Questionnaires were given to 250 respondents out of which 218 were received and a sample of 200 was finally selected.

### Measures

**Deepa Krishnaveni Emotional Intelligence Test (DKEIT):** The self-report emotional scale developed by Ranganath (2011) called Deepa Krishnaveni Emotional Intelligence Test (DKEIT) had been tailored to measure the EI of the Indian population. It consists of eighteen items that reflect the emotional intelligence of the respondents. Every item within the form delineated a work-related behavior. The higher the score, the larger the tendency a person possessed to exhibit showing emotion intelligent behavior. Ranganath (2011), defined EI as the ability to perceive various emotional stimuli associated with himself and his environment, appraise and regulate them in order to produce appropriate behavioral responses which results in improved intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. DKEIT is split into 3 constituents of EI particularly perception, appraisal and regulation and those they are outlined:

- Emotional perception is the ability of a person to interpret the varied emotional stimuli triggered by the entities of his/her environment and organize them for more processing

- Emotional appraisal is that ability of a person which allows him to understand the emotional data provided by the perception process and appraise it cognitively with regard to his/her environment to decide the acceptable responses to the stimuli
- Emotional regulation is that the ability of a person to control the response fed by the appraisal mechanism with respect to the person/object/situation so as to elicit positive outcomes

**Multivariate Personality Inventory (MPI):** In addition, to the DKEIT, Multivariate Personality Inventory (MPI) was used to measure the personality traits of the employees. This inventory was developed to assess some of the personality attributes among the administrative personnel in India. A set of personality variables was selected on the basis of the information available from various studies as it was thought that the personnel whose orientation is people centric should possess attributes similar to those of a leader either in an industrial organization or in political situation. Most of the studies in this area were done on executive leadership in industry; therefore, the qualities found to be necessary for leadership in such an organization were thought to be relevant to these personnel too. With the help of information available in literature relevant to the subject, nine personality variables were selected, viz., dominance, dogmatism, self-confidence, empathy, need achievement, introversion, neuroticism, ego-ideal and pessimism. A brief description of these variables is presented.

**Dominance:** Individual whose personalities are characterized by dominance or ascendancy will more frequently be found to occupy or emerge in leadership roles. The primary desires prevalent in such persons are for power, prestige and material gain. Some of the behavioral components of this variable are to control one's human environment to direct and to influence the behavior of others by suggestion, reduction, persuasion or command.

**Neuroticism:** This concept implies a heightened sensitivity to stressful environmental situations; a low degree of stress-tolerance. Neuroticism has been summarized in terms of four major categories: excessive and conflicting motivations, instability, inadequate coping procedures and low-esteem.

**Empathy:** This variable, otherwise known as interpersonal sensitivity, has been considered important for people especially in working environment. This involves the realization and understanding of another person's feelings, needs and sufferings. It is a self-conscious effort to share and comprehend accurately the presumed consciousness of another person.

**Need-achievement:** This implies a desire or tendency to complete with a standard of excellence where winning or doing well is the primary concern, affective concern over one's goal attainment and there is no competition, however, it involves meeting a self-imposed requirement of a good response. Any performance its outcome or the capacity to produce it is viewed, experienced and judged within a frame of reference based on various standards of excellence. Therefore, the need to achieve in definitive terms means striving to increase or keep one's own capability as high as possible in all activities in which a standard of excellence is thought to apply and where the execution of such an activity can either succeed or fail.

**Ego-ideal:** The ego-ideal is composed of all the fantasies which portray the person as a hero, accomplishing great deeds or achieving recognition. Taken together, at any stage of an individual's life, they represent his highest hope, the dramatization of himself as a man of destiny. Failure to actualize his instated fantasy depresses him. The ego ideal usually consists of a composite of internalized examples.

**Introversion:** The introvert tends to be self-oriented and introspective. Their interests run toward the intellectual and artistic and he shows more concern for abstract areas than for reality. His extreme concern for internal matters may result in insufficient attention to practical affairs and his values are more apt to be idealistic or sentimental than realistic. He tends to behave in a serious, quite, constrained, even inhibited manner and avoids social gatherings and personal involvements. The introvert tends to be highly ego-involved in achievement or in competitive situations and thus vulnerable adventure in high risk-situations. Resignation or withdrawal from the stress-situation is the natural response of the introvert.

**Self-confidence:** To be a leader in any situation, an individual must appear to make positive contribution to the group. According to some; self-confidence has a positive relationship with leadership. Therefore, self-confidence is an important variable as it indicates the extent of assurance one possesses about one's capacities and abilities are not only confronting problem situations but also in finding solution to them.

**Dogmatism:** It is any ideology regardless of content: an authoritarian outlook on life on intolerance towards those with opposing beliefs and a sufferance of those with similar beliefs; a closed way of thinking. To say that a person is dogmatic or that his belief-system is closed is to say something about the way he believes and the way he thinks not only about single issues but also about networks of issues.

**Pessimism:** It is a tendency to look upon the future with uncertainty, disbelief or disdain accompanied, sometimes, by expectation of negative happenings regardless of the actualities of the situation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Demographic profile of respondents:** Female represented 52 or 26% and male represented 148 or 74% of the respondents. About 75 or 37.5% of the respondents were aged between 20-30 years old, 64 or 32% were between 31-40, 30 or 15% between 41-50 and 31 or 15.5% were above the age of 51. Frequencies for gender and age are shown in Fig. 1 and 2, respectively. The descriptive statistics of the data are given in Table 1 and 2.

**Reliability:** The cronbach's alpha value for dependent variable EI was 0.741 and for independent variable personality was 0.676 (Table 3 and 4).

### Correlation:

- $H_1$ : there is no relationship between emotional perception and personality

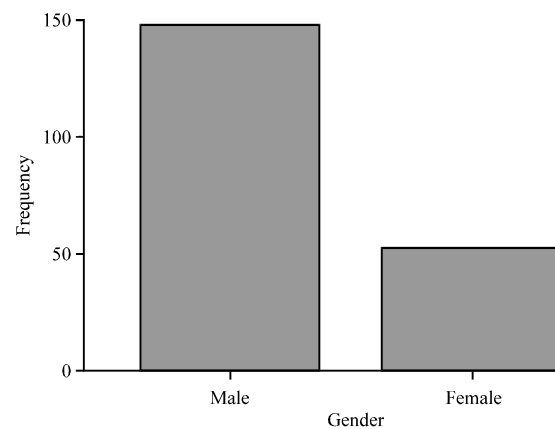


Fig. 1: Gender distribution

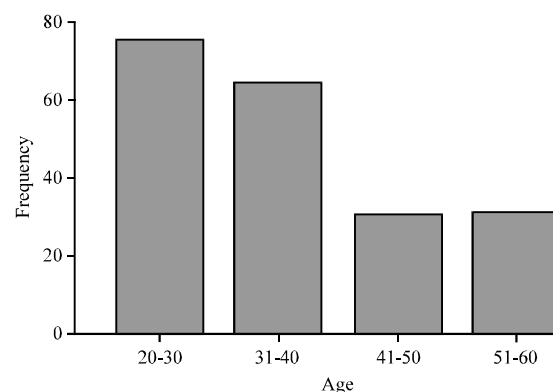


Fig. 2: Age distribution

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variables	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception	200	16	4	20	14.76	4.404
Appraisal	200	12	8	20	17.39	2.542
Regulation	200	35	25	60	50.15	8.258
EI	200	52	48	100	82.30	11.005
Empathy	200	5	0	5	3.47	1.129
Ego ideal	200	6	0	6	3.44	1.239
Pessimism	200	6	0	6	2.79	1.596
Introversion	200	6	0	6	2.81	1.534
Neuroticism	200	7	0	7	3.96	1.829
Need achievement	200	6	0	6	3.22	1.187
Self confidence	200	5	0	5	2.58	1.226
Dogmatism	200	5	0	5	2.82	1.239
Dominance	200	5	1	6	4.10	1.220

Table 2: DKEIT reliability

Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
0.741	18

Table 3: MPI reliability

Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
0.676	50

Table 4: Correlation between managers emotional perception and personality type

Variables	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Empathy	0.273**	0.000
Ego ideal	0.097	0.173
Pessimism	-0.067	0.344
Introversion	-0.135	0.056
Neuroticism	-0.035	0.624
Need achievement	0.010	0.887
Self confidence	0.298**	0.000
Dogmatism	-0.061	0.388
Dominance	0.091	0.202

Table 5: Correlation between managers emotional appraisal and personality type

Variables	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Empathy	0.191**	0.007
Ego ideal	0.009	0.899
Pessimism	-0.142*	0.045
Introversion	-0.188**	0.008
Neuroticism	-0.080	0.261
Need achievement	-0.035	0.620
Self confidence	0.249**	0.000
Dogmatism	-0.077	0.281
Dominance	-0.097	0.172

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 shows the relationship between one dimension of emotional intelligence, i.e., emotional perception and nine personality traits. The results of correlation suggest there is a strong positive relationship between emotional perception and empathy and emotional perception and self-confidence. All the other personality traits; ego ideal, pessimism, introversion, neuroticism, need achievement, dogmatism and dominance have no relationship with emotional perception. This indicates that the individuals who are able to perceive emotions well tend to be more empathetic and self-confident as compared to those who are not aware of the emotions of themselves and others:

Table 6: Correlation between managers emotional regulation and personality type

Variables	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Empathy	0.417**	0.000
Ego ideal	0.028	0.695
Pessimism	-0.190**	0.007
Introversion	-0.301**	0.000
Neuroticism	-0.088	0.215
Need achievement	0.014	0.849
Self confidence	0.483**	0.000
Dogmatism	-0.004	0.958
Dominance	0.088	0.216

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

- H<sub>2</sub>: there is no relationship between emotional appraisal and personality

Correlation between managers emotional appraisal and personality traits is shown in Table 6. The correlation coefficient indicated quite a strong positive relationship between emotional appraisal and empathy and emotional appraisal and self-confidence. On the other hand, the results indicate a negative relationship between emotional appraisal and pessimism and emotional appraisal and introversion. This suggests that people who are able to access emotions are empathetic and self-confident on the other hand the negative correlation suggests that individuals who are optimistic as opposed to pessimists can access their emotions and emotions of others and also the people who are extrovert as compared to introvert can access emotions. The results show that introverts and pessimists find it difficult to appraise emotions as compared to others.

- H<sub>3</sub>: there is no relationship between emotional regulation and personality

The results of correlation between emotional regulation and personality are given in Table 7. Similar to the results of emotional appraisal and personality the correlation coefficient of emotional regulation and personality also indicate a positive correlation between

Table 7: Correlation between managers emotional intelligence and personality type

Variables	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Empathy	0.467**	0.000
Ego ideal	0.062	0.385
Pessimism	-0.203**	0.004
Introversion	-0.323**	0.000
Neuroticism	-0.099	0.165
Need achievement	0.006	0.932
Self confidence	0.539**	0.000
Dogmatism	-0.045	0.527
Dominance	0.080	0.262

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

empathy and self-confidence with emotional regulation. Pessimism and introversion are again negatively correlated with emotional regulation. The results show that people who can regulate or use their emotions are empathetic and self-confident whereas pessimists and introverts are not able to regulate emotions which thereby suggest that optimistic people and extroverts can also regulate their emotions and emotions of others:

- H<sub>4</sub>: there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and personality

The result of correlation between emotional intelligence and personality is fairly same as that of the various dimensions of emotional intelligence. Table shows the correlation coefficient of the overall emotional intelligence of managers with their personality traits. The results indicate positive correlation of emotional intelligence with empathy and self-confidence and negative correlations with pessimism and introversion. This means that emotionally intelligent people are more empathetic and confident about themselves also emotionally intelligent people tend to be optimistic.

In the present study, the researcher examined the correlation between various dimensions of emotional intelligence, i.e., emotional perception, emotional appraisal, emotional regulation and nine different personality traits empathy, ego-ideal, pessimism, introversion, neuroticism, need achievement, self-confidence, dogmatism and dominance to find out whether there is any relationship between EI and personality using DKEIT and MPI as tools for EI and personality, respectively. The results showed a positive relationship between EI and empathy and self-confidence, also, it shows a negative relationship between EI and pessimism and introversion. The results of this study are similar to Mayer *et al.* (2000, 2002) study which also examined that emotionally intelligent people are empathetic, also the study of the NEO-PI-R feelings sub items states "I find it easy to empathize with others to feel myself what others are feeling" also suggest the same. Our findings are similar to Athota *et al.* (2009) who suggested that EI contributed as significant positive

predictor of personality traits included extraversion and inversely predicted pessimism. The correlation analysis of our study shows that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and ego-ideal, neuroticism, need achievement, dogmatism and dominance. Emotional perception is independent of ego-ideal, pessimism, introversion, neuroticism, need-achievement, dogmatism and dominance whereas it is positively correlated with empathy and self-confidence. Emotional appraisal and emotional regulation both are positively correlated with two personality traits, empathy and self-confidence on the other hand, they are negatively correlated with pessimism and introversion.

## CONCLUSION

The assertion that personality should be used by organizations to develop the EI of people (Dainty and Anderson, 2000) suggests a strong relationship between personality and EI. The current study shows that there is a relationship between EI and personality even though it's not very comprehensive or strong. The reason may be methodological limitations, nature of the current sample with respect to the bias in terms of gender and organizational level. The findings elucidate that EI demonstrated positive correlation with empathy and self-confidence significant inverse correlation with pessimism and introversion. The findings of the study are important as no research has been done to find the relationship between DKEIT and MPI and the results of a relationship between these two will add to the current literature on emotional intelligence and personality. In addition, the scales used to evaluate EI and personality were developed by Western scholars and tested in a western setting. Therefore, it is believed that the researcher's culture is likely to bias the design of the research instrument (Hofstede, 1991). Therefore, it was desirable to conduct a study in the Indian context on the Indian managers by using the tools which were developed in India.

## LIMITATIONS

There appears to be a need to conduct further studies in wider range of organizations in order to test further the findings and build a more generalizable basis for interpretation of the results. The development of a better result would be aided if further studies would be conducted on larger population with more balanced sample in terms of gender. Further, research into the role of MPI analysis as an aid to developing EI could be warranted as a result of this study. More studies could include studies of development programs which use MPI as a core component and in which individual EI is

assessed at the start of the program and after a period of sustained development to ascertain how actions to build MPI functions may impact on the development of EI. The data was collected exclusively through self-report method, without the inclusion of multiple sources; this may be an issue that contributes to the weaknesses of the study. The relationship between our variables of study may have been inflated due to response bias. The demographic information related to gender, age, income and education is also significant for studying the relationship between these variables.

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