Leadership and Emotional Intelligence during a Crisis*

Manuel Aguilar Yuste[a]

Abstract: Currently, a company's success not only depends on having the capital, tools, knowledge, and services to offer to a specific audience. It depends mainly on the emotional intelligence of its organizational leaders to achieve harmony in leader-team interpersonal relationships and fulfill its goals and objectives. Therefore, it is pertinent to contribute to this field of research by exploring the environment where these types of human relationships occur. Managerial leaders who apply emotional intelligence strategies make a company' excellent management visible and viable; these leaders are responsible for influencing others, molding groups as needed. The daily interaction between leader and employees is dynamic, and one way or another arises from following certain types of leadership found within the structure. Nevertheless, we are living in challenging times due to a global pandemic, where new emotions and skills must be managed, particularly by the leader. Any event of this magnitude has its consequences, especially if we talk about a virus that has caused a health crisis and continues to cause the death of thousands of people. These repercussions encompass several areas, such as the economy, health, education, and society. Albert Einstein used to say that the tone of the century is set in its first twenty-five years, so it is essential to build the foundations of a new society marked by new social leadership.

Keywords: Leadership; health crisis; emotional intelligence; organizational change

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a Universidad de Extremadura, Extremadura, Spain.
E-mail: maguilaryuste@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8390-8644

Liderazgo e inteligencia emocional durante una crisis

Resumen: En la actualidad, el éxito de una empresa no solo depende de contar con el capital, las herramientas, el conocimiento y los servicios para ofrecer a un público específico, sino principalmente de la inteligencia emocional de sus líderes organizacionales para lograr la armonía en las relaciones interpersonales entre líder y equipo y cumplir con las metas y los objetivos. Por tanto, es pertinente contribuir a este campo de investigación mediante la exploración del entorno donde se dan este tipo de relaciones humanas. Los líderes gerenciales que aplican estrategias de inteligencia emocional hacen visible y viable la excelente gestión de una empresa; estos líderes son responsables de influir en otros y de moldear grupos según sea necesario. La interacción diaria entre el líder y los empleados es dinámica y, de una forma u otra, surge de ejercer ciertos tipos de liderazgo que se encuentran dentro de la estructura. No obstante, vivimos tiempos desafiantes debido a una pandemia mundial en los que el líder en particular debe manejar nuevas emociones y habilidades. Todo evento de esta magnitud tiene sus consecuencias, sobre todo si hablamos de un virus que ha generado una crisis de salud y sigue provocando la muerte de miles de personas. Estas repercusiones abarcan varias áreas como la economía, la salud, la educación y la sociedad. Albert Einstein solía decir que los primeros veinticinco años marcan el ritmo de un siglo, por lo que es fundamental sentar las bases de una nueva sociedad caracterizada por un nuevo liderazgo social.

Palabras llave: liderazgo; crisis de salud; inteligencia emocional; cambio organizacional

Liderança e inteligência emocional durante uma crise

Resumo: Atualmente, o sucesso de uma empresa não depende só de possuir o capital, as ferramentas, o conhecimento e os serviços para oferecer a um público específico mas, principalmente, de contar com a inteligência emocional dos seus líderes organizacionais para conseguir a harmonia nas relações interpessoais entre líder e equipe e atingir as metas e os objetivos. Portanto, é pertinente contribuir para este campo de pesquisa mediante a exploração do ambiente onde este tipo de relações humanas acontece. Os líderes gerenciais que aplicam estratégias de inteligência emocional tornam visível e viável a excelente gestão de uma empresa; estes líderes são responsáveis por influenciar outras pessoas e de moldar grupos de acordo com o que for necessário. A interação diária entre o líder e os empregados é dinâmica e, de uma maneira ou de outra, surge do fato de exercer alguns tipos de liderança que se encontram dentro da estrutura. No entanto, vivemos tempos desafiadores devido a uma pandemia mundial nos quais o líder, em particular, deve lidar com novas emoções e habilidades. Todo evento desta grandeza tem as suas consequências, principalmente, se falarmos de um vírus que gerou uma crise de saúde e continua provocando a morte de milhares de pessoas. Estas repercussões chegam a várias áreas como a economia, a saúde, a educação e a sociedade. Albert Einstein sempre dizia que os primeiros vinte e cinco anos definem o ritmo de um século, pelo qual é fundamental estabelecer as bases de uma nova sociedade caracterizada por uma nova liderança social.

Palavras-chave: liderança; crise de saúde; inteligência emocional; mudança organizacional.

Introduction

Background and context

The social and economic issues facing the world because of the coronavirus and other dramatic events such as adverse weather phenomena caused by global warming and climate change, especially in the US and China, create a hostile environment for businesses worldwide. Consequently, business organizations must institute restructuring processes to deal with economic challenges to remain competitive. Globalization is another challenge companies must face in the current business environment; Because of it, cultural, social, managerial, and economic transformations are pushing multinational organizations to institute change management measures.

Moreover, leaders must consider cultural differences and regional specificity, among other factors, as they engage their employees. Within the current turbulent and dynamic operating environment, employees might not respond well to the extensive change management processes that business leaders institute to remain competitive. Therefore, innovative leadership practices are necessary to manage change during crises effectively. Emotional intelligence is one pertinent concept in the change management and leadership literature regarding how leaders approach the change management processes in their business organizations. The current study analyzes the literature on the relationship between leadership and emotional intelligence in influencing change management during a crisis. It proposes a methodology for determining the effectiveness of two leadership styles, transformational and transactional, in ensuring successful change management in organizations during crises.

The concept of crisis

To define the concept of crisis, we must refer to De Nicolás et al.'s (2000). In their view, crisis is a fragile and conflictive state in which, given internal or external causes, there is a tendency to disorganization and balance and normality of the system are disturbed.   However, from social sciences, Britton

(1986) defines crisis as a concept of "three terms and/or phases," where phases are "periods of social crisis and generators of collective stress." These phases are the following:

- The number and type of people involved.
- The degree of involvement of people within the affected area or social system.
- The amount of disruption or destruction caused in the social system by the agent inducing collective stress.

These criteria would give rise to another series of definitions that can contextualize the concept of crisis; for instance, Puy and Romero (1998, p. 184) divide it into disaster, emergency, and accident:

- "Disaster: Extensive and almost complete disruption of all social processes, social structure and primary and secondary interactions, and extensive destruction of functional infrastructure (buildings, communication, and social support networks)."
- "Emergency: Localized rupture that interferes with the ongoing activities of certain people involved (the victims), and also causes a certain rupture with other peripheral people."
- "Accident: It would only be possible to consider a very localized type of rupture on a specific group of victims, but not on the social levels of the largest population."

In the situation that concerns us, and in the context in which we are immersed, we must deal with the concept of crisis from a health point of view because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This health emergency, which resulted in strict lockdown of the entire population and mobility restrictions, has directly and adversely affected the economy, thus producing a double crisis: health and economic.

Reinhart and Rogoff (2009) stated that an economy is considered to enter a technical recession when it has experienced negative growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) for two consecutive quarters. It would also be convenient to differentiate between short-term and long-term effects, direct and indirect effects, and reversible and irreversible consequences of a crisis (Pinilla et al., 2009).

As Dávila and López-Varcárcel (2009) affirmed, the effects of crises strongly depend on the institutional context and the structuring of civil society. Regarding the institutional context, the welfare state turned into the norm with its mechanisms for protecting citizens and expressing social solidarity makes a big difference. Given that social policies affect the main population determinants of health, the extension of universal social policies aimed at the most vulnerable groups is associated with better overall health. For example, according to Stuckler et al. (2009), social structuring and social capital have a protective effect on health during crises. In the former Soviet bloc countries, social capital, measured by membership in social organizations, cushioned the rise in mortality due to economic disintegration and massive privatizations.

For practical purposes, all this can be examined in the report of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2021), which highlights, among other issues, that consumption, transport, or industry were hit by the pandemic, suffering abrupt falls that have been overcome as the year progresses. In 2020, the Spanish economy experienced the most significant drop since the Civil War, with a decline of 11 %. In the eurozone, GDP fell 6.8 %, a figure that far exceeds the 4.9 % of the Great Recession of 2009 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Chained volume. Interannual variation rates (%).
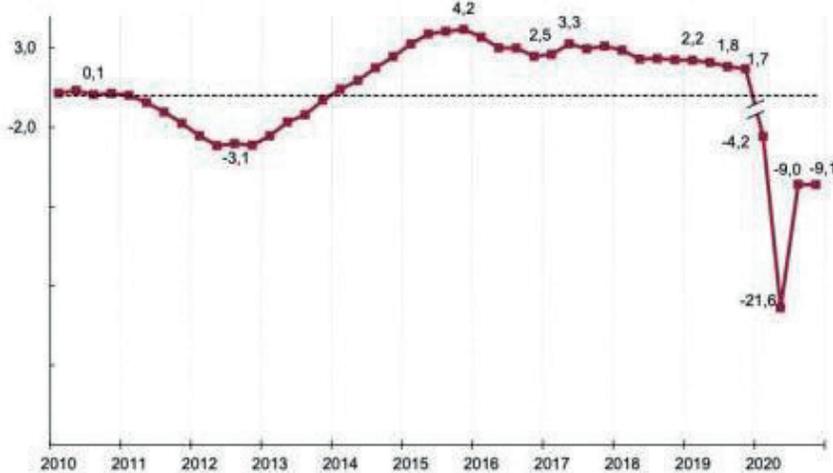
Source: Taken from Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2021)

The concept of emotional intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence emerged from Gardner's and Thorndike's work on social intelligence and multiple intelligences, respectively. Chopra and Kanji (2010) point out that Gardner's work highlighted that human intelligence is composed of multiple interwoven and interconnected capabilities that work together to influence outcomes in personal and workplace settings. These authors provide a concise definition of emotional intelligence, stating that it connects feelings and thinking; in other words, it is thinking about feeling and feeling about thinking. Emotional intelligence helps deal with the interpersonal and intrapersonal complexities characteristic of organizational contexts changing crisis. Maulding et al. (2012) define emotional intelligence as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them," and to deploy the information gathered to guide one's actions and thinking (p. 21). The researchers point out that IQ by itself is an inadequate predictor of individual success in organizations since individuals might have a high IQ but still fail to deliver the desired results (Maulding et al., 2012).

According to Batool (2013), emotional intelligence is different from general intelligence in that the latter is a logical and mathematical type while the former is intrapersonal and interpersonal. The researcher notes Goleman's lamentation that despite the multiple training programs and expert advice offered by multiple leadership professionals, effective leadership has remained elusive for most people. Managing emotions is one skill that training and expert advice does not offer to aspiring leaders to influence organizational outcomes positively (Batool, 2013).

Based on the definitions of emotional intelligence, despite the contradictory use of the word intelligence (objective) and emotion (subjective), the concept has a high level of empirical validity since physiological and neurological foundations underlie the concept and could help explain differences in organizational leadership outcomes, particularly during a crisis. Studies in neuroscience have demonstrated that although the logical or thinking areas of the brain are separate from the feeling of emotional parts, they are interwoven and intertwined. Consequently, actions and decisions cannot occur without the involvement of the emotional brain (Chopra & Kanji, 2010). Figure 2 summarizes the essential elements of emotional intelligence within the organizational leadership and change management setting. It shows that emotional intelligence involves perceiving, understanding, managing, and using emotions to reach desired ends.

Figure 2. Essential elements of emotional intelligence within organizational contexts.
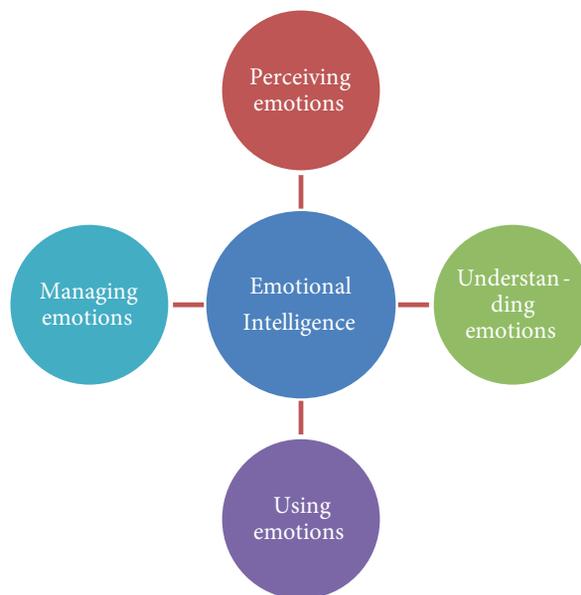
Source: Taken from Batool (2013)

Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Styles, and Organizational Performance

Emotional intelligence is one of the most applied constructs in the leadership literature. Emotional intelligence influences the type of leader an individual becomes and the leadership style adopted in change management. Currently, the two most influential types of leaders include transactional and transformational leaders.

A transformational leader stimulates the interest of his colleagues, inspires individuals to put aside their interests in favor of those of the group, increases the ability of others, makes employees aware of organizational goals and objectives, inspires employees to look at work from another viewpoint, and generally has a direct or indirect

influence on how the organization functions. Consequently, the following four dimensions comprise transformational leadership: individual considerations, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Batool, 2013).

Maamari and Majdalani (2017) provide a succinct analysis of the differences between transactional and transformational leadership. The researchers point out that transformational leaders motivate their employees by exciting loyalty, trust, and admiration in them. Therefore, the employees feel motivated to go beyond the expectations of top management to achieve organizational and personal goals and objectives. On the other hand, transactional leaders appeal to the self-interests of their employees (Maamari & Majdalani, 2016). According to Batool (2013), transactional leaders use rewards as incentives for improving performance. Some areas such leaders emphasize include punishments and rewards to improve employee performance, employee compliance, task completion, and work standards. Research on transactional and transformational leadership effects has established that the former has higher predictive ratings of satisfaction and effectiveness.

Furthermore, previous research has found that subordinates had higher effort levels than the transactional leadership style (Batool, 2013). Generally, organizations prefer transformational leadership styles because of the higher employee commitment, trust, and satisfaction that the approach entails. However, research has not compared the effectiveness of the two leadership styles in multiple organizational contexts to understand whether the transformational leadership style has better outcomes in some organizational contexts than the transactional one. Maamari and Majdalani's (2016) study investigated whether emotional intelligence influenced leadership style and affected the employees' organizational citizenship behaviors. The researchers found that while emotional intelligence affected the leadership style adopted, the differences between styles in the employees' feelings about the organizational climate were relatively small (Maamari & Majdalani, 2016). Therefore, there is a gap in research on the impact of emotional intelligence and leadership style on employee perception of the organizational climate and their performance in meeting organizational goals and objectives.

The intentional change theory (Figure 3) is a model that incorporates emotional intelligence and has elements consistent with transformational leadership styles. According to the intentional change theory, performance development plans, characteristic of transactional leadership approaches, can stress and depress an individual's motivation to change and learn.

Figure 3. Diagrammatic summary of the intentional change theory.
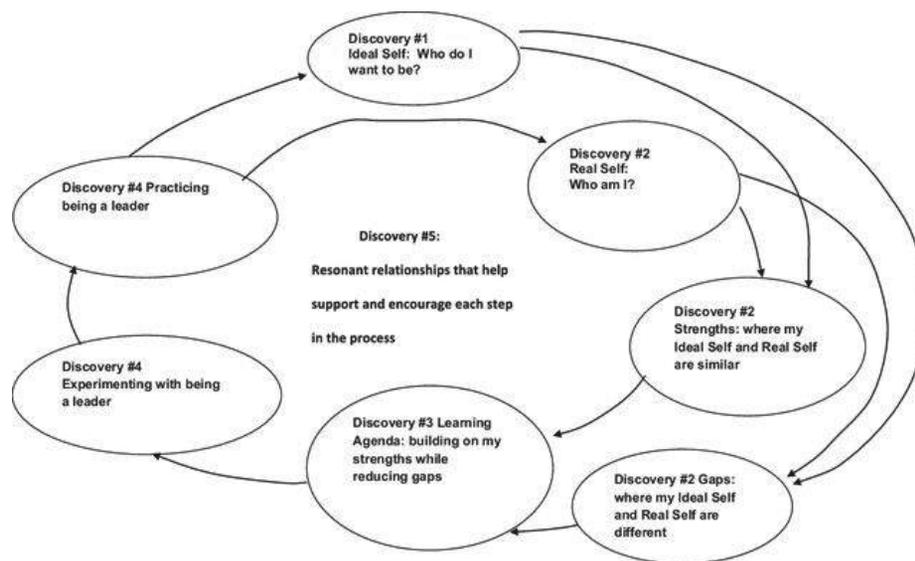
The intentional change theory proposes an approach consistent with transformational leadership styles, which is the development of a learning agenda that delimit learning actions and goals that individuals can enthusiastically participate in during the change management process. The development of a learning agenda is the third discovery in the intentional change theory framework. Compared to performance development plans, the learning agenda helps employees grow, especially in actualizing themselves by reducing the difference between the ideal and real selves through continuous learning (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Jordan (2005) emphasizes the importance of the learning organization in continuously improving the abilities and skills of employees to ensure effective change management over time.

The fourth discovery is consistent with the transformational leadership style, which involves practicing and experimenting with new feelings, thoughts, and behaviors to use strengths and reduce the pervasive influence of weakness on workplace performance (Boyatzis et al., 2012). Because they have achieved self-actualization, transformational leaders can help employees through the process of matching the ideal and real selves.

Finally, the transformational leader can foster and maintain trusting relationships and bonds with employees to offer help and support during the change management process (Boyatzis et al., 2012). In Boyatzis et al.'s (2012) study, Mary Tuuk went through the different stages, making her an effective leader by managing her own emotional states and understanding the relationship between her real and ideal selves. The change process requires significant emotional intelligence on the leader's part to ensure that he or she understands personal emotions to effectively deal with the turbulences of the emotional, cognitive, and perceptual challenges employees face during the change process.

A significant finding in the research (Fig. 3) is the association between transformational leadership and emotional and social intelligence. The two elements are essential in inspiring employees to create stronger relationships at the workplace to improve performance. Daniel Goleman has contributed the most to the literature on the link between leadership and emotional intelligence. According to his conceptual deliberations on emotional intelligence, leaders with high emotional intelligence are the most important for organizational success and performance since they can influence the employees by understanding their feelings at the workplace. Consequently, such leaders can devise measures to influence performance and manage their own emotions to influence organizational performance (Batool, 2013; Maulding et al., 2012). Also, leaders high in emotional intelligence can intervene when problems arise, meaning they could have better conflict management than leaders who utilize other interventional strategies during conflict or crisis. Maulding et al. (2012) add that leaders high in emotional intelligence rather than general IQ can reason on their own and other people's feelings, making them adept at managing emotional will in their relationships and within themselves.

The characteristics above make emotional intelligence a beneficial quality in managing conflict and change management during a crisis. Leaders high in emotional intelligence can influence organizational performance by creating a favorable climate to motivate employees to contribute positively to organizational performance (Maulding et al., 2012). Maamari and Majdalani (2016) define organizational climate as the employee perception of their surroundings and the feelings the perceptions excite in them, influencing their performance. The favorable environment that transformational leadership creates is conducive to better organizational performance outcomes. Other consequences of high emotional intelligence include the ability to gain the employees' trust and understand how the social and political environment in the workplace could influence outcomes.

The context within which change management occurs is an essential consideration in understanding the linkage between emotional intelligence, leadership styles, and change management outcomes. According to Batool (2013), the most effective organizational leaders integrate the components of emotional intelligence into their leadership practices. Therefore, they adopt a contextual

approach in determining which aspects will most influence organizational outcomes. The researcher provides various examples of leaders who have successfully integrated four or more leadership styles to influence their organizational performance, including insurance companies and schools. These leaders utilized multiple leadership styles contextually to influence organizational outcomes (Batool, 2013). The eclectic approach proposed by the researcher suggests that emotional intelligence can be a valuable tool in helping leaders determine which leadership style fits a particular context. Batool (2013) reports that in the school examples, the schools where leaders utilized one or two leadership styles performed poorer than those who utilized four or more leadership styles. Based on the literature, there is ample evidence to suggest that emotional intelligence directly correlates with multiple leadership style outcomes.

Other studies have established a clear relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership effectiveness, and organizational performance. In a study on leadership development and coaching, Boyatzis et al. (2012) report on the case of Mary Tuuk, who underwent a leadership development program focusing on emotional intelligence and developed strategies for coping with stress. The researchers point out that she learned that emotions could be contagious. Therefore, leaders should develop strategies to deal with their stress, thereby assisting other people in ameliorating theirs.

Stress can lead to a self-perpetuating cycle that infects the workplace environment, exacerbating the challenges leaders face when instituting change in a crisis environment. Boyatzis et al. (2012) report that paying attention to personal renewal and engaging people in particular conversational types can help deal with leadership stressors. By dealing with personal stressors, leaders can help the people under their care and leadership rebuild their perceptual, emotional, and cognitive talent. Thus, emotional intelligence can help ensure a healthy workplace environment, particularly during stressful situations such as instituting organizational change during a crisis.

Studies on employee perception of the role of emotional intelligence in influencing organizational outcomes suggest that employees are aware of the various factors that promote or impede organizational performance. For example, Batool's (2013) research involved a survey of 50 participants in the Pakistan banking sector. The participants were at the managerial level of their respective organizations. The researcher sought to find out the relationship between leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence by evaluating the level of emotional control of the female and male population in the working-class population within the Pakistan context. The results were generalizable to other contexts, such as the western world, since the researcher used a quantitative research design in the study. The findings demonstrated that between 40 and 42 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that responsibility was a major factor in leadership effectiveness and 58 percent strongly agreed that workload affected effective leadership and emotional intelligence. Most participants agreed that stress and self-control were essential factors that moderated the relationship between effective leadership and emotional intelligence (Batool, 2013).

Similarly, Ugoani (2017) reports that regulation of emotions in others and the self or self-control is a significant element of emotional intelligence. Asnawi et al. (2014) add that the individual employee must develop the emotional intelligence capacity to manage their emotions when change processes challenge their existing values and beliefs. As Boyatzis et al. (2012) suggested, transformational leaders high in emotional intelligence can help employees manage their emotions, feelings, and thoughts during change management since they have developed the capacity to do so themselves. Research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational change can provide additional insights on how influential leaders can manage change effectively for improved organizational performance during crises.

Emotional intelligence and organizational change

Change management is an essential element of organizational processes since adapting to a turbulent and dynamic operating environment can

improve and sustain competitive advantage. None-theless, depending on the change management approach adopted, employees might resist change or experience inertia. Change management involves harmony between employees, collaboration, influence, and communication on the organization's path. Emotional intelligence can help remove barriers to change, elicit employee compliance with change initiatives, and help them acknowledge the need for change, thereby allowing them to cooperate (Ugoani, 2017).

Eliciting employee compliance can be difficult, particularly in an organizational environment dominated by transformational rather than transactional leadership. Raithatha (2015) provides a historical analysis of the evolution of change management approaches. During the first phase, a hierarchical and transactional relationship existed between top management and employees. In other words, organizations viewed the employee as a servant dependent on the organization for work and salaries while the employer was the master that held the key to employees' good fortunes.

Change management has since evolved from the hierarchical master-servant relationship to scientific management characterized by division of labor and specialization and finally to an organizational environment in which human resource management treats employees as organizational assets worth nourishing and nurturing (Raithatha, 2015). The latter organizational paradigm has created the problem of motivating employees to follow organizational change initiatives despite their resistance and inertia. To deal with the complexities of change management in the current prevailing organizational paradigm, Raithatha (2015) states that organizations have increasingly relied on people with high emotional intelligence to correctly evaluate situations and respond accordingly to employee resistance to change and inertia.

Multiple change models have attempted to provide effective solutions for dealing with employee inertia and resistance to change. The intentional change theory suggests that organizations are most likely to experience the desired outcomes in change management when their employees and

leaders make five discoveries. The first and most important discovery is the "activation of an individual's ideal self" (Boyatzis et al., 2012, p. 19). Figure 4 illustrates the various components that comprise the ideal self, including the importance of shared and collective visions in influencing the development of the ideal self.

Figure 4. Components of the ideal self.

Source: Taken from Boyatzis et al. (2012)

Passion, purpose, and core values are part of the individual's vision statement. They are integrated rather than separate components of the ideal self. By activating the ideal self, the individual can understand how his deepest desires influence other people's perception of him or her, thereby assisting in understanding the real self (Boyatzis et al., 2012). For a healthy and positive self-image, there should be no conflict between the real and ideal selves. Emotional intelligence provides individuals with the tools to ensure that a disjunction between the two ideas of the self does not emergence, thereby creating a high level of self-efficacy, whether as a leader or follower in the workplace environment. According to Michikyan et al. (2014), the real self is composed of an individual's genuine or authentic feelings and has its origin in internal attributes.

On the other hand, the ideal selfcomprises the individual's wishes, hopes, aspirations, or ideal attributes. If the real self is not consistent with the ideal self, the individual might develop dejection-related emotions and a negative self-image (Michikyan et al., 2014). Consequently, leaders with high emotional intelligence help their employees to match the ideal with the real self. Boyatzis et al. (2012) add

that the areas in which the ideal and the real selfconverge are strengths, while in the reverse case, they are weaknesses. Leaders who have already activated the ideal self through self-actualization or other similar processes can be more effective in inspiring their employees to reach the ideal self or accomplish their desires, wants, hopes, and aspirations.

Supporting evidence shows a clear linkage between leadership styles and the effectiveness of change management processes, especially in helping employees overcome the assault on their values, passion, and purpose that organizational change entails. Maulding et al.'s (2012) study of 48 P-12 school administrators provide supporting evidence for the first component of the intentional change theory, which is discovering the self. Using a mixed-method approach comprised of qualitative and quantitative studies, Maulding et al. (2012) investigated how nontraditional leadership factors influenced leadership success relative to the concepts of resilience and emotional intelligence. From the perspective of school administrators' self-analysis, the researchers found that resilience and emotional intelligence were significant predictors of leadership effectiveness. The findings support Boyatzis et al.'s (2012) contention that discovering the self is a significant component of effective leadership during change management. In the best-case scenario, the organizational vision aligns with that of the individual, thereby inspiring the individual to meet organizational goals and objectives since they are aligned with their vision. The resultant effect is high job satisfaction, trust, and commitment (Maamari & Majdalani, 2016).

In the same vein, Chrusciel (2006) notes that emotional intelligence is a valuable tool in measuring not only the organizational performance but also individual employee outcomes during change management processes. Another consequence of aligning organizational and personal goals and objectives related to employee job satisfaction and commitment is low employee turnover rates.

A comparable change model, the KI Thought-Bridge, LLC, has emotional intelligence as its foundational conceptual framework. This change model suggests that change occurs in three stages within an organization. The first stage is 'ending,' which signifies departing from old procedures, values, and culture. Employee denial and resistance to change characterize the 'ending' stage. Employees question the motives and reasons for the change occurring within the organization. According to Raithatha (2015), the 'ending' stage requires leaders with high emotional intelligence that can be authoritative yet empathic towards employees as they go through the motions of the impending changes in the organization.

According to Ugoani (2017), three emotional intelligence factors are necessary for successful organizational change management, including change catalyst, leadership, and empathy. Supporting evidence on the importance of empathic leadership comes from Smollan and Parry's (2009) qualitative study on the relationship between attributed emotional intelligence of change leaders and employee response to change processes. The researcher found that followers who feel that their change leaders, catalysts, or agents "understood their emotional reactions, and responded appropriately" had a more positive orientation and were comfortable with the change process (Smollan & Parry, 2009, p. 2). Figure 5 provides a diagrammatic representation of the role the perceived empathy of the change leader plays in ensuring effective change management. It shows that the perceived leader's empathy, which emanates from high emotional intelligence, is a mediating influence that affects how employees respond to organizational change. Depending on it, employees can commit to or resist organizational change (Smollan & Parry, 2009).

Figure 5. The role of perceived leader's emotional intelligence in change management.
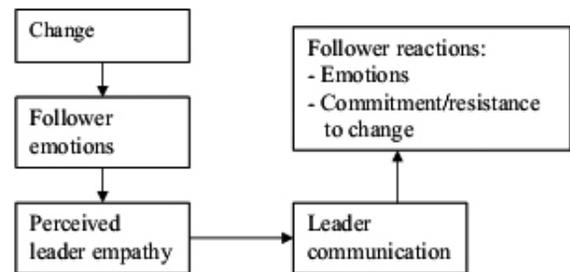
Source: Taken from Smollan and Parry (2009)

In stage two of the KI ThoughtBridge, LLC change model referred to as 'gap,' the change agent or change catalyst is responsible for anticipating the emotional responses to change such as confusion among employees and addressing them accordingly using emotional intelligence. Jordan (2005) adds that in addition to resistance to change, confusion is a predominant element during change management leaders should address. Leaders high in emotional intelligence can detect and address the confusion associated with change management processes within organizations. Finally, the 'new beginning' stage involves experimentation with the new changed environment to create a sense of excitement and hope among employees (Raithatha, 2015). All the KI ThoughtBridge, LLC change model steps require significant emotional intelligence to succeed in the change management process.

Research aims and hypothesis

The current study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of two organizations that utilize transactional and transformational leadership styles to understand the influence of emotional intelligence on change management processes during crises. Organizations with fixed business processes and operations will favor transactional leadership styles, while those that require innovation and creativity in their employees will prefer transformational leadership. Therefore, the two organizations selected for comparative analysis are Wal-Mart and Google. The former company has fixed business processes that require low levels of creativity and innovation, while the latter's business processes require innovation and creativity in its business operations. The literature reviewed has demonstrated a strong linkage between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence.

Conversely, emotional intelligence had a loose association with transactional leadership styles. Therefore, a comparison of organizations that utilize either the transactional or transformational leadership styles and the effectiveness of their change management processes can provide additional insights into the relationship between emotional intelligence and change management. The following are the hypotheses for the study:

- Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of transformational and transactional leadership styles in change management processes.
- Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence does not significantly improve the effectiveness of change management processes.
- Hypothesis 3: The effectiveness of change management processes is dependent on the organizational context rather than the leadership styles or emotional intelligence.

Methods

Research design

The proposed research design is a mixed-method approach using qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. According to Wisdom and Creswell (2013), mixed-method research is an emergent methodology that mixes or integrates qualitative and quantitative data to solve research questions or problems. A major advantage of the approach is that it utilizes the benefits of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Mixed-method research has various characteristics, including collecting and analyzing qualitative or open-ended and quantitative or closed-ended data.

Also, the researcher should select the appropriate sample size for both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Integration of data collected using the qualitative and quantitative methods is another pertinent characteristic of mixed-method studies (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). The mixed-method approach will ensure data collection on the study participants' subjective (qualitative) and objective (quantitative) experiences for a more comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the link between emotional intelligence, leadership styles, and their influence on the effectiveness of change management processes.

Research procedure

The research will involve two groups from the two companies selected for comparative analysis: middle-level managers and lower-level

employees. The researcher will subject the middle-level managers to an open-ended survey using a questionnaire to understand their leadership style and deployment of emotional intelligence in change management within their respective organizations. The participants will be personally interviewed to ensure they understand the open-ended questions appropriately. Face-to-face administration of the survey questionnaire will provide opportunities for asking follow-up questions and seeking clarification where necessary. Besides, face-to-face questionnaire administration will ensure that the qualitative data collected is sufficient for analysis to gain insights into the research problem identified.

For lower-level employees, the researcher will use a closed-ended questionnaire to collect quantitative data on their perceptions of their middle-level managers' leadership style and deployment of emotional intelligence strategies. The researcher will administer the questionnaire via email since it is closed-ended and does not require the researcher's presence.

Sampling, data collection, and analysis

Random sampling will be used to select lower-level employees and ensure that the study results are generalizable to other organizational contexts. A sample of 50 lower-level employees from each organization will be sufficient and representative for quantitative data collection and analysis. For the middle-level managers, the researcher will use selective or subjective sampling to select the most relevant participants that have an insight into their respective organizations' change management processes. The sample size for the qualitative data collection will be ten middle-level managers from each organization. Qualitative data collection requires a smaller sample size to ensure that the data collected from each participant is extensive and sufficient for qualitative data analysis and interpretation.

The qualitative data analysis process will involve thematic analysis. The researcher will analyze the qualitative data from both organizations to unearth recurring predominant themes from the participant responses. For the quantitative data analysis, the researcher will utilize inferential and descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics will help in identifying any inconsistencies in the data collected using measures such as mean, mode, median, and frequency distribution tables. Descriptive analysis will help identify any outliers or inconsistencies in the quantitative data collected. Microsoft Excel software tools will be sufficient for descriptive statistical analysis and presentation using graphs, tables, and charts. The inferential data analysis will rely on SPSS statistical analysis software. The statistical measures for the comparative analysis of the two data sets include regression analysis to estimate the relationships between the effectiveness of change management processes, leadership styles, and emotional intelligence measures. T-tests will be used to determine any significant difference between the means of the two groups from the companies selected for comparative analysis.

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