Differentiating Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

Abstract

Leadership is a well-researched concept that has received considerable attention since the nineties. In this article the reader is introduced to the claim that leaders can be found at all levels of employment, while at the very least, all managers are expected to be leaders. Yet managerial status does not guarantee leadership. The authors argue that leadership is a necessary component of management, and a filter for successful management. Effective managers demonstrate leadership capabilities.

Leadership attributes are well captured in measures of emotional intelligence. Hence leadership can improve if managers work to further develop their EQ. This study set out to show how EQ, and hence leadership, can vary in different levels of employment among a large composite group of 3,305 employees drawn internationally. Respondents' EQ was assessed online with the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment (SEI), and standardized to result in scores for eight distinct scales, grouping into three pursuits and a total EQ score.

The relationship between six leadership groups (as based on their EQ performance) across six different employment levels was statistically examined. The results suggest that leadership realizes in different ways depending on the level of employment. It appears that employees become more skillful in enhancing their emotional literacy (emotional awareness) and applying consequential thinking as they progress on the employment ladder. Intrinsic motivation and optimism are best leveraged by non-managerial employees, rather than employees at the senior levels. The diminishing incorporation of empathy with an increase in employment level seems to stand in sharp contrast. General employees (that is, non-managerial employees and those with high levels of specialization) and entrepreneurs will benefit from further developing their competence in pursuing their objectives with an overarching sense of purpose. The finding that high-EQ leaders seem to dominate in the managerial levels may be viewed as encouraging.

Differentiating Emotional Intelligence in Leadership

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Background

There is considerable writing and activity around the notion of *leadership* in the business world and elsewhere. The subject matter of leadership receives attention in multiple applications, including training, certification courses and online education, coaching and development, models and games, membership to professional associations, journal articles and other publications, and assessments.

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A Google search of the term leadership produces more than 170 million results, which may be an indication of the recent popularity of the term. Going back as far as 50 years, leadership scholars have conducted more than 1,000 studies in an attempt to determine the definitive styles, characteristics, or personality traits of great leaders (George, Sims & McLean *et al*., 2007). The authors claim that none of these studies has produced a clear profile of the ideal leader. However they see this as a desirable outcome, as it prevents people from trying to imitate a prescribed, transparent leadership style.

The term *management* is often associated with leadership in the workplace. A Google search for management produces close to 800 million links (over four times more than that for leadership), with related words such as conflict, sustainability, efficiency, decision making, team building often occurring in the key words of the links. The organizational context in which the term management is set, is apparent both in popular and scholarly references:

1. Administration of business: the organizing and controlling of the affairs of a business or a particular sector of a business
3. Handling of something successfully: the act of handling or controlling something successfully
4. Skill in handling or using something: the skillful handling or use of something such as resources
   (Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library 2003).

This popular perspective is well supported by a scholarly definition of management in the Oxford English Dictionary (1989), where the verb *manage* is defined as to 1) be in charge of, run; 2) supervise (staff); 3) administer and regulate (resources); and 4) succeed in doing or dealing with. From a social sciences perspective, the term *management* characterizes the process of leading human resources. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989), the word *manage* originates from the Italian *maneggiare*, meaning *to handle* – especially a horse. This turn derives from the Latin *manus*, meaning hand. According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/leadership) the French word *mesnagement* (later *ménagement*) influenced the development in meaning of the English word *management* in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The terms *leadership* and *management* are often used interchangeably, to which a blurring of dictionary definitions seems to contribute. For example, the Microsoft® Encarta® Reference Library (2003) states that *leadership* has to do with 1) position within a group; and 2) an ability to lead, that is, the ability to guide, direct or influence people. Similarly, *leadership* in the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) is defined as 1) a person or thing that is the most successful or advanced in a particular area, but also as 2) the principal player. In addition to the above definitions mentioned above for the term *manage*, the Oxford

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Dictionary (1989) also adds 5) succeed despite difficulties, cope; and 6) be free to attend (an appointment) to the list. In other words, from a simple dictionary definition, the terms leader and manager are used interchangeably due to an overlap in the functions and roles of each, even if documented definitions of the terms suggest that *leadership* and *management* are two distinct concepts, rather than synonyms.

It appears that an improved distinction between the terms *leadership* and *management* as reflected in scientific publications is a recent development that is receiving renewed attention since 1990. There is growing support that leadership involves supremacy as exerted by influence, whereas management has to do with superiority as derived from a person's position. If one can accept this distinction, then one can deduct that leadership is one facet of good management. Thus leadership is one (of many) assets that a successful manager will have, or can develop.

The placement of leadership versus management is subtle, captured in the difference between clout versus muscle, dominance versus domination, strength versus force, authority versus control. Leaders often behave in a more transformational nature; managers tend to lean towards transactional styles (Bass & Riggio, 2006). One area where this is demonstrated is in American Sign Language (ASL). The sign for *managing* reminds of someone holding onto the reigns of a horse, as if restraining something. By comparison, the ASL sign for *leading* is a cradling of arms with a back-and-forth rocking as if nurturing someone (Warren & Goldsmith, 2003).

The leading of a group, especially when its size is contained, is often driven by specific talent (influential power) rather than position. In many cases it is vision, strategy, goal or value that serves as the guiding principle in group success (Predpall, 1994). This may potentially result in conflict if the manager wants to exert his or her positional power to lead the group, especially if the manager does not also demonstrate the characteristics that naturally bring about influential power. This is a classic example of when control versus authority comes into play and create tension. However, leaders are ideally able to be observant of and sensitive towards such situations, and create a constructive atmosphere of mutual confidence where loyalty can be fostered (Fenton, 1990).

It may be possible for the rare manager to fulfill his/her job requirements without leadership capability. For example, if a manager heads a group of highly motivated and/or skilled employees, single or strong leadership may not be required. Alternatively, if the responsibilities of the manager are largely procedural with clear definitions and boundaries with little room for variation (as in highly bureaucratic work environments), leadership qualities may not be essential. Hence leadership can be viewed as a managerial asset and not a managerial essentiality if the organizational circumstances are optimal.

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However, seldom is the workforce so fortunate, which reinforces the tendency to see management and leadership as synonyms of each other.

Leadership is about setting a vision or new direction for a group and engaging them in that; *management* is about directing and controlling according to established principles. Team Technology (http://www.teamtechnology.co.uk) explains that leadership without management sets a direction or vision that others follow without much consideration for much how it will be achieved, leaving that for the team to figure out. The soccer player showing remarkable footwork but less accuracy in passing the ball to his team player comes to mind. On the other hand, management without leadership controls resources (subordinates) and processes to maintain stability and ensure results are achieved according to plan, much like the team player who passes accurately but does not do much with the ball in pursuit of a goal. The winning team needs both parts. Similarly, effective workplaces need both leaders and managers, which is why Jack Welch drew public criticism for contradicting comments made in this regard recently.

Kotter (1999) wrote that leadership is the primary force behind significant change. According to him leadership drives change, while management controls it, making sure that a complicated system of people and technology can run smoothly. Management activities would include planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving. Kotter added that leadership defines what the future looks like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles.

It is easy and even tempting to build onto the definitions above and assign qualities. For example, in a work context one might say that leaders consider employees, give credit where it is deserved, enthuse others, are comfortable with risk as potential opportunities, and often draw from overcoming personal challenges. Knowing who they are, leaders practice their values consistently through using their hearts and their heads, and demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and lead with their hearts as well as their heads (George, Sims & McLean *et al*., 2007). To regard managers as the opposite of these characteristics poses a potential danger: In contrasting leadership and management as opposites, many authors fall into the trap of using antonyms and dichotomous thinking.

Comparative lists of good leader-bad manager are abundant, and do not help much to foster understanding of the two concepts. The two terms are not two extremes on the same continuum. Leaders do not stand in a bipolar relation to managers. Rather, leadership is a filter that distinguishes effective from ineffective managers. Effective managers demonstrate leadership capabilities, whereas ineffective managers can have the opportunity to develop them.

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Collins (2001) wrote about five levels of leadership, with Level Five being the most effective. A Level-Three leader is considered a competent manager who organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives. A Level-Four leader is labeled an effective leader who catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulating higher performance standards, which leaves room for advancement from the previous level. The Level-Five leader builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. Of significance with this type of classification is that it underscored the notion that leadership helps characterize the efficacy of management.

Pascale (1990: 65) wrote that "… managers do things right, while leaders do the right thing", a proverb that was also used by Peter Drucker and Warren Bennis (1994), two respected names in business circles. This may mean that managers think incrementally by doing things by the book and following company policy, while leaders, who think more strategically or even radically, follow their own intuition, which may (and sometimes may not) help organizations find their so-called competitive edge and move forward. Fenton (1990) believed that greater reliance on emotions equips leaders to risk more and be noticed for good reason, to question assumption and be suspicious of convention, and to be innovative. A manager relies heavily on job experience and cognitive ability; a leader also depends on emotional intelligence.

Much has been written about the link between leadership and emotional intelligence, from Daniel Goleman (1998), to studies by the Centre for Creative Leadership and the Consortium for Research on EI in Organizations, to Stephen Covey (1989), Jack Welch (2004) and the Harvard Business Review. World-leading organizations from American Express to Federal Express, from the US Air Force to Sheraton are experimenting with emotional intelligence as a component of competitive advantage. A global community of emotional intelligence practitioners has emerged, with consultants, researchers, trainers and coaches implementing emotional intelligence training in all sectors of society.

Google shows some 1,3 million links to these two keywords combined (and a similar number of links to the keywords management and emotional intelligence). There is growing evidence that the range of capabilities that constitutes EI plays a key role in determining success in life and in the workplace. The Harvard Business Review (HBR) has released several articles on emotional intelligence. In April 2003 they reported:

> "In hard times, the soft stuff often goes away. But emotional intelligence, it turns out, isn't so soft. If emotional obliviousness jeopardizes your ability to perform, fend off aggressors, or be compassionate in a crisis, no amount of attention to the bottom line will protect your career.

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Emotional intelligence isn't a luxury you can dispense with in tough times. It's a basic tool that, deployed with finesse, is the key to professional success."

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) stressed the importance of empathic listening and resonance and self-awareness when displaying leadership. Empathic listening and resonance is viewed as the ability of leaders to perceive and influence the flow of emotions (including motivational states) between themselves and others they work with, while self-awareness can be described as the ability to perceive and moderate the effect one is having on others from the perspective of these auhors. Sosik and Megerian (1999) found empirical support for the importance of self-awareness, and that emotional intelligence is the foundation of leadership. According to Cooper (1997), trustworthiness is an important element in a leader's makeup, as it is related to innovation and creativity. Miller (1999) is of the opinion that that many managers fail because they are too rigid and have poor relationships.

The list of attributes is lengthy and empirical support is growing. Although different models for measuring and working with emotional intelligence exist, measured EQ components align closely with the characteristics attributed to leadership and good management. Hence the claim is made that leadership will improve if managers work to further develop their EQ. It is within this context that we will look at the EQ performance of a large composite group of employees across different levels in their respective organizations.

Purpose

Most people first heard the term *emotional intelligence* around 1995 with the publication the best-selling book *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (Goleman, 1995). The author laid out a powerful case that factors such as self-awareness, self-discipline, and empathy determine personal and professional success. He drew on the work of numerous leading scientists and authors who were working to define and measure the skills of emotional intelligence.

Goleman explained in an interview (Freedman, 2005) that the concept of emotional intelligence originated with two psychology professors on a summer's day in 1987. "John Mayer and Peter Salovey invented the whole field when they were chatting about politics while painting a house", Goleman contended. Salovey, (now Dean of Yale College and Professor of Psychology at Yale University) and Mayer (now Professor at University of New Hampshire) were talking about their research on cognition and emotion, and got into

discussing a politician. They wondered 'how could someone so smart act so dumb'? Their conclusion was that smart decision-making requires more than the intellect as measured by traditional IQ.

Goleman continued the story with Freedman (2005): "And because of that conversation, they published a wonderful seminal article – but in an obscure journal. The moment I saw their concept of emotional intelligence, all kinds of bells went off. And I thought, 'I have to write about this!'" With over 5 million copies in print in 30 languages, Goleman struck right: The world was ready to learn about this powerful concept.

Many other researchers and thought-leaders have contributed to the concept of emotional intelligence. Reuven Bar-On has researched the effects of emotion on performance since the late 1980s as well (Bar-On, 1997). In fact, in a draft of his Ph.D. dissertation he even used the term *EQ*, which he is widely acknowledged for today. Now researchers all around the world are refining the scientific definition and practitioners are developing models to implement the science. Salovey and Mayer (1997) focused emotional intelligence on the abilities to perceive and use emotions as part of thinking:

> *Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.*

During the same time in 1997, Six Seconds was established to teach the skills of emotional intelligence. Six Seconds is an international non-profit organization that sets out to help businesses, schools and individuals apply EI to improve performance. The Six Seconds methodology began in a curriculum called Self-Science, which Goleman identified as one of two models for how to effectively teach emotional intelligence: "Self-Science is a pioneer, an early harbinger of an idea that is spreading to schools coast to coast" (Freedman, 2005).

Six Seconds endeavoured to distill all that experience and the research of people like Salovey, Mayer, Goleman, and Damasio into a model focused on action. People can use their emotional intelligence in leadership and life to assist in improved fulfillment, wholeness, health, prosperity, and purpose. Six Seconds (Ghini, Freedman & Jensen, 2005) defined emotional intelligence as follows:

> *Emotional intelligence is the capacity to integrate thinking and feeling to make optimal decisions.*

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This definition underscores an action model of EI, which is well-suited for a workplace context where employees are expected to perform and excel. The model follows a simple three-step process for making emotionally intelligent choices. Within these three steps are eight specific competencies that enable employees to be effective in their job. These are detailed in the next section.

The purpose of this study is to investigate what emotional intelligence looks like when viewed across different levels of employment. In its simplest format, if EQ lies at the heart of leadership as the literature suggests, then one would hope that employees, as they climb the ranks in an organization, would display distinct patterns and competence in varying EQ competencies to be successful in their job roles.

Method

Six Seconds Model

A large sample of 3,305 employees completed the Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment (called the SEI, meaning 'six' in Italian) over a period of two years. The SEI is a statistically validated, web-enabled self-assessment containing 104 items. More information about its validation can be found on http://www.eqperformance.com/sei.php. The SEI underscores the model of EQ-in-action, which begins with three important pursuits: becoming more aware (noticing what you do), more intentional (doing what you mean), and more purposeful (doing it for a reason). The three steps are defined as:

- *Know Yourself* – awareness. Increasing self-awareness, recognizing patterns and feelings lets you understand what 'makes you tick' and is the first step to growth.
- *Choose Yourself* – intentionality. Building self-management and self-direction allows you to consciously direct your thoughts, feelings, and actions (versus reacting unconsciously).
- *Give Yourself* – purpose. Aligning your daily choices with your larger sense of purpose unlocks your full power and potential. It comes from using empathy and principled decision-making to increase wisdom.

Within these three areas are eight specific competencies. These are briefly listed below, with a fuller discussion provided after the main body of this article (see Appendix).

- *Know Yourself* (self-awareness)
  - EEL – Enhance Emotional Literacy: *recognize and appropriately express emotion*

- ▫ RCP – Recognize Patterns: *identify reactions and choices*
- ▪ *Choose Yourself* (self-management)
  - ▫ ACT – Apply Consequential Thinking: *evaluate the costs and benefits of choices before acting*
  - ▫ NVE – Navigate Emotions: *learn from and transform feelings*
  - ▫ EOP – Exercise Optimism: *identify multiple options for changing the future*
  - ▫ EIM – Engage Intrinsic Motivation: *build internal energy and drive*
- ▪ *Give Yourself* (self-direction)
  - ▫ ICE – Increase Empathy: *respond appropriately to others' feelings*
  - ▫ PNG – Pursue Noble Goals: *align daily choices with principles and purpose*

The sample is extensively composite in nature, spanning across 57 different countries across the world. The findings from 41% of the SEI assessments are from North America, a further 31% from Europe, 19% from Asia and the remainder from other regions. Countries with the largest representation are the United States, Italy, China, Spain, Australia, Canada, France, Singapore and India, in this order. The assessments were completed either in English (by about two-thirds of the sample), Italian, Mandarin, Spanish, French, or Indonesian. The respondents represent a large range of industry sectors, job types and roles.

The sample is equally distributed between males and females. The average age of the group is 38 years and 10 months, with the vast majority being in their employment years. A cross-sectional analysis of the sample demographics did not reveal skews beyond what one would normally expect (for example junior people are younger than senior people).

Consistent with findings from other EQ assessments, EQ as measured with the SEI appears to increase somewhat with age, although not significantly. (Post-hoc multiple comparisons using the method of Scheffé were applied after ANOVAs, $p < 0.01$.) Differences seem largest between the extreme age categories outside of the employment age range. EQ differences within this age range are most distinct in *Enhance Emotional Literacy*, which is comparable with emotional awareness in other EQ assessments.

Gender differences were more noticeable out of all the demographics known about this sample. Significant differences were found with regards to *Enhance Emotional Literacy*, *Apply Consequential Thinking* (from *Know Yourself*), *Increase Empathy* (from *Give Yourself*) and *Total EQ* (Student's T-test, $p < 0.01$). Females consistently outperformed males in these competencies, although in each case the differences were not larger than two EQ scale points.

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Similar to other EQ and IQ measures, the average score for measuring EQ on the SEI is 100, with a standard deviation of 15. All mean scores reported here are standardized against a general norm group, and unadjusted for possible social desirability (the SEI assessment uses a Likert scale format), positive impression, self-criticism or any other response style artifact.
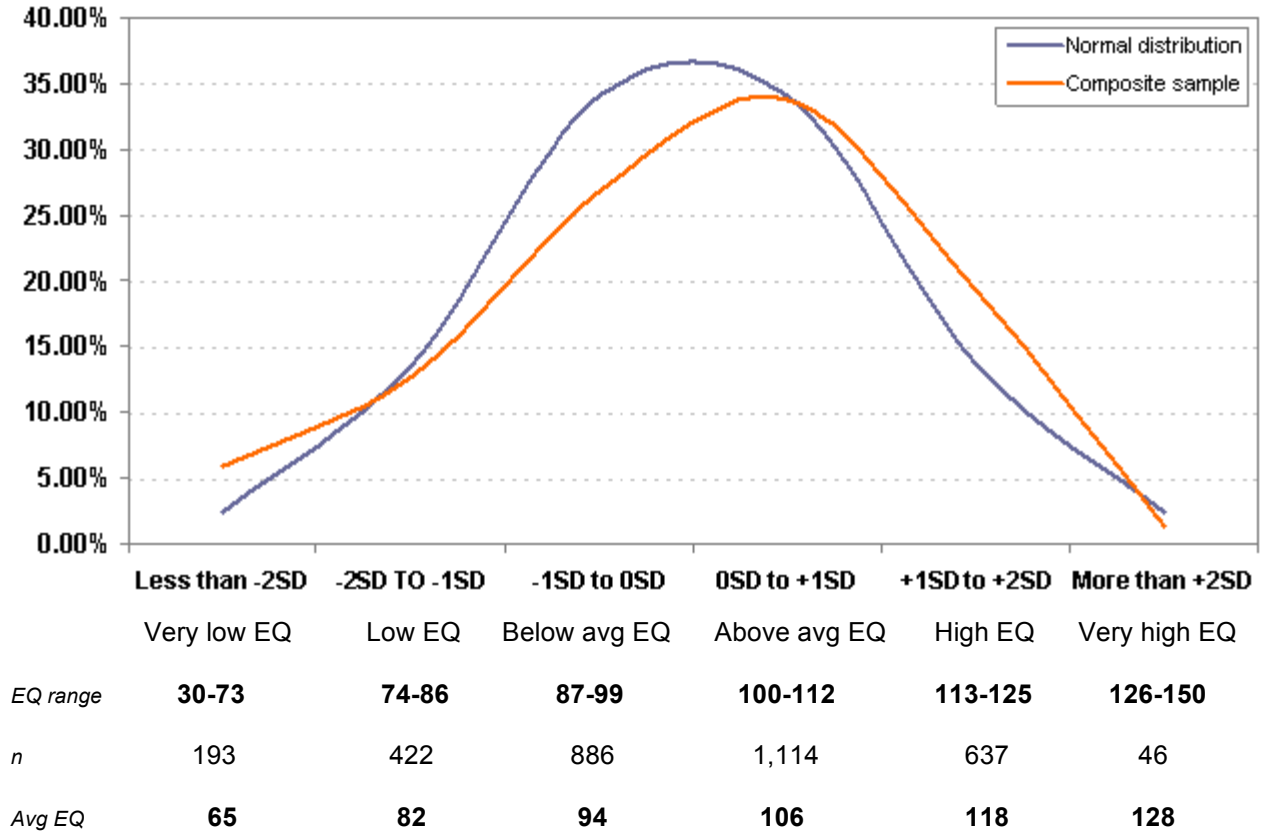
Respondents reported their level of employment to be in one of the following categories:

- *Student* – students or specified as other, for example tutors, volunteers, etcetera (n = 145)
- *Professional* – designated professions, such as architect, broker, IT, consultant, lawyer, engineer, teacher, musician, etcetera (n = 123)
- *Employee* – general staff, that is, non-managerial personnel in an administrative or clerical role, including where no designated profession was provided, etcetera (n = 1,106)
- *Manager* – middle managers, supervisors, managers, etcetera (n = 1,118)
- *Entrepreneur* – free-lance, principles/owners/partners, entrepreneurs, etcetera (n = 352)
- *Executive* – directors, CEOs, CFOs, CIOs, COOs, executives, etcetera (n = 454)

On the premises of a direct link between EQ and leadership, the sample was categorized into six distinct leadership groups such that the number of respondents in each group closely resembles that of a normal distribution curve (see Figure 1). An EQ score range of SD = 13 was found to be optimal for this purpose.

Figure 1. Approximate normal distribution of leadership within the sample

	Less than -2SD	-2SD TO -1SD	-1SD to 0SD	0SD to +1SD	+1SD to +2SD	More than +2SD
	Very low EQ	Low EQ	Below avg EQ	Above avg EQ	High EQ	Very high EQ
EQ range	**30-73**	**74-86**	**87-99**	**100-112**	**113-125**	**126-150**
n	193	422	886	1,114	637	46
Avg EQ	**65**	**82**	**94**	**106**	**118**	**128**

These descriptions lay the groundwork for investigating whether leadership differs significantly within the reported employment levels.

Results and Discussion

The full EQ profile for each level of employment, as measured by the SEI, is presented in Figure 2. The group profiles were derived from averaging the EQ scores of the respondents within each group. An overview of the bar graphs shows that all EQ scores lie relatively close to the normed average of 100, which can be expected for any group of large size. However, Scheffé's post-hoc multiple comparisons revealed that employees differ significantly ($p < 0.01$) in EQ depending on the level of employment they were at the time of their assessment.

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In addition to the found significance in EQ profile differences, the patterns within the profile scores also deserve attention. For instance, the consistently lower scores for the professional group is interesting: These employees are considered specialists in their field, who often make a deliberate choice not to enter the managerial ranks where they are required to spend a significant portion of their work time on people issues and use their 'soft' competencies that they find less fulfilling. Professionals are often leaders in their subject matter, attributes of which lie outside the boundaries of EQ assessment.

At the same time, the EQ scores of the student group compare well with that of other group profiles. While students generally stand at the beginning of their career, the strong scores may reflect the potential of this group to advance though the employment levels. Lastly, it is intriguing to observe within each of the eight EQ competencies in Figure 2, how entrepreneurs match up with differing levels of employment depending on the nature of the EQ competence.

Figure 2. SEI EQ profiles for different employment levels
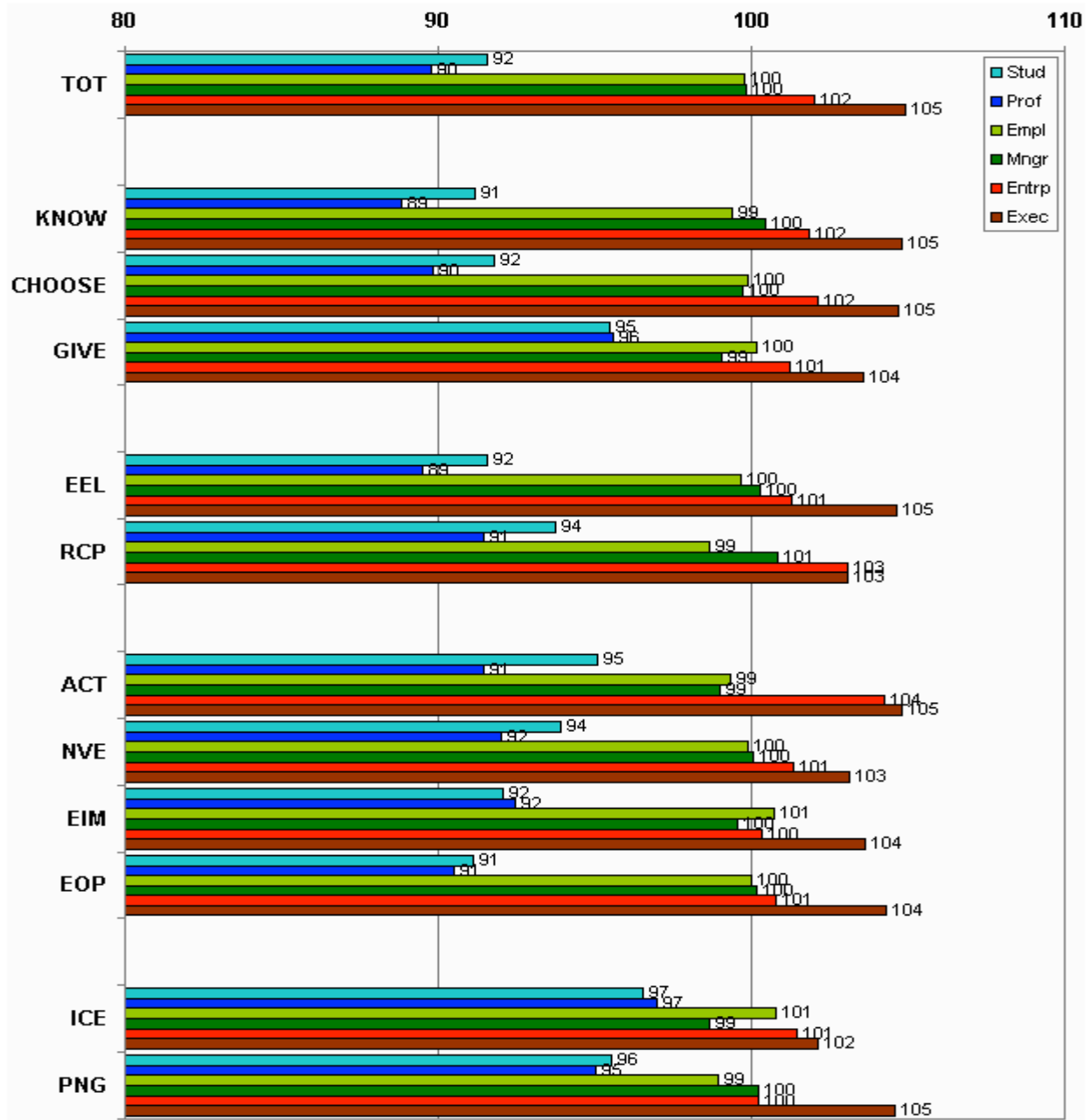
Note how the EQ profiles generally rise in score as employees go up in rank. This pattern suggests that EQ matters to employee level. Yet the increase from regular employee to the executive level is about five EQ points, indicating that the relationship is more sophisticated than being mathematically linear. It is

possible that the differences are clouded by the existence of leaders and others within each level of employment. This will be explored next.

All eight SEI competencies made it into a stepwise regression model (using a forward-selection procedure); however, only 6.47% of the variation in employee level could be explained. This finding is not surprising. Since the relationship between EQ and employee level is not simple – the authors contend that not all managers and executives are leaders – one would expect a low R^2 value as was found. In addition, there appears to be more to EQ than high scores when leadership in the workplace is considered.

In the case of cognitive intelligence or aptitude assessments, generally high scores are sought, while we pay attention to what knowledge is not attained yet, or what should be corrected or enhanced. In the case of EQ, a meaningful balance of scores is also important. Certain EQ competencies may be particularly critical to specific job roles. Regardless of the average EQ that each level of employment is at, Table 1 provides a comparison of the competencies that are considered either strengths or development areas for each level.

Table 1. EQ strengths and development areas for each level of employment

Level of Employment	Development Areas[1]	Strengths[1]
Students	EOP, EEL, EIM	ICE, ACT, PNG
Professionals	EEL, EOP	ICE, PNG
Employees	RCP, PNG, ACT	ICE, EIM, EOP
Managers	ICE, ACT, EIM	RCP, EEL
Entrepreneurs	PNG, EIM, EOP	ACT, RCP
Executives	ICE, RCP, NVE	ACT, EEL, PNG

1 Listed in order of most to least
EEL – Enhance Emotional Literacy   ACT – Apply Consequential Thinking   NVE – Navigate Emotions   ICE – Increase Empathy
RCP – Recognize Patterns   EIM – Enhance Intrinsic Motivation   EOP – Exercise Optimism   PNG – Pursue Noble Goals

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Table 1 reveals that people draw from different strengths and are challenged by different development areas in their seeking of alignment between the three EQ pursuits, depending on their level of employment. For example, note how *Enhance Emotional Literacy* and to some extent also *Recognize Patterns*, which lie at the base of leadership, develop from being a development area to being a strength as one goes up in employment level. This suggests that people with strong levels of awareness (that is, *Know Yourself)* are generally able to identify, acknowledge and express their feelings in particular situations, knowing whether these feelings are typical or not.

Following up on these feelings (that is, *Choose Yourself*), people seem to be increasingly able to assess the cost and benefit of their choices – emotionally and tactically – look at *Apply Consequential Thinking*. It is interesting to observe how *Engage Intrinsic Motivation* and *Exercise Optimism* play ping-pong through the employment levels. Regular employees seem best equipped to gain energy from personal values and commitments rather than being driven by others or external forces, and to take a proactive perspective of choice and opportunity, hope and possibility. One wonders why these strengths are not evident among the managerial and professional groups.

In sharp contrast, *Increase Empathy* moves inversely through the employment levels from being a strength to being a development area. This suggests that the reasons for applying EQ competence (that is, *Give Yourself*) and hence leadership take a back-step as employees move up the ladder; managers seem to become detached of their purpose and self-direction. This is counter-balanced somewhat by *Pursue Noble Goals*, a strength for students, professionals and executives, where principled decision-making thrives and charge is taken.

The findings in Table 1 and Figure 2 suggest that leadership plays out differently within each level of employment. They also show distinct pathways for development within a particular employment level, or for succession planning. While further EQ development is appropriate for all levels of employment, the patterns of development areas and strengths can serve as a prediction of person-fit in a particular employment level, which can be helpful for vocational decision-making, recruitment, and retention initiatives.

What remains to be investigated is whether the business world succeeds in drawing leaders, as measured by EQ competence, into the managerial ranks. This is explored in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Distribution of leadership among different levels of employment
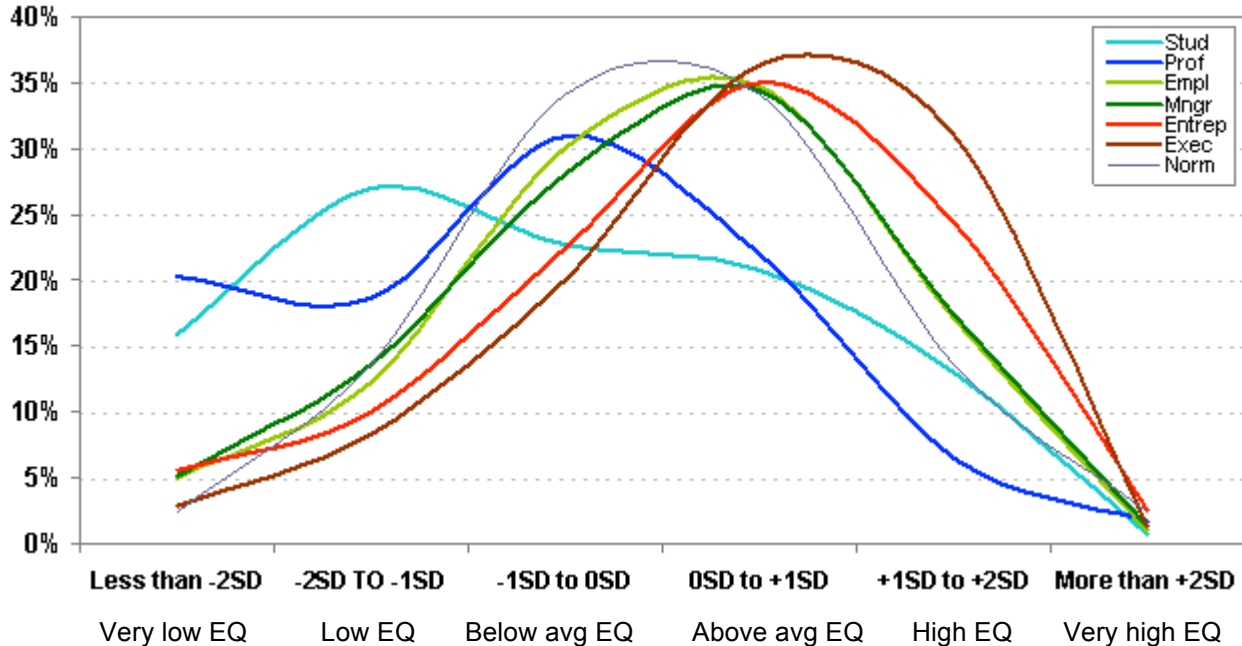
The results from Figure 3 look desirable from a managerial perspective: Comparatively more people with high EQ, and hence leadership, are found among managers, entrepreneurs and especially executives. The patterns do not claim that all executives or entrepreneurs have high EQ or are leaders, nor do they suggest that student or professionals have little leadership capability.

Professionals may be in two camps with regards to leadership: Some may benefit from further EQ development, while in general their subject-matter focus and interest may conflict with moving into the managerial ranks. This may emphasize the boundaries of EQ, in that it does not comment on subject expertise and therefore compliments IQ and aptitude measures.

Note the tendency towards bimodality (the two heaps) in the student curve. This confirms the earlier suggestion that while students generally are still developing their EQ, a subgroup among them may be well-suited for managerial positions as they advance in their careers. This further suggests that EQ measurement may be a powerful tool for HR initiatives to address the bottleneck created by the Baby Boomer population entering their retirement phase and cocooning (Pitcher, 1996). EQ and leadership may be one powerful way for this generation to blossom and leave something valuable for generations to come.

Conclusion

The statistical results appear to support the claim that managerial status is not perfectly synonymous with leadership, but that leadership, as measured by EQ, seems to advance people's careers into the managerial levels. The SEI proved to be a useful assessment tool to illustrate this. The findings also suggest that overall high EQ is not what matters most for leadership, but that EQ strength is specific to employment levels. The study results offer a valuable backdrop for vocational decision-making and career planning, personal development, and strategic business positioning.

Appendix: Description of the eight SEI competencies
(Courtesy of Six Seconds (www.6seconds.org))

Enhance Emotional Literacy
Definition: Accurately identifying and interpreting both simple and compound feelings.

Feelings are complex aspects of every person. They provide flavor and texture to perceptions, interactions, and experiences. This EEL competence lets one examine feelings, name them, and begin to analyze the causes and effects.

Emotions are linked to neurotransmitters with specific effects and structures. Each has a unique physiological 'signature' (composed of specific biological characteristics involving skin temperature, muscle pattern, and area of the brain). Each emotion also affects thinking in specific and predictable ways (for example, fear focuses attention on risk or a perceived problem) with a considerable degree of consistency across demographic and cultural differences.

Recognize Patterns
Definition: Acknowledging frequently recurring reactions and behaviors.

Sometimes people assess new situations and respond carefully and thoughtfully, but frequently they run on autopilot, reacting unconsciously based on habit. In part it is because the human brain is wired to form and follow neural pathways. Left in the subconscious, these patterns can inhibit optimal performance because they are reacting with a generalized response rather than one carefully tailored to the current situation.

The human brain is structured through ingrained neural networks that grow from repetition and association to create automatic responses. Thus everyone has and follows patterns, a kind of human autopilot. A

large part of a person's behavior is subconscious, driven by these mental and emotional habits. Some patterns are functional; some are not. Learning to recognize these 'autopilot' reactions is the first step to evaluating and changing them.

Apply Consequential Thinking

Definition: Evaluating the costs and benefits of your choices.

This competency helps assess decisions and their effects. It is key to managing impulses and acting intentionally (rather than reacting). It is a process of analyzing and reflecting, using both thoughts and feelings, to identify a response that is optimal for oneself and others.

People are constantly making choices, and there are costs and benefits to each decision. Sometimes those stakes are high; sometimes they are not. Meta-cognition, (that is, thinking about thinking) is one way of knowing the difference. Improving consequential thinking requires learning to evaluate the options and choose wisely. It begins by investing a few seconds of reflection to assess the options, risks, and rewards.

Emotions provide data about our decisions – a 'felt sense' of what is right or wrong. The part of the brain that provides that felt sense by acting as a barometer for behavior, is called the basal ganglia. At the same time an area called the pre-frontal cortex does the cost-benefit analysis of the decision. It takes these two parts working together to make optimal choices. Bringing the intelligence of emotions into decision-making requires attending to both thinking and feeling.

Navigate Emotions

Definition: Assessing, harnessing, and transforming emotions as a strategic resource.

People are expected to control their emotions, to suppress intense feelings like anger, joy, or fear, and keep them within bounds during decision making. However, at the same time feelings provide insight and energy; they help drive decision making and behavior. This competence lets one manage emotions at the foundational level, neither minimizing them, nor wallowing in them. The 'emotionally intelligent' choice is somewhere in between: Recognize the feelings, identify the feelings, and keep them moving.

Feelings arise from stimulus – perceptions, thoughts, other combined feelings, physical sensation, or interaction. Emotions are manifestations of chemicals that transmit information in the brain and body. The neuropeptide molecules are created primarily in the hypothalamus and generally last for approximately six seconds. People have multiple feelings at any given moment. As they attend to a feeling it is usually intensified and more of that chemical is produced. Emotions help direct and focus attention, providing

data about the internal and external environment. The purpose is to serve at least a survival function, helping people avoid danger and forming supportive relationships. Navigating emotions is a process of understanding those messages and harnessing both the information and the energy in the feelings for a desirable outcome.

Engage Intrinsic Motivation

Definition: Gaining energy from personal values and commitments versus being driven by external forces. People who require external reinforcement to be motivated are always at the mercy of others' approval or reward system. Engaging intrinsic motivation means developing and utilizing lasting inner drivers.

Intrinsic motivation is driven from within; extrinsic motivation is driven from outside. Increasing one's intrinsic motivation involves two components. The first is to reduce the need for external validation and reward. This means lessening the craving for approval, praise, money, or adulation from others, and worrying less about criticism and failure. When people need acknowledgement or approval from others, they give up autonomy; they make themselves dependent on others' regard. The second component is to develop clear internal values, goals, and self-validation in place of the external substitutes.

Exercise Optimism

Definition: Taking a proactive perspective of hope and possibility.
Optimism allows people to see beyond the present and take ownership of the future. This learned way of thinking and feeling bestows ownership to one's decisions and outcomes. Everyone uses both optimistic and pessimistic styles of feeling and thinking; some tend to use one of these more often. An optimistic outlook increases the pool of choices and the opportunity for success. The optimist believes that there is always a way, one just have to find it. Through optimism one is able to choose oneself.

Optimism means recognizing an adversity or failure as a temporary and isolated situation that can be changed with continued effort. It does not mean having false hope or always being happy. There is a time for critical realism, and there is a time for being open to expanded possibilities. By employing a habit of optimism, people recognize that they have choices however, which is an essential part of taking ownership of their behavior and is known to improve performance, health and relationships.

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Increase Empathy

Definition: Recognizing and appropriately responding to others' emotions.

Empathy is a non-judgmental openness to others' feelings and experiences such that it builds connection and awareness. It starts by noticing both the pleasant and unpleasant feelings and genuinely caring what the other person is experiencing. This is followed by intent listening, authentic sharing and responding in a way that shows concern. Empathy is key to understanding others and forming enduring and trusting relationships. It includes taking other people into account in decision making.

Empathy is a feeling of shared understanding that occurs when people connect on an emotional level. It grows from recognizing the inherent humanity and interdependence all people have with one another. Empathy is different from sympathy or pity. Sympathy implies the ability to enter into, understand, or share somebody else's feelings, without that person necessarily picking up on it. Pity occurs when you show sympathy in a way of sorrow or regret. Both sympathy and pity remains relational distance; empathy minimizes this.

Pursue Noble Goals

Definition: Connecting your daily choices with your overarching sense of purpose.

Having noble goals positions one well to activate all the above EQ competencies. Noble goals go beyond the Salovey-Mayer definition of emotional intelligence – they are about putting EQ competence into purposeful action. When people examine their personal vision, mission, and legacy, and use that conviction to set their goals and objectives, emotional intelligence gains relevance and weight. Pursuing a noble goal facilitates integrity and ethical behavior. Tactical or strategic goals define actions, but the nobility in these goals help shape the reasons underlying them. It is a statement of purpose that encompasses the professional and personal life with a future orientation, the driving force behind values, principles, and goals. It helps one step out of ego protection, win-lose, and zero-sum thinking.

In a business climate of globalization, outsourcing, and the increasing sophistication within which the knowledge worker function in today's information era, employees increasingly look to leaders to articulate that meaningful vision and put it into action. Thus the pursuit of purpose is essential for today's managers and leaders.

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