



EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES IN EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP – A NEED OF THE HOUR

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Abstract

The ongoing research on leadership exemplify that leadership is all about the application of right set of competencies. Contemporary leadership demands the leader to be the strongest pillar and source of inspiration for tapping unflinching milestones. The responsibility of global leaders has become ever changing. Leaders are expected to assume some out of the box competencies and expand their discretionary behavior to keep performing. The paper describes the role of certain competencies required by effective leaders. Especially the roles of emotional and social competencies in leadership effectiveness need to be explored. This paper ensures the purpose of understanding the role of certain competencies in exhibiting specific leadership behaviors. The paper proposes a framework with the support of appropriate literature and suggests a research agenda. This conceptual framework provides an insight into the specific role of emotional and social skills required for specific leadership behaviors and illustrate a progressive thinking in how to develop certain emotional and social skills in leader.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Competence, Social Intelligence, Social Competence, Leadership Effectiveness.

“Like how moods are contagious, vulnerability of leaders at work places is contagious. Vulnerability in sharing insights makes the people also to open up. These leaders are real leaders at heart”

-Tommy Spaulding, Author for Heart Led Leadership

1. Introduction

A self organized leader can bring lot of difference to organization. Self – organization is the ability to handle one- self with integrity and clearly inculcate core values and beliefs in everything that comes in one’s way. The repetitive application of these core values and integrity moulds a person to be competent enough to deal with complex situations and persons. Hence work places are in need of self-organized and competent leaders. Literature approves the same thing. According to **Mintzberg (1973)** the competencies like empathy, interpersonal skills play a critical role for a person to be effective. Later on so many researchers supported the fact that leadership is all about managing and exhibiting competencies at right time with the advent of interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills like empathy, social skills, relationship management etc has emerged in the literature as the strong predictors of effective leadership (**Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008**). Hence it is observed from the literature that strong possession of interpersonal competencies by leaders brings clarity in their role as leader at workplaces. There is no doubt the strongly emerged interpersonal skills are emotional and social competencies (ESCs). ESCs are multi dimensional skills that cause self emotional awareness and also of others and aids to maintain social relationship so as to create organizational awareness.

This paper provides an insight on the interventions of emotional and social intelligence competencies on effective leadership. The paper views leadership as one of those entities of organization, which decides the organizational learning and development. Leaders’ primarily human beings exhibit a range of human moods and emotions at work places. What matters most is the vulnerability a leader display when he/she managing those moods in a way possible for positive results. Not all moods lead to positivity but the underlying fact is moods are contagious. So it is a progressive sign for leaders to manage all moods and emotions in certain manner that leads to synergy of emotional stability and social awareness. The study of this synergy is the objective of this paper. The study comes up with an early framework which needs research and also compares specific emotional and social intelligence competencies in effective leadership. The study measures required propositions of the study to construct the framework. Hence the objectives of this paper are listed under:

2. Objectives of the Study

- To study the role of synergy of emotional intelligence and social intelligence in effective leadership.
- To analyze and study the required propositions with the advent of literature.
- To discuss the role of emotional and social competencies in specific leadership behaviour.

3. Review of Literature

Emotional Intelligence has its roots from centuries and gained momentum in this century due to its contribution in personal and professional progress. It evolved as one of the major research constructs in behavioral sciences when **Thorndike (1920)**

first introduced the concept of social intelligence as a combination of motivational intelligence and emotional intelligence. It is then the world realized the limitation of cognitive factors and the exclusive role of non-cognitive factors in achievements of life. But the real value addition occurred when **Mayer-Salovey (1990)** defined Emotional Intelligence as “ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings, to discriminate among them and to use this information to one’s own thinking and action”. Hence EI is the **ability** to understand emotional triggers from the social situations around and draw information regarding interpersonal and intrapersonal components. This information of emotions makes one to behave as ‘human’ and shore up the rational decision making capabilities. Their four branch model of EI (**Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 1990**) as a cognitive ability explains the ability perspective of intelligent component.

- **Perceiving Emotions:** The ability to perceive emotions in oneself and others as well as in other objects, art, stories etc. and other stimuli.
- **Facilitating Thoughts:** The ability to generate, feel and use emotions as necessary to communicate feelings or employ them in other processes.
- **Understanding Emotions:** The ability to understand emotional information, to understand how emotion can combine and progress through relationship transitions, and to appreciate such emotional meanings.
- **Managing Emotions:** The ability to open up feelings, the ability to modulate them in oneself and others so as to promote personal understanding and growth.

Later **Reuven Baron (2002)** described EI as an “array of emotional and social competencies, skills and behavior that impact intelligent behavior”. His definition is universally popular as **trait perspective of EI**. The following are the five components of EI in Baron Model: Self Perception, Interpersonal, Decision Making, Self –Expression and Stress Management.

Goleman (1998) proposed a model of EI which is considered to be mixed perspective had been considered as the first phenomenal research on EI. His research on EI connected this construct to the workplace variables like leadership, stress, and decision-making skills, effective communication skills etc. He believed EI as set of competencies that one can learn and develop with the help of innate intelligence. The four components of Goleman’s EI are: Self awareness, Self management, Empathy and Relationship Management. These three models are considered to be the backbone models of Emotional Intelligence as they conferred the world about the huge role of non cognitive abilities in personal and professional success. The debate on three forms of EI whether it is knowledge, trait and ability depicted EI in three forms and influential amount of research had been done on these **three depictions (Milkolajczack, 2009)**.

EI as Ability: Knowledge of emotions (How far people know about their own feelings and their intensity)

EI as Trait: Practice or applicability (How far people practice the knowledge about their emotions)

EI as Competency: Consistency and adaptability (How far people deal with different range of emotions like fear, anxiety etc with consistency and also of others with consistency).

The outcome of all those research confers that Emotional Intelligence is the essential intelligence like abstract intelligence, mechanical intelligence and social intelligence and is highly associated with self esteem, well being and happiness (**Gallagher & Vella, 2008; Scutte & Malouff, 2002**). So the ongoing research on EI must focus not on the ability to accept the emotions and act according to situations, but on the ability to do that acceptance consistently. Hence Emotional Competence (EC) is of more significance in intelligence as it deals with the ability to deal with emotions in the right manner consistently (**Brasseur et.al. 2013**). Emotional Competence in literature has more significance with the personality variables like self-esteem, psychological well being, long live happiness and work place variables like high performance, achievements, inspiration. EC is highly correlated with high performance of jobs especially with high interpersonal nature.

Social intelligence is a construct developed and investigated by the research world from many decades. **Thorndike (1920)** when first proposed this term, he defined it as the “ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls- to act wisely in human relationships.” Later after lot of critical inceptions **Mayer (1993)**, Thorndike and **Zacarro et.al (1991)** enhanced it by defining the two components for social intelligence namely a) being aware of other’s needs and problems b) responding or adapting different social situations. Several studies investigated convergent and divergent validity of the construct and generated empirical evidence to state that social intelligence is the best predictor for behavior. It is so assertive to state that leadership too consist a social component. Several studies investigated the contributions of social intelligence to leadership. The remarkable outcomes are reviewed here. Effective leaders are those who spend quality time in understanding the needs of the employees and respond accordingly. Leaders need social intelligence to asses themselves and also their relationship with others. Few studies empirically predicted social intelligence is one of the best components among multiple intelligences a leader should acquire.

Zacarro (1991) predicted that social intelligence improves behavioral flexibility in leaders through understanding needs of people and responding according to that. **Goleman & Boyatzis (2008)** identified several performance differentials in leaders who are socially intelligent and socially not intelligent. They even predicted social intelligence contributed to leaders more in handling crisis situations. In their article on Social Intelligence and Biology of Leadership they proposed that “Leading effectively is less about mastering situations-or even mastering social skill sets, than about developing a genuine interest in and talent for fostering positive feelings in people whose cooperation and support you need.”(**Lisa Brice, 2011**) They go on define “Social Intelligence as a set of interpersonal competencies built on specific neural circuits that inspire others to be effective.”

Thus, it is observed from the related literature that Emotional and social skills stimulates an interpersonal skill which is a key component of effective leadership. Interestingly in the literature only few frameworks were available to study the network of emotional and social skills and effective leadership and these frameworks also never attempted to address the exact role of specific emotional and social competency in specific leadership behavior. There exists a lot of scope for the new entrants to explore this particular aspect. Therefore we attempted to explore this need to be explored area and proposed the following framework which is not only prudent but also has the advantage of valid measurement tools and more emphasis on specific skills.

4. Proposed Framework for Emotional and Social Intelligence Competencies for Effective Leadership

Based on the above literature review, this proposed framework mainly grounded on the fact that emotional and social competencies (ESCs) stimulate interpersonal skills which in turn a key component for effective leadership. To support this aspect the selection of competencies made on two factors like the proximate intensity of specific competency to theoretical discussion and availability of validated measure. The following are the two emotional competencies (EC):

1. Intrapersonal EC
2. Interpersonal EC

While Interpersonal EC is the ability to identify, understand, use, manage and regulate emotions in self and interpersonal EC is the ability to identify, understand, use, manage and regulate emotions in others. The following are the three social competencies:

- Social Information Processing(SIP)
- Social Skills(SS)
- Social Awareness(SA)

While SIP is the empathic understanding of social conversations, SS is the ability to communicate and maintain interpersonal relationships; SA is the ability to act in accordance to the situation. The two emotional intelligence competencies are associated with model of **Mayer, Salovey & Caruso (1990)** broadened by Profile of Emotional Competence (PEC; **Brassuer and Milkolajczac, 2013**). The three social intelligence competencies are associated with social intelligence by **Silvera et al (2001)** to understand and measure the social intelligence level. The following table presents the right picture of the current proposed framework.

Framework for emotional and social intelligence competencies for effective leadership

Competency	Definition	Expected Leadership Behavior
Intrapersonal EC	Ability to identify, understand, use, manage and regulate one's own emotions.	Clearly defining own role and letting group members know what is expected of them, planning and organizing the group tasks, encouraging use of uniform procedures, trying out new ideas in the group, clarifying own attitudes to the group, deciding for the group members what they should do and how they should do
Interpersonal EC	Ability to identify, understand, use, manage and regulate emotions in others.	Being friendly, Approachable, creating pleasant group interactions, implementing suggestions made by group members, treating them as casual, giving advance information about changes
Social Information Processing	Ability of understanding verbal or nonverbal messages regarding human relations, empathizing and reading hidden messages as	Allowing group members related autonomy, encouraging them to use their own judgment in problem solving, relaxation of control after task assignment, trust in group members and encouraging the group to set their

	well as explicit messages.	own pace.
Social Skills	Basic communication skills such as active listening, acting boldly, establishing, maintaining, and breaking up a relationship	Maintaining closely-knit organization and resolving team member's conflicts and exhibiting empathy.
Social Awareness	Ability of active behaving in accordance with the situation place, and time	Reconciling conflicting demands and reducing disorder in the group and exhibit Tolerance of uncertainty and postponement of decisions without anxiety.

Source: Author's Findings through review of literature and propositions.

5. Research Propositions

P1: *Intrapersonal Emotional Competency is positively associated with Leader's Initiation of a Structure in organization.*

As the definition suggests that intrapersonal EC is the ability to identify and express emotions in self in such a manner so as to understand clearly one self. The leaders with high intrapersonal EC can exhibit idealized on others as they clearly know about their emotions (**Bass & Avolio, 1994**). These leaders are mostly transformational in nature as they can easily express their identified emotions. Intrapersonal EC is the starting point of all emotional expressiveness. An emotion or certain mood rightly identified is rightly delivered. Leaders who have high intrapersonal skills completely know their self expectations and goals and can be effectively exhibit clear vision and establish discipline among followers and take more initiation in delivering results. According to **Keller (1995)** leaders with high intrapersonal skills can produce high results as they can easily establish clear vision among groups and influence them to achieve results. Hence there is a wide scope of research and explore association between interpersonal EC and leader's initiative of structure in organization.

P2: *Interpersonal Emotional Competency is positively associated with Leader's Relationship Management in delivering results.*

Decades of research on leadership suggested that "People Skills" are most essential at work places (**Riggio & Lee, 2007**). What drives the teams to achieve results mostly at work places is not vision, clarity, skills etc; instead it is the emotional intelligence of leader (**Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008**). The emotions of leaders at workplace are mostly contagious in nature hence what matters most is the ability of leader to express and manage those emotions at workplaces (**Goleman, 2000**). Interpersonal emotional competence is defined as the ability to identify, understand, use and manage emotions of others. Interpersonal competencies facilitate leaders to apply this ability of reading and understanding the emotions of team. There exist strong correlation between EI and interpersonal competence of leaders which moulds them good relationship managers at workplaces (**Riggio & Lee, 2007**). With the emergence of globalization and workforce diversity, there is a scope for a variety of situations at workplace where leaders have to multitask of understanding people's emotion, changes ahead and the impact of their managerial styles. Obviously the current global leaders should carry a baggage of multi dimensional skills everywhere as they are more responsible for the key deliverables. We suggest the further research on leadership should focus more about the accurate grounded competencies that a leader should possess to multitask. The further exploration of the association of these two variables may result in the prediction of the exact level of synergy of emotional competence and interpersonal skills a leader is in need of.

P3: *Leader social information processing is strongly associated with the progression of leader empathy.*

Social information processing is defined as the ability of understanding verbal or nonverbal messages regarding human relations, empathizing and reading hidden messages as well as explicit messages. To be perceived as leader by others is the challenging job for leaders at workplace. The threshold of being effective leader is to understand the intent of social element involved in the process of executing leadership. social information processing assists the leader to process the unspoken emotions at workplace especially at the time of crisis. This ability improves of rationale of leader in decision making and gives the ability to trust their followers (**Maher & Lord, 1995**). Information processing is strongly correlated with those factors of leadership that establish trust between leader and team. The considerable amount of research is not available about the exact role of social information processing ability in developing empathetic leaders. So the further research in this aspect may highlight the need of development of this ability to increase the authentic empathy of leader.

P4: *Leader social skills are positively associated to be socially intelligent and to enact the role of leadership.*

Basic communication skills such as active listening, acting boldly, establishing, maintaining, and breaking up a relationship to maintain closely knit relation within organization are key contextual responsibilities of leaders. Social skills are exactly these abilities. Virtual workplaces have created big challenge of handling flow of information in organizations. Traditional



Corporate communication taught us how to be alive in terms of knowledge flow between different departments at workplace. Significant strategies were proposed and practiced to keep the business environment dynamic and sophisticated. Now as the world is ever changing, contingent leaders are in need of flexible communication channels that enhance their bottom line results. The two year long research conducted by group of researchers from HBR on how to achieve flexibility in communication at workplaces on blue chip, profit, non-profit, large, medium and small organizations has revealed to one insightful outcome that “leadership is a conversation”. According to this work, being conversational rather than passing commands, leaders can gain some of the significant results like a) Operational Flexibility b) High Levels of Employee Engagement c) Tight Strategic Alignment to outperform competitors (**Groyberg & Slind,2012**). The three mentioned above have been the strong predictors of organizational effectiveness. To implement this strategy by leaders in organizations need to understand the components of conversations. Hence this exploration of the association between social skills of leaders and the effectiveness of leadership may open new scope for developing strategies that enhances the role of conversations and communication in the life of leaders.

P5: Leader social awareness is positively associated with their tolerance of uncertainty.

Social awareness is the ability to act according to the situation and time. Tolerance of uncertainty is the trait required by the leaders to deal with sudden demands and to reduce disorder in groups and establish order even in the situation of crises. There is lot of research available in the literature about how a leader should be vulnerable to all situations and stay positive all the time so as to keep the things going but very few researchers attempted the area of what it takes for a leader to deal with negative emotions. What is that required for a leader to deal with uncertainties. Hence the more study on the skill of social awareness and how to aids leader to deal with uncertainties and negative emotions is needed.

6. Discussion and Future Research Agenda of the Study

Based on the existing research in the series of this research propositions observe that most of the studies conducted in the past has emerged a fact that emotional intelligence and social intelligence are the strong predictors of leadership effectiveness. Thus, leadership really needs the emotional and social competence to enact the role as a leader. It is also observed that the research on leadership in Indian context is still in the nascent stage and there is a drastic need to address so many issues like

- a) What is the role of synergy between emotional and social counterparts in intellect of leaders?
- b) What makes a leader emotionally and socially intelligent?
- c) What is the role of emotional social competence in the effective leadership?
- d) How to manage negative emotions at workplace as a leader?
- e) What is the role of individual emotional and social competence in improving specific leadership behavior?

The current study with the support of past literature meaningfully arrived at the conclusion that the two emotional intelligence competencies namely interpersonal EC and intrapersonal EC and the three social intelligence competencies namely social information processing, social skills and social awareness are the basic level of developing emotional and social intellect in leaders. Through review of literature it is also identified that these variables have strong correlations with all those factors that progress the effectiveness of leadership. Therefore, the proposed framework with the research propositions is the need of the hour in leadership research. We suggest that the study with the following proposed hypotheses may lead to some phenomenal results that can open another new era of excellence in leadership.

P1: Intrapersonal Emotional Competency is positively associated with Leader’s Initiation of a Structure in organization.

P2: Interpersonal Emotional Competency is positively associated with Leader’s Relationship Management in delivering results.

P3: Leader social information processing is strongly associated with the progression of leader empathy.

P4: Leader social skills are positively associated to be socially intelligent and to enact the role of leadership.

P5: Leader social awareness is positively associated with their tolerance of uncertainty.

The study formulated to measure and study these propositions as hypotheses has a very wide scope for research and also applications. The outcome of this study may attempt to address the results of synergy of emotional and skills in leadership. We suggest that this study on the role of emotional and social intelligence competence can be targeted for the assessment of effective leadership and also address that the specific competencies required for specific leadership roles.

7. Conclusion

“People Skills: are the strong predictors for effective leadership.. To maintain interpersonal relations is the most challenging task of leaders of global business environment, to communicate and manage is not enough anymore. To converse intimately with emotional awareness of self and others with strong intentionality and inclusion of social content is what matters. Every

conversation of leader should influence and inspire team to maintain relationship with organization. Therefore, now leadership is need of “extended people skills” phase. We suggest that this research can add the significance to this skill set by focussing on the synergy of emotional and social intelligence competence.

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