

Leader Emotional Capital Matters in The Automotive Manufacturing Industry

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Abstract: The ability of an organisation to adapt to constant change determines its long-term viability. Organisations that understand the value of excellent leadership in organisational performance will see growth and sustainable profitability. This research focused on the automotive industry in Isipingo, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. To thrive and remain competitive, the automotive sector must adapt to changing conditions, be efficient, and respond rapidly to external forces. Managers are frequently challenged with balancing the frustrations of different interest groups within the sector; becoming skilled and successful leaders; and steering the organisation in the appropriate direction. The emotional competency of employees is a valuable resource designated as emotional capital. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the emotions of leadership influence employee performance in this Industry Therefore, the research question entailed, what is the role of leaders' emotions? Analysis of extant literature was related to aspects that impact leaders' emotional capability. The main variables included emotional capital, leadership, emotions, and employee performance. This study was based on a quantitative approach. Primary data was collected through a survey which was analysed using Spearman's rho correlation. The results highlighted how a leader's emotions affect employees and demonstrated a substantial association between employee performance and the leader's overall emotional state. It was determined that a leader's emotions can have both beneficial and negative effects on employee performance. The recommendations offered useful advice on how to choose tactics that would yield appropriate results for the organisation to be sustainable.

Keywords: Emotions, Employee performance, Leadership Influence, Sustainability

1. Introduction

The ability of organisations to adapt to constant change determines their long-term viability. Organisations that recognise the importance of strong leadership in organisational performance will achieve growth and sustained profitability. The complexity of business environments in today's fast-paced world, mainly in the Automotive Manufacturing industry necessitates businesses to hire leaders with good management skills as well as strong intrapersonal and interpersonal skills (Goleman 1998). Leaders who cannot distinguish and measure their emotions may miss critical signals from co-workers or subordinates. Similarly, managers who exhibit poor emotional management could allow their feelings to affect their leadership effectiveness. This research is based on the Automotive industry in Isipingo, Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. Toyota South African Motors plays a major role in supporting the economy and are leaders on the market in South Africa. The company also has a worldwide approach that prioritises efficiency, as well as a framework that allows for varied levels of plan and process coordination. To thrive and remain competitive, the Automotive industry must adjust to the new circumstances, be effective and react quickly to external influences. For a business to be successful, it must address the demands of its clients, which necessitates being locally relevant. Hence, the Automotive industry must be flexible and adapt to changes rapidly if they are to thrive and remain competitive in this rapidly changing environment. When an industry culture is excessively rigid, it is hard for its leaders to adjust or evolve, which often leads to conflict. Task abilities and technical knowledge are not enough for managers who are frequently confronted with reconciling the frustrations of conflicting interest groups within the industries. To be competent and successful leaders and to drive the organisation on the right path, these managers will need interpersonal and intrapersonal skills amongst their employees (Tyagi, 2013). This article highlights the results of a research study that investigated whether the emotions of leadership influence employee performance in the Automotive Manufacturing Industry. Through an in-depth look at leaders' emotional capital, this study helps to illustrate ways possible that managers may combine leadership standards and emotional capital to deal with the day-to-day problems of their jobs. The paper provides a review of literature related to sustainability, leadership and leadership development. This is followed by an overview of the methodology and key results of the study, discussion as well as a conclusion.

2. A Review of Extant Literature

2.1 The Notion of Emotional Capital

The term 'capital' comes from economic discourse and describes a supply of capital that can be traced back to its origins and returns (Gendron 2013). Capital was traditionally thought of as tangible goods that were utilised and useful during the production process, according to traditional economic theory. However, the idea of capital has evolved into a more general method of thought, especially in cases where some elements of its definition offer a helpful framework for thinking in a different field (Gendron et al. 2016). Emotional capital is explained as the skills or routines that translate the control of emotions into numerous social advantages (Froyum 2010). Moreover, emotional capital refers to the sources that are advantageous for the development of an individual's career, personal, and organisational (Gendron 2004). The idea of emotional capital was created by Nowotny (1981). As a result of relationships, social and cultural elements known as emotional capital have formed (Reay 2004). A person's behaviour, relationships, key decisions, and even their economic activities are all influenced by their emotions, which are unique and stem from their personal feelings (Newman 2008).

2.2 The Leadership Construct

The idea of leadership is complex and constantly changing. According to Robertson (2007), Benmira and Agboola (2021), leadership includes the deliberate acts that have an impact on the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning. Some people seem to emit a field of influence that others will react to in a similar way to how iron filings align in a magnetic field (Northouse 1997; Bennis 2009). A leader is always determined by self-interest—not by any specific goal, nor by the desire to pursue personal perfection (Northouse 2007). The longing to thrive drives the best leaders as it is a desire and a source of great personal fulfilment. According to Northouse (2007), effective leadership is the process of motivating a team of individuals to strive towards a shared goal.

2.2.1 Leadership Theories

In recent years, experts have focused on a leader's psychological and charismatic qualities. Early studies on leadership frequently saw a leader as a strategist rather than as an inspirational person (Arnold et al., 2005). Leaders were viewed as those who could encourage their subordinates and help the organisation succeed by motivating teams to work towards shared objectives. This is supported by the definition of leadership provided by Yulk and Van (1992) and Ahmed and Nawaz (2016), who define it as a process that affects an organisation's task objectives and strategies; motivates employees to carry out the strategies and objectives; and shapes the organisation's culture.

Many theories have been proposed about leadership and leaders' attributes since it became clear that leadership involves more than the application of reasoning and practical skills. For instance, it is said that leadership entails the capacity to shape the behaviour of others; the possession of a range of abilities, such as strong conceptual and analytical abilities to shape the goals and strategies of a task; and interpersonal and persuasion abilities to persuade others to carry out plans and strategies (Jex & Britt, 2008). Leadership is sometimes viewed as a process rather than an end-product. To make sure the team works together efficiently, leaders have a number of responsibilities. For instance, leaders must set team goals, create strategies to reach those goals, put those strategies into practice and maintain them, and ensure that the team adheres to the organisation's culture.

2.2.2 Emotions and the Link with Leadership

Over time, researchers have come to understand that there are other qualities that make for good leaders, in addition to intelligence. For leaders, especially when working with others, the ability to handle emotions wisely is crucial (Goleman et al. 2002). Prior leadership theorists believed that certain behaviours, independent of the situation, were necessary for leaders to exhibit in order to be effective (Arnold et al. 2005). In contrast, leaders who can adjust to a diversity of circumstances in the actual world are required. The authorities must be adaptable in this situation. To address this weakness, Fiedler (1967) and Yusof et al. (2013), suggested a contingency theory of leadership, stating that a leader's success is measured by the circumstances in which they find themselves and how their personal traits respond. He also mentioned that depending on the situation, a leader is required to adjust accordingly.

Later, Fiedler (1995) and Siebert-Adzic (2012) made known a new resource, suggesting that some cases will require a leader to use experience rather than intellect to address any situation at a workplace. He thought that leaders might use their proficiency as a guide to handle a variety of scenarios that arise in the workplace, which could be solved better when using emotional capital. Vroom and Yetton (1998) and Karakus et al. (2021) argued that it is crucial for a leader to be flexible in decision-making. In 1998, their theory proposed that leaders must be able to adjust to any situation at work. They affirm that a variety of factors, including time restraints, clearly defined decision parameters and subordinates' approaches, can affect the nature of a scenario. Leaders need to use emotions as a skill to judge a situation. Leaders who are emotionally capable respond better to difficult situations, and their decisions are not based on emotions.

2.2.3 Leadership and the Nexus with Organisational Performance

It is widely understood that strong leadership is a prerequisite for effective organisations, and that if this requirement is disregarded, the organisation's performance will suffer (Fatma and Adiguzel 2020). High-performing businesses are able to deliver a number of benefits for their businesses and society, including resource attraction, income development and employment creation, according to Madrid-Guijarro et al. (2007). Employee potential is transformed into reality by leadership. Leadership in transition is more challenging than anticipated and involves a variety of approaches, concepts and strategies, only some of which are successful (Jeffrey and Laurie 2012).

Charismatic individuals are regularly sought after by organisations in need of strategic transformation in order to lead change initiatives. Leadership is always supportive of fostering innovation through culture, which leads to better results (Dissanayake, Norsanina and Hamid 2017). Strategic teams may be a better option for organisational transformation than full of personality leaders (Landrum, Howell and Lori 2000). Creating a common vision for the company; managing personnel and activities across divisions; disseminating information throughout the entire organisation; identifying and correcting activity deviations; and inspiring workers to work harder are just a few of the managerial tasks carried out by the leadership. Stakeholder agency or relationships are necessary for the corporation to perform (Kahandawaarachchi, Dissanayake and Maitra 2016).

2.3 Performance – Individual and Organisational

Performance in an organisational setting is frequently determined by how much a member of the organisation contributes to attaining its goals. Employees are the primary source of competitive advantage for organisations that specialise in providing services. Employee performance is the essential component of every business and the most crucial aspect for the profitability and effectiveness of the business (Sabir et al. 2012). Both the employee's actions and inactions are used to assess performance. Employee performance comprises output quantity and quality, attendance at work, courtesy and adaptability, and milestones of output. Individual performance was the subject of Yang's (2008) study, and the results showed that it was difficult to confirm an individual's performance. In a similar vein, he claims that corporations may apply merits depending on individual success (Yang 2008). Most organisations rely on their employees. To reach the goals and objectives of the organisation, all employees, including leaders, must give their best performance, effort and make the best use of their skills. Organisations have certain demands on both their leadership and employees. Employees therefore strive to meet these expectations in many circumstances, but occasionally they are reliant on their leaders for direction (Sabir et al. 2012). The question of how an employee may be competent and effective in enhancing the modernity, performance and productivity of an organisation arises. An effective leadership strategy can be a powerful tool for finding and refining leadership qualities amongst the organisation's staff.

2.3.1 The Role of Leaders in Employee Performance

There is an adverse relationship between job satisfaction and transformational leadership, according to several empirical studies (Draft 1988; Pacasila 2020). The concept develops into a shared vision as subordinates work to make it a reality. Stated differently, many transformational leadership behaviours, such as assigned full of personality, idealised impact, inspirational motivation, stimulating thoughts, and individualised concern, can be used to identify the transformational process (Bass and Avolio 2003). To achieve organisational objectives, a leader who employs transformational leadership offers his team members the freedom and trust to execute their functions in accordance with his philosophy.

Butler (1999), Farooqui and Nagendra (2014), mentioned that a transformational leader motivates followers to have a vision, a mission and organisational goals. Transformative leadership has the potential to increase

employee happiness more than indifferent or uninterested leadership. According to professionals, leadership that is solely concerned with employee output and ignores the opinions of its followers will not be successful in obtaining the best performance from its workforce (Cummings 2010).

3. Methodology

This section discusses the methodology, the research design, the data sources, the target population, as well as the data sampling methods and sample size, data collection tools. Research provides the opportunity to ascertain the causes of a series of events, as well as the effects of those events. The same data showing up repeatedly allows the researcher to reach conclusive conclusions and establish reliable generalisations (Sutton and Austin 2015).

3.1 Study Design and Participants

For this study, the quantitative research methodology was used. To collect primary data, a quantitative data collection tool – namely, a questionnaire was created and distributed. Thereafter, capturing of data, analysis of data and processing and data interpretation were taken into consideration for this study. To give a thorough description of a phenomenon, a descriptive study design was used. This method was chosen because it assists the researcher to translate the identified variables into numerical form, facilitating a wider application of the study's findings. In this particular research, the target population entailed employees from the Automotive Manufacturing Industry in the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) area. The particular company in this study has more than 8000 employees. Moreover, the company has 170 managers who have more than 10 people reporting to them within the structure of the organisation.

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a key factor in the research study is the sample size from the target population because it affects how generalisable the research findings are. The sample size of 120 managers was selected for this study from the 170 managers that made up the target population group. The study sample involved employees (managers) employed in the automotive manufacturing industry in KZN who participated in the primary data collection procedure for this project. Rather than being chosen at random, managers were requested to participate in the survey by email, which was sent on the 11th of July 2023. A total of 120 invitations were emailed to managers, and the participation was strictly voluntary. After being emailed information about the research aim, the managers were requested to complete a questionnaire. For those individuals who wanted to participate in the study, the requirement was for the participants to sign a consent form before beginning the questionnaire.

3.2 Data Collection Method

Every participant had first-hand knowledge of the constructs, such as employee performance, emotional capital and leader's emotions. The research topic, anonymity, estimated time of the survey and potential contributions from each participant were all explained in advance. Depending on the participants' pace, experience and level of emotional involvement, the questionnaire took between 4 and 10 minutes to complete. A total of 98 sample respondents completed the survey and all these responses were valid. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the questionnaire results. Key relationships were identified, and this information was summarised.

4. Results

A questionnaire with total of 15 questions with a Likert response scale, was distributed to the sample participants to ascertain whether there is a relationship between leader emotional capital and workforce performance. Every statement in the questionnaire included a response scale between 1 (for strongly disagree) and 4 (for strongly agree). Table 1 below summarises all the questions regarding Leaders' emotions. All the statements were determined to have a mean score of 2.9 or higher. For example, the majority of respondents (59.14%) stated that they can regulate disruptive emotions; respondents 'set aside emotions to complete a task' (50.54%); 'be aware of which emotions they are experiencing and why' (53.76%) and 'be conscious of your moods' (55.91%).

Table 1: Leaders' emotional capital

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Control your distressing emotions.	3.23%	11.83%	51.61%	33.33%	3.15	1.7749366
2. Help others feel better when they are down.	3.23%	10.75%	46.23%	39.78%	3.23	1.7959399
3. Control your anger.	2.15%	16.13%	39.78%	41.94%	3.22	1.79307
4. Be aware which emotions you are experiencing and why.	1.08%	13.98%	53.76%	31.18%	3.15	1.7749366
5. Understand why people feel the way they do.	3.23%	20.43%	59.14%	17.20%	2.90	1.7038486
6. Understand the effects your emotions have on others.	1.08%	20.43%	48.39%	29.03%	3.03	1.7413501
7. Be aware of your moods.	1.08%	15.05%	55.91%	27.96%	3.11	1.7628103
8. Confront problems without demeaning the members of the team.	1.08%	15.05%	45.16%	38.71%	3.22	1.7930421
9. Not allow negative feelings of others to inhibit collaboration.	1.08%	17.20%	48.39%	33.33%	3.14	1.7719199
10. Set aside emotion in order to complete a task.	0.00%	17.20%	50.54%	32.26%	3.15	1.7749754
11. Recognise the external factors influencing the organization.	2.15%	15.05%	59.14%	23.66%	3.04	1.7444228
12. Be aware of non-verbal messages that are sent to others.	2.15%	21.51%	53.76%	22.58%	2.97	1.7227135
13. Provide emotional support to others during stressful times.	1.08%	17.20%	47.31%	33.33%	3.11	1.7628179
14. Control disruptive emotions.	1.08%	16.13%	59.14%	23.66%	3.05	1.7475021

Source: Authors

Due to the non-normal distribution of the data, Spearman's rho correlation analysis was used to determine whether leadership emotions affect employee performance. Results indicated a strong correlation between a leader's emotion and workforce performance ($r= 0.71855$, $p< 0.01$). The Spearman's rho correlation table is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Spearman's rho correlation analysis output

		emotions of leadership	Employee performance
emotions of leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	0.718552984
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0
Employee performance	Correlation Coefficient	0.718552984	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	.

Source: Authors

Leaders benefit from the use of emotional capital because they can better manage their teams and the workplace by having the capacity to detect, synthesise, comprehend and control emotions. Moreover, followers respond favourably to and have a higher opinion of highly intelligent leaders. Employees will feel at home and

motivated at work with emotionally intelligent leaders, and they will provide their best effort to achieve the company goals.

5. Discussion

As the objective of this research was to investigate whether the emotions of leadership influence employee performance in the Automotive Manufacturing Industry, the theoretical analysis on the emotions of leadership was based on extant literature. In order to determine the relationship between employee performance and leadership emotions, correlation statistical analysis was used to analyse the primary data. The results of this study can be utilised to highlight the organisation's advantages and disadvantages. Discussions on suggestions for enhancing leadership emotions can then be constructed. The data analysis presented suggests 55% of respondents can regulate disruptive emotions and set aside emotions to complete a task; whilst 51% are aware of which emotions they are experiencing and why; and 56% are conscious of their moods. The current analysis reveals that, at the very least, emotions and emotional capital are important factors to consider when evaluating leadership. The two major categories of human emotions are, namely, positive and negative and these entail two categories that should be seen as opposites or polarities. Negative emotions are fuelled by a deep-seated dread of the unknown or the actions of others, and a desire to restrain or prevent them to prevent harm (Watson and Clark 1984). Positive emotions, in contrast, are propelled by a hidden yearning for harmony and pleasure.

The results demonstrated a strong correlation between employee performance and the leader's overall emotions ($r= 0.71855$, $p< 0.01$). There are several ways that emotions impact organisational behaviour. The impact might be immediate, such as behaviour brought on by various emotions; or indirect, such as performance-affecting mediating mechanisms, namely motivation and perception. Although organisational procedures can also change emotions, organisational behaviour is not the only thing that is impacted by emotions. Emotions are undoubtedly present in both those who lead and those who are led, but until recently, research, theory and possibly even practice, have ignored the emotions of leaders. However, as they have a direct impact on not just the performance of their subordinates but also that of the entire business, leaders must continually control their emotions to act in the manner expected of them. Emotions have been shown to affect how subordinates view their leaders (Newcombe and Ashkanasy 2022) and followers tended to attach more credence to leaders' emotive displays than to the messages themselves. Leaders' emotional expressions are crucial in helping followers determine their genuineness (Humphrey 2002). For example, leaders that constantly have antagonistic expressions on their face will encourage an unfriendly setting, which could affect the follower's morale and zeal. However, making followers feel at ease and inspired at work using favourable body language and facial gestures reveals that leaders must control their emotions on both personal and professional levels. The emotions of a leader have a large impact on those of others. In the same way that leaders who are themselves joyful, excited and energising are likely to positively stimulate their followers, so are leaders who are themselves troubled and antagonistic. According to Glaso et al. (2006), a leader's melancholy emotional responses can make them appear less effective and cause followers to lose interest. These results imply that leaders who have better emotional competence are viewed as being more effective. Leaders with positive emotional traits are viewed as more trustworthy by followers than those with negative emotional traits. According to Jin et al. (2022), strong empathetic leaders are more likely to connect with their team members, comprehend their emotional states, and spread their own emotions to their subordinates by controlling their own emotions. Furthermore, the way that subordinates perform on the work can be impacted by their emotions.

Studying the emotional facets of leaders has numerous ramifications. Firstly, leaders can gain from research demonstrating the value of emotional capital to them. Leaders could improve their efficiency in dealing with tough co-workers and assignments by developing their emotional capital. As a result, leaders emotional as well as cognitive traits are crucial. In the workplace, leaders would be more effective and have a higher likelihood of success if they used both emotional and cognitive skills equally. Secondly, leaders who have high emotionally capital are more capable of identifying their followers' needs and build strong relationships with them. In the workplace, social interaction between leaders and followers is crucial. For their team to accomplish the objectives of the organisation, leaders can give instructions and direction by developing strong leader-follower relationships. Leaders could create this connection by using emotions in the right way. Leaders would be able to deal with the difficult events they encounter in the workplace by learning effective emotional management techniques. It might be a tool to help individuals manage their stress, thus boosting their efficiency and productivity at work. The results presented in the correlational analysis, show a positive correlation between leaders' relationship management and followers. Thus, it can be said that connections exist between the follower's performance and the leader's ability to manage relationships. Relationships and assertiveness have

statistically been shown to be associated with subordinate performance, whereas empathy and adaptability have not been found to be related. This research findings concur with Ngirande and Timothy's (2014) research findings, which also indicated a strong positive correlation between employee work satisfaction and a leader's emotional intelligence. The correlation analysis's ($r=0.62$) conclusions suggest that higher levels of emotional capital in leaders may increase worker job satisfaction. Emotional capital leaders are more likely to make wise judgments at work, which will increase their employees' level of job satisfaction.

6. Conclusion of the Study

The main aim of the research study was to assess whether emotional capital matters in the Automotive Manufacturing Industry. Based on the analyses presented, it can be concluded that emotional capital is unquestionably a key component of effective leadership. Emotional capital is a skill that leaders may use to better manage their teams and the workplace environment. Leaders need to be able to notice, assimilate, comprehend and manage emotions in order to effectively lead their teams. To summarise the findings of this research study, the results indicate that emotional capital does indeed play a fundamental role in the automotive manufacturing industry. Furthermore, the objective of the study was achieved, by virtue of the fact that emotions of leadership do have a vital influence on employee performance. The correlation analysis showed that there is a correlation between leaders with high emotional capital and employee performance, and they can improve the emotional state of employees and also motivate employees to want to achieve more in their work. Developing an environment that is regarded as equitable and assisting employees to become more empathic in their interactions with clients are two crucial steps in reaching this objective. The findings appear to indicate that leaders must develop their leadership abilities to motivate others to follow them and assist them in bringing about beneficial changes in the organisation by raising employee satisfaction and productivity. Thus, to maintain a high degree of employee performance amongst the employees, leaders must possess a high degree of emotional capital. Doing so, will help the organisation achieve both its short- and long-term objectives and thus become sustainable.

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