

# ANALYZING THE ROLE OF 'EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE' IN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN THE INDIAN HOSPITALITY SECTOR

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Emotional intelligence has become a buzz word; Emotional Quotient (EQ) has long overtaken the Intelligence Quotient (IQ). A manager capable of recognizing and managing emotions of the self and of others may be more adept at work. Hoteliers have to work long hours due to which staff may become disgruntled and when insufficient returns are received, it may show up in their behaviour at work. The hotel industry is a service oriented industry which has an intangible product to sell, something that is produced and consumed in the same instant. **Objectives:** To understand in depth, the concept of emotional intelligence in hospitality. To analyze the link between EI and its role in developing effective leaders in hospitality. **Methodology:** Convenience sampling was used and the samples were approached online due to COVID. The samples were shortlisted from the personal contacts of the authors in Hyderabad's 5 star hotels holding management level positions. Out of 50-60 samples approached, 43 samples consented for their inclusion. **Results:** EQ has been ignored in hospitality curriculum with 55% sample base completely agreeing to and same should be for hiring, as voted by all 43 samples. 26 samples were also in complete favor of EI being a necessary pre-requisite for promotions. **Conclusion:** EI is extremely necessary in leader building and developing EI focused course for the under-graduates will help inculcate the quality in later stages of career.

**Key Words:** Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Quotient, Work-life Balance, Hospitality

## INTRODUCTION

Intelligence can be also called as the sum total weightage of an individual to act in the best possible manner and to tackle everyday situations effectively and efficiently. Originally Intelligence came from the Latin *Intelligentia*, which is a combination of *Inter* i.e. between

and *legere* i.e. to choose, thus it is a choice of electing rational behaviour amongst a lot of substitutes available in the matter of how one carries himself/herself (Koc, 2019).

EI, which stands for Emotional intelligence, is the ability to manage and understand one's own thoughts and emotions, as well as those of the individuals around in the society. People who have a higher degree of emotional intelligence can properly understand what their sentiments mean, what are they feeling, as well as how such thoughts and emotions can affect others. To become a successful leader, having a high quotient on the emotional level is a necessity (Dowding, 2016).

In previous years, some of the recruiters have started incorporating aptitude tests which judge the emotional intelligence of the particular applicant in their shortlisting processes, and this works on the theory that an individual with a higher capacity of emotional intelligence will have better intrapersonal, interpersonal and leadership skills. Considering the fact that some of the studies have found a link between job performance and emotional intelligence, there are many others that haven't shown any such correlation between both the variables, making it difficult to prove anything on a scientific basis. It is equally difficult to measure making the process difficult to predict due to the highly volatile nature of every individual's emotional state and intelligence.

In their book *Emotional Intelligence & Hospitality*, Cavelzani and Esposito (2010), talk about the importance of emotional intelligence for an individual who has a hotel as his or her workplace. Emotions of any sort need to be managed well as hotels are extremely brand conscious and aim to make a long lasting relation with their guests. If the leaders do not have the right amount of Emotional Intelligence in them, it might lead to hampered relations with them when the managers do not recognize the emotional needs and expectations of their guests, which ultimately leads to complaints, bad publicity, expensive service recovery and lost goodwill. In order to understand the customer's emotions or the guest's emotions, the manager/leader first needs to understand his/her own emotional state and follow the basic elements which concerns him/her i.e. desires, action taken to fulfil them and lastly the stimuli to other's emotional needs.

Being self aware about one's own emotional need is the first step to better EI, which brings in self control and is a positive way of dealing with the same. This is defined as the trait of keeping a tab on personal impulses as well as maintaining a calm poise in negative situations.

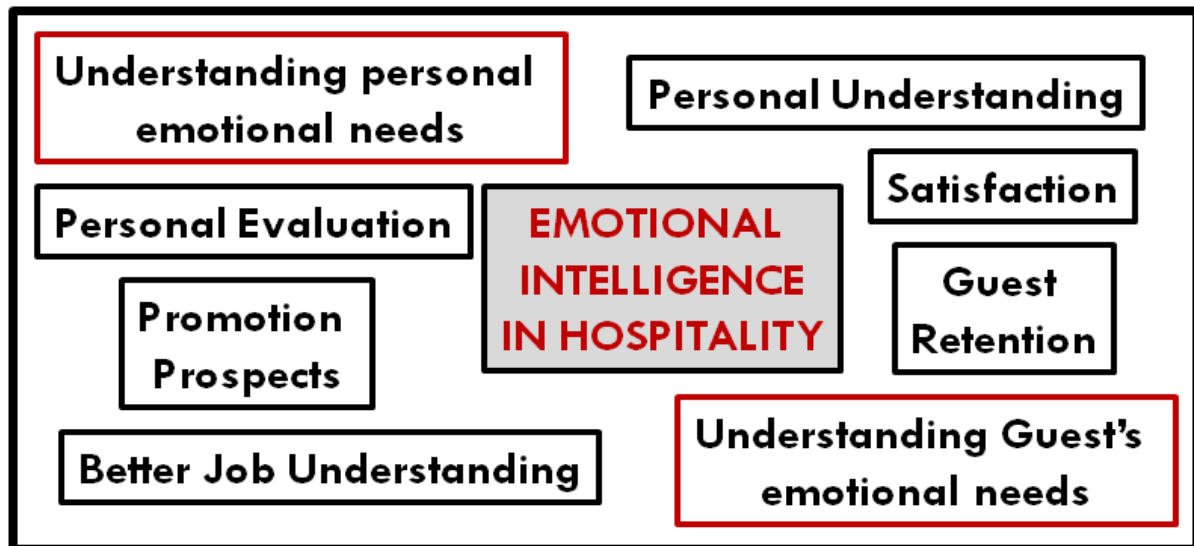
Emotional fatigue can easily puncture the drive an individual has and having a friendly face to share such emotional situations can benefit both (Rahim et al, 2002).

EI is made up of four domains: social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, as well as relationship management. Sub categorized within each component lie further 12 competencies of EI which implement outstanding work performance as a team leader which are positive outlook, self-control and empathy. Along with this, some crucial abilities are also thrown into the mix, namely influence, achievement, conflict management, inspirational leadership and lastly teamwork. A comprehensive 360-degree assessment is required so as to know the most important competencies & collect both self-ratings and the views of others acquaintances. This sort of feedback which is of an external nature is particularly helpful in the proper evaluation of all EI related areas, including self-awareness. One can get a fair estimate of one's strengths and weaknesses by asking the people who (s) he interacts with on a daily basis, at work or at home. The more people one asks, a clearer picture one will get (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017).

In a responsible position, an individual is required to be welcoming, friendly as well as attentive to the guests who visit their hotel, in short one has to be a “people’s person”. An individual with developed emotional intelligence is someone who is fundamentally efficient in managing personal relationships. Individuals with a higher emotional quotient have a certain trait set which include empathy, social awareness, and a helping nature which enables them to enjoy helping others. The skill sets are ideal for staff employed in hospitality whose regular task is to interact with new people. Hospitality professionals naturally have an above average emotional intelligence; studies have shown which comes as no surprise due to the fact that staff of frontline hospitality deals with varied personalities, emotions, and demands on regular basis, from their customers. The wiggle space of errors to any given time is very less and the hospitality staff need to report at a notice to handle difficult situations. Making customers and patrons happy at all the times involve a unique mix of finesse, serenity and inner fortitude (Editor, 2019).

(Scott-Halsell et al., 2008) study examined the scores of EI in the hospitality industry professionals, and analyzed the factors that impact the hospitality professionals’ scores. Though a few differences were resulted between the groups, the above average scores on a mean scale did show that it is a skill set equipped by the hospitality professionals. It was also a sign that young students who wish to enter the sector after completing their graduation

should be prepared in advance in terms of developing and honing strong EI skills, as these would be the skills that may certainly give an advantage in effectively sustaining in the industry, and enjoying success in both the personal and professional front.



*Figure 1: Inter-relational model of EI in personal and professional front (Source: Author's Compilation)*

(Kim & Agrusab, 2011) in their paper summarized that whenever talking about task coping, EI is considered as the strongest predictor i.e. once the two basic traits of personality which are neuroticism & extraversion come under the picture, EI doesn't influence much on coping emotions and EI is sometimes also related to social diversion as well as distraction.

(Goleman, 1995) has pointed out that EI tends to increase with maturity and age. Thus, a certain gap was expected, based on the time spent in the industry. The reason for such an occurrence was that a higher EI tends to reduce the turnover of the people who decide to not change streams in a short time, anyways have higher levels. Also to be noted, (Ashkanasy, 2003) found in his research that people with a higher EI aspect take part in activities of a voluntary nature involving EI training in a more frequent way. Thus, this might have affected who participated in the research study and also those who opted to refrain from it.

EI and hospitality especially in India has been a lost concept. How are the managers or shift leaders supposed to handle such situations? Will the same approach to problem solving help every time with every guest or employee? Is the hotel industry ready for emotionally intelligent leaders, what do they look like? How do they manage to handle sticky situations in an emotionally balanced way? Such are the few questions this paper foray into and get the

industry opinion on the same. The study not only prove to be a resourceful literature base, but also provide industry opinions to verify and answer the questions that were posed. The study also benefit the industry and act as an effective toolkit for the HR to imbibe the concepts of EI in their employees for stable growth. The objectives of the study were-

- To know in depth about the concept of emotional intelligence in hospitality
- To analyze the link between EI and its role in developing effective leaders in hospitality

## METHODOLOGY

Emotional Intelligence has an important trait aspect attached to it, which helps the hospitality staff perform their jobs better. This paper intends to find out from an extensive secondary database about the link between emotional intelligence and its role in developing effective leaders in the Indian hospitality industry. The same was tried to link with the industry as well with a close ended questionnaire and tools like Likert's Scale.

**Research Design:** The study adopted an exploratory structuring for effective absorption of secondary database, as many studies have been done on the same topic and the paper adopted 60% secondary findings and 40% primary findings, using a close-ended questionnaire.

**Locale:** The samples were shortlisted from the personal contacts of the authors in the city of Hyderabad, Telangana who worked in 5 star hotels holding management level positions in major hotels in the city.

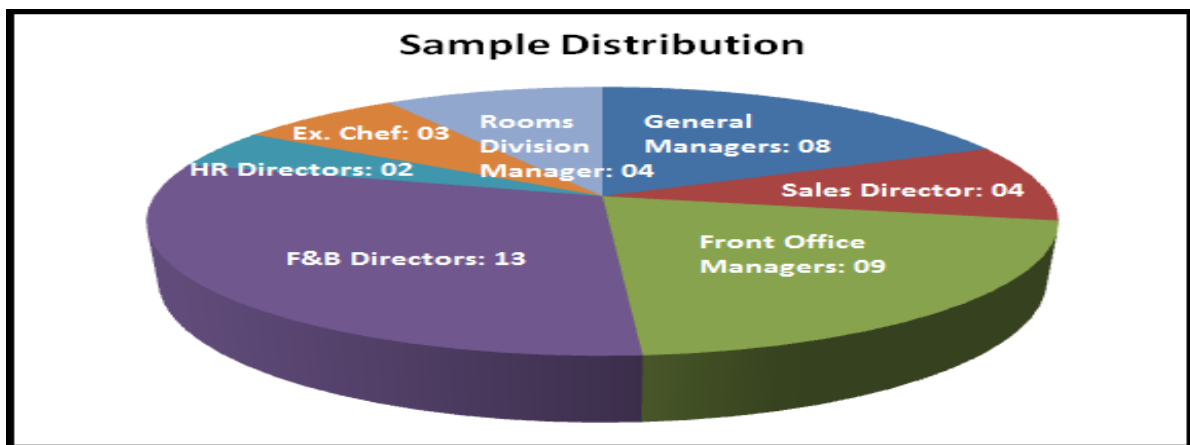
**Sampling Design:** The samples were approached using Convenience sampling without considerations to age and sex. 43 samples consented for their inclusion in the study which was approached online due to COVID protocols and a field study was not undertaken.

**Tools and Technique:** An online questionnaire was framed using Google Forms and was forwarded to the samples. A major tool that was used for the analysis was a Likert's Scale.

**Data and Statistical Analysis:** The primary data was collected through a close-ended questionnaire and the secondary data, was extensively studied from scholarly articles, research papers, online sources and magazines. The analysis of the primary data was done through pictorial representations using pie charts and bar graphs.

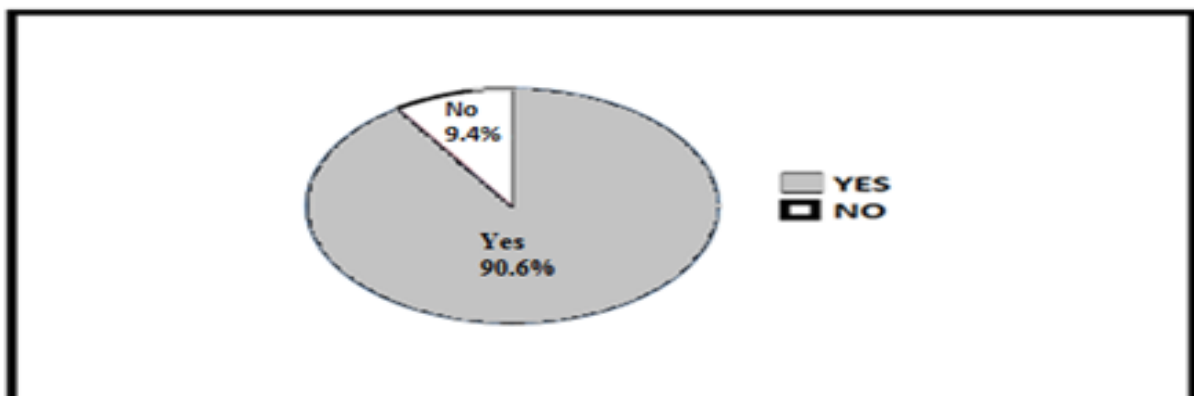
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Emotional Intelligence, a trait of handling personal as well as an individual's emotions with the best possible care is a very important aspect in developing leadership amongst the hospitality managers, an industry where handling varied personality guests is an everyday task. Managerial position holders from Hyderabad hotels were approached with an online questionnaire so as to know their opinions on the same. Sample distribution has been depicted in the following table:



*Figure 2: Sample Distribution pie chart*

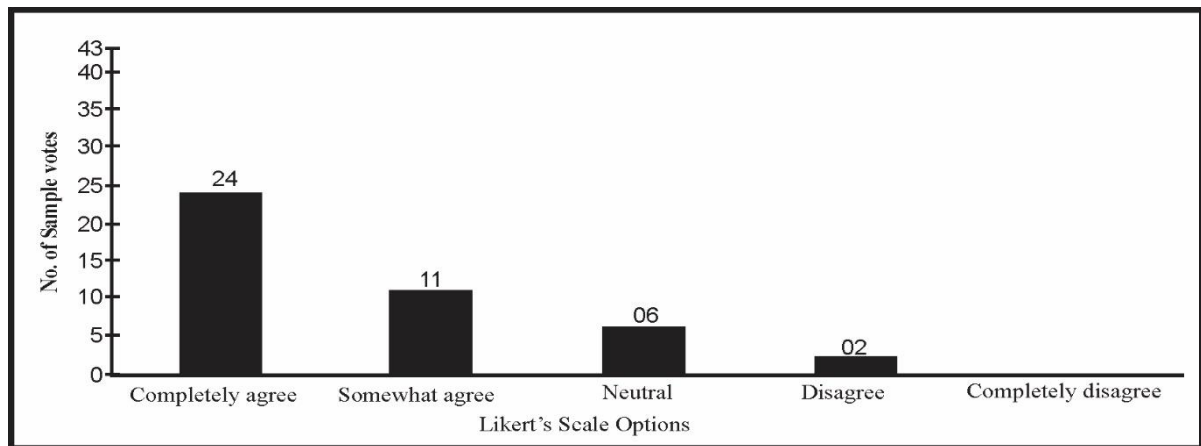
The first question assessed about the awareness levels of the samples when asked about whether they know the basic concepts of emotional intelligence or not. To this a majority of about 90% was established towards the positive side i.e. yes with 39 samples voting for the answer whereas the remaining 4 samples were not aware about it.



*Figure 3: Pie chart depicting awareness levels on emotional intelligence of samples*

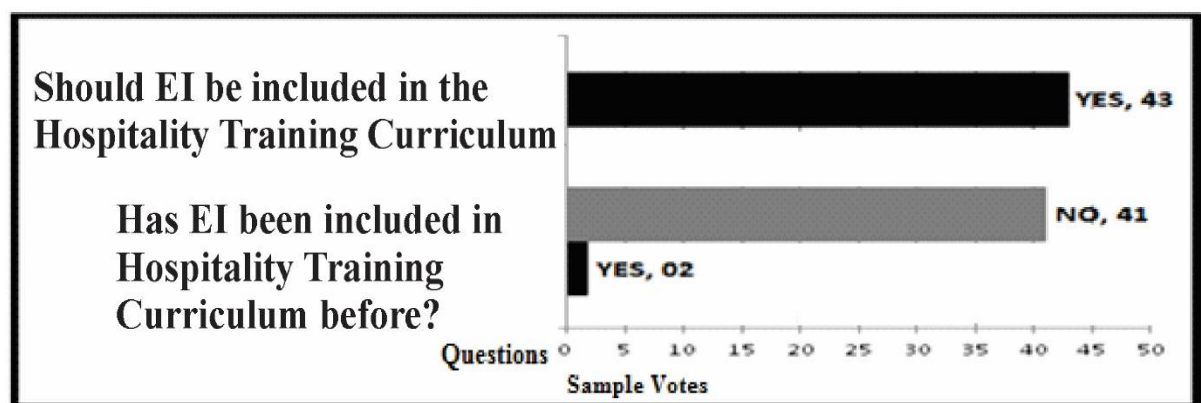
The next question gathered the samples opinion on whether they think that EI plays an important role in developing efficient leaders, 2 samples did not agree. The scale point 5 had

24 votes, scale point 4 had 11 votes, scale point 3 had 6 votes and lastly scale point 2 had only 2 votes. Completely disagree i.e. scale point 1 had 0 votes. This proved that around 81% of the total sample population was completely or somewhat agreeing to the statement posed in front of them.



**Figure 4: Opinions of samples on whether they think EI develops good leaders**

The following question enquired the relation between emotional intelligence and its relevance in the hospitality training curriculum. The question had a 2-part aspect to it, the first part questioned on whether any concepts of EI has been included in the hospitality training curriculum or not, with about 95% or 41 said no and only 2 samples saying yes. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part was on whether EI should be included in the hospitality training curriculum, to which 100% samples voted for yes.



**Figure 5: Sample votes towards EI and Hospitality Training Curriculum**

A Likert's scale was used for further analysis of various EI related parameters, with the scale point 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest, are presented in a table. Mostly, a trend was followed with all the parameters being voted towards the higher side of scale point 5 and 4



with the only exception of the parameter *Empathy may dilute authority* where 04 samples even disagreed completely by voting for scale point 1. Out of 43, 43 samples were of the opinion that EI should be added to the hospitality curriculum.

**Table 1: Likert's Scale responses of various EI related parameters**

<b>EI Related Parameters</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
EI is necessary for developing effective leaders in Hospitality	37	03	03	00	00
EI should be included during recruitment	29	06	05	03	00
Testing EI should be made mandatory for promotions	26	11	06	00	00
The level of EI develops with age	39	04	00	00	00
Hospitality can develop leaders without EI	06	09	21	05	02
Enhanced levels of EI help in managing teams better	35	06	03	00	00
Empathy may dilute authority	08	10	14	07	04
Interpersonal communication is easier for leaders with high EI	27	12	04	00	00
EI helps evaluate ones strengths & weaknesses	31	07	02	02	01
EI leads to better levels of discipline	33	08	01	01	00

A Likert's Scale was used to judge parameters along with the votes towards scale point 5 (completely agree), 4, 3, 2 & 1 (completely disagree) in the table that provides an overview that respondents have, like only 6 samples completely agree on Hospitality can develop leaders without EI and 37 samples completely agreeing on EI being necessary for developing leadership in the hospitality industry.

The results were evident of the fact that EI was recognized by the respondents as question assessed about awareness levels of samples when asked about whether they know the basic concepts of EI or not. It pointed that EI was recognized by 90% of respondents (39 samples) with only 4 samples being unaware of the concept. The role of EI in developing efficient leaders was 81% of the sample population with only 2 samples not agreeing to the statement. The responses to the questionnaire (*table 01*) had a majority of respondents voting towards scale point 5 and 4, thus concluding EI is an important factor for developing effective leadership in the hospitality professionals to help them deal with everyday situations better confirming to the study done by (Goleman, Emotional intelligence, 1995).



## CONCLUSION

EI helps individuals in reading their peers emotions better and help anticipating alternatives to address those emotions. Hospitality, an industry dealing with people has not captured EI in their training modules, & samples of the study voted otherwise i.e. they should be adopted for developing good hospitality leaders. *Limitations of the Study:* A major drawback here was that limited point of view was received as only 1 city was included and adding up more cities could have given a more varied view. The sample base was also very limited considering the busy working hours of hoteliers.

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