

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR LEADERSHIP
(UTILIZING LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS FOR
LEADERS WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE): A
CASE STUDY IN TURKISH MILITARY**

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership skills and to inspect the influence of age and educational background factors on emotional intelligence development of the officers within Turkish Land Forces. The impact of emotional intelligence on leadership is studied through Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Survey, on 213 ranked officers. The subjects are categorized according to their ranks (as a substitute for age factor) and military origin (as a substitute for educational background).

The survey results propose a positive relationship between military rank and total EI: The higher the military rank, the superior the level of total EI. Similarly, military origin is observed to have impact on emotional intelligence, as military academy graduates demonstrated lower levels of total emotional intelligence compared to officers with other origins.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Leadership, Emotional intelligence for Leadership.

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk Kara Kuvvetlerinde görevli subayların duygusal zeka ve liderlik becerileri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi ve bu ilişkide yaş ile eğitim durumunun duygusal zekanın gelişimi üzerinde bir etkisinin olup olmadığının belirlenmesidir. Duygusal zekanın liderlik üzerindeki etkisi, Bar-On Duygusal Zeka Ölçeğinin 213 subay üzerinde uygulanması ile ölçülmeye çalışılmıştır. Subayların rütbeleri (yaş faktörü) ve askeri kökenleri (eğitim geçmişi) temel çıkış noktası olarak ele alınmıştır.

Araştırma sonucunda rütbe değişkeni ile toplam duygusal zeka arasında olumlu yönde bir ilişki bulgulanmıştır: Rütbe arttıkça, toplam

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duygusal zeka becerilerinin arttığı gözlemlenmiştir. Benzer biçimde, kara harp okulu mezunu subayların duygusal zeka düzeylerinin diğer kaynaklardan gelen subayların gerisinde olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duygusal zeka, Liderlik, Liderlik için Duygusal Zeka.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) became a focal subject of many studies in literature and center of attraction for business organizations in recent period. Limited research in this promising field drew the attention of academicians and positive impact on business results attracted professionals. Both parties proposed EI as an attainable skill, and as a critical ability for a successful leadership. Therefore, literature definitions, models and research on EI primarily involved business world and results utilized for business trainings and seminars for personnel development. However, armed forces, as an institution closely tied to leadership skills, gathered limited attention of EI researchers. The main purpose of this paper is to explore EI and its impacts on leadership skills for army, particularly, Turkish Land Forces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership and army

Through their research, academicians came up with numerous definitions for leadership: Certo defines⁰ the term as a process of channeling actions towards achieving targets (1989), while Hellriegel and Slocum identifies leadership as a skill of influencing, motivating and guiding members of the organization in order to meet the objectives (2006). According to Arikan, influencing members, a leader ensures achievement of group or organizational targets. (2001)

Leadership from military point of view, on the other hand, is defined as commander's action of influencing others through leadership requirements and characteristics and through utilizing techniques and tactics based on discipline and moral factors in order for a troop to complete a mission. Military personnel achieve this mission by fulfilling leadership

requirements (beliefs, morality, ethics, character, intelligence and abilities).

Atkinson refers to Marshall Montgomery's leadership definition as "a passion of gathering individuals around a common cause and a character of instilling trust". The main dimension is instilling trust to group members. The commander must be mature enough to control his emotions with intelligence. The commander must be coldblooded to face the sudden instances and dangerous cases without any nervousness, dread or panic. Indeed, he must demonstrate stillness to calm down subordinates' panic and fear. He must be tough to bear with the situation till accomplishment (1995).

Military leadership is not just a privilege of command over subordinates. Indeed, it is an ability based on influencing through creating respect, trust and morality. Leader, in the eyes of subordinates, accomplishes the mission and protects them (Berberoglu and Demiray, 2002). The role of military leader as an activator and a creator, possessing larger horizon of ideas, is to set challenging targets and monitoring the organization if necessary actions are taken (Fred and Manske, 1994).

Compared to other fields, leadership gained great importance for military through time; such that World War I and II set off the origins for primary serious studies. Turkish military literature also hosts studies on leadership, as many of the victories are named after commanders (Battle of Inonu, Turkish War of Independence...etc.) and as leadership is placed amongst four main components of the battle.

Emotional Intelligence

Human as the basic and the most important asset of the modern ages, is a key element for determining the success of any type of organization. A sophisticated, continuously learning and self-adapting human capital provides the necessary push for growth. However, such capital is hardly created via people with solely high levels of cognitive intelligence. Goleman identifies the completing competence for superior success through a set of specific abilities and skills such as empathy, self-discipline and

initiative-taking, called EI (2001). Salovey and Mayer further define the term as a type of social intelligence providing ability of perceiving emotions, differentiating among of various types of emotions and utilizing them to take actions(1990).

Following social scientists' interest, EI also created a buzz in psychobiology and neurobiology fields. Studies indicate that the measures for two types of intelligence, namely, intelligence quotient (IQ) and emotional quotient (EQ), represent the activity of distinct parts of the brain. Among which, IQ is genetic at an average rate of 50-60% and could be improved up to a degree through the impact of environmental factors. On the contrary, as EQ consists of attainable skills, it is open to improvement through time (Goleman, 2001). It is known that as people mature, they are more likely to assess instances clearly, and become more harmonious, more restrained and generally better communicators.

Improvement of EQ through experience and age can be exemplified from sports field. It is stated that U.S swimmers raced at Sydney Olympics had an average age of 30 and it is further explored how younger swimmers, between 15-16 years of age, fell behind of the older ones. Results showed that younger swimmers easily panic after a bad start, as experienced and older swimmers were able to demonstrate the necessary "physiological concentration" for higher success and younger ones only practiced pool-workouts while experienced ones improved performance via patience and control demanding yoga and breathing exercises.

Emotional Intelligence and Army Leadership

As an attainable intelligence, many organizations consider EI to be one of the most important capabilities of their human capital. (Jackson and Lash, 1999) Many academicians and professionals state that superior skills related with correct perception and assessing of own and others' emotions, distinguishing among these emotions and making use of gathered information on thoughts and actions, provide success for leaders. (Cacioppe, 1997) Armed forces is not an exception, but number of studies connecting these two fields in the

literature is insufficient. Among few research on this subject, Abrahams state in his article that selection of military leaders with poor EI skills result in “lost unit effectiveness and junior leader disenchantment”. (2007) Supporting his point, Sewell comments on U.S. Army, promoting self-aware, flexible and adaptive leaders, which are some of competencies of EI and he concludes on successful teams to be created by army leaders who study and utilize EI. (2009). Focusing specifically on officers in Turkish Navy, Topuz raises a similar point that within military context, EI is required by all leaders (2005).

Such studies combining emotional intelligence and its impact on army leadership are among few research on the subject. However, studies further analyzing the influences of variables, such as age and educational origin, on emotional intelligence on army leaders is missing, for which this article aims to contribute.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to explore the correlation between cumulative EI and its main dimensions; and variables which have impact on army leadership (Table 1). Variables inspected are,

1. Military rank (as a substitute for age)
2. Military origin (as a substitute for educational background)

Table 1. Emotional Intelligence main and sub dimensions

| Main Dimensions | Sub-dimensions |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Intrapersonal Intelligence | Self-awareness |
| | Assertiveness |
| | Self-regard |
| | Self-actualization |
| | Independence |
| Interpersonal intelligence | Empathy |
| | Interpersonal relationship |
| | Social responsibility |
| Adaptability | Problem solving |
| | Reality testing |
| | Flexibility |
| Stress management | Stress tolerance |
| | Impulse control |
| General mood | Happiness |
| | Optimism |

Source: Matthews, Zeidner and Roberts,
2004: 19.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Specifically the null and alternative hypotheses tested are,

H₀: Military officers with other origins do not demonstrate higher emotional intelligence levels compared to graduates of Military Academy.

H₁: Military officers with other origins demonstrate higher emotional intelligence levels compared to graduates of Military Academy.

H₀: Increasing rank does not lead to higher level of emotional intelligence.

H₂: Increasing rank leads to higher level of emotional intelligence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The study universe consists of officers of Turkish Military Land Forces. Sample set of 225 military officers are randomly selected from the universe, among which 213 came up with valid questionnaires.

Sample set officers are grouped under two categories: According to military origin, two sub-categories; graduates of Military Academy, enlisting right after secondary school and officers with other origins succeeding over entrance exams after completing any high school. According to military ranks, two sub-categories; “Group 1 Officers” (Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, and Captain) and “Group 2” *Officers* (Major, Lieutenant Colonel, and Colonel). Groups of officers were formed with the purpose of a cumulative analysis of the rank variable. Additionally, these groups were formed according to Code of Internal Service’s consideration of majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels as higher officers. Sub-lieutenants (with undergraduate degrees) are excluded from the study; since they enlist in order to complete the mandatory military service and their assignments are temporary. Moreover, generals are also excluded, as their intense work-schedule would not allow completing necessary sample size.

Basis for rank increase in Turkish Armed Forces is explained in Table 2.

Table 2. Officer Ranks

| Officer Ranks | Waiting Period | Category | Study Group |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Sub Lieutenant | 11 months | | <i>Excluded from the study</i> |
| Second Lieutenant | 3 years | | Group 1 Officers |
| First Lieutenant | 6 years | | |
| Captain | 6 years | | |
| Major | 5 years | Higher Officers | Group 2 Officers |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 3 years | | |
| Colonel | 5 years | | |
| Brigadier General | 4 years | Generals | <i>Excluded from the study</i> |
| Major General | 4 years | | |
| Lieutenant General | 4 years | | |
| General | 4 years | | |
| Marshal | - | | <i>Excluded from the study</i> |

This study grounds upon military ranks, as a substitute for age factor. The reason is that a rank corresponds to specified years of service which is applicable for all personnel. Therefore, increasing rank is linked to increasing age. (Table 2)

Research Instrument

The data used in the study is gathered through questionnaires from officers employed at Military Land Forces in 2004.

The questionnaire is based on Acar's version of Bar-On's survey, translated to Turkish language, further corrected via comparisons, and reliability and validity tests applied. Acar adapted the questionnaire to Turkish population in her doctorate dissertation on the impact of EI on the leadership skills of banking sector managers. (Acar, 2001)

Data Analysis

Responses are analyzed with SPSS. For the reliability of the EI test, Acar's results of alpha coefficient method of Cronbach is utilized. Questionnaire cumulative coefficient of 0.9212; among basic dimensions, personal abilities coefficient of 0.8373, interpersonal abilities coefficient of 0.7787, coherence coefficient of 0.6542, coping with stress coefficient of 0.7314 and state-of-mind coefficient of 0.7506 are all at acceptable levels. (Acar, 2001)

Cumulative EI was calculated through taking the averages of the responses for basic and main dimensions of EI.

Mean deviations for parametric variables are measured via t-test and Anova test. Necessary correlation analyses are performed with Pearson Correlation Matrix.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics:

There exist 5 statements assessing demographic characteristics of the subjects in the questionnaire. The distribution of personal variables, military origin, rank, marital status, parental status, employment of the spouse are included in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the officers

| Demographic characteristics | | n | % |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----|------|
| Military Origin | Military Academy | 170 | 79.8 |
| | Other | 43 | 20.2 |
| Rank | Group 1 Officers | 165 | 77.5 |
| | Group 2 Officers | 48 | 22.5 |
| Marital status | Married | 141 | 66.2 |
| | Single | 72 | 33.8 |
| Parental status | With children | 119 | 84.3 |
| | No children | 22 | 15.7 |
| Employment of the spouse | Employed | 90 | 44.6 |
| | Unemployed | 51 | 23.9 |
| | N/A | 72 | 31.5 |

Military Rank and EI

Military rank taken as the variable, higher rank officers constituting Group 2 demonstrate higher level of EI compared to Group 1 officers. Results indicate that with increasing rank (and age in parallel), total EI increases. (Table 4)

Table 4. Relationship with rank and cumulative EI and its main dimensions

| Group variables | | n | Average | P Value |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----|---------|---------|
| Cumulative EI | Group 1 Officers | 164 | 3.84 | 0.001 |
| | Group 2 Officers | 48 | 4.03 | |
| Personal abilities | Group 1 Officers | 165 | 3.93 | 0.025 |
| | Group 2 Officers | 48 | 4.11 | |
| Interpersonal abilities | Group 1 Officers | 165 | 4.05 | 0.003 |
| | Group 2 Officers | 48 | 4.13 | |
| Coherence | Group 1 Officers | 165 | 3.77 | 0.001 |
| | Group 2 Officers | 48 | 3.99 | |
| Coping with stress | Group 1 Officers | 165 | 3.49 | 0.113 |
| | Group 2 Officers | 48 | 3.65 | |
| State of mind | Group 1 Officers | 165 | 3.96 | 0.002 |
| | Group 2 Officers | 48 | 4.10 | |

There exists relationship between rank and all main dimensions of EI, except for “coping with stress”. (Table 4) Group 2 officers provided better responses for personal abilities, interpersonal abilities, coherence and state of mind, leading to higher EI levels for specified dimensions.

Military Origin and EI:

Officers with other military origin, on the other hand, are much more EI driven people, scoring higher EI levels compared to Military Academy graduates. (Table 5)

Research results indicate that military origin and all main dimensions of EI are related, except for coherence and coping with stress. For these two dimensions of EI, changing military origin has no statistically meaningful impact. Besides, for the rest of the dimensions, officers with other military origins have higher EI levels.

Table 5. Relationship with military origin and cumulative EI and its main dimensions

| Group variables | | n | Average | P value |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----|---------|---------|
| Cumulative EI | Military academy | 170 | 3.85 | 0.025 |
| | Other | 43 | 3.99 | |
| Personal abilities | Military academy | 170 | 3.92 | 0.004 |
| | Other | 43 | 4.16 | |
| Interpersonal abilities | Military academy | 170 | 4.03 | 0.006 |
| | Other | 43 | 4.21 | |
| Coherence | Military academy | 170 | 3.80 | 0.296 |
| | Other | 43 | 3.89 | |
| Coping with stress | Military academy | 170 | 3.50 | 0.432 |
| | Other | 43 | 3.60 | |
| State of mind | Military academy | 170 | 3.95 | 0.027 |
| | Other | 43 | 4.13 | |

As a summary, empirical results suggest that:

1. H1 can be accepted, but H1(0) has to be rejected. Military officers from other origins demonstrate higher levels of EI.
2. H2 can be accepted, while H2(0) has to be rejected. Increasing rank leads to higher levels of emotional intelligence.

CONCLUSION

An outcome of the study is the positive correlation between EI and variables affecting army leadership. Specifically, rank and military origin factors are taken as the

variables and both of them are proved for their impact on leadership characteristics of officers of the Turkish Military Land Forces.

Since higher rank signifies higher age, the key finding that higher rank officers are found to have higher levels of EI indicates the attainability of EI through age. This outcome is in line with the literature in favor of development of EI: Ratnesar points out EI increase through experience and maturing (1997). Dulewicz and Higgs also state EI as a developable trait or competency (2004). Additionally, Schachter places a lot of emphasize on practicing for EI development (2009). Likewise, as the officers get experienced while they rise in rank and age at the same time, they attain more on EI skills compared to younger officers.

The other outcome indicating Military Academy graduates' lower levels of EI is a field without any previous literature study exercised. However, considering military origin to be associated with the amount of time spent in the army, it is inferred that Military Academy education affects EI development of the officers. Intense discipline environment limiting performing of personal abilities, narrow social environment hindering variety of interpersonal communications and pressure on the state of mind are some of the factors that might influence stated dimensions of EI.

Since leadership is regarded as a crucial component of army, and research results indicate its relationship with EI, further improvement of army leadership through EI development must be closely considered. Higher officers transferring work or life experiences, or EI advancement trainings at Military Academy could contribute to EI levels of younger, inexperienced officers.

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