Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in Higher Education Institutions: An Empirical Approach

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Abstract:
University Top Management are increasingly expected to be strategic and innovative in their work, whether that be increasing student success, improving teaching and learning, growing enrollments, advancing research efforts, serving the community, and more. Meeting these expectations requires leaders to work with a broad range of students, faculty, staff, and various external constituencies. At the same time, they must navigate fast-paced environments, demanding schedules, increasing accountability expectations, declining or stagnated resources, and frustrating bureaucratic hurdles. These challenges can often lead to a range of emotions for the University Top Management and their teams that can include everything from feelings of frustration and disempowerment, to surprise and elation. Leaders across organizational types are coming to understand that working in an emotion-filled context requires a special set of skills, and have recognized the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) for leading people. Since universities are primarily people-focused organizations, academic leaders can benefit from having an understanding of their own EI and how to use it within their leadership roles. EI is the ability to actively regulate your emotions and the emotions of those around you through self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Through our educational preparation, most academics are typically taught to downplay emotions so that they do not interfere with research or teaching. However, being disconnected or unaware of our own emotions and the emotions of others can be problematic when moving into a leadership role and having to work regularly with others on administrative tasks. (There is also increasing recognition that emotional intelligence has a role in teaching and research as well). This paper intends to present an empirical study that will seek to identify the relevance of emotional intelligence for effective higher education academic leadership. This paper analyzes EI and Leadership in HEIs which can be used as a basis for future research while providing a knowledge base for contemporary training of EI in HEIs.

Keywords: University top management, emotional intelligence, leadership, academic leaders

1. Background to the Study
Organizations in the world over face challenges today which require reforms in the management and governance styles. They continue to attempt to achieve more for less by creating and maintaining value and the key to facing these challenges is a motivated, well-trained and committed workforce. Additionally, soft skills such as Emotional Intelligence (EI) have become relevant in leadership effectiveness and organizational success. Universities are not exempt from these challenges and therefore need to rethink their strategies to address the issue. The term emotional intelligence (IQ) was coined by Dr. Reuven Baron in 1985 to describe his approach to assessing this aspect of general intelligence. According to Baron (1996), broadly speaking, emotional intelligence addresses the emotional, personal, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence, vitally important in daily functioning. This less cognitive part of intelligence is concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with our immediate surroundings. These factors increase our ability to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands. Emotional intelligence is tactical and immediate, and as such reflects a person’s ‘common sense’ ability to get along in the world.

Education systems are being transformed globally, giving rise to immense challenges. According to Bharwaney (2006), many employees are ‘drowning’ in organizations that employ them without the skills needed to survive in these organizations. Interest in EI revolves around a number of hinges, two of which being its potential value to predict success as a leader and to help explain the difference between outstanding and average levels of leadership performance. Traditional estimates of intelligence seem to predict success as a leader to a certain extent. After all, to assume a position of leadership in the 21st century workplace requires a high level of cognitive ability or IQ in order to process the complexity of information leaders face daily. This is especially true for the higher education environment, where given levels of IQ can be regarded as a ‘threshold’ competence, a minimal capability that all managers must have in order to get and keep their job (Spencer and Spencer, 1993; McClelland, 1973). However, these estimates have not been able to account for a large portion of the variance in work performance and career success, especially among top managers and senior leaders (Emmerling and Goleman 2003). Merely having an IQ in the able, effective and efficient range or a post-
The main focus of EI literature has been on the hypothesized value of EI to affect individual success (Higgs and Dulewicz 1999; Goleman 1998), and some empirical support has been established for a positive association between EI and work performance (Donaldson-Feilder and Bond 2004, 190). Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Mayer and Salovey (1995) hypothesize that higher levels of EI result in better psychological and physical well-being, and that EI, measured as an ability predicts a variety of important outcomes. According to Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004, 209±210), individuals with a high EI ‘might also be more adept at describing motivational goals, aims, and missions’. Nonetheless, exactly how and to what extent EI accounts for effective leadership is as yet unknown.

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has generated a broad interest both in the lay (Goleman, 1995) and scientific fields (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990), overshadowing other less spectacular classical psychological concepts, such as personality, or even a concept having bad press as IQ (Grewald & Salovey, 2005; Sternberg, 2002). There are several sociological and epistemological reasons to explain the fast and wide diffusion of the term EI in professional fields. One of these reasons regards the acknowledgement made by professionals of the importance and relevance of emotions and feelings for their work outcomes. In this sense, EI has become a satisfactory and appropriate theoretical scaffold within organizational and educational fields to organize their everyday work, both for evaluative and formative tasks (Caruso & Salovey, 2004; Feldman-Barret & Salovey, 2002). However, this fast and wide diffusion of the term EI in the lay, and, specially, in applied fields such as education and organizations, has oversimplified the concept and generated expectations of results beyond scientific.

In recent years, the concept of EI has gained popularity as a potential primary attribute of effective leadership. However, despite the growing interest in relating EI to effective leadership, little empirical research has been published that explicitly examines this relationship. According to Davies, Stankov and Roberts (1998) many of the popular claims about the predictive value of emotional intelligence are viewed by psychologists as ill-defined, unsupported, and improbable. The question arises as to whether knowledge regarding exactly how EI, measured as a set of abilities, may be related to leadership in such a way as to facilitate significant advances in leadership training and development programmes, and the ability to select potentially effective leaders. The main aim of the study is to explore the nature of this relationship in the context of leadership effectiveness in a higher education institution. One of the objectives of the present study is to find out if emotional intelligence could be used to predict leadership effectiveness among staff in management positions.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Universities world over engage in teaching research, consultancy and conducting outreach programmes. Knowledge creation and dissemination is carried out within these universities and this being the reason they should be effectively managed in order to produce highly effective and knowledgeable human resources to fit into the job market and create own jobs. Higher education institutions, the world over, are facing new challenges which require reforms in their management and governance styles, Mwangi, Mukulu and Kabare (2011). The rise of new stakeholders, internal factors, together with globalization and the rapid pace at which new knowledge is created and utilized, growth in student enrolments and in the number of higher education institutions are among the recent developments which challenge higher education institutions (Jowi, 2003). The rapid expansion of university education has led to a number of challenges. According to UNESCO World Conference on higher education (1998), low funding from the exchequer, increased enrolment, limited access compared to the population level, increased enrolment without commensurate improvement in available facilities, gender inequality and a low research capacity, are some of the problems facing universities in the region.

Any reform package requires a determined leader whose vision and support make possible the success of reform strategies (Mwiria et al 2007). One variable that has recently gained much popularity as a potential underlying attribute of effective leadership is the construct of emotional intelligence (EI) (Sosik and Mererian 1999) as cited by Mwangi, et al. (2011). EI is described as a set of abilities that refer in part to how effectively one deals with emotions both within oneself and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It has been proposed that in leadership, dealing effectively with emotions may contribute to how one handles the needs of individuals, how one effectively motivates employees, and makes them feel at work (Goleman, 1998b). Today’s effective leadership skills have been described to depend, in part on the understanding of emotions and the abilities associated with EI (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1998a).

Additionally, Goleman (2001) points out that research on leadership, strongly suggests that the emotional intelligence of leaders matters twice as much as that of their cognitive abilities such as intelligent quotient (IQ) or technical expertise.

Other research findings indicate that leaders who were primarily strong in emotional intelligence were more likely to succeed than those who were stronger in either relevant previous experience IQ (Cherrniss, 2003). While making a contribution in the same field, Bradberry and Greaves (2003) stated that leaders who had high emotional intelligence were 20% more productive than those with low emotional intelligence. Unlike IQ, emotional intelligence can be enhanced through training (Slaski, & Cartwright, 2003). An organization that is short of capital may resort to borrowing money, and one in a poor location has the option to move. However, an organization with short of leadership has little chance for survival (Yousef, 1998). The relationships between Emotional Intelligence and leadership have attracted considerable attention. Previous researches focused on specific human resource behaviors. Yet not much study has been conducted to investigate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership style in particular in HEIs. This study, therefore, will help to fill this gap and effort to improve the understanding of the role of EI in HEIs.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence theoretical paradigm considers emotional intelligence from the perspectives of either ability or mixed model. Goleman proposed a mixed model in terms of performance, integrating an individual's abilities and personality and applying their corresponding effects on performance in the workplace (Goleman, 2001). The model was found appropriate in the current study because the researcher expects academic leaders to apply competencies of emotional intelligence in their performance of duty. The model outlines four main emotional intelligence domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

Self-awareness, is the ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions. Self-management involves controlling one's emotions and impulses to adapt to changing circumstances. Social awareness, includes the ability to sense, understand, and react to other people's emotions while comprehending social networks. Relationship management, entails the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict (Goleman, 1998). The four domains were considered relevant in the current study because duties of Academic Leaders involve coordinating all stakeholders within a HEI.

Goleman (2001) further advocates that if a person is not in tune with her/his own feelings, then they are oblivious to the feelings of others. Leaders who lack emotional self-awareness are less empathic to the emotions of others. By being attuned to how others feel, a leader can say and do what is appropriate, whether that means calming fears, assuaging anger, or joining in good spirits. Therefore, being in tune with others' emotions allows a leader to sense the shared values and priorities of the group. A leader who lacks empathy and is self-absorbed is out of tune with the group and can unwittingly act in ways that set off negative reactions. It is for this reason that, emotionally intelligent leaders build resonance by tuning into people's feelings and their own and are expected to guide others in the right direction. An Academic Leader is expected to understand her/his emotions and manage them well in order to understand emotions of others and deal with them appropriately. Goleman includes a set of emotional competencies within each domain of emotional intelligence. According to this model there are 18 competencies. Emotional competencies are not innate talents, but rather learned capabilities that must be worked on and developed for one to achieve outstanding performance. Goleman posits that individuals are born with a general emotional intelligence that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies. The organization of the competencies under the various domains is not random. They appear in synergistic clusters or groupings that support and facilitate each other (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 1999). The current study explored the 18 emotional intelligence competencies in this model because they were considered applicable to all leaders of institutions including University Top Management.

Goleman acknowledges that cognitive intellect plays a significant role in effective leadership and regards intellect and clear thinking largely as the characteristics that get someone in leadership position. However, he concurs that intellect alone will not make a leader because leaders execute a vision by motivating, guiding, inspiring, listening, and persuading through creating resonance. The current study considered emotional intelligence of University Top Management while appreciating that their IQ is above average. The fact that best leaders are able to orchestrate thought and feeling was considered by the researcher in adapting this theory. Goleman believes that the four emotional intelligence domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management are the basic ingredients of effective primal leadership of resonance. Goleman's subsequent mixed model of emotional intelligence which combines both emotional intelligence abilities and emotional intelligence competences flows from this assertion, and has greater resonance for University Top Management because of its message of hope and relevance in terms of good practice in the workplace.

Potentially, the quickest way to increase emotional intelligence competencies in members of an organization, is to select when recruiting, individuals who already demonstrate those competences and behaviours. However, human resources selection processes tend to focus on what appears on the applicant's curriculum vitae which captures education, skills and experience. Therefore, Goleman acknowledges that the best way is for organizations to develop and maintain emotional intelligence in their present employee population, but that the commitment to develop emotional intelligence must be made at the top. The mixed model of emotional intelligence sits well with the aim of this research study which had its roots in developing and sustaining effective University Top Managers through heightened understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective leadership in HEIs. The notion of leaders creating resonance so that others choose to follow as advocated in this model is thought-provoking for University Top Managers. Therefore, in pursuing Goleman's mixed abilities practice-driven model of emotional intelligence, it was necessary to explore in more detail what the literature says about emotionally competent leadership in the 21st century workplace and ground this in the HEIs' setting.

2.2. Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in HEIs

Parrish, (2015) states that there is existence of two opposing paradigms of influence on the success of an institution and these are: leadership and management. These two paradigms are collectively acknowledged in the higher education sector as constituting academic governance. Management, often perceived to be the less desirable, has been described in higher education terms as intrusive, restrictive and grounded in unnecessary administrative tasks that are concerned with functional effectiveness and efficiency (Ramsden 1998). Leadership on the other hand is seen to be collaborative in nature, focused on setting and motivating others in new directions and aligned to achieving established and shared goals that promote high quality teaching and learning (Ramsden 1998; Knight & Trowler 2000; Osseo-Asare).

Effective higher education leadership is posited to promote a culture that is conducive to outstanding learning and
teaching and a central requirement for academic excellence (Knight & Trowler 2000). Zaccaro, Kemp and Bader (2004) suggest that leadership traits contribute significantly to leadership effectiveness, leadership development and career progression. However, in the higher education setting, leadership positions are often filled by academic staff who have limited experience in formal management or leadership roles and responsibilities (Rowley & Sherman 2003).

Anderson and Johnson (2006), assert that formal leadership development in higher education is lacking, maintaining that most of the leadership development that takes place is the result of individuals ‘learning on the job’ (2006, 1). These sentiments together with concerns that leadership training is not valued by institutions are resonatingly affirmed in the literature (e.g. Marshall 2006; Rowley & Sherman 2003; Scott, Coates & Anderson 2008), highlighting the need for academic leadership capacity development to be enhanced. There is sound evidence to suggest that emotional intelligence is a key factor in effective leadership performance and that emotionally intelligent leadership will result in highly productive and successful work organisations (Chen, Jacobs & Spencer 1998; Goleman 1998a; Cavallo & Brienza 2010). In the higher education setting there has also been research to support the importance of emotional intelligence for effective leadership (Rantz 2002; Rowley & Sherman 2003; Bryman 2004; Bryman 2007a; Scott, Coates & Anderson 2008; Bryman 2009). While literature identifies the importance of emotional intelligence for effective leadership in higher education (Hesburgh 1988; Horner 1997; Hall 2002; Anderson & Coates 2009), it does not explicitly establish how emotional intelligence is applicable for leadership.

There is growing evidence to support the benefits and importance of emotionally intelligent leaders and leadership. Goleman’s (2004) support for this claim that effective leaders possess high degrees of emotional intelligence, stem from his studies of outstanding leaders. In one study, Johnson & Johnson (a global American pharmaceutical, medical devices and consumer packaged goods manufacturing company) had divisions around the world nominate a total of 358 high potential leaders. 1,400 employees of these identified leaders were given a 180-question survey that measured competencies associated with leadership performance, including emotional intelligence to complete. Goleman discovered, from an analysis of the gathered data, that the highest performing managers had significantly more emotional intelligence capabilities. When he compared star performers with average ones in senior leadership positions, Goleman further identified nearly 90% of the difference in their profiles to be attributable to emotional intelligence factors. Numerous other studies (e.g. Goleman 1998b; Ashkanasy, Hartel & Zerbe 2000; Goleman 2000; Palmer et al. 2001; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee 2002; Ashkanasy & Dasborough 2003; Carmeli 2003; Dulewicz & Higgs 2003; Higgs & Aitken 2003; Rosete & Ciarrochi 2005) have found that emotional intelligence is strongly linked to effective leadership that is synonymous with positive performance outcomes. Furthermore, theorists posit that leaders’ emotional intelligence can significantly impact on work related outcomes such as job satisfaction and job performance in leaders and their staff (Bachman et al. 2000; Gardner & Stough 2002; Wong & Law 2002; Prati et al. 2003). Other studies have found that emotionally intelligent leaders are thought to:

- Be happier and more committed to their organisation (Abraham 2000); desire and achieve greater success, lead an effective team and be more satisfied working with others (Miller 1999; Gardner & Stough 2002);
- Inspire trust, loyalty and commitment, achieve results that are beyond expectations and many of the greatest productivity gains, innovations and accomplishments from individual staff and work teams (Cooper 1997; Johnson & Indvik 1999); and
- Take advantage of and use positive emotions to predict major improvements in an organisation’s functioning, improve decision making and instill enthusiasm, trust and cooperation in employees (George 2000).

There have been many different definitions of leadership promoted in literature, in fact Bennis and Nanus (1985) in a review of leadership literature identified in excess of 350 different definitions of this concept. In higher education there have also been many different perceptions of what leadership might be and identifying one succinct, universally accepted definition is near impossible (Bryman 2007a). Ramsden’s, (1998) definition of leadership in higher education – the ‘everyday process of supporting, managing, developing and inspiring academic colleagues’ (Ramsden 1998, p4) has been widely used by researchers and advocates of leadership in higher education. Another well supported opinion is that leadership in higher education is concerned with managing change on both a personal and institutional level (Knight & Trowler 2001; Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin 2006; Coates & Anderson 2007; Scott, Coates & Anderson 2008). Other perceptions of leadership in higher education include - the opposite of management (Knight & Trowler 2001, Kuiper 2005), concerned with how people relate to each other (Anderson & Johnson 2006) and ‘like herding cats’ (Ramsden 1998; Adams 2000; Brown & Moshavi 2002; Bryman 2009; Bryman & Lilley 2009).

Despite the range of theories, models and beliefs about leadership in higher education one thing that does resound strongly across research and literature is the notion that leadership in higher education is multi-faceted, that the context is extremely important in the conceptualization and practice of leadership and that leadership in higher education is uniquely distinct and different to leadership in other contexts (Rantz 2002; Bryman 2004; Bryman 2007a; Bryman 2009; Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin 2009; Middlehurst, Goreham & Woodfield 2009). Further, there is a strong belief that leadership in higher education needs to be contextually appropriate to the disciplinary characteristics and culture of a specific situation or circumstance and to ignore this is to risk leadership being irrelevant and inappropriate (Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin 2006; Scott, Coates & Anderson 2008; Bryman & Lilley 2009). There is also an assertion that leadership in universities is not only relevant for those who have hierarchical or positional roles but that leadership can and should be exercised by everyone across the institution (Ramsden 1998; Anderson & Johnson 2006; Bolden, Petrov & Gosling 2008).
Leadership plays a pivotal role in the success of higher education institutions and is a critical factor in sustaining and improving an organisation's quality and performance (Hesburgh 1988; Martin et al. 2003; Osseo-Asare, Longbottom & Murphy 2005; Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin 2009). The success or failure of higher education initiatives is seen to be the responsibility of the leader despite the fact that others may have a role in the realisation of the project goals and outcomes. The affordances of effective leadership in a higher education context have evolved over time. Traditionally, effective leadership in higher education was associated with personal academic achievement, for example journal and other scholarly publications, conference presentations, and research supervision of students (Rowley 1997). More recently, studies exploring the premise of effective leadership in a higher education context have identified specific behaviours practices, and indicators of effective leaders such as providing a clear sense of direction, establishing credibility and trust and bringing innovative policies and practices into action (Scott, Coates & Anderson 2008; Bryman 2009; Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin 2009).

Finally, a review of relevant leadership in higher education literature was conducted to assess whether these five leadership practices were valid. The findings of this review, which have been summarized in Table 2.1, supported and endorsed the five proposed effective leader ship in higher education practices that conceptualize the leadership competency framework. Consequently, these five practices were adopted as a framework to guide the investigation of effective leadership throughout this research study.

| Leadership Competence Framework Practices | Main Literature Supporting these principles |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Providing a clear sense of direction and/or strategic vision | Rowley (1997); Hesburgh (1988); Ramsden (1998); George (2000); Pounder (2001); Rantz (2002); Rowley & Sherman (2003); Osseo-Asare, Longbottom & Murphy (2005); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2006); Anderson & Coates (2009); Bryman (2009); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2009); Middlehurst, Goreham & Woodfield (2009) |
| Creating and fostering a positive collaborative work environment where staff support and facilitate the direction set. | Hesburgh (1988); Drath & Falus (1994); Rowley (1997); Ramsden (1998); George (2000); Knight & Trowler (2000); Martin et al. (2003); Rowley & Sherman (2003); Osseo-Asare, Longbottom & Murphy (2005); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2006); Scott, Coates & Anderson (2008); Anderson & Coates (2009); Bryman (2009); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2009); Middlehurst, Goreham & Woodfield (2009) |
| Having integrity and credibility, being considerate, trustworthy and empathetic, treating staff fairly and acting as a role model | Ramsden (1998); Pounder (2001); Rantz (2002); Rowley & Sherman (2003); Bryman (2004); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2006); Bryman (2007a); Bryman (2009); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2009); Middlehurst, Goreham & Woodfield (2009) |
| Proactively promoting the interests of the department/institution within and external to the university, respecting existing culture but seeking to advance values through a vision for the department/institution | Ramsden (1998); Pounder (2001); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2006); Scott, Coates & Anderson (2008); Bryman (2009); Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin (2009); |

Table 1: Evidence of the Five Proposed Effective Leadership in Higher Education Practices Located in Reviewed Literature

The fact that effective leadership is not about possessing and exercising a concise set of capabilities but rather employing different combinations of leadership practices depending on and appropriate for the situation is a well-supported notion (Pounder 2001; Rantz 2002; Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin 2006; Gibbs, Knapper & Picinnin 2009). This perspective suggests that effective leadership in higher education is complex and requires a multi-faceted approach with a suite of behaviours or practices that will result in the effective execution of leadership in any given situation. The leadership styles that have been most commonly viewed as appropriate for leadership in higher education are transformational leadership, transactional leadership and distributed leadership. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership whereby the leader inspires followers through a shared vision for the future. Transformational leaders tend to delegate responsibilities, regularly monitoring and communicating with their followers in regard to the tasks for which they have responsibility (Bass & Avolio 1994; Hinkin & Tracey 1999; Barling, Slater & Kelloway, 2000; Barnett, McCormick & Conners, 2001; Brown & Moshavi 2002; Sivanathan & Fekken 2002; Mandell & Pherwani 2003). Transactional leadership is a style of leadership that relies on the compliance and obedience of followers to do as the leader instructs. The ‘transaction’ is usually remuneration in the form of a salary paid to the follower for doing as they are told. In the event that the follower doesn’t obey a leader’s directive the leader is justified and authorised to discipline as necessary thereby, the ‘transaction’ becomes a negative rather than a positive exchange (Barnett, McCormick & Conners, 2001; Dale Amburgey 2005; Bryman 2009). Distributed leadership is a style of leadership that centers around leadership...
practice rather than a hierarchical or positional leader. In a distributed style of leadership all members of the collective are experts in their own right and as such each has a unique and important role to play in the realisation of the shared vision and the subsequent implementation of this vision (Leithwood & Jantzi 1998; Gronn 2000; Bennett et al. 2003; Harris 2003; Harris 2005; MacBeath 2005; Spillane 2006).

In a global study of 121 organisations Goleman (1998a), found that emotional competencies were responsible for 67 percent of effective leadership performance. Similarly, Cavallo and Brienza (2010) in a global study involving 358 managers and 1400 employees from the Johnson and Johnson Consumer and Personal Care Group found that emotional intelligence was a distinguishing factor in effective leadership. Chen, Jacobs and Spencer (1998) found that emotional intelligence competencies were 53 percent more frequent in organisational ‘star performers’ than other competencies such as cognitive competencies. There is sound evidence to suggest that emotional intelligence is a key factor in effective leadership performance and that emotionally intelligent leadership will produce highly productive and successful work organisations.

In a research study of roles and capabilities of leaders from Australian higher education institutions, effective leaders were found to possess a fruitful blend of emotional intelligence, academic competence, and appropriate skills and knowledge, underpinned by effective time-management and organisational skills (Anderson & Coates 2009). Specific emotional intelligence competencies have been identified as having relevance to leadership effectiveness. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990) empathy is a central characteristic of emotional intelligence. Empathy has also been identified to be highly significant for leadership (Humphrey 2002; Kellet, Humphrey & Sleeth 2002; Wolff, Pescosolido & Druskat 2002) and a crucial competency for effective leadership in higher education (Hesburgh 1988; George 2000; Bryman 2004; Bryman 2007a; Bryman 2009). George (2000) explains that empathy underpins most leadership practices claiming that by understanding what motivates individuals, better enables the leader to exercise leadership in a manner that will appeal to the individual. Hesburgh (1988) also supports the need for leaders in higher education to use empathy to influence and motivate others rather than autocratically directing them to action. Additionally, Hesburgh highlights the importance for empathy in regard to being sensitive to the well being and needs of individuals.

Throughout this investigation, there were several contradictions unveiled that warranted acknowledgement and discussion including:

- 1. In an environment that espouses the development of individuals to operate in a particular area of professional practice there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that higher education leaders are not being adequately prepared or equipped to lead.
- 2. Providing constructive feedback to individuals on their performance is an important leadership responsibility. This does not need to be a negative practice and should be managed to the benefit and not the detriment of the individual.
- 3. The importance of emotional intelligence for leadership in higher education is well recognised however the prevalence of this vital construct seems to be somewhat lacking.
- 4. The fact that leaders are a critical factor in an organisation’s success is well established however, the appointment of leaders in higher education is often not strategic or reflective of the magnitude of this importance.
- 5. The higher education setting is by nature an autonomous environment which is in opposition to the principals of effective leadership as such there is a need for leadership in higher education to transcend the nature of the environment and espouse emotionally intelligent leadership practices that are attuned to the needs of staff.

3. Conclusion

This study addressed a gap in the quantum of research suggesting that emotional intelligence is a significant factor for effective leadership in higher education. This assertion was addressed through the explicit examination of the potential for emotional intelligence abilities and competencies to enhance leadership practices in a higher education context. The resounding conclusion that eventuated was that emotional intelligence is a highly relevant and significant construct for leadership in higher education and that leadership capacity development initiatives in higher education should include a focus on developing emotional intelligence understanding and skills.

From the examination and synthesis of findings that occurred in this research study, twelve emotional intelligence capabilities for effective leadership in higher education have been generated. These capabilities have been developed as a practice framework for identifying enhancing and assessing leadership in a higher education context and advocates that effective leaders will:

- Generate a vision and associated strategy that strives to meet the needs and advance the capability of the individual, team, department and institution.
- Regularly communicate the vision and associated strategy so that key stakeholders have a shared understanding of what is to be achieved and how it will be achieved.
- Inspire and guide individuals and the team to achieve the shared vision and associated strategy.
- Accurately identify and interpret the needs, interests, abilities and concerns of others and appropriately manage, utilise or develop these to promote productivity and success for the individual, team and department/institution.
- Understand their own strengths and limitations and responsibly moderate their behaviour in leading and inspiring others to achieve a shared strategic direction/vision.
- Establish and promote an optimistic, collegial and collaborative work environment where individuals and the team are encouraged to achieve the shared strategic direction/vision.
• Maintain a high standard of conduct that provides a positive role model for others.
• Behave in an appropriate and professional manner that instills the trust of others.
• Accurately discern the development needs of others, empathetically communicate these and assist others to develop accordingly.
• Acknowledge and reward the developments and achievements of individuals, the team and the department/institution.
• Promote and communicate the vision/strategic direction and consequent achievements of the department/institution within and external to the university.
• Generate and encourage a progressive vision for the future that will advance the department/institution.
• These twelve capabilities are proposed as an articulation of the relevance of emotional intelligence for effective leadership in higher education. The ensuing intention is that the capabilities would inform the focus of content to be addressed in leadership development initiatives and provide the basis for explanations and practical examples of how emotional intelligence might manifest in effective higher education leadership.

Several recommendations for the enhancement of current and future leaders in higher education are proposed as a consequence of the findings in this study. These are:

4. Recommendation

Higher education institutions should invest in leadership capacity development initiatives that are designed to prepare and further develop future and existing leaders.

Leadership capacity development initiatives in higher education should incorporate opportunities for individuals to gain knowledge of emotional intelligence specifically - self awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills and how these constructs might manifest in authentic higher education practice.

Leadership capacity development initiatives in higher education should encompass an approach that fosters awareness raising of effective leadership; identification and implementation of strategies to foster leadership development in an authentic context; and ongoing reflection to ensure sustainable and enduring leadership capacity development.

In conclusion emotional intelligence is positioned as a construct that can be employed by leaders to develop socially just and equitable workplaces that will ‘make a difference’ in higher education. The potential that leadership in higher education will continue to improve and be enhanced seems certain and this paper is submitted with optimism that there are exciting reforms ahead for leaders and leadership in higher education.

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