

The Effects of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Leadership Style on Sales Performance

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Abstract

This paper investigates the effects of emotional intelligence (EI) and leadership styles on sales performance. The study involves a descriptive analysis of literature regarding emotional intelligence, transformational/transactional leadership styles and sales performance. A conceptualised model of leadership style, emotional intelligence and sales performance was created from literature reviewed. The findings suggest that both transactional/transformational leadership styles act as strong predictors of leadership effectiveness and their ability to influence the sales person's performance. In addition, transactional and transformational leadership styles appear to have a symbiotic relationship with emotional intelligence within leadership styles domain. The literature provides support for a model, which suggests that emotional intelligence components such as personal/social competencies, motivation and empathy are positively linked to transformational leadership style, which empowers the sales person to perform beyond their normal expectations. Leaders who exhibit transactional leadership characteristics are viewed negatively as they often lack motivation and charisma. They are individuals who operate within the confines of rules, policies and procedures. Despite the negative perception, transactional leaders have components such as contingent-reward that positively correlate of productive sales performance. The findings suggest that there is a correlation between EI, Transactional/Transformational leadership styles and sales performance.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, sales performance*

JEL Classification: *M30*

"All learning has an emotional base"

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Introduction

Businesses today are operating within a challenging socioeconomic environment where growth and profits have become difficult to attain, as we function within a culture of austerity. The sales force is a key strategic component in generating sales with industrial consumers which enables profit realisation, particularly for those firms which operate within a business-to-business (B2B) dominion, as they are very reliant upon the sales force to grow and prosper within contemporary markets (Avlonitis and Panagopoulos 2010). However, in today's challenging competitive economic marketplace personal selling is still regarded as the key to success for many industrial organisation (Ingram, Schwepker and Hutson, 1992) and one of the most imperative considerations facing businesses is in relation to their ability to manage the salesforce and

improve their performance (Koshy and Sing 2010). According to the Economist (2009) the world is in the deepest recession since the Second World War and organisations' future success will stem from their leadership ability to influence and improve the performance of organisations; and this is of particular importance when contextualised within a sales environment (Humphreys, 2002). The sales function is critical in the success of the organisation (Mackenzie, Rich and Podsakoff 2001).

Leadership is not simple but a complex dynamic phenomenon, where a multitude of variables can influence and impact upon the leader's performance, which in turn can have such a profound effect on organisational performance (Bycio et al, 1995). The purpose of this paper is to understand the effects of emotional intelligence, leadership styles on sales performance and the primary objective will be to seek further insight that will lead to sales performance improvement through leaders understanding the effects of emotional intelligence and leadership styles. This paper will endeavour to examine the following questions:

1. Does Transformational or Transactional leadership style have an effect on sales performance?
2. How does emotional intelligence (EI) impact on leadership style and performance?
3. What is the relationship between sales performance, leadership and EI?

According to Kohli (1989), three taxonomies relate to a salesperson's performance:

- 1) Sales people characteristics and role perceptions (Churchill, Ford and Walker 1985; Mayer and Greenberg, 1964; Newton, 1973; Jolson, 1974; Dubinsky, 1980; Cron 1984)
- 2) Task characteristics (Teas and Horrell 1981; Sujan, Sujan & Weitz 1986; Moncrief, 1986)
- 3) Supervisory behaviours (Churchill, Ford and Walker, 1975; Dietz, Verbeke, Verwaal, 2011).

The role of leadership refers to supervisory behaviour in relation to their ability to influence the sales performance. Task characteristic and emotional intelligence are linked to supervisory behaviours as well as sales person's characteristics. Handy (1993, pp. 118) posited that leadership within groups of people and within organisations will always be the vital component in the effectiveness of the organisation as they make things happen (Churchill, Ford and Walker, 2006, Chonko, Griasaffe, Jaramillo and Roberts, 2009).

Leaders are conceived as catalyst for change. They are the individuals who have the capacity to enhance, maintain or hinder a salesperson's performance dependent upon the leadership style that they exhibit (Humphreys, 2002). Leaders also have the propensity to ignite passion and a deep desire that brings out the best in each one of us (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002). Sales managers are responsible for the performance of the sales team and for achieving the organisational objectives, leaders who have the predisposition to motivate the salesforce into action and create an environment where they feel compelled to do their best work are more likely to yield a better performance from their subordinates. Thus, effective selling has many widespread features that are in common with leadership, (Bass 1997), both roles require the leader and the salesperson to try to modify or influence the decisions or perceptions of the buyer or their subordinates (Bass 1997).

Therefore, the leaders' role in this context is to ensure that they have the capability to influence the behaviour of the salesperson in order to accomplish their tasks and objectives (Jobber and Lancaster 2006, pp. 413). There it is generally accepted view that leaders are responsible for the strategic direction and mobilisation of their teams in order to achieve the organisational goals. This notion is in contrast to (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002) postulation where they contend that the key to a leader's success is determined by how well they can activate the emotions within others, as this will determine how well the task is accomplished. As a result, the literature review will set out to examine the effects of leadership styles, emotional

intelligence, and sales performance. This paper will also present a conceptualised model between emotional intelligence, leadership styles and sale performance.

Literature Review

The literature review presented within this paper examines three separate and interdependent elements: leadership styles, emotional intelligence and sales performance. The following section will deal with each of these facets, as conceptual model will be derived from them.

Leadership

Leadership for many years has been the subject of much debate (Barnard, 1938, Handy 1982, Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003, Partington, 2003, Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002) and the connections between leadership and performance (Bycio, 1995). There are many schools of thoughts covering leadership, early theorists discussed leadership in terms of traits, which seeks to understand which personality characteristics denotes a successful leader (Mahoney et al 1960; Argyris, 1955) the principal belief of the traits theorist is that leaders were “born” and not “made” (Stodgill, 1948). Trait theorists focus their attention on the qualities that are required to be an effective leader (Cole 1999) despite substantial academic attention it has been difficult to arrive at a set of characteristics or traits that identify effective leaders. Handy’s (1993) research analysed over one hundred studies pre-1950 in order to establish some common traits or characteristics. However, during the process Handy (1993) was only able to establish five percent correlation between the characteristics within each of the studies, which demonstrates the multifaceted nature of leadership but also recognising the difficulty enshrined in traits theorisation of leadership.

Style theorists in contrast to the trait theorist, are of the opinion that it is the behaviour of the leaders rather than the characteristics that determine how people perform within their work environment (Cole 1999). Leadership style has been expressed in terms of transactional, versus transformational, autocratic versus democratic style of leadership. The challenge for traits theorists is their inability to validate those characteristics (Stodgill, 1948, Ogbonna 2000), which subsequently led to the emergence of style theory of leadership (Likert 1961), which focuses on the behaviour and style of the leader. Both style and trait theorists have endeavoured to establish a “one cap-fits all philosophy” or as described by (Ogbonna, 2000, pp 767) the “one best way of leading” approach. This contributed to the introduction of the contingency and situational theories because of the inherent perceived limitations of this approach. The basic tenet is that situational factors play a critical role in the efficacy of a leadership role (Mulins, 1999) which results in another shift of emphasis from style and traits theories to contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967; House, 1971).

Personality, emotional intelligence and competencies have a tendency to influence in various degrees the performance of the leader and of the salesforce. The ability to influence a salesperson’s performance is commonly associated with variety of factors (Churchill et al 1985; Churchill et al 1985; Goleman et al 2002; Churchill, Ford and Walker 1977; Bass, 1995; Spiro and Perrault 1979):

- Role variables;
- Skills;
- Motivation;
- Personal factors;
- Aptitude;
- Organizational/environmental factors;
- Motivation;
- Leadership;
- The environment and culture of the organisation.

Leaders who have the tendency to motivate the salesforce (subordinates) into action can create an environment where they feel compelled to do their best. This will more likely yield a better performance from their subordinates. Effective selling has many common features that are in congruence with leadership (Bass 1997); both roles require the leader and the salesperson to try to modify or influence the decisions or perceptions of the buyer or their subordinates Bass (1997). Leaders are also required to be cognisant of the emotional disposition of their followers and their customers, so that they are equipped to manage them in such a way that it may influence a positive outcome, better sales performance and more favourable decision from a buyer. Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) argue that emotions are inseparable from an organisation work setting. The attitudes and behaviours of effective salespeople are aligned to the attitudes and behaviours of an effective leader (Bass 1997). How well the emotional temperament of a salesperson is managed will determine the leader's level of effectiveness. Goleman et al (2002, pp. 3) postulates that great leaders ignite our passion and they inspire the best in us through tapping into and working through our emotions.

According to (Cole 1999) leadership is a dynamic process within a group whereby an individual influences others to contribute voluntarily to the achievement of group task in a given situation. This would suggest that the leadership role involves directing groups or individuals towards the attainment of a specific objective. In addition, they need to be adaptable by utilising different leadership styles that guide and influence other people's behaviour, due to the dynamic nature of the relationship. According to (Handy 1993, pp. 100) there are some general assumptions made in relation to effects of leadership (1) employees will work harder (2) they become more productive (3) employees improve their performances (4) recognition that different leadership styles yield different results in relation to performance. The role of the sales manager is to affect change in attitudes, behaviours and performance outcomes by creating a positive working environment where employees are happy, have clear expectations about their roles, which give rise to a greater level of commitment resulting in increased levels of motivation (Chonko, Griasaffe, Jaramillo and Roberts, 2009). The sales manager's actions can fundamentally affect the performance of the salesperson (Mulki, Jaramillo and Locander 2005). They also responsible for creating the organisational cultural norms that according to Schein (1985) are the shared set of assumptions, values and beliefs. Consequently, Figure 1 (conceptual model of leadership & emotional intelligence on sales performance) has been derived from the literature reviewed.

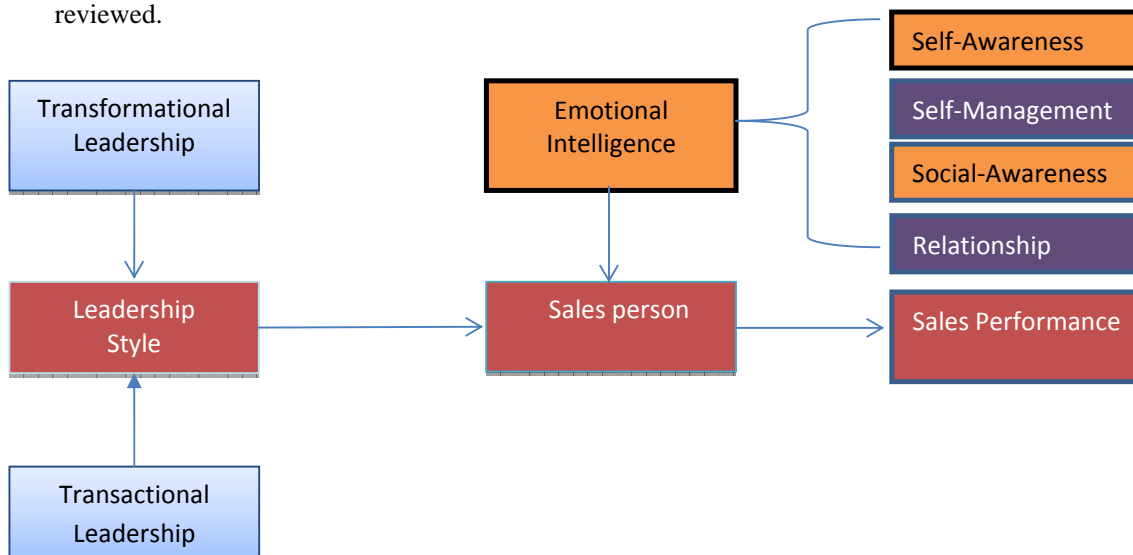


Fig.1. Conceptual model of leadership & emotional intelligence on sales performance

Source: made by the author

Leadership style

Leadership style is the focus within this review, specifically transactional and transformational leadership styles (Adair, 1983; Slevin 1989; Hershey and Blanchard 1988). Leadership style assumes the adoption of a particular style, stance or behaviour, which will transform a leader and create a new set of behaviours within the leaders so that they can become more effective. In essence an effective leader can be constructed (Muller and Turner, 2005), effective being defined by task, people and performance. Leadership has been discussed in many ways, which include contingency theory (Fielder, 1967; Robbins 1997), leadership style (Adair 1983; Hershey & Blanchard 1988; Slevin, 1989), leadership traits (Kirkpatrick & Locke 1991; Turner 1999), charismatic leadership (Bass 1990) and emotional intelligence (EI) leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002). Nevertheless, this review focuses on two main styles of leadership as they affect salesperson's performance. According to Mackenzie, Rich and Podsakoff (2001) there are two ways in which transformational leaders differs from transactional leadership. The first relates to the process in which the leaders attempt to engage and influence their followers, customers and subordinates. Secondly, transformational leaders recognise that trying to motivate and influence the behaviours of their followers can only be achieved by focusing on their inherent values, aspiration and goals in order to derive a greater level of performance. As noted by Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) transformational leadership becomes possible when the leaders' followers change their attitudes and belief and adopt the leader's internal standard (values). This view is also consistent with Bryman (1992) who suggests that the transformational leader's goals and aspirations need to be congruent with that of the follower and become aligned and this synergy will increase the likelihood of a more favourable performance outcome.

This is in contrast to the transactional leadership style that is synonymous with compliance of rules, policies and procedures (Kelman, 1958) and on effort and rewards, which is contingent upon the follower's performance. According to Fetter, Mackenzie, Moorman and Podsakoff (1990) transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers to perform over and above expectations by providing aspirational goals, articulating a vision and becoming suitable role models. This juxtaposes the transactional leader whose behaviour focuses on contingent reward and punishment behaviour. There is an inherent dissonance which comes out of the literature, transactional and transformational leadership are uniquely different, however their traits can be simultaneously displayed and co-exist within the same leader (Mackenzie, Rich and Podsakoff 2001). Transactional leadership style is prevalent within business environment (Bass, 1985) and this would suggest that the majority of leaders engage within transactional forms of leadership behaviour, which is contingent upon performance and reward. Notwithstanding, the exceptional leader goes beyond this behaviour and engages in transformational leadership behaviours in order to become more effectual (Mackenzie, Rich and Podsakoff 2001). It is contended that although transactional and transformational leadership roles are antithetical, they can in fact be regarded as symbiotic.

Transformational Leadership (Performance)

Transformational leaders are regarded as charismatic; they engage their followers through the employment of visionary skills and their ability to inspire others. Channer and Hope (2001) have described transformational leaders as leading others through inspiration and enthusiasm as opposed to ordering and instructing, whereby they are stimulating their intellectual and emotional response, which activate a positive vision within the follower. As a consequence they are respected, admired and trusted (Humphreys 2002). Various scholars have posited that the significant attributes of a transformational leader is their ability to create an environment where their followers perform "beyond expectations" (Burns, 1978; Bass 1995; House and Shamir, 1993; Fetter, Mackenzie, Moorman and Podsakoff, 1990).

Sales people have a variety of tasks to carry out during the completion of their roles, however, the one which resonates most with sales people is in regards to sales performance which is commonly defined and associated with sales volume or productivity (Brown and Paterson 1993). Leaders are also required to create an environment where sales people can exceed expectations, which is vital to the success of the firm (Mackenzie, Rich and Podsakoff 2001). The sales environment is considered as competitive, demanding and requires the sales person to perform at agreed levels by the organisation. Sales people's behaviour can be moderated through their cognition, beliefs and emotions. Selling and performance engenders a large degree of stress relative to other roles and they have a higher propensity to encounter substantial emotional demands (Chonko, Howell and Bellinger 1986). The transformational leaders are well placed to tackle these emotional encounters and to be effective within these circumstances as they reduce stress and burnout (Bass, Seltzer and Numerof 1989).

Transactional Leadership (performance)

The term transactional denotes to receive something in exchange for something else or commonly referred to as contingent-reward system. The dynamic relationship between a transactional leadership style and a follower is one of exchange; this is where there is an implicit or explicit offer of exchange between the manager and employee and a promise of reward in return for good performance (Bass, 1985) or for something of value (Humphreys 2002). This symbiotic relationship and contribution required by each party is both understood and compensated (Burns, 1978).

Transactional leadership style is predominant within business (Bass, 1985) and largely within the sales environment where the core objective is for the sales person to produce sales, for which they are rewarded through commissions, bonuses, and incentives in exchange. Contingent reward behaviour is noted to be positively correlate with the subordinate's performance (Avolio et al 1998). There has been a plethora of literature relating to leadership style and sales performance (Sujan et al 1988; Jaworski and Kohli, 1991). Historically this has been contextualised with the transactional leadership paradigm until Bass' (1985) consideration regarding transformational leadership. The notion that transformational leadership style will enhance a sales person's performance has been noted in the conceptual articulation (Dubinsky et al, 1995; Jolson, 1996). However, despite the hypothesis that transformational leadership enhances sales performance, the findings have not been supported empirically (Dubinsky et al, 1995).

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

There are factors that resonate with leadership style, performance and behaviour, namely emotional intelligence (EI) or emotional quotient (EQ). The term emotional intelligence (EI) was first coined by Mayer and Salovey (1990) in which they suggested that EI was a mental process where previously independent variables such as thinking and feeling work in partnership. George (2000) asserts that EI is the degree in which emotions are cognitively managed. Stein (2009) on the other hand defines EI as the ability to "tune in to the world, read situations and to connect with others whilst taking charge of your own life". Salovey and Mayer (1990) originally described emotional intelligence as social intelligence. This resonates with the capacity to analyse the feelings and emotions of one's self and of others and to utilise the knowledge to shape person's thinking and actions consequently.

Sales managers will often recruit sales people dependent upon a multitude of different criteria such as character, personality, experience, skills and intelligence (IQ). These factors are often considered to be key characteristics in relation to supporting the recruitment decision of a sales person. According to Cherniss (2000) IQ alone is not a very good predictor of job performance and this assertion was further reinforced by Hunter and Hunter (1984) who contend that IQ will only account for twenty-five percent of the variance in relation to someone's performance.

According to Cherniss (2000) the pace of change continues to increase through the world of work where there are greater expectations and demands placed upon a person's cognitive, emotional resources and consequently these set of tools will become more pertinent in today's dynamic working environment.

The role of the sales person and leader is extremely challenging. They both operate within a complex, demanding and dynamic working environment where they are prone to experience an array of different emotions through their various interactions with customers, suppliers and managers. Emotions can become highly intense and can on occasion become a disruptive influence within a work environment. They can also have a real significance impact for "getting work done" (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002, pp. 12). This means understanding emotions and becoming more emotionally intelligent will enable leaders, sales people and followers to become more effective within the workplace. Positive emotions are more likely to be displayed, when the salesperson/leader is achieving their organisational goals and objectives as juxtapose to negative emotions, which are likely to be displayed or exhibited when performances are below the required standard. This is conditional upon where the salesperson/leader is on the sales performance spectrum, the degree and context of the emotion will determine the sales persons-leaders performance. Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002, pp. 12) argue that the length, type and degree of emotional preponderance will determine the individual emotional response. Emotional response can manifest themselves through the leader-follower cognition, behaviours, and actions and through their general disposition (mood). Thus, "when people feel good they work at their best and feeling good lubricates mental efficiency (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002, pp. 14)" and there is a greater probability of a better performance.

Bass (1997) postulates that within the dynamic relationship between the salesperson/buyer and the leader/follower interaction the leader and the salesperson are both attempting to achieve the same objective, which is to endeavour to influence a positive outcome, this may result in a change in the behaviour, cognition or decisions of the buyer/follower. The degree of emotional intelligence awareness displayed by the leader-follower will not only determine their relationship but also their performance. The development of emotional intelligence acuity supports a leaders' ability to become more effective within their role (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002, pp. 38), which in turn results in a more effective performance from the leader.

Although there are other theorisations of EI (Salovey and Mayer, 1997; Bar-On (1997), however, within the context of this paper, we focus on Goleman (1998) model of EI as the basis of the development of the leadership and emotional intelligence debate as it encapsulates the traits within the other models. Goleman (1998) energetically articulates that emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for successful leadership. In this vein, it is sought in this paper to understand the dynamic relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles in regards to IE from Goleman's (1988) perspective. Figure2: Emotional Intelligence Competencies illustrates the dimensions of Goleman's (1988) EI schemata.

The below figure illustrates Goleman et al (2002) and Goleman (1988) conceptual construct of emotional intelligence as well as associated emotional competencies, constructs and competencies, which come under four classifications: (1) Recognition of one's emotions (2) Recognition of emotions in others (3) The regulation of emotion in oneself (4) The regulation of emotion in others. In the following paragraphs, these four domains of EI will be discussed in turn.

	Personal Competence	Social Competence
Recognition	SELF-AWARENESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS • ACCURATE SELF-ASSESSMENT • SELF-CONFIDENCE 	SOCIAL-AWARENESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMPATHY • ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS • SERVICE
Regulation	SELF-MANAGEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMOTIONAL SELF-CONTROL • TRANSPARENCY • ADAPTABILITY • ACHIEVEMENT • IMITATIVE • OPTIMISM 	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INSPIRATIONAL • INFLUENCE • DEVELOPING OTHERS • CHANGE CATALYST • CONFLICT MANAGEMENT • BUILDING BONDS • TEAM WORK

Fig. 2. Emotional Intelligence Competencies

Source: made by the author

Self-Awareness

Emotionally intelligent individuals are cognizant of their emotions and the way in which they respond and perform in respect of them. They maintain awareness in regards to the way they behave (Averill, 1980). The foundation of self-awareness is one of self-recognition; the ability to recognise that one's own emotions will either constrain or empower one's own emotional response but also the emotional responses within others (Goleman et al 2002). The ability to maintain a level of awareness is key, particularly in regards to buyer/seller, leader/follower relationship and team related issues as it enables leader/follower to identify, resolve and manage emotional issues earlier, so that they do not become protracted or detracted from the performance objectives of the organisation (Ammeter et al, 2003). According to Bradberry and Greaves (2009, pp. 26) self-awareness is so critical in relation to job performance and it has been noted that eighty-three percent of people who were high in self-awareness are top performers compared with just two percent who are bottom performers. Self-aware individuals have the capacity to influence, change and alter their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. However, this is contingent upon their reactions to an emotional response (Eisenberg and Fabes, 1992; George, 2000).

Goleman et al (2002, pp. 40) maintain that the most compelling sign of a self-aware individual, are those people who take the time to self-reflect and take time to make decision. Followers/leaders who are not irrational or impulsive and who have the ability to reflect will be able to act with a sense of "conviction and authenticity" (Goleman et al 2002, pp. 40). Self-awareness is a skill that can be acquired; however, it is about understanding one's internal drivers, the triggers that motivate us. Leader-follower who has a greater sense of self-awareness will have a greater propensity to achieve their goals within their work or personal environment, as they understand the motivational trigger that drives them to achieve (Bradberry and Greaves 2009, pp 25).

Self-Management

Self-awareness refers to a leader-follower capacity to keep their emotions under control and to retain a calm disposition (polychroniou, 2009) both internally and externally regardless of the nature or unpredictability of the situations in which they encounter, within a social or work setting. Goleman et al (2002, pp. 45) postulate that failure to understand our feelings will result

in the individual losing control of their emotions. Goleman et al (2002) also argue that positive emotions such as enthusiasm, excitement and jubilation are acceptable emotional states. As juxtapose to negative emotions such as anger, rage and anxiety, as these emotions tend to dominate an individual emotional state and these emotions can become all-consuming, which can overwhelm the leaders-follower brain capacity to “focus on the task in hand.” This usually affects negatively the performance of the leader-follower or buyer/seller.

Leader-follower who is effectual at self-management is more likely to have a greater propensity to sustain a positive and optimistic disposition, and as a result, they can have an infectious effect on others (Goleman et al 2002, pp. 46; Bradberry and Greaves, 2009, pp. 25). Leaders-followers who have the ability to manage their internal emotions will be conditional upon their self-awareness. Self-management is the materialisation of what happens when you act or do not act upon your emotional response (Bradberry and Greaves, 2009, pp. 32). Goleman et al (2002, pp. 45) suggest that failure to know what you are feeling, disables one’s ability to manage those feelings and inevitably our emotions will take control of us.

Social-Awareness

Social-awareness relates to an individual’s ability to be cognisant of the emotions of other people who they share the same environment with, and to become emotionally adept at understanding how someone else is feeling or thinking. Goleman et al (2002, 48) describe social-awareness as empathy, a person’s ability to attune themselves with how another person is feeling. The Oxford Dictionary (2012) defines empathy as “*the ability to understand and share the feelings of another*”. The ability to empathise enables a leader-follower to make emotional connections that resonates with another person, these connections according to Goleman et al (2002, pp. 49) create a positive atmosphere which can create an aspirational sense of optimism about a better future. Empathy is regarded as the fundamental component of social awareness (Goleman, 2002, pp. 50; Bradberry and Greaves, 2009, pp. 38). The ability to develop a symbiotic relationship where you are able to be socially aware and empathise with other people is today a prerequisite condition of an effective leader-follower and seller-buyer relationship, as it guides behaviour and social effectiveness.

Relationship-Management

Relationship management is another social competence; a highly competent leader-follower cannot become competent if they are not adept at relationship-management (Bradberry and Greaves, 2009, p 44). Relationship management is one’s ability to utilise and manage the awareness of other people’s emotions as well as your own emotions in order to foster positive interactions and exchanges effectively. Relationship management poses a significant challenge with our social and professional lives and the ability to master or become more aware of our emotions within us and in others will enable leaders to put their emotional intelligence to work (Goleman et al, 2002, pp. 52).

Emotional Intelligence, Leadership and Performance

Abraham (1999) proposed that emotional intelligence is directly associated to performance and the literature on this concept both conceptually and empirically continues to supports this assertion (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002, pp. 14; Bradberry and Greaves 2009, pp. 26). Furthermore, there are key components within emotional intelligence, which appear critical for top performers. As previously noted, self-awareness competency is vital in relation to job performance where it has been identified that eighty three percent of people who were high in self-awareness are top performers compared with just two percent who were bottom performers (Bradberry and Greaves 2009, pp. 26). Leaders who exhibit high levels of emotional

intelligence have the capacity to dictate, determine and contribute to the overall emotional intelligence of their followers; they also set the emotional mood of the team dependent upon their own emotional state. In order for a leader-follower to benefit from emotional intelligence, they must try to understand the variables that make up emotional intelligence.

Goleman et al (2002, pp251) contend that emotional intelligence contributes to between eighty to ninety percent of the competencies that distinguish an outstanding leader compared to average leader, and if this assertion is accurate EI is critical for organisation success as it influences the performance of the leader-follower as well as buyer-seller. Leaders who are emotionally self-aware have the ability to recognise their innate emotional drivers and as a result, they are able to accurately recognise and manage their own emotional disposition including that of buyer-seller. Different leaders exhibit different leadership styles and in this context leaders have varying degrees of emotional intelligence and some leadership traits we would argue are more aligned to specific EI determinants.

Transactional leadership style would appear to have less EI acuity whilst transformational leaders would appear to be high in EI acuity. Both transactional and transformational leadership styles have been noted and the various characteristics that each leadership style possesses. Both styles influence the leader-follower relationship and performance. As previously noted, transformational leadership has the ability to enhance a salesperson's performance (Dubinsky et al, 1995, Jolson, 1996). Fetter, Mackenzie, Moorman and Podsakoff (1990) have suggested that transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers to perform over and above expectations by providing aspirational goals, articulating a vision and becoming suitable role models. This is in contrast to the transactional leadership style, which is prevalent within business (Bass 1985), and it is particularly prevalent within the sales environment, where the core objective for the sales person is to produce sales, for which they are rewarded through, salary commissions, bonuses, and incentives in exchange. These contingent reward behaviours (reward and punishment) have been suggested to have a negative effect on the follower and on their performance.

Despite the proposition that transformational leadership style alone will enhance a salesperson's performance, the findings have not been supported empirically (Dubinsky 1995). On the contrary, findings suggest that transactional leadership style may well have more of an effect on improving the salesperson performance (Avolio et al, 1988). Given the dynamics of literature reviewed, it has become evident that EI is critical in driving sales performance and in influencing the leadership style, which plays a crucial role within the organisational effectiveness spectrum. Whilst transactional and transformational leadership roles/styles are incongruous they are inextricably interrelated and symbiotic in nature as they both can engender performance but in varying dimensions within an organisation.

Managerial Implication

A significant amount of research has been expended in order to examine the effects of leadership styles, emotional intelligence and performance and this research represents a start at developing a new conceptual model which may well be useful for firms, leaders and sales practitioners. Emotional intelligence and leadership styles is not a general panacea for sales performance, however, they are necessary competencies which may underpin the salesperson's levels of effectiveness and where the leader may be able to maximise their potential. Within dynamic market environment leaders who have been able, to identify their own EI and the EI of others will be better placed to lead and to achieve greater performances.

In this context, the recruitment and selection process would become the first step in the assessment of EI and leadership style in addition to personality or experience. The manager would be required to become more diligent regarding the candidates levels of EI/leadership

style. Leaders may facilitate this by adapting current practices and by asking relevant questions during the interview process. In addition, organisations will have the opportunity to re-examine the leadership style throughout their business. A multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) would help them to determine the style of leadership (transformational vs. transactional). This potentially has two benefits: (1) identify training needs in relation to EI / leadership (2) offering suitable training needs as to how to apply leadership style or EI in the management and performance of the salespersons.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to examine the effects EI and leadership styles on sales performance. Whilst transformational leadership can be distinguished from transactional leadership styles, the nature and perception of the transformational leader can be regarded as key influencing factor and predictor of performance (Barling et al 1996). There is a common perception that transformational leadership style will enhance performance. Fetter, Mackenzie, Moorman and Podsakoff (1990) posit that transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers to perform over and above expectations. The transformational leader has the capacity to develop their followers by enabling them to buy in to the big corporate visions, goals and aspirations. Effective leaders practise transformational leadership, but they also utilise skills within the transactional leadership dominion. Whilst transactional leadership style is very prevalent within commerce and industry, it would appear to be incongruent to transformational leadership style. The transactional leadership style has become synonymous with compliance, rules, policies and procedures (Kelman 1958). Transactional leadership characteristics such as contingent-reward and management-by-exception underpin the transactional leadership style. Transactional leaders are not perceived as developers of people, or natural motivators, however, there are specific components within the transactional leader repertoire, which has a positive effect on performance.

In conclusion, the research suggests that there is a link between EI, transactional and transformational leadership styles and sales performance. Both transactional and transformational leadership styles and the level of emotional intelligence acuity can effect and determine the level of salespersons performance. This study is not empirical in nature and does not lend itself to broad generalisations to specific selling situations or when compared to different personalities, which offers scope for further research.

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