



Emerging Markets Queries in Finance and Business

# Leadership and emotional intelligence: the effect on performance and attitude

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## Abstract

Employers and mainly those who operate in an international context and interact in a multicultural environment want and look for employees who possess emotional competences, which influence and ease relationships between people, allow a better social cohesion, an emotional self-control and an “alphabetisation” of emotional states, and who work together for their personal benefit and not contrary to their expectations, needs and competences. An increasing number of specialists state that emotional intelligence is a central variable that affects leaders’ performance.

In this study, carried out in a sugar factory, we tried to characterise the internal environment of the organisation and the relationships that dominate them in order to identify and understand the situation the organisation is confronted with in terms of the relationship between managers and subordinates, empathy, nonverbal communication, self-control, handling relationships, emotional intelligence. We tried to provide exploratory evidence for the effects that emotional intelligence has on leaders and followers in terms of performance, results and work satisfaction.

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## 1. General Considerations

Lately, there has been a growing interest in emotional intelligence among researchers and consultants in the

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fields of psychology, education and, especially, management. Emotional intelligence courses are conducted by management consultants. Some experts state that emotional intelligence affects both physical and mental health, and the career development of individuals. Some theories of leadership imply that emotional and social intelligence are more important for leaders and managers as cognitive and behavioural complexity and flexibility are important characteristics of competent leaders. Yet there is little empirical evidence in the literature on the relationship between emotional intelligence of leaders and their followers and the results of their work. One reason for this lack of evidence may be the absence of accurate measurements from the psychological and the practical perspective of emotional intelligence that can be used in studies of leadership and management. A group of Chinese scientists from universities in Hong Kong have attempted to develop such a measurement and to provide exploratory evidence about the effects of emotional intelligence on work outcomes of leaders and their followers.

## **2. Approaching Leadership in Terms of Emotional Intelligence**

Leadership is concerned with the interaction of leaders with other individuals. Once there are involved social interactions, emotional awareness and emotion regulation become important factors affecting the quality of interactions. Social intelligence can affect the success in work of managers and leaders in a more important way than traditional mental intelligence. Effective leadership behaviour depends crucially on the ability of a leader to solve complex social problems that arise in organisations. Good leaders must have a good understanding of their own emotions and of those of others, and are able to regulate their emotions when interacting with others.

Emotional intelligence has become a vital element of the way today's leaders address the complexity of the challenges they encounter in the business environment. The leaders who are considering this type of intelligence own a real competitive advantage. Emotional intelligence does not fall within the classic model of leadership, where the leader is associated with representative, charismatic and sometimes despotic figures in military history. Today, it is difficult for the workforce to accept autocratic leadership styles, retaliation or omissions pronounced at psychological level occur, the employees now having more options and choices than yesterday's soldiers, so that the leaders must lead this workforce who are more aware of their rights and adopt consultative, cooperative and democratic styles.

The importance of emotions has been addressed, argued, dissected, criticised, highlighted ever since Antiquity. Plato said that what one learns has an emotional basis, which is very relevant and proven in each individual, as when learning and work are done with passion, there are positive feelings towards learning, towards the activities to be undertaken, the learning process becomes by itself easier for the memory, it is a pleasure to be involved and has both intrinsic individual results and measurable and observable performance, and when coercive factors related to a particular field or situation interfere and which are forced on the limbic system of the brain, although emotionally and psychologically there is the refusal of that acquirement, of adopting a particular style or achieving a process, what is learned or done thereafter will be forgotten, so it will not represent something useful which is worth to be used later, it generates stress, frustration, and will be stored in long-term memory - at best - as something which is always negative, which needs to be postponed as it creates discomfort, so a disagreement between emotional perception and what needs to be done or said, entails disturbing effects in the interaction with others, in activities at work, in private life, which manifests itself sooner or later in different forms.

It was found that people with high intelligence failed to obtain significant performance at work, that there are components of intelligence which do not manifest by intelligence in its classic format but greatly affect work performance and social success. It was concluded that there are human qualities that promote success, other than those that give a high intelligence quotient, and thus was developed the concept of emotional quotient. It has been shown that people with high emotional intelligence achieve high performance in sales or management, where success is closely linked to the ability to understand and use interpersonal relationships.

This concept is increasingly used with instruments that measure it in modern business leadership, at least

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