



Hearts Over Smarts:
An Analysis of Emotional Intelligence in the Global Apparel Supply Chain

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Emotional intelligence (EI) has been said to be more powerful than IQ and a key predictor of success in life (Goleman, 2001). EI is described as the ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and relationships and to reason and solve problems (Mayer et al., 1997). The EI four-branch model includes the mental process of (a) perceiving emotions, (b) using emotions to facilitate thought, (c) understanding emotions, and (d) managing of emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). General intelligence, g factor, refers to an individual's basic mental ability that influences performance measures, known as IQ (Spearman, 1927). There are distinctions between EI and general intelligences. General intelligences such as verbal-propositional rely on "cold" cognitive processes, where, EI operates on "hot" cognitive emotional processes that are of importance to the individual and the surrounding environment (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Additionally, EI differs from general intelligence, in that, EI can be learned and developed at any stage of life (Goleman, 2001). Emotional intelligence has been investigated as a predictor for leadership (Northouse, 2013) and organizational behavior (Collins, 2001,) as well as, play a major role in the success at school, work, and home (Goleman, 2001). However, there is a lack in understanding general characteristics that an individual may possess that could affect EI, especially in the hyper-dynamic global apparel supply chain.

The global apparel supply chain is a fragmented industry spanning across not only organizational boundaries, but national borders, which creates a unique work environment full of uncertainty and volatility (Dicken, 2010). Cohesive and effective work relationships across diverse cultures are vital for the production of timely and affordable garment products, thus the importance of supply chain management (Chen & Paulraj, 2004). With such a diverse supply chain and members that range in many characteristics, there was a need to learn what, if any, supply chain member's individual characteristics may have an effect on EI. As a first step in understanding EI in the apparel industry, this study investigated the global supply chain at the individual level of the supply chain member and how EI could be affected by certain demographic characteristics. The specific objectives of this study were to determine if EI is affected by gender, ethnicity, age, and years working in the apparel industry for global apparel supply chain members.

An online survey method was utilized to collect 135 usable responses in January 2015 to empirically test the relationships of general individual characteristics on emotional intelligence. The sample included global supply chain members that were recruited by snowball sampling technique due to the hard to reach nature of this population. Participants' job positions included designers, buyers, technical designers, production & sourcing, as well as, vender and factory owners. Gender of the participants was 34 (25.9%) male, 93 (68.9%) female, and 8 (5.2%) rather

not say. Ethnicity of the participants was 99 (73.3%) White, 5 (3.7%) Black, 26 (19.3%) Asian/Pacific Islander, 3 (2.3%), Hispanic/Latino, and 2 (1.4%) rather not say. Age of participants ranged from 18 to 71 with the mean age between 37 and 38 year old. Years of the participants working in the apparel industry ranged from less than one year to 51 years, with an average of 14.4 years in the industry.

To achieve the study's objectives, the data were analyzed using multiple regression to examine the dependent variable of EI and the independent variables of gender, ethnicity, age, and years working in the apparel industry. The regression analysis indicated that both age and years working in the apparel industry had a significant affected EI, while gender and ethnicity had no significant affect. It was found that age significantly predicted EI ($\beta = .51, p < .05$), as did years working in the apparel industry ($\beta = -.43, p < .05$).

The findings indicate that while holding gender and ethnicity constant, age was a positive predictor of EI, while years working in the apparel industry was a negative predictor of EI. Age was an expected predictor of EI (Goleman, 2001; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), however, the longer the participants had worked in the apparel industry, the lower their EI score. For the success of the supply chain, corporate HR departments need to help facilitate a work environment and train management that supports and develops EI. Both gender and ethnicity were accounted for in the analysis and found to have no significant affect. Thus, alluding to other factors that may be causing supply chain members to have lower EI scores the longer their tenure in the industry. These findings lead to an array of future research opportunities for both qualitative and quantitative inquiries and may open a new area of research in exploring the individual's relationship with the work environment and business practices. The findings may also help academics guide and teach future apparel supply chain members in not only EI, but the importance of group dynamic skills for the success of their careers.

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