

Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Outcomes: Insights from a Malaysian Perspective

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Research examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership particularly in the higher education industry in Malaysia is relatively unexplored. This study aims to explore whether or not the emotional intelligence of academic heads correlated to the outcomes of transformational leadership. In this study, 93 lecturers from higher educational institutions in Malacca, Malaysia were sampled in 2009. Data were collected using survey questionnaires. The study of outcomes of transformational leadership (extra effort and satisfaction) and emotional intelligence revealed that each outcome of leadership correlated significantly with the four domains of emotional intelligence. The results of this study contribute to the growing belief that emotional intelligence should be included in the training and development of academic heads and others in the human service professions.

JEL Codes: M12, M19

1. Introduction

The world today is undergoing massive changes which are constant, from technological innovations to global competition. Organizations today need to adapt and change in order to maintain their competitive edge. Rapid environmental changes are causing fundamental transformations that have a dramatic impact on organizations and present new challenges for human resources management in general and leadership in particular. The business environment is continually changing, and a leader must respond in kind (Goleman, 2000) to guide these changes as rapidly as they occur.

On the threshold of the 21st century, leaders of organisations face a whole new set of management challenges (Dess and Picken, 2000). Among the challenges facing institutions of higher learning today are greater competition for students, more demanding students and parents and higher expectations that colleges and universities should contribute to the development of a learning society and globalization of the education industry. In order to stay competitive, organizations must re-examine leadership competencies and develop effective leaders.

These new leadership requirements have placed new demands on leadership training programs to develop these skills in evolving leaders and on organizations involved in leadership selection to identify them in potential candidates (Fulmer, 1997). As a result, various researches has been exploring the underlying attributes

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and behaviours of leaders who successfully perform these contemporary leadership roles in order to identify leadership selection and training criteria for the recruitment and development of effective leaders (Church and Waclawski, 1998; Sternberg, 1997).

One variable that has recently gained much popularity as a potential underlying attribute of effective leadership is the construct of emotional intelligence (EI) (Sosik and Megerian, 1999). The concept of emotional intelligence has been increasingly studied since Peter Salovey and John Mayer introduced the concept in 1989. Ever since the publication of Daniel Goleman's first book "*Emotional Intelligence*" on the topic in 1995, emotional intelligence has become one of the hottest buzzwords in corporate America (Cherniss, 2000). The debut of emotional intelligence phenomenon over the last few years has change the traditional view of what it takes to be an effective leader.

Given the increased recognition of the importance of the relationship between leaders and followers in the leadership literature, the question arises whether the concept of emotional intelligence has significance for leadership effectiveness. Goleman (1998) author of "What makes a leader?" in the November/December 1998 issue of the Harvard Business review states that close to 90 percent of the competencies relevant for leadership success are social and emotional in nature. Research on leadership associated to leading in the private, for profit business sector appears to be more extensive than the literature on leaderships in the education sector. The amount of research on academic head's leadership is surprisingly scarce considering the enormous responsibilities that accompany the role.

While current studies detail what leaders are like, and how they make decisions, the role of emotional intelligence in the leadership process particularly outcomes of transformational leadership has not yet been extensively researched on.

Despite theoretical links between emotional intelligence and leadership, there has been relatively little empirical research examining the relationship between emotional intelligence in the workplace and effective leadership (Gardner & Stough, 2002) particularly in the higher education industry in Malaysia. Previous studies were mainly focused on the manufacturing or service industries in a Western context. It is hoped that this study will further that understanding and provide organizations particularly institutions of higher education with greater insight into emotional intelligence and effective leadership particularly in an Asian cultural context.

The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence of leaders in institutions of higher learning i.e. academic heads, their leadership style and outcomes of leadership.

In the sections that follow the authors begin with a review of the literature as it relates to emotional intelligence and their hypothesized relationships with outcomes of transformational leadership. The methodology section follows and illustrates the research instruments used. This article concludes with a description of the study's findings and analysis followed by summarizing the implications, conclusions and limitations of this study.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The roots of emotional intelligence theory go back at least to the beginnings of the social intelligence movement identified by E.L Thorndike (1920). The term emotional intelligence (EI) was first introduced by Salovey & Mayer (1990), referring to emotional intelligence as an ability to recognize the meaning of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and solve problems on the basis of them. This definition consists of three categories of abilities: evaluation and expression of emotion, regulation of emotion, and using emotions in decision making. Goleman in 1995 popularized the concept in his groundbreaking best seller *Emotional Intelligence: why it matters more than IQ*. Goleman (1998) in his subsequent book redefines EI as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships”.

While Cooper and Sawaf (1997) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to sense, understand and successfully apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence. Mayer and Caruso (2002) defined emotional intelligence as the capacity to understand and explain emotions, and of the emotions to enhance thought, on the other. The terms – emotion and intelligence have specific, generally agreed upon scientific meanings that indicate the possible ways they can be used together.

Goleman (2002) identified four main domains of emotional intelligence which are self awareness, self management, social awareness and social skill. The current model reflects recent statistical analyses by Richard Boyatzis that supported the collapsing the twenty five competencies into twenty. (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 2000. Self awareness is the capacity to be aware of one’s own feelings and able to carry out accurate self assessment. It requires individuals to understand the connections between what they feel and how they act upon these feelings.

Self management involves managing one’s emotions such that they assist rather than interfere with tasks and the ability to restrain one’s uncontrollable emotions and impulses. Individuals who have this ability are able to stay calm and collected even in times of crisis, remain positive and focused under tremendous amount of stress. Social Awareness determine how individuals manage relationships. Social skill involves being able to inspire and guide individuals, art of influence, communication skills and conflict management competency. In the present study, the Goleman conceptual framework of emotional intelligence was used.

Goleman (1998) argues strongly that emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for successful leadership. Sivanathan and Fekken (2002) conclude in their study that leaders reporting greater emotional intelligence were perceived to be more effective as leaders. According to Gardner and Stough (2002) study, the outcomes of leadership (extra effort, effectiveness and satisfaction) will correlate significantly with the components of emotional intelligence. Therefore, leaders with high levels of emotional intelligence have a higher aptitude to tap into their followers and lead transformationally and as a result lead effectively.

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Bass (1985) reported that employees perceived transformational leaders as effective, and that they would expend effort for the leader, were satisfied with the leader, and performed well.

Emotionally intelligent leaders model behavior, mood and style that create positive resonance throughout their organization impacting commitment, motivation and productivity.

According to Bass (1997), satisfaction is achieved when the leader is working with others in a satisfying way. It is well documented that transformational leadership style are associated with higher ratings of follower satisfaction (Bass, 1990; Robbins, 2001). Leaders high in emotional intelligence are able to accurately appraise how their followers feel and use this information to influence their subordinates' emotions, instill feelings of trust and satisfaction and thus maintain an effective team. Hence it is proposed that **Hypothesis 1, H1**;

There is a significant relationship between the **overall emotional intelligence** of academic heads and lecturers' satisfaction with leadership.

An outcome of leadership is extra effort. The extra effort of a subordinate is characterized by the willingness of the follower to work harder, willingly expand their job descriptions and enhanced commitment to their job.

Bass (1990) stated that transformational leaders increased follower motivation and that by engaging in transformational leadership, these leaders could motivate followers to exert extra effort. Bass further add that a transformational leader could take a follower far beyond what originally was deemed possible. Thus, leaders who are more emotional intelligent would be able to inspire followers extra effort. Hence it is proposed that **Hypothesis 2, H2**;

There is a significant relationship between the overall emotional intelligence of academic heads' and extra effort of lecturers

3. Methodology

This study was conducted using a correlation research design. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) defined correlation research as "research that involves collecting data in order to determine the degree to which a relationship exists between two or more variables". The advantage of correlation research is that it allows the researcher to conduct studies of several variable and their interrelationships at the same time (McMilland and Schumacher, 1993).

Data were collected using a quantitative research methodology. Academic heads were the primary focus, but the data were collected from lecturers to identify lecturers' perception of their academic heads emotional intelligence and the outcomes of transformational leadership (satisfaction and extra effort).

The academic heads of each institution in Malacca were identified and approval was received from them. With their cooperation, the survey instruments were distributed to the lecturers. Upon completion of the survey, the respondents were instructed to place them in unmarked envelope provided.

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Data collection began in January and continued to early June 2009. Collection of results was concluded in early October 2009. 120 surveys were distributed in January – June 2009 of which 93 were returned and used in the study.

The sample size was determined using a power analysis based upon the work of Cohen (1998). For a correlational analysis with an alpha level of 0.5 and a medium effect size, 85 subjects are needed for a power of 0.80. In application to this study, the sample size (n = 93) was more than adequate for a medium effect size.

Two commercially viable survey instruments were adopted and administered. The Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5x) (Bass & Avolio, 1996) was administered to 120 lecturers in various private higher education private institutions in Malaysia. The MLQ measured the variables of transformational leadership style and the outcomes of academic heads leadership in the areas of extra effort and satisfaction with the leader.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire has been examined in over 75 research studies, appearing in journals, dissertations, conference papers and technical reports (Lowe and Kroeck, 1996). Recent studies have indicated that the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is a reliable measure of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire behaviour (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996)

In fact, Bass & Avolio (2000) reported that the MLQ (Form 5X) has been used in over 200 theses and doctoral dissertation exploring and testing the paradigm of transformation and transactional leadership.

In summary, the MLQ has demonstrated sufficient evidence of factorial, concurrent, discriminant and construct validity. (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

The second instrument Emotional Competence Inventory 2.0 (Sala, 2002) was also distributed to lecturers' measuring the emotional intelligence domains of academic heads based on the lecturers perception. The Emotional Competence Inventory is supported by evidence of reliability and validity. Research presented in the technical manual presents predictive validity evidence for both self and total others ratings on the Emotional Competence Inventory (Sala, 2002). The results indicate very good internal consistency reliability for the Emotional Competence Inventory (Sala, 2002).

4. Findings and Analysis

There were 26 male and 67 female lecturers participating in the survey with a response rate of 78%. The age range include 33 (35.5 %) lecturers below the age of 30, 42 (45.2 %) lecturers between the age of 30 and 39, 17 (18.3 %) lecturers between the age 40 and 49 and 1 (1.1 %) lecturer above the age of 50. The level of education included 11 (11.8%) lecturers with a master's degree, 81 (87.1 %) lecturers with a degree and 1 (1.1 %) lecturer with a professional qualification.

Lecturer job satisfaction is achieved when the academic head is working with other team members in a satisfying way. Theoretical literature (Bass and Avolio, 1990) has suggested that leadership style is one of the several influences on job satisfaction.

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It was hypothesized that a significant relationship exists between the variables of satisfaction as perceived by lecturers' and the emotional intelligence of the academic heads.

Table 1. Correlation of Emotional intelligence domains and lecturers' satisfaction

	SELF AWAREN ESS	SELF MANAGEM ENT	SOCIAL AWAREN ESS	SOCI AL SKILL S	TOTA L EI SCO RE	SATISFACT ION
SFI F	1					
SELF	.795(**)	1				
SOCIAL	.636(**)	.724(**)	1			
SOCIAL	.736(**)	.837(**)	.732(**)	1		
TOTAL EI	.858(**)	.949(**)	.831(**)	.942(*	1	
SATISFACT	.556(**)	.670(**)	.523(**)	.634(*	.674(*	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Result of table 1 indicated a significant and positive correlation ($p < .05$) between the four emotional intelligence domains and lecturers' satisfaction. There was a positive ($r=0.674$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between overall emotional intelligence score of academic heads and lecturers' satisfaction with leadership. There was a positive ($r=0.556$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between the academic heads self awareness and lecturers' satisfaction with leadership.

There was a positive ($r=0.670$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between the academic heads self management and lecturers' satisfaction with leadership. There was a positive ($r=0.523$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between the academic heads social awareness and lecturers' satisfaction with leadership. There was a positive ($r=0.634$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between the academic heads social skills and lecturers' satisfaction with leadership. This corresponds to the findings of Wong & Law (2002) in that emotional intelligence of leaders was associated with employee job satisfaction.

The results of this study, demonstrates that academic heads reporting higher emotional intelligence results in higher levels of lecturers' satisfaction with the academic head leadership. Hence hypotheses 1 are supported.

This is in line with Bass (1990) assertion that transformational leaders are able to motivate their subordinates in an effort to achieve the goals of the organization. In doing so, they are able to generate esprit de corps. Job satisfaction is increased because subordinates feel that they are a part of a team that is directed toward the achievement of organizational goals. Subordinates feel that they are valued by the organization and that the leadership cares about them.

Extra effort of a lecturer is measured by a lecturer willingness to try harder, complete more that they are expected to do and have a heightened desire to succeed. The MLQ(5X) was used to evaluate a lecturer extra effort from a lecturers' perspective. It was hypothesized that a significant relationship exists between the extra effort of lecturers and the emotional intelligence of the academic heads.

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Table 2. Correlation of Emotional intelligence domains and extra effort of lecturers.

	SELF AWARENESS	SELF MANAGEMENT	SOCIAL AWARENESS	SOCIAL SKILLS	TOTAL EI SCORE	EXTRA EFFORT
SELF AWARENESS	1					
SELF MANAGEMENT	.795(**)	1				
SOCIAL AWARENESS	.636(**)	.724(**)	1			
SOCIAL SKILLS	.736(**)	.837(**)	.732(**)	1		
TOTAL EI SCORE	.858(**)	.949(**)	.831(**)	.942(**)	1	
EXTRA EFFORT	.568(**)	.642(**)	.541(**)	.613(**)	.662(**)	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 indicated a significant and positive correlation ($p < .05$) between the four emotional intelligence domains and leadership effectiveness. There was a positive ($r=0.662$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between overall emotional intelligence score of academic heads and extra effort of lecturers'.

There was a positive ($r=0.568$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between the academic heads self awareness and extra effort of lecturers', positive ($r=0.642$), significant correlation between the academic heads self management and extra effort of lecturers'. The academic heads social awareness was positively correlated ($r=0.541$) with extra effort of lecturers'. There was a positive ($r=0.613$), significant correlation ($p<0.01$) between the academic heads social skills and extra effort of lecturers'.

The results of this study, demonstrates that academic heads reporting higher emotional intelligence results in higher levels of lecturers' extra effort. Hence, hypotheses 2 are supported. This parallels the findings of Bass (1990) that transformational leadership was associated with employees' willingness to exert extra effort.

This is in line with Asforth and Humphrey (1995) postulation that the positive emotion of the leader elevates subordinates emotional state, and inspires subordinates to outperform with more enthusiasm. A leader must have high level of emotional intelligence in order to gauge the reactions of subordinates and perform accordingly in order to achieve the desired affective arousal of subordinates (George, 2000). This affective commitment has been shown to increase the motivation of subordinates hence extra effort by subordinates (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995).

5. Implications for Practice

As a result of this study finding, there are various implications for educational institutions of higher learning as well as for academic heads who lead these institutions. Current findings indicate significant correlations between emotional intelligence levels of leaders and leadership outcomes of extra effort and lecturer satisfaction.

For organizations, emotional intelligence competencies could be utilized in organizational assessments for hiring, training and development, and promotions of leaders. Leaders through continuous emotional intelligence and leadership

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development can be trained to use a combination of emotional intelligence competencies and transformational leadership style for effective leadership.

6. Limitation of the Study and Recommendations For Future Research

This research had some limitations that will need to be addressed in future research. The study was limited to the higher education institutions in Malacca, Malaysia. Although the study exhausted close to the maximum number of lecturers available at the various higher educational institutions for the study, the sample size remains small. However, the study was able to replicate significant links between the variables found in the past literature.

The results of this study indicate that the relationship between academic heads emotional intelligence and outcomes of leadership merit additional research. Further research using a similar design, with larger samples and in differing context would provide important information.

Further analyses undertaking the comparisons of emotional intelligence competencies between the individual rater group scores (i.e. self scores, deans, peers, direct report and clients) will provide a deeper understanding of the importance of demonstrating particular competencies to each of these distinct groups.

7. Conclusion

Ryback (1998) conclude that a balanced interaction between intellect and emotion or “emotional intelligence” is the basis of effective leadership. It has been proven through this study in H1 and H2 that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and lecturer satisfaction and extra effort.

This study addresses the literature gap regarding emotional intelligence and outcomes of leadership which is satisfaction and extra effort particularly in the Malaysian context. It is crucial that leaders become more aware of emotions and the role they play in leadership effectiveness so that the balanced interaction between emotion and intellect that Ryback (1998) alludes to and thus leadership effectiveness can be achieved.

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