

Spirituality and Emotional Intelligence: Determinants of Effective leadership

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Abstract

The role of an effective leader in the growth and development of an organization continues to be an area receiving attention. The important parameters which are emerging as key indicators of effective leadership may be innumerable but the present research will focus on two vital parameters that are spirituality and emotional intelligence. The role of emotional intelligence (EI) in the development of leadership process is undisputed but what role does spirituality play in creating effective leaders is the current area of interest. The present research proposes to study the role of spirituality and emotional Intelligence in the development of effective leadership through extensive literature review. Emotional Intelligence includes self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, managing relationships, integrity, sociability, warmth and optimism on the part of the leader reflecting it onto the followers and spirituality comprises the values, attitudes, and behaviours that are reflecting compassion, vision, hope, commitment, satisfaction and happiness that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one and others. Fry (2003) has pioneered immense research in the area of spiritual leadership; therefore this review would integrate most of his theory and findings of other researchers as well. As conclusion a critical review has been given based on extensive review of literature and the appreciative inquiry conducted on a panel of scholars on these factors.

Keywords

Spirituality, Emotional Intelligence, Empathy, Sociability, Values, Compassion, Commitment, Satisfaction and Happiness

I. Introduction

In an organization leadership is the important facet which directly or indirectly affects the effectiveness of an individual himself and others around him. In the era of rapid globalization, for a leader to be effective he should have high level of emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence includes motivation, empathy, sociability, warmth and optimism on the part of the leader reflecting it onto the followers. Emotional intelligence thus can be seen as an intellectual capability i.e. it is the capacity to reason with emotion in four areas: to perceive emotion, then integrate it into thought, to understand these emotions, and to finally manage it [34]. The leader should be able to connect with his followers understand where they're coming from and what they've dealt with in the past. Only if the leader understands all this will he be able to take his followers forward with him towards growth and fulfillment. A good leader will motivate its workforce to perform efficiently. Leadership is defined as the process by which one member of a group (called leader) influence other members (called followers) for the attainment of shared vision and common goals [2].

Researchers have proposed several models of emotional intelligence that can be broadly categorized as either ability or mixed models [33]. Ability models define emotional intelligence strictly as a set of abilities pertaining to emotions and emotional information processing [32]. Mixed models lump together abilities pertaining to emotions, personality traits, motivation,

and other concepts. In a study, data from more than 30 different behaviors from banking, mining, geology, sales and health care industries documented that a number of emotional intelligence competencies, qualities such as, achievement drive, developing others, adaptability, influence and self-confidence distinguished top performers from average ones [35]. During 1990s there was an escalation of interest in emotionally intelligent leadership. Research has shown that effective leaders are also likely to be emotionally intelligent. Particularly effective leaders are likely to be consciously aware of themselves, their emotions, strengths and weaknesses, use emotions to improve their thinking and decision-making and intentionally regulate emotions and moods in an effective way.

It has been concluded that emotional intelligence is a better predictor of leadership success than IQ. The age old view of leader has drastically changed. Now leaders are considered as the heroic individual, often charismatic, whose positional power, intellectual strength and persuasive gifts motivate followers. With the advent of positive Psychology, one more important dimension which has been added in the prevalent dimensions of leadership is the spirituality quotient of the leader. The spiritual leadership comprises the values, attitudes, and behaviours that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership [17]. Spiritual leadership theory (SLT) is a causal theory for organizational transformation designed to create an intrinsically motivated, learning organization. According to the spiritual leadership theory, altruistic love is also given from the organization and is received in turn from followers in pursuit of a common vision that drives out and removes fears associated with worry, anger, jealousy, selfishness, failure and guilt and gives one a sense of membership—that part of spiritual survival that gives one an awareness of being understood and appreciated. Thus, this intrinsic motivation cycle based on vision (performance), altruistic love (reward) and hope/faith (effort) results in an increase in ones sense of spiritual survival (e.g. calling and membership) and ultimately positive organizational outcomes such as increased Organizational commitment and productivity and continuous improvement. Another study provides additional support for SLT as a significant and important driver of organizational commitment (80%) and productivity (56%) as well as sales growth (13%) [13].

This is the belief in current scenario that the corporate world is more into materialistic, commercial and strictly profit oriented values, whereas it is important to acknowledge spiritual and ethical aspects being equally important while conducting business. Fry (2003) who pioneered research in this area and gave path for other researchers to explore this topic has explained three characteristics of a leader i.e. vision, hope/faith and altruistic love catalyzed by intrinsic motivation and not focusing on extrinsic motivation in order to induce to the followers the characteristics i.e. calling and membership which would lead to organization commitment and productivity. Spiritual Leadership Theory (SLT) by Fry (2003) explains the three leaders' spiritual factors, mediated by the two

followers' characteristics to influence organizational outcomes are explained below.

The Three Leaders' Spiritual Factors Include:

1. **Vision:** Refers to "a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future". The powerful impact of vision and leadership on organizational performance was studied. The result was striking. Leaders who demonstrated strong visionary leadership had the highest performing teams. Leaders with good management skills but without vision had average team performance [27]. A spiritual leader has a broad appeal to key stakeholders, he defines the course of action for the workforce very clearly, he reflects high ideals, highly encourage hope and faith within all its employees and positively establish a standard of excellence.
2. **Hope/faith:** Refers to "the source for the conviction that the organization's vision/purpose/mission will be fulfilled", thus it "adds belief, conviction, trust, and action for performance of the work to achieve the vision. Hope/faith is thus the source for the very strong and positive intuition and belief that the organization's vision /purpose/ mission will be fulfilled.
3. **Altruistic Love:** Refers to leaders and followers having "a sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others. Underlying this definition are the values; patience, kindness, lack of envy, forgiveness, humility, selflessness, self-control, trust, loyalty, and truthfulness.

The Two Followers' Characteristics are:

1. **Meaning/Calling:** Basically refers to a transcendence or how a person makes a difference through service to others and, while doing so, derives meaning and a sense of purpose in one's life. The term calling has always been associated with the defining characteristics of a professional [15].
2. **Membership:** The feeling of being understood and appreciated. Membership encompasses the cultural and social structures we are born with and through which we reach out to world, what William James, the founder of modern psychology, called man's most fundamental need—to be understood and appreciated. Having a sense of being understood and appreciated is largely a matter of interrelationship and connection through social interaction and thus membership. No materialistic reward can equivalent the work of genuine appreciation and concern. Therefore, a leader who is having faith and hope that his followers would reach the vision through intrinsic motivation are conveying that they are heard, acknowledged, and their contribution toward organization is counted.

An exhaustive review of the literature revealed that spirituality expresses itself in the embodiment of spiritual values (i.e., integrity, trust, ethical influence, honest communication, and humility) and spiritual behaviors (i.e., demonstrating respect, treating others fairly, expressing care and concern, listening responsively, appreciating the contributions of others, and engaging in spiritual practice). The author of review noted that none of the authors examined in the literature review proposed potential sources of spirituality, other than commenting that —spiritual faith is not required for practicing spirituality [39]. Perhaps, this is due to a fear that clearly defining spirituality could lead to dogmatic rigidity [31], and the belief that spirituality should not be constrained by

the doctrine of any one particular faith or religion [42].

Further, there is evidence that workplace spirituality programs not only lead to beneficial personal outcomes, such as increased positive human health and psychological well-being, but that they also deliver improved employee commitment, productivity and reduced absenteeism and turnover. Companies perform better if they emphasize workplace spirituality through both people-centered values and a high-commitment model of attachment between the company and its employees. There is mounting evidence that a more spiritual workplace is not only more productive, but also more flexible and creative. Spiritual leadership have a little different approach of using motivation as a tool to inspire its workforce because the completely negate the extrinsic motivation and place a very strong focus on only intrinsic motivation [18].

In a study spiritual leadership theory was used to explain the apparent contradictory condition wherein one can seem to be obsessed with work yet have high levels of psychological well-being, positive human health and organizational commitment and productivity. The enthusiastic workaholic will be energized by a job that is intrinsically motivating. They argue that, to the extent that the spiritual leadership paradigm is implemented, enthusiastic workaholics will be intrinsically motivated, experience competence, autonomy, relatedness, and spiritual well-being. Spiritual leadership theory can also be used to explain the low levels of psychological well-being, positive human health, and dysfunctional organizational behavior of non - enthusiastic workaholics. The non-enthusiastic workaholic is primarily motivated by extrinsic rewards that can appear to be quite effective. However, they are neither adequate nor productive motivators and may even be, for several reasons, detrimental to organizational performance over the long run [15]. Global companies have realized that Intelligence Quotient alone cannot be used as predictor for success or performance. Leaders with just high IQ will not be able to make an impact in this fast moving global workplace. More important if not less than a leader's Intelligence quotient is the way they will conduct themselves and the way they interact with others. A leader having extremely high IQ will be able to complete his tasks and will be able to set targets for the employees but if Emotional Intelligence is low then getting those tasks done from the employees and keeping them involved at the workplace will not be easy. If the employees are not happy and feel dissatisfied then the productivity of the whole organization will go down. In short a leader has to be a catalyst for success. If the employees feel the leader is doing his work diligently and giving each employee respect only then will they start behaving like the leader, leading to a successful organization.

Emotionally Intelligent leaders in an organization will come in contact with similar troublesome situations as other leaders but the way they react to that particular situation will be different. Other leaders with lesser emotional intelligence might get stopped by setbacks, they might have to struggle for a longer time; they may react in a more negative manner towards others who are involved, which might lead to increased animosity at the workplace. They might take things personally at the workplace which are not meant to be, making themselves a victim. All of this would prevent them from being an effective leader. This is where emotional intelligence comes in and facilitates their success. Emotionally intelligent leaders should be able to move pass setbacks faster and they will see these situations as a learning experience and a chance to further improve their relationships. This can be supported by a study conducted on leaders in stressful situations. Since leadership positions in organizations often involve a very hectic work pace

with several and changing demands and high levels of stress [36]. Not only do leaders have to meet these multiple demands, but they also have to constructively resolve conflicts, and create and maintain a sense of support and trust. Emotional intelligence contributes to what is referred to as constructive thinking or the ability to solve problems with a minimum of stress [12, 29].

A leader who is high on emotional intelligence may act on emotional knowledge which suggests that followers are more likely to experience positive emotions and be supportive of the leader's goals and objectives when the leader expresses confidence in followers and serves to elevate their levels of self-efficacy [21].

It was concluded that over the last decade, ambitious claims have been made in the management literature about the contribution of emotional intelligence to success and performance. Writers in this genre have predicted that individuals with high emotional intelligence perform better in all aspects of management [28].

The non-cognitive emotional intelligence could potentially contribute to a more holistic understanding of interpersonal influence and leadership; however, significant issues of definition, psychometric independence, and measurement must be conclusively resolved. Possible relationships between emotional intelligence, transformational leadership, and individual/organizational outcomes are described and further investigation is encouraged [6]. Various explanations are offered to explain why employees increasingly work longer hours: the combined effects of technology and globalization; people are caught up in consumerism; and the "ideal worker norm," when professionals expect themselves and others to work longer hours [20].

The concept of spiritual leadership is different from the models summarized previously because it is not a leadership type with spirituality injected into it. That is, the aforementioned leadership types use spirituality as a means to reach specific goals such as increased efficiency and profitability in a business context [26]; [41]. A recent study examined the relationship between spirituality and leadership and reflected that managers' spiritual abilities can affect charismatic, transformational, visionary and team leadership styles [3]. Another research stated that spiritual leadership can be applied in educational organizations [1].

Servant leadership is exemplified by a leader who follows spiritual values to serve other people, both in his or her own organization and in the community [22]. Researchers claimed that servant leadership is simply helping other people to discover their spirituality in order to promote altruism and trust in others [40]; [25]. Other researchers have found that the spirituality of leaders and their servant-leader behaviors have positive relationships [4]; [5]. A doctoral dissertation provided another useful example of infusing spirituality into leadership. The researcher examined the spirituality of historical and modern leaders, including Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Moses, Muhammad, the Dalai Lama, Gandhi, Khomeini, King and Mandela. This study led to a discussion of soulful leadership, which considers ways to use spirituality to transform oneself in order to achieve greater meaning in life. [16]. Transformational leadership is linked with a leader's spirituality, and spirituality also fosters mutual trust between a leader and his followers [10]. The leader may also depend on his or her own spiritual resources to develop an environment in which others can feed on spirituality [30].

II. Discussion and Conclusion

The present review was conducted to analyze whether spirituality and emotional intelligence make a manager an effective leader. Effective leaders make a better organization and create an inclusive culture. Leadership is the process of social influence as the behavior of the leader affects the followers' behavior to a great extent. Leader is the member of the group or organization who plays an important role in influencing the behavior of the members of the group or organization. Success of the organization depends on its leaders as they have facilitative, innovative, inspiring vision and empower people to transform the vision into reality. Among all the important traits of leaders which take organization to a greater heights, emotional quotient and spiritual quotient play a pivotal role. The characteristic manifest of high EI encompass self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, managing relationships, integrity, sociability, warmth and optimism on the part of the leader reflecting it onto the followers and spiritual leadership comprises the values, attitudes, and behaviours that are reflecting compassion, vision, hope, commitment, satisfaction and happiness that are necessary to intrinsically motivate oneself and others. Ample research has been conducted to understand the role of Emotional Intelligence in leadership process. The review reflects that for any organization to grow and develop the level of EI of the managers / leaders matters a lot as EI is an important indicator of personal and professional success. The earlier study where data from more than 30 different behaviors from banking, mining, geology, sales and health care industries documented that a number of emotional intelligence competencies, qualities such as, achievement drive, developing others, adaptability, influence and self-confidence distinguished top performers from average ones [35]. Another study which supports the fact how EI is an important indicator of general wellbeing of the employees shows a significant correlation between Emotional Intelligence and general wellbeing and both in turn contribute to employee behavior which is critical to job performance [23].

There is growing evidence that spiritual practices are associated with better health and wellbeing at personal front; and a better organizational culture, organizational effectiveness and productivity at professional front as our personal translates onto our professional. Seeing the vital role these spiritual practices play in our personality and behaviour, the studies were analyzed to emphasize the role spirituality plays in the development of an effective leader. The review reflects that for any organization to grow and develop the level of spirituality of the manager / leader plays a dynamic role as it improves the culture of the organization. It is an important indicator of personal growth as mentioned "Spirituality is concerned with those qualities of the human spirit-such as love and compassion, patience tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of wholeness and harmony-which bring happiness to both self and others". When one has the high spirituality quotient it will reflect on the professional front also. Appreciative Inquiry was conducted on a group of senior managers of a reputed educational institute to gain an insight and discuss the feasibility and implication of the research. An assumption was made that the managers who are high on spirituality may have high level of emotional intelligence also as these two parameters are very important factors of a stable and balanced personality. A true and effective leader is that who is happy with his own self and makes others also happy and gives them opportunities to grow as he is happy and satisfied with his own growth. He is in "I am OK, you are OK" life position.

The understanding developed through extensive literature review and the insight gained through appreciative inquiry support that spirituality and leadership are the important determinants of an effective leader. Leadership qualities reflected by an effective leader are those which are the outcome of spirituality and high emotional intelligence. Spirituality comprises of their values, attitudes, and behaviours that are reflecting compassion, vision, hope, commitment, satisfaction, happiness and harmony that are necessary to intrinsically motivate oneself and others and create an all-encompassing organizational culture. The 7% of leadership success is attributable to intellect; 93% of success comes from trust, integrity, authenticity, honesty, creativity, presence and resilience[9]. As far as emotional intelligence is concerned it comprises of those qualities where leaders are able to manage their own as well as others emotions, are able to motivate themselves as well as others, have empathy towards others and are good in social skills to manage different situations and take up challenges in personal and professional life. Leaders with high level of emotional intelligence positively apply social skills to influence others, create strong relationships with clients and employees, and are effective motivators by controlling their emotions and understanding their weaknesses [14]; [37]; [7]. Somewhat similar results have been reported by a study where a significant correlation was found between emotional Intelligence and general wellbeing and both in turn contributed to employee behavior which is critical to job performance [23]. In another study also it was concluded that the different leadership styles create different type of climate which is responsible for the overall wellbeing of the employees and the institute [24].

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