

Assessing the Relationship among Emotional Intelligence, Creativity and Empowering Leadership: An Empirical Study

Swadip Bhattacharjee*
Md. Sahidur Rahman**

Abstract: *The study is conducted to unveil the relationship among emotional intelligence of supervisors, creativity, and empowering leadership competencies perceived by the subordinates. Emotional intelligence was measured by the Emotional Quotient Index (Rahim et al., 2002) while creativity was measured by the Creativity Scale (Zhou & George, 2001). Additionally, empowering leadership was measured by Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapps' (2005) scale. The data for the study were collected from 142 subordinates (who rated their supervisors' emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership capability) working at different organizations in Chittagong with the help of a structured printed survey instrument. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, bivariate correlation, and regression analysis. The results demonstrated a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and creativity ($r=0.73$). Strong relationship was also found between emotional intelligence and empowering leadership ($r=0.75$). An important implication of the study is that modern organizations should focus on improving emotional intelligence competencies of those managers who feel encouraged to transfer responsibilities and to support employees to be creative. The limitations and further research directions are also discussed.*

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Creativity, Empowering leadership, Supervisors, Subordinates.*

1. Introduction

In this unstable and unpredictable business milieu, managers need extra competitive edge from their employees for success of the organization. To cope with this dynamic environment, employees need to be more creative and, at the same time, managers should give them proper scope to be creative (Al-Madadha & Koufopoulos, 2014). In this era of globalization, the contribution of empowering leadership (Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen & Rosen, 2007) and creativity (Ambile, 1988; Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004) has proven to be significant in organizations. These two competitive approaches tend to be influenced by the emotional intelligence of managers.

Emotional intelligence refers to a person's ability to detect and manage emotional cues and information (Robbins, 2005). It also indicates to a person's ability to realize the feelings

* Assistant Professor, Department of Management, University of Chittagong, Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh, Email: swadip_hrk@yahoo.com

** Professor, Department of Management, University of Chittagong, Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh, Email: sahidur_cu@yahoo.com

themselves, others, to distinguish between the two, and use that information to guide one's thinking and acting (Salovy & Mayer, 1990). Goleman (1995), one of the pioneers of this field, has argued that "EI is twice as important as IQ" (p. 34). It is a critical element for an individual's effectiveness as well as improving leadership quality. The concept of emotional intelligence was developed twenty five years ago. But, in the last ten years studies examining emotions in the work place have become more popular in different organizational areas such as organizational behavior (Daniel, 2003), change (Carr, 2001), performance (Khosravi, Manafi, Hojabri, Aghapour & Gheshmi, 2011), work motivation (Ying, Victor, & Hui, 2011) empowering leadership (Muchechetere, Ganesh & Karambwe, 2012; Lucas, Laschinger & Wong, 2008), stress (Styhre et. al., 2002), creativity (Sukumaran & Sivelingham, 2012) and so on. Therefore, emotional intelligence has a great impact on the performance of managers as well as organization (Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel & Hooper, 2002).

Similarly, creativity is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others (Franken, 1993). According to him, creativity has been originated from three reasons – i) for varied and complex stimulation, ii) to communicate ideas and values, and iii) to solve problems. So creativity produces actionable ideas, new concepts, new designs, and new opportunities. Without creativity, a person is unable to access the comprehensive information and resources, rather locked up in old habits, structures, patterns, concepts, and perception (Akinboye, 2003). Sternburg and Lubart (1996) described creativity as the confluence of intellectual activity, knowledge, motivation, thinking styles, personality, and environment. A number of studies also support that creativity is related with different management topics such as organizational culture (Tesluk, Farr, & Klein, 1997), organizational climate (Ekvall, 1996), leadership (Zhang & Bartoll, 2000), job performance (Kuncel, Hezlett & Ones, 2004), entrepreneurship development (Okpara, 2007), emotional intelligence (Sukumaran & Sivelingham, 2012) and so on. Therefore, it can be said that creativity is a knowledge intensive process by which a person can generate new ideas, new products, and new processes in a concurrent situation. This is why, creativity is important for emotional development and work performance of managers/supervisors (Sukumaran & Sivelingham, 2012).

Accordingly, empowering leadership refers to the set of leader behaviors that entails sharing power or allocates more responsibilities and authority to his or her employees (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Sims, Faraj & Yun, 2009). Empowering behaviors of leaders give employees great authority and responsibility to take of the needs of the organization and to provide employees with the means for making influential decisions. Empowering leaders support employees to voice their thoughts actively and offers more opportunities to share their knowledge in order to search for the solutions themselves (Arnold, Arad & Drasgow, 2000). Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp (2005) proposed four dimensions for empowering leadership – i) enhancing the meaningfulness of work; ii) providing autonomy from bureaucratic constrains; iii) fostering opportunities for participation in decision making; iv) expressing confidence in high performance. Undoubtedly, these

dimensions are highly related to emotional intelligence (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2012) and employee creativity (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). This style of leadership focuses on enabling and sharing power and responsibilities with subordinates so that followers can contribute and participate in the decision making process which, in turn, enhance the self-efficacy (Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2012). Moreover, empowerment is linked with organizational culture (Avolio, Zhu, Kho & Bhatia, 2004), performance (Srivastava, Bartol & Locke, 2006), organizational commitment (Bogler & Somech, 2004) and so on.

The above literature reveals that no empirical research has been conducted to identify the relationship among emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership in Bangladesh. This research gap has motivated the researchers to undertake the present study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

The term “Emotional Intelligence” was first brought in the management literature by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action” (p. 189). This definition consists of three types of ability- i) expression and evaluation of emotion, ii) regulation of emotion, and iii) using emotions in the decision making process. Later Mayer and Salovey (1997) included a new area for thinking about feelings and revised their definition of EI as “involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 10). Though emotional intelligence was coined by Salovey and Mayer (1990), it was popularized by Goleman’s book “Emotional Intelligence” in 1995. Goleman (1998) defined emotional intelligence as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (p. 317). It indicates that emotional intelligence is related to a number of non-cognitive skills, abilities, or competencies that can influence an individual’s capacity (Rahman, Ferdousy & Uddin, 2012). Emotional intelligence also defined by different scholars in different concepts such as Martinez (1997), Davies, Stankov, and Roberts (1998), Cooper and Sawaf (1998), Weisinger (1998) etc. Thus, emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive and understand emotions, to regulate and organize emotions and, to generate and manage emotions so as to enhance thinking and promote intellectual growth (Rahman, Ferdousy & Karan, 2013).

To measure the emotional intelligence of an individual, different emotional intelligence instruments are used such as TMMS (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey & Pafai, 1995), EQ-I (Bar-on, 1997), ECI (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 1999) etc. Among various measures, the current study intends to use the “Emotional Quotient Index” (EQI) developed by Rahim et al. (2002) to

measure five components of emotional intelligence. The five components are – i) self awareness, ii) self regulation, iii) motivation, iv) empathy and v) social skills. These are the re-characterization of Goleman's (1995) original components. Descriptions of these five components are as follows:

Self awareness: It means having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives, as well as their effect on others. This component is demonstrated by the presence of self-confidence, realistic self assessment, and a self depreciating sense of humor.

Self regulation: Self regulation refers to the ability to keep emotions and impulses under control to remain calm. This component is demonstrated by the presence of trustworthiness and integrity, accept ambiguity, and open to change.

Motivation: demonstrated the ability to stay focused on the goal rather than backward, based on expectations of success rather than fear of failure, and accepts changes to achieve goals. Characteristics of motivated emotionally intelligent leader are ability to drive change, optimism, and high organizational commitment.

Empathy: Empathy, the fourth component, is the ability to understand the feelings transmitted through verbal and non-verbal messages, to provide emotional support to people when needed, and to understand the links between others' emotions and behavior.

Social skills: the final component, associated with a person's ability to deal with problems without degrading other people to not bring up negative feelings that may hinder co-operation, and to resolve conflicts with diplomacy. This component is characterized by the ability to drive change, persuasive skills, and expertise in building and leading teams.

2.2 Creativity

Creativity is not an ability to create out of nothing (only God can do that), but the ability to generate new ideas by combining, changing, and reapplying existing ideas. It is noticed as trait or gift that is normally distributed, a genetically determined property of individuals. In Western culture, creativity is focused on originality based phenomenon (Lubart, 1999). But in Eastern culture, creativity is viewed as a process of understanding and enlightenment of personal truth or self-growth (Lubart, 1999). It involves a state of personal fulfillment. However, the western world has dominated creativity research and academic psychological literature (Batey & Furnham, 2006).

Creativity is a process. The basic condition for a creative act is to combine known elements into new combinations or perspectives that have never before been considered. It is much more likely to emerge when a person considers many options and invests the time and effort to keep searching rather than settling for mediocre solutions.

Creativity is also an attitude, the ability to accept change and newness, a willingness to play with ideas and possibilities, a flexibility of outlook, the habit of enjoying the good, while looking for ways to improve it (Okpara, 2007). It is an art of generating solution to problems by the force of imagination and reasoning (Okpara, 2007). Within every individual, creativity is a function of three of components such as expertise, creative thinking, and motivation. i) Expertise is the arrangement of technical, procedural, and intellectual knowledge, which is the foundation of all creativity. Creative potential will increase when individuals have the ability, maturity, and such other expertise in the occupied areas. ii) Creative thinking relates to how people approach problems and solutions. It is the ability to use analogies as well as talent to solve problems under different viewpoints. iii) Motivation is the desire to work on something interesting, involving exciting, satisfying, personally challenging. It is an inner passion and interest which energizes person for creative accomplishment.

Everyone has substantial creative ability but difference in level. For example, Einstein, Edison, Picasso and Mozart as well as other individuals who have exceptional creativity are very rare. A study of 461 men and women found that less than one percent of individuals who have exceptional creativity. Ten percent of individuals have high creativity and about sixty percent of individuals have a little creativity or medium creativity (Robbins, 2005). This suggests that most humans have the potential to be creative.

Over the past few decades creativity has become a highly fashionable topic in both the academic and business world. That is not to say that creativity did not exist before, but its' improvement to the continued success of an organization had yet to be recognized. At present, many management problems require novel solutions. Frequently, it is difficult to see solutions to problems by thinking in a conventional fashion. Logical thinking takes our existing knowledge and users' rules of inference to produce new knowledge. But logical thinking process is merely an extension of what we know already, rather than being truly new. So, logical thinking has only a limited role to play in helping managers to be creative. That's why the need for creative problem solving has arisen as a result of the inadequacies of logical thinking. It is a method of using imagination along with techniques which use analogies, associations, and other mechanisms to help produce insights into problems. Now-a-days, the majority of organizations are fully aware of how vital creativity is to be their prosperity. So, creativity plays a prominent role in business (Seidel & Rosemann, 2008).

2.3 Empowering Leadership

The lateral meaning of 'empowerment' has been referred to "give authority or power to others". So, power is the focal point of empowerment (Carmeli, Schaubroeck & Tishler, 2011). Conger and Kanungo (1988) defined empowerment as "the process by which a leader or manager shares his/her power with subordinates" (p. 477). Spreitzer (1995) defined empowerment, from psychological aspects, as "intrinsic task motivational construct manifested in four cognitions, meaning, self-efficacy and impact" (p. 1444). Kirkman and Rosen (1997, 1999) extended the

concept of empowerment to the team level. They argued that empowered teams find their task more meaningful, leading to higher intrinsic motivation. Empowering leadership behaviors encourage delegating authority to an employee, so as to enable the employee to make decisions and implement actions without direct supervision or intervention (Bass, 1985). So, empowerment can be defined as a means which involves the employees in decision making process (Bowen & Lawler, 1992) and as a personal phenomenon where individuals take responsibility for their own actions (Peters, 1996). Among the diverse aspects of empowerment such as participative decision making (Lawler, 1992), job enrichment (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), delegation (Chen & Aryee, 2007), empowering leadership has assumed special importance, as is consistent with the trend toward providing increased autonomy to employees (Bennis & Townsend, 1997). A number of empirical studies have supported the notion that empowerment can be productively viewed as dynamic relationship between a supervisor and an individual subordinate (Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005; Robert, Probst, Martocchio, Drasgow & Lawler, 2000). Keller and Dansereau (1995) provided evidence that empowerment related leadership practices are individualized at the subordinate level. This mutual perception between employees towards management practices and policies relevant to the empowerment process in the workplace is termed as structural empowerment (Sun, Zhang, Qi & Chen, 2012).

Empowered employees are more adaptive to the different work situations (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Manz & Sims, 1987; Spreitzer, 1996; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Empowered individuals create an effective work unit within the organization while powerless individuals are more rigid, rules minded, and less committed to achievement of the goals of the organization. Empowered employees can access and mobilize support, information resources, and opportunities and, therefore, afford more flexibility to achieve organizational goals than those individuals who lack control over their margin of action and are dependent on others (Kanter, 1977). Hence, empowering leadership tends to create psychological ownership in the task, ensures higher levels of coordination (Zaccaro, Rittaman & Marks, 2001) and contributes in decision making processes which, in turn, enhance the self-efficacy and commitment (Dierebding & Dijkstra, 2012; Gill, Fitzgerald, Bhutani, Mand & Sharma, 2010).

3. Development of Research Hypotheses

3.1 Emotional Intelligence and Creativity

Available studies (Olatoye, Akintunde, & Yakasai, 2010; Sukumaran & Sivelingham, 2012; Vijaykumar & Govindaraju, 2012) found that there might be a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and creativity. Sukumaran and Sivelingham (2012) conducted a study to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity on work performance and commitment on a sample of 100 supervisors and 300 subordinates. It is found that supervisors and employees who control their emotion are more creative and can assist their companies to overcome rigid and traditional problem solving approaches. Dadvar, Mohamadrezai, and Fathabadi (2012) also found a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence

and creativity of girl high school students of Baft city in academic year 2008-2009 with sample size of 214 students. So, from the above references, the following hypothesis can be developed:

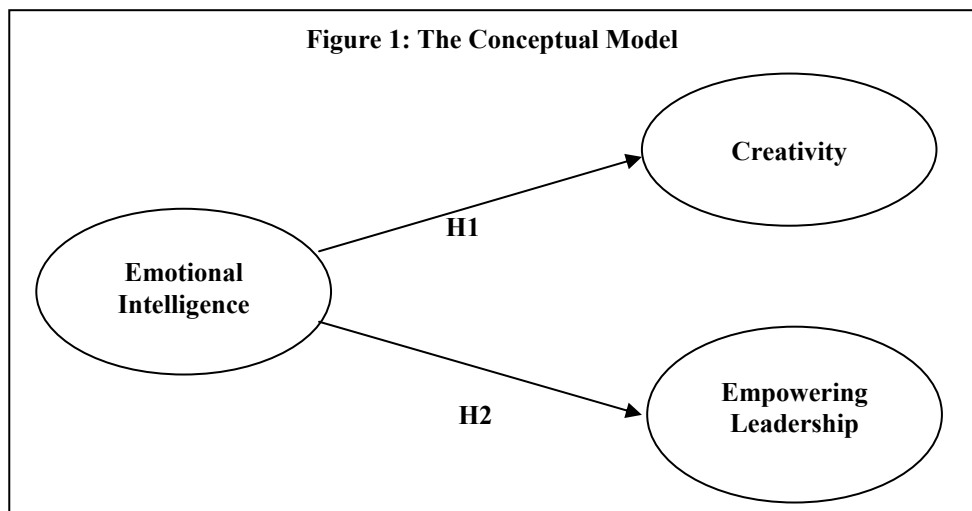
H1: There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity perceived by the subordinates.

3.2 Emotional Intelligence and Empowering Leadership

Several studies (Liu, Wong, & Fu, 2012; Lucas, Laschinger & Wong, 2008; Muechechere, Ganesh & Karambwe, 2012; Rahman & Ferdausy, 2014; Srivastava & Bharamanaikar, 2004) have been conducted to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowering leadership. It is, more or less, revealed the same results. Srivastava and Bharamanaikar (2004) examined the relationship of emotional intelligence with leadership excellence, success, and job satisfaction. The results showed that emotional intelligence significantly correlates with leadership behavior and success. Lucas, Laschinger, and Wong (2008) tried to find the relationship between nurse manager's emotionally intelligent leadership style and nurses' structural empowerment on a sample of 203 nurses from two hospitals. Muechechere, Ganesh and Karambwe (2014) conducted a study on a sample of 262 business leaders, to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on empowerment in Zimbabwe. Fortunately, the previous studies found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and empowerment competencies. Hence, the authors have suggested the second hypothesis as follows:

H2: There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and empowering leadership perceived by the subordinates.

A hypothetical model was developed to exhibit the relationship among emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership as follows:



Source: Authors' own contribution, 2015

4. Research Methods

4.1 Participants

The data for this study were collected from 142 subordinates working at different private organizations in Chittagong, the commercial capital of Bangladesh. The organizations were classified into five categories such as manufacturing, education, financial, service, and others. The respondents were classified into categories namely higher level, mid level, and lower level. They were asked to rate their supervisor's/manager's emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership capacity. The respondents were assured that any information provided by them would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.

The respondents ranged in age from 24 to 62 years, with a mean of 36.10 (SD = 9.55) years, and 101 (71.12%) were male while 41 (28.88%) were female. Average experience was 10.38 (SD = 9.79) years. There were 33 (23.24%), 94 (66.20%), and 15 (10.56%) representations by the higher, middle, and lower-level participants respectively. The respondents were well educated: 34 (23.94%) had completed bachelor degrees, 91 (64.08%) had postgraduate studies while 17 (11.98%) showed other degrees. In terms of organizational units, 61 (42.96%) belonged to manufacturing, 8 (5.63%) to education, 26 (18.31%) to finance, 44 (30.99%) to services, and 3 (2.11%) to other industry.

4.2 Survey Instruments

The study adopts the following measures to collect data from the participants:

4.2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence was measured using the EQI developed by Rahim et al., (2002, 2006) to measure subordinates' perceptions of their respective supervisors' emotional intelligence. The EQI uses 40 items to produce a scale to measure the five components of emotional intelligence. The five emotional intelligence components of the EQI are – i) self awareness, ii) self regulation, iii) motivation, iv) empathy, and v) social skills. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 7 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). A higher score indicates a greater emotional intelligence of a supervisor.

Sample items for the EQI instrument were 'My supervisor is well aware of the effects of his or her feelings on others' (self awareness), 'My supervisor keeps his or her distressing emotions in check' (self regulation), 'My supervisor has high motivation to set and attain challenging goals' (motivation), 'My supervisor provides emotional support to people during stressful conditions' (empathy), and 'My supervisor inspires and guides employees to improve their job performance' (social skills). The alpha reliability scale of the creativity for the current study was 0.96.

4.2.2 Creativity

The instrument of creativity was developed by Zhou and George (2001) with 13 items to measure subordinates'/employees' perception of their supervisors'/managers' creativity. Sample items were "My supervisor/manager suggests new ways to achieve goals or objectives", "My supervisor/manager promotes and champions ideas to others", "My supervisor/manager comes up with creative solutions to problems" etc. The response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). A higher score indicates a greater creative capability of supervisors'. The alpha reliability scale of the creativity for the current study was 0.81.

4.2.3 Empowering Leadership

Empowering leadership instrument was developed by Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp (2005) to measure subordinates'/employees' perception of their supervisors'/managers' tendency to empower leadership. Twelve items were used to measure the empowering leadership capability of the supervisor'/managers' rated by their subordinates/employees. Sample items were "My supervisor/ manager helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the company", "My supervisor/ manager often consults me on strategic decisions", "My supervisor/manager allows me to make important decisions quickly to satisfy customer needs" etc. The response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). A higher score indicates a greater empowering leadership of supervisors. The alpha reliability scale of the empowering leadership for the current study was 0.91.

4.3 Data Collection Procedure

Convenience sampling technique was used in this study for selecting the respondents. In order to collect data, printed questionnaires were distributed among 204 subordinates/employees working at different private organizations in Chittagong, the second largest city of Bangladesh. The authors spent three weeks to collect data from the subordinates. In collecting data for this study, the authors briefed the participants about the purpose of the study and then procedures to complete the printed survey instruments. The participants took thirty minutes on an average to complete the questionnaires. Due to some constraints, it was not possible to collect an equal number of responses from each organization. Finally, a total of 142 (70%) usable responses were received. Then, the raw data entered into an Excel file for summarization, and then imported into the SPSS version 20.0 data editor for statistical analysis.

4.4 Reliability of Scales

Reliability reflects the consistency of a set of item in measuring the study variables / concepts (Cooper & Schinder, 2001; Field, 2005). It illustrates the individual differences concerning the amount of agreement or disagreement of the concepts or variable studies (Page & Mayer, 2000). In this study, reliability measurement is important to verify the consistencies of the items used in EI and delegation. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used method to measure the reliability of

the scale (Field, 2005; Malhotra, 2002). It may be mentioned that Cronbach's alpha value ranges from 0 to 1, but satisfactory value is required to be more than 0.60 for the scale to be reliable (Cronbach, 1951; Malhotra, 2002). However, Cronbach's alpha of the EI scale for the current study was 0.96 and for creativity and empowering leadership were 0.81 and 0.91 respectively. Therefore, these three instruments were highly reliable for the data collection.

5. Findings

The mean and standard deviation calculated for emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership are presented in Table 1. The mean and standard deviation for emotional intelligence, creativity and empowering leadership were consistent with previous research findings (Liu, Wong, & Fu, 2012; Rahman, Karan & Biswas, 2014; Sukumaran & Sivelingam, 2012). Correlations between emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership and the value of Alpha (∞) are also presented in Table 1.

Table-1: Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations between variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Correlation		
				1	2	3
EI	5.06	0.90	0.96	1		
CR	4.92	1.30	0.81	0.73*	1	
EL	5.02	1.08	0.91	0.75*	0.75*	1

Source: Authors' own research, 2015

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); N = 142; EI = Emotional Intelligence, CR = Creativity; EL = Empowering Leadership.

Examination of Table -1 shows that there was a significant positive correlation (strong) between emotional intelligence and creativity ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.01$), as well as empowering leadership ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$). Creativity is also strongly positively related with empowering leadership ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, our all hypotheses were supported by the results.

Table 2: Summary of regression analysis of potential covariates with EI, CR, and EL

Covariates	Co-efficient (β)			Standard Error (β)			Value of t-statistics			Value of R ²			Value of F-statistic		
	EI	CR	EL	EI	CR	EL	EI	CR	EL	EI	CR	EL	EI	CR	EL
Organization	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.07	0.88	0.66	0.50	0.22	0.17	0.22	4.15*	3.04*	4.15*
Department	-0.08	-0.05	-0.06	0.04	0.05	0.04	-2.09*	-0.88	-1.43						
Level	-0.45	-0.59	-0.46	0.17	0.25	0.20	-2.69*	-2.37*	-2.34*						
Experience	0.03	0.04	-6.66	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.94	1.08	0.00						
Gender	0.08	-0.14	-0.39	0.21	0.31	0.25	0.37	-0.43	-1.53						
Age	-0.01	-0.01	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.03	-0.28	-0.24	0.68*						
Education	-0.31	-0.27	-0.32	0.13	0.20	0.16	-2.32*	-1.38	-2/01*						

Source: Authors' own research, 2015

Note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); N = 142; EI = Emotional Intelligence, CR = Creativity, EL = Empowering Leadership

An analysis of Table -2 implies that only 22%, 17% and 22% of the variance in emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership were explained by the demographic factors such as organization, department, level, age, experience, gender, and education respectively. The presence of unexplained variance suggests that there were other implied variables those account for variations in emotional intelligence, creativity and empowering leadership.

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis regarding EI with CR and EL

Predictor Variables	Co-efficient (β)	S.E. (β)	Value of t-statistic	Value of R ²	Value of F – statistic (ANOVA)
CR	1.06	0.09	11.31*	0.54	127.93*
EL	0.90	0.08	11.98*	0.57	143.55*

Source: Authors' own research, 2015

Note: *. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); N = 142; EI = Emotional Intelligence, CR = Creativity, EL = Empowering Leadership.

Examination in Table-3 indicates that about 54% and 57% of the variances in creativity and empowering leadership were explained by emotional intelligence where both were significant. The presence of unexplained variance suggests that there were other implied predictor variables those account for variations in creativity and empowering leadership.

6. Discussion

The present study intends to explore the relationship among emotional intelligence, creativity and empowering leadership as perceived by the participants.

The first purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity. Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity perceived by the subordinates. The result of the current study supports this argument. Thus, managers/supervisors who can keep stable their emotions are to be more creative and encourage employees to generate new ideas, support creative enthusiasm, and motivate employees to achieve organizational goals. This positive relationship is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Olatoye, Akintunde & Yakasai, 2010; Sukumaran & Sivelingam, 2012; Vijaykumar & Govindaraju, 2012). So, once managers/supervisors can increase their emotional intelligence and creativity, they can develop their work commitment and performance to attain the organizational goals (Sukumaran & Sivelingam, 2012).

The second purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowering leadership. In consistence with hypothesis 2, the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowering leadership was found to be positive as perceived by the respondents. The result of the current study supported this hypothesis, which is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Liu, Wong, & Fu, 2012; Lucas, Laschinger, & Wong, 2008; Mucchechere, Ganesh & Karambwe, 2012). This tentative interpretation is based on the theoretical assumption that managers / supervisors with high emotional intelligence are able to identify talents among employees, decentralize the management process, and then empower tasks to the subordinates. This feature of management will boost performance among employees via creativity and innovation.

7. Implications for Management

In today's turbulent business world, besides the impact of skills and knowledge of employees, emotion being an important element that should take into the daily operation of an organization to face challenges. Emotional intelligence is vital for managers as it helps the managers to motivate the team and bring success of the organizations' goals. At the same time, without creative ideas and empowering leadership practices, it is very difficult for an organization to sustain (Al-Madadha & Koufopoulos, 2014). Now-a-days, the supervisors' as well as subordinates' emotional intelligence and creativity are declining because of the lack of training program that is provided by the management. So, an important implication of the study is that management should implement emotional intelligence and creativity development programs that can bring quicker and more powerful changes in employees' effectiveness. Another important implication is that management should encourage and reward employees' creative ideas that can be implemented through group activities such as team building. Another important learning of this research is that managers should acquire and use their emotional intelligence competencies to develop and improve their

empowering capacity. So, modern organizations should focus on improving emotional intelligence of those managers who are creative, support creative ideas, and like to share their power with subordinates.

8. Limitations

The study has suffered from some limitations. The most important limitation was to use convenience sampling which might limit the generalizability of the findings. A random sampling procedure could be the best alternative to assure generalizability of the results. The use of deductive research approach may be another limitation of the study. Inductive research technique could be used to explain the patterns of relationship among the proposed variables. The sample size posed another limitation of the study. A larger and representative sample is needed to further investigate the relationship among emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership. The presence of common method variance in the measures may have caused inflated relationships between independent and dependent variables. One way to overcome this problem is to split the measures of variable by time. Finally, it should be noted that the current study used emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership measurement scales which were short of 360 degree assessments where senior bosses, supervisors, colleagues, and peers could rate participants on the relevant characteristics.

9. Future Directions

Further research is needed to understand the relationship among emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership, longitudinally. An important area of future research could examine the relationship among emotional intelligence, turnover intention, and organizational citizenship behavior in a collectivistic society like Bangladesh. In addition, an increasing number of initiatives need to be undertaken to redesign the construct of EQI. Although, the construct of EQI (Rahim et al., 2002; 2006) was the re-characterization of the original ECI (Emotional Competence Inventory) suggested by Goleman (1995), some components were inadequately defined to explain the maximum amount of variances in creativity and empowering leadership. The structural equations model generates more reliable conclusions in terms of the construct validity of the measurement used. Furthermore, future research would benefit from a large sample size, using a variety of samples to investigate the relationship among emotional intelligence, creativity, and empowering leadership. Research examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and empowering leadership mediated by creative performance is also suggested because it may provide important insights for organizations.

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