Corporate Leadership: A Study of the Emotional Intelligence Skills in Growing in the Corporate World

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Abstract: *There is a growing interest in exploring the emotional intelligence of corporate leaders. The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective performance of corporate leaders. Many researchers have observed that there is an inextricable link between thoughts and emotions and current research is revealing the ways in which emotions can influence thinking and decision-making. And corporate with high employee engagement are more successful that those with low engagement. The research that does exist argues much of the driving force behind engagement is controlled by external factors such as available resources, working environment and leadership support, but research focused on individual characteristics, such as emotional intelligence, has yet to be studied. This research sought to better understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement. Taking a quantitative, non-experimental approach, the research utilised the Likert scale to measure emotional intelligence of 300 corporate leaders span worldwide representing varied corporate world. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that corporate leaders could better develop effective leadership skills by becoming more aware of their strengths and weakness in the area of emotional intelligence, along with improving their leadership behaviours.*

Key Words: *Emotions, Emotional Intelligence, Social Intelligence, Corporate Leader, Globalisation.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Effective management, according to Bennett and Langford (1983), is the achieved success of measured goals and productivity using the ability to manage people, gets along with people and manage emotions (Zeidner, Matthews &Roberts, 2004). Competent managers with strong leadership skills are scare (Cafolla, 2008). Since the start of the global recession in December 2007, corporate began to increasingly scrutinize their operating costs and a steady stream of layoffs followed. Following reductions, the remaining workforce is often left to cope with similar workload demands and drastically reduced resources. The result can be a significant decrease in employee engagement, which research has shown to be a key indicator of positive business outcomes (Harter, Hayes & Schmidt, 2002).

It is important to note that employee engagement is strongly influenced by the employee's manager (Harter et al., 2002). Hughes, Thompson and Terrell (2009) explained that engaging people at work requires an ongoing series of activities that stir employees' caring and involvement related to the corporate and their work. They speculated that leaders' emotional intelligence is critical to this effort. Moreover, examining the work of leadership theorists such as Bass (1990), Kobe, Reiter-Palmon and Rickers (2001) and Mayer and Salovey (1993) further indicates that the associated construct of social intelligence also plays an important role in engagement.

2. BACKGROUND:

In the middle to late 1990's there were a number of definitions and constructs that were proposed as emotional intelligence. Some proposed definitions of emotional intelligence took centre stage and gained widespread popularity beyond academia, for example Goleman's (1995) bestselling book on Emotional Intelligence. During this time, many of the proposed definitions of emotional intelligence had not yet been evaluated through rigorous testing for validity and reliability. This phenomenon created confusion among both practitioners and researchers on what really is emotional intelligence.

However, during the late 1990s and early 21st century many researchers had conducted a variety of investigations on the validity and reliability of various proposed constructs of emotional intelligence and concluded that the emotional intelligence construct proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) is indeed a type of intelligence. Emotional intelligence (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006) has been identified as a critical component of effective leadership and has increasingly become the topic of recent research. Past studies were conducted with self-reported data. The relationship between emotional intelligence and corporate leadership has not been significantly demonstrated from the multiple-source perspective (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006). Nevertheless in the corporate sector there is currently a lack of research evidence on the practical significance of emotional intelligence and the corporate leadership performance.

Though, according to Jordon (2008) many practitioners claim that emotional intelligence is making a difference in information technology (Levinson, 2003); in human resource management (Neely-Martinez, 1997), in finance (Kirch, Tucker & Kirch, 2001) and in management (Myers & Tucker, 2005).

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Emotional intelligence is significant to many fields; little research has been conducted on emotional intelligence in the context of corporate leadership and corporate success. The problem is that emotional intelligence, though considered significant to many fields, is not in the context of corporate leadership and corporate success. Research by Goleman (1998, as cited in Turner, 2004) showed business performance improved when leaders exhibit high levels of many or all emotional intelligence competencies, particularly initiative, empathy, mentoring, teamwork, self-confidence and achievement orientation. Cote and Miners (2006) posited that studies on emotional intelligence and job performance are positively related. Unless the shortcomings of corporate success are addressed, the corporate sector will continue to experience high rates of failures.

4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this study was to provide more insight on the relative importance of the essential emotional intelligence skills and corporate leadership competencies identified in the literature review. This article accomplished that purpose by investigating the essential emotional intelligence skills, corporate leadership competencies, characteristics and desired behaviours of corporate leaders. These competencies and behaviours are required to successfully lead and influence followers and host nation counterparts in multinational corporate. This study utilised quantitative questionnaire to access and analyse the relative importance and effectiveness of the emotional intelligence skills and corporate leadership competencies of the corporate. The specific research population was the corporate leaders across the globe.

The purpose of the study is to verify existing research found in the literature review and to fill gaps identified in existing knowledge. Existing research exposes a foundation of knowledge on the topic of effective corporate leadership. Corporate leadership does have different meanings for different people. So understanding more about the effectiveness of corporate leadership will help leaders to better understand their constituencies which could lead to greater corporate results.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

One of the significant challenges corporate facing is that the demand for leaders exceeds the supply (Parry & Sihna, 2005; Bernthal & Wellins, 2007). The current study was important because there is a continuous need for effective corporate leaders who can respond to the ongoing demand for flexibility and to the continuous and accelerated rate of change (Lester et al., 2006). The purpose of this research study is to examine whether there exists any relationship between leader's emotional intelligence and corporate success. According to Bliss (2006), various studies have determined that emotional intelligence is very important in the development of a leader's ability to accomplish goals. Corporate leaders who develop their emotional intelligence have a greater opportunity of building successful relationships among peers, subordinates, superiors and customers (Bliss, 2006).

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The research study examined the relationship of emotional intelligence and critical thinking to corporate leadership. The specific research questions of the study were as follows:
1. What are the relationships between emotional intelligence and critical thinking of corporate leadership?
2. How do emotional intelligence and critical thinking skills together serve as an effective predictor for corporate leadership?
3. How do emotional intelligence and critical thinking independently serve as effective predictors for corporate leadership?

The following statements of hypothesis correspond to the research questions and were tested in the study:
H_o: The prominence of emotional intelligence skills is not growing in the corporate world in the era of globalisation.
H_1: The prominence of emotional intelligence skills is growing the corporate world in the ear of post globalisation.

7. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Since business corporate are ubiquitous and ineradicable (Scott, 2003), one might infer that leaders share similar attributes. As a human social phenomenon, leadership has been topic of thought and discussion for centuries (Bass, 1990). Only recently have corporate researchers begun considering the dynamics of thinking and feeling as factors relevant to leadership (Ashkanasy, 2002; Hartley, 2004)

There is a growing awareness of the requirement for human dimension in leadership (Pauchant, 2005). The linking of a leader and the feelings held toward a leader influence overall perceptions of that leader (Brown &

Keeping, 2005). Effective leaders ensure that followers feel comfortable and at ease with their leadership style (Stern, 2004). Challahan et al., (2005) suggested that, without including the emotional social dimension the framing of leadership success was not possible.

Before exploring what emotional intelligence is, a definition of the two terms used in the construct must be discussed. First, emotions are defined as responses to an event or situation, either internal or external that have a positive or negative meaning for the person (Salovey & Mayer, 2007). Emotions heighten awareness and redirect attention where needed (Caruso, 2008). They act as a signal which requires one of three following responses:

- A change in the relationship between individuals,
- A change in the relationship between the individual and the environment, or
- An internal perception of a change in relationships.

Each emotion triggers a reaction. Next, the meaning of intelligence must be clarified, as intelligence has many different meanings to different people. In the context of this study, intelligence will be defined as the ability to think abstractly. Emotional intelligence, then, in its simplest terms can come to describe the intersection between emotion and cognition (Mayer et al, 2007).

Emotional intelligence has its roots in social intelligence, which was first identified by Thorndike in 1920 (Law, Wong & Song, 2004). Gardnser asserted that multiple intelligences were as important to learning as the cognitive dimension (Opengart, 2005). The construct of emotional intelligence was first defined in the germinal work of Salovay and Mayer in 1990 as the skill by which individuals, through understanding and differentiating their emotional states, leverage that knowledge in social interaction (Feyerherm & Rice, 2002). Emotional intelligence, the ability to understand people and human interactions (Goleman, 1995), has become a significant factor, even surpassing cognitive intelligence, for effective performance at all levels with organisations (Goleman, 1998; Harvey et al., 2006).

The social world is rapidly changing and interpersonal social skills and emotional intelligence have been becoming increasingly critical to successful corporate operations (Harvey et al., 2006). The ability to effectively interrelate emotionally is rapidly being recognised as a vital leadership skill (Goleman, 1998; Barbuto & Burbach, 2006). Corporate leaders and researchers see emotional intelligence as a mechanism for improved performance of the corporate (Goleman et al, 2001, Kart, 2003; Robbins, 2005).

A significant number of studies have shown the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership (Boyatzis & Van Oosten, 2003). As leaders ascend the organisational hierarchy, emotional intelligence increases in significance, explaining up to 90% of the differences in leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 1998). Self awareness is important to leaders (Harvey et al., 2006). Goleman et al., (2001) suggested that managing people's emotional self is the primary task of emotional leadership. Through self awareness, self management and empathy, leaders can improve mood relationships, management and transparency.

Passion, compassion and empathy, as fulcrum points of emotional intelligence, depend on the leader's ability to manage emotions. Considered leadership strength, passion is the fundamental energy driving intense emotion (Chang, 2004). Emotions are not self contained phenomena. A leader's emotional mood affects the mood of the organisation (Goleman et al., 2001; Macaluso, 2003).

Mayer, Goleman, Barrett and Guststein et al., (2004) stated that leaders must manage corporate mood. Leading with passion and compassion is an effective approach to accomplishing mood control. Not only do leaders need to understand the mood of the corporate but they must be able to respond (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). Empathy, as the sensitivity and capacity to be touched by the feeling of others, is a crucial skill for leaders (Macaluso, 2003). Developing emotional intelligence in the workforce has the potential to save costs in corporate projects because emotional intelligence helps workers work together in the quick - paced, technology - driven knowledge world (Schick, 2004). Since emotions influence and drive corporate behaviour, understanding emotional intelligence increases the ability to address constant change (Richards, 2004). According to Richards, (2004), integrative change that reverberated across the spiritual, emotional, behavioural and cognitive dimensions, occurred in practice within the phenomenon of leadership. As leaders, team members must take into account the multiple dimensions of the spiritual, emotional, behavioural and cognitive realms as they persuade others to influence corporate change.

8. METHODOLOGY:

There are two principal research paradigms that can be used in business research, namely – the positivistic and a phenomenological / interpretivism paradigm. According to Bryman and Bell (2007), positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond. The role of positivism as stated by Anderson (2004) resides in searching for facts in terms of clarifying the relationship between variables before identifying a data collection pattern through statistical approaches as followed in quantitative research procedures. According to Collis and Hussey (2003), the positivistic approach concentrates on facts and the causes of social events, paying modest respect to the subjective state of the individual.

The quantitative research is built on a numerical measurement of specific characteristics relation to a phenomenon. Quantitative approaches employ deductive logic, moving from the general to the specific. The tools used to carry out quantitative research tend to be surveys and questionnaires (Coombes, 2001). It is a very structured approach and is most often focused on objectivity, generalisability and reliability (Collis & Hussey, 2003). The key advantage of the quantitative approach, therefore, is that it is based on fact and reliable data that enables researchers to generalize their findings to the population from which the sample has been drawn.

A non-experimental research design is an appropriate approach to determine if a specific treatment (Emotional Intelligence skills of a corporate leader) influences an outcome (corporate leadership skills and effectiveness of the corporate) using a sample that is not randomly assigned to a treatment or comparator group (Creswell, 2014).

A questionnaire according to Collies and Hussey (2003) can be used to gather data, when the issues which arise are likely to be confidential and sensitive and give respondents more time to consider their answers. The questionnaire survey, as defined by McDaniel and Gates (2002) is comprised of a set of questions designed to generate the evidence necessary to accomplish the objectives of the research study. It is a method of getting answers to the research questions based on designing specific questions to be answered by the research participants (Robson, 2004). Questionnaires as a survey method may be viewed as a comparatively simple and uncomplicated means of examining participants' attitudes, values, beliefs and motives. When the survey includes sensitive issues, a questionnaire affords a high level of confidentiality and anonymity (Robson, 2004).

The questionnaire consisted of five close-ended questions with an open-ended section at the end of the questionnaire for participants to add any further comments about their perception on the psychodynamic skills. The response scales took the form of the Likert Scale. The Likert scale is one of the most widely used response scales in research and is used to evaluate behaviour, attitude or other phenomenon on a continuum. Rating scales simplify and more easily quantify peoples' behaviours or attitudes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). A neutral response option has not been given which might prove a bit disastrous if the majority of the respondents decide to choose this, thus posing a danger of not being able to conduct an optimal evaluation.

The sample size is a significant characteristic with any empirical study in which the goal is to make assumptions about a population based on a sample. Indeed, the sample size used in the study was determined based on the data collection figures and the need to obtain sufficient statistical power (Saunders et al., 2009). Saunders et al., added that the larger the sample size, lower the likely error in generalizing to the population.

The survey was distributed to a purposeful sample of 300 participants includes corporate leaders from different spectrum, represents different areas of specialization and comprises different sectors. Statisticians contend that as a sample size increases, variability (i.e., effort variance) decreases and power increases. As power increases to detect a false null hypothesis, there is an increased risk of falsely rejecting a true null hypothesis.

9. ANALYSIS:

The survey asked a series of questions in order to establish whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence skills of a corporate leader and the effectiveness of the corporate. And the focus of the research and the survey is to find out whether the prominence of emotional intelligence skills is increasing in the growing corporate world. This section provides a summary of the information that was collected through a questionnaire. The following tables and figures provide a snapshot of emotional intelligence skills of corporate leader.

Table 1: Open to Criticism

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	Dis-Agree	Total	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1	In your opinion, a leader should not become defensive when criticized.	39 (13)	96 (32)	135 (45)	84 (28)	81 (27)	165 (55)

Most of the people were of opinion that every leader is subjected to criticism always. It is necessary quality of leader to evaluate the criticism. If he thinks that criticism is destructive then he must not react but respond sensitively through his action. if he bothers about criticisms then he is sure to lose the confidence levels, his performance derails. If such is done he is sure to fail in discharging the duties and responsibilities.
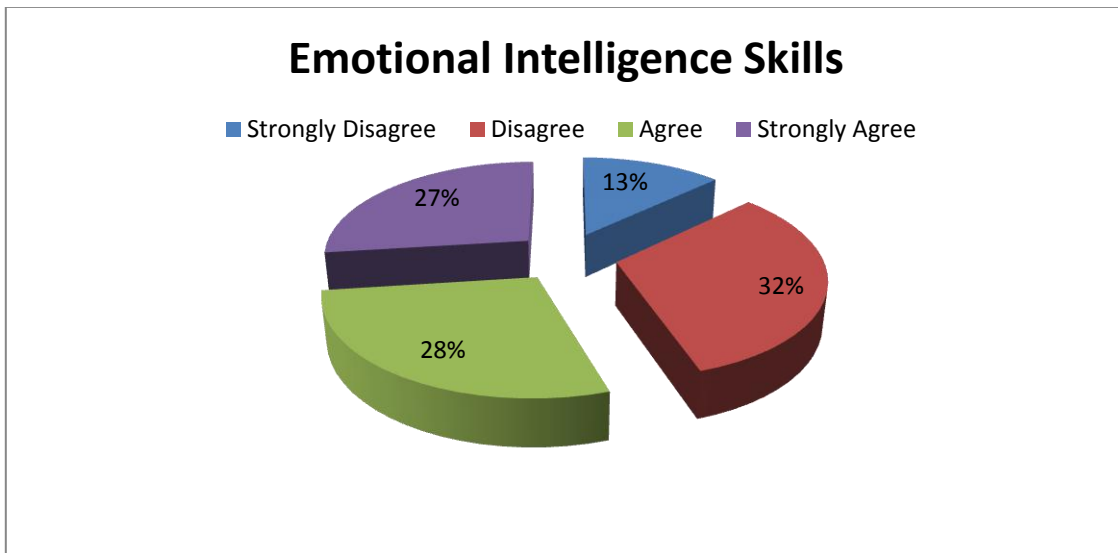
Figure 1: Open to Criticism

Table 2: Feedback for Growth

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	**Dis-Agree**	**Total**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
2	In your opinion, a leader utilizes criticism and other feedback for growth.	42 (14)	84 (28)	126 (42)	75 (25)	99 (33)	174 (58)

Most of the people were of opinion that If it is a positive criticism then he has to accept the criticism without any second thought. Through this he will be able to understand the flaws in his performance. He must try to observe the reasons for such criticism, understand the deviations, and try to overcome them.
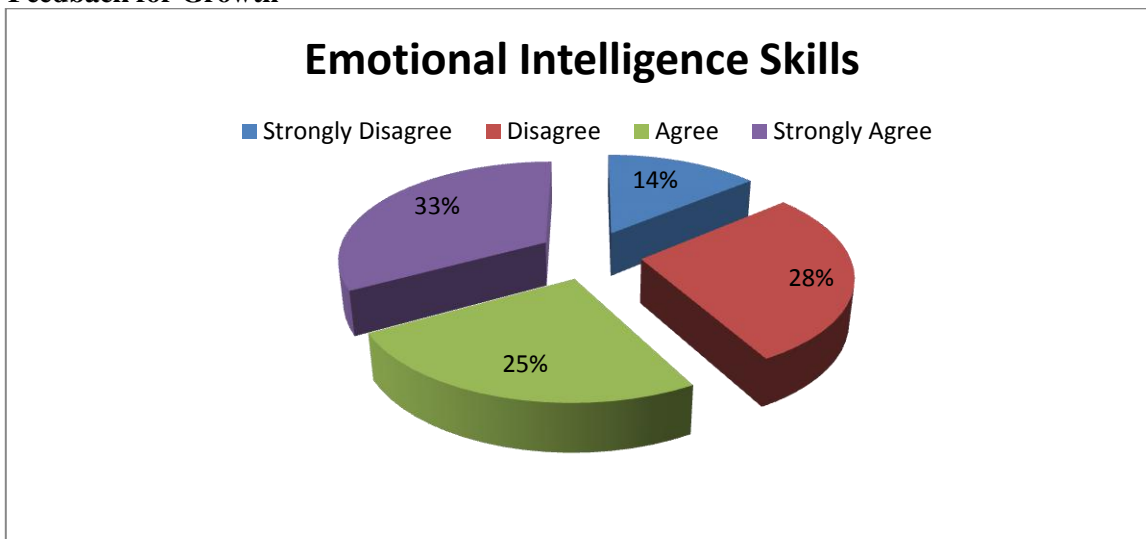
Figure 2: Feedback for Growth

Table 3: Managing Stress

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	**Dis-Agree**	**Total**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
3	In your opinion, a leader manages anxiety, stress, anger and fear in pursuit of goal.	51 (17)	90 (30)	141 (47)	90 (30)	69 (23)	159 (53)

Most of the people were of opinion that every leader should manage the workforces who have diversified attitudes and personalities. We know that no two people have same set of attributes. No two people have same psychology. So there is a chance that leader gets frustrated in some situations. He must not be caught in such situations instead he must have good control over the emotions like anger, fear, and anxiety. He must manage the stress effectively then only he become a true leader and then will be able to enjoy his job. Frustrated leader loose his temperament, loses control, criticises other, and finally looses mental peace and sometimes results in loosing health. According to the opinion of respondents- if leader sets goals where as a leader with good emotional intelligence achieves goal by managing stress.
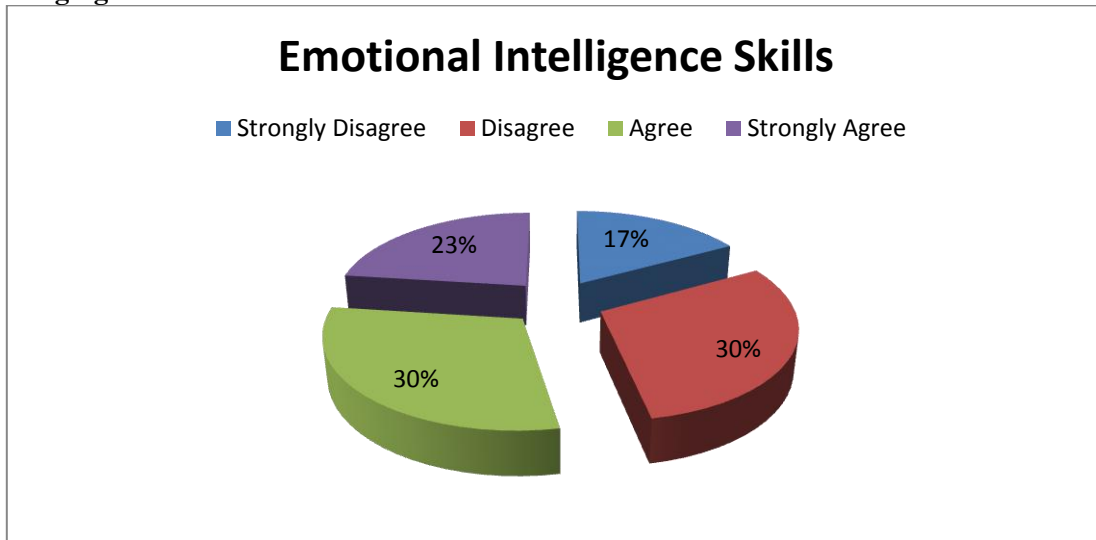
Figure 3: Managing Stress

Table 4: Patience Listening

		Non-Agree			Agree		
	Indicator	**Strongly Disagree**	**Dis-Agree**	**Total**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
4	In your opinion, a leader listens without jumping to judgement.	45 (15)	75 (25)	120 (40)	60 (20)	120 (40)	180 (60)

Most of respondents were of opinion that decision making should be performed after careful observation and listening. A leader should not take hasty decisions. He should listen carefully and with good controlled thought, he should analyse the situations, allow the discussions to happen through participatory approach and finally take the decisions. He must carefully listen and then take a decision. He should respond after careful listening and attention rather than reacting to the situations
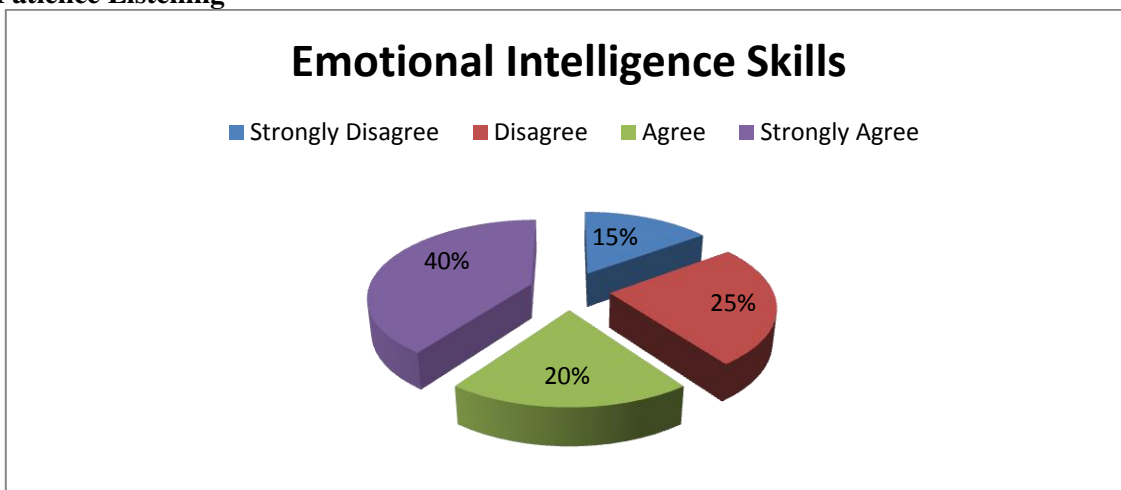
Figure 4: Patience Listening

Table 5: Neutral Perspective

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	**Dis-Agree**	**Total**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
5	In your opinion, a leader tries to see things from another's perspective.	66 (22)	75 (25)	141 (47)	48 (16)	111 (37)	159 (53)

Most of the respondents are of opinion that leaders should be empathetic in nature. They said that the decisions must not be taken from his point of view. He has to take the decisions by understanding the feelings and emotions of members of group which he lead. Stepping into shoes of others is the right option for any leader.

Figure 5: Neutral Perspective
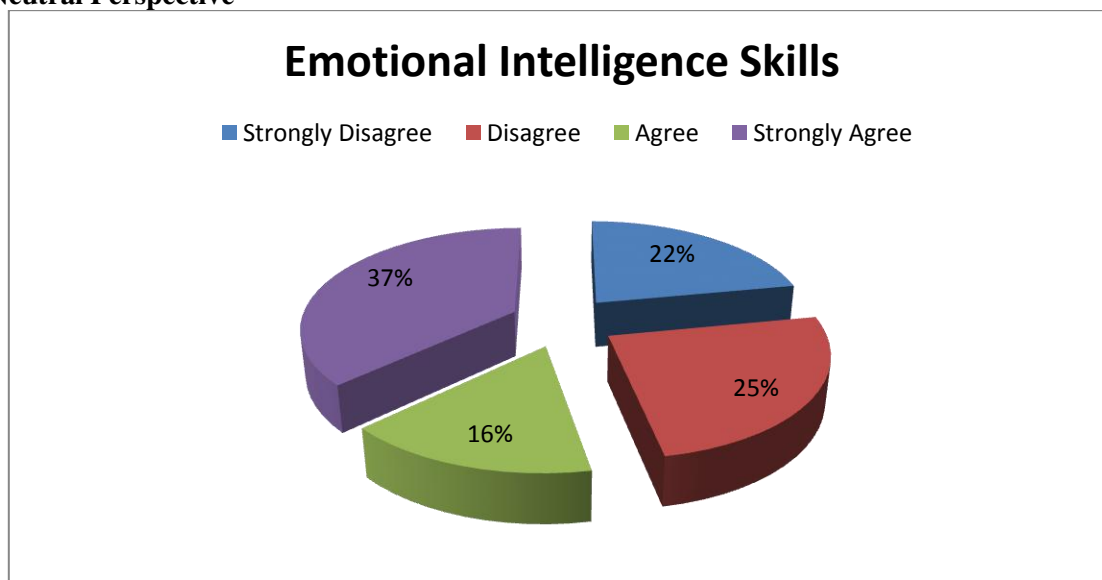
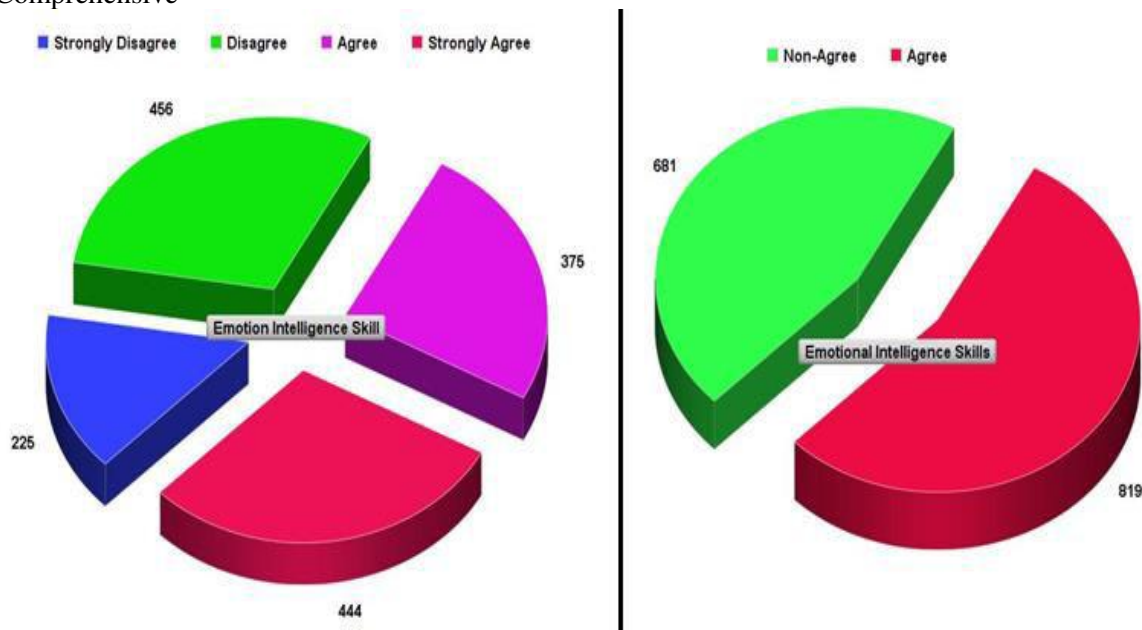**10. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS:**

The Emotional Intelligence Skill status of both the participants with disagreed and agreed is presented in Table 6. A perusal of the table provides that the indicators of Emotional Intelligence Skill have helped the corporate leaders to increase their level of Emotional Skills. It is found that overall 227 per cent of the total participants were disagreeing and 273 per cent were agreed consisting different emotional indicators i.e. leader's defensive, criticism, anxiety, stress, anger, fear and judgement acts with emotional and wisdom of corporate leadership.

Table 6: Comprehensive

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	**Dis-Agree**	**Total**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
1	In your opinion, a leader should not become defensive when criticized.	39 (13)	96 (32)	135 (45)	84 (28)	81 (27)	165 (55)
2	In your opinion, a leader utilizes criticism and other feedback for growth.	42 (14)	84 (28)	126 (42)	75 (25)	99 (33)	174 (58)
3	In your opinion, a leader manages anxiety, stress, anger and fear in pursuit of goal.	51 (17)	90 (30)	141 (47)	90 (30)	69 (23)	159 (53)
4	In your opinion, a leader listens without jumping to judgement.	45 (15)	75 (25)	120 (40)	60 (20)	120 (40)	180 (60)
5	In your opinion, a leader tries to see things from another's perspective.	66 (22)	75 (25)	141 (47)	48 (16)	111 (37)	159 (53)
	Total	**243 (81)**	**420 (140)**	**663 (221)**	**357 (125)**	**480 (160)**	**819 (285)**

Note: The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages of participants and non-participants. The value of Chi-square ($\chi2$) is 3.8820 between participants with disagree and agree. The table values at 5 per cent with 4 degree of freedom are 9.48.

Figure 6: Comprehensive

In order to measure the impact of Emotional Intelligence Skills, participants with disagreed compared with the agreed. The table shows that overall 227 per cent of the total participants were disagreeing and 273 per cent were agreed consisting five indicators Chi-square ($\chi2$) test shows the significant difference and positively accepted the hypothesis regarding the different emotional indicators i.e. leaders defensive, criticism, anxiety, stress, anger, fear and judgement acts with emotional and wisdom of corporate leadership.

11.SUMMARY:

A significant number of studies have shown the positive relationships between emotional intelligence and effective leadership (Boyatzis & van Oosten, 2003). Based on the current study results, the claim is strongly supported with self-awarness, self-management and relationship management. Other researchers have maintained that the emotional intelligence of leaders did not influence the leaders' effectiveness (Humphreys et al., 2005). Social awareness, considered discretely, showed no significant relation with effectiveness, giving less support to claims about the relationship between the emotional intelligence of leaders and the leaders' effectiveness.

The literature reviewed found there is a gap in applying emotional intelligence competencies of corporate leaders to motivate and empower others using emotional intelligence. Even though results from this study indicated the emotional intelligence of corporate leaders did not relate to corporate success, corporate leaders can use the information as a means for discussing leadership theories in behavioural terms within the corporate realm. Critical to the success of any corporate, it to be responsive to the customers' needs. The needs of the customer can change, the corporate recompenses the knowledge to adjust those demands with innovation. In addition, an effective corporate addresses a customers need is sometimes forgotten when a corporate grows too quickly.

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