Generation Y Employees: The role of Psychological Empowerment on the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Citizenship Behaviors

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Abstract

The present study aims to propose and test an integrative model that considers the mediating effects of Generation Y employees' psychological empowerment (PE) on the relationships between their emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal citizenship behaviors (ICB). The model was tested on a sample of 477 Generation Y employees working in IT sector. For the indicators of employees' EI, Wong and Law's model, involving 'self-emotion appraisal', 'others' emotional appraisal', 'use of emotion' and 'regulation of emotion', has been applied in the study. Hierarchical regression analyses postulated that EI and ICB were mediated by PE. The relationships between use of emotion and ICB were fully mediated by PE, while the relationships between self-emotion appraisal, others' emotional appraisal and regulation of emotion and ICB were partially mediated by PE. The findings indicate that organizations should focus more on enhancing PE of Generation Y employees, which is the underlying effect between their EI and ICB.

Keywords: Generation Y, emotional intelligence, psychological empowerment, interpersonal citizenship behavior.

1. Introduction

Today organizations are faced with not only cultural differences, but also generational differences as well. Technological improvements, different values, behaviors and attitudes, diverse work conditions and preferences make necessary for the organizations to consider the generational differences. There are marked differences in expectations and motivators among different generations (Glass, 2007). Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979) and Generation Y (1980-2000), all have different characteristics, behaviors, value judgments and attitudes at work (Twenge, 2010). Generation Y (Gen Y) is the most recent generation in the workplace. This generation is known by a variety of names including the Internet Generation, the iGeneration, the Millennials, the Generation Y, the Nexters and the Echo Boomers. Gen Y employees are quite different in terms of values and expectations from the previous generations (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009).

For this group of employees, the most defining experience is the growth of the Internet and technology (Lyons, 2004). Gen Y employees are characterized as socially sensitive, curious, ambitious, technologically adapt and easily bored. One of the main problems for the organizations is to attract and retain Y Generation workers, who are younger, and highly skilled (Krahn & Galambos, 2014). Much of the work on Gen Y has been based on their personality characteristics, work values, beliefs and differences in career attitudes (Cogin, 2012; Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Macky, Gardner & Forsyth, 2008). However, there has been lack of research on the emotional characteristics of this generation, which would make the older generations to better understand Gen Y in order to meet the needs and desires of them. In this sense, emotional intelligence has been considered as one among the many factors, which act as sources of work attitude and behavior of the employees. In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) is the new psychological construct that has received the greatest attention in both practitioner and academic literature.

Accumulating evidence suggests that EI plays a significant role in the work environment (George, 2000; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Law, Wong & Song, 2004). Particularly, research posits that employees' EI can predict work related outcomes, such as job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Abraham, 1999; Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel & Hooper, 2002; Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter & Buckley, 2003; Wong & Law, 2002). However, the empirical evidence is scant (Carmeli & Josman, 2006) and there has been limited research about the processes through which Gen Y employees' EI influences work related behaviors such as interpersonal citizenship behaviors (ICB) in order to develop a more complete understanding their inner workings of EI of this generation. Interpersonal citizenship behaviors are defined as the actions directed toward helping and showing courtesy to colleagues (Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan, 2005). ICB focuses on altruistic behaviors and indicates the depth of feeling for and connection with them (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002). Employees' EI may enhance altruistic behaviors (Carmeli & Josman, 2006), which in turn leads higher ICB in organizations. ICB results in enhanced employee job performance and eventually contributes to group and organizational functioning (Mossholder et al., 2005). Clearly, there is a need for greater attention to be paid to understand the interaction of Gen Y employees' EI on their ICB at work.

Citizenship behaviors like altruism and prosocial behaviors, which are the activities that cause to benefit others and promote positive interpersonal relationships (Hay, 1994; Michalik, Eisenberg, Spinrad, Ladd, Thompson & Valiente, 2007), have shown to be important outcomes of psychological empowerment (Chan, Taylor & Markham, 2008; Imer, 2009; Koberg, Boss, Senjem & Goodman, 1999). PE is defined as the motivational concept of self-efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) and increased intrinsic task motivation (Spreitzer, 1995).

Employees, who engage in prosocial work behaviors, experience positive changes in themselves and their work environment (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Bateman & Crant, 1993; Grant & Ashford, 2008). Prosocial behaviors of employees are strongly associated with interpersonal citizenship in organizations because employees, who demonstrate such behaviors towards their co-workers, are interested in contributing to other people (Rioux & Penner, 2001). PE is a motivational construct, which reflects an active, rather than a passive, orientation to a work role (Spreitzer, 1995). Accordingly, employees, who have such active orientations, will have desires in order to shape their work roles and feel an increase in their task motivation (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) that can lead them to engage in prosocial behaviors at work (Tastan & Serinkan, 2013).Thus, the goal of the present study is twofold. First, to determine the emotional characteristics of Gen Y via discerning emotional intelligence dimensions. Second, to examine the underlying processes through which Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence influence their interpersonal citizenship behaviors at work by focusing on their psychological empowerment perceptions. It is argued that Gen Y employees' emotional characteristics affect their PE and thus in turn contribute to their ICB at work.

2. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

2.1 Generation Y at work

Gen Y employees are self-confident, sociable, able to multitask very well and technologically savvy. They attempt to work faster and more efficiently compared to older generations. They are information hungry, abrupt and seek for everything to be done in a fast and immediate way of action. Additionally, they perceive collaborative decision making as attractive. They are good in collaborative work environments (Grose, 2005). Social awareness, which is an issue that the previous generations do not consider, has become a way to attract and appease this generation (Glass, 2007). Gen Y employees consider work important, but prefer to balance work with personal and family time. They express a need to be valued for doing the job and can be expected to change jobs numerous times looking for the right fit if not engaged. Although they can get easily bored at work, they are goal and achievement oriented (Lowe, Levitt & Wilson, 2008; Yeaton, 2008). Thus, Gen Y employees are observed to be unique of their own traits and in their relationship patterns. In organizations stability and managing of emotions are vital. In this manner, emotional intelligence should be specifically considered for Gen Y employees (Baskaran & Vijayaragavan, 2015). Unfortunately, emotional intelligence of Gen Y employees has received, thus far, little attention.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Empowerment

Emotional intelligence is referred as a set of skills contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others. It is the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

While appropriate technical skills are prerequisites for success in carrier life, applying EI skills such as developing rapport, articulating ideas, building and mending relationships also become increasingly important in all organizational positions (Robbins & Hunsaker, 2009).

Daniel Goleman (1995) categorized the components of EI into four fundamental skills namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions; how they influence life and work. Self-management is to use the ability of understanding one's feelings to effectively deal with emotional situations. Social awareness, which is the ability to understand and empathize with others make it easier for people to get along in organizational life, build networks and use behavior to accomplish positive results. Finally, relationship management, which is the ability to connect with others in ways that build positive relationships, results in building teamwork and collaboration, and resolving conflicts as they arise (Goleman, 1995).

On the other hand, Wong and Law (2002) used Gross' model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998) in order to discuss the role of EI and how it affects work outcomes. Emotion regulation is defined as the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions (Gross, 1998). On the basis of emotion regulation, Wong and Law (2002) classified four constructs of EI: 1) self-emotion appraisal (SEA), the ability to understand one's emotions before regulating, 2) others' emotional appraisal (OEA), understanding one's emotions connection to the ability to understand the emotions of others, 3) use of emotion (UOE), the ability to make use of emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance and 4) regulation of emotion (ROE), the ability to regulate emotions that will enable a more rapid recovery from psychological distress.

Both theoretical and empirical evidence indicates that EI affects the emotional responses of individuals (Harvey & Dasborough, 2006; Jordan et al, 2002; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). EI allows individuals to handle stress by regulation emotional reactions to negative job outcomes (Jordan et al, 2002). Dasborough and Ashkanasy (2002) found that employees with lower EI have more extreme emotional responses compared with the ones having higher EI. Emotional responses and their effect on individuals' behavior are affected by the ability to manage and regulate the emotional responses (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). People high for regulating their emotions will manage the effect of these emotions on their behavior to promote the most effective outcomes (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler & Mayer, 1999). On the other hand, psychological empowerment is defined as a set of psychological states that are necessary for individuals to feel a sense of control in relation to their work (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Spreitzer (1995) suggests four cognitions of psychological empowerment: 1) meaning, the value of work goals judged in relation to an individual's own ideas, 2) competence (self-efficacy), an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform activities with skill, 3) determination, the reflection of autonomy in the initiation and continuation of work processes and 4) impact, the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative or operating work outcomes. These four perceived empowerment cognitions combine additively to create an overall construct of psychological empowerment such that the lack of any single dimension decreases the overall degree of empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). Thus, studies have been conducted using the single unitary construct (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Kark, Shamir & Chen, 2003; Seibert, Silver & Randolph, 2004).

Emotional intelligence is substantial to a multigenerational workplace as it enhances the employee happiness and job satisfaction (Njoroge & Yazdanifard, 2014). The relationship between EI and PE is underdeveloped, despite of the studies that currently exist (Fettahlıoglu & Sünbül, 2015; Harvey & Dasborough, 2006; Jeon, & Yom, 2014; Parolini, 2005). Psychological empowerment represents high levels of motivation and internally controllable attributions for failures are associated with positive emotions, which cause empowerment (Campbell & Martinko, 1998). As such, these attributions are similar to those made by individuals with high EI. High EI leads to positive emotional reactions and these reactions are linked to positive desirable outcomes such as psychological empowerment (Harvey & Dasborough, 2006). Therefore, individuals high in EI tend to feel themselves more psychologically empowered than the ones having lower EI.

2.3 Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Citizenship Behavior

Interpersonal citizenship behavior, one form of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), is defined as the citizenship behavior that is directed toward coworkers and focuses on cooperative assistance for individuals in need (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002).

Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine and Bachrach (2000) recommended that future research and theory development should be directed towards identifying unique antecedents of different forms of citizenship behavior. Recently, studies (Chiaburu, Stovernik & Zhang, 2013; Illies, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007; Regts & Molleman, 2013) have directed their attention at citizenship behavior oriented toward coworkers, because such behavior can serve as a feasible means of coordinating activities between employees (Podsakoff, Ahearne & MacKenzie, 1997), increase productivity (Conway, 1999) and indicate the depth of feeling for and connection with others in organization (Mossholder et al., 2005). ICB is also referred as helping (Lepine & Van Dyne, 2001), altruism (Organ & Ryan, 1995), or individual targeted citizenship behaviors (OCB-I) (Williams & Anderson, 1991).

ICB rather than the broader construct of OCB is focused in the present study as research suggests a focus on correlates unique to specific elements of OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002). Even if some studies state that different constructs of OCB are correlated (Lepine, Erez & Johnson, 2002; Tastan & Serinkan, 2013), some research indicates that rather than performing employees all types of OCB uniformly, employees choose which of the OCB elements they will perform (Settoon & Mossholder, 2002; Van Dyne, Cummings & Mclean, 1995). OCB elements are different from each other and they have different correlates. OCB can be assessed in two broad categories, which are organizationally and individually focused (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Individually (employee) focused ICB has a different target, another colleague, than does OCB, which focuses on the whole organization. An employee, who does not feel positively towards the organization, may not perform OCB. On the other hand, this employee may display altruistic behaviors towards his/her friends. Thus, ICB at work needs to be evaluated as a particular recipient that is not required for the performance of other elements of OCB (Bowler, & Brass, 2006).

Research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and ICB has received, thus far, little attention. Nevertheless, the scant research that exists offers some support for the relationship between EI and altruism, which is related with ICB. Charbonneau and Nicol (2002) found a positive correlation between adolescents' emotional intelligence and altruism ($r = .25$, $p < .01$). Carmeli and Josman (2006) showed that employees' emotional intelligence is positively significant with altruism ($r = .27$, $p < .001$).

Employees' emotional intelligence may enhance altruistic behaviors (Carmeli & Josman, 2006). Employees high on EI have the ability to easily shift from negative to positive moods (Carmeli, 2003). As such, they can respond in a more positive way than do employees with low EI (Abraham, 1999). In addition, employees in good moods have relatively more positive look towards life. Hence such employees can easily realize their colleagues' feelings; they can regulate and alter the affective reactions of their colleagues (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Furthermore, as high EI employees will be in a better mood compared with the ones having lower EI, it is expected that they may be more socially interactive (Staw, Sutton & Pelled, 1994), which may result in good relations with others. Therefore, they may display altruism towards their colleagues in the organization. However, to the author's knowledge, there has been no such a study about the mechanism of how the individual effects of EI dimensions influence Gen Y employees' interpersonal citizenship behaviors in organizational settings.

2.4 Interpersonal Citizenship Behavior and Psychological Empowerment

Helping and prosocial behaviors, which are the predictors of ICB, are the actions that employees are willing to engage in, beyond their job requirements. Such actions bring benefit for both the peer target of the behavior and the organization (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). The influence of psychological empowerment on citizenship behaviors such as prosocial and voluntary behaviors, have been studied and empirically tested in several studies (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Chiang & Hsieh, 2012; Meyerson & Kline, 2008; Tastan, 2011). It has been suggested that the focus of citizenship behaviors, such as taking the initiative to help colleagues with heavy workloads or those who are behind schedule, should be psychological (i.e. psychological empowerment) (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

When employees feel themselves psychologically empowered, this sense would alter the employees' source of motivation and stimulate active helping behaviors at work. Psychological empowerment has been studied as an important antecedent variable of organizational citizenship behaviors (Eisenberger, Fabes & Spinrad, 2006; Zhong, Lam & Chen, 2011). There have been also studies made in Turkey about the positive impact of PE on OCB (Arslantas, 2007; Tastan & Serinkan, 2013). PE is suggested as a type of internal motivation to promote OCB (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Wat & Shaffer, 2005). It incentivizes the employees, increase their motivation and demonstration behaviors such as altruism and helping others (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012).

As seen, interpersonal citizenship behaviors at work such as prosocial and voluntary behaviors have provided evidences for positive relationships with employees' psychological empowerment.

2.5 Mediating role of Psychological Empowerment on the relationships between Generation Y Employees' Emotional Intelligence and their Interpersonal Citizenship Behaviors

Attitudes and behaviors of employees are influenced by one's generation. Grose (2005) suggests that it is the generation that defines and distinguishes the person. Gen Y has experienced greater job mobility with respect to other generations in search of career advancement (Grose, 2005). Thus, it is very important to provide greater insight into the similar emotional characteristics of this generation and what motivates them in work that can help organizations attract, engage and retain this generation. Motivations underlying altruistic behaviors would provide insights into the perceptions and values of Gen Y. These employees are more sociable and evoke more sharing and solidarity. They express their individuality through practices, which resemble sharing (Urbain,Gonzales & Gall-Ely, 2013).

Psychological empowerment, as stated, is an intrinsic task motivation reflecting an employee's orientation to his or her work role (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). It has been regarded as one of the important antecedent variables of altruistic, voluntary and prosocial behaviors at work (Liden, Wayne & Sparrowe, 2000; Zhong et al., 2011). Gen Y are often early adopters of new technologies. They have a strong sense of responsibility, work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit. They enjoy the challenge of new opportunities and like to be involved in decision making process. They are paving ways to more open and tolerant organizations. They give importance to collaboration and networking. Furthermore, they value skill development and thrive on mentoring and coaching (Jorgensen, 2003). However, they are comfortable with change and that's why it's crucial for the organizations how to retain them.

There is a general agreement that high emotional intelligence leads to positive emotional reactions (Goleman et al., 2002) and these reactions are linked to positive desirable outcome such as psychological empowerment (Harvey & Dasborough, 2006). Individuals high in EI tend to feel themselves more psychologically empowered than the ones having lower EI.

Psychological empowerment is an internal motivation conducive, which promotes organizational citizenship behaviors as a whole (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). ICB, which is one form of OCB, increases group productivity and coordination in organizations. To achieve success, organizations need employees, who assist their colleagues (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Employees' psychological empowerment perceptions have significant association with altruism towards colleagues (Arslantas, 2007). Empowerment strategies are themselves altruistic acts in nature, because they are designed to help others develop and realize their potential (Zhong et al., 2011). Individuals high in EI tend to feel themselves more psychologically empowered than the ones having lower EI. By maintaining a positive state of mind, altruism becomes more rewarding for such employees and, thus they may ponder more the intrinsic rewards of helping others (Isen, 1993). By their abilities of understanding and regulating the affective reactions of others, they perceive more the need for help and, thus they offer their colleagues more empathic responses to both personal and work-related problems (Carmeli & Josman, 2006).

Thus, it is conceivable to suggest that when dimensions of EI for the Gen Y employees are high, this would positively influence their psychological empowerment, which would result in better interpersonal citizenship behaviors at work. However, there has been no research until now exploring whether the relationship between Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence dimensions and interpersonal citizenship behaviors in organizations is mediated through their psychological empowerment perceptions. It might be that Gen Y emotional intelligence dimensions are primarily related to their psychological empowerment and this strong sense of PE might contribute to higher levels of ICB. To assess the dimensions of EI, Wong and Law's model of EI (2002) is considered and possible hypotheses are developed to be tested in the present study.

*Hypothesis 1:*Psychological empowerment of Gen Y employees will mediate a positive relationship between their self-emotion appraisals and interpersonal citizenship behaviors.
*Hypothesis 2:*Psychological empowerment of Gen Y employees will mediate a positive relationship between their others' emotional appraisals and interpersonal citizenship behaviors.
*Hypothesis 3:*Psychological empowerment of Gen Y employees will mediate a positive relationship between their use of emotions and interpersonal citizenship behaviors.

*Hypothesis 4:*Psychological empowerment of Gen Y employees will mediate a positive relationship between their regulation of emotions and interpersonal citizenship behaviors.

3. Method

3.1 Sample and Procedure

Cross-sectional multi-source data were gathered through questionnaires from a sample of 477 Gen Y employees and from their direct supervisors in IT companies. In IT sector, research on motivation has been mostly carried out in order to understand employees' behaviors (Oh & Syn, 2015). IT companies are located at Technology parks of five universities in Ankara, Turkey. These companies undertake technological projects and allow opportunities for managing knowledge work, displaying innovative and creative behaviors and thus self-improvement; all of which reinforce the relevant factors of PE in organizations (Knol & Van Linge, 2009; Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, Schippers & Stam, 2010; Spreitzer, 1995). The sample consists of 263 men (55%) and 214 women (45%).

All the data were collected and administered on site during work time. Questionnaires were distributed to Gen Y employees and their direct supervisors on convenience method. When the aim of the study was introduced, confidentiality and anonymity were assured, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. No incentives were offered. Out of the 650 questionnaires distributed, 477 questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 73.3%.

3.2 Measures

The survey for the study included measures of emotional intelligence, psychological empowerment and interpersonal citizenship behavior. The responses to all of the following multi-item scales were averaged to form composite variables.

Emotional Intelligence Scale: The 20-item Emotional Intelligence developed by Wong and Law (2002) was used to assess the dimensions of Gen Y employees' emotional intelligence. Participants rated each item on a five-point scale ranging from "disagree strongly" (1) to "agree strongly" (5), based on how much each statement described them. Sample items are as follows: "I really understand what I feel" for *self-emotion appraisal*; "I am a good observer of others' emotions" for *others' emotional appraisal*; "I am a self-motivated person" for *use of emotion* and "I have good control of my own emotions" for *regulation of emotion*. The Turkish translation and adaptation of the instrument was conducted by Guleryuz,Guney, Aydın and Asan (2008). Alpha coefficients for each dimensions of emotional intelligence were all at reasonable intervals, ranging from 0.76 to 0.87.

Psychological Empowerment Scale: Gen Y employees' psychological empowerment was assessed using Spreitzer's (1995) psychological empowerment scale. For each of the four psychological empowerment components (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact), the scale contains three items, for a total of 12 items. Sample items are as follows: "My job activities are personally meaningful to me" and "I am confident about my ability to do my job". Participants were asked to evaluate each item by providing five alternatives, scoring from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Higher scores specify the perception of being more psychologically empowered. Since the psychological empowerment dimensions combine to provide a total empowerment score (Spreitzer, 1995), an overall measure of psychological empowerment was used in the analyses. The Turkish adaptation of the instrument was borrowed from Ergeneli, Ari and Metin (2007). The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.88.

Interpersonal Citizenship Behavior Scale: Gen Y employees' interpersonal citizenship behavior items were measured by Settoon and Mossholder's (2002) scale. A direct supervisor was asked to evaluate his or her subordinate's (Gen Y) interpersonal citizenship behaviors at work. ICB scale consists of 14 items. Sample items are "This employee; compliments coworkers when they succeed at work" and "takes a personal interest in coworkers". Respondents rate five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree (1)" to "strongly agree (5)". Higher scores were indicative for higher interpersonal citizenship behaviors of the employees. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.79. A professional translator was requested to translate the original version of the questionnaire into Turkish, which was then back translated into English.

*Control variables:*In the analyses only gender is included as a control variable. Age is not taken as a control variable as all of the participants are in Y Generation. Prior studies have demonstrated that gender can be a potential predictor of interpersonal citizenship behavior (Bowler & Brass, 2006; Pandey, Wright & Moynihan, 2008).

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary Factor Analyses

The measurement model was first tested by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to evaluate the factor structure of the scales used in the study and to determine how well the measurement model fit the data (Bollen, 1989).

4.1.1 Confirmatory Factor Analyses

First of all, the data for CFA assumptions were screened. Outliers and univariate distributions were scanned for skewness and kurtosis scores for the aim of normality assumptions and they were found to be within reasonable ranges (Skewness <2; Kurtosis values <2). Additionally, multivariate normality with Mardia's coefficient of the value of kurtosis was inspected in the data and no violation was found. All of the indexes were evaluated according to Byrne's (2010) recommendations.

CFA results revealed that the model did not initially provided a good fit with the data for the EI scale. Based on the modification indices, a path of covariance was added between error terms of item 9 and 10 loading on UOE scores. Additionally, another path of covariance was added between error terms of item 14 and 15 loading on ROE scores. Subsequently the final model shows a better fit to the data [x^2 (df = 96) = 120, GFI = 0.96, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.97 and RMSEA = 0.04][1]. For each dimension of EI, indexes were created by averaging the relevant items.

For the PE scale, the 12 items assigned for measuring empowerment were averaged to create a single index. Conducting CFA revealed that the scale did not initially provide a good fit to the data. After inspecting the modification indices, it was determined that the model of psychological empowerment provided an adequate fit after covariance terms were added between items 2 and 3, items 4 and 5 and items 10 and 12, respectively [x^2 (df = 47) = 66, GFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.90 and RMSEA = 0.07]. All estimated loadings were significant.

One-factor solution for the ICB scale was validated with CFA. Examination of the fit-indexes for the one-factor model of interpersonal citizenship behavior suggested a good fit to the data [x^2 (df = 72) = 90, GFI = 0.98, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96 and RMSEA = 0.05].

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, alpha coefficients and inter-correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and correlations among variables

Variable	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	-			-					
2. SEA	3.81	.81	.06	(.85)					
3. OEA	4.15	.69	-.01	.36**	(.81)				
4. UOE	3.78	.74	-.02	.31**	.16**	(.76)			
5. ROE	3.41	.92	.45	.31**	.13**	.32**	(.87)		
6. PE	4.23	.54	-.06	.17**	.29**	.29**	.15**	(.88)	
7. ICB	3.94	.72	-.04	.19**	.32**	.09*	.14**	.31**	(.79)

Note: Gender is coded as 0 = woman, 1 = man.
N = 477, * *p*<.05 ***p*<.001.
Cronbach alpha coefficients are in parentheses in the diagonal.
SEA = Self-emotion appraisal, OEA = Others' emotion appraisal, UOE = Use of emotion, ROE = Regulation of emotion, PE = Psychological Empowerment, ICB = Interpersonal citizenship behavior.

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[1]The criteria for a good fit (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006): x^2/df ratio < 3,GFI = Goodness-of-Fit Index(GFI 0.90),TLI=Tucker Lewis Index (TLI 0.90), RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA<0.08),CFI = Comparative Fit Index (CFI 0.90).

As seen, final reliability coefficients of the scales and subscales yielded high internal reliability coefficients (in a range between .76 and .88). The correlations between variables provide initial support for the hypotheses. Significant positive correlations were found between interpersonal citizenship behavior and psychological empowerment ($r = .31$, $p < .01$), self-emotion appraisal ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), others' emotion appraisal ($r = .32$, $p < .01$), use of emotion ($r = .09$, $p < .05$) and regulation of emotion ($r = .14$, $p < .01$). Consistent with the previous research, employees who score high in psychological empowerment tended to have better interpersonal citizenship behaviors with their co-workers. Additionally, psychological empowerment was correlated with self-emotion appraisal ($r = .17$, $p < .01$), others' emotion appraisal ($r = .29$, $p < .01$), use of emotion ($r = .29$, $p < .01$) and regulation of emotion ($r = .15$, $p < .01$). However, employees' gender has no correlation between the variables in the study.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Mediated Regression Analysis

Mediated regression analyses were used in order to test the hypothesized models. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) four criteria need to be met to support the mediational hypothesis. First, the independent variable (i.e. EI dimensions: SEA, OEA, UEA and ROE) needs to be significantly related to the mediator (i.e. psychological empowerment). Second, the mediator (i.e. psychological empowerment) needs to be significantly related to the dependent variable (i.e. interpersonal citizenship behavior). Third, EI dimensions should significantly influence ICB. Finally, full mediation will occur, if the relationship between EI dimensions and ICB disappears when PE is introduced into the regression equation predicting ICB. If the coefficient between EI dimensions and ICB after introducing PE into the regression equation remains significant but is reduced, there is evidence for partial mediation. The results of the mediated regression analyses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.Results of the mediated regression analyses

Equation	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	b	S.E.	β	R^2	F
1a	SEA	PE	.12	.03	.18**	.03	8.32**
1b	PE	ICB	.41	.06	.31**	.09	25.40**
1c	SEA	ICB	.17	.04	.19**	.04	9.75**
1d	PE		.37	.06	.28**	-	-
	SEA	ICB	.13	.04	.14**	.11	20.86**
2a	OEA	PE	.24	.03	.30**	.09	23.78**
2b	PE	ICB	.41	.06	.31**	.09	25.40**
2c	OEA	ICB	.34	.05	.33**	.10	28.73**
2d	PE		.31	.06	.23**	-	-
	OEA	ICB	.27	.05	.26**	.15	29.35**
3a	UEA	PE	.22	.03	.30**	.09	23.68**
3b	PE	ICB	.41	.06	.31**	.09	25.40**
3c	UEA	ICB	.09	.04	.09*	.01	2.66
3d	PE		.40	.06	.30**	-	-
	UEA	ICB	.01	.04	.01[n.s.]	.10	16.9**
4a	ROE	PE	.09	.03	.15**	.03	6.33**
4b	PE	ICB	.41	.06	.31**	.09	25.40**
4c	ROE	ICB	.11	.03	.14**	.02	5.09**
4d	PE		.38	.06	.29**	-	-
	ROE	ICB	.07	.03	.09*	.11	18.55**

n.s. = non-significant *$p < .05$ **$p < .001$

In Table 2 equations 1a through 1d tested the relationship between SEA and ICB as mediated by PE; equations 2a through 2d tested the relationship between OEA and ICB as mediated by PE; from 3a to 3d tested the relationship between UOE and ICB as mediated by PE; and finally 4a to 4d tested the relationship between ROE and ICB as mediated by PE.As it can be seen in the equations from 1a to 1 d, the three mediation criteria are confirmed. Both PE and SEA were related to ICB, but the relationship between SEA and ICB was weakened (decreased from .19 to 14) when PE was added to the regression model.

Sobel Test (1982) was used to test whether the indirect effect of SEA on ICB via the mediator is significantly different from zero using the relevant parameter estimates and standard error (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Sobel Test was significant (z = 3.87, *p*< .01), indicating that PE partially mediated the relationship between SEA and ICB. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

As shown in equations from 2a to 2d, both PE and OEA were related to ICB, but the relationship between OEA and ICB was reduced (from .33 to .26) when PE was added into the model. Sobel Test was significant (z = 4.50, *p*< .01) revealing that PE partially mediated the relationship between OEA and ICB, and thus supporting Hypothesis 2.

As it can be understood from equation 3a, UEA was positively related to PE, while equation 3b displayed that PE was positively related to ICB. Equation 3c showed that UEA was significantly related to ICB, however equation 3d confirmed that the effect of UEA on ICB became insignificant when PE entered into the equation. Therefore, PE acted as a full mediator on the relationship between UEA and ICB, supporting Hypothesis 3.

Finally, for the equations from 4a through 4d, both PE and ROE were related to PE, but the relationship between ROE and OCB was weakened (from .14 to .09) when PE was added to the regression model. Sobel Test was significant (z = 3.85, *p*< .01) specifying that PE partially mediated the relationship between ROE and ICB. Hence, Hypothesis 4 is confirmed.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to further investigate the mediating effects of Gen Y's psychological empowerment perceptions on the relationship between their emotional intelligence and their interpersonal citizenship behaviors in IT sector. Through a literature review, causal relationships among EI, PE and ICB were examined. The subjects of the study were Gen Y employees working in IT sector. The reason of choosing specifically IT sector was the technological dispositions of Gen Y. The study found that all of the Gen Y employees' dimensions (SEA, OEA, UOE, and ROE) positively influenced their ICB at work. Moreover, Gen Y employees' PE perceptions were positively related to their ICB. The originality of the present study is that it extends the prior literature by providing Gen Y emotional characteristics and PE into EI-ICB relationship. This study provides encouraging evidence that Gen Y employees with certain emotional intelligence characteristics are more vulnerable to PE and consequently contribute to ICB. Results of the study demonstrate that the relationship between Gen Y employees' UEA and ICB were fully mediated by their PE, while the relationship between SEA, OEA and ROE and ICB were partially mediated by PE.

Scholars have advocated the importance of Gen Y employees (Baskaran & Vijayaragavan, 2015; Schwarz, 2008; Twenge, 2010), who are open to interpersonal citizenship behaviors such as prosocial actions, collaboration, altruism and helping each other (McCrindle, 2006), because such behaviors facilitate positive changes both in employees and in their work environment (Mossholder et al., 2005). The present study proved that Gen Y employees' self-ratings of emotional intelligence correlated significantly with their immediate managers' ratings of interpersonal citizenship behaviors about them. Thereby this study provided support for Abraham theoretical arguments (1999) of a relationship between EI and OCB such as altruism and prosocial behaviors. The study showed that Gen Y employees' EI influence their ICB via their PE.

Gen Y employees' use of emotion was found to be the strongest mediating variable out of other EI characteristics. The effect of UOE on ICB is fully mediated through PE. Thus Gen Y employees having higher UOE are more likely to feel PE that linked to higher demonstration of ICB at work. Use of emotions can show itself by generating flexible planning and facilitating cognitive processes such as creativity and punctuality, which is a mood redirected attention and enhancing persistence regarding challenging tasks that can be motivate emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Gen Y employees high in UOE are adaptive when it comes to creating motivation, planning, thinking patterns and perceiving their work as challenging. Thus, they find their work more meaningful, they believe in their capability to perform challenging tasks, they can easily regulate actions and feel more psychologically empowered. Scholars have agreed on the individual differences as antecedents of citizenship behaviors (Bettencourt, Gwinner & Meuter, 2001; Charbonneau & Nicol, 2002; Chiaburu et al., 2013). Cognitive motivational states such as PE may explain the process by which individual differences influence prosocial behaviors (Tastan & Serinkan, 2013). Hence, when Gen Y employees are self-aware and recognize their "gut feelings", they realize these feelings can provide useful information about difficult decisions.

They make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities (UOE) (Goleman, 1995) and feel more PE which in turn increase their ICB in organizations. The effects of Gen Y employees' SEA, OEA and ROE on their ICB were partially mediated by their PE. The major portion of the relationship between Gen Y employees' SEA, OEA and ROE and their ICB was indirect through psychological empowerment perceptions of Gen Y employees, suggesting the lack of PE of Gen Y employees is important. These findings demonstrate that Gen Y employees' SEA, OEA and ROE predict their ICB. The reasons are such that; employees higher in these EI characteristics improve the decision-making process, due to a better understanding of themselves (SEA) and their colleagues' emotional reactions (OEA) (Carmeli & Josman, 2006), find their job more meaningful due to their ability of ROE that enables them being in positive state of mind (Carmeli, 2003), as reflected in their PE. The finding that Gen Y employees' PE as an intrinsic motivational variable explains, in part, the influence of their EI on ICB is an important first step in understanding the mechanisms through which EI characteristics affect such behavioral reactions at work.

On the other hand, an equally important finding is SEA, OEA, UEA and ROE have also direct relationships with ICB that is independent of the employee's perceptions of PE. Employees high in these four emotional characteristics are able to realize organizational rules and norms. Such employees display higher levels of sensitivity towards informal behavioral expectations at work. They have a tendency to demonstrate compliant behavior, aimed at helping to their colleagues because of their sensitivity to organizational environment (Wong & Law, 2002).

5.1 Practical Implications

This research is the first to investigate Gen Y employees' emotional characteristics and their effects on the employees' PE and ICB in Turkey. Equally important, it is conducted in IT sector, which reflects common traits of Gen Y such as giving importance to technology and information. In the current study, the mediation effects of PE on the relationship between Gen Y employees' emotional characteristics and their ICB have several practical implications for both employees and managers. The study attracts attention to the importance of EI for Gen Y employees. EI should be regarded as a crucial variable for the organizations in order to better understand Gen Y employees. It is associated with Gen Y employees' PE and ICB at work. The managers should comprehend that emotional and motivational variables are both important determinants of interpersonal citizenship behaviors; the impact of emotional variables is partly indirect by influencing psychological empowerment of Gen Y employees.For the enhancement of EI among Gen Y employees, current levels of EI can be assessed in order to enable the employee for identifying the areas of strengths and weaknesses. Training programs can be organized for the aims of teaching Gen Y employees to keep their emotions under control, to take the responsibility for their actions and to illustrate how their actions will affect their colleagues.

The findings of the study indicate that managers should focus more on their Gen Y employees PE, which is the underlying mechanism between EI and ICB. Managers can try to articulate a vision (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004), which inspires Gen Y employees to take greater responsibility in order to encourage greater feelings of PE. Setting goal clarification and clear specification of tasks and work role may facilitate feelings of empowerment (Conger, 1989) among Gen Y employees. Realizing employee needs and creating a supportive atmosphere can also lead up to greater PE (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). Managers should also understand this mechanism influences Gen Y employees' ICB at work, which indicates the depth of feeling of and connection with others in the organization (Mossholder et al., 2005).

The result of the study suggests that when organizations try to enhance ICB of their Gen Y employees, psychological empowerment perceptions may be critical to consider along with the more typically emphasized emotional characteristics. In this manner, managers of Gen Y employees should facilitate the creation of an organizational environment in which these employees are encouraged to assist others and take positive actions beyond the limits of their work roles. The effects of such a strongly prosocial culture will not only felt by individually, but also create a collective efficacy in organizations as a result of the development of Gen Y employees' self-efficacy, as well. Consequently, such positive perceptions of self and collective efficacy may result in greater effort to succeed in organizations (Bandura, 1986). Thus, with the implementing the suggestions indicated above, it is believed that it will be very beneficial for both Gen Y employees and organizational well-being.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

This study is not without limitations. The first limitation of the study concerns the country, which may limit the generalizability of the results for Gen Y employees. Turkish societal and organizational culture can be defined as a blend of "Western" and "Eastern" values (Aycan, 2001). Therefore, future studies might be needed to replicate this study for Gen Y employees in other countries having different cultural values. Second, this study drew its data from only Information Technology sector in which participants are highly educated. Nevertheless, it is believed that, IT sector will reflect the general characteristics of Gen Y better, compared to other sectors. Third limitation of the study is the cross-sectional design that does not allow for and assessment of causality. Further research with longitudinal designs might confirm the causality of the hypothesized relationships. Finally, another avenue for future research concerns examination of other mediating variables linking emotional intelligence and interpersonal citizenship behaviors at work. Some situational variables such as perceived leadership styles, feedback environment and social network ties (Bowler & Brass, 2006) might be extended for assessing Gen Y employees' emotional characteristics in predicting their interpersonal citizenship behaviors.

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