

A Study on the Impact of Ethnocentric Traits on the Level of Emotional Intelligence among Managers, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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Abstract:

This study investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on managers of American and British descent. Emotional intelligence is seen as an individual's capacity to appropriately regulate his/her emotions, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and action. Carefully managed emotions can drive trust, loyalty and commitment as well as increase productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness in the individual, team and organizations. Information was gathered from experts, using surveys. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that emotional intelligence tests should be designed to measure competencies associated with the understanding, and management of leaders/managers.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence (EI), Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI)

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of EI has been conceptualized as an important predictor for success at work. Emotional intelligence (EI) is seen as an individual's capacity to appropriately regulate his/her emotions, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and action. Most managers would rather steer away from dealing with emotional issues, whereas emotions that are properly managed can have successful outcomes. Carefully managed emotions can drive trust, loyalty and commitment as well as increase productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness in the individual, team and organizations.

A growing body of research attests to the importance of studying the role of EI in successful leadership. The central notion underlying this research is the view that people with high EI competencies are more likely than less emotionally intelligent people to display leadership success in the workplace like managers. Much of the popular management literature on EI has described the construct as an underlying attribute of leadership success, and that it has been proposed that screening for EI in the recruitment process may aid in the identification of potentially more successful leaders.

Emotions can lead to an increased morale amongst employees, but, can also prove to be destructive. Negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger and hostility usually use up much of the individual's energy and lower morale, which in turn leads to absenteeism and apathy. It is believed that when a person has the best training the world has to offer and high level of intelligence, without emotional intelligence, the person still cannot be a good leader. EI is far more important at all levels in the workplace than technical skills and intelligence quotient.

1. Statement of Problem

This study is aimed at understanding the ethnocentric traits of American and British managers and the impact of the same on their level of emotional intelligence.

2. Research Hypothesis

There will a significant difference between the emotional intelligence observed in an American Manager as opposed to that in a British Manager.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The roots of emotional intelligence follow the lines of the intelligence testing movement. Thorndike (1920) acknowledged there are multiple intelligences and social intelligence is one of them. Social intelligence was problematic from its inception because it is inherently difficult to measure. Examining humans in interactions is a much more difficult task than measuring the cognitive abilities of an individual solving a math problem. Despite the challenges, researchers still made efforts to measure social intelligence. Thorndike and Stern (1937) reviewed these attempts and concluded social intelligence was composed of three components: attitude toward society, social knowledge, and degree of social adjustment. They also determined social intelligence was too complex to be measured and the difficulties inherent in measuring interactions with people were too large an obstacle to overcome.

The term, emotional intelligence, was first mentioned in a doctoral dissertation nearly 20 years ago (Payne, 1985). This qualitative study proposed one can overcome deficiencies in emotional functioning and regulation by showing strength in the face of fear or desire.

Researchers John Mayer and Peter Salovey conducted research a few years later attempted to answer why some individuals were better at reading emotions than others. It was in this study where they first published the term emotional

intelligence. Mayer and Salovey followed with a second study shortly thereafter that proposed the first model of emotional intelligence and brought its attention to the research community (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Emotional intelligence was defined as the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Mayer and Salovey described emotional intelligence as a unique cognitive ability based upon emotion that is operationalised in an individual's social environment.

Daniel Goleman (1995) brought emotional intelligence to the mainstream public. He reviewed the work of Mayer and Salovey, presented his own similarly construed model of emotional intelligence, and forever changed the landscape of public awareness of the term.

Emotional intelligence is attractive to organizations because it provides a framework from which emotionally-based soft skills can be designed and measured.

The awareness of emotional intelligence brought about by Daniel Goleman's book also fueled much research that was subsequently published during the second half of the 1990s. One of the biggest complaints surrounding emotional intelligence upon its inception was the lack of research to support its validity. Indeed, this skepticism was well founded at the time because emotional intelligence was thrust into the public eye by Goleman's (1995) book that was largely theoretical. Some skepticism continues today, criticizing the methodology of the flood of research during the last seven years (Barrett, 2001).

Taxonomy of Emotional Intelligence

While there are three predominant emotional intelligence taxonomies in widespread use today, the Goleman (2002) taxonomy offers a four-part structure which focuses on an individual's ability to understand his or her own emotions and emotional state, to manage and regulate responses to these emotions, to recognize the emotional state of others, and to respond to the emotions present in others to interact effectively. Goleman's (2002) model is designed for application in organizational theory, research and practice. This framework operates under the assumption that it can be used to develop the effectiveness of individuals in the workplace and in leadership positions (Goleman, 2001).

Personal competence	Social competence
Self awareness	Social awareness
Self-management	Relationship management

Fig. 1: Goleman's taxonomy of EI

Personal competence encompasses an individual's capacity to manage him or herself. Therefore, it includes both self-awareness and self-management (Goleman et al., 2002). Self-awareness includes emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence. Self-management consists of emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative and optimism. Social competence is a factor that includes an individual's capability to manage relationships. Social competence is composed of both social awareness and relationship management. Social awareness includes empathy, organizational awareness, and service. Relationship management comprises inspirational leadership, influence, developing others, catalyzing change, managing conflict, and teamwork and collaboration.

Emotional Intelligence and Performance

The significance of the emotional intelligence construct is truly felt only when one considers that, unlike other predictors of success such as general intelligence, emotional intelligence can be learned. Studies conducting emotional intelligence training with university students show a marked increase in emotional intelligence measured by a pre- and post-test measure.

Emotional intelligence is an excellent correlate of job success for leaders. Perhaps the strongest evidence to date for the utility of emotional intelligence for predicting on-the-job success for leaders comes from a study by Cavallo and Brienza (2002). This study assessed the leadership behaviour of 358 leaders at Johnson and Johnson Corporation, at locations across the globe. The study found the best performers were those high in emotional intelligence as rated by their supervisors, peers, and subordinates in the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI), a 360-degree feedback instrument based upon Goleman's (2001) model. Emotional intelligence competencies that were the best predictors of success in this study were self-confidence, achievement orientation, initiative, leadership, influence and catalyzing change.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was circulated to 10 managers based on judgemental sampling technique. Emotional Intelligence is not quantifiable data. Yet, the use of questionnaires allows us to attempt an understanding of how different people think and react to certain situations. The data were tabulated and graphically illustrated for clarity in understanding the hypothesis set.

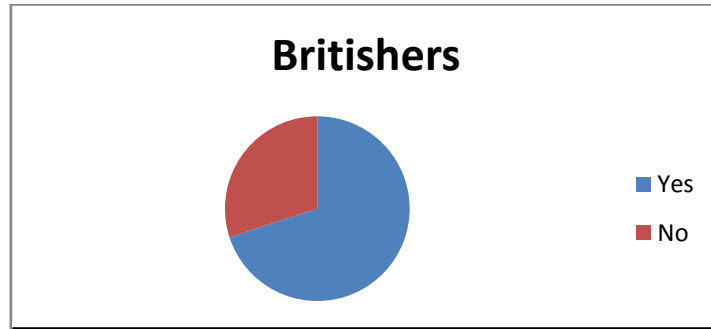
1. Limitations

- 2.1 Data collection from managers was challenging, due to their hectic schedules.
- 2.2 The quality of findings may be affected due to the restricted sample size.
- 2.3 Further statistical analysis could not be applied due to the sample size.

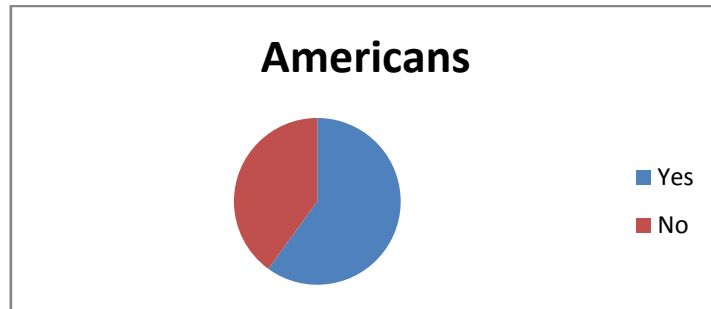
2. Analysis & Results

Q1: Can you express anger freely and non-destructively, then let it go?

Britishers- 70% Yes 30% No

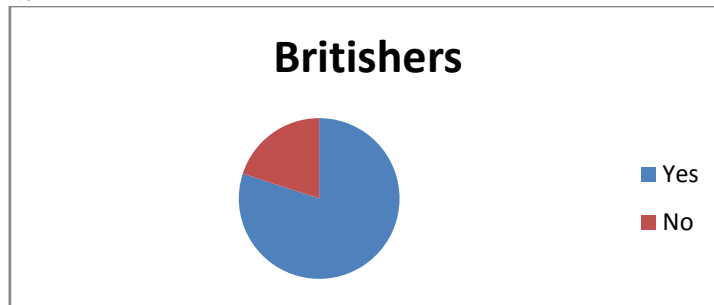


Americans- 60% Yes, 40% No

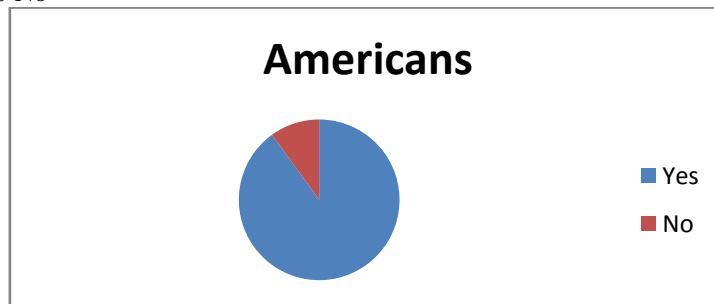


2. Are you able to recognize when you need help, then ask for help or support?

Britishers- 80% Yes, 20% No

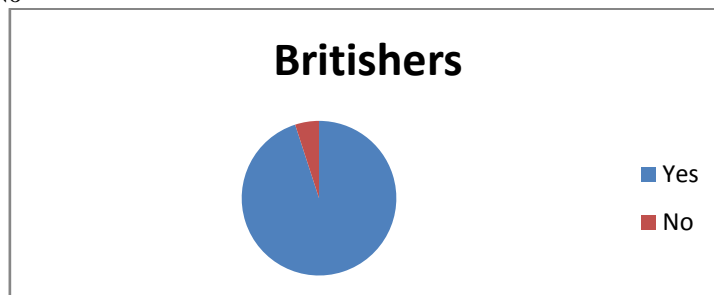


Americans- 90% Yes, 10% No

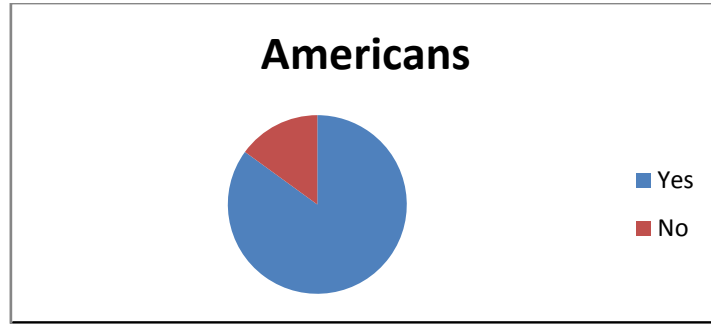


3. Can you strongly protest against mistreatment?

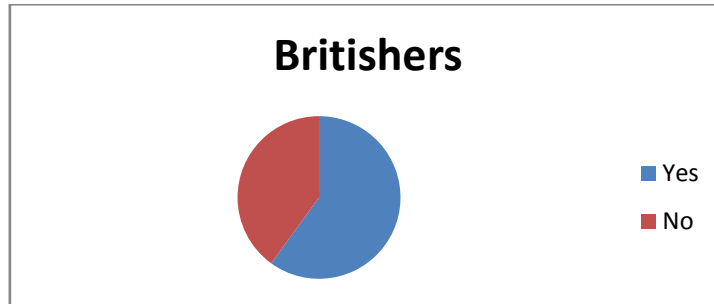
Britishers- 95% Yes, 5% No



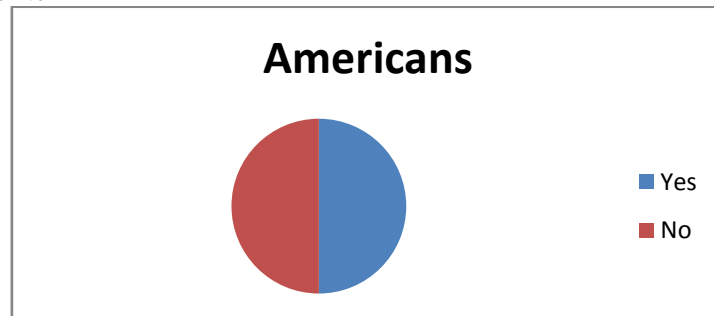
Americans- 85% Yes, 15% No



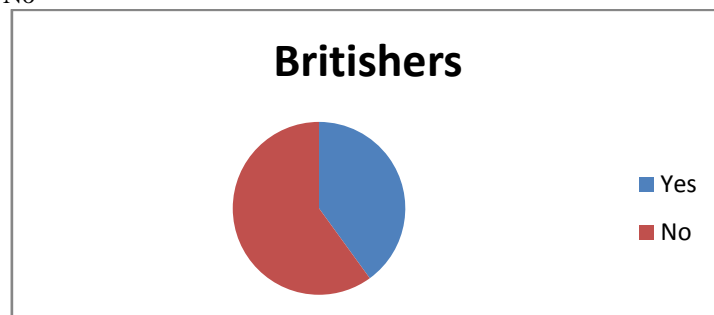
4. Can you empathize with the needs and feelings of others, without judgments or criticism?
Britishers- 60% Yes, 40% No



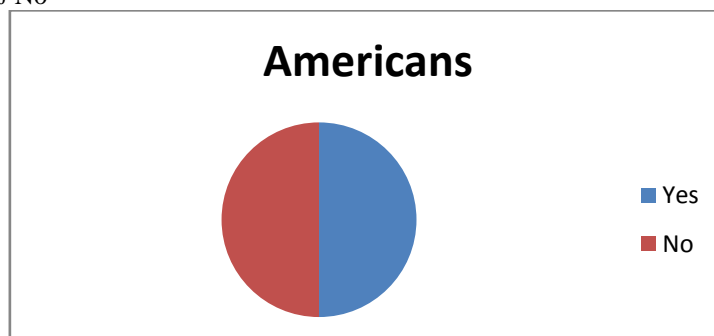
Americans- 50% Yes, 50% No



5. Can you motivate others without resorting to fear tactics or manipulation?
Britishers- 40% Yes, 60% No

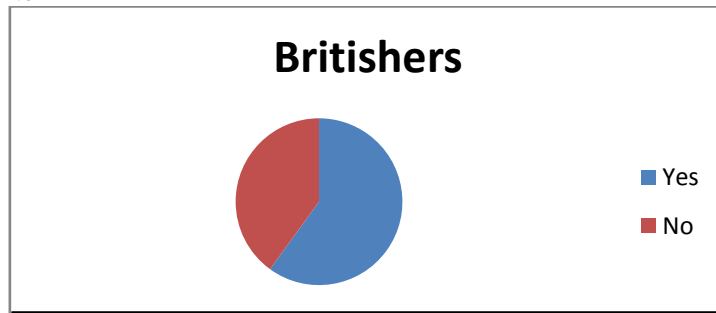


Americans- 50% Yes, 50% No

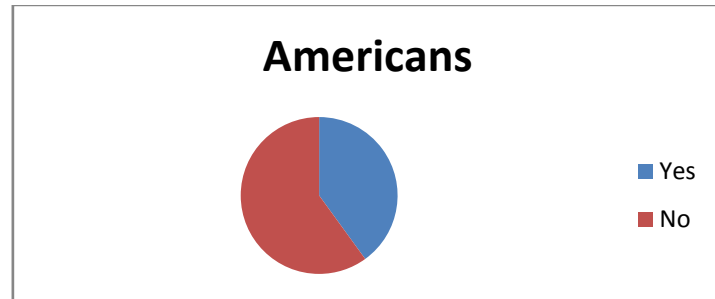


6. When necessary, can you contain (rather than repress), your impulses and delay your gratification, without resorting to guilt, shame, or suppression of your emotions?

Britishers- 60% Yes, 40% No

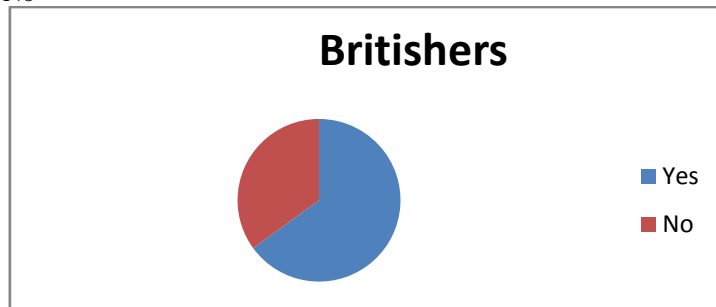


Americans- 40% Yes, 60% No

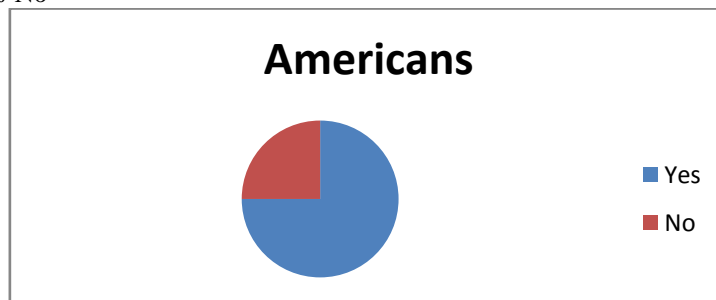


7. Can you focus your energy on work, yet balance this with fun and rest?

Britishers- 65% Yes, 35% No

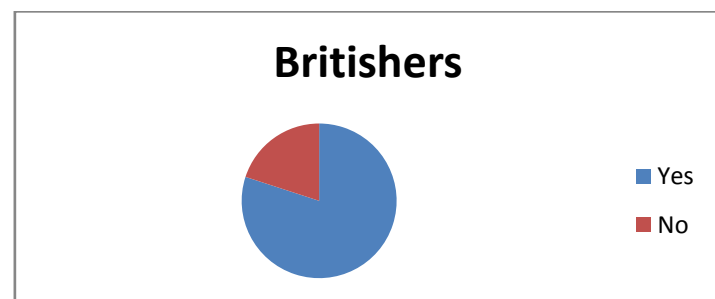


Americans- 75% Yes, 25% No

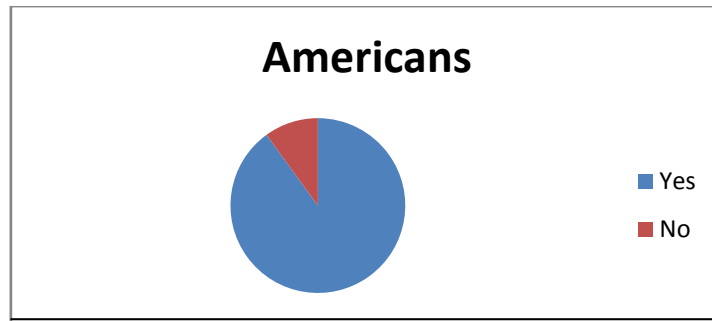


8. Can you accept and even enjoy others who have different needs and world-views?

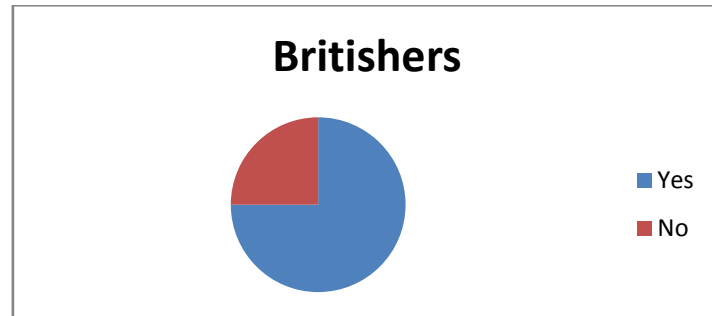
Britishers- 80% Yes, 20% No



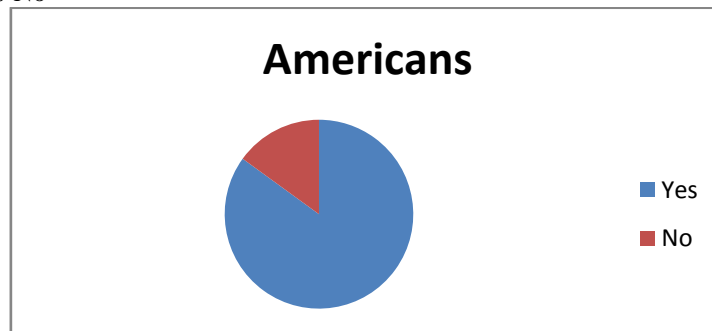
Americans- 90% Yes, 10% No



9. Can you accept your own shortcomings, without feeling ashamed, and remain excited about learning and growing?
Britishers- 75% Yes, 25% No



Americans- 85% Yes, 15% No



IV. DISCUSSION & SUGGESTION

The results showed certain key differences in both cultures which may exist due to individual bias and cultural rifts such as:

- American managers find it more difficult to control their anger and let go of grudges easily as compared to British managers who find this easier.
- Majority of the American managers feel it is okay to ask for help rather than keep things inside as compared to British managers who are more private about intense emotions.
- British managers feel more inclined to express their discontent at injustice than American managers who do not feel the need to correct oppression.
- British managers are more empathic towards their employees than American managers who mostly adopt an indifferent attitude.
- Majority of British managers tend to rely on fear as a source of reinforcement while American managers believe in positive motivation.
- More American managers seem to suffer from guilt and shame if asked to delay their gratification or contain impulses. This signifies weak control.
- Both British and American managers find it relatively easy to separate and manage work and personal life.
- American managers are more tolerant of different opinions and views than British managers who come across as rigid and adhere to rules.
- American managers find it a little difficult if their mistakes are pointed out, to take constructive criticisms than British managers.

Based on the findings and discussions of the study, few suggestions are listed:

- American managers must be involved in workshops that enhance their empathic skills that allow them to connect with employees and promote an environment of peace and acceptance in the workplace.
- They should also be able to take constructive criticism and work to improve areas they are lacking.

- British managers must be more flexible and improve control over the work life and personal life as this could negatively impact the organization.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that there is significant difference between emotions felt and expressed by American managers and British managers. This proves the fact that ethnocentric traits do have an impact on emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has been found important because it provides an excellent framework to look at how people understand and manage emotions. Emotional intelligence considers how people interact in a way cognitive ability theories cannot fully account for.

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