Trait Emotional Intelligence & Leadership: A Study of Managers and Employees

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Abstract: Over the past 30 years, Emotional Intelligence has been gaining ground in the field of business and management. Much has been written about the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in leadership, which overlaps with the concept of management (Young & Dulewicz, 2008). Although, there are many researches into the connection between leadership and emotional intelligence, there seems to be a research gap between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership (TL). This study examines the effects of the factors of Trait EI (emotionality, self–control, sociability, well–being, adaptability and motivation) (TraitEI, 2021; Petrides, 2009) on the dimensions of Transformational Leadership (vision, inspirational communication, supportive leadership, intellectual stimulation, personal recognition) (Rafferty and Griffin, 2004). Two groups were surveyed for this study. One (with 74 participants) consisted of managers who work in public or private sector' organizations. The other sample (with 120 participants) consisted of employees who work in public or private sector' organizations. The aim of the study was to investigate the connection between Trait EI and Transformational Leadership from the manager's point of view, and from the employees' point of view. Are there any differences between those two points of view? Are there any differences between Trait EI and Transformational Leadership due to the sectors (private – public) of the organizations? The tools used in this research include the following: a) Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEI-QUE SF) by Petrides (2009) and b) Rafferty's and Griffin's (2004) Five Dimensions of Transformational Leadership Test. The current paper hopes to contribute to the comprehension of the linkage among Trait EI and TL on Greek organizations managers', and trigger future empirical research in the area.

Keywords: Trait Emotional Intelligence, Transformational Leadership, connection, managers, employees, organizations

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been a major topic in the Human Resources Field and it has been broadly considered as crucial for a leader to be effective. According to Ashkanasy and Tse (2000) transformational leaders are attentive to their own emotions. As a result, they reflect on their emotional behaviors, perceive others' emotions and effectively react to their needs. Moreover, Suciu, Petcu & Cherhes (2010) argue that leaders who underestimate EI are likely to fail due to their lack of ability to inspire followers.

Transformational Leadership (TL) is described as leadership which creates valuable and positive change amongst followers with the goal of developing followers into leaders. TL enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms, such as the following: a) connecting the follower sense of identity and self to the mission of the organization, b) being a role model for followers that inspires them and c) understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the followers (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Transformational leadership is associated with many aspects of an organization (Rossidis et al., 2020), such as: job satisfaction (Belias & Koustelios, 2014a; Belias & Koustelios, 2014b; Belias & Koustelios, 2015; Boamah et al., 2018; Belias et al., 2020), change management (Belias & Koustelios, 2014c), performance (Wang et al., 2011), organizational culture (Belias et al, 2017; Ntalakos et al., 2022; Belias et al., 2018) and motivation (Conchie, 2013). Hence, it is very important to examine the parameters which can influence the transformational leadership.

Although there are several researches which suggest that there is a strong positive connection between EI and TL (Leban & Zulauf, 2004; Rubiz, Munz & Bommer, 2005), there are some researchers who argue that there is a mediocre or, at some cases, no connection between EI and TL. For instance, Follesdal et al. (2013) discovered that EI levels did not predict TL; especially when control factors as leaders' ages are used.

The main purpose of the current research is to discover if there is a connection between the factors of Trait EI and the dimensions of TL as far as managers and employees are concerned. In the first part of the paper, there is a literature review of the linkage between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership. The material used for this paper has been retrieved from scientific pages such as Scopus, Google Scholar and Science Direct. In the second part of the paper there is the methodology and the results of a research which conducted on managers and employees of Greek public/private organizations. The current research hopes to be useful to scholars and practitioners for future reference.

2. Trait Emotional Intelligence

Petrides and Furnham (2000) were the first researchers who introduced the model of Trait Emotional Intelligence (Trait EI) (Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki, 2007). Trait EI is defined as "a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies and it should be investigated primarily with reference to established personality taxonomies; trait EI can be measured via trait emotional intelligence questionnaire" (Petrides, 2010; Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki, 2007).

In addition, trait EI is the only operational definition in the area that recognizes the inherent subjectivity of emotional experience (Petrides, 2010). Hence, the trait EI facets are personality traits, and not competencies or mental abilities or facilitators as other researchers have suggested (Petrides, 2010). In fact, according to researches, the same genes that are implicated in the development of individual differences in the Big Five personality traits are also responsible for th
e development of individual differences in trait EI (Vernon, Villani, Schermer & Petrides, 2008).
According to London Psychometric Laboratory (Psychometriclab, 2021), which is developed by Petrides and colleagues, there are 15 specific facets which can comprise global trait EI. These facets are grouped into four main factors:

1. Well – Being: describes the facets happiness, optimism and self – esteem
2. Self – Control: describes the facets emotion regulation, impulse control and stress management
3. Emotionality: describes the facets empathy, emotion perception, emotion expression and relationships
4. Sociability: describes the facets emotion management, assertiveness and social awareness

Apart from these 4 main factors, there are two independent factors used to describe the facets adaptability and motivation respectively.

High scores on the above facets are associated with extraversion, mental health, job satisfaction, seniority, popularity, organizational commitment, affective reactions in decision making, sensitivity, overconfidence and social desirability. On the contrary, low scores are correlated with neuroticism, introversion, anxiety, job stress, humility, psychopathology, truancy and rumination (TraitEI, 2021).

3. Transformational Leadership

One of the first researchers who introduced the concept of Transformational Leadership (TL) was James MacGregor Burns (1978). According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership can be recognised on an organization when "leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation" (Allen et al., 2016).

Burn's original ideas were expanded by Bass (1985) to the development of the theory that is best known as Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory. According to Bass (1985), transformational leader can be defined based on the impact that he has on his followers (Choi et al., 2016). In other words, transformational leaders gain trust, respect and admiration from their followers (Choi et al., 2016). Similarly, Allen et al. (2016) present a series of characteristics that transformational leaders should have. These are the following: focus on the goals of the organization, influence by modelling, use persuasion, promote individualized influence, motivate with charisma to attain a common goal.

The most common empirical model, which is used to measure transformational leadership, is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Rafferty and Griffin, 2004). During the past 20 years, several alternative versions of MLQ were developed. More thoroughly, Bycio et al. (1995) (by using MLQ-1 model) discovered that a five – factor model including charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward and management by exception, was a good fit to data. In addition, Avolio et al. (1999) suggested their

model based on the MLQ – 5X. This is a six – factor model using a reduced set of items produced the best fit to the data (Rafferty and Griffin, 2004).

Finally, inspired by the leadership measures of House (1998) and Podsakoff et al. (1990), Rafferty & Griffin (2004) suggest the 5 Dimensions' Transformational Leadership model. This is used to measure the 5 factors (dimensions) of the transformational leadership skills which a leader should possess. Thus, Rafferty & Griffin (2004) re-examined the theoretical model developed by Bass (1985), and they suggested the below five sub-dimensions of transformational leadership:

1. Vision is defined as: the expression of an idealized picture of the future based organizational values.
2. Inspirational Communication is defined as: the expression of positive and encouraging messages about the organization, and statements that build motivation and confidence.
3. Supportive Leadership is defined as: expressing concern for followers and taking account of their individual needs.
4. Intellectual Stimulation is defined as: enhancing employees' interest in, and awareness of problems, and increasing their ability to think about problems in new ways.
5. Personal Recognition is defined as: the provision of rewards such as praise and acknowledgement of effort for achievement of specified goals.

4. The linkage between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership

Over the past 20 years there have been several different researches indicating the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership. More thoroughly, Barling et al. (2000) discovered that EI is significantly related to three dimensions of TL: inspirational motivation, idealized influence and individualized consideration. Gardner's and Stough's (2002) research was based on the analysis of the data of high level managers. They argue that EI is positively related with TL. More specifically, intellectual stimulation has the strongest correlation with total EI scores. In addition, Hackett and Hortman (2008) (based on their research on assistants principles of secondary education) suggest that EI levels were positively correlated with TL behaviours; social awareness and relationship management are the most significantly correlated. Similarly, San Lam and O' Higgins (2013) examined the connection between EI and TL using data from managers and employees of two Chinese companies. The authors found out that there is a positive correlation between EI and TL.

Although there are several researches indicating the relation between EI and TL (such as the above), there are some researches indicate that there is a mediocre relationship between EI and TL. After the collection of data from public employees who worked in organization on the United States, Barbuto and Burbach (2006) found that there is a moderate correlation between EI and TL, as well as there is a difference between the leaders' self-reported and the employees' rated-reported results. On the same point of view, Brown, Bryant & Reilly (2006) found no correlation between EI and TL. They also discovered that neither the total EI nor its subscales predicted variance in TL scales.

The main purpose of the current study is to examine the connection between Trait EI and TL not only from the managers' point of view, but also from the employees' point of view. In addition, this study investigates if there is a difference between the scores of Trait EI and TL of the managers in comparison with those which are collected by the employee's group. Last but not least, the current research examines if the variable sector (public or private) has a moderating role in the connection between trait EI and TL both for managers and employees. Hence, the hypotheses of the research are the following:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a positive connection between Trait EI and TL both for managers and employees.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a difference between the scores of Trait EI and TL of the managers in contrast to the ones collected by the employees' group.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): The variable Sector moderates the connection between Trait EI and TL.

5. Method

5.1 Participants and procedure

The participants of this study were collected by two different samples. The first sample consisted of managers who work in public or private organizations (74 participants in total). More thoroughly, 50 men and 24 women participated. 30 managers (40.5%) work in public organizations and 44 managers (59.5%) work in private

organizations. The mean age of the sample was 48.1 years (SD=10.94) and the age range was from 18 to 65 years. The majority of participants had attained an undergraduate (48.6%) or a Master's degree (29.7%) and as far as their annual income is concerned, the majority of the sample (32.4%) gained from 20.001 up to 30.000 euros per year. The managers worked in several organizations such as education institutes, health departments, ministries and public services, banks, retail stores.

The second sample consisted of employees who work in public or private organizations (120 participants in total). More thoroughly, 58 men and 62 women participated: 51 employees (42.5%) work in public organizations and 69 employees (57.5%) work in private organizations. The mean age of the sample was 33.7 years (SD=10.45) and the age range was from 18 to 65 years. The majority of employees had attained an undergraduate (49.2%) or a Master's degree (30.0%) and as far as their annual income is concerned, the majority of the participants (45.0%) gained from 10.001 up to 20.000 euros per year. The participants worked in several organizations such as education institutes, health departments, ministries and public services, banks, retail stores, food industry and real estates.

A questionnaire was given to the participants of the first sample. This questionnaire consisted of three parts: a) Demographics of the sample, b) Measurement of the Trait EI of the sample, and c) Measurement of the transformational leadership skills of the sample.

Similarly, a second questionnaire was given to the participants of the second sample, which consisted of the same three parts.

Both questionnaires were hosted in an online platform for approximately two months. All the questionnaires were completed anonymously either by managers or employees who work in Greek organizations of public or private interest. Both groups were invited through email and social media applications.

5.2 Measures

5.2.1 Trait EI

In order to measure the Trait EI factors of the participants of the two groups, Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Version (TEI-QUE SF) was used (Petrides, 2009). TEI – Que SF is a 30 item scale designed to self – measure global Trait EI. These 30 items are categorised under the six key factors of global Trait EI: a) Well – Being, b) Self – Control, c) Emotionality, d) Sociability, e) Motivation and g) Adaptability. All the questions (30 items) were measured through a 7 – point Likert scale (1 – "Strongly Disagree" to 7 – "Strongly Agree") (TEIQue – SF, 2021).

5.2.2 Transformational Leadership

To measure the transformational leadership skills of the managers of the organizations of the sample, Rafferty's and Griffin's Five (5) Dimensions Transformational Leadership Test was applied (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). Rafferty's and Griffin model consisted of 15 items (questions) which are used to measure the five dimensions of transformational leadership skills: vision, inspirational communication, intellectual stimulation, supportive leadership and personal recognition. Managers were asked to complete the 15 items on a 5 – point Likert scale (1 – "Strongly Disagree" to 5 – "Strongly Agree") measuring transformational leadership skills from the managers' point of view. Likewise, employees were asked to complete these 15 items from their point of view; to put it in another way, employees were asked to measure their leader's transformational skills from their personal experience in the workplace.

6. Results

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics both for managers and employees. As shown in Table 1, managers had higher Trait EI scores than employees as mean value in managers (mean=5.095, SD=.667) is greater than the one in employees (mean=4.806, SD=.657). Similarly, managers had higher transformational leadership skills scores (mean=4.079, SD=.439) than the ones that the employees scored (mean=3.308, SD=.899). In other words, managers believe that they have higher scores of transformational leadership skills than the employees believe about their managers. Moreover, on the first group the internal consistency for global Trait EI is .887 (Cronbach's alpha value) and the internal consistency for transformational leadership is .821. On the second group, the internal consistency for global Trait EI and for transformational leadership is .860 and .956 respectively. Thus, the 30 items of Trait EI are closely related. Similarly, the 15 items of TL are closely related. In addition, the last

column of Table 1 presents the values of the Pearson coefficient. According to the fourth column, there is a strong linear relationship between global Trait EI and Transformational leadership (Pearson coefficient = .657) on the participants of the first group. On the contrary, the value of the Pearson coefficient (.213) is very low on the second group which implies that there is a weak linear connection between employees' global Trait EI and their managers' transformational leadership skills.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for Group 1 and Group 2.

Table 1a: Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha, Correlations of Managers (Group 1)

Variable	Mean	SD	Alpha	Pearson
Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI)	5.095	.667	.887	.657
Transformational Leadership (TL)	4.079	.439	.821	
N = 74. SD = Standard deviation. Alpha > .600 reliability is significant. Pearson > .500 correlations are strong				

Table 1b: Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alpha, Correlations of Employees (Group 2)

Variable	Mean	SD	Alpha	Pearson
Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI)	4.806	.657	.860	.213
Transformational Leadership (TL)	3.308	.899	.956	
N = 120. SD = Standard deviation. Alpha > .600 reliability is significant. Pearson > .500 correlations are strong				

Table 2 shows if there are any differences between the global Trait EI of the participants of the group 1 compared to the participants of the group 2. According to Table 2, there is a significant difference between global Trait EI of the managers compared to the Trait EI of the employees (t=2.948 and p=.004<0.05). More specifically, there is difference between manager's Trait EI skills and employee's Trait EI skills, as managers scored more in comparison with the Trait EI scores of the employees. Moreover, Table 2 indicates that there is difference on the values of Transformational leadership between the group of managers and the group of employees (t=6.846 and p=.000<0.05). Managers scored higher values on their leadership skills than the employees' ones. In other words, managers think that they have very good leadership skills, whereas the employees believe that their managers have mediocre leadership skills.

Table 2: Compare means of Trait EI and TL for Group 1 and Group 2.

Table 2. Independent Sample T test (compare means of Trait EI and TL for Group 1 and 2)				
Variable	t	sig. (p-value	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI)	2.948	.004	.289	.098
Transformational Leadership (TL)	6.876	.000	.770	.112
p value < 0.05 is significant (confidence interval percentage 95%)				

Table 3 displays the moderating role of the sector (public or private) in the relationship between Trait EI and Transformational leadership. According to Table 1 there is strong linear connection between Trait EI and TL as far as the managers of Group 1 are concerned (Pearson coefficient = .657). Table 3 shows the results of correlation analysis after the use of variable Sector, as a Control variable. As a result, Pearson coefficient value has become .673 which implies that the connection between Trait EI has become stronger due to the moderating role of variable sector. Likewise, Table 3 displays the moderating role of the sector in the linkage between Trait EI and TL for the employees of Group 2. As it is already said, there is a weak linear relationship between Trait EI and TL as far as the employees of Group 2 are concerned (Pearson coefficient = .213). On Table 3, Pearson coefficient value (after the use of Sector as control variable) has become .211. This indicates that sector has no significant influence on the linkage between Trait EI and TL for the employees' sample.

Table 3: Correlation (Pearson coefficient) after the use of Sector as Control Variable (Group 1 & 2).

Table 3a. Pearson Coefficient (Correlation with the use of Sector as Control Variable) (Group 1)		
Variable	Pearson	sig. (p-value)
Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI)	.673	.000
Transformational Leadership (TL)		
p value < 0.05 is significant (confidence interval percentage 95%), Pearson > .500 correlations are strong Control Variable = Sector (public or private)		
Table 3b. Pearson Coefficient (Correlation with the use of Sector as Control Variable) (Group 2)		
Variable	Pearson	sig. (p-value)
Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI)	.211	.000
Transformational Leadership (TL)		
p value < 0.05 is significant (confidence interval percentage 95%), Pearson > .500 correlations are strong Control Variable = Sector (public or private)		

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to examine the connection between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership. Hence, data collected from two different groups: one group was structured by managers of Greek public/private organizations and the other one was structured by the employees of Greek public/private organizations. Based on Trait EI theory (Petrides, 2009) and Rafferty's & Griffin's sub-dimensions model of TL (2004), hypotheses were formulated in order to examine the above relationship.

According to first hypothesis (H1), the findings of the current research show that there is strong positive correlation between Trait EI and TL on the sample of managers. On the contrary, there is mediocre positive correlation between the factors of Trait EI of employees and the opinion the employees have about the transformational leadership skills of their managers. In other words, the relationship of Trait EI and TL is much less significant in the sample of employees than the one on the managers in which the connection is very strong.

Consequently, as far as the second hypothesis (H2) is concerned, the findings of the research show that there is difference between the Trait EI of managers and the Trait EI of employees. More thoroughly, managers seem to have higher scores of Trait EI skills than the employees. Similarly, there is difference between the opinion managers have about their own TL skills and the opinion employees have about their managers TL skills. Managers seem to believe that they have high leadership skills, while their employees believe that their managers do not possess high TL skills.

Last but least, the third hypothesis (H3) referred to the moderating role of Sector (public or private) in the connection between Trait EI and TL. Although in the group of managers, sector seems to moderate in the connection between Trait EI and TL, in the second group (employees) sector seems to have no influence on the connection between Trait EI and TL.

To sum up, the current study contributes to the theoretical as well as the practical research of the linkage between Trait EI and TL. Although there are several reviews about Emotional Intelligence and Leadership there seems to be a research gap between Trait EI and TL. Especially when it comes to the Greek market, there is no significant information about this linkage as far as public or private organizations are concerned. This research hopes to trigger future researchers and practitioners into decode all the key factors that influence Trait EI and TL.

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