



Trait emotional intelligence among hierarchical levels of leadership

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Abstract. *Purpose.* This study examined whether trait emotional intelligence (or emotional self-efficacy) can differentiate across leadership levels in a sample of senior, middle, and junior leaders, employed by a bank organization in Greece ($N = 157$). *Method.* For the objectives of this study, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) short form (Petrides, 2009) was sufficient. It includes 30 items from the full form (two items for each of the 15 facets) and can be used to measure the four components generated from the full form: emotionality, self-control, sociability, and well-being, as well as the global trait emotional intelligence. Age, gender, tenure, and education level were used as control variables. Trait emotional intelligence, age and education were significant predictors in a multinomial regression model. *Findings.* Regarding senior leaders, the odds were significantly higher for each unit increase in trait EI (5.58) than for middle leaders (1.92), with junior leaders as the reference category. Further, leaders scored significantly higher on trait emotional intelligence compared to the standardization sample of the TEIQue. The difference is due to senior and middle leaders, though the effect size for the former was considerably larger than for the latter, whereas junior leaders did not show statistically significant differences. Trait emotional intelligence and four factors' impacts (self-control, well-being, emotionality, and sociability) were investigated among the three hierarchical leadership levels. *Value of results.* The results support the notion that leadership positions require high trait emotional intelligence and that leadership needs are dependent on the leader's level within the organization.

Keywords: trait emotional intelligence, leadership, hierarchical levels.

Theoretical framework

Conceptual approaches of emotional intelligence

According to Aristotle's (4th BC) three ways (types) of persuasion, it could be noted that leadership capability is generated through the interconnections of the behavioral aspects, depending on the personal character of the leader [*ethos*], on the cognitive aspects or obvious proof, provided by the words and actions [*logos*], and on the emotional aspect, defined by the ability to place employees, on an individual and team level, in a specific context of thinking and emotional state [*pathos*], while it is via this interaction that exceptional leadership skill is achieved.

Virtue plays a prominent role in the work of Aristotle, who argued that it is more valuable and superior to any art because it is related to emotional moods and actions, which usually show exaggeration, lack, and mid-way, meaning by the latter harmony of reason and emotional mind. For

example, it is possible to be afraid or show courage, feel desire, be angry or compassionate, and, in general, be pleased and dissatisfied, either too much or too little, both of which are not good. Feeling all these things at the right time towards the right people, for the right purpose, and in the right manner, is the mean and the ideal, as noted in Nicomachean Ethics (1106b), laying the foundations for the study of emotions and the understanding of their dynamics.

From the foundations of Aristotle centuries ago, the roots of social intelligence, to the importance of non-cognitive elements of intelligence and the recognition of emotional skills, the theory of multiple types of intelligence defined, challenging the classical view of intelligence, emotional intelligence (EI) and the skills contained in it, emerged as a distinct field of scientific study and research in the early 1990s (Gardner, 1983; Thorndike, 1920; Wechsler, 1940). Although the focus of D. Goleman's work, which contributed decisively to the popularity of the concept of EI, was on emotions and implications for schools and child development, there was a staggering and widespread impact in the world of business after the publication of his best-seller (1995), particularly in leadership screening and development (Goleman, 2011).

The diversity of theories about EI has resulted in the emergence of different conceptions of its structure. Thus, research efforts were made through various theoretical models to approach its multifactorial concept spherically (BarOn, 2000; Goleman, 1998; Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2002; Petrides, Furnham, 2001). The theories that have been formulated for the interpretation of EI consider it as a complex concept that includes a series of dimensions (abilities, traits, skills), referring to various fields of human nature (cognitive, personality, behavior). Following different approaches, the purpose remains the same, and that is to understand and interpret the skills, characteristics, and abilities associated with EI.

Theories and models in the conception of EI are under the umbrella of two main approaches. The first concerns the models of ability, or models of cognitive-emotional abilities, which consider EI as a mental skill that, in terms of structure and organization, corresponds to the other forms of intelligence, which primarily refer to cognitive abilities. The other one includes mixed models or socio-emotional models, which describe emotional intelligence as a complex conceptual framework comprised of various emotional abilities and interpret it as a combination of cognitive as well as emotional, social, and adaptability skills that affect individuals to successfully cope with environmental demands and pressures and contribute to the interpretation and prediction of their performance in each field of activity. K. V. Petrides and A. Furnham proposed a conceptual distinction between EI as a personality trait (or emotional self-efficacy) and emotional intelligence as cognitive or emotional ability, based on the method of assessing EI (Petrides, Furnham, 2001). Trait EI is defined as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides, Pita, Kokkinaki, 2007).

For some authors, the existence of alternative approaches for the same subject is a sign of research progress and it is noted that there are no correct or incorrect methods of measuring EI, (under the necessary condition of fulfilling the criteria of validity and reliability), but rather that all methods have their strengths and weaknesses, which determine the framework for their application along with their theoretical background (Petrides, Furnham, Mavroveli, 2007). Others point out that this variety and development of measurement tools, both by the method of self-reporting and through performance tests, creates a problem in the research community regarding the inability to compare between surveys while it is getting even more difficult to meta-analyze the data (Landy, 2005). One cannot generalize from one construct (i.e., trait or ability EI) and its operational vehicles to the other, since contradictory findings might be obtained from the two (Petrides, Furnham, 2001). It is critical, as mentioned, to specify the type of EI construct investigated in each study because self-

reported measures of EI do not converge with maximum-performance measurements; the former correlate strongly with personality but not with cognitive ability, whereas the latter exhibit the opposite pattern of results (Zeng, Miller, 2001).

A distinction between EI based on traits on the one hand and ability on the other hand is widely recognized and accepted in the scientific literature, along with the assumption that these are two different constructs (Petrides, 2011). This recognition, however, seems to be more prevalent in the science of psychology than in the fields of business administration or organizational behavior, where it does not receive the same degree of recognition, pointing out the need for future researchers to pay attention to this central distinction (p. 657). Both EI as a trait and ability have a theoretical relationship with leadership. Given that the focus of the current study is on trait characteristics for leader's assessments and the perspective of EI as a representation of the emotional aspects of the human personality, the spotlight is via the lens of the trait measure of EI.

Emotional intelligence and leadership

Various research efforts have been devoted to the study of the relationship between EI and a variety of organizational issues. Several scholars have tried to explore the benefits of organizations' having emotionally intelligent leaders and employees. EI seems to utilize human resource practices and contribute to optimal individual (Abraham, 2004; Kunnanatt, 2004; Lopes, Salovey, Straus, 2003; Sy, Côté, 2004; Sy, Tram, O'Hara, 2006; Tischler, Biberman, McKeage, 2002), and group performance (Kelly, Barsade, 2001; Welch, 2003). Leaders with high levels of EI use their social skills to positively influence others, to build strong relationships with customers and partners, and to motivate others, while regulating their emotions and understanding their own shortcomings (Feldman, 1999; Noyes, 2001). Due to the social complexity of today's organizations, leaders with high EI are considered more capable of achieving more by gaining the best performance from a smaller number of people, recognizing the nuances of dynamic situations and creating positive results (Dearborn, 2002). As D. Goleman argues, EI is the catalyst component to the successful functioning of an organization because it helps to foster team spirit, maximize the effectiveness of human resources, and contribute to business efficiency and survival in a competitive environment (Goleman, 1999).

Several writers have also claimed that using EI effectively assists individuals to improve their intuition, get insight into complicated problems, and motivate themselves to act (Sosik, Megerian, 1999). EI can help achieve high performance at work (as reflected in monthly income increases and corporate rankings) by enabling people to cultivate positive relationships in the workplace, collaborate effectively in groups, and build social capital (Coleman, 1990). Job performance often depends on support, advice, networking opportunities, and more generally on resources provided by other people (Seibert, Kraimer, Liden, 2001). The requirement for emotional and cultural intelligence among intercultural leaders is becoming increasingly apparent as a result of globalization (Alon, Higgins, 2005; Early, Ang, 2003). Through EI, world leaders may optimize the success of their work in a variety of external environments, providing their organization a competitive edge. This multi-information framework related to EI helps to clarify the adjustments needed to implement leadership development programs in multinational corporations.

The growing scientific literature that analyzes the role of moods and emotions in organizational settings shows that emotions are not a secondary factor but instead play a central role in the leadership process. One of the major challenges facing tomorrow's leaders and organizations is to lead with EI (Cooper, 1997). Also, a significant part of the research begins to focus on the accuracy with which EI can differentiate the best leaders (Carmeli, 2003). As studies show that high emotional quotient distinguishes average higher performance, the role of EI becomes critical for leadership positions where a high degree of interpersonal effectiveness is required. Several scholars have concluded that as people rise through the hierarchical ranks of their organizations, EI becomes even

more significant in comparison to IQ (intelligence quotient) and technical skills (Young, Dulewicz, 2005; Goleman, Boyatzis, McKee, 2002).

Hierarchical levels of leadership

Leadership at the hierarchical levels of the organization reflects different psychological and sociological dynamics. Many leadership scholars have clearly remarked that leadership needs are dependent on the leader's level within the organization (Day, Lord, 1988; Hunt, 1991; Hunt, Ropo, 1995; Jacobs, Jaques, 1987; Katz, Kahn, 1978; Mathieu, Zaccaro, Klimoski, 2001). As a multilevel phenomenon, leadership dynamics unfold at multiple hierarchical levels, with effective leaders establishing strategy at the top, mid-level leaders aligning and coordinating, and lower-level leaders engaging and motivating their immediate work groups (DeChurch, Hiller, Murase, Doty, Salas, 2010). The types of leadership behavior applied may vary depending on the environment. However, in the same way, people's predispositions to these behaviors can vary. For example, cognitive requirements differ as a function of the leader's hierarchical level (Zaccaro, 2001). Similarly, the level of analysis at which a leadership model manifests itself will also vary depending on the environment (Antonakis, Atwater, 2002; Waldman, Yammarino, 1999). That is, the level at which leadership operates may vary from person to group, at the organization level, or between leadership levels. This perspective complements the traditional concepts of context, in which context is seen as a moderator of the relationship between leadership traits (e.g., traits, behaviors) and outcomes of leadership. A contextualized approach to organizational leadership is more likely to generate precise, coherent, and ultimately more successful models and general theories of this phenomenon, as well as a greater understanding of how senior leadership characteristics and behaviors vary from middle and junior-level leadership.

V. Dulewicz and M. Higgs studied the differences in competencies associated with EI to examine how they differentiate between board members and executive managers (Dulewicz, Higgs, 2003). They concluded that board members scored higher on all characteristics related to EI, arguing that many of the tasks of the board require EI competencies. In another study in the Royal Navy, it was showed that EI makes a great contribution to overall performance (Young, Dulewicz, 2005). A. B. Siegling with colleagues conducted a study on 96 employees of a multinational company where they found higher EI among leaders than non-leaders (Siegling, Nielsen, Petrides, 2014). In another study of 128 managers, results revealed significantly higher scores than the standardization sample on global trait EI, as well as on self-control, and well-being factors (Siegling, Sfeir, Smyth, 2014).

EI is more important than IQ and technical skills for all vocations, and the higher an individual advances in an organization, the more significant EI becomes (Goleman et al., 2002). The question of whether EI is differentiated among organizational hierarchy levels appears to have received little empirical attention. Although there are reports that managers have higher EI than employees and that people with higher EI hold positions in the highest leadership hierarchy (Siegling et al., 2014b; Obradovic, Jovanovic, Petrovic, Mihic, Mitrovic, 2013), no analysis at distinct hierarchical levels emerges, with studies focusing primarily on top management positions.

Present study

Many studies have examined and demonstrated associations between trait EI measures and various aspects of leadership. There is a considerable body of evidence indicating the validity of personality traits in predicting leadership-related dimensions (Judge, Bono, Ilies, Gerhardt, 2002). The number of studies suggesting that leaders have high trait EI is limited, and more empirical support is needed to yield the argument that leaders demonstrating high trait emotional intelligence competencies are more likely to be selected for, or to advance to higher leadership positions. For this purpose, the current study examined whether senior leaders have higher trait EI and whether

trait EI varies between leadership levels among senior, middle, and junior leaders, utilizing objective (i.e., naturally occurring) rather than psychometrically evaluated classifications of leaders and controlling for relevant variables. Previous research has focused on leadership attributes evaluated utilizing rating scales, often based on self-report. The current study examined the role of trait EI in leadership within an applied context. In particular, the leadership assessment was based on the business position of participants in a Greek bank organization. It was, thus, objectively determined and less prone to response biases than in other studies. The mean trait EI of the total leader sample as well as senior, middle, and junior leaders was compared to the TEIQue standardization sample means (Petrides, 2009). Trait EI and factors were examined among the three leadership levels. Furthermore, multinomial regression was used to assess trait EI as a predictor of leader level, controlling for age, gender, tenure, and education. The following hypotheses were tested.

Hypothesis 1. Leaders will have significantly higher trait EI scores than the TEIQue standardization sample.

Hypothesis 2. Trait EI and factors will be more prevalent among senior than middle and junior level leaders.

Hypothesis 3. Trait EI will distinguish leaders' levels, controlling for age, gender, tenure, and education.

Method

Participants

This study was carried out in a big bank organization based in Greece. The existence of an integrated leadership structure is important as the purpose of the present study is to investigate whether trait EI varies among leaders' levels using objective (i.e., naturally occurring) rather than psychometrically assessed classifications of leaders. The fact of the large size of the company in conjunction with the organizational structure, the assignment of roles and levels of responsibility makes clear and distinct the ranking of the hierarchy of the organization's leaders.

Leadership in the organization entails the direct supervision and appraisal of individuals in groups whose size varies depending on the level of hierarchy. The subordinates at the junior leadership levels are over three employees, while at the senior executive level, the number can reach or even exceed one hundred individuals. The executives of the company are expected to lead the company in achieving the highest levels of performance and to guide and inspire their subordinates by motivating them to achieve the goals of the organization. For individuals to be promoted in the organization's hierarchy, they are evaluated by competent committees and councils.

The research design of the current study involves three hierarchical levels, which correspond to the long recognized three-tiered organizational design (DeChurch, Hiller, Murase, Doty, Salas, 2010; Jacobs, McGee, 2001). The leadership levels of the bank organization are classified into senior, middle, and junior. It is noted that senior executives hold senior management positions in the organization, being mainly managers of general directorates of the organization or big bank branches. The middle executives hold managerial positions as department managers, deputy directors or managers of smaller branches with a lower level of responsibility than the senior ones. Finally, the junior executives consist mostly of team leaders.

Of a total of 776 contacted employees, 158 individuals participated, yielding a response rate of 20,36% ($N = 158$). The sample of 158 leaders consists of 94 men and 64 women, with males comprising the majority with a percentage of 59.5% and women representing a percentage of 40.5%. The mean age of the sample was 48.66 years ($SD = 7.21$), and the age range was 36–63 years. The

majority of participants had attained a Bachelor's (37.3%) or a Master's/PhD degree (44.9%) and had an average of 22.61 years of tenure ($SD = 6.56$).

Regarding the distribution of the sample at the levels of the leadership hierarchy, the questionnaire was fully and successfully completed by 37 senior (23.4%), 83 middle (52.5%), and 38 junior leaders (24.1%).

Measures

Trait emotional intelligence

For the objectives of this study, the TEIQue's short form (Petrides, 2009) was sufficient. It includes 30 items from the full form (two items for each of the 15 facets) and can be used to measure the four components generated from the full form: emotionality, self-control, sociability, and well-being, as well as the global trait EI. The items are graded on a seven-point Likert scale, and the respondents' answers range from "1" (totally disagree) to "7" (totally agree). Internal consistency in this study was acceptable and consistent with that reported for the standardization sample (Petrides, 2009). Specifically, Cronbach's alphas were .80 for global trait EI, .72 for self-control, .73 for well-being, .73 for emotionality, and .70 for sociability.

Leadership

As outlined in the preceding section, leadership was operationalized using the company's definition of a leader. The organization's hierarchical structure, the categorization of banking branches according to financial terms, the number of human resources on each level, and the levels of responsibility were all considered in the division of leadership into the three levels mentioned above, which was followed by discussions with relevant human resource management departments within the company.

Design and procedure

Questionnaires were emailed to participants via the organization's mail system and included an introductory letter from the author. They were completed electronically through an on-line survey as they were circulated following relevant approvals received from the competent committees of the bank. The confidentiality and anonymity of the answers were guaranteed as the system used incorporates by design all safety requirements. The data collection process lasted over a time frame of approximately two months.

The multivariate normal distribution for the global trait EI was first determined. Measured trait EI scores were compared to the normative data using one-sample t-tests (Petrides, 2009). It was also verified that, as measured by Levene's statistic, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met. Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA), along with post-hoc analyses and t-tests, were used. In addition to Hochberg's GT2 as a post-hoc statistic, we used Cohen's d and η^2 (2) as impact size measurements. For comparing clusters of unequal size, these effect size statistics are suggested (Field, 2013). A multinomial logistic regression was performed to explore the relationship and create a model between the predictor variables and membership in the three groups (senior, middle, and junior leaders). Data was analyzed using IBM-SPSS version 26.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the entire sample as well as for the senior, middle, and junior leaders are displayed in Table 1. Regarding the tenure of the sample between the levels of leadership hierarchy, statistically significant differences were observed with the senior leaders showing higher mean scores ($M = 26.92$, $SD = 5.62$), than the middle leaders ($M = 23.21$, $SD = 5.67$), which in turn showed significant

differences with the junior leaders ($M = 17.13, SD = 5.54$), [$F_{(2,155)} = 29.32, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.27$]. Following the same pattern, age increased significantly across leadership levels, [$F_{(2,155)} = 39.40, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.34$]. In contrast, no statistically significant differences were noticed at the level of education.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the overall sample and for each leadership level

Participants	Tenure		Age		Education level	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
All Leader's	22.61	6.56	48.72	7.21	2.27	.75
Senior ($n = 37$)	26.92	5.62	54.35	6.44	2.30	.67
Middle ($n = 83$)	23.21	5.67	49.08	5.78	2.22	.77
Junior ($n = 38$)	17.13	5.54	42.45	5.75	2.37	.38

Note: EI — emotional intelligence, *M* — mean, *SD* — standard deviation; education level: one for secondary education, two for bachelor and three for master / PhD.

The mean global trait EI score of leaders was compared to the TEIQue normative comparison standardization sample mean. A one-sample *t* test revealed that leaders in the current sample had significantly higher trait EI scores ($M = 5.34, SD = 0.73$) than the normative comparison group ($M = 4.89, SD = 0.59$), $t_{(157)} = 7.78, p < .001$. The overall sample had significantly higher scores than the standardization sample on self-control, $t_{(157)} = 6.46, p < .001$, well-being, $t_{(157)} = 5.11, p < .001$ and emotionality $t_{(157)} = 5.11, p < .001$, while there was no difference on sociability factor ($p = .06$). In a further analysis, the differences between the leadership levels and the normative comparison standardization sample mean were also examined. Regarding senior level leaders, it emerged that scores were significantly higher on trait EI, $t_{(36)} = 8.84, p < .001$, on self-control, $t_{(36)} = 8.09, p < .001$, well-being, $t_{(36)} = 8.49, p < .001$, emotionality $t_{(36)} = 3.63, p < .001$, as well as on sociability factor, $t_{(36)} = 3.96, p < .001$. Concerning middle level leaders, statistically significant differences were observed on trait EI, $t_{(82)} = 5.83, p < .001$, self-control, $t_{(82)} = 4.86, p < .001$, well-being, $t_{(82)} = 4.40, p < .001$, and emotionality, $t_{(82)} = 5.36, p < .001$, yet there was no difference on sociability factor. However, the effect size for trait EI was much larger for senior leaders (Cohen's $d = 1.32, r = .83$) than for medium leaders (Cohen's $d = .75, r = .54$). There were no differences between the normative comparison group and the junior level leaders in any of the factors, not even in the trait EI score.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine according to H2 whether hierarchical levels of leadership with senior, middle, and junior leaders differ with respect to their trait EI, self-control, well-being, emotionality, and sociability. The results are presented in Table 2. Regarding global trait EI, the analysis revealed a significant effect of the level of leadership [$F_{(2,155)} = 7.72, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.09$]. More specifically, for global trait EI, post hoc comparisons using the Hochberg's GT2 test indicated that the mean score for senior leaders ($M = 5.67, SD = 0.54$) was significantly higher than the middle ($M = 5.33, SD = 0.68$) and the junior leaders ($M = 5.04, SD = 0.85$). However, the middle level leaders did not significantly differ from the junior leaders. Concerning the self-control factor, the analysis of variance indicated a significant effect of the level of leadership [$F_{(2,155)} = 10.78, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.12$]. According to post hoc comparisons, the mean score for senior leaders ($M = 5.45, SD = 0.73$) was higher than the medium ($M = 4.96, SD = 0.90$) as well as the junior leaders ($M = 4.50, SD = 0.98$), while the difference between medium and junior leaders was also significant.

Regarding the well-being factor, since the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met for this data, the obtained Welch's adjusted *F* ratio was used, as suggested for these cases (Field, 2013), which indicated a significant result [Welch's $F_{(2,82.30)} = 5.52, p < .01$]. Beyond that, post hoc follow-up procedures using the Games — Howell test were conducted to test the difference between all unique pairwise comparisons. That revealed a significant difference between the mean score of seniors ($M = 5.45, SD = 0.73$) and medium ($M = 4.96, SD = 0.90$) as well as the junior leaders (M

= 4.50, $SD = 0.98$), while the difference between medium and junior leaders was not statistically significant. In respect of the sociability factor, the analysis indicated a significant effect [$F_{(2,155)} = 5.13$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$]. More concretely, the senior leaders ($M = 5.49$, $SD = 0.89$) had a significantly higher average score on the factor of sociability than junior leaders ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.22$), although there was not a significant difference between senior and middle ($p = .059$), as well as between middle and junior leaders. Finally, there was no statistically significant effect of the leadership level on the emotionality factor among the three leadership levels.

Table 2. Trait emotional intelligence and factors of emotional intelligence analyses of variance (ANOVAs) by leadership level

Variables	Parameters	Samples			
		Leader's level	Senior (a) ($n = 37$)	Middle (b) ($n = 83$)	Junior (c) ($n = 38$)
Trait EI	M		5.67	5.33	5.04
	SD		.54	.68	.85
	F	7.72***	$a > b^*$, $a > c^{***}$		
	df	2			
	η^2	.09			
Self-control	M		5.45	4.96	4.5
	SD		.73	.9	.98
	F	10.78***	$a > b^{**}$, $a > c^{***}$, $b > c^*$		
	df	2			
	η^2	.12			
Well-being	M		6.02	5.67	5.50
	SD		.56	.89	.99
	F	5.52**(Welch's F)	$a > b^*$, $a > c^*$		
	df	2			
	η^2				
Emotionality	M		5.45	5.36	5.17
	SD		.7	.71	.76
	F	1.46			
	df	2			
	η^2	.02			
Sociability	M		5.49	5.02	4.75
	SD		.89	.96	1.22
	F	5.13**	$a > c^{**}$		
	df	2			
	η^2	.06			

Note: EI — emotional intelligence, M — mean, SD — standard deviation, F — Fisher's statistic, df — degrees of freedom, η^2 — eta squared-effect size measure. All p -values are two-tailed. * — $p < .05$, ** — $p < .01$, *** — $p < .001$

Table 3 displays the bivariate correlations between the study variables. Trait EI correlated positively with leadership, age and negatively with gender. In turn, leadership correlated negatively with gender and positively with tenure and age, which were positively associated among them.

In table 4, the multinomial regression results are presented. The reference category was junior leaders. The model containing the full set of predictor variables represents a significant improvement in fit relative to the intercept only model, $\chi^2_{(12)} = 101.07$, $p < .001$. Based on the McFadden R^2 (one of the more preferred alternatives, see e.g. Allison, 2014), the model represents a 31,3% improvement in fit as compared to the intercept only model. The R^2 indices, were .47 (Cox, Snell) and .54 (Nagelkerke), respectively. Although in linear regression, R^2 has a clear definition of the proportion of the variation that can be explained, this notion is not equivalent to the logistic model (Long, Long, 1997; Menard, 2000; Peng, Lee, Ingersoll, 2002).

Table 3. Intercorrelations between leadership, trait emotional intelligence, and control variables ($N = 158$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Leadership	–					
Trait EI	.300***	–				
Tenure	.516***	.103	–			
Age	.579***	.157**	.915***	–		
Education Level	–.034	.008	–.535***	–.426***	–	
Gender	–.198*	–.158*	–.202*	–.269***	.079	–

Note: * — $p < .05$, ** — $p < .01$, *** — $p < .001$. Senior level leaders were coded “3”, middle level leaders were coded “2” and junior level leaders were coded “1”. Male participants were coded “0” and female participants were coded “1”. EI — Emotional Intelligence. Education level was coded “1” for secondary education, “2” for bachelor and “3” for master (PhD).

According to the additional chi square goodness of fit tests, Deviance chi square suggested a good fitting $p > .05$, while Pearson chi square test suggested a poor fitting $p < .05$. Low expected frequencies and empty cells, due to the many possible combinations of model variables are one of the reasons that the difference between these statistics can be observed. The Box–Tidwell transformation was used to modify the predictor variables in order to verify that the assumption of linearity of logarithmic data was met. The overall evaluation of the model, tests of individual regression coefficients, and the goodness-of-fit test statistic indicated a reliable model. Relative to the constant-only model, the model including trait EI and control variables improved the prediction accuracy among leadership levels from 52.5% to 70.9%.

Trait EI was a significant predictor of leadership level in the presence of the control variables in the equation (age, tenure, gender and education level). As a result of the predictive impact, senior leaders had higher trait EI ratings than junior leaders. The odds of being a senior leader are multiplied by 5.58 for each one-unit increase in trait EI, while the odds of being a middle lever leader are multiplied by 1.92. Age was a significant predictor in the model. Here, the odds of being a leader are multiplied by 1.47 for each on-unit increase in age, for senior leaders but not significant for medium leaders, given the levels of trait EI and the other control variables. Gender was significant in likelihood but an insignificant variable in the regression model.

Table 4. Multinomial logistic regression analysis predicting leader’s level with trait emotional intelligence and control variables ($N = 158$)

Senior level leaders	β	SE	OR	95%CI	p
Intercept	–29.32	5.24			.000
Trait EI	1.72	.51	5.58	[2.03, 15.32]	.001
Tenure	.11	.13	1.12	[.86, 1.47]	.398
Age	.38	.13	1.47	[1.15, 1.90]	.003
Secondary education	–4.56	1.24	.01	[.01, .12]	.000
Bachelor	–2.24	.91	.11	[.18, .63]	.014
Male	.75	.73	2.12	[.51, 8.79]	.312
Middle level leaders	β	SE	OR	95%CI	p
Intercept	–12.49	3.40			.000
Trait EI	.66	.33	1.92	[1.02, 3.66]	.045
Tenure	.10	.11	1.10	[.90, 1.36]	.350
Age	.19	.10	1.21	[.99, 1.48]	.055
Secondary education	–1.97	.92	.14	[.02, .84]	.032
Bachelor	–.65	.62	.52	[.15, 1.76]	.293
Male	–.62	.50	.54	[.20, 1.44]	.218

Note. The reference category was junior leaders. Male participants were coded «0» and female participants were coded «1», EI = emotional intelligence, EDL = educational level, Education level was coded «1» for secondary education, «2» for bachelor and «3» for master (PhD), CI = confidence interval for odds ratio (OR).

Regarding the level of education of senior leaders, the odds ratio informs us that as the level of education changes from a master's (PhD) degree to a bachelor's degree, the relative probability of being a senior leader decreases by 0.11 and by 0.01 for secondary education, respectively, compared to junior leaders. For middle leaders again, the chances are reduced from master's (PhD) level to bachelor's level, but not statistically significant, while from master's (PhD) to secondary education, the probability is significantly reduced by 0.14. Finally, tenure was not a significant predictor in the model. Employees' tenure was defined in this study as the number of working years of experience and not the time they had worked for the organization.

Discussion

The results support H1, consistent with previous research which showed that leaders (Siegling et al., 2014a) and managers (Siegling et al., 2014b) mean scores were higher on global EI as well as on factors of self-control and well-being, while in this study, emotionality emerged as another factor of differentiation. More specifically, in the study involving the manager sample, the emotionality factor appeared in addition to the other two with higher means than the standardization sample but only on female managers. In the current study, the overall sample mean (for global trait EI and three factors) was above the normative average, while leader level focused analyses showed that only senior and middle leaders were above the normative data. In the case of senior leaders, global trait EI and the four factors were above the mean, while middle leaders' scores were higher on global trait EI and three factors (except sociability). As has been mentioned above, it should be considered that the composition of this study sample is different from that of the standardization sample. The mean age of the latter, for example, is about 20 years younger ($M = 29.65$ years, $SD = 11.94$) than the current sample. However, even though the average age of junior leaders ($M = 42,45$) falls at the age interval (34–44), which according to research indicates that EI scores peaks (Bar-On, 1997, Derksen, Kramer, Katzko, 2002) no statistically significant differences were observed in global trait EI and factors compared to the standardization sample data. That suggests that although EI evolves across the lifespan, the cause of the differences found cannot be attributed to this factor. Furthermore, the fact that they are more pronounced at senior levels and only significant for senior and middle leaders may hold important ramifications, subject to consistent replication in further research.

Regarding H2, that was partially supported, senior leaders scored higher compared to junior leaders on global trait EI, self-control, well-being, and sociability factors. Differences were also observed between senior and middle leaders on the overall EI but also on the factors of self-control and well-being. Differences between middle and junior leaders were observed only on the self-control factor, which should be noted that it was also the one factor that differentiated among all three levels of leadership. The emotionality factor did not show significant differences among the three levels. It appears that differences in self-control and well-being replicate both between leadership levels and in comparisons to the normalization sample. The same factors appear to differ in two other studies of leader and manager samples compared to the normalization sample, which requires more constant repetition and further investigation, possibly in larger samples.

The autonomy of senior leaders provides the freedom and discretion to make decisions, taking substantive responsibility as those in charge of job completion. However, this can only happen when individuals can control and regulate themselves in relation to their goal, giving priority and the right pace to effectively complete their work efforts (Carver, Scheier, 1982). In addition, in changing working conditions, an individual's self-control becomes more important as a factor for adapting to a new context at work, something that is also needed when the role requires multitasking abilities. The degree of emotional skill of self-control implies the self-discipline of the individual, the

ability to postpone satisfaction and control his impulses. Self-discipline allows for commitment to political, moral, and team values (Goleman, 1995). Successful leadership includes an inner-ethical commitment, a course of action to invest in higher goals regardless of cost-benefit balance (Shamir, House, Arthur, 1993), and this is likely to be required more importantly at higher leadership levels.

Because of their role, senior leaders likely have more opportunities to act as role models, empower, and encourage subordinates to think for themselves, motivating them to achieve more than they thought. In this way, they gain their trust and increase their belief in their effectiveness. Then, the trust and dedication of subordinates in turn cultivate a sense of giving and participation, covering the individual need for effectiveness and competence of the leader. This strengthens the motivation of leaders to continue contributing to the quality of personal interactions, leading them to higher levels of well-being (Ryan, Deci, 2000). Senior leaders probably have a stronger organizational definition defined as «perceived oneness with an organization» (Mael, Ashforth, 1992, p. 103).

Global trait EI discriminated between leaders' levels, consistent with H3. It emerged as a predictor for both senior and middle management compared to junior leaders. In contrast to earlier studies that used rating scales to measure leadership-related variables, leaders in this study were identified based on their specific job position within the organization. The positive relationship between trait EI and age in comparison with the non significant relationship between trait EI and tenure can explain why, even though tenure was directly related to leadership, it did not emerge as a significant predictor in the regression model, with the effect of age controlled. One plausible explanation is that although organizational tenure has been concluded to be positively related to managerial promotions, when leaders have higher trait EI, they rise to higher positions faster.

Theoretical and practical implications

It is a fact that the way of working in the modern context of organizations has changed drastically in recent years and continues in this ever-changing trajectory. Leadership styles are less authoritarian and the orientation is more human-centered. Employees are regarded as a company's most valuable asset and as its representatives to stakeholders, while at the same time, there has been a strong shift toward knowledge- and customer-centric jobs, such that employees have greater autonomy in general, even at the lowest levels of organizations. Since modern organizations are always looking for improved performance, they recognize that goals and benefits can result from people's higher EI.

The present study contributes to the understanding of the impact of trait EI on leadership hierarchy by examining it in relation to the leadership structure and more specifically among senior, middle, and junior leaders while providing empirical support to the theoretical approach that different characteristics are required at leadership levels. Furthermore, the aim was to offer an insight regarding the selection and development of leaders' grasping mechanisms that might explain or account for the results of the leadership phenomenon. A better understanding of the variations and similarities in leadership at different hierarchical levels could assist the actions of human resources departments in the selection and development of leaders.

Conclusion

As the human factor and socio-emotional skills become more and more important for achieving higher performance in organizations, it makes sense that individuals who exhibit these skills advance to higher hierarchical positions. Social scientists and anthropologists have pointed out that appropriate emotional manifestations and recognition of the feelings of others are essential for the successful functioning of leadership in modern societies (Boehm, 1999). In addition, as

these individuals are able to regulate their own emotions and communicate clearly and confidently, understand and influence the feelings of others, they are likely to have well-developed impression management and social capital management skills. These social factors have been found to be more important than the technical factors in terms of the conditions for promotion (Tharenou, 1997). While these findings will need to be replicated in other samples and industries, they do provide indications that the spectrum of personality traits associated with emotions is important in leadership roles.

The managers who were emotionally unstable and unable to handle high pressure and those who put personal advancement ahead of personal integrity, had weak interpersonal skills, and were narrowly focused in terms of technical and cognitive skills, were more likely to fail after reaching higher levels of management (McCall, Lombardo, 1983). As they note, these leaders were successful at a lower organizational level, implying that distinct models of effectiveness operate at successive levels of the organization (Zaccaro, Klimoski, 2002). Several authors have hypothesized that leadership at the lower hierarchical levels could be described as more task-oriented and technical than at the higher levels of leadership (Antonakis, Avolio, Sivasubramaniam, 2003, p. 271). Such findings suggest that the nature of effective leadership may be substantially different at higher versus lower hierarchical levels (Waldman, Yammarino, 1999, p. 269).

Suggestions for future research

A more thorough investigation into leading groups within the organizational structure is required, as this will allow researchers and professionals to better understand and evaluate the differences and similarities that occur at different hierarchical levels. Furthermore, it would be valuable to explore the EI competences that are most significant under specific settings, such as during an organism's strategic change or in sustaining an organism's developmental rhythm. Along with EI as a trait, the effect of EI as an ability could be examined in order to control variations in influences and predict patterns between hierarchical levels. Future research could aim to connect the different components of EI with leadership approaches among leadership levels as measured through 360-degree tools. Simultaneously, the results would provide valuable information about the convergence of leaders' and followers' perceptions as well as the relationship, contribution, and interaction between them.

Limitations

The study must be considered in the light of several limitations. The findings may be influenced by the organizational culture of the host company or by Greek national culture, and further studies in other countries and other organizations would be useful. The samples between the three hierarchical levels were of unequal size, a limitation that was partially addressed by the utilization of Hochberg's GT2. Furthermore, even though senior, middle, and junior leaders are expected to differ in age, experience, and possibly other characteristics, the leader sample varied significantly; nonetheless, these realistic factors must be considered and dealt with in various ways and procedures. The important role of gender has also not been explored in the present research, precisely because of its great significance in the study of leadership and EI which is planned to be addressed as a separate subject in a subsequent study.

It is critical to acknowledge that other factors cannot be ruled out as explanations for the above-average trait EI scores found in this leader sample. It is also possible that other factors, such as cognitive intelligence skills or other leadership competencies, are factors of differentiation between the leadership levels that coexist with EI and that in itself is not sufficient to interpret the multilevel dynamics of leadership. It could be the case that these dimensions are needed "to participate" while EI is needed "to run the table".

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Уровень проявления черт эмоционального интеллекта на различных иерархических уровнях руководства

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Аннотация. *Цель.* В этом исследовании выяснялось, может ли уровень эмоционального интеллекта (эмоциональный интеллект как совокупность личностных черт, или эмоциональная самооффективность¹) различаться между иерархическими уровнями управления? *Метод.* Выборку составили руководители высшего, среднего и младшего звена, работающие в греческой банковской организации ($N = 157$). Черты эмоционального интеллекта (самоконтроль, благополучие, эмоциональность и общительность) измерялись при помощи «Опросника черт эмоционального интеллекта» (TEIQue) К. В. Петридеса. В качестве контрольных переменных использовались возраст, пол, стаж работы и уровень образования. *Результаты.* Эмоциональный интеллект (ЭИ), возраст и образование были значимыми предикторами в модели полиномиальной регрессии. Что касается руководителей старшего звена, то шансы на увеличение уровня ЭИ на каждую единицу были значительно выше (5,58), чем для руководителей среднего звена (1,92), при этом руководители низового уровня выступали в качестве эталонной категории. Кроме того, руководители набрали значительно более высокие баллы по ЭИ по сравнению со стандартизированной выборкой опросника эмоционального интеллекта (Petrides, 2009). Разница обусловлена руководителями высшего и среднего звена, хотя величина эффекта для первых была значительно больше, чем для вторых, тогда как руководители низового уровня не показали статистически значимых различий. Общий показатель ЭИ и показатели четырёх отдельных факторов (самоконтроль, благополучие, эмоциональность и общительность) измерялись на трёх иерархических уровнях управления. *Выводы.* Результаты исследования подтверждают мнение о том, что руководящие позиции требуют высокого эмоционального интеллекта и что потребности руководства зависят от иерархического уровня, занимаемого руководителем в организации.

Ключевые слова: эмоциональный интеллект; эмоциональный интеллект как личностная черта; лидерство; руководство; иерархические уровни управления.

¹ Автор опирается на малоизвестную в России теорию эмоционального интеллекта как набора (совокупности) личностных черт, разработанную К. В. Петридесом. Данная теория противопоставляется широко распространённым «когнитивным» теориям, рассматривающим эмоциональный интеллект как когнитивную способность. Подробнее см.: (Petrides, 2001; 2007; 2009; 2011). *Прим. ред.*