

The New Gringos: A Study of Emotional Intelligence in US, Chilean and Indian MBA Students

Abstract

The concept of emotional intelligence, that we can develop and use our emotions and those of others to influence decisions is very attractive. Very few studies have used this concept in non- North American settings. We therefore test the cross- cultural application by applying the instrument in Chile and India. The Chileans surveyed appear to be little different from North Americans but the Indians are lower on all scales and sub scales. The potential implications are discussed.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Culture

Introduction, Literature Review and Hypotheses

The term Emotional Intelligence (EI) was first coined by Goleman (1995) and Mayer and Salovey (1997) and can be defined as a set of interrelated emotional abilities (i.e., accurately perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding emotions, and managing emotions to attain goals). More formally, Emotional Intelligence involves “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth”(Mayer & Salovey, 1997: 10).

After Goleman’s (1995) book, many authors approached the measurement question of defining Emotional Intelligence (EI). Both McEnrue and Groves (2006) and O’Boyle et al. (2011) have done excellent jobs of summarizing and evaluating these measures. McEnrue and Groves (2006) summarize the four key theoretical perspectives and their associated measures:

1. Goleman’s (1995, 1998) four-dimensional trait-based model of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills;
2. Bar-On’s (1997) five-dimensional trait-based model of intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptation, stress management, and general mood;
3. Mayer & Salovey’s (1997) four-dimensional ability model of emotional perception, appraisal, and expression, emotional facilitation of thinking, understanding emotions, and regulating emotions; and
4. Dulewicz and Higgs’s (1999a, 2000) seven-dimensional trait-based model of self-awareness, emotional resilience, motivation, interpersonal sensitivity, influence, intuitiveness, and conscientiousness.

After an extensive review, McEnrue and Groves (2006:38) conclude, “We have advocated the MSCEIT on the basis of its psychometric properties and HRD¹ application potential, there will undoubtedly be further refinement of this test as well as the development of other measures that improve the assessment of emotional abilities.” While in this paper we accept these conclusions and use MSCEIT in this survey, we also note several studies continue to use their own or other models.

Since Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined Emotional Intelligence (EI), studies have linked EI to outcomes such as job performance, quality of relationships, and well-being (e.g., Brackett et al., 2006; Côté & Miners, 2006; Lopes et al., 2004). Several studies such as Gabel et al. (2005) and Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) suggest that portions of EI are related to expatriate adjustment and effectiveness in moving to a new culture.

¹ Human Resource Development

However, as Walter et al. (2011) remind us, even after 20 years of development there is much to be done in Emotional Intelligence. Among the areas remaining is that we do not know how Emotional Intelligence is used in different cultures and the leadership styles that flow from that. Indeed most EI studies have assumed that this concept, developed and tested in North America, has universal applicability². As Moon (2011) observes, even though Mayer and Salovey (1997) explicitly provide for the consideration of different cultural origins in examining more complex manifestations of Emotional Intelligence (beyond that of the simple identification of emotion), regrettably most studies that have been done have the assumption that EI is universal rather than relative. Moon (2011:2) continues, “More recently, it was noted that there is a general consensus among emotion researchers on the important role that culture can play when applying EI in practical settings, but there is currently little relevant research and few specific recommendations (Roberts, Zeidner, & Matthews, 2007).” Some examples of tests of inter cultural differences in Emotional Intelligence are Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2005), Karim and Weisz (2010), Moon (2011), Tang et al. (2010) and Johnsen et al. (2012).

One of the earlier cross-cultural studies is Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2005). Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2005) examine the relationship of Emotional Intelligence to depression across countries using Chilean, U.S., and Spanish subjects using the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) to measure Perceived Emotional Intelligence with three factors: Attention, Clarity, and Repair³. The TMMS assesses one’s emotional beliefs concerning *Attention* (amount of attention paid to one’s emotional states), *Clarity* (understanding of one’s emotional states), and *Emotional Repair* (the ability to regulate one’s emotional states). Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2005) find only one significant inter country significant difference, i.e., U.S. students focused more on Clarity at a significantly higher level than Chileans. This they ascribe to the very individualistic nature of U.S. society.

Karim and Weisz (2010) provide a dual test of the MSCEIT Scale and the outcomes in two very different countries⁴, France and Pakistan. Karim and Weisz (2010:374) report the following on the MSCEIT instrument: “The results from multi sample analysis revealed that the MSCEIT has the property of factorial invariance across both cultures, including invariance of factor loadings, unique variances, and factor variance”. Karim and Weisz (2010:374) continue “for both Pakistani and

2 This goes back to Mayer et al. (2001:1). Compelling cross-cultural research by Ekman (1973) has supported Darwin's hypothesis that emotional expression has evolved across species (Darwin, 1872/1965). This strongly implies that emotional information—and the capacity to read it—would show some universality across human beings and even closely related mammalian species.

3 Despite broad acceptance of the models described in McEnrue and Groves (2006), a number of papers continue to use their preferred measures of Emotional Intelligence. Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2005:92) for example, argue that “Various instruments have been developed that attempt to avoid the problems associated with self-report in the measurement of EI (e.g., the MSCEIT, and its precursor, the MEIS). However, one of the most widely used self-report measures is the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS), essentially a measure of Perceived Emotional Intelligence (PEI), namely the knowledge that individuals have about their own emotional abilities.”

4 Throughout this paper, country differences and cultural differences are identified using the Hofstede et al. (2010) measures.

French students, the MSCEIT scores were distinguishable from the Big Five personality dimensions, self-report emotional intelligence measures, and cognitive intelligence”. On the actual scores Karim and Weisz (2010) find the more communitarian Pakistani students score significantly lower in mean overall Emotional Intelligence than the individualist French students do. They also find within each sample, females score significantly higher than males on the MSCEIT total scores.

Moon (2011) also using the MSCEIT scale finds that European-North Americans score significantly higher on the composite MSCEIT measure than East Asians. Furthermore, that measuring values using the Triandis (1995) horizontal-individualism scale, helps explain why European-North Americans have higher understanding and regulation of emotion scores. However, the opposite dimension of vertical-collectivism, does not significantly account for the lower EI scores of East Asians. In effect, Moon (2011) provides some evidence for the potential cultural-relativity of EI.

There are counterbalancing studies to the conclusions discussed above. Tang et al. (2010), using a different measure of Emotional Intelligence from Low and Nelson (2003)⁵ and a sample of university administrators, found no overall difference between U.S. and Taiwanese leaders. Within this conclusion, they are very different patterns. Tang et al. (2010: 912) summarize this sub result as follows:

The US participants, on average, scored significantly higher on the relationship-oriented emotional skill of Assertion, and the task-oriented emotional skills of Decision-making and Time management than their Taiwanese counterparts. Taiwanese participants, on average, scored significantly higher on the relationship-oriented emotional skills of Comfort and Commitment Ethic than the US academic leaders. No significant differences were found with regard to total EI skills and relationship-oriented emotional skills of Empathy, Leadership, and task-oriented emotional skills of Drive Strength, Self Esteem, and Stress Management.

Most recently, Johnsen et al. (2012) used yet another measure of EI, Tapia’s (2001) Emotional Intelligence Inventory⁶. Studying merchant navy officers, Johnsen et al. (2012), found that the more individualist European officers have a

5 The Low and Nelson (2003) model of an Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP). Emotional intelligence, as defined by Low and Nelson (2003), is a learnt ability through a transformative learning process to identify experience, understand, and express human emotions in healthy and productive ways. This definition leads to a practical, comprehensive, and skills-based approach to developing the emotional abilities of:

1. knowing and valuing self;
2. building and maintaining a variety of strong, productive, and healthy relationships;
3. getting along and working well with others in achieving positive results and.
4. effectively dealing with the pressures and demands of life and work.

6 The measure of EQ used in the present study was the Emotional Intelligence Inventory. The EII from Tapia (2001) used 41 questions (scored 1–4; Never like me — Always like me) to identify four factors of Emotional Intelligence. These factors are “Empathy”, (e.g. “I sympathize with other people when they have problems”), “Utilization Thought”, (“I am able to stay motivated when things do not go well”), “Handling relationships” (“I think about how I can improve my relationship with those people with whom I don’t get along”) and “Self-control” (“Having car trouble causes me to feel stressed”).

lower total Emotional Intelligence score than those of Southeast Asian. Given that these subjects have a much wider range of ages and more significant amount of work experience than those of Moon (2011), this study has considerably more external validity. Johnsen et al. (2012), also raise the importance of examining experience, which affected emotional intelligence. When separating the EQ scale in its facets, higher scores for Asian officers were particularly found on “Utilization of emotions”, “Handling relationships”, and on “Self-control”.

So where do we go from here? The preponderance of the evidence seems to suggest that there is cross-national variance in Emotional Intelligence scores. It further provides some evidence that countries that are more individualistic have higher overall EI scores. The limited evidence from Moon (2011) suggests it is also possible that higher power distance (more vertical) societies result in lower EI scores. Also, almost no evidence has been collected from Latin America. In Asia, studies seem to be limited to Greater China with no results from India. Therefore, we go forward with a test of cross-cultural differences in Emotional Intelligence using the world’s most individualistic country, the U.S. on one end of the scale and two collectivist countries, Chile from Latin America and India from South Asia. Chile is one of the least individualistic countries in the world, but is moderate to high in power distance. India is average on individualism but quite high on power distance. If individualism drives Emotional Intelligence, the U.S. will rank highest followed by India and then Chile. If on the other hand, the lack of a power relationship drives EI then The U.S. will lead followed by Chile and the India. Of course, it is possible that a moderating variable such as age, sex and ethnicity may affect the results.

In our study based on this literature, we hypothesize the following in the alternate:

Ha1 - U.S. subjects being the most individualistic will score significantly higher on the overall Emotional Intelligence scores and its subcomponents than subjects from Chile or India.

Ha2 - U.S. subjects being the least Power Distant will score significantly higher on the overall Emotional Intelligence scores and its subcomponents than subjects from Chile or India.

Methodology and Results

Sample and Data Collection

In order to test if emotional intelligence differs among countries, we selected a group of MBA students in three countries – India, Chile, and the U.S. to test our hypotheses. These countries are selected because they are respectively relatively high power distance; low in individualism and high in individualism (see Table 1 and Figure 1 below). The same data is provided in Figure 1

Insert Table 1 about here

Insert Figure 1 about here

We collected Emotional Intelligence data using the online survey developed by MSCEIT (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002). The survey is an ability-based test of Emotional Intelligence that helps to identify a person's ability to identify emotions in others, to use emotions to facilitate thought, to understand emotional meanings, and to know how to manage emotions (http://www.unh.edu/emotional_intelligence/ei%20About%20the%20MSCEIT/eiMSCEIT%20Intro.htm). The survey has 141 items. Our overall sample is 230 MBA students from universities in India, Chile, and the U.S. We collected data from 110 MBA students in India, 50 students in Chile, and 70 students in the U.S. Table 2 provides demographics for our respondents.

Insert Table 2 about here

Insert Table 3 about here

Table 3 presents the mean scores for overall and four branches of Emotional Intelligence for different countries. The average Emotional Intelligence (EI) of U.S. MBA students was highest at 95.90, followed by the average EI of Chilean students at 93.77. Indian MBA students were found to have the lowest overall EI at 70.61. In addition, Indian students had the lowest EI on all the four branches – perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions. U.S subjects scored higher than their Chilean counterparts on the perceiving and using elements of EI. Chilean subjects were found to have higher EI than U.S. respondents on understanding and managing emotions.

Multi-Variate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

In order to analyze if respondents from three countries are different on the four branches of Emotional Intelligence, we conducted MANOVA. Our overall MANOVA is significant at $p\text{-value} < .001$. This test indicates that significant differences exist in the overall emotional intelligence of MBA students in different countries. We then conducted one-way Analysis of Variance tests to see if U.S., Indian and Chilean MBA students different on total EI as well as four components of EI (see Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

As previously discussed, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is an ability-based test designed to measure the four branches of the EI model of Mayer and Salovey (1997). In addition to the main index of Emotional Intelligence, it contains four sub-components or branches. These can be interpreted as follows:

1. Perceiving Emotions: The ability to perceive emotions in oneself and others as well as in objects, art, stories, music, and other stimuli.
2. Facilitating Thought: The ability to generate, use, and feel emotion as necessary to communicate feelings or employ them in other cognitive processes.

3. Understanding Emotions: The ability to understand emotional information, to understand how emotions combine and progress through relationship transitions, and to appreciate such emotional meanings.
4. Managing Emotions: The ability to be open to feelings, and to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth.

Therefore, we conducted ANOVA on overall as well individual branches of emotional intelligence. Tables 5, 6, and 7 present the results of ANOVA between the following pairs of countries: U.S.-Chile, U.S. – India, and Chile-India. In each table, we present country comparisons for the sub components of Emotional Intelligence (perceiving, using, understanding and managing) and total emotional intelligence.

Insert Table 5 about here

Insert Table 6 about here

Insert Table 7 about here

Differences in total Emotional Intelligence across different countries were found significant at p -value $< .001$. In order to test which MBA students are significantly different, we conducted post-hoc tests using Bonferroni Correction. The results indicate that Indian MBA students have significantly lower overall EI than Chilean and U.S. Students. No significant differences in the overall EI were found between Chilean and U.S. students.

Differences across the sample countries on Branch 1 (perceiving emotional intelligence) were found significant at p -value $< .001$. In order to test which MBA students were significantly different, we conducted post-hoc tests using Bonferroni Correction. The results indicate that Indian MBA students have a significantly lower ability to perceive their own emotions than Chilean and U.S. Students. U.S. students also had a significantly higher score than Chilean students in perceiving their own emotions. This mirrors the findings of Fernández-Berrocal et al. (2005) that U.S. students had more Clarity or understanding of one's emotional states in the TMMS scale.

Differences across the sample countries on Branch 2 (facilitating thought) were found to be significant at p -value $< .001$. In order to test which MBA students were significantly different, we conducted post-hoc tests using Bonferroni Correction. The results indicate that Indian MBA students were significantly less able to employ emotions in other cognitive processes than Chilean and U.S. students. No significant differences in the facilitating thought were found between Chilean and U.S. students.

Differences across the sample countries on Branch 3 (understanding emotions) were found to be significant at p -value $< .001$. Total Emotional Intelligence across different countries was found significant at p -value $< .001$. In order to test which MBA students were significantly different, we conducted post-hoc tests using Bonferroni Correction. The results

indicate that Indian MBA students have significantly lower overall EI than Chilean and U.S. students. No significant differences in the overall EI were found between Chilean and U.S. students.

Differences across the sample countries on Branch 4 (managing emotions) were found to be significant at p -value $< .001$. In order to test which MBA students were significantly different, we conducted post-hoc tests using Bonferroni Correction. The results indicate that Indian MBA students have a significantly lower ability to manage emotions in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth than Chilean and U.S. students. No significant differences in overall EI were found between Chilean and U.S. students.

Control Tests

We also conducted several control tests to verify the findings of our research. We ran several regressions to identify the effect of control variables (i.e., age and gender of respondents, and country effects) on total Emotional Intelligence and each of the four branches of Emotional Intelligence – perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions. Before conducting these regressions, we deleted observations that had not provided data on demographics. We conducted these analyses with 209 observations – 32 Chilean, 70 U.S., and 107 Indian respondents. The results of these tests (untabulated) are discussed below.

The first regression estimated the impact of age, gender (scored as a 1/0, male/female dummy variable), and two country dummy variables, country 1 (dummy variable for India), and country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) on the total Emotional Intelligence of respondents. We found that overall regression model (adjusted R-Square = .47) is significant (p -value $< .001$), but age is insignificant. However, gender is a significant variable. Male subjects overall have a lower intercept value for total Emotional Intelligence than females. The reference category for country dummy variable is the U.S. and we found that only country 1 (dummy variable for India) is significant (p -value $< .001$). Country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) is not significant. This indicates that the change in country of respondents from the U.S. to Chile does not bring any variation in their total emotional intelligence.

The second regression estimated the impact of age, gender (dummy variable), and country 1 (dummy variable for India), and country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) on the perceiving emotional intelligence branch. We found that overall regression model (adjusted R-Square = .30) is significant (p -value $< .001$), but the demographic variables, i.e., age and gender, are insignificant. In this case, both country 1 and country 2 are significant. This suggests that the change in the country of respondents from the U.S. to India or the U.S. to Chile brings significant variation in their ability to perceive emotions.

The third regression estimated the impact of age, the gender (dummy variable), and country 1 (dummy variable for India), and country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) on the using emotional intelligence branch. We found that overall regression model (adjusted R-Square = .31) is significant (p-value < .001). Interestingly, both age and gender are significant variables in using emotions. Older subjects are better able to use emotions to achieve their objectives. The results suggest that change in gender of respondents from females to males lead to significant decrease in the ability to use emotions to achieve the goals. The reference category for country dummy variable is the U.S. and we found that only country 1 (dummy variable for India) is significant (p-value < .001). Country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) is not significant. This indicates that the change in country of respondents from the U.S. to Chile does not bring any variation in their ability to use emotional intelligence.

The fourth regression estimated the impact of age, gender (dummy variable), and country 1 (dummy variable for India), and country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) on the understanding Emotional Intelligence branch. We found that overall regression model (adjusted R-Square = .36) is significant (p-value < .001), but age and gender are insignificant. The reference category for country dummy variable is the U.S. and we found that only country 1 (dummy variable for India) is significant (p-value < .001). Country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) is not significant. This indicates that the change in country of respondents from the U.S. to Chile does not bring any variation in their ability to understand emotional intelligence.

The fifth regression estimated the impact of age, gender (dummy variable), and country 1 (dummy variable for India), and country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) on the ability to manage Emotional Intelligence. We found that overall regression model (adjusted R-Square = .44) is significant (p-value < .001), but age and gender are insignificant. The reference category for country dummy variable is the U.S. and we found that only country 1 (dummy variable for India) is significant (p-value < .001). Country 2 (dummy variable for Chile) is not significant. This indicates that the change in country of respondents from the U.S. to Chile does not bring any variation in their ability to understand emotional intelligence.

These control tests provide strong evidence that our main results are robust. Therefore, our results provide enough evidence that total emotional intelligence has its antecedent in ethnicity rather than the culture of the country.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results that we found provide even more evidence that Asians take a different perspective on Emotional Intelligence and as with Moon (2011) it is a lower level from a U.S. perspective. We believe that this is because Indians are relatively communitarian and higher in power distance. While being part of a community would indicate the need to understand the emotions of the group, this may already be in place in the norms of work and other social interactions. However, a higher power distance society does not require the subtle persuasion and deep introspection a low power distance society. In a high power distance orders are given and accepted without regard to the feelings of the recipient.

Why then do we have no real difference with Chileans? The first answer may be that our sample came from arguably the best private and religious universities of Chile. Students from these schools have probably travelled in the U.S. and many have lived there. Although they took the test in Spanish, they study and read MBA cases and textbooks designed for the U.S. market and may well be influenced by the culture of that market. The second reason was that our U.S. subjects were predominantly of Hispanic origin. Vargas and Kemmelmeir (2012) find European Americans to be higher in *vertical individualism* than Latino Americans. *Vertical individualism* describes the autonomous self that gains gratification through competition and personal achievement. While there is no direct published evidence that minority groups are lower on emotional intelligence, low vertical individualism has been linked to lower EI by Moon (2011). Further, the scores of our U.S. sample are not very different from that of the European-North Americans of Moon (2011).

Future studies will need to add to the sample group to ensure ethnic balance and a wider range of countries. However, we believe that we have provided more needed data that Emotional Intelligence levels are different in different cultures. Finally, we see that surprisingly one notably collectivist country has no real statistical differences in Emotional Intelligence with the U.S. That sample is made up of upper class Chileans, so we christen this group, the New Gringos.

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Table 1**Hofstede's Cultural Scores**

Index Scores	United States	Chile	India
PDI	40	63	77
UAI	46	86	40
IDV	91	23	48
MAS	62	28	56
LTO	29	-	61

Table 2
Respondents and Their Profiles

	United States	Chile	India
Number of Respondents	70	50	110
Average Age (In Years)	30.99	24.22*	25.47**
Male Respondents	40	23	75
Female Respondents	30	10	34
Unidentified Gender	0	17	1

*average age for 49 respondents, **average age for 108 respondents

Table 3
Means of Emotional Intelligence Scores by Country

Emotional Intelligence	United States <i>n</i> = 70	India <i>n</i> = 110	Chile <i>n</i> = 50
Perceiving	102.90	80.44	95.41
Using	98.50	77.14	95.43
Understanding	91.48	74.83	94.20
Managing	94.74	76.63	95.44
Total	95.90	70.61	93.77

Table 4

Multivariate Tests Across all countries^a

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.996	11050.739 ^b	5.000	223.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.004	11050.739 ^b	5.000	223.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	247.774	11050.739 ^b	5.000	223.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	247.774	11050.739 ^b	5.000	223.000	.000
Country	Pillai's Trace	.565	17.641	10.000	448.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.461	21.120 ^b	10.000	446.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	1.116	24.770	10.000	444.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	1.064	47.646 ^c	5.000	224.000	.000

a. Design: Intercept + Country

b. Exact statistic

c. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Table 5**Comparison of Emotional Intelligence: United States and Chile**

Index	Mean Difference (U.S. - Chile)	Std. Error	Significance
Perceiving	7.4868**	2.8275	0.026**
Using	3.0719	2.8387	0.841
Understanding	-2.7213	2.1688	0.633
Managing	-0.6993	1.9132	1.000
Total	2.1273	2.3932	1.000

** Significant at $p \leq 0.05$ **Table 6****Comparison of Emotional Intelligence: United States and India**

Index	Mean Difference (U.S. - India)	Std. Error	Significance
Perceiving	22.45236***	2.3348	0.000
Using	21.36171***	2.3440	0.000
Understanding	16.65478***	1.7909	0.000
Managing	18.10768***	1.5798	0.000
Total	25.28879***	1.9761	0.000

*** Significant at $p \leq 0.01$ **Table 7****Comparison of Emotional Intelligence: Chile and India**

Index	Mean Difference (Chile - India)	Std. Error	Significance
Perceiving	14.96556***	2.6045	0.000
Using	19.37604***	2.6148	0.000
Understanding	19.37604***	1.9978	0.000
Managing	18.80702***	1.7623	0.000
Total	23.16136***	2.2044	0.000

**** Significant at $p \leq 0.01$

Figure 1

Hofstede's cultural scores for three countries