



Evaluating the impact of a leader's emotional intelligence on organisational performance within a South African telecoms firm

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Business Administration to the Faculty of Commerce, Law, and Management, University of the Witwatersrand

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UNIVERSITY



DECLARATION

I Mfanafuthi Shongwe declare that this research report entitled "**Evaluating the impact of a leader's emotional intelligence on organisational performance within a South African telecoms firm**" is my own unaided work. I have acknowledged, attributed and referenced all ideas sourced elsewhere. I am hereby submitting it in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Business Administration at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I have not submitted this report before for any other degree or examination to any other institution.

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Signed at Johannesburg on 30th May
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my darling wife, Pamela Shongwe, and our three “Champs”: MfanakaJesu, Mpumelelo and Nkanyezi Shongwe for their support and encouragement, and for allowing me to sacrifice crucial hours of being a husband and father to concentrate on my educational sojourn.

Thank you Fam!

To God be the Glory!

ABSTRACT

The ability of leaders to understand their own emotions as well as the emotions of those with whom they work is a key indicator of improved business performance and long-term growth (Ferrar, 2009). According to Ferrar (2009), as service-oriented businesses grow, leaders are expected to not only manage, but also lead with sensitivity.

Companies are realising that in order to succeed, they need leaders who have an innate ability to improve group cohesion and morale through shared emotional experiences (Augusty and Mathew 2020). According to Goleman (1998), this ability is assumed to be based on emotional intelligence (EI), which is consistent with the current research aim.

The aim of the current study was to develop a conceptual framework towards a sustainable organisation design that could address the impact of EI of the leader on organisational performance and sustainability. The study examined the link between EI and effective leadership and the impact it may have on organisational performance and sustainability.

To investigate the relationship between EI and organisational performance and sustainability, a survey research design was used. According to the current study, EI has a strong positive relationship with organisational performance.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; effective leadership; organisational performance; organisational sustainability

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Emotional intelligence: Can be defined as the ability to recognise, understand and regulate one's own emotions; and to recognise, understand and influence the emotions of others.

Organisational performance: The output or results of an organisation as measured against its goals and objectives.

Effective leadership involves setting the tone and culture of the organisation, and influencing the behaviour of followers to execute the organisation's vision.

Organisational sustainability: Having the leadership, talent and strategies in place to be able to rise to the unique challenges that face organisations nowadays.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1. Background and context

More generally, this research evaluates the impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on organisational performance within a South African telecoms firm. Before getting to the research conceptualisation (Section 1.2), however, we briefly introduce the terms and concepts that we have used in conceptualising this research in Section 1.1, while Section 1.2 provides a more specific and detailed discussion on the research context. The research conceptualisation section provides for the research problem statement (Section 1.3.2) and, consequently, the purpose of this research (Section 1.3.2) as well as the research questions (Section 1.3.3). The delimitations and assumptions of the research study are in Section 1.3, while we discuss the significance of the research study in Section 1.4 and provide a preface to the research report in Section 1.5.

Telecoms sector in South Africa

Telecoms in South Africa plays an important supporting role in socio-economic development and the digital advancement of industries (Accenture, 2020). The telecoms sector is an important part of modern lifestyles and has a significant impact on the country's economic growth as it strengthens productivity levels.

Despite the economic challenges facing the nation, South Africa's telecoms sector has continued to grow. Mobile subscriptions, internet penetration and other related services are all increasing. South Africa's fibre network and data centre markets are rapidly expanding (Accenture, 2020). While the local telecoms sector continues to expand, more needs to be done to strengthen the sector, expand its reach and reduce service costs. This will improve the well-being of citizens, while also promoting economic development and growth (Accenture report, 2020).

According to an Accenture report (2020), improving telecom operators' competitiveness in a variety of areas, such as the delivery of new services and

the support of innovation, will be critical. The role of effective leadership would be essential in this regard. To that end, Augusty and Mathew (2020) believe that to achieve effective leadership, key competencies and skills ought to be identified and to ensure that training of future leaders centres around these key areas.

Emotional intelligence (EI), according to Goleman (1998), is essential for effective leadership. Goleman argued in his 1998 article, "What Makes a Great Leader", that without EI, a person could have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind and an endless supply of smart ideas, but still be ineffective as a leader.

Law, Song and Wong (2004) posited that EI is increasingly becoming an essential component of how leaders handle the intricacies of the problems they face in the business world today. Leaders appear to be confronted with unique challenges on regular basis, and an effective leader in today's organisation must be capable of adapting to these evolving issues. For example, leaders who are unable to discern and self-assess their emotions may fail to recognise certain cues from their co-workers or subordinates. According to Law, Song and Wong (2004), findings indicate that EI leaders outperform their counterparts.

The world of business has accepted the concept of EI as pertinent to organisational performance and as a competitiveness tool (Dabke, 2016), thereby supporting the aim of the current research study, which is to assess the impact of the EI of a leader on organisational performance and sustainability.

Leadership and emotional intelligence

Due to increasing competition in the telecoms sector, telecoms companies place greater emphasis on organisational performance, which involves pressuring leaders with the task of making correct decisions in complex and difficult situations towards achieving a set target in line with effective and

efficient utilisation of resources (Lee, 2014;). Leaders are required to not only manage, but also to lead with sensitivity in today's service-oriented companies. (Ferrar, 2009).

The telecoms industry is among the most competitive in the world and managing organisational performance in that sector could mean improving various complex issues that relate to achieving organisational objectives (Radha & Prasad, 2013). EI of leaders is expected to provide an added advantage through self-awareness and social awareness (Manisha, 2012; Shahhosseini et. al. 2012).

A study by Gryn (2010) posited that there is a positive relationship between organisational performance and EI. According to Gryn (2010), the emotional tone set by an enterprise's executive or presumed leader can determine its success or failure. They contended that leaders must be able to connect with others in the organisation, not only intellectually, but also emotionally.

The argument being made here is that there is a positive relationship between the EI of a leader and organisational performance. Thus, the current research study aims to evaluate whether the EI of a leader can predict organisational performance in a South African context. The findings can be used to improve training and mentoring programmes in the telecoms and other South African industries.

1.2. Conclusion

A brief introduction was provided of the terms and concepts used in conceptualising this research. The background of the current study was given, highlighting the state of the telecom industry in South Africa, and how it can remain competitive and position itself for future challenges. The importance of EI and effective leadership was highlighted. The current study aims to examine the impact of leaders' EI on organisational performance.

1.3. Research conceptualisation

The research problem statement

Against the above background, the research problem investigated within the ambit of this research study reads as follows: "Evaluating the impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on organisational performance and sustainability within South African Telecoms firm."

It is critical to understand how a leader's EI influences organisational performance and sustainability. Little research has been conducted to determine this effect, which is why the current study was conducted.

Due to increasing competition in the telecoms sector, telecoms companies place greater emphasis on organisational performance, which involves pressuring leaders with the task of making correct decisions in complex and difficult situations towards achieving a set target in line with effective and efficient utilisation of resources (Lee, 2014).

The influence of EI on effective organisational leadership remains relatively unknown (Ngirande & Timothy, 2014). Further, the authors are of the opinion that there is a lack of research (conducted or published) to support the relationship between EI and effective leadership despite the interest it has garnered. Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) further argue the inadequate connection between EI and employee satisfaction.

According to the Harvard Business Review (2004), emotional intelligence is a significant variable that influences organisational performance (Mayer, Goleman, Gutstein, 2004). Thus, the study is being conducted to evaluate whether a leader's EI skills have a significant influence on organisational performance and sustainability in the selected South African telecoms companies. The study would then develop a conceptual framework based on Goleman's (1998) model of EI as illustrated in Table 1. It would also attempt to examine the impact of the EI of a leader on organisational performance and sustainability.

Table 1: A framework of emotional competencies (Goleman, 1998)

| | Recognition | Regulation |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Personal Competence | <p>Self-Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Awareness of your emotional state • Recognizing how your behavior impacts others • Paying attention to how others influence your emotional state | <p>Self-Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check • Acting in congruence with your values • Handling change flexibly • Pursuing goals and opportunities despite obstacles and setbacks |
| Social Competence | <p>Social Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picking up on the mood in the room • Caring what others are going through • Hearing what the other person is “really” saying | <p>Relationship Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting along well with others • Handling conflict effectively • Clearly expressing ideas/information • Using sensitivity to another person’s feeling (empathy) to manage interactions successfully |

Goleman (1998) believed that EI comprises four fundamental abilities: Self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and social skills. Specific sets of competencies are depicted in the diagram above.

According to Bradberry and Greaves (2014), EI consists of four core skills that can be classified into two primary competencies: personal competence and social competence.

Personal competence

Personal competence is defined as the ability to manage your behaviour and emotions while remaining emotionally aware (Bradberry & Greaves, 2014). It refers to an individual's ability to manage himself or herself. It focuses on you as an individual rather than your interactions with others. As a result, it entails both self-awareness and self-management (Goleman et al., 2002). Emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence are all aspects of self-awareness. It describes how people understand and deal with their own emotions.

- **Self-awareness** is the capacity to correctly interpret and remain conscious of your feelings when they occur. Self-aware people are capable of recognising and expressing their own feelings (Goleman, 1998).

- **Self-management** is the ability to remain resilient and positively steer your actions by becoming mindful of your emotions. A person can control their emotions while focusing on a task at hand, allowing them to positively influence the decision-making process. Emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative and optimism are all aspects of self-management. (Goleman, 1998).

Social competence

Social competence is an attribute that is comprised of social awareness and relationship management. Social awareness includes having empathy, organizational awareness, and being of service (Bradberry & Su, 2006). The most important being *empathy*, which refers to being aware of others' feelings without their utterance. Empathy in the workplace also entails detecting and comprehending the issues or concerns that underpin co-workers' emotions. To get the best out of others, a leader must demonstrate empathy – the human touch (Goleman, 2000).

- **Social awareness** is the ability to accurately sense and pick up on other people's emotional signals and react in an empathetic manner (Goleman, 1998).
- **Relationship management** is the ability to use emotional awareness (in oneself and others) to successfully manage interactions. According to Goleman (1998), some of the components of relationship management include inspiring leadership, influence, developing others, catalysing change, managing conflict, and teamwork and collaboration.

The conceptual framework adopts Goleman's (2001) model, which emphasises EI as a broad set of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management are the four core EI frameworks outlined in the model. Within each construct of EI, Goleman provides a collection of emotional competencies, and indicates that emotional competencies are learned capabilities that must be developed to achieve exceptional performance.

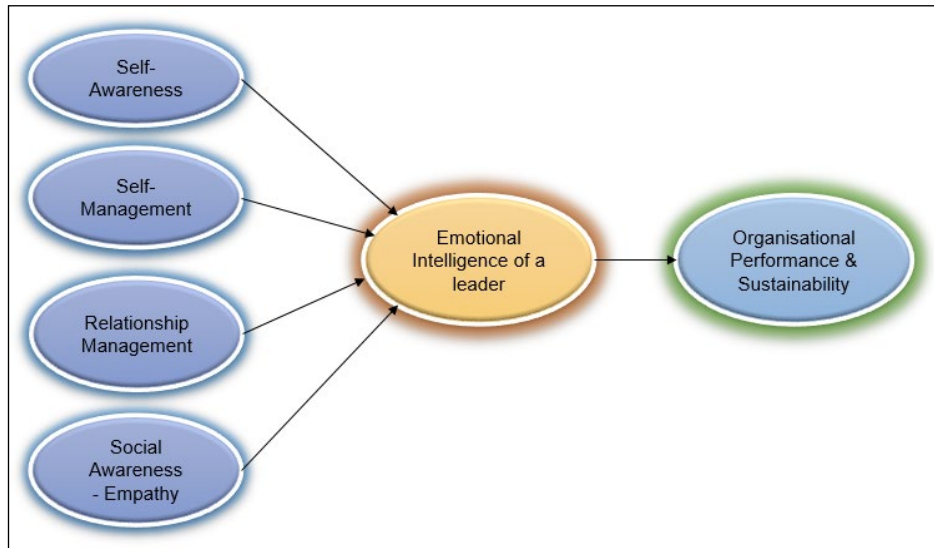


Figure 1: Conceptual framework (adapted from Goleman, 1998)

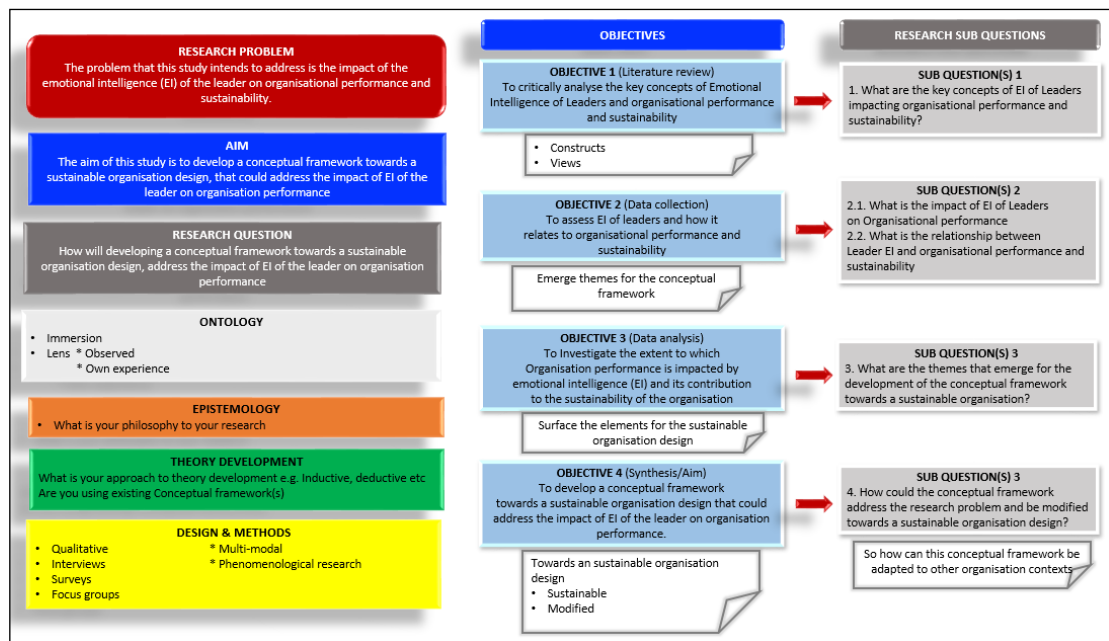
While EI can improve performance in a variety of areas, including achievement and close relationships (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), it is believed that it may also play a key role in leadership effectiveness. The current study proposes that the four aspects of EI as described by Goleman (2001) contribute to effective leadership, which in turn influences organisational performance and sustainability.

The research purpose (aim and objectives) statement

The purpose of the current study is to establish a relationship between EI and effective leadership and how likely can the two constructs influence Organisational performance and sustainability.

The study would follow the qualitative research method. In qualitative research, data analysis is performed with the aim of generating direct interpretations of meanings and functions of a phenomenon under investigation (Hedge, 2015). Upon collection of all the data from participants and respondents, a researcher would employ proper procedures to analyse the data. Analysing the research data properly helps the researcher gain insights from it and draw informed conclusions (Sreejesh et al., 2014).

Table 2: Research framework (Author's own)



1.3.1.1. Research aim

The current study aims to develop a conceptual framework towards a sustainable organisation design that could address the impact of EI of the leader on organisational performance and sustainability.

According to Ngirande and Timothy (2014), there has been insufficient research conducted and published to support the relationship between EI and effective leadership despite the interest shown. Ashkanasy and Daus (2002) further highlight the inadequate connection between EI, effective leadership and organisational performance.

EI is becoming more of an important feature in how leaders handle the intricate nature of the problems they are faced with in their work environment (Wong & Law, 2002). The authors further note the constantly changing challenges leaders are confronted with and propose that a successful leader in today's organisation ought to adapt to these evolving issues. For example, leaders who don't have discernment and self-assessment may miss certain cues from their co-workers or subordinates.

1.3.1.2. Research objectives

In order to lead effective teams and ensure company sustainability, Goleman (2001) outlined essential components of EI that leaders must develop. Goleman (2001) went on to say that, leaders must be self-aware in order to perceive emotions as they arise in response to various business situations and be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Generally, EI can be categorised into four core competencies. For one to improve one's EI, Landry (2019) notes that one requires an in-depth understanding of each competency.

- **Self-awareness** is central to everything. It describes one's ability to understand one's strengths and weaknesses, as well as one's ability to recognize one's emotions and their effect on one's and one's team performance.
- **Self-management** entails managing one's emotions, especially under stressful circumstances, as well as maintaining a positive outlook despite any difficulties experienced. Leaders who lack self-management tend to be reactive and find it difficult to control their impulses.
- **Social awareness** describes one's ability to recognise other people's emotions and the dynamics in effect in one's organisation. Leaders who are highly socially aware are empathetic. They put effort in understanding their colleagues' feelings and points of view, thus allowing them effective communication and collaboration with their peers. It is also important to be able to read a room.
- **Relationship management** refers to one's ability to influence, coach, be a mentor, and resolve conflict in an effective manner.

The current study seeks to establish the influence of the above EI competencies on leaders and how likely it is to promote positive feelings among subordinates, which according to Allen and Meyer (1990) and Amjad (2018) tend to increase participation, cooperation and improved organisational performance and sustainability.

The following research objectives and research questions would help guide the current study:

- **Objective 1** (Literature review): To critically analyse the key concepts of EI of leaders, and organisational performance and sustainability. This objective would support the main construct of the study's literature review.
- **Objective 2** (Data collection): To explore the constructs of EI and how it relates to organisational performance and sustainability. This objective would assist the current study with data collection.
- **Objective 3** (Data analysis): To establish the themes and extent to which organisational performance is impacted by EI and its contribution to the sustainability of the organisation.
- **Objective 4** (Synthesis/aim): To develop a conceptual framework towards a sustainable organisation design that could address the impact of EI of the leader on organisational performance.

The research questions

1.3.1.3. Primary research question

The research question posed within the ambit of this dissertation, reads as follows: *“How will developing a conceptual framework towards a sustainable organisation design, address the impact of EI of the leader on organisational performance?”*

1.3.1.4. The research sub-questions

The investigative questions researched in support of the research question are as follows:

- What are the key concepts of EI of leaders influencing organisational performance and sustainability?

- What is the impact of EI of leaders on organisational performance and sustainability?
- What are the themes that emerge for the development of the conceptual framework towards a sustainable organisation?
- How could the conceptual framework address the research problem and be modified towards a sustainable organisational design?

The attributes contained in the above research questions, i.e., EI, effective leadership, organisational performance and sustainability, would form the basis of the data-collection questionnaires.

1.4. Delimitations and assumptions of the research study

Limitations of the study

The participants in this study were restricted to employees within the researcher's current employer and included team leaders and managers from various departments within the Enterprise Business Unit environment. Fellow MBA students and individuals known to the researcher also formed part of the research study. To reduce bias, objective questions on standardised survey questionnaires were used, ensuring that participants remained anonymous after contributing to the study.

Key research assumptions

The study's relevance and accuracy of the findings are dependent on the sincerity of those who participated. As a result, a basic assumption is that those who took part provided correct information and were entirely truthful when answering questions.

Ontology/research paradigm

A research paradigm, or philosophy, refers to a system of beliefs, and ontological and epistemological assumptions, that a researcher may subscribe to regarding the development of knowledge (Rajasekar, 2013; Saunders et al., 2016). In this research study, two ontological observations were made:

- Humans are the weakest link in the information and cybersecurity chain.

- Existing information and cybersecurity framework models are largely, and mainly, techno-centric (as opposed to being socio-technically equivalent to strengthen the weak socio/human link).

Saunders et al. (2016) distinguished the philosophical assumptions through the objectivism and subjectivism perspectives as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Philosophical assumptions through objectivism and subjectivism perspectives, derived from Goodwin & Darley (2008) and Saunders et al. (2016)

| Philosophical assumption | Typical questions | Objectivism perspective | Subjectivism perspective |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ontology (nature of being, or reality) | What makes humans the weakest link in security chain? What are security frameworks like? | Perspective based on: One true reality or universalism; granular things; externalities; order | <i>Perspective based on: Multiple realities or relativism; convention; social constructionism; flowing processes; chaos</i> |
| Epistemology (nature of knowledge) | How do we know, and accept, that humans are the weakest link in the security chain? How do we know, and accept, that existing security framework models are largely techno-centric? | Through numbers, facts, generalisations, observation of phenomena, and assumptions of a natural scientist | <i>Through opinions, narratives, attributed meanings, context specifics, and assumptions of humanities and the social scientist</i> |

With reference to Table 4, the ontological position of this research study is *subjectivism*. This is because the two ontological and epistemological assumptions, although somewhat previously quantified by various researchers, are still subjective and based on opinions, context specifics and social constructions of different social actors (people) (Goodwin & Darley, 2008; Saunders et al., 2016). Hence, it is very difficult to attain a definitive state of adequate security. There are various types of research philosophies (epistemological perspectives), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Research philosophies and associated research methods, derived from Carson et al. (2006), Barney et al. (2007), Merriam (2014), and Saunders et al. (2016)

| Philosophy type | Philosophy type description | Associated research approach | Associated research methodology | Associated research strategy |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Positivism (post-positivism) | Researcher keeps objective posture, is independent and detached from what is being researched | Deductive and highly structured | Quantitative | Surveys, experiments |
| Critical realism | Acknowledgement of bias by researcher, but tries to be as objective as possible to reduce it and any errors | Retroductive | Any method appropriate for study at hand | Action research, ethnography |
| Interpretivism (constructivism) | <i>Researcher is subjective, part of what is being researched, and interpretations critical to knowledge contribution</i> | <i>Inductive</i> | <i>Qualitative</i> | <i>Case study, ethnography; grounded theory</i> |
| Postmodernism (post-structural) | Researcher and phenomena embedded in power relations. Certain narratives of research suppressed at expense of others | Any suitable research approach | Qualitative | Any strategy appropriate for study at hand |
| Pragmatism | <i>Researcher's doubts and beliefs initiates this type of research</i> | <i>Any suitable research approach, including abductive. The emphasis is on practical outcomes</i> | <i>Any suitable methodology, including qualitative, multiple, quantitative or mixed</i> | <i>Any suitable strategy. This is driven by the nature of a research problem</i> |

With reference to Table 4.5, the research paradigm adopted in this study leans toward both *interpretivism/constructivism* and *pragmatism*. In this study, the two research paradigms are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are complementary since the emphasis of the study is to find pragmatic ways to address the impact of EI of leaders on organisational performance.

Pragmatists acknowledge that there are various means of interpreting the world around us and that all facts affect our actions (Shariatinia, 2016). However, in the end, the objective of a pragmatist's research study is to contribute practical solutions that can inform future, and hopefully improved, organisational practices (Saunders et al., 2016).

The researcher has more than 10 years' experience in the telecoms industry, mainly working in the technology and engineering environment. Over the years, the researcher has observed that most employees, including managers, in the technical environment do lack some emotional competencies that are of vital importance in the workplace. This lack of emotional competency may be detrimental to organisational effectiveness.

Employees working at a telecom's environment have typically technical abilities, therefore they would need to learn and develop emotional competence (a learned capability based on EI) in order to achieve high performance at work as described by Raza and Kashif (2011). Goleman (2004) suggests that EI is a skill whereby those who own it try to control their life with self-awareness, improve it with self-management, and perceive its effects through sympathy or by managing relations to improve their own or others' morale.

The researcher is of the view that emotional competency is essential for employee performance and organisational effectiveness. It is an integral tool for an efficient workforce and organisational success. This is in line with the aim of the current research study.

1.5. Significance of the research study

The significance of this research study is vested in the possibility that the results obtained, and reciprocal recommendations, can be applied to the research problem, and alleviate in the short term the current inefficiencies that exist in the organisation where the researcher is working. From a long-term perspective, the recommendations could be implemented to the benefit of other organisations in South Africa.

1.6. Preface to the research report

To this end, the report has six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a literature review covering the problem, the past studies, the explanatory framework and the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 discusses the research strategy, design, procedures, reliability and validity measures as well as limitations. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings, to interrogating the research questions, while Chapter 5 and 6 summarise and conclude the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature review is a critical part of any research study. According to Gill and Johnson (2003, p. 26), “a critical review of the literature should provide the reader with a statement of the state of the art and major questions and issues in the field under consideration.” Merriam (as cited in Collis and Hussey, 2003, p. 109) stated that a literature review should be “an interpretation and synthesis of published research”.

In this chapter, an in-depth literature review is conducted on the primary theme of the dissertation, problem statement and research objectives. The purpose of this literature review is to critically analyse the key concepts of EI of leaders, and organisational performance and sustainability.

2.2. EI definition and models

This section of the research study will explain EI and its different models, why it is important, and how to best apply it in the workplace to maximise organisational performance.

EI definitions

Each definition describes EI in a slightly different way. Similarly, to how the definition of cognitive intelligence has shifted over the last decade, the concept of EI has shifted based on who describes it (Ackley, 2016).

According to Ackley (2016), each definition has its own merits. He believes that settling on a universally accepted definition at this point is premature and probably unnecessary. Diverse perspectives on EI inspire various lines of research and practice, all of which foster learning (Ackley, 2016).

The definitions provided by the three models under consideration are as follows:

1. Lewis (2019) defines EI as one's ability to perceive emotions, to assist thought through accessing and generating emotions, to comprehend emotions and emotional knowledge, and to be able to regulate emotions in a thoughtful manner so as to grow emotionally and intellectually.
2. The Goleman model describes EI as one's capacity to recognise one's own feelings and those of others, the ability to motivate oneself, and to successfully manage one's emotions as well as those of others. Effective work performance can be enhanced by exhibiting emotional competence which is a learned skill based on EI (Lewis, 2019).
3. According to **Bar-On** (1997), EI is a set of non-cognitive abilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures.

Emotional intelligence models

The three models that currently dominate the EI landscape were developed by (1) Peter Salovey and Jack Mayer, and refined in collaboration with David Caruso, (2) Daniel Goleman, and (3) Reuven Bar-On.

Mayer and Salovey' model

John Mayer and Peter Salovey were the first to develop a comprehensive model of EI, beginning with the concept of "emotional information processing". They first defined EI as "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 action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Years later, Mayer and Salovey (1997) refined their definition to mean "the ability to perceive emotions, integrate emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotions, and regulate emotions to promote personal growth". EI is defined as the ability to perceive, assimilate, comprehend and regulate emotions. Emotions, according to them, are "internal events that coordinate

many psychological subsystems such as physiological responses, cognitions, and conscious awareness” (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2000, p.180).

Emotions are intertwined with thoughts; the ability to understand and use them to aid in thinking and behaviour is critical. Emotional information is regarded as necessary and valuable. According to Mayer and Salovey, “emotional intelligence is a set of interconnected skills that enable people to process emotionally relevant information efficiently and accurately” (Salovey & Grewal, 2005).

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), there are four levels of EI: Emotional perception; the ability to reason with emotions; the ability to understand emotions; and the ability to manage emotions. Their working model categorises skills or abilities into four categories, which they refer to as branches, as shown in Figure 2.

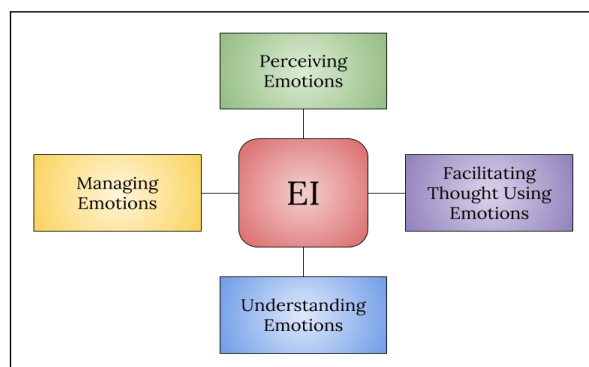


Figure 2: The Four-Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018).

Branch 1: Perceiving emotions entails being mindful of and responsive to others' feelings. It relates to the capability to detect and decode emotional signals to identify emotions accurately (yours and others') (Papadogiannis, Logan, & Sitarenios, 2009).

Branch 2: Facilitating thought using emotions entails integrating one's emotions in order to facilitate thought. This is achieved by analysing, attending to, or reflecting on emotional information, which, in turn, facilitates higher-order cognitive activities including reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, and considering other people's perspectives (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002; Papadogiannis et al., 2009).

Branch 3: Understanding emotions is the ability to interpret how different emotions relate to one another and how, over time and situations, emotions can fluctuate (Rivers, Brackett, Salovey, & Mayer, 2007).

Branch 4: Managing emotions involves being able to successfully manage one's own and others' emotions. Being able to manage emotions allows one to maintain, shift, and cater emotional responses to any possible situation whether positive or not (Rivers et al., 2007).

Goleman's model of EI

Moore (2019), citing Goleman's (1998) research on emotional intelligence states that leadership and managerial abilities are often linked to EI skills. Moore (2019) further states that Goleman's (1995) model is based on five critical factors that determine a person's EI:

1. Emotional self-awareness – this skill, known to be similar to Mayer and Salovey's Perceiving Emotions skill, is the ability to have an awareness of your feelings and how those feelings affect people around you.
2. Self-regulation – similar to Facilitating Thought and Managing Emotions, refers to an individual's ability to manage their emotions and what effect those emotions may have.
3. Motivation – refers to perseverance in the face of adversity.
4. Empathy – the ability to detect the emotions of others.
5. Social skills – an individual's ability to manage their relationships with others and to evoke responses from them.

Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI)

According to Moore (2019), a recent contribution to EI literature, the ESI Model by Bar-On's (2006), groups EI, social skills and their facilitators together. Bar-On (2006) observed that the construct has important interpersonal and intrapersonal components, and thus prefers the term "emotional-social intelligence" or ESI. The model is made up of five interconnected competencies, skills and behaviour clusters identified from academic literature. They were specifically considered because they were all perceived to have an impact on our well-being and performance as humans (Bar-On, 2013).

Bar-On (2006) identified 16 factors as skills that can be learned and improved upon. Those 16 skills have been grouped into five composites similar to the other two models. The five composites and definitions thereof are listed below:

1. Self-perception comprises self-regard (having respect and confidence in oneself), self-actualisation (the pursuit of meaning and self-improvement), and awareness (and understanding) of one's own emotions.
2. Self-expression comprises emotional expression (expressing emotions constructively), assertiveness (communicating feelings and beliefs respectfully), and independence (under one's own control, without attachment to emotions).
3. Interpersonal consists of interpersonal relationships that are mutually beneficial, empathy (understanding and sharing the feelings of others), and social responsibility (awareness of social issues, extending a helping hand).
4. Decision-making comprises of solving problems (where emotions are concerned), reality testing (being able to see things objectively), and impulse control (to resist or delay the urge to act).
5. Stress management involves being flexible (where emotions, thoughts, and behaviours are involved), having stress tolerance (coping under stressful situations), and being optimistic (positive attitude and confidence in the future).

Conclusion

Each model has value, but none appears to be complete. Each researcher had a different starting point, where they made their figurative cuts. Initially, Salovey and Mayer (1997) wanted to expand our comprehension of intelligence. Goleman (1998) was interested in bridging the divide between psychology and the workplace, so he focused on factors that addressed that problem. Bar-On's (2006) study was inspired by the need to look beyond conventional assumptions about IQ to see what other factors contribute to success.

Regardless of which model is preferred, it appears that some interaction between native ability and learning is required for a complete understanding of EI. Emotional intelligence is the intelligent use of emotions. This integration is described in each of the major EI models.

Some researchers suggested that EI is the most important predictor of life success. While this is not always the case, EI has been linked to success in life. It has been linked to a variety of skills, including decision-making, organisational productivity and academic success, according to research (Cherry, 2018).

The preceding section examined the key concepts of EI and its perceived influence on performance (Salovey and Mayer, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Bar-On, 2006). The following section will look at the influence of EI on leadership and organisational performance.

2.3. EI and effective leadership

This section of the research study seeks to investigate the relationship between EI and effective leadership, including the perceived influence on organisational performance and sustainability.

Goleman and colleagues coined the term primal leader (Schoo, 2008) in relation to the concept of priming – the primary role a leader occupies in an organisation. Goleman (1998) believed that effective leadership required both leadership and EI.

Leadership, by definition, includes a social component. Individuals who are better able to assess and adjust to social conditions are likely to be leaders (Kobe et al., 2001). Individuals who increase a company's productivity in a sustainable manner are regarded as examples of effective leaders.

Managers with higher EI are better able to facilitate effective working relationships with others (Mayer et al., 2008). Such qualities are much more important in the workplace, where individuals engage with a large number of people, and leaders in particular are frequently responsible for the well-being of large groups of people while attempting to achieve goals.

High levels of EI indicate a higher likelihood of success (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). For example, rather than overall intelligence (IQ), the level of EI is more likely to predict a manager's ability to effectively lead their department (Gilio & Dorsey, 2016). Higher levels of EI in leaders may be characterised by greater self-awareness and empathy (Goleman, 1998b). These people will collaborate well with others, connect with their team members and motivate others in difficult situations.

Leaders with high EI are more likely to be aware of their own and others' needs, as well as how to make the best decisions to meet everyone's needs. Most importantly, these abilities can be learned. Some of the most important traits identified build on an individual's innate personal qualities. Many researchers and practitioners agree that EI characteristics can be learned and improved through practice and training (Kreitz, 2009).

Danguah (2014) explains that the success of relationship employees and how it affects service quality, customer satisfaction and organisation performance can be supported by Goleman's (1995) model of mixed EI. The model argues that emotional competences are not innate but rather can be taught and therefore learnt. According to Goleman's (1995) model, education can influence an individual's EI. Goleman's (1995) model remains the most accepted model for social inter-relational and business relationships though its credibility has been questioned conceptually (Mayer et al., 2001).

Conclusion

This section attempted to examine the relationship between EI and effective leadership and its perceived impact on organisational performance. While EI can improve performance in a variety of areas, including achievement and close relationships (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), it is believed that it may also play a key role in leadership effectiveness. The current study proposes that the four aspects of EI as described by Goleman (1995) – namely, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationships management – contribute to effective leadership, which in turn influences organisational performance and sustainability. The following

section would investigate the link between EI and organisational performance with an aim to further support the research goal.

2.4. EI and performance

The outcome or effect of an individual's actions over a given period of time is referred to as performance managing employee performance and is important for an organisation to achieve its objectives (Shahzad, 2010). In the overall strategy of the company, assessing an employee's competency and evaluating his productivity is critical. Pacing oneself in terms of output is vital, and this cannot be achieved unless the employee's potential and ability to succeed are evaluated.

According to Shahzad (2010), the efficiency and effectiveness of a company are inextricably linked to the performance of its employees. Better employee performance contributes to several positive outcomes, including improved employee cohesion, high-quality productivity and workplace engagement (Ashford & Black, 1996).

Emotional competence, which according to Goleman (1998, p.2) is a "learned skill based on emotional intelligence", is equally essential for achieving outstanding results. This illustrates that in order to be a star performer, workers must possess high interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies in addition to professional skills and abilities (Goleman, 1998).

EI was tested alongside 33 other important workplace skills by TalentSmart and, according to Bradberry and Greaves (1995), was discovered as a best predictor of performance, accounting for 58 per cent of success in all types of jobs.

Through his work, Goleman has shown that EI is closely related to job effectiveness particularly for individuals holding higher positions in the workplace; however, this has come as a shock to the business sector (Lee, 2014). EI and its role in the organisation is widely covered in literature related to performance in the workplace (Lee, 2014). Literature shows that a great leader not only has intellect, but EI which influences decision-making (Lee, 2014).

While there have been objections to the findings of EI having an effect on job performance, the majority of other research findings show that EI and job performance have a positive relation (Lee, 2014).

According to Shahzad (2010), the efficiency and effectiveness of a company are linked to the performance of its employees. Better employee performance contributes to several positive outcomes, including improved employee cohesion, high-quality productivity and workplace engagement (Ashford & Black, 1996).

EI and organisational performance

There is a growing body of research that suggests that EI ought to be considered as playing a key role (as opposed to being an additional factor to consider) in the effective performance of managers in the workplace since performance is not only influenced by managers' knowledge and skills but also their emotions and personality traits (Kim, 2020).

According to Kim (2020), many recent studies support the positive relationship between a manager's EI and performance of the company. One of those studies suggests that a manager with high EI is able to improve the effectiveness of his job performance while also being aware of the company's financial position.

According to Oyewunmi, Oyewunmi and Oludayo (2015), emotionally intelligent leaders perform better in the workplace, appear to be happier and committed to their employer, show more success in the workplace, apply a positive outlook when seeking to improve the organisation's performance, and make employees feel included, enthusiastic, trusted and needed through strong interpersonal relations.

A leader's ability to positively influence the emotions of employees has the potential to improve employee performance (Humphrey, 2002). The application of these rare qualities combined with the ability to influence subordinates towards task completion will in the end lead to organisational growth and performance (Oyewunmi et al., 2015).

Wong and Law (2002) discovered that EI has a positive effect on performance. Managers' EI can have a significant impact on their subordinates' performance.

Ezzi, Azouzi and Jarboui (2016) assert the role of EI in conflict management among workers. In their research, those authors confirmed a positive relationship between emotion management, emotion understanding, and customer service performance. In determining the long-term performance of employees, personal emotions appear to have a higher significance as opposed to their intellectual abilities (Ezzi et al., 2016). According to Cheng and Chang (2009), emotionally intelligent leaders who are adaptable to changing environments are likely to be more effective at solving problems and strategy development in comparison to those who are only able to focus on one dimension or orientation.

According to Porter (1980), changes in the environment determine a firm's performance, wherein threats may appear unexpectedly, and opportunities may be scarce. To that end, a firm's ability in responding to changes in the environment will tend to be more subjective (Akram, Goraya, Malik & Aljarallah, 2018).

According to Akram, et. al (2018), organisational performance can be viewed from different standpoints such as the firm's capabilities, quality, profits gained from the selling of goods and services, return on investments, and its ability to reduce operational costs. In order to be sustainable under these realms, organisations are obliged to lead their business in a manner in which they are not only socially responsible, but also environmentally capable (Akram et. al, (2018). The next section will cover organisational sustainability in detail.

EI and organisational sustainability

EI has recently emerged as an important component of reforming the landscape of organisational behaviour practices to support corporate sustainability (Rivero, 2014).

Sustainability in business involves having a minimal impact (or positive effect) on the environment, community, or society in general (Spiliakos, 2018). It addresses mainly two categories *viz* the effect of business on the environment, and the effect of business on society.

There are distinct parts concerned with corporate sustainability according to Rivero (2014). Organisations are concerned with ecological and sociological issues from an external environmental standpoint. For example, a company might be concerned about government legislation or the physical environment, both of which could have an impact on overall operations (Rivero, 2014). Trustworthiness in the workplace can be fostered by leaders who model a good attitude among subordinates thus creating open lines of communication between management and staff (Rivero, 2014). It is just as important for leaders to have good social skills to promote effective communication with subordinates. In the same token, effective EI leaders are more likely to treat their employees well, thus building trustworthiness in the workplace (Rivero, 2014).

In a similar study, leaders with a high level of EI were seen to have self-awareness, were able to self-manage, have empathy, and good social skills. (Goleman, 2011). Other studies have suggested that emotionally intelligent leaders are high performers in comparison to other leaders who did not exhibit EI behavioural traits (Rivero, 2014).

When making business decisions, sustainable businesses consider a variety of factors such as environmental, economic and social factors and monitor the impact their operations have to avoid short-term profits resulting in long-term liabilities (Spiliakos, 2018).

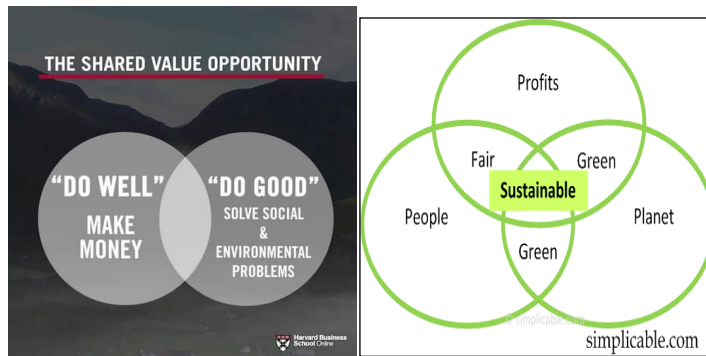


Figure 3: The Concept of Business Sustainability (HBS: Online, 2018)

The Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without jeopardising future generations' ability to meet their own needs" (WCED, 1987). Most definitions of sustainability propose three focus areas of economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability (Elkington & Fennell, 1998).

2.5. Conclusion

Analysis of the three models of EI to find out how they differ from one another shows that they are complementary rather than contradictory albeit, debate surrounding certain controversial aspects (a variety of definitions and constructs of EI) remains (Raza & Kashif, 2011).

Research finds significant relationships among all the three models of EI, by recognising the co-dependence of both cognitive and non-cognitive factors.

The next chapter identifies and describes the research approach, design, procedure and methods that will be used in this research to collect, process and analyse empirical evidence.

3. RESEARCH STRATEGY, DESIGN, PROCEDURE AND METHODS

3.1. Research strategy

At the centre of a research design are research questions, which specifically outline what needs to be investigated (Maxwell et al., 2013). A research design is the necessary steps of how a researcher will go about addressing these questions (Saunders et al., 2016). In essence, it provides a framework and detailed roadmap for the collection and analysis of data (Barney et al., 2007; Sreejesh et al., 2014). Figure 2 illustrates a research design employed in the current study.

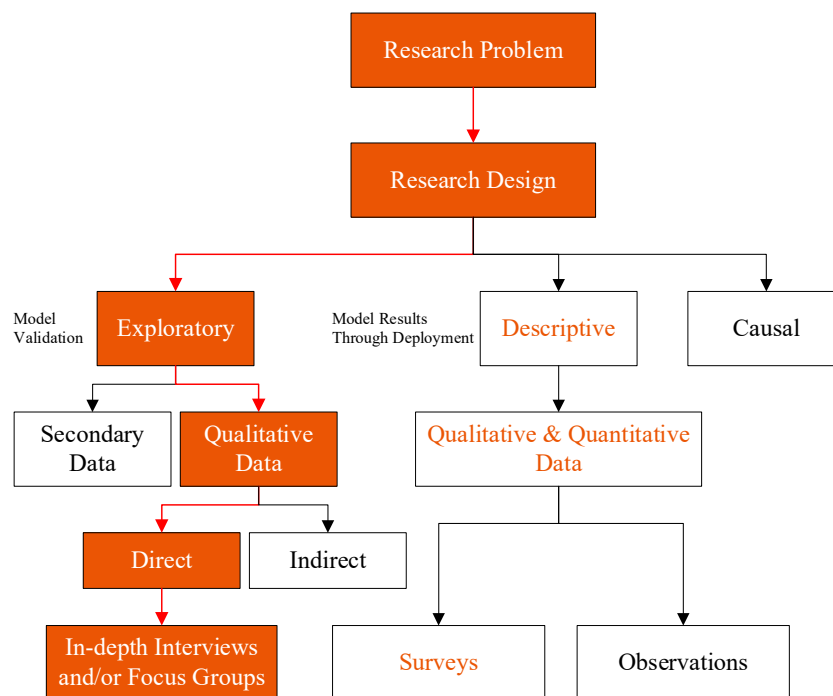


Figure 4: Research methodology, derived from Sreejesh et al. (2014)

Although Sreejesh (2014) only discusses three research purposes (exploratory, descriptive and causal), it is very important to highlight that this research study subscribes to the view of Saunders et al. (2016) that there are more research purposes than shown in Figure 4. According to these researchers, those are exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or causal

(Sreejesh, 2014) and evaluative. A research methodology refers to the specific procedures used to carry out research (Hegde, 2015).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), a qualitative research methodology is often associated with an interpretive research paradigm. This is because researchers need to make sense of the socially constructed and subjective meanings given to phenomenon under investigation (Saunders et al., 2016). Ultimately, the goal of qualitative research is to find and explain patterns and their relationships in the data of phenomena being studied (Jabareen, 2009). It can be inferred, therefore, that positivism and critical realism (see Table 4) are both not suitable for the current study.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

A research data collection and analysis strategy refers to techniques and procedures of how a researcher will go about collecting and analysing data in answering their research questions (Saunders et al., 2016). In general, there are a number of research data collection strategies a researcher can adopt depending on the nature of study inquiry. These strategies include the following (Sahu, 2013; Sreejesh et al., 2014; Hedge, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016):

- Census/sample survey
- Experiment
- Case study
- Archival and documentary research
- Action research
- Ethnography
- Grounded theory
- Narrative inquiry

As shown in Figure 2, the survey research strategy can be employed by both the qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiry, regardless of the exploratory or descriptive nature of the study. The current study, however, pursued the exploratory inquiry mode through the qualitative research methodology to validate the conceptual framework. The data collection strategy therefore

found to be appropriate is the sample survey through questionnaires. A survey is a research data collection strategy used to gather data from respondents usually through questionnaires (Sreejesh et al., 2014).

It is a comparatively easy data collection strategy to explain and understand (Saunders et al., 2016). Moreover, exploratory research studies are usually associated with qualitative research methods as adopted in this study (Berndt & Petzer, 2011). Saunders et al. (2016), however, argued that the survey data collection strategy is also associated with a deductive approach, which is linked to descriptive and quantitative research studies.

Sample design

According to Maxwell (2013), whenever a researcher is faced with a choice about what data sources to pay attention to or whom to talk to, a sampling decision needs to be made. A sample refers to a representative part of a population (Sahu, 2013), whereas sampling denotes a process where a small part of the population is selected as participants (sample elements) for a survey (Berndt & Petzer, 2011). A population in this case, according to Saunders et al. (2016), refers to the full set of elements or cases from which a sample is taken. Since it may be difficult, if not impractical, for the researcher to know, or even have access to, all the sample elements of the information and EI practitioners and researchers (Saunders et al., 2016), Kolb (2010) emphasises the importance of defining a target population in order for the right survey participants to be selected.

The survey participants were selected on the basis of their experience, knowledge and relationships with the subject matter (Freedman et al., 2007). In addition to experience and knowledge, the willingness and availability to participate in a study, as well as the ability to express opinions and experiences in a reflective manner cannot be overemphasised (Bernard, 2011).

Sampling method

There are, generally, two types of sampling methods, namely, probability (or representative) sampling and non-probability (non-random) sampling (Sreejesh et al., 2014).

For probability sampling, Saunders et al. (2016) states that the chance of each case being selected from the target population is known and often equal for all cases. The inverse is true however for non-probability sampling and makes it impossible to answer research questions that need statistical inferences to be made about the characteristics of the population (O'Reilly, 2017).

Most qualitative researchers, however, employ the non-probability sampling technique as their first choice (Merriam, 2014). The most common type of non-probability sampling in qualitative research is called purposeful (Patton, 2002) or purposive sampling (Merriam, 2014). In purposive sampling, participants are specifically identified and chosen for the study due to some interesting association to the researcher and his/her research topic (Ferrari, 2009). Maxwell (2013) concurred that purposive sampling techniques involve particular persons or contexts that are intentionally chosen to provide information that cannot otherwise be obtained as greatly from other data sources.

Collection techniques

A well-designed data collection plan requires the insight and creativity of a researcher, not a blind conversion of research questions into collection techniques (Maxwell, 2013). Qualitative modes of inquiry rely generally on the seamless integration of information from various sources of data and collection techniques, a principle referred to as triangulation (Denzin, 2017).

Maxwell (2013) posited that this technique can minimise the potential limitations or biases in a study conclusion due to the adoption of a particular method, and can also empower the researcher to attain acceptable levels of validity and abstraction of the explanations developed (Maxwell, 2013). In general, data collected for research purposes can either be primary or secondary (Sahu, 2013). Primary data are new data collected directly from participants using data collection techniques such as the survey (Sreejesh, 2014; Hedge, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016):

- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Measurements

- Direct observation
- Tabulation
- Internet-mediated data collection

Survey questionnaire

Although there are multiple views on what a survey questionnaire is, in this study it represented a data collection technique where each participant was asked the same set of questions in a pre-determined sequence (De Vaus, 2014), regardless of whether it was self-administered, completed face-to-face or by telephone. According to Brace (2008), the key objective of a survey questionnaire is to extract the data essential for the researcher's research objectives and questions.

Punch (2003) argued that this could be achieved by designing a questionnaire that asks for the kind of information required to answer the research questions. Oppenheim (2000) and Bell and Waters (2014), however, were of the opinion that it is very difficult to develop a good survey questionnaire. According to Saunders et al. (2016), a good survey questionnaire must ensure that the researcher collects the right data to answer his/her research questions.

Data analysis procedures

Upon collection of all the data from participants and respondents, a researcher must employ proper procedures to analyse the data. Analysing the research data properly helps the researcher to gain insights from it and draw informed conclusions (Sreejesh et al., 2014). In qualitative research, data analysis is performed with the aim of generating direct interpretations of meanings and functions of a phenomenon under investigation (Hedge, 2015).

Saunders et al. (2016) recommended that the analysis of data be performed simultaneously with data collection as it can reveal to the researcher some important data patterns, themes and relationships. This worked well for the current study's personal and focus group interview data-collection technique as it allowed the researcher to decide how to test emerging themes in the data progressively (Maxwell, 2013). Indeed, the interactive nature of concurrently

collecting and analysing data allowed the researcher to adjust future data-collection procedures to determine whether related data exist in cases where research was planned (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

There are three main procedures for qualitative data analysis (Maxwell, 2013), namely, categorising procedure, connecting procedure, and memos and displays. The current study has adopted the data categorising procedure as it involves qualitative data preparation (Merriam, 2014) such as transcribing and editing interview data, coding, entering, cleaning and performing thematic analysis on the data (Sreejesh et al., 2014; Maxwell, 2013). Figure 5 summarises the qualitative data analysis procedure adopted in the current study.

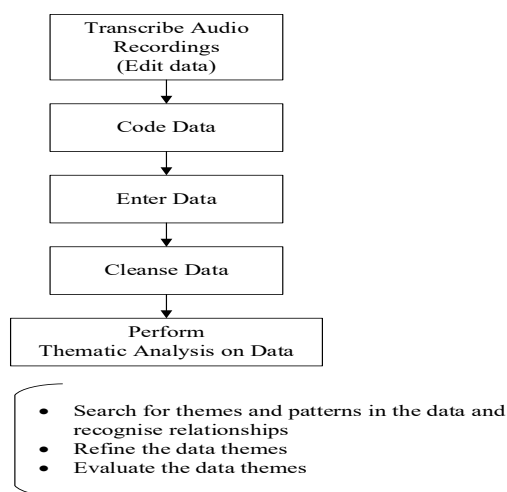


Figure 5: Qualitative data analysis procedure, derived from Saunders et al. (2016) & Sreejesh et al. (2014)

Data reliability

Internal reliability refers to ensuring consistency of the collection and analysis of the data (Merriam, 2014). One way of achieving this is by using multiple data collectors. Since the study adopted a mixed-methods approach to data collection, as well as a diverse sample of participants to increase the internal reliability of the data, it was not necessary to use multiple data collectors. External reliability, on the other hand, is more concerned with the replicability and consistency of the study results (Malhotra, 2012). Saunders et al. (2016), however, contended that qualitative research is not necessarily intended for

replication since participants' interpretations are socially constructed in a specific setting at the time it is conducted.

Nonetheless, the researchers emphasise that a rigorous description of the study context, research design and methods is still necessary as it may help other researchers should they wish to replicate a similar study. In the previous sections of this chapter, a rigorous description of the adopted research methods, approach and strategy was provided. These should enhance the reliability of the research findings and conclusions of the study. While it is necessary, data reliability is not the only key characteristic that ensures good quality research (Saunders et al., 2016). Data validity is also essential (Sreejesh et al., 2014).

Data validity

Data validity is acknowledged to be a key factor in research design (Maxwell, 2013). It refers to the ways in which validity threats are avoided and appropriate measures are taken to ensure accuracy of the collection and analysis of data (Saunders et al., 2016). As stated by Maxwell (2013), some of the best strategies for data validity include intensive interviews and triangulation, as adopted in the current study. Ethical concerns of the data as well as the participants providing it must also be addressed when conducting research.

3.3. Ethical concerns

Ethical concerns did arise as the researcher sought access to individuals and organisations, and collected, analysed and reported on the data. As noted by Sekaran and Bougie (2017), ethics in the context of research refers to the expected code of conduct or societal norms of behaviour by a researcher with regard to the rights of the study participants. To ensure that those who are the subject of the research study, or directly affected by it, have their rights protected, an ethics approval request to conduct the study was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Witwatersrand, Wits Business School. The same ethical considerations were accorded to the survey questionnaire respondents.

3.4. Researcher biases

One of the threats to validity of the qualitative data (Maxwell, 2013), and its reliability (Saunders et al., 2016), is researcher bias. As noted by Maxwell (2013), researcher bias refers to any factor such as a researcher's preconceptions, values, or theory that may distort the collection and analysis of the data. For example, a researcher's preconceptions or subjective views about phenomena may negatively influence the way interview recordings are transcribed and survey questionnaire responses interpreted.

According to Hammersley & Atkinson (2007), it is impossible to totally eliminate the researcher's influence. Rather, what we can do is to understand it and use it ethically and productively to answer the research questions (Maxwell, 2013). This was accomplished by consciously keeping the researcher's bias towards certain response items over others in check while editing the interviews and questionnaire data (Hedge, 2015).

3.5. Methodological limitations

The two main limitations worth acknowledging are sample size and time horizon. Although Saunders et al. (2016), Merriam (2014), Sahu (2013) & Palinkas et al. (2013) argue that there are no rules for qualitative research data sample size, only saturation is important. In addition, Saunders et al. (2016), Creswell (2013) and Palinkas et al. (2013) contend that 5 -25 participants suffice for semi-structured and in-depth interviews as adopted in this study. However, the researcher is of the opinion that the sample size of the current study was a bit low.

The second methodological limitation is time horizon of the research study. This was a cross-sectional study, which means there was time constraint. Had this been a longitudinal study, the researcher is of the opinion that multiple direct personal interviews and focus group interviews would have yielded even better results of the study.

3.6. Conclusion

The study assumed a subjectivism ontological position wherein reality of phenomena is socially constructed by different social actors. As a consequence, the pragmatic social constructivism research philosophy was adopted. The study subsequently employed the deductive approach, which is descriptive in nature, to review critically the leadership, EI and organisational performance literatures to describe what the possible causes of the gaps could be. In addition, the study employed the inductive approach, which is exploratory in nature, to understand why gaps in the selected frameworks.

In this regard, the qualitative research methodology, associated with an interpretive research philosophy, was adopted. The main objective of selecting the qualitative research approach as the leading method of research was to find and explain the themes, patterns and their relationships in the conceptual frameworks.

4. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, detail is provided pertaining to the data collected for the research. Furthermore, the data must be analysed using descriptive or inferential analysis method. Thereafter, the analysed data will be interpreted and mapped to the literature review.

Procedure

The survey was conducted using the online platform Qualtrics. This procedure was used because it was more convenient for the participating organisations and their employees. The questionnaires were distributed to more 120 participants, and 104 responded. This accounts for a response rate of 87%. Thus, the results can be generalised to the entire population given the high response rate.

4.2. Sample characteristics

Gender Distribution

In terms of the gender composition, the study found that 59% of the respondents were male, while 41% were female, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 5: Gender distribution

| # | Answer | % | Count |
|---|------------------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | Male | 58.95% | 56 |
| 2 | Female | 41.05% | 39 |
| 3 | Prefer not to disclose | 0.00% | 0 |
| | Total | 100% | 95 |

Age Distribution

In terms of the age distribution of respondents, the study found that most (57%) of the respondents were aged between 30 and 39 years, 24% were aged between 40 and 49 years, 12% were aged between 20 and 29 years, and the rest (7%) were 50 years and above. The percentage in this table shows that the allocation of questionnaires to various groups was in no way influenced by bias. It is a true reflection of the researcher's impartiality in the distribution of questionnaires.

Table 6: Age distribution

| # | Answer | % | Count |
|----------|---------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | 20 - 29 | 11.58% | 11 |
| 2 | 30 - 39 | 56.84% | 54 |
| 3 | 40 - 49 | 24.21% | 23 |
| 4 | 50 and above | 7.37% | 7 |
| | Total | 100% | 95 |

Period of stay in the organisation

The study found that most of the respondents had been in their respective organisations for a period of between one and five years (53%), while 23% had been in their organisations between six and 10 years, and the rest (24%) had been in their organisations for more than 10 years. These results are summarised in the table below.

Table 7: Period of stay in the organisation

| # | Answer | % | Count |
|---|--------------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | 1 - 3 years | 29.79% | 28 |
| 5 | 4 - 5 years | 22.34% | 21 |
| 6 | 6 - 10 years | 23.40% | 22 |
| 7 | More than 10 years | 24.47% | 23 |
| | Total | 100% | 94 |

Academic qualifications

The study found that most (41%) of the respondents had achieved either Degree or Honours level in their academic qualification, while 32% had achieved a master's or PhD level, and the rest (25%) had achieved up to higher certificate or Diploma level.

Table 8: Composition of academic qualification

| # | Answer | % | Count |
|---|------------------------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | Higher Certificate / Diploma | 27.37% | 26 |
| 3 | Degree / Honours | 41.05% | 39 |
| 4 | Masters / PhD | 31.58% | 30 |
| | Total | 100% | 95 |

SA - Emotional Intelligence (Self-Awareness):

Table 9: Self-Awareness (SA)

| # | Question | 1 (never) | 2 (rarely) | 3 (sometimes) | 4 (often) | 5 (always) | Total |
|---|--|--------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|-------|
| 1 | I recognize how my feelings affect my performance. | 2.41% 2 | 2.41% 2 | 19.28% 16 | 46.99% 39 | 28.92% 24 | 83 |
| 2 | I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses | 0.00% 0 | 1.23% 1 | 12.35% 10 | 50.62% 41 | 35.80% 29 | 81 |
| 3 | I am decisive, and able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures. | 0.00% 0 | 2.41% 2 | 31.33% 26 | 53.01% 44 | 13.25% 11 | 83 |
| 4 | I am reflective and try to learn from experience. | 1.22% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 10.98% 9 | 41.46% 34 | 46.34% 38 | 82 |
| 5 | I am open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development. | 0.00% 0 | 1.25% 1 | 12.50% 10 | 37.50% 30 | 48.75% 39 | 80 |

SA – Seem to be high at over 65%)

SM - Emotional Intelligence (Self-Management):

SM - Detailed responses (SM seem to be high at over 55%)

Table 10: Self-Management

| # | Question | 1 (never) | | 2 (rarely) | | 3 (sometimes) | | 4 (often) | | 5 (always) | | Total |
|---|--|--------------|---|------------|---|---------------|----|-----------|----|------------|----|-------|
| 1 | I think clearly and stay focused under pressure. | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 28.40% | 23 | 50.62% | 41 | 20.99% | 17 | 81 |
| 2 | I consistently act ethically and am considered to be above reproach. | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 12.50% | 10 | 48.75% | 39 | 38.75% | 31 | 80 |
| 3 | I am organized and careful in my work | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 17.50% | 14 | 45.00% | 36 | 37.50% | 30 | 80 |
| 4 | I maintain my composure, even during stressful times | 1.23% | 1 | 1.23% | 1 | 23.46% | 19 | 53.09% | 43 | 20.99% | 17 | 81 |
| 5 | I seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources. | 0.00% | 0 | 3.70% | 3 | 16.05% | 13 | 45.68% | 37 | 34.57% | 28 | 81 |

SOA - Emotional Intelligence (Social Awareness):

SOA – detailed responses (SOA seem to be high 70%)

Table 11: Social Awareness (SOA)

| # | Question | 1 (never) | | 2 | | 3 (sometimes) | | 4 | | 5 (always) | | Total |
|---|--|--------------|---|-------|---|------------------|----|--------|----|---------------|----|-------|
| 1 | I show sensitivity and understand others' perspectives. | 0.00% | 0 | 1.23% | 1 | 13.58% | 11 | 38.27% | 31 | 46.91% | 38 | 81 |
| 2 | I seek ways to increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty. | 0.00% | 0 | 3.70% | 3 | 23.46% | 19 | 33.33% | 27 | 39.51% | 32 | 81 |
| 3 | I offer useful feedback and identify people's needs for development. | 0.00% | 0 | 3.70% | 3 | 19.75% | 16 | 39.51% | 32 | 37.04% | 30 | 81 |
| 4 | I respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds. | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 12.66% | 10 | 29.11% | 23 | 58.23% | 46 | 79 |
| 5 | I help based on understanding other people's needs and feelings. | 1.27% | 1 | 1.27% | 1 | 20.25% | 16 | 35.44% | 28 | 41.77% | 33 | 79 |

RM - Emotional Intelligence (Relationship Management):

(RM seem to be high at over 65%)

Table 12: Relationship Management (RM)

| # | Question | 1 (never) | | 2 (rarely) | | 3 (sometimes) | | 4 (often) | | 5 (always) | | Total |
|---|---|--------------|---|---------------|---|------------------|----|--------------|----|---------------|----|-------|
| 1 | I encourage debate and open discussion. | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 21.95% | 18 | 41.46% | 34 | 36.59% | 30 | 82 |
| 2 | I listen well, seek mutual understanding, and fully welcome sharing of information. | 0.00% | 0 | 2.44% | 2 | 13.41% | 11 | 36.59% | 30 | 47.56% | 39 | 82 |
| 3 | I step forward to lead as needed, regardless of position. | 0.00% | 0 | 2.50% | 2 | 15.00% | 12 | 50.00% | 40 | 32.50% | 26 | 80 |
| 4 | I model team qualities like respect, helpfulness, and cooperation. | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 8.75% | 7 | 43.75% | 35 | 47.50% | 38 | 80 |
| 5 | I promote a friendly, cooperative climate. | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 6.17% | 5 | 32.10% | 26 | 61.73% | 50 | 81 |

Organisational Performance

Table 13: Organisational performance

| # | Question | 1 (strongly disagree) | | 3 (Somewhat agree) | | 5 (strongly agree) | | 4 (agree) | | 2 (disagree) | | Total |
|---|--|--------------------------|---|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|--------------|----|-----------------|----|-------|
| 1 | Employees are prepared to go an extra mile for the company. | 2.44% | 2 | 41.46% | 34 | 20.73% | 17 | 31.71% | 26 | 3.66% | 3 | 82 |
| 2 | Employees' trust into leadership is high. | 0.00% | 0 | 26.83% | 22 | 12.20% | 10 | 41.46% | 34 | 19.51% | 16 | 82 |
| 3 | Trust among employees themselves is strong. | 2.44% | 2 | 41.46% | 34 | 12.20% | 10 | 32.93% | 27 | 10.98% | 9 | 82 |
| 4 | The number of customer complaints within the last period has decreased strongly. | 4.88% | 4 | 37.80% | 31 | 1.22% | 1 | 40.24% | 33 | 15.85% | 13 | 82 |
| 5 | We deal with customer complaints faster than our competition. | 2.53% | 2 | 39.24% | 31 | 7.59% | 6 | 36.71% | 29 | 13.92% | 11 | 79 |

4.3. Results Interpretation

According to the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1, the relevant EI factors have a virtual correspondence with organizational performance (Goleman, 1998). Furthermore, the mean value was significantly higher than average, as shown in Table 9, based on the test statistics in Table 10.

According to the statistical findings, EI has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance. This finding supports the findings of Cherniss (2001); and Cherniss and Goleman (2001), who discovered a positive relationship between EI and organizational effectiveness, as well as a significant positive relationship between EI and workplace success.

Table 14: Survey results of the current study (Author's own)

| Summary : EI Survey Results | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| EI factor | Mean | High range |
| Self-awareness | 4.12 | > 3.54 |
| Self-management | 4.08 | > 4.02 |
| Social Awareness | 4.22 | > 4.20 |
| Relationship management | 6.30 | > 3.90 |

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Organisational Performance | 4.78 |
|----------------------------|------|

Table 15: ECI 2.0 EI measurement (Goleman, 1995)

| ECI 2.0 Cluster | Competency | Low Range | Medium Range | High Range |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Self-Awareness | Emotional Self Awareness | < 3.10 | 3.10 to 3.54 | > 3.54 |
| | Achievement Orientation | < 3.75 | 3.75 to 4.04 | > 4.04 |
| Self-Management | Adaptability | < 3.72 | 3.72 to 3.98 | > 3.98 |
| | Emotional Self-Control | < 3.78 | 3.78 to 4.07 | > 4.07 |
| | Positive Outlook | < 3.50 | 3.50 to 3.84 | > 3.84 |
| Social Awareness | Empathy | < 3.92 | 3.92 to 4.21 | > 4.21 |
| | Organizational Awareness | < 3.68 | 3.68 to 4.02 | > 4.02 |
| Relationship Management | Conflict Management | < 2.95 | 2.95 to 3.26 | > 3.26 |
| | Coach & Mentor | < 3.66 | 3.66 to 4.03 | > 4.03 |
| | Influence | < 3.55 | 3.55 to 3.88 | > 3.88 |
| | Inspirational Leadership | < 3.71 | 3.71 to 4.08 | > 4.08 |
| | Teamwork | < 3.98 | 3.98 to 4.25 | > 4.25 |

Most respondents seem to have some level of EI. There seems to be some consistency in the way they responded to the questions regarding the four constructs of EI, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management, and the resultant outcome of organisational performance.

The relationship between managers and subordinates, according to Carmeli (2003), is dependent on their level of EI (Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017; Amjad, 2018). A positive relationship between managers and subordinates is likely to promote positive feelings, which tend to increase participation, cooperation and improved performance (Allen & Meyer, 1990, Amjad, 2018).

The results of this study align with literature regarding a positive relationship between EI of a leader and organisational performance.

5. THE DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the research is concluded. The research design and methodology, the research process, the research problem, research question, and investigative questions and data analysis findings are revisited, and final conclusions drawn. In addition, based on the overall research findings, recommendations will be made to mitigate the research problem. Furthermore, a holistic reflective overview will be provided of the completed research.

5.2. Finding's discussion

Several studies have discovered that EI can have a significant impact on a variety of human endeavours.

Goleman's (1995) model emphasizes emotional intelligence as a broad set of skillsets that drive performance outcomes. The model defines four major constructs of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Within each construct of emotional intelligence, he provides a set of emotional competencies, and believes that emotional competencies are learned capabilities that must be mastered to reach exceptional performance. He believes that people are born with a general emotional intelligence that determines their ability to learn emotional competencies (Ugoani, Amu, & Emenike, 2015).

According to Goleman (2001), EI assists organisational leaders in developing a vision for their organisations, motivating subordinates to commit to the vision, and energising them to work enthusiastically to achieve this vision. Furthermore, EI may enable leaders to create a distinct identity for their organisations, instilling high levels of trust and cooperation throughout the organisation while maintaining the flexibility required to respond to changing conditions. Both individual and group EI contributes to organisational performance and sustainability.

In recent years, EI has received a lot of attention in management, human resources, organizational behavior, and commitment literature. Many of them emphasized the significance of EI as a predictor in critical areas such as job performance, academic performance, sales performance, and so on (Lee, 2014).

The relationship described in this study between a leader's EI and organizational performance would have significant implications not only for individuals, but also for organizations in their capacity as employers. This would require that organisations rethink their human resource policies and career development strategies in order to promote an emotionally intelligent workplace (Lee, 2014).

Employees' personal emotions are more important than their academic talents in determining their long-term success, according to Ezzi, Azouzi, Jarboui, 2016). This implies that emotional intelligence and performance are inextricably linked.

The study's goal was to look at the impact of a leader's emotional intelligence (EI) on organizational performance and sustainability in the telecoms industry, concentrating on four important areas of EI: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Shahzad, Sarmad, Abbas & Khan, 2011)

The emotional tone created by the executive or perceived head of a company, according to Bipath (2007), can also impact organizational success or failure.

5.3. Research question and result discussion

This study attempted to critically examine EI of a leader and its impact on organisational performance and sustainability. Specifically, the following research questions were explored in detail:

Question 1:

What are the key concepts that make up EI and their impact on organisational performance?

Self-awareness, self-management, relationship management and social awareness are the pillars of managerial skills that predict managerial effectiveness and organisational performance. It could be concluded that all four EI components are related to EI of a leader and, ultimately, organisational performance and sustainability.

Question 2:

What is the relationship between EI and organisational performance?

The current study has revealed that there is a positive relationship between EI and organisational performance in accordance with previous studies (Nell & De Villiers, 2004). Research findings by Law, Song and Wong (2004) indicated that individuals with high EI are likely to perform better than their counterparts.

Question 3:

What are the themes that emerge for the development of the conceptual framework towards a sustainable organisation?

According to Dulewicz and Higgs (2003), the need for effective leadership has become critical in the 21st century. Changes in the business environment, such as market globalisation, technological advancements and an impending labour shortage make the selection of leaders a critical task (Harris & Kuhnert, 2007). Thus, the following EI themes emerged and seem to be key in effective leadership and organisational performance and sustainability.

Self-awareness: According to the current study and other similar research, self-awareness appears to be at the heart of organisational productivity and sustainability. Self-awareness refers to one's ability to recognise one's own strengths and weaknesses and the impact of one's emotions on one's performance as well as those of one's team. One needs to bring out the best in oneself before expecting others to bring out the best in themselves – this is the core of self-awareness (Landry, 2019).

Social awareness: The current study shows that leaders who practise empathy have social awareness. They are receptive to their colleagues' feelings and inputs, in so doing, forges effective communication and collaboration. In a separate study, it was shown that managers who were perceived as being better performers by their boss, showed more empathy toward their direct reports (Landry, 2019).

According to Ferrar (2009), leaders are expected to not only manage, but also to lead with sensitivity, which is why the above themes emerged.

Question 4:

How would the conceptual framework address the research problem?

The problem that this study intends to address is the impact of the EI of the leader on organisational performance and sustainability.

EI is defined as the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as recognise and influence the emotions of those around you (Mayer & Salovey, 1990; Goleman, 1995)

EI plays an important role in leadership effectiveness, particularly when a leader has to deal with teams and workgroup members. Teams can benefit from their emotionally intelligent leaders in the following ways: they are inspired to work together to achieve team goals, and their leaders have a transformative effect on them. Leaders therefore challenge their team members towards achieving team effectiveness and performance, facilitate team dynamics, build trust among team members, and inspire member to work towards achieving the vision (Singh, 2007). To that end, the conceptual framework could be utilised in telecoms firms to align with their HR policies and career development strategies towards developing and achieving an emotionally intelligent workplace. EI models proposed in the current study have the potential to inform and equip leaders in the telecoms industry to develop performance evaluation framework policies for their employees.

Question 5:

What is the relationship between leader EI and organisational performance?

This study has revealed that EI of the managers is of immense importance to improve the work outcome and work attitude of the subordinates. An emotionally intelligent manager is helpful in job enrichment, and useful to improve the effective organisational commitment. Connecting with other people in the organisation on an intellectual level is not enough, leaders ought to also connect with others on an emotional level. Leaders and employees would need to learn and develop emotional competence, as supported by findings from the current study (Bapath, 2007). The performance factors most strongly predicted by EI are decision making, effectiveness and influence. These outcomes are critical to leadership, suggesting that EI is most important in this domain. It therefore appears that leaders who develop greater EI are more likely to succeed.

6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Summary

Businesses are constantly faced with uncertain futures. Leaders with a high EI therefore have the responsibility to apply their skills and knowledge to guide the business forward effectively and efficiently as well as to lessen fear of the uncertain future within their employers. Because leaders have the power to control the direction an organisation takes as well as influence (and therefore motivate) their employees to perform well for the company, they can drive the company to succeed.

Decision-making, effectiveness, and influence are the performance factors strongly predicted by EI. These outcomes are critical for leadership, implying that EI is especially important in this domain. In short, leaders who develop greater EI appear to be more likely to succeed.

According to the third model proposed by Goleman (1995), EI is a mixed intelligence that includes both cognitive capacity and personality dimensions.

6.2. Conclusions

It was shown in the current study that EI is an important tool in achieving organisational performance and sustainability. This applies to both managers and employees in an organisation. While cognitive ability is an important factor to consider when hiring prospective employees, EI is equally important. Leaders with a high EI have been shown to be far more successful than those who lack this trait (Rivero, 2014).

- The findings of this study show that to achieve desired results, leaders need to accept EI as a trait that drives business success.
- Research findings from the current study emphasize the impact that leaders with a high EI have on their subordinates. Managing one's emotions assists leaders with self-management and ultimately

efficiently managing their subordinates with the sole purpose of achieving business success.

- It is concluded therefore that EI significantly contributes towards leadership success.

An emotionally intelligent person ensures that his/her emotions align with other people's behavioural expectations. EI is a crucial attribute for managers as it determines their ability to perform leadership and motivation functions.

In line with the current research study, several studies found a strong association between EI, effective leadership and organisational performance and sustainability.

6.3. Recommendations

The findings of the current study are supported by the findings of other researchers, who found that EI is an important predictor to job and organisational performance (Goleman, 1995; George, 2000; Law et al., 2004; Daus & Ashkanasy, 2005; Manley, 2009).

In this regard, organisations are encouraged to incorporate emotional competency into their learning and development strategies. They should invest in developing their leaders in the four domains of EI, starting with self-awareness and social awareness (Shuck & Herd, 2012). Improving such skills and abilities will help leaders to develop high-quality exchange relationships with their followers, which has been found to be an important factor in organisational performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1: Data collection instrument(s)

- Survey questionnaire link: Qualtrics
https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9MoesofVD8k71jw

- Research Results data:



Microsoft Word 97 -
2003 Document

Appendix 2.1: One-page bio of the researcher including declaration of interest in the research and funders, if any

Mfanafuthi Shongwe is an MBA student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Tshwane University of Technology awarded him a Bachelor of Technology in Electrical Engineering. He also has an MSc degree in Technology Management from the University of Pretoria, and MCom degree in Programme and Project Management from Cranefield College.

Shongwe is currently employed at one of South Africa's leading telecoms companies. He is a seasoned project management and engineering professional, with more than 12 years' experience in the telecoms industry.

His research interests include technology, strategy and leadership in a South African context. Shongwe's current research topic is "Evaluating the impact of a leaders' emotional intelligence (EI) on organisational performance and sustainability within a South African telecoms firm," which focuses on the EI of a leader and its impact on organisational performance.

Shongwe previously conducted research studies on the following research topics:

- Evaluating Mobile Operators Migration Strategies for Evolving to Long Term Evolution (LTE) Technology (2010).
- The Impact of Supply Chain Management (SCM) Practices on Organisational Performance in a South African Telecommunication Industry (2018).

He is currently an active member of various School Governing Bodies (SGBs), where he contributes his knowledge and skills for the benefit of those schools and the community as a whole.

Shongwe lives with his wife and three children in Johannesburg. He intends to pursue a PhD in the near future.

Appendix 3.1: Dully filled in data collection instrument(s)

- Survey questionnaire link: Qualtrics
https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9MoesofVD8k71jw

- Research Results data:



Microsoft Word 97 -
2003 Document

Appendix 2.2: Ethic documentation

WBS_Ethic clearance letter



Microsoft Excel
97-2003 Worksheet

WBS_Ethic Clearance Application



Microsoft Excel
97-2003 Worksheet