Assessment & Development

Matters

Leadership derailment and emotional intelligence: Relationships between two measures

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Measures used

Hogan Development Survey (Hogan & Hogan, 1997) and Bar-On's EQ-i®
(Bar-On, 1997).

THE POTENTIAL COST of leadership derailment to the organisation is considerable. Not only does it incur costs for exit and rehire, but also it can have an immeasurable negative impact on team productivity and motivation. Research suggests that a deficit in emotional intelligence (EI) can contribute to leadership derailment (Ruderman et al., 2001; Goleman, 1998). Three areas of EI appear in particular to be conducive to leadership derailment: poor interpersonal skills; difficulty in dealing with change; and lack of teamwork skills.

This study aims to further our understanding of the links between EI and leadership derailment. Moving beyond the idea that a lack of EI leads to derailment, we also explore the impact of overplayed EI and potential negative outcomes for leaders (Book, 2009). To understand these relationships, correlations between the HDS and the EQ-i were conducted.

The EQ-i is a measure of EI, defined as 'how we recognise, understand and manage our emotions to ultimately succeed in life' (Bar-On, 1997). Studies indicate that the higher the level of EI, the more likely we are to perform well at work (Bar-On, 1997). The HDS identifies 11 patterns of dysfunctional interpersonal leadership behaviour. These leadership derailment areas identify overplayed strengths that are of particular concern in managerial and leadership roles as they can seriously hinder career progression (Hogan & Hogan, 1997).

Participants

Two-hundred-and-eighty UK working adults completed both instruments for the study.

Analysis and results

Scale Level Analysis

The initial scale level analysis revealed that all of the HDS scales significantly correlated with a number of the EQ-i scales (Table 1). The text below focuses on the three strongest correlations between the tools for each scale of the HDS.

	VOL	MIS	CAU	DET	PAS	ARR	MAN	DRA	ECC	PER	DEP
Prob Solv	−.16**	.07	−.16**	−.02	−.00	.18**	.05	−.02	.03	.19**	−.20**
Flex	−.41**	−.21**	−.49**	−.23**	−.14**	.24**	.24**	.27*	.14*	−.16**	−.20**
Rea Tes	−.49**	−.23**	−.36**	−.22**	−.30**	.07	−.14**	.03	−.23**	.03	−.10
Soc Res	−.24**	−.26**	−.02	−.40**	−.10	−.20**	−.30**	−.04	−.12*	.08	.18**
Inter Rel	−.55**	−.18**	−.51**	−.66**	−.23**	.18**	.24**	.42**	.18**	−.08	−.00
Emp	−.25**	−.18**	−.11	−.42**	−.06	.00	.02	.09	.01	.03	.07
Happ	−.62**	−.15*	−.57**	−.48**	−.24**	.23**	.23**	.40**	.18**	−.11	−.11
Opt	−.48**	−.14*	−.58**	−.30**	−.14*	.33**	.36**	.46**	.21**	−.13*	−.31**
Indep	−.25**	−.00	−.59**	−.07	−.09	.34**	.34**	.39**	.24**	−.17**	−.63**
Em Awr	−.42**	−.20**	−.41**	−.41**	−.20**	.19**	.18**	.28**	.10	−.04	−.09
Sel Act	−.55**	−.17**	−.52**	−.32**	−.27**	.32**	.17**	.34**	.17**	−.11	−.25**
Assert	−.29**	−.05	−.72**	−.20**	−.28**	.46**	.34**	.48**	.26**	−.18**	−.48**
Self Reg	−.58**	−.14*	−.66**	−.28**	−.20**	.32**	.27**	.39**	.17**	−.13*	−.24**
Imp Con	−.42**	−.31**	.02	−.10	−.11	−.22**	−.38**	.33**	.34**	.12*	.18**
Stres Tol	−.47**	−.08	−.62**	−.18**	−.15**	.28**	.31**	.40**	.21**	−.17**	−.34**
Total EQ	−.64**	−.23**	−.65**	−.42**	−.26**	.28**	.20**	.36**	.11	−.09	−.25**
Intra−per	−.54**	−.15*	−.72**	−.33**	−.26**	.40**	.32**	.47**	.23**	−.15*	−.39**
Inter−per	−.49**	−.25**	−.34**	−.63**	−.20**	.03	.05	.24**	.05	.00	.08
Adapt	−.47**	−.18**	−.45**	−.22**	−.20**	.21**	.06	.13*	−.03	.01	−.21**
Stres Man	−.59**	−.25**	−.40**	−.18**	−.17**	.04	−.04	.05	−.09	−.03	−.11
Gen Mod	−.61**	−.16**	−.63**	−.43**	−.21**	.30**	.31**	.46**	.21**	−.13*	−.23**
Pos Imp	−.42**	−.18**	−.18**	−.19**	−.07	.06	−.01	.05	−.00	−.07	−.02
Neg Imp	.33**	.18**	.19**	.24**	.18**	.07	.31**	.01	.40**	−.11	−.02

N=280, *p*<.05 **p*<.01

Note:
EQ-i® scales – Prob Solv=Problem Solving, Flex=Flexibility, Rea Tes=Reality Testing, Soc Res=Social Responsibility, Inter Rel=Interpersonal Relationship, Emp=Empathy, Happ=Happiness, Opt=Optimism, Indep=Independence, Em Awr=Emotional Self-Awareness, Sel Act=Self-Actualisation, Assert=Assertiveness, Self Reg=Self Regard, Imp Con=Impulse Control, Stres Tol=Stress Tolerance, Intra-per=Intrapersonal, Composite, Inter-per=Interpersonal Composite, Adapt=Adaptability Components, Stres Man – Stress Management Components, Gen Mod=General Mood Components, Pos Imp=Positive Impressions, Neg Imp=Negative Impressions.
HDS scales – VOL=Enthusiastic-Volatile, MIS=Shrewd-Mistrustful, CAU=Careful-Cautious, DET=Independent-Detached, PAS=Focused-Passive Aggressive, ARR=Confident-Arrogant, MAN=Charming-Manipulative, DRA=Vivacious-Dramatic, ECC=Imaginative-Eccentric, PER=Diligent-Perfectionistic, DEP=Dutiful-Dependent.

Enthusiastic-Volatile: The strongest correlations were with EQ-i Happiness, Self-Regard and Interpersonal Relationships, all of which were negative. This suggests that high scorers on the Volatile scale are less content with life, are less self-assured and may be less comfortable networking, building and maintaining relationships. Interestingly, this scale correlated negatively with all 15 of the scales on the EQ-i. Similarly there were large significant negative correlations with the five EQ-i composite scales (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Stress Management and General Mood) and the Volatile

scale. This suggests, overall, that individuals with a high score on the Volatile scale may be less emotionally intelligent.

Shrewd-Mistrustful: This had significant negative correlations with EQ-i Impulse Control, Reality Testing and Social Responsibility. This indicates that high Mistrustful scorers may at times be impulsive, find it hard to tune into the realities of a situation (e.g. have inappropriate suspicions) and may engage less in group activities.

Careful-Cautious: This had strong negative correlations with the EQ-i Assertiveness, Self-Regard and Stress Tolerance scales. The negative correlation of .72 with Assertiveness was the largest correlation of the matrix and confirms the major themes associated with the Cautious scale, involving reluctance to openly voice opinions or thoughts.

Independent-Detached: This correlated negatively with Interpersonal Relationships, Happiness and Empathy. This fits with the extreme of the Detached scale, which indicates high scorers may be less motivated by building relationships with colleagues and may be imperceptive to the moods and feelings of others. These results indicate that high Detached scorers may be less inclined to outwardly express their happiness, as defined by the EQ-i, to others.

Focused-Passive Aggressive: This correlated most negatively with the EQ-i Assertiveness, Reality Testing and Self-Actualisation scales. The links to Assertiveness and Reality Testing reflect the tendency for high scorers to get lost in their own thoughts as opposed to focusing on the present, and a reluctance to vocalise their annoyance when interrupted. The negative correlation with EQ-i Self-Actualisation supports the view that high Passive Aggressive scorers may have anxieties about the value of their contribution and concerns that they are not fulfilling their potential in life. These are people who may appear stubborn and reluctant to deviate from their preferred way of doing things.

Confident-Arrogant: This correlated positively with EQ-i Assertiveness, Independence and Optimism. Such results suggest that high scorers on the Confident-Arrogant scale are rarely limited by self-consciousness, are forthright, self-directed and positive, even in the face of adversity. When overused, these EQ-i scales tie in with the Arrogant scale, as these individuals may be seen as too dominant and intimidating.

Charming-Manipulative: This correlated positively with Optimism and Assertiveness, and negatively with Impulse Control. Such correlations emphasise that individuals scoring high on Manipulative tend to be happy to share their views with others, are optimistic, yet impulsive and hasty at times. Following the main themes of the Manipulative scale, these elements of EI may result in an individual being so convinced that events will turn out positively in the end, that they don't always fully evaluate the consequences of their actions.

Vivacious-Dramatic: This had significant positive correlations with Assertiveness, Optimism and Interpersonal Relationships, suggesting that high scorers on the HDS Dramatic scale may be happy to assert themselves, view life positively and enjoy building relationships with others. If the high scoring EQ-i scales are overplayed, the correlations suggest that a high Dramatic scorer may at times be domineering in social interactions and a poor listener.

Imaginative-Eccentric: This scale correlated negatively with Impulse Control and

positively with Assertiveness and Independence. This fits with the theme of Eccentric, as the correlations suggest an individual who can be described as passionate, variety seeking and determined in their ideas. If overplayed, the scales on the EQ-i describe an individual who may be overly zealous with their contribution and quick to jump to conclusions.

Diligent-Perfectionist: This scale has the weakest correlation with the EQ-i scales, indicating that it may draw less on EI in the way that it manifests itself. This is not surprising given that the HDS Perfectionist scale is more about controlling data than relationships. The only positive correlation was with the EQ-i scale of Problem Solving, indicating that high scorers on the Perfectionist scale are likely to be systematic and methodical when dealing with emotional issues, but if overused individuals may be too systematic and consequently slow to act. The negative correlations were with Assertiveness and Independence indicating that Perfectionist high scorers may be passive and uncertain of their work, making them inclined to check their work repeatedly.

Dutiful-Dependent: This correlated negatively with Assertiveness, Independence and Optimism. This relationship fits with the main characteristics of the Dutiful-Dependent scale that describes a compliant, passive individual who may be keen to seek others' opinions and may be overly pessimistic about outcomes.

Discussion

The relationships between the EQ-i and the HDS scales and clusters provide important interpretive information and support for the taxonomy and factor structure of the tools. There were several significant correlations between the tools, indicating links between EI (as measured by the EQ-i) and leadership derailment (as measured by the HDS). The overall findings suggest that while some leadership derailment triggers may be related to a lack of certain aspects of EI, other leadership derailment triggers may be associated with overplaying elements of EI.

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