BEYOND TRADITIONAL METRICS: RETHINKING HUMAN CAPITAL IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP THROUGH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

This paper examines the traditional metrics to establish the degree to which emotional intelligence and qualitative instruments are accorded recognition in assessing school leadership effectiveness. Traditional metrics adopt quantitative indices such as standardised test scores, matriculation rates and teacher evaluation scores. They measure effectiveness across various leadership models, including distributed, transformational, transactional, instructional, and shared leadership. However, the weakness of traditional metrics lies in their over-reliance on numerical data - which downplays the qualitative dimensions of leadership. The study adopts Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory (TEI) and Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI) as units of analysis to reconceptualise school leadership assessment. The Integrative literature review was adopted as a methodological approach to make sense of the principles of the adopted frameworks and related literature. It was discovered that emotional intelligence is an essential component in gauging leadership effectiveness. The study reveals that school leaders' emotional composition and their awareness of it impact their leadership effectiveness. We also found that leaders who are aware and sensitive to their teams' emotional configuration engender cohesion, collaboration, and goal attainment. In addition, the role of adaptable qualitative instruments for measuring school leadership effectiveness was underscored. The study proposed an adaptable framework drawing from theoretical exploration and empirical evidence.

Keywords: Traditional metrics, emotional intelligence, school leadership, human capital, conceptual analysis.

1. Introduction and background

In the evaluation of school leadership effectiveness, traditional quantitative metrics such as the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), Successful School Leadership Survey (SSLS), and Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) have provided valuable insights into leadership practices and organizational performance but often overlook crucial aspects such as emotional intelligence (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2020; Wang & Dapat, 2023). It is worth noting that emotional intelligence is a subtle yet essential component of human capital (Gendron, 2004; Sabie, Bricariu, Pîrvu, & Gatan, 2020). While these metrics offer numerical data on outcomes, they fail to capture the nuanced influence of emotional intelligence on leadership performance, hindering efforts to cultivate positive school climate and enhance leadership effectiveness (Brackett et al., 2011). Moreover, the weaknesses of traditional metrics lie in their inability to measure non-numerical indicators of effective leadership. For instance, not paying attention to the implications of culture on leadership raises concerns about traditional metrics generalizability across diverse contexts (Leithwood et al., 2023; Adewale & Adekunle, 2023). Consequently, there is a recognized need to integrate emotional intelligence into leadership assessment frameworks and develop adaptable qualitative instruments to provide a holistic understanding of school leadership effectiveness (Kramer, 2023). This paper aims to address these gaps by exploring the role of emotional intelligence in shaping human capital expressed through leadership practices. It also advocates for the integration of adaptable qualitative instruments into traditional metrics to enhance the measurement of leadership effectiveness in education (Leithwood, Sun, Schumacker, Hua, 2023). Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How does emotional intelligence influence the effectiveness of school leadership practices?
2. To what extent do traditional metrics for measuring school leadership effectiveness cater to emotional intelligence as a construct contributing to leadership effectiveness?
3. What are the advantages of adaptable and contextual-oriented qualitative instruments in gauging non-numerically measurable attributes in leadership?

4. How can emotional intelligence constructs and qualitative instruments be infused into the existing quantitative instruments for assessing school leadership effectiveness?

2. Theoretical underpinning

This study is underpinned by Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory (TEI) and Team Emotional Intelligence Theory (TEI).

2.1. Theoretical rationale

The rationale for adopting Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory and Team Emotional Intelligence Theory hinges on their ability to offer comprehensive frameworks for understanding emotional competencies in school leaders and teams (Petrides & Mavroveli, 2018). Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory focuses on the stable dispositions underlying individual emotional functioning. On the other hand, Team Emotional Intelligence Theory recognises the impact of the collective emotional composition of team members in an organization (Jordan, Ashkanasy, Härtel & Hooper, 2002). Additionally, TEI positively influences team cohesion, adaptability, and overall team performance. (Jordan et al., 2002).

2.2. Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory (TEI)

Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory (TEI) represents a framework for understanding emotional intelligence (EI) within the context of school leadership. The theory was initially proposed by Konstantinos Petrides and Adrian Furnham in the early 2000s. TEI diverges from the traditional view of emotional intelligence as a set of competencies and skills, focusing instead on the underlying personality traits associated with emotional functioning (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). TEI Components include factors emotionality, self-control, sociability, and well-being, which collectively contribute to individuals' emotional functioning.

2.3. Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI)

Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI) is the aggregate of team members' emotional disposition which influences their satisfaction and performance (Brown, 2022; Aritzeta et al., 2021). This theory underscores the need to understand how the interplay of team members' emotional awareness, regulation, and interpersonal skills shape team dynamics and effectiveness. This implies that effective teams transcend individual competencies to include group emotional synergy.

2.4. Implications of Trait and Team Emotional Intelligence on school leadership effectiveness

While traditional leadership theories emphasise cognitive abilities and management skills, recent research underscores the significance of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness (Kim, & Kim, 2017). In the context of school leadership, TEI holds significant implications for leaders' ability to understand and effectively manage their emotions, navigate interpersonal relationships and inspire others. Research has shown that school leaders with high levels of TEI are better equipped to foster positive school climates, build trust and rapport with stakeholders and promote collaboration among faculty members (Day et al., 2020). On the other hand, Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI) holds implications for collaborative leadership models, distributed decision-making processes, and the cultivation of a supportive team culture (Chang, Sy & Choi, 2012). School leaders who foster TEI among their teams prioritise open communication, empathy, and mutual respect, increasing team cohesion, adaptability, and innovation (Druskat & Wolff, 2001). Drawing from the preceding, Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) and Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI) offer valuable insights and strategies for enhancing school leadership effectiveness.

3. Methodological approach

The study adopts Integrative Literature Review (ILR) methodology to investigate the intersection of emotional intelligence and traditional metrics in assessing school leadership effectiveness. The lack of emotional intelligence construct and contextually adaptable qualitative instruments for measuring school leadership effectiveness was also accounted for by using ILR. The rationale for adopting ILR for this study hinges on several factors. First, ILR offers a flexible and iterative approach to synthesising diverse perspectives and theories to understand a phenomenon (Torraco, 2005). Second, it encourages critical analysis, theoretical synthesis and the generation of novel conceptual frameworks (Torraco, 2004). Given the complex and multifaceted relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, ILR provided an ideal framework for integrating diverse literature sources to generate new insights and

perspectives (Bem, 1995). Given the foregoing, we adhere to the principles of ILR by defining the research questions, searching for relevant literature, analysing and synthesising relevant literature, identifying patterns and gaps and writing the final review.

4. Literature review

4.1. Shifting perspectives: Emotional Intelligence in Leadership from critique to recognition

As knowledge evolves in leadership theory and practice, the role of emotional intelligence (EI) has sparked considerable debate. Initially, doubts were raised regarding the significance of EI in leadership effectiveness, with questions surrounding its construct validity and predictive power lingering in academic circles. Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough (2009) delved into critical reflections on the relevance of the theoretical underpinnings of EI in leadership roles, the efficacy of different measurement tools, and the neurological basis of emotional intelligence. These deliberations laid the groundwork for subsequent investigations into the links between leader EI and their effectiveness. However, a growing body of evidence spanning disciplines, including psychology, medicine, and education, has steadily bolstered the case for emotional intelligence as a crucial component in measuring leadership effectiveness (Arora, et al., 2010). In a recent study, Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Humphrey, Harms et al. (2021) revisited and reevaluated the arguments surrounding EI's role in leadership effectiveness. Contrary to earlier scepticism, the authors highlight a wealth of new evidence confirming that leaders' emotional capacities contribute to their effectiveness.

4.2. Implications of lack of emotional intelligence gauge as a component of traditional metrics

Extant literature indicates that the absence of emotional intelligence (EI) poses significant challenges to effective school leadership. School leaders who are emotionally deficient struggle to cultivate positive relationships with teachers, students and parents (Brackett & Katulak, 2013). This deficiency also manifests in ineffective communication, a lack of empathy and poor conflict resolution skills (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Moreover, such leaders tend to undervalue and disrespect teachers, which results in low morale and productivity among staff (Gómez-Leal et al., 2021). Low teacher morale diminishes educator effectiveness and negatively impacts student engagement and school climate (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Bajgar, 2001). Furthermore, leaders deficient in EI are prone to stress and burnout due to their inability to regulate emotions effectively (Wiens, 2016). Stress and burnout impair decision-making, problem-solving and overall leadership effectiveness.

4.3. The role of adaptable qualitative instruments in measuring leadership effectiveness

Evaluating school leadership effectiveness reveals the limitations of traditional quantitative metrics, which fail to comprehensively grasp leadership attributes and behaviours (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Without incorporating qualitative instruments, assessments overlook contextual nuances essential for understanding leadership practices within diverse educational settings (Leithwood et al., 2023). While quantitative metrics provide numerical data on outcomes, they overlook intricate factors influencing leadership performance, hindering the customisation of leadership approaches to specific school contexts (Leithwood et al., 2008). The absence of qualitative instruments also deprives evaluations of critical insights into leaders' behavioural patterns and interpersonal interactions (Spillane, 2006), thus impeding the assessment process and offering a narrow view of leadership effectiveness primarily focused on quantifiable outcomes (Day, Leithwood & Sammons, 2008). Moreover, without qualitative feedback mechanisms, leaders lack personalised insights into their strengths and areas for improvement, hindering their professional growth and ability to enhance leadership practices over time (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Therefore, integrating qualitative methodologies into the assessment process is crucial for a more holistic understanding of school leadership effectiveness.

4.3.1. The necessity of qualitative measures for assessing leadership in schools.
The lack of qualitative evaluation methods implies missing important insights into leaders' behavioural patterns and interpersonal dynamics. This results in a narrow and outcome-centric assessment of leadership effectiveness (Day, Leithwood & Sammons, 2008; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Unlike quantitative-oriented metrics, qualitative tools capture the seemingly obscure components of leadership and contextual nuances crucial for evaluating leadership in diverse educational environments (Leithwood et al., 2023). Moreover, without qualitative feedback, leaders do not receive personalised feedback necessary for their professional development and the improvement of their leadership skills (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Thus, integrating qualitative methodologies is essential for comprehensively understanding school leadership effectiveness.

4.4. The blind spots in conventional metrics for evaluating school leadership effectiveness

The assessment of school leadership effectiveness traditionally relies on quantitative research approaches and metrics. These often overlook the nuanced role of emotional intelligence skills in leadership effectiveness. Specifically, instruments such as Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), Successful School Leadership Survey (SSLS), and Distributed Leadership Inventory (DLI) do not explicitly accommodate emotional intelligence construct. They are also not qualitative-oriented in measuring school leadership effectiveness.

4.5. Proposed framework: Holistic School Leadership Assessment Framework (HSLAF)

Informed by literature on leadership and the frameworks of Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) and Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI), the Holistic School Leadership Assessment Framework (HSLAF) is introduced to improve the assessment of school leadership effectiveness. This integrated approach integrates emotional intelligence components into traditional metrics and emphasises using adaptable qualitative instruments for a comprehensive leadership evaluation. The framework has four components: ***expanded traditional metrics, contextual adaptability, comprehensive evaluation and continuous improvement.*** *Expanded Traditional Metrics* holds *that w*hile validated metrics are foundational for evaluating leadership, they should incorporate emotional intelligence competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management*. Contextual Adaptability* acknowledges that, given the diverse educational contexts, HSLAF advocates the development of adaptable qualitative instruments for measuring leadership effectiveness, including interviews and focus group discussions. These tailored instruments provide deeper insights into leadership practices and effectiveness*. Comprehensive Evaluation* advocates for a comprehensive evaluation of school leadership effectiveness by combining quantitative data with qualitative insights. This approach engenders a nuanced understanding of leadership behaviours, emotional dynamics, and contextual factors shaping effectiveness. *Continuous Improvement* embraces a cyclical assessment and improvement process while implementing HSLAF as a strategy. This is because, assessment feedback informs targeted professional development efforts, strengthening emotional intelligence competencies and enhancing leadership effectiveness over time.In summary, integrating emotional intelligence into traditional metrics alongside adaptable qualitative instruments offers a comprehensive approach to evaluating school leadership effectiveness. By fostering cognitive and emotional competencies, this framework aims to cultivate emotionally intelligent leaders capable of driving positive transformation in educational environments.

5. Conclusion

This study underscored the significance of integrating emotional intelligence frameworks with traditional metrics in assessing leadership effectiveness within educational contexts.The study offered a nuanced understanding of how emotional intelligence influences leadership practices and effectiveness by adopting a theoretical framework that blends Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory (TEI) and Team Emotional Intelligence (TEI). The importance of adaptive qualitative instruments was also explored. leadership development and implementing organisational interventions within educational settings.

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