

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in Institutions of Higher Learning

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Abstract: *Leadership is of paramount importance in all organizations. Effective leadership requires a wide range of skills, and among these, is emotional intelligence. This paper will focus on how leaders can use emotional intelligence to manage and lead an empowered workforce, develop the team spirit whilst giving individual recognition and acknowledgement. The Student Affairs departments in institutions of higher learning can use emotional intelligence as they offer services to the student population. Neglecting emotional intelligence relates to career derailment.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a process of influencing activities of an organized group towards goal achievement and also the art of doing jobs through others. It is also seen as a process of mutual stimulation by any person who during the time, and, in so far as his will feeling, and insight direct, controls others in the pursuit of a specific cause. Leadership as a process views leading more as coordinating efforts and moving a group forward. The leader is not seen as an individual in charge of followers but as a member of a group. Leadership is looked at as a process which places emphasis on a group or team (Hoerner 1997). This paper is going to discuss how emotional intelligence impacts on leadership so that its influence can be felt in various organisations. The discussion also explains why emotional intelligence is needed in leadership. The paper also applies the Goleman model to explain emotional intelligence in relation to leadership. Finally, the concept of emotional intelligence will be applied to student affairs. Terms like leadership, emotional intelligence, emotional competence, are going to be operationalized.

1.1. Operational Definition of Terms

A brief explanation of key terms is offered below.

Leadership: is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse 2010).

Emotional intelligence: refers to the ability to identify and express emotions, understand emotions, assimilate emotions in thought, and regulate positive and negative emotions in oneself and others (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts 2002).

Emotional competence: is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work (Goleman 1998).

2. JUSTIFICATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Emotional intelligence is defined as a person's ability to recognize personal feelings and those of others and to manage emotions within themselves and in their relationships with others (Goleman 1998). Key leadership skills and perspectives are related to aspects of emotional intelligence and the absence of emotional intelligence is related to career derailment. Higher levels of emotional intelligence are related with better performance. Emotional intelligence is a popular measure for identifying potential effective leaders and for developing effective leadership skills. Researches on leadership propose that effective leaders must possess social and emotional intelligence (Seltzer & Bass 1990). Emotional intelligence is a measure used when identifying effective leaders, is the key to

effective leadership skills and assists leaders as they strive to more effectively meet the needs of their team mates and colleagues

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

There are different theoretical frameworks that have been propounded by different scholars.

3.1. Mayer and Salovey Model

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey 1997). This model views emotions as useful sources of information that helps one to maneuver in the social environment. The manner in which one person processes information of an emotional nature and in their ability to relate emotional processing to a wider cognition varies from person to person hence the different adaptive behaviours portrayed. The ability model explains emotional intelligence as comprising of the four branches of mental ability namely; perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions.

3.2. Bar-On Model

The Bar-On model defines emotional intelligence as the ability to be aware of, to understand and express oneself, how to relate with others, deal with emotions and control one's impulses and solve problems that are of social or personal nature (Bar-On 2000a). In other words, the Bar-On model describes emotional intelligence as a cross-section of inter related emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that impact intelligent behaviour. Intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, management and general mood are the five main domains of the Bar-On model (Bar-On 1997b).

3.3. Goleman Model

The Goleman model views emotional intelligence as an array of competencies and skills that drive managerial performance (Boyatzis et al. 2001). Goleman (1998) defines, "emotional intelligence as the capacity to recognizing one's own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationship". Goleman goes on to say that the potential for learning emotional competencies is inborn. The main constructs of the Goleman model are self-awareness, self management, social skills and relationship management.

From all the definitions of emotional intelligence above, the paper views the emotional intelligence paradigms as striving to understand individuals and how they perceive, understand, utilize and manage emotions in an effort to predict and foster personal effectiveness (Goleman 2001). To add on, EI is a container term that encompasses a series of skills that one has learned or intuitively adopted. Emotional intelligence is an evolving aspect in leadership and as such entails, for example, employees of today have more options as compared to the employees of yester-year. Leaders need to manage and lead an empowered workforce and go beyond the consultative, co-operative and democratic styles of today. Owing to the opportunities for growth, challenge and glory, leaders must be on hand to coach and mentor subordinates so that they develop their potential. To add on, there is the need for inclusion and the development of team spirit despite the leaders being expected to take full responsibility when things go wrong. The concept of emotional intelligence has been conceptualized as an important predictor for success in leadership (Goleman 1995).

4. RESEARCH ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Studies reveal that there are two factors connected to the effectiveness of leaders. These are social desirability and the socialization process at work, and the second is in line with personal surgency and the desire to have an impact on others (Digman 1997). On the same note, Hogan and Holland (2003) proposed that interactions in work settings can be categorized as attempts to get along with others and to get ahead of others. Studies also show that leaders who consistently outperform their peers not only have the technical skills required, but have also mastered the aspect of emotional intelligence. E.I requires a person to be aware of and read cues in different situations and then adapt accordingly. It is this ability to adapt to the environment that ensures success. Bono & Ilies (2006) maintain that leaders use emotion, consciously or unconsciously in order to influence their team members. If leaders are more aware that their emotional expressions have a direct influence on the emotions of the group

members, they will be more motivated to elaborate their speech so that so that they send them their emotions. On the same note, leaders capable of obtaining emotional answers from their team mates have a greater opportunity to accomplish the desired organizational changes. Leadership theory states that charismatic leaders' speeches are energetic, passionate and emotional.

5. EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES IN LEADERSHIP

According to the Goleman model, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in predicting success in the work place, especially among those in the top leadership (Goleman 1998). To add on, Goleman's theory is based on social and emotional competencies. Emotional competencies show the extent to which an individual performs at certain skills and abilities which result in effectiveness in the workplace or in leadership. Emotional competencies are self-awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management.

5.1. Self-Awareness

Self awareness relates to one's ability to understand one's emotions and those of others, and the ability to express emotions accordingly. It is the ability to accurately perceive one's emotions and remain aware of them as they happen, including the ability to manage one's response to specific situations and people. Shipper and Davy (2002) say that self-awareness is the keystone to emotional intelligence and serves as the foundation for the emotional and psychological development necessary to achieve success. To be better equipped to provide a 'holding environment' for his/her team mates and create a culture where every team member feels comfortable, a leader must be able to regulate his/her own emotions. To create a trusting environment between the leader and the team members for healthy work interactions which promote positive job performance, the leader needs to be emotionally intelligent. Self awareness leads to personal development owing to the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). A leader who is self-aware has a clear picture of his/her strengths and weaknesses and thus becomes self-confident. It is vital for one to always know how one feels and knows one's own emotions and actions, and how these can affect the team members. A leader who is self aware or mindful of his actions has more positive outcomes. To become an effective leader, one must strive to analyze one's own leadership style and determine the scope of one's leadership zone (Goleman 1998). Self-awareness in leadership is related to self-control and stress tolerance, for example if a leader is quick to anger then it is likely that colleagues do not see him/her as very self aware. The level of EI is related to the dynamic of the process of self-assessment, which gradually leads to creating the feeling of identity and dignity, of self- respect and to shaping a self-unitary concept (Goleman 2001).

5.2. Self-Management

Self-management is the ability to be aware of one's emotions and have the flexibility to positively direct one's behaviour in response to those emotions, to manage emotional reactions in all situations and with all people. Leaders who regulate themselves effectively rarely make rushed or emotional decisions, stereotype team members or compromise their values. Self management involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances, thinking before taking action. If a leader can recognize and exercise self-awareness and self-control as the situation unfolds, he/she is able to choose to act in an appropriate manner, thus eliminate unnecessary turmoil or backtracking.

5.3. Social Awareness

This the ability to accurately identify the emotions of other people and thus understand the effects of those emotions, for example, understanding what other people are thinking and feeling even though the perceiver does not feel the same way.

5.4. Relationship Management

It is the ability to use awareness of one's own emotions and those of others to successfully manage interactions, for example, by providing clear communication and effectively handling conflict (Bradberry & Greaves, 2003). As a leader it is important that he/she has the ability to develop and maintain working relationships with various internal and external parties. This is linked to impulse control. Poor impulse control is evident through the inability to control hostility and explosive behaviour and this indeed affects relationships with team members. Stress tolerance is related to

relationship management. Problematic relationships result in poor stress management. A good leader must have the ability to resolve conflicts, collaborate and form a good team spirit, work together with subordinates, develop them, being supportive, inspire people and promote good relationships (Goleman 1998).

5.5. Empathy

Is the ability to understand the perspective of others and taking active interest in their concerns, being sensitive to diversity about what others feel, understanding what workers feel and what they want by being aware of their needs, perspectives, feelings, concerns, sensing their developmental needs, behaving carefully in terms of instructing the staff and becoming a good listener to employees' initiation without interruption (Goleman 1998). Goleman (1998b) contends that empathy is understanding and interpreting colleagues' feelings and being able to identify with their feelings on issues through understanding their perspective and cultivating rapport with people from different 'walks of life'. An empathic leader and team members have an awareness of the diversity of personalities and are accepting of the diversity of people and the impact culture can have on interactions within a team environment.

Other competencies needed by the leader as propounded by Bass 1990, include:

- Courage and assertiveness, resilience, planning, listening skills, feeling the impact on others.
- Service orientation, building relationships, collaboration, conflict resolution, organizational savvy, self-confidence, goal orientation, optimism, flexibility and adaptability.
- Leading others, authenticity, motivation.

6. FACTORS SHAPING THE EXTENT TO WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL BECOMES A LEADER

Kouzes and Posner (1995) suggest five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership that can assist leaders in navigating the risks and challenges of leadership. They are (1) challenge the process, (2) inspire a shared vision, (3) enable others to act, (4) model the way, and (5) encourage the heart. Leaders are involved in challenging the process by recognizing good ideas, giving support to the ideas, and challenging the system to ensure that the new ideas are adopted. Leaders have a vision of what can be, they have absolute belief in their visions, and they are able to communicate their visions effectively to others. Leadership is a team effort, and a leader enables others to act by ensuring that there is teamwork, trust, and empowerment. A leader should lead by example and show commitment.

6.1. Qualities of a Good Leader

Metaphorically, a good leader must possess the following qualities summarized below:

- 'Big eyes' so that he/she sees what is happening among the team members or group members.
- A 'big nose' to sense any mishaps before they get off hand and to sense any misunderstandings.
- 'Big ears' so as to hear the verbal and non-verbal communication from the diverse team members. These will also enable the leader to get information about his leadership both formally and informally as well as about the concerns of the team/group members.
- A 'small mouth' so that he/she does not do a lot of talking but use the other senses in conducting his/her leadership responsibilities.
- A 'big heart' so as to show commitment, care, empathize and be there for all the members in his group/team.
- 'Big arms' to show that he/she is prepared to work for and with the team.
- 'Big feet' to enable him/her to supervise and monitor all the aspects to help and improve the team/group members as he engages in (MBWA) management by walking around (Bass 1990)

6.2. Benefits of EI to the Leader

EI encourages the ability to make good decisions. Secondly it helps in the building of relationships with and amongst the team members. EI also helps to deal with stress as well as display self awareness. Research indicates that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of the success of leaders in a variety of organizations. The culture of change in the workplace is often rife with anxiety,

stress, and uncertainty, and emotions can often overflow (Fullman 2001). Fullman contends that effective leaders are able to combine intellectual and emotional intelligence to address the culture of change within the workplace. He also postulates that in the culture of change; relationships are critical and thus emotional intelligence in leaders must be high.

Failure to manage emotions on the part of the leader leads to loss of life, for example, when a leader makes a recommendation to expel a member without having substantiating evidence but just acting on the spur of the moment- emotions can cause high blood pressures, heart failures, among others. To add on, if the emotions of the leader are often too high, this affects the immune system and the leader becomes vulnerable therefore leaders have to develop skills to manage emotions.

7. EI AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Lanser (2000) places a strong emphasis on the importance of self-awareness in guiding and perfecting job performance, including interactions between the leader and team members or among colleagues and in the establishment of positive and productive leadership and teamwork skills. Team members need to be aware of their feelings as they may allow uncontrolled emotions to impact on the dynamics and culture of the team. Cherniss (1998) emphasizes that effective team members are self-confident, which is reflective of their own emotional self-awareness, and ability to control their emotions.

Self-awareness of emotions enables the leader and team members to then practice self-regulation, which is the ability to use emotions to facilitate the progress of the task or the project (Goleman 1998b; Lanser 2000). Being able to regulate emotions especially during conflict, pressure, stress and deadlines facilitates the smooth progress of the project and promotes positive, effective working relationships with other team members and clients. Goleman (1998b) explains that handling emotions and putting the task first rather than emotions aids in the attainment of the required goal.

Being able to motivate fellow team members into contributing their best is very powerful. Workers are discretionary in their application to a project – they will only give if they feel they are being supported, nurtured and inspired. Successful teamwork requires intrinsic motivation, persistence and vision. Team members are not only responsible for their own motivation but they also play a key role in motivating the team and colleagues.

Social skills are essential for the development of positive, effective relationships with colleagues and the ability to interact with team members to deter conflict, be aware of ease and dissipate underlying tensions that can accumulate and have a negative impact on working relationships and project success. Team leaders need to be able to stimulate cooperation, collaboration and teamwork through well-developed social skills (Goleman 1998b).

8. IMPLICATIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

- A student affairs professional has to develop a high EI and CQ so as to be able to develop relationships with the diverse team he/she is leading. Positive, effective interpersonal relationships are an important element of successful teams. Emotional bonding that exists between team members has a profound effect on the work produced and the overall success of the project. Teams that care about each other at a personal and professional level are more likely to be successful than teams that ignore the importance of the relationship between positive interpersonal relationships, professional relationships and goal achievement.
- The student affairs professional has to help students to develop decision making and conflict management skills by encouraging them to be involved in the Student Representative Council. As a member of the SRC, the students need to be helped to develop cultural intelligence since they will be dealing with a diverse student population. Cultural intelligence can be developed in both the SRC and other students through programs and workshops, for example, culture nights and dinners.
- The student affairs professional has to inspire the channels of communication in an institution of higher learning by involving the stakeholders, for example, parents, students and subordinates, among others. To add on, student affairs professionals need to develop communication skills so that they can become good listeners, motivate subordinates and empower them to discuss their concerns confidently, as well as help sub-wardens, peer educators and peer counselors to develop good communication skills needed in the discharge of their service to the student population.

- The student affairs professionals have to adopt a variety of management styles, for example, management by walking around (MBWA) so as to get to the real picture of the services they are offering students be it in the canteen, halls of residence or lecture rooms so as to be aware of student needs and areas that need improvement.

9. CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence has been seen as a way of recognizing, understanding and choosing how one thinks, feels, and set priorities or acts. It shapes how the leader's and team members' interacts and understands one another. Higher levels of EI have been seen as related to better performance while low EI as related to career derailment. The main constructs of the Goleman model discussed in this paper are self-awareness, self management, social skills and relationship management. Self-awareness has been seen as the keystone to EI and serves as the foundation for the emotional and psychological development necessary to achieve success. To add on, self awareness has been seen as leading to personal development owing to the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). It was also found out that leaders who regulate themselves effectively rarely make rushed or emotional decisions, stereotype team members or compromise their values. EI has been seen as capable of encouraging the ability to make good decisions, help in the building of relationships with and amongst the team members, deal with stress as well as display self awareness. Student Affairs leaders can help students to develop skills, for example, decision making, conflict management, communication, listening, problem solving skills by encouraging them to be involved in the Student Representative Council (SRC), peer counselors, peer educators, sub-wardens, graduate assistants, among others. As a leader it is important for one to develop and maintain working relationships with various internal and external parties or stakeholders.

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