

A Comparison of the Emotional Intelligence of Leaders in Spain and United States

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INTRODUCTION

A growing research literature suggests that emotional intelligence (EI) may play an important role in career success and job performance than general intelligence. A meta-analysis of 69 independent studies explored the predictive validity of emotional intelligence with diverse job performance outcomes (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). Results suggested diverse measures of EI correlated .23 with job performance ($k=19$, $N=4158$). Other research suggests that leaders who are interpersonally effective create a psychologically healthy work climate that results in significantly higher engagement of direct reports, less perceived stress and greater retention (Nowack, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

A new study by Tools4Training and Envisia Learning compared differences in emotional intelligence of leaders in Spain and the United States. A study of 740 leaders in Spain were compared to 1,271 leaders from the US using the validated Emotional Intelligence View 360 assessment (<http://www.tools4training.es/>) which measures 17 competencies divided into three factors: Self-Management, Relationship Managers and Communication.

Comparisons of self, manager and direct report ratings were explored using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine significant differences between countries. Separate analyses were also done by rater groups separately (self, manager and direct reports).

RESULTS

Comparisons between Spain and United States were conducted on a composite score of the Emotional Intelligence View 360 assessment. Leaders in Spain rated themselves significantly higher on overall emotional intelligence compared to those in the United States as did direct reports ($p < .05$). However, boss ratings of leaders were significantly lower suggesting that they are the most critical in evaluating the emotional intelligence of leaders in Spain. No significantly differences between self, manager and direct report ratings in the United States.

Emotional Intelligence by Rater Group

Rater Group	Spain	USA
Self*	17.14	15.69
Manager	15.38	15.70
Direct Report*	16.58	15.98

* $p < .01$

CONCLUSION

In general, leaders in Spain are rated significantly higher by direct reports and perceive themselves to be more emotionally intelligent on the three major areas measured in this study (Self-Management, Relationship Management and Communication). However, bosses in Spain appear to be the most critical rater group rating leaders significantly lower than either direct reports or the leaders themselves. In the United States, no significant differences between rater groups were found on the composite measure of emotional intelligence. Analysis at the competency level revealed few significant differences (e.g., self-ratings were significantly higher on Trustworthiness and Communication compared to direct reports).

It is expected that some cultural differences between leadership practices will exist when comparing rich concepts such as emotional intelligence between countries consistent with prior research (Hofstede, 2001). Current research with the Emotional Intelligence View 360 suggests that it overlaps with existing measures of Transformational Leadership suggesting a more participative style of leadership might characterize how direct reports perceive leaders in Spain. Future studies should continue to explore differences in the emotional intelligence of leaders in different countries and the specific components that are most strongly associated with performance and effectiveness.