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Gülbeniz Akduman and Zeynep Hatipoğlu and Zeki  
Yüksekbilgili

Istanbul Arel University / Istanbul-Turkey, Nisantasi University /  
Istanbul-Turkey, Avrasya University / Trabzon-Turkey

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## A Research about Emotional Intelligence on Generations

Gülbeniz Akduman<sup>1</sup>

Zeynep Hatipoğlu<sup>2</sup>

Zeki Yüksekbilgili<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

Success in the workplace takes a lot more than education, book knowledge or experience. Organizations and the conscious, achievement-oriented managers needs a high rate of "emotional intelligence" to be successful. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage personal emotions and the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence (EQ) matters just as much as intellectual ability (IQ). In the research Chan's (2006) EI12 scale was used for the measure of emotional intelligence. The main question of the study is to analyze the emotional intelligence according to generations. In this study, it is proved that there is a no significant difference about emotional intelligence in different generations.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, EI, generations

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) has become a major topic of interest in scientific and academic circles as well as in the public and private sector (Mortana, Ripolla, Carvalhob, Bernala, 2014: 97). The contrary this philosophical and cultural background that the new notion of EI has become important in psychology.

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<sup>1</sup> Istanbul Arel University / Istanbul-Turkey, E- mail: [gulbeniz@akduman.com](mailto:gulbeniz@akduman.com)

<sup>2</sup> Nisantasi University / Istanbul-Turkey, E-Mail: [zynhatipoglu@gmail.com](mailto:zynhatipoglu@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Avrasya University / Trabzon-Turkey, E- mail: [zeki@yuksekbilgili.com](mailto:zeki@yuksekbilgili.com)

Emotional intelligence involves the capacity to accomplish faithful analysis about emotions and the capacity to employ feelings, emotions, and emotional knowledge to augment thought, incorporating particular expertness and suggesting that this distinctive expertness may also be considered as constituting a united, general emotional intelligence (Ljungholm, 2014: 128). Despite the fact that a variety of concepts similar to EI have been proposed over the years, modern interest in EI began with Salovey and Mayer's article defining EI (JR.O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, Story, 2011: 789).

Over the past several decades, the concept of emotional intelligence has once again become popular (Cherniss, 2010: 110). Emotional intelligence is significant and useful for various fields. Since 1990's emotional intelligence has been studied considerably researchers focused on the possible outcomes of interrelating the construct with the outcomes of life, such as business, psychology or education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Mayer and Salovey (1989) was first defined emotional intelligence (EI) as "The subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey, Mayer, 1989: 189). Their resources point out that a coherent conceptual model of EI, which differentiated multiple aspects or province of emotional abilities, such as emotion perception and emotion management. They besides developed a series of tests for assessment of EI, culminating in the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test. This test has been used a lot of research and covered different subjects (Matthews, Zeidner, Roberts, 2012: 106).

Daniel Goleman defines emotional intelligence as: "The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those in others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman, 1998: 16). The concept of EI has been

popularized by Daniel Goleman's (1995) influential book "Emotional Intelligence" in which he claimed that EI can matter more than IQ and suggested a redefining of what it means to be smart. Goleman's book argues that effective business leaders are distinguished not by their education, native intelligence (IQ) or subject knowledge, but by emotional intelligence, which in the context of the workplace includes characteristics like self-awareness and self-control; the ability to communicate and influence others; and facility at building bonds and creating group synergies (Goleman, 1995).

There are many definitions of the emotional intelligence in the literature. Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary defines emotional intelligence as: "The ability to understand the way people feel and react and to use this skill to make good judgments and to avoid or solve problems" (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/emotional-intelligence>). Spielberg (2004) has suggested three major models of emotional intelligence:

- The Salovey and Mayer Model: Model defines emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions to facilitate thinking. It contains four subscales: perceiving emotions, using emotions to simplify thought, understanding and managing emotions (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2000: 396).
- The Bar-On Model: Model emphasizes on an interrelated emotional and social competencies measured by self-report. The self-report consists of five scales: intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood. (Baron, 2010: 55).
- The Goleman Model: Model describes the construct as competencies and skills that are controlled by emotional being. It has five subscales: self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and managing relationships (Goleman, 1998).

It is not new that workplaces have generational differences, but the importance of these differences is new and poses inimitable challenges for organizations worldwide. Today's multigenerational workplaces require that organizations understand and value diversity in

order to benefit from it; after all, the need to feel important and respected cuts through all generations. In the current period, employee needs are significantly changing and organizations are in a constant search of motivation. Emotional intelligence is very significant to a multigenerational workplace in that it enhances employee productivity, employee happiness, job satisfaction and leadership proficiency; in addition, it creates mutual employee-employer relationships which increase employee's commitment to an organization (Njoroge, Yazdanifard, 2014: 34).

In today's workplace, where it's not uncommon to find four or five generations, multiple languages, many ethnicities and races and differences in gender, religion, personalities and values (Gardenswartz, Cherbosque, Rowe, 2008). There's also a more fundamental changes to today's shifts. In past generational changes, new workers tended to adjust their expectations and behavior to the realities of the organizations and workplace. Today's new generations expect the workplace will adjust to them ad – for better or worse – it is, as our co-worker's experience demonstrates in a small way. Emotional intelligence improves the skills leaders need to understand the behavior of workers and motivation of co-workers with different values and to find the common ground that can build a cohesive, effective team to tackle the tasks at hand ([http://www.haygroup.com/downloads/fi/emotional\\_intelligence\\_leadership\\_prescription\\_for\\_tough\\_times\\_final.pdf](http://www.haygroup.com/downloads/fi/emotional_intelligence_leadership_prescription_for_tough_times_final.pdf)).

Researchers wondered whether generational differences also exist in the vital workplace skill of emotional intelligence recognizing and managing your own emotions and those of others. Analysis of more than 6,000 individuals tested using the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal® revealed a sizeable difference in the core emotional intelligence skill of self-management. Notably, Generation Y and Baby Boomers the two largest groups in today's workforce have a massive gap between their abilities to self-manage. Coming of age with too many video games, instantaneous internet gratification is responsible for Generation Y's lagging self-

management skills also adoring parents have created a generation of self-indulgent young workers who can't help but wear their emotions on their sleeves in tense situations. However, a deeper look reveals another explanation. Even within the same generation, older people have better EQ skills than younger despite sharing the same generational influences. Self-management appears to increase with age. Experience and maturity facilitate the mastery of one's emotions (<http://www.talentsmart.com/articles/Great-Divide:-The-Generational-Gap-in-Emotional-Intelligence-1404193582-p-1.html>).

### **Objectives**

The main objective of this research are to examine whether there is any significant difference about emotional intelligence in baby boomers, x generation and y generation.

### **Testing of Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a no significant difference about emotional intelligence in different generations.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The main scale used to measure emotional intelligence is Chan's (2006) EI12 scale. The survey questionnaire is used as a research instrument which captures the general information about the emotional intelligence level of the employer using five-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 being "Not Important" to 5 "Most Important".

The original scale was implemented to Turkish by Konakay (2013). The implemented scales Cronbach Alfa coefficient was found as 0,813 (Konakay, 2013: 131).

In this study, the survey has been conducted as face to face survey and the researchers has managed to have 216 working surveys. Respondents have also been asked to define their generation depending on their birth dates.

The following birth date is used to define the generations of the respondents;

- Baby Boomers; born between the dates of 1946 through 1964.
- X generation; born between the dates of 1965 through 1979.
- Y generation; born between the dates of 1980 through 1999.

The below table shows the descriptive statistics of the respondents depending on their generation.

Table 1: The descriptive statistics of the respondents.

Baby Boomers		X Generation		Y Generation	
Count	N %	Count	N %	Count	Z %
16	7,4%	57	26,4%	143	66,2%

The statistical software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 has been used to perform all statistical calculations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained has been scanned for differences according to generations. The Kruskal-Wallis H test is a rank-based nonparametric test that can be used to determine if there are statistically significant differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on a continuous or ordinal dependent variable. Due that data is not normally distributed Kruskal-Wallis H test is conducted.

A Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that there was not a statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence between the different generations,  $\chi^2(2) = 4.031$ ,  $p = 0.133$ , with a mean rank emotional intelligence level of 135.56 for baby boomers, 106.98 for x generation and 105.74 for y generation.

Therefore it can be concluded that there is a no significant difference about emotional intelligence in different generations.

## CONCLUSIONS

Emotional intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them. Organizations and the conscious, achievement-oriented managers needs a high rate of "emotional intelligence" to be successful. In conclusion, there are currently many academic studies about emotional intelligence.

Each generation grew up in a different time with different values. Managing this gap can be quite a challenge if you see every employee through the eyes of your generation. Other people of different generations, genders, management status, backgrounds, and cultures who have different values, ideas, ways of communicating and getting things.

One of the most important management challenge is to manage generation X and Y together. With the generational differences in work life, organizations and leaders must have some idea of how to relate to different generations. So, the researches defining specific differences between these generations are important to overcome this challenge. This study aimed to analyze the emotional intelligence according to generations, and as a result, it is proved that emotional intelligence does not differ between generation X and Y. Each generation has different values and frame of mind but emotional intelligence is unconnected and common variable therefore emotional intelligence should be evaluated independently of generations.

The findings of the study are limited by use due to its focusing on employees of İstanbul (in Turkey). Finally, a frequency scale may not be appropriate to evaluate all the items of EI12 although it was used in this study based on the original scale. In future studies would be interesting to use another alternative scale more fitted to the items. Also in future studies a



comparison between private and public sector workers, increasing the number of participants would be very appropriate.

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