Chapter 5
Of Leaders and Leadership Through Emotions

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors explore leadership and its relation to emotion. While looking at who is a leader, they present the basics around the concept of emotional intelligence, and its huge impact in the last decades. Research findings will be presented to highlight fundamental characteristics of leaders, such as mindfulness, the ability to manage emotions of the self and the others, empathy, as well as social skills, intended as the ability to handle relationships, in group and social settings. Furthermore, they introduce the concept of emotional labour, which consists of a range of work-related emotions, and the four Cs theory that suggests we should appreciate emotions according to context, challenges, communication, and community. Lastly, the authors present models and processes to measure leadership traits, such as performing a social network analysis or a personality test.

INTRODUCTION

When discussing leadership on a wider scale, a lot of the same familiar names keep cropping up time and time again. Names like Steve Jobs, Nelson Mandela, Richard Branson and even Mark Zuckerberg (before the recent data scandals, that is), are some of the most typical examples of touted leaders in the modern day. So when researchers are trying to study the perfect formula that will win everyone the title of leader in their group or social environment, a great
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interest is sparked. This is exactly what happened when twenty or so years ago, the concept of Emotional Intelligence came out of nowhere, promising practitioners, theorists and academics alike to have found the perfect algorithm to all our leadership dreams (Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham, 2004). You might have already been exposed to an Emotional SWOT analysis, to be performed in relation to yourself or the work environment you live in and feel more empowered in your abilities to become a better leader or team member.

However, the verdict is still out on the perfect relationship between emotions and leadership. In this Chapter, we will discuss some popular theories and models, and try to better understand if there is at least some common ground on the qualities, abilities and in general terms, the attributes that a great leader should have (see note 1).

Emotional Intelligence and Other Perspectives

Eighty to ninety percent of [leadership] competencies are not cognitive. For any top executive..., there are never more than two competencies that come out in the cognitive areas as distinguishing outstanding performance. [...] All the rest are what we call emotional intelligence. (Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A., 2002).

Who is a leader? A leader should be someone able to influence a group of people towards achieving a predetermined vision or set of goals. Researchers have presented behavioural, contingency, traits and even more modern theories to predict who can be a leader. In particular, behavioural theories of leadership are based on the assumption that anyone can be trained to be a leader. According to such theories (see Judge, Piccolo & Ilies, 2004), leaders show two specific behaviours, also known as initiating structure - here defined as the way a leader defines and organises their role and those of employees to reach the goal - and consideration, which calculates the level of trust and regard for others’ feelings.

On the other end, contingency theories of leadership take into account situational influences on leadership styles and effectiveness. For example, according to the Fiedler contingency model (see Altmae, Tuerk & Toomet, 2013), a leader is effective if and when there is a proper match between the leader’s style of leading other employees, and the actual control and influence the leader has in the specific situation. Other contingency theories focus
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