

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN  
SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL IT PROFESSIONALS**

**By**

**Saumya Goyal**

---

**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study is to compare the emotional intelligence of successful and unsuccessful IT professionals. For this purpose 80 IT professionals belonging to the same work group of a leading IT company in Hyderabad were selected and Emotional Intelligence Scale by Ajawani et al. (2002) was administered to them. The findings confirmed the hypothesis that successful and unsuccessful IT professionals differed in regard to their emotional intelligence with successful IT professionals having higher emotional intelligence.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Little over a decade ago, Daniel Goleman (1996) published his highly successful book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ?* Ever since numerous books and hundreds of research papers have tried to explore different dimensions of this field. However, the quest to understand this interesting area has only increased over time.

Emotional intelligence refers to a set of abilities that involve the way in which people perceive, express, understand, and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others (Cherniss, 2004). Several different models of EI have emerged since 1990. The significant ones are-

- (i) Salovey and Mayer's Ability-Based Model (2004)
- (ii) Goleman's Performance-Based Model (1998)
- (iii) Bar-On's Competency-Based Model (1997)

## **A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence in Successful and Unsuccessful Information Technology (IT) Professionals, 2, 2010**

---

Bar-On's (2007) model included 5 meta-factors and each of them comprises a number of closely related competencies, skills and facilitators (total of 15). These are-

- (i) **Intrapersonal** meta-factor includes self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization,
- (ii) **Interpersonal** meta-factor includes empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship,
- (iii) **Stress Management** meta-factor includes stress tolerance, and impulse control,
- (iv) **Adaptability** meta-factor includes reality testing, flexibility, and problem solving, and
- (v) **General Mood** meta-factor includes optimism, and happiness.

Emotional intelligence finds its application outside the world of therapy and research with organisations as well as educational institutions applying the concept to enhance their working environment. In the light of various research studies it is found that emotional intelligence is crucial to the success of IT professionals and the workforce in general. It has also become imperative for organizations to understand how male and female employees differ with regard to their emotional intelligence in order to manage them better and use them more effectively in various organizational situations.

### **PROBLEM & HYPOTHESIS**

The present research aimed to study and compare the emotional intelligence of IT professionals on the basis of their successfulness and gender. The problem of the research is whether successful and unsuccessful IT professionals differ in regard to their emotional intelligence. It has been hypothesized that successful and unsuccessful IT professionals would differ in regard to their emotional intelligence.

## A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence in Successful and Unsuccessful Information Technology (IT) Professionals, 2, 2010

---

### METHODOLOGY

**Sample:** A total of 80 professionals from a leading IT company in Hyderabad were selected for the purpose. The respondents belonged to the same work-group. The selection was such that out of these 80 respondents, there were an equal number of successful and unsuccessful participants in the study.

**Tools:** In order to measure emotional intelligence level of the respondents, "Emotional Intelligence Scale" (Ajawani et al., 2002) was used.

**Design & Procedure:** A 2x2 factorial design was used for the research. Successful employees were determined using two parameters: higher remuneration and/ or higher rank/ position in the same work-group. Emotional Intelligence Scale was administered to them which helped in obtaining overall emotional intelligence scores and scores on 15 sub-factors of emotional intelligence (based on Bar-On model).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 gives average scores of successful and unsuccessful IT professionals for overall emotional intelligence as well as for 15 dimensions of emotional intelligence. The corresponding t-value and its significance are depicted in Table 1.

**Table # 1: Average Scores of Successful and Unsuccessful IT Professionals on Emotional Intelligence and Its Dimensions, And Corresponding t-value**

S. No.	EI Dimension	Successful IT Professionals (Average score)	Unsuccessful IT Professionals (Average score)	't' Value	Remarks
1.	Overall Emotional Intelligence	302.7	273.9	4.851	P<.01
2.	Emotional Self-Awareness	19.3	16.63	4.307	P<.01
3.	Assertiveness	18.48	16.88	2.397	P<.05
4.	Self-Regard	20.75	18.63	3.470	P<.01
5.	Self-Actualization	21.6	19.58	3.636	P<.01
6.	Independence	19.3	17.28	2.986	P<.01

**A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence in Successful and Unsuccessful Information Technology (IT) Professionals, 2, 2010**

---

7.	Empathy	20.8	20.13	1.209	Not significant
8.	Interpersonal Relationship	20.65	19.2	2.654	P<.01
9.	Social Responsibility	21.33	20.55	1.324	Not significant
10.	Problem Solving	20.23	18.58	3.177	P<.01
11.	Reality Testing	20.3	17.7	4.507	P<.01
12.	Flexibility	19.9	18.35	2.490	P<.05
13.	Stress Tolerance	18.45	16.6	3.396	P<.01
14.	Impulse Control	18.53	16.13	3.709	P<.01
15.	Happiness	21.05	17.6	6.390	P<.01
16.	Optimism	22.03	20.13	3.198	P<.01

Results confirmed the hypothesis that successful and unsuccessful IT professionals differed in their overall **Emotional Intelligence**. More specifically, successful IT professionals had higher emotional intelligence than unsuccessful IT professionals. Success in IT professionals with higher emotional intelligence can be attributed to the fact that because of being emotionally intelligent these professionals are able to understand self as well as others better and adjust to situations as needed. They also understand and express themselves better and are able to handle stress, and meet the daily challenges. They have a positive outlook towards life and display a better emotional and social functioning.

Successful and unsuccessful IT professionals also differed on the **Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Self-Regard, Self-Actualization, Independence, Interpersonal Relationship, Problem Solving, Reality Testing, Flexibility, Stress Tolerance, Impulse Control, Happiness, and Optimism** dimensions of emotional intelligence. Successful IT professionals scored higher on all of these dimensions. **Emotional Self-Awareness** plays a role in success as it leads a person to identify his/ her emotional weaknesses and strengths and he/ she can make improvements in the desired

areas. **Assertiveness** gives the person an ability to express his/ her thoughts and stand up for them which leads to one's success. **Self-Regard** gives one a feeling of security and self-confidence which is essential for a person to be successful. Successful professionals with high degree of **self-actualization** strive for development and are able to set and achieve goals to realise their potentials. **Independence** makes a person self-reliant and free of emotional dependency. **Interpersonal Relationship** is vital for professionals to establish mutually satisfying relationship. Professionals good at **problem-solving** dimension of emotional intelligence are able to effectively address intra-personal and inter-personal problem they encounter in their daily lives. **Reality-Testing** helps professionals get a right perspective on situations and they are able to validate their internal feelings with external reality. **Flexibility** is an important dimension for success of IT professionals as it helps them effectively adapt to changes in their lives. Professionals with high **stress-tolerance** are able to successfully deal with stressful situations and events without getting overwhelmed. **Impulse control** is also a vital criterion for one's success as it helps in effectively controlling emotions thereby preventing hostile and irresponsible behaviour. Being satisfied with one's life and being able to enjoy it leads to a high level of **happiness** and the resulting positivity plays a crucial role in one's efforts to achieve success. Similarly, **optimism** helps a person gain a positive outlook on life in general.

The only dimensions where successful and unsuccessful IT professionals did not differ were **Empathy** and **Social Responsibility**. Both these dimensions are part of the interpersonal meta-factor which signifies social-awareness and interaction. Since IT job environment necessitate working in groups, both unsuccessful and successful

## **A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence in Successful and Unsuccessful Information Technology (IT) Professionals, 2, 2010**

---

professionals have these dimensions well developed and do not differ on them significantly.

### **REFERENCES**

- Ajawani, J.C., Sethi, A., Bhatpahari, G., & Hussain, M. (2002). *Emotional Intelligence Scale*. Unpublished
- Bar-On, R. (1997). *The Bar On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i): Technical manual*; Canada: Multi-Health Systems
- Bar-On, R. (2007). The 5 meta-factors and 15 sub-factors of the Bar-On model; Available at: <http://www.reuvenbaron.org/bar-on-model/essay.php?i=3>
- Cherniss, C (2004). Emotional Intelligence. In C.D. Spielberger, *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology*, Elsevier Academic Press
- Goleman, D. (1996). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*; New York: Bantam Books
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*; New York: Bantam Books
- Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D.R. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory, findings, and implications; *Psychological Inquiry*, 15, 197-2

Saumya Goyal (1980) did her BE in Computer Technology from Nagpur University in 2001 and MBA from IBS, Hyderabad in 2004. She has worked with Satyam Computers, Deloitte, and UBS in the areas of Knowledge Management and Strategic HR Intelligence. At present, she is pursuing her MA in Psychology from Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla University, Raipur. She is also an independent researcher and content writer. She has published a paper in 'Osmania Journal of Management', and has authored articles for 'HRM Review' and 'The Economic Times'. She can be reached at: [saumya.goyal@gmail.com](mailto:saumya.goyal@gmail.com)

*I am deeply indebted to Dr. J.C. Ajawani, HOD, Psychology, Arts and Commerce Girls' College, Devendra Nagar, Raipur (C.G.) who helped me in the execution of this research.*