

Emotional Component in Leadership

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Importance of emotions in effective leadership.....	3
Leader-member exchange (LMX).....	4
Fiedler’s Contingency Model – Relationship-oriented approach	5
Criticisms of the Emotional-intelligence model	5
Conclusion	6
References	7

Introduction

In this dynamic and competitive corporate environment, leadership plays an integral role in ensuring organizational effectiveness and profitability. A robust leader may regulate the employee's performance and the organizational culture, thereby stimulating organizational productivity and ensuring long-term gains for the company (Ann Castelli and Abdul Rahman, 2021). One prime component of leadership is the empathy which enables leaders to emotionally connect with their employees and thereby influence their work performance and productivity. In this rapidly expanding global market where there are multicultural differences and transforming operational models, it is essential for leaders to emotionally connect to their employees and to consider their perspectives and opinions. This leadership trait will transform the work place environment into more open and flexible, thereby reinforcing greater organizational productivity and effectiveness (Surji, 2014).

This report essentially highlights the prime role that emotions play in ensuring effective leadership. It also sheds lights on how the emotional trait of a leader may impact the employee's working relationships and performance.

Importance of emotions in effective leadership

In today's world, managerial development is a prime task that involves identifying leaders that have specific personality traits that can enable them to enhance the firm's performance and enable the firm to stay competitive in the long-term. *Emotional intelligence* is one primary trait that has been characterized as integral in ensuring effective leadership (Prochazka et al., 2018). Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to effectively perceive emotions, use these emotions to facilitate further thought, comprehend emotions, effectively manage emotions to foster intellectual and emotional growth (Issah, 2018). Goleman also emphasizes on four dimensions of emotional intelligence that are integral for emotional development within the work place. These include self-awareness, relationship management, social awareness and self-management. When leaders aim to enhance their EQ, they influence the employees' work performance and the overall organizational productivity (Kotzé and Nel, 2015).

I agree that emotional intelligent leaders are more productive and influential than leaders who do not possess this trait. This is because this trait enables the leaders to enhance their resilience and

mental toughness which prepares them to resolve challenges in a highly fierce and competitive corporate environment. It also enables leaders to sharpen their thinking ability via practices such as self-awareness and self-management, which thereby enables them to react wisely in tough situations and resolve challenging conflicts. Most importantly, it enables the leader to acquire a *relationship-oriented approach* towards it's employees. The art of self-mastery and social awareness acquired via this trait enables leaders to develop a relationship of trust and cooperation with the employees. This relationship enables the leaders to become an inspirational and transformative leader who has the capability of influencing others, managing tough conversations, effectively managing conflict, inspiring teams, coaching talent and eventually becoming an idealistic leader (Raina, 2019).

Emotional intelligence is also highly correlated with organizational success and productivity. A Career Builder survey which involved 2600 hiring managers showed that 71% valued emotional quotient (EQ) more than high Intelligence quotient (IQ). When these managers were inquired about the reasons, they asserted that a high EQ enables leaders to stay calm whilst in pressure, make wise decisions and resolve sensitive issues maturely, become an inspirational leader, efficiently resolve conflicts and display empathy. Robert Kennedy is a prime example of a high empathetic leader who shifted his political priorities when he observed the sufferings of Americans. Other examples of emotionally intelligent leaders include Winston Churchill, Martin Luther, Warren Buffet and Abraham Lincoln (Moss, 2018).

The importance of emotions can also be asserted by the sayings of Plato who describes emotions as a prime source of human behavior. Hence, in order to become a valuable leader, it is integral to expand one-self via emotional self-awareness and self-management and comprehend the emotions of others via social awareness and relationship management (Fouts, 2019)

Leader-member exchange (LMX)

The importance of the emotional trait in leaders can also be explained via the leader-member exchange theory. This theory emphasizes that a high LMX enables greater emotional connectivity between the employees and managers, which thereby leads to greater information exchange, trust, role clarity, competence, commitment and higher job satisfaction. Another significant consequence of the LMX is the psychological empowerment in the employees. This leads to the development of self-determination, competence and self-efficacy within the employees, which

thereby impacts their task performance and productivity. Hence, the leader-member exchange theory explains the importance of emotions as an integral trait in leadership effectiveness (Aggarwal et al., 2020). This shows that a leader who possesses the emotional trait tends to outstand the other leaders due to his ability to establish positive relationships with the employees and reinforce a strong leader-member exchange culture

Fiedler's Contingency Model – Relationship-oriented approach

The Relationship-oriented leadership approach in the Fiedler's contingency approach also analyzes the importance of relationship management in order to ensure organizational effectiveness. This approach focuses on how a leader may enhance the work motivation and job satisfaction of employees by embracing effective relationship management. A Leader who adopts this style of leadership tends to encourage collaboration and team work by fostering positive relationships and encouraging effective communication. Further, this participatory style of leadership encourages employees to work with entrepreneurial-orientation, which thereby enhances the work-place productivity and performance. Further, this style of leadership focuses on employee development and personal growth, which thereby motivates the employees to further leverage their work performance (Ruzgar, 2018).

A task-oriented leader on the other hand, may result in low morale and reduced creativity amongst the employees. Further, such leaders may face difficulties in resolving conflicts and managing employees in high stake environment, which may thereby jeopardize the organizational productivity and effectiveness. Hence, it can be asserted that the emotional connectivity and relationship-oriented behavior are essential variables that may make the leader more influential than the others (Vidal et al., 2017).

Criticisms of the Emotional-intelligence model

While this emotional connectivity and relationship-oriented behavior is highly valued as an integral trait in leaders, there are also several criticisms pointed towards this concept. For instance, a research by Adam Grant explores a lack of correlation between the organizational results and emotional intelligence. Further, Mayer also pointed out that a strategist who is not emotionally intelligent can also hire talented employees and make handsome profits in the business (Ovans, 2015). However, in my opinion, emotional intelligence and a strong leader-employee relationship

is integral in order to focus strategically, manage conflicts and develop a strong workforce that would work towards enhancing the overall organizational productivity (Raina, 2019).

Conclusion

It can be asserted that leadership is an ‘emotion-laden process’ which enables the leader to enhance organizational effectiveness and productivity by establishing an emotional bond with the employees and motivating them to work at their best potential. Emotional intelligence enables the leader to stay resilient, resolve conflicts, avoid biases and establish positive employee relationships which may leverage the employee productivity and performance. High emotional connectivity gives birth to a strong leader-member exchange which creates greater trust and commitment and ensures role clarity amongst employees.

The art of emotional connectivity and relationship management enables a leader to become an inspirational and a transformational personality who is capable of facilitating change, motivating employees to maximize performance and enhancing the overall organizational performance.

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