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Theory & Relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Styles and Leadership Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

Effective leadership is essential for an organization's success, and therefore, the ability to identify and define effective leadership is crucial. Technical expertise, superior performance, and established experience are no longer only criterion of effective leadership. Today effective leaders are defined by inspiring and motivating others, promoting a positive work environment, understanding and managing emotions, building bonds, communications, influence, and so forth. Emotional Intelligence (EI) has an emerging track record of being linked to leadership performance. Emotional intelligence connects a leader's cognitive abilities with their emotional state. The ability for leaders to recognize the impact of their own emotions on their decision making is paramount if a leader is to make sound decisions based on the best interests of the organization.

Key words: leadership, emotional intelligence

INTRODUCTION

A leader must be able to read emotions in his/her peers and employees in order to be as effective as possible. Stogdill originated this notion with linkages of leader personality and control over emotions to employee perception of leader effectiveness. Due to the complexity of organizational change and the role emotions play in changes such as global expansion, job eliminations, leadership changes, and the stressors of day to day work, the EI of managers and how they manage their associates is an element that leadership needs to consider while moving their organizations forward. Emotional intelligence abilities, capacities and skills are becoming significant and inevitable almost in all works of life ranging from effective leadership, building teams, social skills, developing human potential and performance, and economic and political life. The rules have changed. Companies are flattening out their structure and reducing the number of second and third level management. Organizations are entering other national boundaries.

Decisions are being pushed down the chain of command and solutions needed to be identified sooner. Employees are being asked to do more than ever before. There has been a paradigm shift and a new kind of leader is needed. These changing organizational structures provide more opportunities for efficiency and effectiveness, challenging and rewarding work, and achievement of goals. New processes and procedures are being developed to cope with rising complexity and the need for speed. To be an effective leader, manager or professional, a person needs to understand and skillfully manage his emotions appropriately based on each person or situation and understand the emotional cues of others in order to effectively interact with others. Organizations everywhere need now to realize the benefits of primal leadership by cultivating leaders who generate the emotional resonance that lets people flourish. Research findings so far indicate that attention to emotion-related aspects of working and learning environments, and a focus on bolstering the EI skills of individuals within these contexts, can contribute to more productive, supportive, and healthy professional and academic experiences.

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BACKGROUND OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is defined as a process of social interaction where performance outcomes are strongly influenced by the leader's ability to influence the behavior of their followers. Emotions play an important role in understanding leadership and in being a good leader. Kouzes and Posner (2010) define leadership as a set of behaviors that anyone in a leadership capacity can be taught and become skilled at to achieve excellence. Burns [2008] offered a definition that encompasses the initial conceptualization of transformational leadership. He defined leadership as: "Leadership is defined as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers. In addition, the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers' values and motivations". In 2013, Bass offered a more comprehensive definition of leadership similar to Burn's definition of leadership. Bass defined it as follows: "Leadership is interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change—persons whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group".

Leadership Theories Chemers claimed that early scientific study of leadership focused around three periods. The trait theory studies started from 1910 to World War I and further studies during a second period from a behavioral perspective from World War II to the late 1960s. Lastly, the contingency theory started in the late 1960s and beyond with a focus on contingency-oriented leadership theories in addition to more contemporary theories. These early periods of leadership studies are important to discuss to understand the origin of transformational leadership.

Trait theory focused on identifying superior and specific traits or characteristics of effective leaders. Early leadership research began with the "Great Man" theories of leadership with a focus on who the leader "was" by identifying traits of a leader critical to a leader's success. Traits such as high energy, social skills and adaptability, among others were included. Initially the study of leadership assumed that leaders were somehow "different" and therefore much of the research focused on identifying this distinguishing, seemingly mythical set of traits. Stogdill concluded that traits alone do not identify leadership and he further predicted that personal and situational characteristics be taken into consideration before adequately theorizing leadership further.

Behavioral Theory Behavioral theories research focused on two styles important for effective leadership; task oriented or people oriented. This was influenced by research done at Ohio State University in the 1960s and later by research conducted at the University of Michigan. These earlier studies included: (a) the importance of a leader's interpersonal relationship with their followers as well as their concerns for accomplishing tasks toward goals or initiating structure and (b) the leadership behaviors necessary for effective leadership or patterns of communication termed consideration. Therefore, behavioral theories focused on a leader's stable style of action often categorized as an orientation to either task or people.

Contingency Theory Although behavioral theories in leadership explained leadership effectiveness, the research shifted to theories that could explain why leadership behavioral styles were not always effective in all settings. Identified leader behavior patterns also showed inconsistency when related to organizational outcomes such as follower satisfaction and productivity. After the trait and behavioral research failed to identify a leadership style that worked best in all situations, contingency leadership theories arose to explain the appropriate leadership style based on the leader, the follower, and the situation. The contingency theory literature focused on the assumption that leaders draw on their attributes and behavioral styles to meet the needs of a particular situation or followers. The contingency theory brought focus to various aspects of contexts like the favorableness of the

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environment, the complexity of task and knowledge of the followers, the relationship between leaders and followers, and the effects of specific leader behaviors on follower motivation and satisfaction.

Theoretical Foundation of Leadership Styles Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership model addressed how particular leader behaviors are necessary to manage a particular situation. Hersey and Blanchard contended that a leadership style was defined by how the followers perceive the leader behaviors; which led to the classification of behaviors as either task or relationship oriented. Task behavior involves the leader clearly defining the goals of the individual or group, which includes telling people what, when, where, and how to accomplish a task. Relationship behavior consists of the leader listening, facilitating, and supporting the communication process of the group. According to Burns, one of the true failures of research was the separation of the relationship between leaders and followers. Burns defined leadership as the collective and purposeful engagement of leaders and followers to accomplish mutual goals. The leader-follower relationship encompasses the interaction of people with various degrees of motivation and power. Burns's seminal work on political leaders solidified this concept. Burns noted that the leader-follower relationship takes place in either a transactional or a transformational form. Burns described transactional leadership as a leader's ability to motivate a follower based upon economic, political, or psychological rewards. Both parties understand each other's role and what is at stake; however, the bargaining process was not based upon a true relationship. In contrast, Burns asserted that transformational leadership involves the leader and follower engaging in a purposeful relationship to achieve a higher level of motivation and ethical aspiration. Burns purported that power alone does not make a person transactional or transformational, whereas leadership does. Bass extended the work of Burns and developed a formal theory, model, and measurement of transformational leadership to explore factors of leadership behavior.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

A review of literature revealed mix findings of the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and leadership effectiveness and performance. Some studies supported the theory that EI positively affects leadership effectiveness and performance, others disputed the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness. Several studies have provided evidence that a significant relationship exists between EI and leadership effectiveness. Leaders with higher EI tend to have impacted leadership effectiveness in a better way and impacted the leadership outcome of extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. Research has shown that the EI of an organizational leader correlates with the quality of the leader's relationship with subordinates. Emotional Intelligence is found to be related to organizational relevant outcome. Research has also indicated that high EI positively influenced workplace stress, perceived control, satisfaction, and commitment. Research has also shown that emotional intelligence has also impacted leadership in family business. Emotional Intelligence has also been found related to job performance in many studies.

STUDIES OF EI AND LEADERSHIP STYLES & LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Transformational leadership theory is based primarily on Bass's work; although Burn's earlier work influenced the thinking behind its development. The dynamics of transformational leadership involve strong personal identification with the leader, joining in a shared vision of the future, or going beyond the self-interest exchange of rewards for compliance. Transformational leaders, aim at reaching followers' emotional drivers to achieve result. An effective transformational leader understands the needs and motivations of others and tries to help them reach their full potential. Goleman finds that truly effective leaders are distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence. Cherniss Suggested that a person's ability to perceive, identify, and manage emotions provides the basis for the kinds of social and emotional competencies that are important for success in almost any job. Barling et al. in 2000 conducted an exploratory study on the relationship between EI and transformational leadership. The study was conducted in a Single Organization with 49 Supervisors and 187 Subordinates. They were administered three questionnaires a) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5x

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short) to assess the four components of transformational leadership and transactional leadership, b) EI inventory of Bar-on to assess EI, and c) Seligman attribution style Questionnaire to measure attribution. The findings showed that idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration (MLQ characteristics of transformational leadership style), as well as contingent reward have significant relationship with Emotional Intelligence. It was also found in the study that Intellectual stimulation aspect of transformational leadership did not have any relationship with Emotional Intelligence. There was no significant association between active and passive management—by- exception, laissez-faire and emotional intelligence. The leaders who report exhibiting these behaviors were assumed to be more effective in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

The research paper reviewed the literature of emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, and three leadership styles namely transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant. The paper reviewed the literature of relationships between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and between emotional intelligence and leadership styles. Overall, the literature revealed mixed findings of relationship between these variables. But major findings indicate a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, and between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership. The findings also revealed a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and passive avoidant leadership style. There are a few published studies in India which have used the variables of emotional intelligence and leadership styles and leadership effectiveness. Some Indian studies also revealed mixed findings of the relationship between these variables.

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