

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

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ABSTRACT

The present field study investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership behaviors. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and have emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence may be relevant to managers because leadership is an emotion-laden process, both from the leader and the follower perspective. Leadership may be more the creation in the minds of followers than the characteristics of those who occupy leadership roles. How and why leaders succeed in influencing their followers is still a compelling question for leadership researchers (George, J. M. 2000).

Two hundred and sixty three managers who participated in a one-week leadership development program at a major public university agreed to have the data from their leadership and emotional intelligence assessment contribute to this study. The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQI) by Reuven Bar-On (1985) was used to measure five major factors of emotional intelligence: intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and mood. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) by Kouzes and Posner (1998) was used to measure five factors of leadership behavior: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Participants were sent copies of the LPI for self and direct reports, peers and immediate manager to complete. Participating managers also completed the EQI. Participants received reports of LPI and EQI results during the leadership development program.

The results of a hierarchical regression analysis based on 263 managers and 1093 direct reports indicated that all five leadership behaviors were significantly related to factors of emotional intelligence. Three EQI factors, interpersonal, adaptability and stress management had significant R^2 relationships the LPI factor, encouraging the heart. Stress management was one of the consistent emotional intelligence factors that correlated with leadership behaviors, explaining 18% of the variance in encouraging the heart, 16% in modeling desired behaviors, and 25% in enabling others to act. However the variance EQI explained with other leadership behaviors was in the 5% range. It was surprising the mood did not yield significant correlations with leadership behaviors. Perhaps this was due to the emotional intelligence instrument we used. In light of all the publicity about the value of emotional intelligence, we think it is critical that research continue to empirically test the relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence.