

Emotional Intelligence and Gender Dependent Leadership

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The complexity involved in business processes and organizations requires the managerial leaders to have strong and effective leadership skills. According to Goleman (1998), most effective leaders are alike that they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence which implies that the traditional forms of intelligence alone cannot guarantee success now a days. Hence, the researches focusing on non-traditional forms of intelligence such as emotional intelligence which can contribute towards effective leadership are gaining momentum worldwide. This article examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and gender dependent leadership as more and more women are entering the workforce than ever before. The moderating effect of gender on emotional intelligence as well as on leadership is discussed. Practical implications such as women leaders having equal potential as compared to their male counterparts which are required for becoming an influential leader have also been mentioned.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Gender, Leadership, Transactional leadership, Transformational leadership

Introduction

Each organization aims only at maximizing its productivity and hence cashing on profits. Undoubtedly, it's the human resource which is the most crucial element that can fulfill this aim of any organization. Hence, any factor that can contribute towards the betterment of human resource must be given due consideration in today's era of fierce competition. Over the last decade emotional intelligence (EI) has drawn significant interest from researchers, academics and HR practitioners throughout the world. The first use of the term "emotional intelligence" is usually attributed to Wayne Payne's doctoral thesis, *A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence* (1985). Mayer and Salovey (1993) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. In word of Law et al (2004), emotionally intelligent employees typically performed better which implies that lack of emotional intelligence in employees could negatively affect performance and their relationships at workplace. The influence of Emotional intelligence on many aspects of life has been widely discussed since its introduction. One of the aspects of prime importance is leadership, a skill which is crucial in everyday life, and to every organization. The role of Emotional intelligence on leadership skill has a very significant effect on the performance of the group. In words of Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is the "sine qua non" of leadership. He also adds that the most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way; they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence.

Researches show that leaders who are emotionally intelligent are more competent. This article aims at finding how gender affects emotional intelligence competencies which are essential to become an influential leader.

Emotional intelligence and leadership

As per Chemers (1997, Leadership has been described as "a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. Since last few decades' interpersonal skills have become vital for effective leadership. Leaders previously were seen controlling, planning and inspecting the overall running of an organization but in today's scenario leadership roles are also to motivate and inspire others, to foster positive attitudes at work, and to create a sense of contribution and importance with and among employees (Hogan et al., 1994). Further George (2000) argues that Leadership can be perceived as a particularly emotion-laden process, with emotions entwined with the social influence process. The leader's mood or behavior is a source of how his/her employees react. Hence, we can say that up to a greater extent, a leader's mood shapes employees' behavior and hence workplace events. It has been proposed by Goleman (1998) that as far as leadership is concerned, dealing effectively with emotions may contribute to how one handles the needs of individuals, how one effectively motivates employees, and makes them "feel" at work. The effective leadership skills have been known to depend, in part, on the understanding of emotions and the abilities associated with Emotional Intelligence (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997; Ryback, 1998). According to Goleman (1998), most effective leaders

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are alike in they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence ,without it, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive analytic mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won't make a great leader” . Earlier there were many theories and approaches towards leadership but in recent years the studies are focusing mainly on two types of leadership theories namely transformational and transactional. Burns (1987) proposed that leadership process occurs in one of two ways, either transactional or transformational. Even Hackman, et al., (1992), says that current developments in leadership have focused mainly on transformational and transactional approaches. According to Burns, transformational leadership is a process in which "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation". Transformational leadership behavior in managers has been widely linked to positive individual and organizational consequences (Bass, 1998).Where as transactional leaders tend to focus on task completion and employee compliance, and these leaders rely quite heavily on organizational rewards and punishments to influence employee performance (Burns, 1987). The distinguishing factor between 'Transformational' leaders and 'Transactional leaders' is the relatively greater passionate commitment by the former for the organizations' future and their ability to share that vision. Transformational' leaders arouse heightened awareness and interests in the group or organization, increase confidence and strengthen concerns for existence to concerns for achievement and growth which lead to the development of competencies among the lower levels (Vaishali & Kumar, 2001).Hence it can be concluded that transactional style of leadership is actually passive in nature whereas the transformational leaders are proactive in their approach and they engage with their followers and motivate them. From the above discussion on transactional and transformational leadership it can be inferred that transformational leaders will achieve higher levels of success as compared to their transactional counterparts and hence will produce much better financial results for the organization too as they provide individualized consideration to their followers and can hence motivate them easily. We also notice as per the definition of transformational and transactional leadership that the former is based more on emotions and hence the leaders having that kind of approach will be more emotionally intelligent than their transactional counterparts. Also, now day's women hold a prominent presence in organizations at different managerial positions, hence, more attention is being devoted towards the differences between the leadership styles of female leaders and their male counterparts.

Women in leadership

Women are increasingly showing their mettle as managers and executives in organizations. Since the past few decades women are entering the workforce in increasing numbers but they did face discrimination initially .one of the reasons why women leaders were so sparse in number in various leadership

positions can be attributed to the fact that leaders tend to foster self replication; that is, the leaders already in power structure favor those of their subordinates for mentoring and hiring for various leadership positions who show resemblance with their leadership styles. Since previously mostly the organizations were male dominated therefore their successors were also male as these potential leaders had certain traits(masculine) which were in sync with their seniors which the female employees lacked and hence were denied senior management roles. In the 1970's important laws were enacted opposing gender discrimination and pay disparities between men and women (Miller K,2006)as these women were facing the 'glass ceiling', which is described as a “transparent barrier preventing women from ascending management hierarchies”. Their number is showing a rise as the business world is finally realizing the benefits of a workforce which is more diverse in terms of gender. When women are continually being better represented in leadership positions, the similarities and differences between male and female leader's styles are gaining much importance. Women are considered to be feminine in approach (caring, nurturing etc) while men are considered as confident, assertive, ambitious and independent (Eagely et al, 2001) which are most commonly referred to as masculine traits. These traits which are noticed in both the genders respectively can be attributed to their upbringing .Since, previously male workers were more prominent in the organizations hence their leadership styles were widely accepted which fall broadly in the category of transactional leadership as it involved contingent rewards based on compliance. When women workers started entering the workforce at an accelerated pace they brought with them all the traits and characteristics which are common to their personalities which can mostly be categorized under transformational leadership. All this resulted in women facing opposition against their styles of management and they even faced discrimination for the same and hence were forced to adopt the masculine leadership traits (Rosener, 1990). As more and more women are entering the workforce, now they are less pressured to adopt accepted “masculine” or transactional management traits. Their style involves collaborating with subordinates during decision making, being empathetic and self-aware and using other cooperative approaches, such as supportive team building, rather than simply self-interest (Lesley Sykes, 2008) which again forms the basis of transformational leadership style but it is now days not only confined to female workers as many male workers have also adopted this style and their number continues to be growing.

Transactional vs transformational approach and the moderating effect of gender

There are noticeable differences in the emotional intelligence scores of male and female managers. The emotional intelligence scores of females was higher than that for males which suggests that females might be better at managing their emotions and the emotions of others as compared to males (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999; Mayer & Geher, 1996).Since

transformational leadership is based mostly on the use of emotions we can conclude that women are mostly transformational in their approach as their higher emotional intelligence can be related to their socially sensitive nature as a result of biological differences and upbringing as compared to men. But this way of leading should not be attributed to females alone, since many men leaders have also adopted this more emotionally intelligent style of leadership which contradicts the belief that there is difference between men and women's styles of leadership in contemporary organizations. Even, Goleman agrees that each gender might be proficient in certain emotional intelligence competency. For e.g. For example, female leaders tend to score higher in empathy, interpersonal relationships and social responsibility, while male leaders score higher in stress tolerance, impulse control and adaptability (Bass, 2000) which also implies that both female as well as male managers may be equally emotionally intelligent but a particular gender might be having certain emotional intelligence competency as their strength which their counterparts might be lacking but they might be performing well as far as other emotional intelligence competency is concerned. Thus it becomes quite evident that gender has no such moderating effect on leadership as even male leaders can be transformational in their approach if they are emotionally intelligent. The message that lies hidden in all these studies is that women are finally getting recognized for their performance and their leadership style and that the management of organizations are increasingly recognizing these emotional intelligence competencies to cash on the profits.

Conclusion

Leaders effect an organization and its performance. Their style of functioning (leadership) determines the organizational effectiveness. We now can conclude that transformational leaders have greater influence on the performance and competencies of their employees than transactional one's. With all the literature available to us we are now aware that gender doesn't have any moderating effect on leadership and that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. Even male managers can lead more successfully by adopting emotional intelligence competencies in their work style because this form of intelligence can be learned too. Even organizations can make use of this skill and teach their male leaders to be more effective by organizing mentoring and leadership development programs for them. This information can be highly beneficial for organizations as it can make their hiring and promoting policies even easier. Knowledge of emotional intelligence and its effect on transformational leadership would help them in identifying and training potential business leaders. Since, it is found that female leaders naturally and mostly use transformational style of leadership it would further contribute to shattering the "glass ceiling", as women would increasingly get selected to occupy managerial positions owing to their

effective leadership capabilities. It would also encourage the mentoring and leadership development of women as they would be looked upon by their organizations as effective potential leader. Since it is quite obvious that women have equal potential as men to be an effective leader, organizations must not be stereotyped in their approach and adopt a fair and diverse leadership development. The relationship between gender, having high emotional intelligence and being a successful business leader are all interrelated. But, the degree of effectiveness of leadership cannot be attributed to gender alone although particular feminine and masculine trait might score well on emotional intelligence scale. Hence, we can conclude that it is emotional intelligence which is becoming more established in the business world through these studies owing to its importance with respect to leadership.

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