Chapter 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The basic purpose of a scientific research activity is to relate the observed facts (i.e. immediate discovery) to some organizations of a system. It amounts to what Arieti (1976) names, individualizing some underlying commonality or connection between things hitherto deemed dissimilar or unrelated. If, however, some of the observed facts do not seem to fit in a system, such apparent contradictions should be explainable with valid reasons. When the observed facts are related to a system, “the immediate discovery may lead to additional properties hidden in the class or system” (Arieti, 1976). It then, becomes an innovation.

This humble piece of research does not attain that lofty ideal of innovation. It merely tends to correlate leadership styles and conflict management with emotional intelligence.

In this chapter an effort has been made to explain various observations in the light of theoretical orientation of emotional intelligence, leadership styles and conflict management. Secondly, the results are discussed to show how these findings are concurrent with the empirical studies already conducted in the field, if any. At places, where the observations did not concur the findings of other investigators, attempts have been made to fathom plausible reasons for these disagreements

Main Findings

1. Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with pioneering, strategic, management, and team, pastoral and encouraging styles of leadership.
2. Even the subscales self-awareness, self management, social awareness and social skills are positively correlated with pioneering, strategic, management, team, pastoral and encouraging styles of leadership.

3. Self awareness is significantly correlated with asserting and compromising styles of conflict management, and there is no relationship between problem solving, avoiding and accommodating styles of conflict management.

4. Self management is significantly and positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no significant relationship with avoiding styles of conflict management.

5. Social awareness is positively and significantly correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no relationship with avoiding style of conflict management.

6. Social skills are positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management.

7. Strategic leadership style is positively correlated with problem solving and asserting styles of conflict management it is negatively correlated with avoiding style of conflict management. It has no relationship with compromising and accommodating style of conflict management.

8. Management style of leadership has positive correlation with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no relationship with avoiding style of conflict management.

9. Team leadership is positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It is negatively correlated with avoiding style of conflict management.
10. Pastoral leadership is positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no correlation with avoiding style of conflict management.

11. Encouraging leadership is positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no correlation with avoiding style of conflict management.

12. Self-awareness, social-awareness and self management are significant predictors of pioneering style of leadership.

13. Self-awareness and social-awareness are significant predictors of strategic style of leadership.

14. Self-awareness and social-awareness are significant predictors of management style of leadership.

15. Self-management and social skills are significant predictors of team leadership.

16. Social-awareness and social skills are significant predictors of pastoral style of leadership.

17. Social-awareness and social skills are significant predictors of encouraging style of leadership.

18. Social-awareness is significant predictor of problem solving style of conflict management.

19. Social-awareness and social skills are significant predictors of asserting style of conflict management.

20. EI cannot predict about compromising style of conflict management.

21. Social-awareness is a significant predictor of avoiding style of conflict management.

22. Social-awareness is significant predictors of accommodating style of conflict management.
Discussion

The present study seeks to explore relationship among emotional intelligence, leadership styles and conflict management. Therefore, the study was designed to be correlation to explore the strength of relationship among all variables. In this section the results obtained are discussed in the context of existing research and conclusions are drawn. One of the objectives of the study was to determine, at least in a preliminary way, the relationship among emotional intelligence and different leadership styles. The results indicated that Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with pioneering, strategic, management, and team, pastoral and encouraging styles of leadership. Even the subscales self-awareness, self management, social awareness and social skills are positively correlated with pioneering, strategic, management, team, pastoral and encouraging styles of leadership. Furthermore, Self-awareness and social-awareness are significant predictors of strategic and management style of leadership. Self-awareness and social-awareness are significant predictors of t style of leadership. Self-management and social skills are significant predictors of team leadership. Social-awareness and social skills are significant predictors of pastoral and encouraging style of leadership. Emotionally intelligent individuals tend to be aware of their own emotions and moods (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Research suggests that a leader with heightened self-awareness may be more effective at inspiring subordinates (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Bass & Yammarino, 1989; Fleenor & McCauley, 1996; Sosik & Dworakivsky, 1998). Leaders who possess heightened levels of self-perception have been shown to be more effective leaders (Roush & Atwater, 1992). When the leader accurately perceives subordinate’s emotions and responds appropriately, the followers may be more receptive (George, 2000). Emotionally intelligent individuals tend to be aware of their emotions and the impact that their emotions have on others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Leaders who are self-aware tend to possess heightened levels of interpersonal control (Sosik & Megerian, 1999) and may be more empathetic toward followers’ needs (Mayer & Geher, 1996; Sosik & Megerian, 1999). Individuals who can accurately read other people’s emotions tend to be more effective at interpersonal interactions with co-workers (Mayer et al., 2000b). Research suggests that leader emotional expression tends to have an impact on both follower affect and perceptions of
leader effectiveness (Lewis, 2000).

Another objective of the study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and different styles of handling interpersonal conflicts. A significantly positive relationship was found among all components of emotional intelligence and different styles of handling interpersonal conflicts. Self awareness is significantly correlated with asserting and compromising styles of conflict management, and there is no relationship between problem solving, avoiding and accommodating styles of conflict management. Self management is significantly and positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no significant relationship with avoiding styles of conflict management. Social awareness is positively and significantly correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no relationship with avoiding style of conflict management. Social skills are positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. Furthermore, Social-awareness is significant predictor of problem solving style of conflict management. Social-awareness and social skills are significant predictors of asserting style of conflict management. Social-awareness is a significant predictor of avoiding style of conflict management. Social-awareness is significant predictors of accommodating style of conflict management. Emotionally intelligent individuals possess the ability to be empathetic and to manage interpersonal relationships (Mayer et al., 2000c). Previous research found that integrating and compromising styles are the most preferred styles of individuals when they face conflicts (Trubisky et al., 1991; Lee, 2003). Second, the literature also showed that both styles have positive impact on promotion, productivity and job performance (Blake and Mouton, 1964; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Jamieson and Thomas; 1974; Jordan and Troth, 2002). However, Rahim (2000, p. 5) argued the weakness of this stream of studies and stated that “unfortunately studies on conflict resolution did not provide any clear link between conflict management strategies and effectiveness”. It is therefore necessary to re-examine the causes and effects of those integrating and compromising styles.

Scholars have noted that EI plays an important role in resolving conflict functionally
Borisoff and Victor, 1998; Jordan and Troth, 2002, 2004). Jordan and Troth (2004, p. 196) argued that "the ability to be aware of and manage emotions is also thought to facilitate functional than dysfunctional, conflict resolution and consequently contribute to better team performance". We therefore assume that EI may lead people to choose more advantageous styles of handling interpersonal conflicts using the integrating and compromising styles. This is derived from the fact that emotionally intelligent people have the ability to better manage and regulate their own emotions and the emotions of others (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Davies et al., 1998; Ng et al., 2007; Mayer et al., 2008).

In addition, emotionally intelligent people are more like to select integrating and compromising styles because those styles may have more beneficial outcomes in terms of the efficacy and suitability (Gross and Guerrero, 2000). As integrating and compromising styles have positive effects on conflict resolution (Hocker and Wilmot, 1998; Gross and Guerrero, 2000), we expect that the integrating and comprising styles may become a preference for a person high in EI in solving conflicts.

Another objective of the study was to explore the relationship between leadership styles and different styles of handling interpersonal conflicts. Strategic leadership style is positively correlated with problem solving and asserting styles of conflict management it is negatively correlated with avoiding style of conflict management. It has no relationship with compromising and accommodating style of conflict management. Management style of leadership has positive correlation with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no relationship with avoiding style of conflict management. Team leadership is positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It is negatively correlated with avoiding style of conflict management. Pastoral leadership is positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no correlation with avoiding style of conflict management. Encouraging leadership is positively correlated with problem solving, asserting, compromising and accommodating styles of conflict management. It has no correlation with avoiding style of conflict management.
Emotionally intelligent individuals possess the ability to manage interpersonal relationships, thus it is expected that leaders with heightened levels of emotional intelligence would be successful leaders (Mayer et al., 2000c).

Managerial implications

The privatization of the workplace has lead to increasing organizational change and organizational contextual volatility, which, in turn, has produced increasing differences and conflicts (Dana and Dana, 2003; Sommer, 2003) as cited in (Yu, Sardessai, Lu and Zhao, 2006). Furthermore, Indian organizations are involved in mergers and acquisitions taking place at a global level will result in workforce diversity and cultural differences that is another major reason of conflicts among employees. Therefore, the findings of this study have some importance to Indian organizations in leadership and managing conflicts.

The results showed significant influence of EI on strategic, management, team, pastoral and encouraging styles of leadership. EI has no significant relationship with pioneering style of leadership. Social awareness or empathy refers to the awareness of others’ feelings, needs, and concerns. According to Goleman (1995), empathy involves understanding others, developing others, and having a service orientation. It implies that the more an individual understands others/colleagues, the more likely he or she will use the team and encouraging styles of leadership.

The problem-solving style is generally perceived to be a more appropriate, more effective, and more competent style in managing conflict. Individuals who experience honest self-awareness also recognize their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. Additionally, these people know how their feelings affect themselves, other people, and their job performance (Goleman, 1999). Self-regulation is an important component of social development and it contributes to the quality of interpersonal relationships (Saarni, 1999). Empathy involves understanding others, developing others, and having a service orientation (Goleman, 1995). Self-regulation and empathy can be developed (Davis, 1983; Kestenbaum et al., 1989). If managers want to be effective at managing conflict, then it becomes necessary for
them to adopt and develop an integrative style. Salopek (1998) noted in an interview with Goleman that emotional intelligence abilities are learned and tend to improve as one ages and matures. Therefore, organizations will have to consciously and continuously strive to inculcate self-regulation and empathy among their managers through an effective programme of training and development.

To reduce the conflict, organizations must increase the levels of EI for their employees' which will help them to manage these conflicts properly and reduce its negative impact on their life and work.

**Suggestion for further research**

While the investigator deems the findings of the present study, obviously caution in adopting them is warranted due to several limitations. First, the small size of the sample prevents us from making stronger claims about the generalizability of these findings. Second, the correlational nature of the data, which were collected at one time point, limits the interpretation with regard to the processes involved. Nevertheless, extrapolations from the data, when supported by theory, can provide suggestions for directions in future investigations.

The present study raised a number of interesting questions for future research: Why was emotional intelligence predictive of leadership and, but not all styles of conflict management. The lack of agreement among researchers on the definition of emotional intelligence poses problems for organizations. The question remains as to whether emotional intelligence is simply a re-labelling of already existing constructs such as personality and general cognitive ability. The abundance of constructs included in the mixed-model framework of emotional intelligence may predict many individual and organizational outcomes. However, labelling these constructs "emotional intelligence" is disingenuous because such constructs fail to meet the criteria for inclusion as a type of intelligence. Future researchers should examine the utility of mixed-model emotional intelligence measures, such as the EQ-i, in predicting work outcomes beyond the influence of other well-established predictor variables, such as personality and general cognitive ability. Current evidence suggests that the EQ-i is not much
more than a measure of personality and affect (e.g., Livingstone & Day, 2002; Newsome et al., 2000).

Several researchers have suggested that emotional intelligence may be used by organizations to select effective leaders (e.g., George, 2001; Kobe, Reiter-Palmon, & Rickers, 2001). It is necessary to empirically examine ability-based emotional intelligence measures in relation to effective leadership behaviours in a military context. The present review outlined a conceptual link between emotional intelligence and leadership suggesting that emotional perception, emotional facilitation, emotional understanding, and emotional management may be important for the prediction of leadership behaviours. Future researchers should test these propositions at different levels within the organization.

It is also important to determine the amount of emotional intelligence that is deemed appropriate for effective leadership. By determining whether emotional abilities are important to successful leadership through job analysis procedures, researcher may gain a greater understanding of whether emotional constructs would be useful for selection and training. According to Arvey et al. (1998) individuals should be selected on the basis of the match between the individual's level of emotional display and the degree of emotional display demanded by the organization. Developing assessment tools to determine the congruency between leader’s emotional abilities and the emotional demands of the organization may prove to be beneficial (Arvey et al., 1998). Another related issue involves examining how much emotional intelligence is too much. Leaders who possess very high levels of emotional management / regulation may use these abilities for their own self- interests (Sosik & Dworakivsky, 1998). That is, they may manipulate followers through emotional regulation for their own personal benefit (Sosik & Dworakivsky, 1998). This question should also be addressed in future research.

A related concept to emotional intelligence is emotional labour (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995; Morris and Feldman, 1996). Emotional labour involves “enhancing, faking, or suppressing emotions to modify emotional expression” (Grandey, 2000, p. 95). An individual engages in this regulation of emotional expression according to the “display rules” of the
organization (Grandey, 2000). Research suggests that emotional labour may result in negative individual health outcomes (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Shaubroeck and Jones (2000) found that individuals who perceived that their job demanded them to express positive emotions tended to report more negative physical health symptoms. Future researchers should examine the impact of emotional management / regulation on the health and well-being of leaders. Finally, the issue of training leaders to enhance their emotional intelligence should be examined in future research. Some researchers suggest that organizations may benefit from providing emotional intelligence training to leaders (e.g., Barling et al., 2000). However, the question remains as to whether emotional intelligence can be developed if it is a set of personality traits (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000). Ambiguity regarding the construct validity of emotional intelligence makes it difficult to determine a starting point at which to determine if a leader's emotional intelligence needs development. This issue should be examined in future research.

Further, no significant attempt has been made except Singh (2007) to explore relationship between EI and leadership in Indian context based on gender with a small sample of IT professionals. Rajendran, Downey, and Stough (2007) explored the preliminary reliability of EI in Indian Context. Thus there is a dearth of empirical support necessitate further exploration of EI and leadership in India.

The understanding of conflict and the role that it plays in influencing employee behaviour and work outcomes is now more important than it ever was. Simply because the work environment is now richer in terms of conflict seeds than before, e.g. diversity, hostility and complexity. In this context, Suliman (2003, p. 330) argued: “The sophisticated methods that used these days by most organizations in order to develop structures, departments and to arrange jobs have increased the growing of counterproductive organizational conflict”.

Thus, there is a general agreement among researchers that analyzing work outcomes helps to understand the processes by which the interaction of employee/organization influences his/her behaviour and work performance including organizational conflict, and it is a fact of life, in organizations just as everywhere else, as people compete for jobs, resources, power, acknowledgement, and security. Dealing with it is difficult
because it arouses such primitive emotions. People feel threatened (rightly or wrongly), and this creates a version of the age-old stress response – fight or flight (Bagshaw, 1998, p. 206). Moreover, most scholars incline to postulate conflict as an inevitable outcome of organizational operation. And “since conflict in organizations is inevitable, it is critical that it be handled as effectively as possible” (Rahim et al., 1999, p. 166). Moreover, no significant empirical work is done in Indian context to validate the findings, which makes it more important to carry out further research.

Future research also will need to examine whether emotional intelligence skills can be taught. That is can executives increase their score on tests that measure the ability to perceive, use, understand and regulate emotions? Zeidner, Roberts and Matthews (2002) and Gil-Olarte, Palomera Martin and Brackett (2006) urge educators to validate emotional literacy programmes. Of course, these findings can be replicated and certain of the interrelationships explored further. But a beginning of importance in this regard in Indian context, the investigator feels, has been made.