

The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Effective Leadership: A Review of Contemporary Research

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership more comprehensively and deeply. This research is qualitative in nature. Data collection techniques included listening and recording important information to conduct data analysis through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings of this study conclude that emotional intelligence plays an important role in effective leadership. Leaders who have good emotional intelligence will be better able to manage themselves and others, manage conflict, make wise decisions, and provide appropriate support and motivation to their employees.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Effective Leadership, Contemporary, Qualitative*

A. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence pertains to an individual's capacity to identify, comprehend, regulate, and apply emotions in a proficient manner. The concept of emotional intelligence encompasses the capacity to recognise and regulate one's own emotions, as well as those of others, in a constructive manner across diverse contexts (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018); (Subhi et al., 2012) and (Arora, 2017). The cultivation of emotional intelligence facilitates the establishment of positive and amicable

interpersonal connections. The aptitude to identify and react to the emotions of others is advantageous in establishing proficient communication, augmenting empathy, and fostering trust (Andiani et al., 2020). Moreover, the possession of emotional intelligence is imperative for effective leadership. A comprehensive comprehension of emotions and adeptness in managing the emotions of team members are crucial for leaders to make informed decisions, inspire the team, and establish a constructive work milieu. The significance of emotional intelligence lies in its ability to facilitate the development of positive relationships, effective leadership, stress management, improved performance, and enhanced psychological well-being. The significance of these competencies is progressively acknowledged in the professional realm, particularly within the framework of effective leadership (Cahyono et al., 2023); (Ausat et al., 2022); (Sutrisno et al., 2023). In order to exhibit proficiency in leadership, it is imperative to possess the capacity to comprehend the emotions of others and motivate them to collaborate towards a shared objective. This notion is supported by scholarly works such as those authored by (Sonmez Cakir & Adiguzel, 2020); (Khoshhal & Guraya, 2016) and (Surji, 2014). Consequently, scholars have come to recognise the significance of emotional intelligence in the context of proficient leadership (Palmer et al., 2001); (Saha et al., 2023); (Cavaness et al., 2020) and (Prezerakos, 2018).

Contemporary studies have indicated that the degree of emotional intelligence exhibited by leaders is a crucial factor in determining their level of success in their respective roles (Issah, 2018); (Urquijo et al., 2019); (Doan et al., 2020); (Suleman et al., 2020) and (Aquino et al., 2021). The development of a leader's capacity to motivate and guide their team members is contingent upon their aptitude for comprehending the emotions of others (Ausat & Suherlan, 2021) and (Subagja et al., 2022). The utilisation of emotional intelligence can aid leaders in enhancing their decision-making abilities and effectively managing conflict, both of which are critical components of effective leadership (Alharbi & Alnoor, 2022) and (Aguilar Yuste, 2021). Leaders who possess high emotional intelligence are capable of identifying and comprehending their own emotions (Zen et al., 2023). The individual in question possesses a profound comprehension of their personal strengths, weaknesses, and values. Consequently, individuals are able to regulate their own emotional responses, enhance their decision-making abilities, and proficiently handle stress. In addition, leaders who possess emotional intelligence are capable of effectively regulating their own emotions, as well as those of their team members (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003). Individuals have the ability to exhibit empathy towards their peers, actively engage in attentive listening, and tactfully address the needs and concerns of others. These competencies facilitate the development of robust interpersonal connections, reinforce group cohesion, and enhance overall collaborative achievement. A leader who

possesses high emotional intelligence has the ability to foster a favourable work atmosphere, inspire team members, establish robust connections, and yield superior outcomes (Barera, 2023); (Lee et al., 2022) and (Salamah, 2023). Emotional intelligence is a crucial component of proficient leadership.

Nevertheless, a continuing discourse persists regarding the degree to which emotional intelligence impacts an individual's capacity to lead with efficacy. According to scholarly sources, there is a debate among academics regarding the most crucial element of effective leadership. Some scholars argue that emotional intelligence holds the greatest significance in this regard (George, 2000) and (Ugoani et al., 2015). Conversely, others contend that other factors, such as intellectual intelligence and prior leadership experience, also contribute significantly to the leadership process (Hughes et al., 2018) and (Judge et al., 2004). In summary, the significance of emotional intelligence in a leader's role is deemed to be minimal. Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to identify, comprehend, and regulate one's own emotions as well as those of others. Although emotional intelligence may prove advantageous in certain interpersonal scenarios, it is not necessarily a crucial attribute for all leaders. In addition to basic leadership abilities, a leader must possess a range of other critical skills, including proficiency in decision-making, strategic foresight, adeptness in communication, capacity to inspire and motivate teams, and robust leadership competencies. The primary objective of a leader is to effectively oversee their team, attain the established objectives of the organisation, and make sound decisions that will contribute to the triumph of the enterprise. While emotional intelligence can facilitate the establishment of positive relationships with team members, it is not the sole determinant of a leader's success. Numerous efficacious leaders have demonstrated the capability to achieve success without possessing a substantial degree of emotional intelligence (Nordin, 2011). This is attributed to their adeptness in resource management, sound decision-making skills, and leadership guided by ethical principles. Excessive emphasis on emotional intelligence may divert attention from other crucial factors, including technical proficiency, industry comprehension, and strategic leadership, in certain circumstances. Consequently, although emotional intelligence holds significance in interpersonal connections, it cannot be asserted that it is imperative for every leader.

Hence, additional investigation is required to comprehensively comprehend the role of emotional intelligence in proficient leadership. The present investigation will utilise the Emotional Intelligence Theory, as conceptualised by Daniel Goleman. The rationale behind this assertion is that the aforementioned theory is congruent with the research subject matter, and places emphasis on the significance of emotional intelligence in the context of proficient leadership (Goleman, 1995). As per the given theory, emotional intelligence comprises an individual's capacity to comprehend, regulate,

and utilise their own emotions, along with comprehending and efficiently interacting with the emotions of others. The concept of emotional intelligence comprises five fundamental constituents, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, and social skills. As per the tenets of emotional intelligence theory, proficient leadership necessitates adept utilisation of the aforementioned components. Effective leadership entails the comprehension and regulation of emotions in oneself and others, which can foster a collaborative atmosphere, incentivize personnel, and yield superior outcomes. Hence, the present investigation holds the promise of enriching the advancement of leadership training initiatives through the contemplation of diverse constituents linked with emotional intelligence.

B. METHOD

The researchers of this study were able to save time and effort by avoiding field data collection in favour of reading relevant literature. The internet and scholarly journal archives were searched using keywords relevant to this debate for articles on emotional intelligence, leadership and effectiveness. In compiling a reputable reference list, the authors were not required to use only certain online sources such as Emerald Insight, Research Gate, or Elsevier's journal portal. The authors limited the keyword search to the role of emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. The year 2010 to date was the timeframe considered for the search of journals, articles and publications. When collecting references, we used various publication portals and entered keywords there. However, only those papers, journals and publications were downloaded that were most relevant to the role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership. The rest were discarded. This article includes a total of 69 citations and references from other works.

The researchers opted to concentrate on the particulars in this inquiry. A method employed for gathering data involved the practise of attentive listening to extract relevant information, which was subsequently subjected to data reduction, presentation, and conclusion formulation. During the data reduction phase, we employed simplification, categorization, and elimination of extraneous data to ensure that the remaining data could be utilised to derive meaningful insights and conclusions. Conducting an analysis of data during the reduction stage is deemed crucial. The process of pruning facilitated the identification of the most pertinent information necessary for the attainment of our ultimate objective. Initially, a sum of 87 sources was obtained. Subsequent to the initial process, it was observed that a total of 69 sources were cited. Subsequently, the information was presented. This procedure is a continuation of the data reduction phase, wherein the initial raw data is condensed into a more feasible dataset that can be analysed with greater ease, leading to the formation of conclusions. The present communication employs a narrative mode of exposition, specifically in the guise of field

notes. Presenting the data in a structured manner based on a pattern of relationships would facilitate its organisation and arrangement. Finally, it is worth noting that inductive reasoning is employed to derive general conclusions from specific observations or evidence. During the ultimate stage of qualitative data analysis, one will revisit the original objectives that were established. During this stage, our aim is to derive conclusions and formulate solutions by identifying trends, patterns, and outliers from the information that we have collected. It is our contention that the sources at our disposal possess a sufficient degree of reliability to enable us to make inferences based on them. We have endeavoured to arrive at a judicious resolution akin to this, in order to enhance lucidity.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In recent times, the significance of emotional intelligence in the context of effective leadership has gained considerable attention. Recent studies indicate that emotional intelligence is a significant factor in a leader's capacity to lead with efficacy. The concept of emotional intelligence pertains to an individual's capacity to identify, comprehend, manage, and articulate their own emotions, in addition to their ability to identify and comprehend the emotions of others (Peña-Sarrionandia et al., 2015).

Scholarly literature suggests that emotional intelligence can be advantageous for leaders in various domains, including communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution. This assertion is supported by studies conducted by (Al-Hamdan et al., 2019); (Yin et al., 2022) and (Hidayat, 2014). Leaders who possess high levels of emotional intelligence are more adept at comprehending and resolving interpersonal conflicts among team members compared to leaders who exhibit low levels of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, a leader who possesses high emotional intelligence is more adept at comprehending the requirements and anticipations of their subordinates, thereby enabling them to furnish the requisite assistance and encouragement (Udod et al., 2020); (Lee et al., 2022); (Mishra, 2022); (Selviyani & Wulansari, 2019); (Akhmad et al., 2022) and (Sembiring et al., 2021).

Based on the aforementioned elucidation corroborated by the findings of prior scholarly investigations, it can be posited that emotional intelligence pertains to the capacity to identify, comprehend, regulate, and apply emotions proficiently in diverse contexts. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial and significant role within the realm of leadership. The following is a critical analysis of the necessity of emotional intelligence in a leadership role:

1. Strong interpersonal relationships: A leader possessing elevated emotional intelligence has the capability to establish robust connections with individuals in their vicinity (Riggio & Reichard, 2008). Individuals possess the capacity to perceive and comprehend the emotional states of others, and subsequently react to them with empathetic and comprehending attitudes. This capability

facilitates the enhancement of team cohesion, augmentation of trust, and establishment of efficient collaboration.

2. **Inspirational leadership:** The possession of emotional intelligence allows a leader to exert a constructive impact and motivate individuals in a favourable manner. Individuals are capable of effectively regulating their emotions, displaying a favourable outlook, and emanating constructive vibes. Fostering a salubrious work milieu and facilitating team mobilisation towards shared objectives is imperative (Wellman, 2001).
3. **Good decision-making:** The decision-making process is notably influenced by emotions. A leader who possesses high emotional intelligence is capable of effectively regulating their emotions amidst challenging situations and instances of disagreement (Kitsios et al., 2022). Individuals possess the capability to assess circumstances in an impartial manner, arrive at appropriate judgements, and effectively address issues.
4. **Effective communication skills:** The possession of emotional intelligence facilitates the ability of a leader to engage in effective communication with their team. Individuals possess the ability to discern and interpret the emotional expressions and nonverbal cues of others, as well as comprehend the implicit meaning conveyed through language. Effective communication skills in leaders can enhance their ability to inspire, motivate, and exert influence over others (Jankelová & Joniaková, 2021).
5. **Good stress management:** Leadership roles frequently entail confronting demanding situations and obstacles. The possession of emotional intelligence enables individuals to effectively cope with stress, evade unfavourable outcomes, and maintain concentration towards attaining objectives. Leaders who possess the ability to regulate their own emotions are capable of exhibiting a composed demeanour and serving as a positive role model for their team (Humphrey et al., 2016).

In general, possessing emotional intelligence is a crucial attribute for an individual in a leadership role. Proficiency in identifying, comprehending, and regulating personal and interpersonal emotions contributes to the establishment of a salubrious workplace, augmentation of output, fortification of associations, and attainment of efficacious leadership.

Although emotional intelligence has the capacity to augment leadership efficacy, there exists variability in the level of emotional intelligence among leaders. Certain leaders may possess exceptional emotional intelligence, whereas others may exhibit comparatively lower proficiency in regulating their own or their subordinates' emotions. Consequently, it is imperative for leaders to give heed to and enhance their emotional intelligence by means of training and self-improvement. In

contemporary times, the subject of emotional intelligence has garnered significant attention within the realm of leadership. Recent studies indicate that emotional intelligence can significantly contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of leaders (Al-Zu'bi, 2015) and (Babar et al., 2017). Consequently, it is imperative for leaders to give heed to and enhance their personal emotional intelligence. There exist multiple strategies that leaders can employ to enhance their emotional intelligence. One approach to enhancing emotional intelligence is through the cultivation of self-awareness regarding one's own emotions (Malekar, 2007) and (Silvia, 2002). Leadership personnel have the capacity to engage in introspection and self-reflection as a means of comprehending and regulating their own emotional states. Furthermore, leaders have the ability to acquire knowledge in identifying and comprehending the emotions of their peers, such as through the observation of nonverbal cues like body language and facial expressions.

Furthermore, it is imperative for leaders to possess the ability to effectively handle conflicts. According to (Zhang et al., 2015) and (Flores et al., 2018), leaders possessing high emotional intelligence are more adept at identifying and resolving conflicts among their team members, ultimately leading to reduced disruptions and increased productivity. Hence, it is imperative for leaders to acquire the skill of conflict management in a proficient manner, along with the capacity to engage in active listening, pose appropriate inquiries, and strive for resolutions that are advantageous for all stakeholders. Conversely, leaders may derive advantages from enhancing their capacity to render judicious decisions. The ability to make effective and prompt decisions is of paramount importance in the realm of leadership. According to (George, 2000), leaders possessing high emotional intelligence are more adept at taking into account the emotions and sentiments of their team members when making decisions. This approach can facilitate the formulation of informed decisions that take into account the effects and ramifications on all stakeholders. In addition, research suggests that leaders who possess high levels of emotional intelligence are more adept at inspiring and offering assistance to their subordinates (Adnyana Wijaya & Riana, 2022); (Issah, 2018); (Alam et al., 2020) and (Yaquot et al., 2021). Leaders who possess the ability to comprehend the requirements and anticipations of their subordinates are more likely to furnish the necessary assistance and encouragement (Nur'aeni et al., 2022); (Az-zaakiyyah et al., 2022); (Muhamad et al., 2023); (Ausat, 2023) and (Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Effective leadership can facilitate the realisation of employees' full potential, leading to enhanced productivity and team performance (Wanof & Gani, 2023); (Subagja, 2023) and (Ausat et al., 2023).

Essentially, current research indicates that emotional intelligence can significantly contribute to the effectiveness of leadership. Leaders who possess high emotional intelligence are more adept at

comprehending and regulating their own and their subordinates' emotions, skillfully resolving conflicts, making astute judgements, and furnishing suitable encouragement and inspiration to their staff (Arora, 2017). Consequently, it is imperative for leaders to give heed to and enhance their emotional intelligence through training and self-improvement.

Moreover, from the standpoint of Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory, a robust association exists between emotional intelligence and proficient leadership. Emotional intelligence pertains to the capacity of an individual to identify, comprehend, regulate, and apply emotions, both within oneself and in others. Effective leadership is defined as an individual's capacity to proficiently guide and manage a team, attain shared objectives, and establish a conducive and efficient workplace atmosphere (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022).

According to the renowned psychologist and author, Daniel Goleman, emotional intelligence holds significant importance in the realm of leadership. This assertion is based on his well-known concept of emotional intelligence. As per his assertion, proficient leadership is contingent not solely upon one's IQ, but is also significantly impacted by one's EQ. Emotional Intelligence Theory posits that there exist multiple avenues through which emotional intelligence is linked to proficient leadership:

1. **Self-Awareness:** The foundation of effective leadership lies in possessing a heightened level of self-awareness. Individuals who possess high emotional intelligence exhibit the capacity to identify and comprehend their own emotional states (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). The individual in question possesses a profound comprehension of their personal aptitudes, limitations, principles, and objectives. Leaders who possess a comprehensive comprehension of their own selves are capable of astutely managing their emotions, circumventing impulsive conduct, and rendering superior decisions.
2. **Emotion Management:** The capacity to proficiently regulate emotions is a crucial aspect of successful leadership. Individuals who exhibit elevated levels of emotional intelligence possess the capacity to regulate adverse emotions, such as anger, frustration, or anxiety, in a manner that precludes their interference with their professional efficacy or interpersonal connections (Peña-Sarrionandia et al., 2015). They possess the ability to effectively convey emotions and motivate individuals through optimistic vibes.
3. **Empathy:** Empathy refers to the capacity to comprehend and experience the emotions of other individuals. Leaders who possess empathy have the ability to perceive and comprehend the emotional states and unspoken necessities of their team members (Marler et al., 2006) and (Kellett et al., 2006). They are capable of offering suitable emotional assistance, establishing robust

connections, and motivating individuals to enhance their performance. Empathy is a valuable trait for leaders as it enables them to comprehend alternative viewpoints, promote efficient communication, and arrive at decisions that are grounded in shared interests.

4. **Social Skills:** Proficient leaders possess adept social abilities. Individuals possess the capability to articulate their thoughts and ideas with precision and efficacy, exert a constructive impact on their peers, and establish robust professional connections. Social skills encompass competencies such as team leadership, collaborative work, constructive collaboration, and positive influence on others (Ausat et al., 2023). Leaders who possess high emotional intelligence are capable of effectively interpreting social dynamics within the workplace, adeptly handling conflicts, and fostering a work environment that is both inclusive and supportive (Rustiawan et al., 2023).

Within the realm of leadership, emotional intelligence pertains to the capacity to inspire and motivate individuals. Leaders who possess the ability to identify and comprehend the emotions of their subordinates have the capacity to modify their leadership approach to cater to individual requirements, thereby inspiring them to attain superior outcomes. In addition, individuals have the capacity to offer valuable criticism, exhibit empathetic listening skills, and acknowledge the valuable input of their peers. Furthermore, the capacity to handle stress is also a crucial aspect of proficient leadership. Leaders who possess a high level of emotional intelligence demonstrate an ability to effectively manage and navigate through stressful situations, thereby enabling them to maintain a composed and logical demeanour when confronted with obstacles and unpredictability. In addition, team members have the potential to assist one another in stress management, fostering a harmonious work environment, and mitigating the risk of team burnout.

From the standpoint of the Emotional Intelligence Theory, there exists a correlation between emotional intelligence and sustained success in leadership roles. Empirical evidence suggests that leaders who possess elevated levels of emotional intelligence exhibit superior efficacy in accomplishing organisational objectives, inspiring team members, preserving high-performing personnel, and cultivating a constructive work environment. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that effective leadership is not solely determined by emotional intelligence. The success of a leader is also influenced by various factors, including intellectual intelligence, industry knowledge, technical skills, and experience. Emotional intelligence is a component that supplements and amplifies holistic leadership proficiencies.

To summarise, Emotional Intelligence Theory posits a significant association between emotional intelligence and proficient leadership. Individuals in leadership positions who possess elevated levels of emotional intelligence are typically more adept at identifying and regulating

emotions, comprehending and exerting influence over others effectively, and establishing a work environment that is both constructive and efficient. The incorporation of emotional intelligence is a crucial element that can enhance the calibre of leadership and the efficacy of leaders in their roles within organisations and teams.

D. CONCLUSION

Drawing from the outcomes of the discourse, it can be inferred that emotional intelligence constitutes a pivotal factor in the attainment of effective leadership. Leaders who possess high emotional intelligence are more adept at managing themselves and their subordinates, resolving conflicts, making sound judgements, and offering suitable encouragement and inspiration to their staff. Hence, it is crucial for leaders to prioritise the enhancement of their emotional intelligence by means of training and individual growth. Emotional Intelligence Theory posits a robust association between emotional intelligence and proficient leadership. The significance of emotional intelligence lies in its ability to aid leaders in the identification and regulation of emotions, comprehension of others, establishment of robust interpersonal connections, and facilitation of a conducive work atmosphere. The acquisition of self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathetic aptitude, and social proficiency are fundamental to the attainment of effective leadership.

Within the context of an organisation, it is imperative to implement leadership training and development initiatives that prioritise the cultivation of emotional intelligence. The training programme ought to be formulated with the aim of enhancing the leaders' comprehension of themselves and their peers, reinforcing their conflict resolution competencies, and cultivating their capacity to deliver proficient support and encouragement. Furthermore, corporations may consider incorporating emotional intelligence as a criterion for selecting individuals for managerial roles. This intervention has the potential to enhance the efficacy of organisational leadership by cultivating individuals with the capacity to guide their teams towards achieving their objectives.

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