

The Human Touch: Power of Emotional Intelligence for Effective Corporate Leadership

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence has become paramount and a growing number of managers and executives have recently come to recognize its significance for effective corporate leadership. As one advances up the corporate ladder, the more important EI becomes. Emotional Intelligence (EI) elements are being integrated as instruments to assess leadership competence and style, and how it affects the corporate culture. The business and corporate leaders have realized that cognitive intelligence, or "IQ" accounts for only part of what leaders need to be efficient and effective. A meta-analysis combined results from 151 independent studies and over 40,000 leaders found that IQ accounts for only 7% of the variability in effective leadership. Corporate leaders are in a good position to help their teams or employees develop emotional intelligence because they can see their people behaving in various real-life situations on multiple occasions over time. They can also provide better and direct feedback after an incident. Some authors have stated emotional intelligence as the "sine qua non of leadership", where it accounts for about 90% of the difference between star performers and average performers in senior leadership positions. An internet search on keywords "emotional intelligence" and "leadership" provided over 1.3 million pages where Amazon.com, the online retailer, offers more than 280 books!

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Corporate Leadership, Leaders

Introduction

To understand the concept of emotional intelligence, first of all, it is essential to investigate the concept of intelligence and emotion. The use of the concept of intelligence dates back to Aristotle. The first classification of intelligence was done by Robert Thorndike in 1920 where he examined the three dimensions of intelligence (Social intelligence, Abstract intelligence and Mechanical intelligence) in his work named "Permanent Mistakes in Psychological Evaluation". The social intelligence dimension is associated with the adaptation of human beings to social life. We have the ability to understand and manage people. The abstract intelligence dimension of intelligence is associated with concepts and principles, which utilize these concepts in problem-solving. The abilities and behaviors related to the use of tools and objects describe the dimension of mechanical intelligence [1].

Research shows that Emotional Intelligence, similar to technical skills, can be developed through a systematic and consistent approach to foster personal and social awareness, self-management, and social skills. However, unlike technical skills, the brain circuit pathways of social and emotional competencies are different from those of cognitive learning. Because the foundations are often laid early in life and reinforced over the years as an infant turn into a grown adult they tend to become synonymous with our self-image and need focused attention over time to bring about change [2].

1. The word Emotion is derived from the Latin word "motere", meaning "to move". When "-e" prefix is added to the word i.e., "emotere", it means to move away. Emotion becomes a movement. According to Daniel Goleman, emotion is also "the tendency of a feeling and certain specific thought of this feeling, and psychological and biological states, and a

series of movements” [3].

- Baron has examined emotional intelligence in five sections: personal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management,

and general mood. Also, these five sections are divided into sub-dimensions.

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions in Bar-on Model

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions
Personal Awareness	Independence, Self-realization, Stability, Self-esteem, Emotional sense of self
Interpersonal Relations	Social responsibility, Interpersonal relations, Empathy
Adaptation of Terms and Environment	Flexibility, Realism, Problem-solving
Stress Management	Stress tolerance, Impulse control
General mood	Happiness, optimism

1. Salovey and Mayer have defined emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence that is the ability to feel others' feelings and emotions, to inspect, to separate them from each other and to use this information as a guide in thoughts and behaviors [4]. This review article outlines the understanding and power of emotional intelligence and how it can be a differentiating factor for leaders to become more effective and influential in a corporate setting.

Literature Review

Extensive research has explored the link between leadership practices and EQ. Based on Bass and Avolio (1997) transformational leader construct, Parker and Sorenson (2008) identified a positive correlation between leadership and EQ. The academic research studies conducted show two distinct types of managers: transformational and transactional [5]. Transformational leaders have been shown to raise interest among their teams, create a different working environment, visibility increase organization goals, aid improve perforation of their organization and motivate employees to put the best interest of the company over their own interests.

On the other hand, transactional leaders reward subordinates in regard to their performance. As explained by Bass and Avolio (1994), transactional leaders focus on work guidelines, task accomplishment and employee positive outcomes. A lot of similarities exist between traits of transformational leaders and emotional intelligence (empathy, inter and intrapersonal skills, self-awareness). Complementing a leader's EQ that enhances performance, employee engagement has also been a central topic in determining success at the workplace.

Leadership is a dynamic exhaustible reality; hence, success highly depends on the followers and situational context [6]. In addition, Marques (2006), documented that an emotionally intelligent leader has the ability to control emotional impulses and understand and manage them for the successful development of relationships and solving conflicts. Goleman et al. (2002) study provided strong evidence that linked EI to the performance of managers within the US and found that essential leadership abilities were connected to emotional intelligence. In addition, the authors suggested that as much as 79% of the success of leaders in the US was driven by superior EI competencies. A large number of analyses showed that the level of leaders' EI influences their conduct, driving success more or less.

Highly emotionally intelligent leaders have superior abilities to

help their subordinates maintain positive moods while interacting with customers and performing emotional tasks [7]. While the concept of “quality leadership” is based on the personality of managers, the “emotional intelligence” construct relies on the fact that leaders have no other option than to bring their one mood and attitudes to the workplace [8]. Hence, the implications for their subordinates are not only related to the job features but also to the ethical and behavioural competencies that leaders possess. This essentially means that both the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the characteristics of excellent managers blend in a manner that would finally lead to the improvement of relationships between leaders and their followers [8].

Conclusion

Two decades have passed since the concept of Emotional Intelligence seized the interest of the academicians, and business arena and people in general. Studies (inter alia, Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005; Rigoglioso, 2006; Kerr et al., 2006) show the relationship between emotional intelligence and efficient leadership has built a new environment for implementation and fostering procedures in the selection, improvement, and performance management done by companies. Multiple researchers recommend inserting emotional intelligence tests into the selection process to improve the level of EQ. Some suggest the assessment of the emotional intelligence of current and potential managers, and the inclusion of EQ into performance ratings and succession planning [9-12].

A lot of confusion emerges while practising the EQ concept [13]. The myriad of definitions supported by different hypotheses and calibrated in different ways contributes to the confusion that corporate culture has in regard to the multiple dimensions of emotional intelligence [14, 15]. A more closely aligned study needs to be conducted to understand and summarize the power of emotional intelligence for effective corporate leadership.

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