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The Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership

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Abstract: Traditionally, intelligence has nothing to do with emotions. Intelligence means the ability to have thinking skills, to find solutions to problems. There are studies that show that a high IQ does not guarantee success in a person's life, IQ contributes 20%, while 80% is attributed to other forces. In the present research, we aim at answering the question: "What is the relation between the level of emotional intelligence of a leader and the type of leadership it exercises?"

Keywords: leadership; management; IQ

Introduction

Emotional intelligence has become, in the recent years, an intensely debated topic, especially in the West. Although cognitive intelligence, IQ, has until now been the natural way of reporting how a particular person thinks, many studies were achieved based on emotional intelligence and, of course, many instruments have been developed to measure this one. However, do we really want our level of emotional intelligence to be measurable? Could we imagine what it would be like to have a numerical expression for how we are? How would we feel if we knew that someone else has a few extra points on a scale of effective interpersonal relationships? However, there are tests, both informal and considered valid, that determine the level of emotional intelligence of an individual. We believe that the best way for an individual to increase their level of emotional intelligence is to read about what it means, understand the explained concepts, put them into practice and be rigorous and careful with how to react to various situations in the future, a method that seems more effective to us, rather than knowing the value of a number that practically represents the emotional individuality of the person in question.

"Academic intelligence has little in common with emotional life." This is how Goleman begins his plea about emotional intelligence. Being intelligent does not mean "the ability to understand things easily" (Schriberg et al., 2005). The first intelligence test was created by Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon more than a hundred years ago. The notion of IQ (intelligence quotient) was introduced in 1908 with the 58-item version of the Binet-Simon test, which determined whether uninterested students were mentally retarded (Schriberg et al, 2005).

There are studies that attest to the fact that a high IQ does not necessarily guarantee success in a person's life (Goleman, 2001). Likewise, "IQ contributes 20% to the factors that determine success in life, while 80% is attributed to other forces" (Goleman, 2005). However, cognitive intelligence and emotional

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intelligence are only two faces of the individual, which are certainly not contradictory, but only separate, in each of us there is a mixture of IQ and EQ in certain doses.

Reuven Bar-On theorizes emotional intelligence by dividing it into five distinct areas, namely the intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general state domains. These, in turn, are made up of certain subcomponents that practically ensure a higher or lower level of emotional intelligence (Stein and Book, 2003). In contrast to this, Daniel Goleman relies on a resonant, respectively dissonant character of the emotionally intelligent leader, who knows how to manage relationships, knows himself very well, managing to control his emotions.

Goleman's main argument is that the emotionally intelligent leader, who appeals to the domains of emotional intelligence and its competencies, the one who creates resonance, is the most capable of mastering the art of leadership based on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2005). An emotionally intelligent leader carries out his work based on self-knowledge, self-control, social awareness and effective relationship management skills.

Over time, there has been a clear interest in the correlation of leadership with cognitive, social and interpersonal intelligences. Lately, researchers are interested in the role played by intelligences different from the cognitive one, namely the social one and especially the emotional one in the leadership process.

To see leadership as an emotional process, “followership” must also be considered (Fineman, 2004). Through this, Fineman defines the activity through which the subordinates of the leader encounter him, the way in which they interact with each other and the way in which they need each other to “dance the games of power” (Fineman, 2004). It is, therefore, a process of mutual influence, each of the parties bringing needs, desires and ideas to implement activities and ways of solving problems.

Case Study

The research field of the present paper is the link between the emotional intelligence coefficient of the leaders and their style of leading - transformational, respectively transactional. In order to determine these correlations, numerous studies were carried out abroad. Some of the conclusions reached by these researchers were favorable. Thus, positive correlations were identified between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, respectively negative correlations between transactional or “laissez-faire” leadership and the level of emotional intelligence.

The research undertaken in this paper is explanatory research, with the objective of verifying the existing relationship between the investigated phenomena, respectively proposing to answer the question: “What is relationship between the level of emotional intelligence of a leader and which type of leadership does he exercise?” To achieve the proposed objective, in this work we set the following research directions:

Hypothesis I: The higher the level of emotional intelligence, the more frequently we have leaders who exercise a transformational leadership method. (Emotional intelligence correlates positively with transformational leadership).

Hypothesis II: The higher the level of emotional intelligence, the less often we have leaders who lead in a transactional manner. (Emotional intelligence correlates negatively with the types of “laissez-faire” management and management by exception, components of transactional leadership).

Starting from the premise that individual reality, i.e. each individual's perception of reality, is the only knowable reality, the present study sought, through the questions, for the subjects to identify situations or problems that they could have faced in their everyday life, to recognize certain character traits through personal experiences. For this purpose, we used a quantitative research method, more precisely the questionnaire method, having the character of an exploratory sociological research. Based on closed questioning methods, it can be said that the undertaken research has to a lesser extent an experimental feature and, respectively, a relatively low degree of control of the analyzed variables.

Research Method

To collect the information, an “opinion questionnaire” was designed and developed, taking into account the fact that it was necessary to study, for the chosen field, the attitudes, dispositions or inclinations of a person, to which can be added the impossibility of directly observing the analyzed phenomena or the subjective nature of the revealed data.

The research survey was conducted based on “closed questions”, with pre-coded answers. The structure of the research instrument is two-dimensional. In a first stage, it is researched the level of emotional intelligence of a leader. This is done using an accredited instrument, a questionnaire with closed, pre-coded questions, developed by Daniel Goleman and Reuven Bar-On and adapted by Mihaela Roco (2007). The questionnaire is made up of 10 questions through which the subject is put in different situations and trained to imagine a possible course of action and the response behavior to the respective situations.

The second part of the questionnaire was dedicated to the identification of the practiced leadership style - management by exception, laissez-faire, transformational leadership, based on a set of 20 statements regarding: the leader-subordinate relationship, the way responsibility is distributed, the practiced decision mechanisms, the mode of communication, the type of control used, the efficiency of the information flow.

The questions related to transformational and transactional leadership represent models of questions adapted from certified and accredited questionnaires, such as the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire or behavioral elements that could suggest the type of used leadership. Thus, Northouse (2007), Bass and Riggio (2006) represent the consulted sources to compile the questionnaire through the provided examples to explain the theoretical notions.

The questions were closed and requested YES/NO answers from the respondents. We have considered that this kind of questions are effective since it was desired to find out a specific aspect of the respondent's experience and knowledge.

Results

A first step in research development is represented by the development of the instrument. Then, we have contacted the Human Resources departments of the companies that accepted their employees to take part in the study. After giving their consent, the research methods and the design of the instrument were explained to them, as well as its purpose. Before applying the tool, to objectify the answers, the subjects were told about its anonymity and full confidentiality of the results. Also, when the questionnaires were launched, it was specified that there are no good or bad answers to the questions, the quality of the answers being conditioned only by the most faithful expression of the opinion of the respondent.

For a brief characterization of the group of participants in the study, it should be mentioned that the study was carried out on a group of 45 subjects, having senior, middle-line or first-line management positions, in different Romanian companies, both public and private. The data was collected through the self-administration of the questionnaire. Compared to the 50 questionnaires launched, 45 were completed.

The subjects were both male (15) and female (30), both under 30 and over 50 years old. All subjects have university degrees, and regarding their experience in managerial positions, it varied depending on each individual and their functional area, being dispersed among each of the pre-coded groups. Less than half of the respondents, more precisely 16, have experience in managerial positions of over 10 years, 10 of them have experience between 2 and 5 years, and 9 belong to the groups of experience between 5 and 10 years, respectively less than 2 years.

Most of the subjects (26) operate at a middle management level, while 13 of them are first-line managers and only 5 of the total of 44 are in senior management positions. Regarding the functional field of the respondents, they work in a number of 15 in finance or accounting, 6 in education, 3 of them in the

administrative field, 4 in research and development, 4 in human resources departments, only 2 in total in sales or marketing and 11 of the respondents in other fields.

To establish the level of emotional intelligence of each leader, each type of answer from part I of the questionnaire was assigned a score highlighted in the table below.

Table 1. How to score and interpret answers to the intelligence test

Question number	Marking the answers	
1	a B C	20 points
2	b	20 points
3	A	20 points
4	c	20 points
5	c	20 points
6	b, c	5 points
	d	20 points
7	A	20 points
8	b	20 points
9	b	5 points
	d	20 points
10	b	20 points

Source: (Roco, 2001)

To calculate the level of emotional intelligence, add the points for the 10 answers. The meaning of the global meaning is: 100 points - below average emotional intelligence; 100-150 points - average emotional intelligence; over 150 points - above average emotional intelligence; 200 points -higher emotional intelligence.

Regarding the way of evaluating the second part of the questionnaire, we have applied the method of collecting a score. The questions are divided into 2 categories - transformational leadership and transactional leadership, highlighted in Table no. 2. One point will be added to the subjects who will answer “YES” to each of the questions related to each category.

Table 2. How to interpret the answers to the leadership test

The type of leadership	Related questions
Transformation	2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20
Transactional (management by exception and laissez faire)	1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18

For example, if subject X will answer “YES” to questions 2, 4, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 3, 6, 8, 10 and “NO” to the rest of the questions, then his score will be 8 points for transformational leadership and 4 points for transactional leadership. This means that the leader has a transformational rather than transactional behavior.

Interpretation

In the process of analyzing the data obtained based on the opinion questionnaires for the research and establishing the truth value of the hypotheses, we will observe the degree of covariation between 2 variables. According to Sava (2004), the association or relationship between two variables can be understood by the terms of covariance and independence. Such a relationship was examined, through the variables of emotional intelligence level, transformational leadership score, respectively transactional leadership score.

To see the degree of covariation between two variables, one of the three descriptive techniques can be used (Sava, 2004):

- calculation of correlation coefficients as association indicators;
- graphical representation of the cloud of points (“scatterplot”);
- creating contingency tables (association).

In this paper, we have used the graphic representation of the cloud of points “scatterplot”, a graph with two axes, each of them involving one of the two variables (Sava, 2004). One can distinguish between the independent variable (cause), which is located on the abscissa, on the OX axis, and the dependent variable (effect), which is located on the ordinate, that is, on the OY axis. The cloud of points provides a series of important information, primarily regarding the form of the relationship between the two variables (linear or non-linear), its direction (positive, negative or absent association), respectively the intensity of the link between the variables (strong, medium, low) (Sava, 2004).

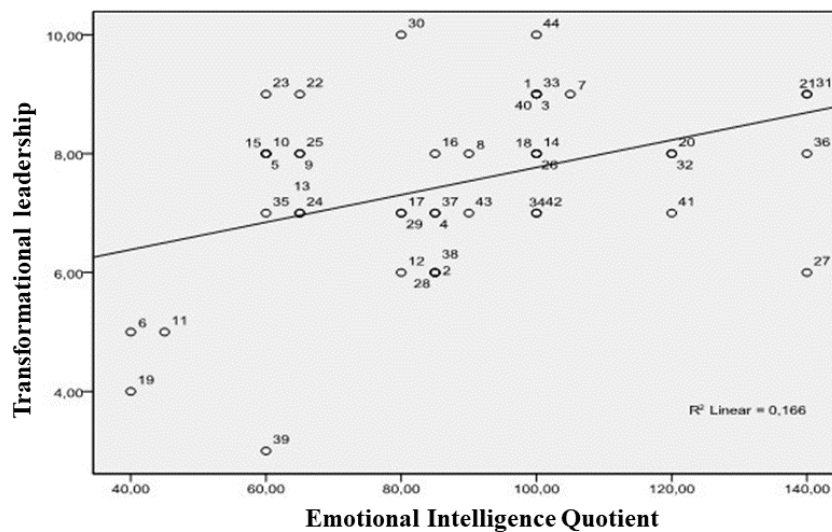


Figure 1. The correlation between emotional intelligence quotient and transformational leadership

The graphic representation of the cloud of points regarding the relationship between the transformational leadership and emotional intelligence variables can be seen in Figure 1. As it can be seen, the relationship between the two variables is approximately linear.

It should also be mentioned that the scores obtained on the emotional intelligence test are average (19 leaders) and below average (26 leaders), according to the analysis grid. It should be mentioned that the value of the most common coefficient is 100 (10 respondents), followed by a coefficient of 60, obtained by 6 of the respondents.

As for transformational leadership, it can be said that the average obtained by the respondents is 7.5 points out of the maximum possible 10, and the average obtained in the case of transactional leadership is 4.8. Taking into account the fact that the scores obtained on the emotional intelligence test are average and below average, we can thus reach a first conclusion. Thus, leaders, regardless of their emotional intelligence quotient, tend to adopt a more transformational than transactional behavior in leadership activities.

Conclusions

The structural and content transformations of the modern socio-economic environment generate a great diversification of the quality and performance of management processes. In this framework, the attention and efforts of managers, consultants and management systems analysts were and are directed towards identifying new approaches to processes from the perspective of the requirements of the new economic-social environment, as well as towards the development and promotion of appropriate leadership styles.

Through research in the field, it was concluded that the effectiveness and efficiency of a leader at work is determined by his emotional capacity. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that a leader will be even more efficient in the work he carries out, both as a mentor and as a point of support for the organization, if he succeeds in adopting a transformational behavior in the activities he undertakes. Therefore, at a certain point in the emergence of leaders' performance, the connection between emotional capacity and transformational behavior emerges. The studies and research developed abroad in the field of leadership have reached obvious conclusions of positive correlation between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, respectively negative correlation between transactional leadership and emotional intelligence.

Regarding the present research, it can be said that both hypothesis I, the one regarding the correlation between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, as well as in the case of the hypothesis regarding the connection between transactional leadership and emotional intelligence, the null hypotheses are accepted. However, it could be observed (Figure 1) that there is a relatively positive linearity between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership. This fact could lead to the conclusion that in other research conditions, the correlation could have been significant. In the present case, the null hypotheses of the research could not be rejected, which leads to the idea that the initial hypotheses, those of a positive correlation between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, respectively of a negative correlation between transactional leadership and emotional intelligence cannot be supported by the obtained data.

Therefore, it can be said that in the leadership activities carried out by the leaders who were part of the research, relate to a behavior based on the exchange of results-benefits, i.e. transactional, and the transformational one, which seeks to overcome the formal framework of achieving objectives, without emotional intelligence being able to manifest its influence in any way.

Despite the demonstration of the existence and manifestation of transformational leadership at the organizational level, none of the respondents registered an above average level of emotional intelligence. Probably, at an above average or maybe even exceptional level of emotional intelligence, the hypotheses of the study could have been verified, and certainly the results of the study would have been different if the respondents had been part of higher management categories. All this leads to an idea, namely that the basis that underpins the emergence of transformational leadership, namely its components, the idealized influence, the inspiration that motivates, the intellectual stimulation and the individualized consideration exists both in a latent and manifest state in the case of most leaders. This base could be easily developed and improved along the way through awareness of the influence of emotions on the driving process. This can be done either by using new management methods, or by improving and adapting the existing ones to market needs.

Therefore, we can observe from what we have demonstrated, both through the stated theories and through the undertaken research, that regardless of its nature, direction, evolution or intensity, a certain connection exists between the investigated phenomena, even if the correlation data are not significant. Thus, researching aspects of human nature, we cannot enjoy the axioms of mathematics, but must accept the notion of relativity that governs this field. Therefore, the management style must be above all adaptable to each individual situation, open to change and improvement through correlations with other fields, firm in defining the objectives and applying the chosen strategy to achieve them.

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