



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership development of students in tertiary institutions. The paper uses information from empirical findings to highlight the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership development. Leadership skills such as social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, articulation and insight and Knowledge were discussed as ingredients for leadership development among students in tertiary institutions. It was concluded that given the right leadership skills and emotional intelligence, students can effectively lead and manage disputes and displeasures among themselves before it turns to violence. The paper suggested that Students' union executives should be subjected to leadership training and retraining, candidates contesting for students' union executive positions should be subjected to leadership competency test and lastly, lectures should be given on emotional intelligence and effective leadership during student's orientation.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Development, Tertiary Institutions, Adamawa State*

Introduction

In cultivating young leaders in tertiary institutions attention is given to leadership skill development such as social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, articulation and insight and knowledge (Redmond, & Dolan

2016). The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has been linked to success and failure of leadership rather than the competency, knowledge and experience of a leader, making it one of the determinants of leadership success (Doe, Ndinguri, & Phipps, 2015). EI helps understand and regulate feelings, emotions and emotional knowledge to promote the growth of emotions and intellectuality (Asrar-ul-Haq, Anwar, & Hassan, 2017).

Sy & Cote, (2004) ascertain that those leaders with high emotional intelligence are characterized by the ability to identify, assess, and equally predict and take charge of their emotions and that of their subordinates in a manner that benefit their group. Individuals with high emotional intelligence have leadership abilities because they have a strong social influence on the people around them in the form of positive effect on people. Leaders who are highly emotional intelligent tend to exhibit emotional labor at workplace by maintaining positive temperaments when interacting with others (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017).

Additionally, research findings of various authors suggest that, those individuals who are highly emotional intelligent are inclined to show better performance in leadership positions in their organization in comparison to individuals who are low on emotional intelligence (Joseph, Jin, Newman, & O'Boyle, 2015; Karimi, Leggat, Donohue, Farrell, & Couper, 2014). Hence, the term Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been defined in Côté (2014) as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.” The term was later revised to consists of “the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth”. While a more recent review defined EI as “the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought”. These definitions all interpret EI as a set of abilities concerned with emotions and emotional information (Côté, 2014).

Furthermore, leadership is a social influence process and a goal directed and action-oriented activity where leaders play an active role in groups

and organizations. leaders use influence to guide others through a certain course of action or toward the achievement of certain goals. Leading people is but a challenging task as well as a great opportunity, and a serious obligation. Hence, the need for leadership development (Nahavandi, 2009).

Leadership development is the expansion of the capacity of individuals to be effective in leadership roles and processes (Williams, McLeod, & McCauley, 2010). It focuses on efforts aimed at expanding individual and collective capacity to be effective in leadership roles and to bring about effective leadership. Among other things, individuals who hold leadership positions are expected to facilitate the development of a direction given environmental considerations, align the efforts of others in support of this direction, and engage and motivate others to accomplish this direction (Williams et al., 2010). Thus, the study of leader development focuses mainly on the acquisition of individual knowledge, skills, abilities (i.e., competencies) and enhanced holistic functioning that promote more effective leadership, mainly for those in formally appointed roles which includes students in tertiary institutions.

Nonetheless, the primary objective of educational institutions is imparting academic learning to the students to ensure that they achieve their personal and professional goals. Yet, it is paramount for them to develop leadership skills to be able to lead and guide others in the right direction, inculcate the traits of diligence and conscientiousness and differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate. Evidently, by engaging in student union governance and by extension being potential players in political and economic domain open graduation, these students are mentored to be leaders, and emotional intelligence is a key ingredient in leadership development of our students in tertiary institutions. Supporting the above statement, the *New Visions for Education* report by the World Economic Forum (2016) stated that emotional intelligence underscores several competencies and character qualities that are essential for 21st century students who will enter the global work force.

Consequently, the objective of this paper is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership development and elucidate

on other skills required for effective leadership development among students in tertiary institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Recent unrest in some tertiary institutions in Adamawa state namely Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola, Federal College of Education Yola and College of Education Hong has resulted in unwarranted destruction of properties, facilities and infrastructures, leading to closure of school, semester elongation and compulsory payment for damages by student. The inability of the student's union government to manage disputes and grievances on campuses suggest that they lack the leadership skills require to lead. This has caused more harm to the system and also the students. Although, the students claimed to have been denied some of their basic rights and freedom, the violence is uncalled for and all means to prevent future occurrence must be harnessed.

Leadership Development Among Students

Students in tertiary institutions are basically youths who desire to develop their skill set, work closely with others, lead change and use their creativity to benefit themselves and society. By engaging them in leadership development opportunities at a young age, societies can cultivate values in their leaders that take account of the need for a more responsible approach to leadership. The objective is that these young people will become influential through their business and community actions in support of a stable society. They will be active citizens, considerate of others and mindful of the consequences of their actions.

Student leadership development is fundamental to effective management of students in school on one hand and the provision of excellent leaders to fill in the leadership roles in organizations open graduation on the other hand. Supporting this assertion, Othman, and Rahman (2014) claimed that leadership skills and competency development are fundamental to the belief that leaders can be made. Thus, leadership development model of Redmond and Donald (2016) is adapted is examining the leadership skill needed for leadership development in students. These are highlighted as

social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, articulation, and insight and knowledge as presented in figure 1.

Redmond and Dolanas (2016) Model

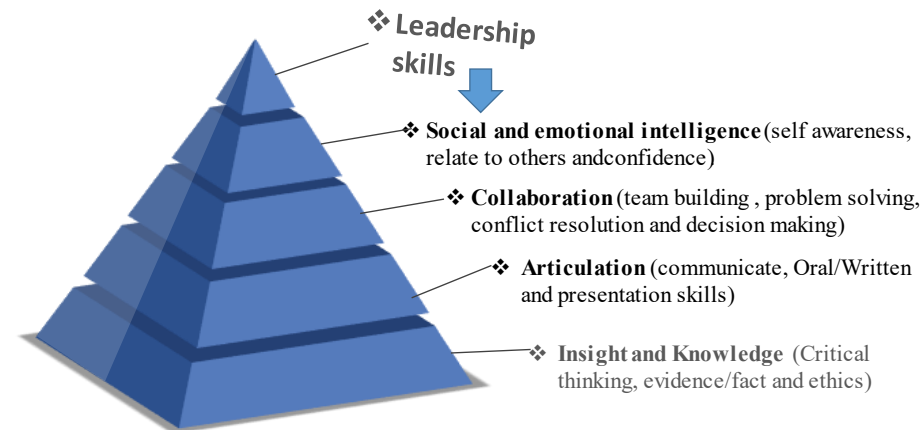


Figure 1.

Social and Emotional Intelligence

Research shows that a leader's emotional resonance with others is a better predictor of effective executive leadership than their general intelligence (Deliu, 2019) Emotional intelligence in leaders involves self-awareness (understanding strengths and weakness), self-regulation (being in control over your emotions), motivation (using inner drive to accomplish tasks), empathy (understanding another person's point of view) and social skills (relating well to others) (Martin, 2019). Similarly, Wamsler, & Restoy, (2020) built on these aspects by outlining four components that are important in leadership: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Moreso, social and emotional competence is a critical component of student leadership. To be capable of leading other people, the students must know themselves well, including their own strengths and their weakness. They can build on their strengths and maximize their potential while also enabling other people, who are

strong in areas that they are weak to contribute and receive recognition for it (Humphries, Williams, & May, 2018).

Self-control and self-awareness are components of social and emotional intelligence which help reduce the chance of developing cognitive distortions such as taking things personally, mind-reading or magnifying situations (Redmond, & Dolan 2016). Having self-control and self-management means that students can understand when things are not working and know how to deal with them appropriately (Soner, 2019). Redmond and Dolan (2016) further stated that leaders need to understand their followers, including their hopes and dreams, enabling them better to enlist their support towards a common ideal. Ultimately, what this means is that the leader must spend time on personal development and building an awareness of how they are in their interactions with others as well as how they relate their vision to others.

Collaboration

Being able to work with other people in a way that ensures that everyone feels there is a fair and just recognition of their time, commitment and ideas is vital to sustaining an effective team. In any emerging team, the group dynamics of forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning apply. As the team comes together, there is the initial settling period, followed by a phase where there is uncertainty and conflict as the group find their roles. This is followed by a stage of normalization, where people feel they are part of a team and can work effectively if they accept other people's points of view. Once established, the group can then move on to performing and contributing meaningfully. When the task is complete, they can then review and recognize the work that was done. As part of any group process, there are times of conflict and disagreement (Redmond, & Dolan 2016).

The role of the leader is to enable the team work well together, particularly under conditions where there are differences of opinion. The leader requires skills in conflict resolution, team building, problem solving and decision-making (Cortellazzo, Bruni, & Zampieri, (2019). The importance of teamwork in finding solutions to problems by bringing people together can produce better results than each person could individually do. All of

these skills help the team to work effectively together towards their common goal. Having a leader who is sensitive to the challenges of enabling different personalities to work together, while recognizing the contribution of each team member, means that the team can work well in spite of the challenges that it faces (Katzenbach, & Smith 2015).

Articulation

Sharing a vision with others to gain their support requires good communication skills, both oral and written. The leader must be able to develop a convincing argument, which encourages others to support their ideas (Costigan, & Brink, 2020). Communication skills are the 'all-purpose instrument of leadership' enabling leaders to share ideas and influence others. Being able to communicate effectively with other people means that the leader needs to have a clear vision and know how to communicate this to others (Van Niekerk, 2014). For example, Dr. King's 'I have a dream' speech communicated a vision. One, which enabled people to see and feel how their own interests and aspirations were aligned with the picture he illustrated (cited in Redmond, & Dolan 2016). His speech illuminated an ideal world worth working towards, which in turn enabled others to share his vision of the future and generate the action necessary for change.

Articulating a vision is vital to enlisting the commitment of others. It also enables a road map to be created. In the words of Campbell (1974, p. 1) 'If you don't know where you are going, you'll probably end up somewhere else'. This highlights further, the importance of clarity in communicating the end goal. Furthermore, a person with a great vision who is unable to communicate it is not going to be effective in gaining support for their cause. Similarly, a person who has great communication skills, but no vision is not going to have the road map to where they want to go. Exposure to a multitude of experiences where students get to practice their communication skills helps to shape the development of these skills in them by strengthening these neural pathways in their brains (Begley 2000). Harnessing such skills early as students enables them to overcome the challenges of speaking in public, gain confidence in their opinions and contribute to society.

Insight and knowledge

Developing knowledge of a particular subject matter is important in leadership. To be able to lead people effectively, it is necessary to demonstrate some level of adeptness in the given area (Shriberg et al. 2005). Being able to think critically about a topic requires a good understanding of the topic. Trust and confidence in the leader are essential for the team to perform and this is highly related to the leader's knowledge (Politis 2003). Dong, et al. (2017) highlight that knowledge is a core skill to leadership which is strongly linked to being able to solve problems and forms part of what can be considered technical skills.

Ethics are an important aspect of knowledge, as having good knowledge of what is right and what is wrong requires a level of moral judgement, which can only come from an insight into the consequences of decisions. Ethical leaders strive for fairness, take on responsibility, fulfil commitments, serve others and show courage by standing up for what is right. Ethics in leadership means that leaders model their actions on solid ethical principles, which are considered the foundation of trust between leaders and followers (Orchard, et al., 2016).

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Development in Students

Previous studies have shown that the construct of emotional intelligence has gained much popularity as a potential underlying attribute of effective leadership. Because in leadership, dealing effectively with emotions may contribute to how one handles the needs of individuals, how one effectively motivates followers, and makes them feel happy. Thus, effective leadership skills have been described to depend, in part, on the understanding of emotions and the abilities associated with EI. Moreover, Balamohan, et al., (2015) opined that leader with greater emotional intelligence will be more effective in leading, as effective leaders are socially adept. Similarly, it was postulated that leadership is an emotional process; whereby leaders recognize followers' emotional states, attempt to evoke emotions in followers, and then seek to manage followers' emotional states accordingly. Furthermore, business leaders ranked EI more important

than any other traditional leadership attributes like financial acumen, market orientation, and planning (Nabih, et al.,2016).

Additionally, EI is viewed in leadership literature as a key determinant of effective leadership, where “higher EI scores are associated with higher leadership effectiveness”. A high level of EI might enable a leader to be better able to monitor how followers are feeling, and take the appropriate action (Kim, & Kim, 2017). Yadav, and Lata, (2019) also describe that emotional intelligence has a strong relationship with effective leadership and further opined that leaders who are aware and understand their own and other’s emotions and can use that understanding to effectively motivate, inspire, challenge, and connect with others are effective leaders. Still, Nabih, et al., (2016). hypothesized and proved that emotional control is a predictor of effective leadership. Where emotional control is the ability to regulate both the expression and experience of emotions, it is a critical component of emotional intelligence and is particularly important in the workplace. Similarly, Desti, and Shanthi, (2015). stated that EI helps in improving leadership and performance. it was also postulated that that leaders with strengths in six or more EI competencies are believed to be more effective and have higher levels of performance outcomes than their peers who lack these strengths (Goleman, 2017).

Contemporary leadership theories demonstrate the centrality of emotional skills for effective leadership. In turbulent times, leaders often need to contain the anxiety of those they lead, regulate their own emotions and express appropriate emotions in response to the needs of the situation. They concluded that leadership is an inherently social role, thus emotional skills are critical component of a leader’s development and effectiveness Nabih, et al., (2016). In recent research, it was stated that leaders who can regulate their own emotions effectively through self-regulatory methods should be better able to adapt to the needs of followers (Reina, 2015).

Conclusion

This paper examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership development of students in tertiary institutions. The paper examines further the leadership skills necessary for effective leadership

among students. The paper concludes that given the right leadership skills and emotional intelligence, students can effectively lead and manage disputes among themselves before it turns to violence. Hence, the need to subject students in tertiary institutions leadership training and skill development.

WAY FORWARD

1. Students' union executives should be subjected to leadership training and retraining
2. Candidates contesting for students' union executive positions should be subjected to leadership competency test.
3. While inducting new students' lectures should be given on emotional intelligence and effective leadership

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