Pepperdine University

Pepperdine Digital Commons

Theses and Dissertations

2017

The influence of leadership emotional intelligence on employee engagement

Kimberly D. Waldron

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/etd

The Influence of

Leadership Emotional Intelligence

on Employee Engagement

_____

A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Pepperdine University

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

in

Organization Development

_____

by

Kimberly D. Waldron

August 2017

This research project, completed by

Kimberly D. Waldron

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been

submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business

and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2017

Faculty Committee

Committee Member, Miriam Y. Lacey, Ph.D.

Committee Member, Darren Good, Ph.D.

Deryck J. van Rensburg, Dean

The George L. Graziadio

School of Business and Management

Abstract

This study examined the possible relationship between leader emotional intelligence (EI) and employee engagement within a small digital media company. The study identified the level of employee engagement within the organization and the level of emotional intelligence of its leaders using Q12 engagement and Schutte self-report emotional intelligence (SSEIT) surveys respectively. These two constructs were then related to each other using the survey data as well as a focus group of company employees. The findings revealed that while there is no direct correlation within the data obtained form the surveys, employees do understand the effect of leader emotional intelligence in the workplace and do think that it is important for their leaders to have high emotional intelligence. Findings suggested the organization should focus on the development of their leaders. Communication and recognition of employees from leadership were indicated as areas to further improve engagement. Further leadership development could help with these areas and positively impact. Future research could obtain more data using a larger sample group and different surveys to further determine the influence of leaders emotional intelligence on employee engagement.

Keywords: EMPLOYEE ENGAGAMENT, LEADERSHIP, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research has shown employee engagement to be a key indicator of positive business outcomes (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Employee engagement has become a common theme throughout some of the most prosperous companies globally such as Southwest Airlines, Facebook, Google, and Dreamworks. While employee engagement has been variously defined it is widely accepted as "the extent to which employees are motivated to contribute to organizational success and are willing to apply discretionary effort to accomplishing tasks important to achieve organizational goals" (Wiley, 2010a, p. 36).

Hughes, Thompson, and Terrell (2009) explained that engaging people in the workplace requires an ongoing series of activities that stir employees' caring and involvement related to the organization and their work. They speculated that leaders' emotional intelligence (EI) is critical to this effort. Leaders need to have relevant knowledge to handle challenging fellow humans as well as insight in their own behavior, influence and emotions (Goleman, 2013).

Strong leadership is the cornerstone of long-term success (Drengler, 2001). As business dynamics become more complex in response to mergers and acquisitions, workforce shortages, rapid technology changes, and increased foreign competition, only those organizations with great leadership will be able to successfully compete. Teece and Leih (2016) believe "there is a need to think afresh about how the managerial methods and organizational structure created for the industrial age can be renovated to help deliver the type of management needed for the twenty-first century knowledge economy in which innovation, change, and disruption are so often, but not always, the norm" (p. 12).

The metamorphosis from industrial machine organizations to dynamic and increasingly complex organizations has forced managers to transform the actual structure of traditional, hierarchical management into a flattened and flexible structure with interactive, interdependent, and creative processes (Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter, & Buckley, 2003).

Significance of this Study

According to a 2015 Gallup poll on employee engagement, about 32.0% of employees are engaged, 50.3% of them are not engaged, and 16.8% are creating real trouble by being actively disengaged (Adkins, 2016). In a time where competition to hire and retain exceptional talent is being driven by business goliaths, how can a smaller private company secure and maintain an engaged workforce? How can leaders be prepared to promote and foster the factors that lead to an engaged workforce? Is emotional Intelligence a positive indicator of employee engagement?

The insights from this study will help leadership teams develop strategies to increase employee engagement. This study will also help to illuminate the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and employee engagement and can, in turn, help organizations determine the role emotional intelligence will play in their approach to developing engaging leaders.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and leader emotional intelligence. The sample for this research was conducted within a small digital media company located in Southern California, Company X. The hypothesis tested in the research design was that leaders with higher

emotional intelligence lead more engaged work groups. The objectives of this research study collected the data necessary to determine the validity of this hypothesis.

Objectives are:

1. To determine the level of employee engagement throughout the organization.

2. Identify the level of emotional intelligence of leaders within the organization.

3. To determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and the emotional intelligence of leadership.

Study Setting

Company X was founded in 2013 and provides full service support for digital media influencers and networks. Rapid growth is being planned for the organization and with this growth has come increased attention on how the organization is performing in the market but also how the organization is functioning internally. Company X's mission is to help digital media creators and influencers succeed and to entertain the world. Company X is a Multi-Channel Network (MCN). MCN's are third-party service providers that affiliate with various digital platforms to offer services that may include audience development, content programming, creator collaborations, digital rights management, monetization, and/or sales. At the time of this study, the organization was supporting more than 130 full-time and 500 part-time Creators/ Digital Media Influencers in the creation and development of their various digital media platforms.

Company X employed 65 employees in their Southern California headquarters at the time of this study. The goal to empower employees, encourage high work

performance, and promote job satisfaction had been a challenge to express through pay

rates, monetary incentives, and mobility throughout the small organization. Providing a

fun, flexible, and inviting work environment that encourages employees to take

ownership of their work and develop strong relationships with clients and co-workers had

been a powerful strategy in employee retention thus far. Most employees had less than

two years of work experience prior to employment with Company X, and with an

increasingly hierarchical organizational structure developing, leadership roles began to

emerge. With a sudden rise in employee turnover from 1.7% in 2016 to 18.5% in the first

half of 2017, management wanted to devote resources toward understanding the pain

points within the organization and developing strategies to correct them. Part of this will

be aimed at management within the organization, especially since many of the managers

are first time managers, and how leadership plays a role in the overall culture and

environment of Company X.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 of this thesis provides an introduction of the overall study. This chapter

reviews the background of the issue with the focus on the significance of attention given

to employee engagement and the factors that contribute to business significance. The

chapter also presents the research purpose, study significance, and the study setting.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature relevant to this study. The literature

reviewed delves into the impact and relevance of employee engagement in business, the

factors relevant to levels of employee engagement, and the relationship of leadership and

leaders' emotional intelligence to employee engagement. Literature examining commonly

used measurements of engagement and emotional intelligence is also covered.

Chapter 3 describes the research methods used in this study. The study design is discussed first, followed by a review of procedures utilized. Survey data collection, focus group data collection, and data analysis methods are also described in detail.

Chapter 4 presents the study results. The results of the first two phases of the study are presented first. Analysis of the survey results and the implications of the results to the focus group design are then discussed. Areas of alignment/misalignment are highlighted and summarized.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the leaders and to the employees, draws conclusions for each of the research questions. Limitations are cited and recommendations to the case organization are provided. Finally, the chapter indicates suggestions for future opportunities for further study in this area.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, the definition, origin, and progression of employee engagement as an area of study are reviewed in support of the research purpose: to determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence within a Southern California digital media company.

The benefits of engagement and the dangers of disengagement are explored, followed by a review of the factors that have been identified as driving factors of engagement. The role of leadership in setting the stage for employee engagement is reviewed, including the competencies that create space for an engaged workforce, the importance of trust for psychological safety created by leadership, and the role of emotional intelligence in leaders. Lastly, the impact of leader's emotional intelligence on employees and their work engagement presented.

Employee Engagement

Definitions of Employee Engagement. The concept of employee engagement is relatively new. Kahn (1990) defined personal engagement as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694). Studies on employee satisfaction pre-date the conception credited to Kahn (1990), because employee engagement goes a step further than satisfaction or commitment. Engagement is defined as "a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gon Alez-ro, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74) "involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm,

focused effort, and energy, so it has both attitudinal and behavioral components" (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 4).

Engagement has its roots in motivational theory, which was first propositioned by Mayo's (1933) motivation experiments. These experiments resulted in the proposal that workers are motivated by emotional rather than economic factors. So an employee will place more importance on being involved and feeling important than by an improvement in workplace conditions. Mayo (1933) set the groundwork on which later theorists, such as Hertzberg (1959), Maslow (1943), and McGregor (1960) would build their theories. Other words used to describe the engagement concept were developed under such labels as involvement and participation as set forth by pioneering work of Lawler (1986), Passmore and Sherwood (1978), Trist and Murray (1990) and others.

Herzberg's (1966) Two-factor theory distinguishes between Motivators and Hygiene Factors. Motivators (e.g., challenging work, responsibility, opportunity, involvement in decision making) give positive satisfaction, arising from intrinsic conditions found in the job itself, recognition for a job well done, task achievement, or personal growth. Hygiene factors (e.g., status, job security, salary, paid insurance, vacations) do not lead to positive satisfaction or higher motivation, though dissatisfaction results from their absence. Critics of Herzberg's theory argue that the two-factor result is observed because it is natural for people to take credit for satisfaction and to blame dissatisfaction on external factors (Malik & Naeem, 2013). Despite these proclaimed weaknesses, Herzberg's theory has been widely read and its enduring value is that it recognizes that true motivation comes from within a person—internal and not from KITA (Kick in the ass)--external factors (Cullen, 1997).

McGregor (1960) expounded two contrasting theories on human motivation and management in the 1960s: The X Theory and The Y Theory. McGregor (1960) promoted Theory Y as the basis of good management practice, pioneering the argument that workers are not merely cogs in the company machinery, as Theory X-Type organizations seemed to believe. The higher-level needs of esteem and self-actualization as pioneered by Maslow (1943) are continuing needs in that they are never completely satisfied. As such, it is these higher-level needs through which employees can best be motivated.

If employees are motivated by the prospect of getting a bonus, perquisite, benefit, or recognition, they may even be motivated to take on more responsibilities and get promoted. Employee satisfaction deals with happiness; are employees happy at work? Are they getting what they want? The motivated employee and the satisfied employee can be excellent performers, but they aren't necessarily engaged.

Engaged employees are more than just happy or looking for recognition or compensation, they are actively pushing an organization forward. An engaged employee is asking "What is in it for us?" instead of "What its in it for me?" As a clear distinction from job satisfaction, active engagement requires the employee to be psychologically available, immersed cognitively, emotionally committed and physically energized (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Kahn (1990) explored three ways in which people can use varying degrees of themselves: cognitively, psychologically, and physically. The cognitive aspect of engagement deals with the employee beliefs about organizational factors such as, how it is led, by whom, and the working conditions. Kahn (1990) found that the psychological condition associated with engagement or disengagement at work could be broken down

into three factors: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. The physical aspect of Kahn's (1990) definition relates to the physical energies employed by individuals in order to carry out their organizational role(s).

Lawler's (1986) model of High-Involvement Organizations identifies four interlocking principles for building a high-involvement work system. These four principles help to ensure that the system will be effective and that the various practices will work together to have a positive impact on employee engagement: a balanced combination of power, information, knowledge, and rewards. Another model of engagement comes from literature focusing on burnout which describes job engagement as the positive antithesis of burnout asserting that burnout involves the erosion of engagement with one's job (Maslach et al., 2001).

While Kahn (1990) had paved the way in research about engagement at work its benefits in business and how to measure this phenomenon did not emerge until years later (Harter et al., 2002). In recent years his work has become widely referenced in practitioner literature and by consulting firms (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004).

Why is Employee Engagement Attractive?

The world's top-performing organizations understand that employee engagement is a force that drives business outcomes. Growing competition for talented workers has given firms added incentive to consider their workforce as untapped resource of productivity, and to review their employee engagement strategies in order to more effectively attract, motivate and retain the type of workforce that will help them to be successful. Such efforts usually include benchmarking against companies that are considered to be leaders in employee engagement and usually relies on the validity of two

assumptions: one that employee engagement is indeed a substantial foundation of organizational success and two that these companies are really better than average at keeping employees engaged (Fulmer, Gerhart, & Scott, 2000).

Harter, a chief scientist at Gallup Research (2002) explains that engaged employees look out for the needs of their co-workers and the overall enterprise, because they are personally committed to the results of not only their work but also the work of the organization. Organizations with an engaged workforce see lower absenteeism and turnover while simultaneously improving quality of work and health (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). According to Sirota (2005), morale is a direct consequence of being treated well by a company, and employees repay good treatment with higher productivity and overall work quality, lower turnover. These benefits translate directly into increased company profitability. Happy employees lead to happy customers, which results in higher sales and company performance. Happy customers and improved company performance, in turn, results in happy employees who can enjoy the sense of achievement and the material benefits that come from working for a successful company.

Levels of Engagement

Gallup Research (2002) labeled three levels of engagement: engaged, disengaged and actively disengaged. Engagement requires energy, and Gallup identifies the passive as being disengaged and the contradictory exertion of energy as active disengagement. The studied outcomes of these three levels of engagement will be explored in more detail in the following sections.

Benefits of Engagement. Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) show that employee work engagement and overall satisfaction are positively related to a variety of important

organizational performance outcomes such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, profitability, productivity, employee turnover, and safety outcomes. The idea of customer service through operational excellence aligns with the thought process that engaged employees are more concerned with customer needs which in turn drives customer satisfaction and loyalty. Many studies (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Saks, 2006; Wiley, 2010b) have shown the importance of employee engagement on organizational success, a level enjoyed by the top-notch organizations found various lists of great/ best places to work each year. Organizations like Google, Adecco, and Cisco represent best practice examples for organizations across the globe.

The connection between the attitudes and behaviors of employees and the link to the organizations bottom line was first successfully displayed by US retail company, Sears. Sears advocated employee engagement in the form of the employee-customer-profit chain. In one year, Sears transformed its biggest loss making 4 division (merchandising) from a $3B loss to the company into a $752M revenue generating division (De Vita, 2007).

In December 2004, the Harvard Business Review released the results of a survey carried out by the Corporate Leadership Council (CLC), which involved compiling 50,000 employee engagement surveys in more than 59 countries worldwide. One of the main findings from the study was that increased commitment can result in a 57% improvement in discretionary effort displayed by employees. According to Buchanan (2004), the increased discretionary effort displayed by employees produced on average, a 20% increase in individual performance, and an 87% reduction in desire to leave the organization.

Dangers of Disengagement. The cost of disengagement is high. Research has shown that disengaged employees cost the U.S. economy up to $350 billion every year (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). They negatively affect the workplace in several ways, including, absenteeism and lateness, higher rate of turnover, and loss of customers. Disengaged employees are checked-out. They are sleepwalking through their workday and may be putting in the time, but lack passion and energy. Little if any discretionary effort is extended. Besides brand and culture, the company's bottom line is greatly affected by disengaged employees. So, while the benefits of engagement are noticeable, the cost of disengagement can result in serious consequence.

The types of measures used to test engagement and the ways the surveys are often designed have been, and remain, strongly influenced by 'positive psychology'. Many in the work engagement field are calling for studies of the negatives (Babcock-Roberson, 2010; George, 2011; Purcell, 2014) since there is clear evidence of the 'dark side' to engagement. To gain further understanding of the engagement individuals expressed towards their roles, Kahn (1990) began with the work of Goffman (1961) who recognized that people are inherently conflicted about being members of ongoing groups and systems and they seek to protect themselves from both isolation and engulfment by alternately pulling away from and moving toward their memberships. These pushes and pulls are calibrations of an individual's self-in-role, enabling them to cope with both internal hesitations and external influences (Kahn, 1990).

Actively Disengaged Employees. Lastly, actively disengaged employees are not just unhappy at work – they are busy acting out their unhappiness, they are aggressively lowering morale and productivity levels. Gallup estimates that actively disengaged employees cost the U.S. $450 billion to $550 billion in lost productivity per year (Garman, 2008). Discretionary effort is aimed at creating dysfunction in the organization. Actively disengaged employees can be dangerous to an organization because this counteractive energy exertion will most likely have an effect on other employees and have a detrimental influence on productivity, customer satisfaction and profitability (Anitha, 2014). This negative energy exertion matches their negative feelings toward the organization and leadership.

Measurement of Engagement

Employees differ greatly in terms of their dedication to their job and the amount of intensity and attention put forth at work. Employee engagement is a construct that captures the variation across individuals and the amount of energy and dedication they contribute to their job (Kahn, 1990). While Kahn's (1990) and Maslach and collegaues (2001) models indicate the psychological conditions or antecedents that are necessary for engagement, they do not fully explain why individuals will respond to these conditions with varying degrees of engagement.

Because of the immense impact employee engagement had been shown to have on organizations throughout the research, Human Resource (HR) consultancy firms began to work with organizations to develop metrics to quantify employee attitudes and behaviors and there resulting impact on customer satisfaction and organizational

performance. These metrics are now widely used in measurement of engagement and in ranking organizations based on these measurements in various lists worldwide.

Among both researchers and practitioners, employee surveys have been used increasingly to simultaneously measure a broad range of work outcomes such as job satisfaction or employee engagement (Langford, 2009). The notion of using an employee survey as a leading indicator of business success is tied to linkage research (Wiley, 1996) which explores the relationship between how employees describe their work environment (as measured through an employee survey) and other critical success measures, such as customer satisfaction and business performance. The concept was first explored by Schneider, Parkington, and Buxton (1980) and since then, dozens of studies have been published demonstrating that employee survey ratings of the work environment are significantly correlated with customer satisfaction ratings, as well as an array of business performance measures (Wiley, 2010a). Ferri-Reed (2010) highlights the importance and ease of administering employee engagement surveys: "Employee engagement surveys can be administered easily with a minimum of disruption in the workplace" (p. 32). Armed with concrete measures of engagement, organizations can then effectively craft strategies to address organizational components that drive engagement.

Gallup Employee Engagement Survey

As a result of the immense impact employee engagement had on Sears in 1992, HR consultancy firms began to work with organizations to develop metrics in order to quantify employee attitudes and behaviors and there resulting impact on customer satisfaction and organizational performance (De Vita, 2007). Gallup's goal to provide analytics and advice to help leaders and organizations solve their most pressing problems

has made them a main player in the employee engagement survey sphere. This approach

has led to the creation of unique tools and techniques for achieving the highest levels of

organizational performance and organic growth. In the late 1990s, Gallup pioneered the

employee engagement movement and introduced the premier tool for measuring and

managing employees. An ongoing employee survey that measures employee engagement,

the Q12 consists of 12 actionable workplace elements that offer proven links vital to

performance outcomes. According to the Gallup's Q12 Index (Smith & Cantrell, 2011), a

0.10 increase in engagement (on a five-point scale) is worth an estimated $100,000 in

incremental profit per store per year as seen in the case of electronics store Best Buy.

Gallup remains at the forefront of employee engagement and has partnered with

thousands of organizations to help them create a sustainable culture of engagement.

The role of leadership in setting the stage for employee engagement is reviewed,

including the competencies that create space for an engaged workforce, the importance of

trust for psychological safety created by leadership, and the role of emotional intelligence

in leaders.

Factors that Drive Engagement

If employee engagement is a state or condition, what influences it to be stronger

or weaker? Through the maturation of the concept of employee engagement, critical

determinants have been found to play varying roles in its measurement. Having already

discussed the variety of definitions, and overlaps between several related constructs and

employee engagement throughout the research, the same is applicable to the elements

that drive or deter employee engagement. Studies by Harter and colleagues (2002),

Holbeche and Springett (2004), and May and colleagues (2004) show that employee

engagement is the result of various aspects of the workplace. The number of factors and sub-factors, as well as their level of importance varies greatly throughout the literature.

Leadership and Employee Engagement

Scholars have defined leadership in different ways; they equally vary in their perceptions of the factors of effective leadership. The leader traits theory that dominated leadership literature in the 1930s explained leadership effectiveness by the natural characteristics and abilities (such as superior intelligence, good memory, bountiful energy, persuasiveness, etc.) of the leader (Porter, Bigley, & Steers, 1996). The characteristics and behavior traits thought to be held by top leaders have changed significantly since then.

For the purpose of this study the focus was on how leadership influences employee attitudes about work environment, job content and autonomy, scope for advancement and career growth. Leadership is a main criteria identified as a fundamental factor to inform employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Effective leadership is a higher-order, multi-dimensional construct comprising self-awareness, balanced processing of information, relational transparency, and internalized moral standards (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008).

Leadership development initiatives should be focused on aligning managers to be drivers in the key areas that have been shown to drive employee engagement, which in turn drives business outcomes (Harter et al., 2002).

Psychological Safety and Engagement

Psychological safety is experienced when an individual feels able to participate without fear of negative consequences (Kahn, 1990). Individuals feel safe to voice

opinions and collaborate for problem solving. Supportive and strong management heightens psychological safety, which plays a vital role in employee engagement.

Research indicated that personal engagement was connected to higher levels of psychological safety than personal disengagement. These results suggested that people were personally engaging in situations characterized by more psychological safety than those in which they were personally disengaging. The data indicated the four factors most directly influenced psychological safety were: interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management style and process, and organizational norms (Kahn, 1990).

Examination of the work of leadership theorists such as Bass (1990), Kobe, Reiter-Palmon, and Rickers (2001), and Mayer and Salovey (1993), indicates that the associated construct of social intelligence also plays an important role in the psychological safety of employees. Bass (1985) declared that good leaders are those individuals who are best able to understand and interact with their followers. According to Kobe, Reiter-Palmon, and Rickers (2001), "Good leaders show empathy for and understanding of the needs of their followers and spend time assessing the groups' attitudes and motivations and are concerned about their levels of satisfaction. These components of good leadership are captured by the social intelligence construct. It seems plausible then that social intelligence is an essential component of leadership" (p. 157) Leadership scholars have increasingly acknowledged the critical function of feelings, arguing that leadership inherently constitutes "an emotion-laden process" (George, 2000; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

How Leaders Drives Engagement

Although there are many factors that contribute toward employee engagement, research suggests that leadership behavior has the potential to influence these factors to a great extent (Mester, Visser, Toodt, & Kellerman, 2003). Many Studies show the importance of leadership to employee engagement (e.g., Anitha, 2014; Babcock-Roberson, 2010; Shuck & Herd, 2012; Wiley, 2010b). The employment relationship between manager and employee is where employee engagement will either be fostered or negated. Research studies show that engagement occurs naturally when leaders are inspiring (Wallace & Trinka, 2009). Leaders are responsible for communicating that the employees' efforts play a major role in overall business success. When employees view work as important and meaningful, it leads to their interest and engagement. Authentic and supportive leadership is theorized to impact employee engagement of followers in the sense of increasing their involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work (Macey, Schneider, & Barbera, 2009). Today's workforce wants to be inspired by their leadership, valued for their contributions and aligned with company objectives (Achievers Corp, 2015). Leaders within an organization can foster an environment of high engagement and today, some leaders are beginning to turn toward understanding their employee's level of engagement as a strategy for shaping the future of their organization (Wollard & Shuck, 2011).

Different aspects of leadership competencies have been linked to employee engagement such as self-efficacy (Luthans & Peterson, 2002), leadership style (Mester et al., 2003), humility (Sousa & Dierendonck, 2017), and authenticity (Hsieh & Wang, 2015, 2013). Leader's emotional intelligence has been linked to other employee

outcomes like team emotional intelligence (Prati et al., 2003), performance and attitude (Wong & Law, 2002) however research directly relating leader's emotional intelligence to employee engagement is lacking. This stream of research is of interest to many organizations that seek to better understand the variance in employees' performance and engagement.

Emotionally Intelligent Leaders to Inspire Engagement

Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to handle one's emotions in varying situations. He proposed that the key skills include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill. Feldman (1999) suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders are more effective because they are aware of the needs of those they interact with, which makes it possible for them to respond appropriately to a given situation.

Scholars have focused on relating emotional intelligence to effective leadership (George, 2000) or showing how components of emotional intelligence such as empathy are important traits that contribute to leadership (Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2002; Wolff, Pescosolido, & Urch, 2002). In addition, a growing body of research has been concerned with the degree to which emotional intelligence can make the difference between good and poor leaders. Some leadership studies have shown that the emotional maturity of leaders is associated with their managerial effectiveness (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Supervisors with high EI and emotional maturity are more likely to use supportive behavior and treat their followers with psychological benefits, as they are more sensitive to feelings and emotions of themselves and their followers. The positive affects of an emotionally intelligence leader plays a role in team and organization effectiveness (Prati

et al., 2003), however the research to show it positively affects employee engagement has not been demonstrated.

Measurement of Emotional Intelligence

Goleman (1995) made popular the notion of viewing the experience and expression of emotion as a type of intelligence. A number of different measures of EI have been frequently used in organizational research. Five commonly used measures include: the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQI: Bar-On, 1997), the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI: Goleman, Cherniss, & Gowing, 2001), the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT: Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002), the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS: Wong & Law, 2002), and the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT: Schutte et al., 1998).

The SSEIT is structured from the EI model by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The SSEIT model is also closely associated with the EQ-I model of Emotional Intelligence. Research suggests that the purpose of the assessment should be kept in mind when deciding whether to use the SSEIT assessment (Nicola, Sanitaria, Teramo, & England, 2009). Schutte and colleagues (1998) suggested that the scale might appropriately be used for research purposes and to assist individuals who are motivated to self-reflect on aspects of their emotional functioning in the context of issues such as career goals or experience of problems that may be related to emotional functioning. Items on the scale may be perceived as fairly transparent and respondents may recognize some answers as more socially desirable than others, Schutte and colleagues (1998) suggested that the scale is not appropriate for use with individuals who have an incentive to present themselves in a socially desirable manner. The SSEIT model was created to fill the need

for a brief validated measure of emotional intelligence that is based on a cohesive and comprehensive model of emotional intelligence.

Summary

This chapter explained the literature surrounding employee engagement, its factors, measurement tools and how leadership is a major driving factor of engagement. Much of the research on employee engagement metrics has been carried out by practitioners due to a gap in the academic literature on the topic.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

This study was designed to determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence within a Southern California Digital Media company. A description of the methods used to obtain the information necessary to accomplish the stated objectives is presented chronologically.

Research Design

The Research was conducted in three phases to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to measure employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence. Each phase was designed to address the objectives.

Objectives are to:

1. Determine the level of employee engagement.

2. Identify the level of emotional intelligence of leaders within the organization

3. Determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and the emotional intelligence of leadership

Phase 1: Employee Engagement. For the first part of the study, a company wide employee engagement survey was conducted to address the first objective: determine the level of employee engagement throughout the organization. The study was a Gallup Q12 analysis of employee engagement. Based on research it was determined that this survey would be well suited to the company and employee demographic. In developing Gallup Research's Q12 survey:

Researchers took into account that, from an actionability standpoint there are two broad categories of employee survey items: those that measure attitudinal outcomes (satisfaction, loyalty, pride, customer intent and intent to stay with the company) and those that measure actionable issues that drive the above outcomes. The Q12 measures the actionable issues for management — those predictive of attitudinal outcomes such as satisfaction, loyalty, pride, and so on. On Gallup's standard Q12 instrument, following an overall satisfaction item are 12 items measuring issues we have found to be actionable at the supervisor or manager level in the company items measuring the extent to which employees are "engaged" in their work (Harter et al., 2006, p. 10).

The Gallup Q12 includes a 12-item self-report using a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale for responses. The Q12 survey aims to obtain information on employee attitudes in four major areas: role, contribution, belonging, and development. Between two and four questions within the survey deal with each of these four main areas.

The participants of the Q12 analysis were the 65 Southern California based employees of the small digital media studio. Management support was obtained and the data was used for other purposes internally, however participants were instructed to answer the questions honestly and assured that no answers would be linked to any individual. The survey was sent to the organizations 65 full-time employees. Of the 65 invitations, 55 employees, 84.6% completed the survey. For research purposes and for internal use the responses were coded only by department. Respondents may have viewed the survey as a management exercise and chosen not to complete the survey or to answer the survey questions in a way that would shed a positive light on the organization. The instructions given and the survey questions are shown in Appendix A.

Phase 2: Leadership Emotional Intelligence. The second part of this research study aimed to address the second objective: to identify the level the emotional

intelligence of leaders within the organization. For the purpose of this research project the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) was used (Schutte et al., 1998). Developed by Schutte and colleagues (1998), The SSEIT is in some literature called the Assessing Emotions Scale, Emotional Intelligence Scale, or the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test, and is based on Salovey and Mayer's (1990) original model of emotional intelligence. The SSEIT is a method of measuring general Emotional Intelligence (EI), using four sub-scales of emotional intelligence as defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990): 1) the appraisal of emotion in self and others, 2) the expression of emotion, 3) the regulation of emotion in self and others, and 4) the utilization of emotion in problem solving

Managers of each department in Company X were given the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). This 33-item self-report inventory focuses on typical or average emotional intelligence. Respondents rate themselves on the items using a five- point scale. Respondents require on average five minutes to complete the scale. Table 1 shows the items comprising the measures and instructions to respondents. Total scale scores were calculated by reverse coding items 5, 28 and 33, and then summing self-report questions. Scores can range from 33 to 165, with higher scores indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence.

The SSEIT includes a 33-item self-report which asks participants to ascertain their level of agreement with the statements on a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale. Within the 33-item self-report are three questions that are reverse scored and need to be adjusted before each sub-test score is scored and added together to give the total score for the participant. Each leader will then be given a score based on the

results of the SSEIT self-assessment. The SSEIT assessment used and instructions given are found in Appendix A.

The 33 items of SSEIT represent all portions of the conceptual model of Salovey and Mayer (1990). In this set of 33 items, representation of different categories of the model was roughly proportionate to the model; 13 of the items came from among those generated for the appraisal and expression of emotion categories of the model, 10 of the items came from among those generated for the regulation of emotion category of the model, and 10 came from among those items generated for the utilization of emotion category of the model (Schutte et al., 1998). In the development of this assessment, the internal consistency was measured by Cronbach's alpha as .90. Researchers also reported a 2-week test-retest reliability for total scale scores of .78 (Schutte et al., 1998).

Phase 3: Relationship between Employee Engagement and Leadership Emotional Intelligence. The final phase of this study addressed the third objective: to determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence. To determine this relationship data was examined both quantitatively as well as qualitatively.

Phase 3a Quantitative Analysis Procedure. The resulting scores from the SSEIT for each department leader and the corresponding department's grand mean engagement scores were then plotted variables used for quantitative analysis. The corresponding graph provided data for further analysis of existence of or lack of trends, linear correlation or predictive measurement.

Phase 3b Qualitative Analysis Procedure. For qualitative analysis of the relationship between employee engagement and leader emotional intelligence, a focus

group composed of 12 employees from various departments and of varying seniority levels was assembled. An e-mail was sent to the whole company asking for volunteers to be a part of a focus group on the topic of leadership. The purpose of this focus group was to provide a definition of emotional intelligence and then to invite employees to discuss their views on the role it may plays in their own performance, overall satisfaction, and how emotional intelligence in their direct or indirect leaders may influence their own engagement at work. 12 employees responded to the email and could attend at the set time.

The three phases of this research study have examined the level of employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence throughout a Southern California based Digital Media studio and have determined the extent to which employee engagement is correlated to leadership emotional intelligence. The entire study was designed to analyze the relationship between employee engagement and to further understand the role of emotional intelligence and its connection with employee engagement throughout the organization.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists

between employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence within a Southern

California Digital Media company.

Objectives are:

1. To determine the level of employee engagement.

2. Identify the level of emotional intelligence of leaders within the
   organization

3. To determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and
   the emotional intelligence of leadership

This chapter presents the findings in order of the research objectives. The results

of the Gallup Q12 Engagement survey for employees are presented first. Next the results

of the SSEIT to determine levels of leader Emotional Intelligence Self Assessment are

presented and discussed. The results of the Q12 survey and the SSEIT self-assessment

will then be related to one another, and lastly the discussion points of an employee focus

group will be highlighted and summarized. Areas of data alignment and misalignment are

presented.

Analysis of Findings

Phase 1: To determine the level of employee engagement. The Gallup Q12

survey for employee engagement was used to determine the level of engagement of

employees at a small Digital Media studio located in Southern California. The results of

the survey by question are shown in Figure 1. The grand mean highlights each

department's overall engagement. The grand mean score is an average of the averages for

the scores received for the individual Q12 items. The grand mean uses the same five-point scale as the individual Q12 items (Harter et al., 2006).

Figure 1

Gallup Q12 Results by Question

The primary data results from the Q12 questionnaire on Company X will be interpreted using Forbringer's (2002) study of the Gallup's Q12 questionnaire.

Level 1 "What do I get?" groups the answers from Q1 to Q2. In order to focus on improving employee engagement the organization must ensure that the employee's basic needs are met. A worker's basic needs according to Forbringer (2002), are knowing what is expected of you and having the resources to perform your role. Q1 –85.49% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they know what is expected of them in this company. Q2 – 90.91% of the respondents feel that they have the materials and equipment they need to do their work right. There were no disagreed or strongly

disagreed responses with either of these statements signifying that employee's basic needs are being met.

Level 2 "What do I give?" groups the answers from Q3 to Q6. This next segment of questions invoke you to contemplate on how you are doing as an employee and what your perceptions are of how others think you are doing. Q3 – 78.18% agreed or strongly agreed that they have the opportunity to do their best every day. This data showed that the majority of the participants feel that they at least have the opportunity to do their best every day in the workplace. Q4 – 10.91% disagreed or strongly disagreed and felt that in the last seven days they did not receive recognition or praise for doing good work. In contrast 65.46% agreed with the statement, while 23.64% neither agreed nor disagreed. It is interesting to note the contrast of responses to this question from employees in the same company. This illustrates the direct influence of line management style on employee engagement. Q5 – 89.09% agreed and felt that a supervisor or someone at work cared about them as a person and 10.91% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Q6 – 28.6% feel that yes there is someone at work who encourages their development and 24.7% somewhat agreed with this statement. There are positive responses in all areas of level 2 except for how employees feel about being rewarded and recognized.

Level 3 "Do I belong here?" groups the answers from Q7 to Q10. The questions in this level gather information as to whether the participant feels that they belong or fit in the organization. Q7 – 76.37% agreed or strongly agreed that their opinions count in the workplace with 5.64% disagreeing. Q8 – 69.09% agreed or strongly agreed that the mission of this organization makes them feel that their job is important. In contrast,

7.27% disagreed and 23.64% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Q9 – 87.04% of the participants feel that their fellow associates are committed to doing quality work. Q10 – 69.09% agreed or strongly agreed that they have a best friend at work while 23.64% neither agreed nor disagreed and 5.46% disagreed with the statement. This illustrates that Company X has some work to do on developing its strategy and culture to foster employee engagement.

Level 4 "How can we all grow?" includes answers from Q11 and Q12. This is the advanced stage of the questionnaire and the focus is on learning, growing, and innovation. Q11 – 67.27% agreed or strongly agreed that yes in the last six months someone in the organization has spoken to them about their progress. 16.36% neither agreed nor disagreed with this while 10.91 disagreed with this statement. This question is tied with the question regarding recognition for most disagreement. These two questions deal with communication of the employees' performance and progress. This is an area Company X should look at closely. Q12 – 74.54% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that within the last year, they have had opportunities at work to learn and grow. 10.91% neither agreed nor disagreed with this while 7.27% disagreed. 7.27% answered N/A to this question possibly indicating that they are newer in the organization and don't have enough information to answer this question at this stage of their employment with Company X. The majority of the respondents from Company X feel that there is room for learning, growing and innovation in the workplace.

Next, the Q12 survey data was separated and assessed by department. The GrandMean and standard deviation for each department is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Gallup Q12 results by Department

	Department								
	Brands	**Claims**	**Clips**	**Comp.**	**Creative**	**Dev.**	**Ops.**	**Prod.**	**Talent**
Grand Mean	**4.70**	**4.23**	**3.73**	**4.17**	**3.42**	**4.28**	**4.21**	**4.28**	**4.40**
(STDV)	**(0.48)**	**(0.79)**	**(0.87)**	**(0.88)**	**(0.83)**	**(0.60)**	**(0.81)**	**(0.82)**	**(0.80)**

According to the data the Creative and Clips teams are the least engaged departments in the organization, while the Brands teams is the most engaged followed by Development and the Production department.

Phase 2: Identify the level of emotional intelligence of leaders throughout the organization.

Nine people managers were asked to voluntarily complete the survey and were given information as to the purpose of the project. Five of nine managers invited to take the survey completed the self-assessment. The five leaders of the organization that responded to the survey had scores ranging from 115 to a high of 152. The results of the self-assessment are shown in Table 2. C-suite executives lead the Creative and Development departments, while the Production and Brands departments are led by VP level managers. The leader of the Claims team is a new manager with less than a year of management experience.

Table 2

Company X's Leadership SSEIT Results

	Department Leader				
	Brands	Compilations	Creative	Claims	Engineering
SSEIT Total Score	131	141	130	152	115

Phase 3: To determine if a relationship exists between a department's level of employee engagement and the emotional intelligence of that department leader. For quantitative analysis, the grand mean of each department was plotted against the score each department leader received on the Emotional Intelligence Self assessment they were given to determine if a linear relationship would exist. The data shown in Table 3 and Chart 2 shows that graph of each department's data points. If there were a direct relationship between the emotional intelligence of the leader and the engagement score of their department it would be expected that the data would present a trend line of correlation. This did not exist in the data set obtained; however with the limited amount of data points no determination can be made.

Table 3

Department Employee Engagement vs. Leadership SSEIT score

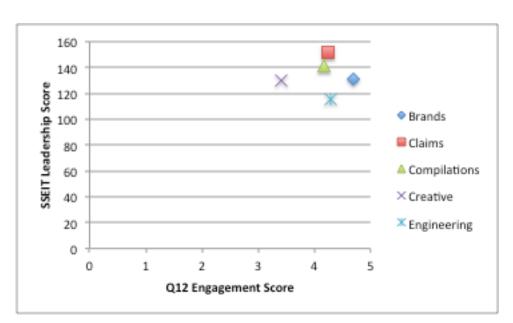| Department	Q12 EE	SSEITT
Development	4.28	115
Creative	3.42	130
Brands	4.70	131
Comp.	4.17	141
Claims	4.23	152
Clips	3.73	N/A
Operations	4.21	N/A
Production	4.28	N/A
Talent	4.40	N/A

Figure 2

Department Employee Engagement vs. Leadership SSEIT score

For a qualitative analysis of the relationship between Employee Engagement and Leadership Emotional Intelligence, a focus group was held with employees from various departments and of varying seniority. They were provided information about emotional intelligence and asked questions pertaining to their perceived level of Emotional intelligence within the leaders of the organization, and whether they believed increased emotional intelligence would increase their level of engagement.

Of the 13 participants in the focus group 11 said that they thought that increased emotional intelligence in their direct and indirect leaders would increase their level of engagement. Two of the 13 explained that increased emotional intelligence in their leadership may or may not have an impact on their level of engagement. When asked if there were other factors that would play a larger role increasing their level of engagement

at work, nine of the 13 participants confirmed that there were other factors that carried more weight for increasing their engagement over leadership emotional intelligence. Some of these included: variety and importance of work assignments, recognition of work and effort, and opportunity for advancement.

Summary

This chapter reported the results of the study. The Q12 engagement scores showed that overall there were no areas for major concern within Company X; however there are some areas that could sue further attention. The emotional intelligence assessment showed that there are varying levels of emotional intelligence within leaders of the organization; however quantitatively, there was not enough evidence to show a direct correlation. The focus group provided further information as to employee thoughts about emotional intelligence in leadership and how it affects them personally. There were also insights around other driving factors of their own engagement within Company X. These findings will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence within a Southern California Digital Media company. The following research objectives were examined:

1. Determine the level of employee engagement

2. Identify the level of emotional intelligence of leaders in the organization

3. To determine if the relationship exists between employee engagement and the emotional intelligence of leadership.

This Chapter discusses indications of the findings, and provides conclusions for each of the research objectives. This chapter also identifies the study's limitations, and recommendations for the organization. Finally the chapter discusses some future opportunities for research in these areas.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The discussion of the results is organized by the research objectives. Relevant evidences to each research question are briefly mentioned, similarities and differences are compared and discussed, and conclusions for each of the research questions are provided.

Employee Engagement. The results from the Q12 engagement survey provided insight in to areas within Company X where improvements can be made. The results of the survey were not compared to other organizations but rather they were examined for areas of concern for the organization to focus on. Overall numbers from the survey did not show large disagreement with any one of the survey questions. Overall this would show that there are not large engagement issues within the organization in any one of

these levels. Data on Gallup Q12 scores from other sources was not available for comparison at the time of this study.

The two questions that had the most disagreement were regarding receiving recognition or praise for work and having conversations about the employees' progress. Both of these areas are directly affected by direct leadership of employees and denote that communication of how an employee is performing is an area for improvement for Company X. Employee recognition is a critical component of achieving higher levels of engagement (Wiley, 2010b). Having appreciation and gratitude from managers and others with power and influence in the organization has a great impact on employees. People like to be appreciated, acknowledged, and respected and know that their efforts are making a difference for their organization.

Another area of the Q12 survey with low scores was surrounding how employees feel about the importance of their jobs as it relates to the mission and purpose of the organization. This is a Level-3 question according to Forbringer (2002), which means it is questioning the employee belonging within the organization. Do the things that drive you also drive those around you? Is your basic value system in line with that of the organization? Popular programs focused on mission statements, diversity training and self-directed work teams are all Level-3 directives and may be beneficial to address the alignment of employees and their work to the overall organization mission and purpose.

Leader Emotional Intelligence. The emotional intelligence of the organization's leaders was studied in order to discover if this was a driving factor of emotional intelligence within the organization. For the purpose of this study the leader's emotional intelligence result was only compared to the other leaders and used to map against their

department's engagement score. There are many factors of effective leadership that were not explored here. Some leadership theories imply that emotional and social intelligence are even more important for leaders and managers because cognitive and behavioral complexity and flexibility are important characteristics of competent leaders (Boal & Whitehead, 1992). The effectiveness of these leaders is only being reported as a factor of their department's engagement scores not with measures of performance within the organization. Although the SSEIT is extensively used in research and has been tested for validity (Schutte et al., 1998), it is also a self-report measure, and although participant's had no reason to skew their answers for any benefit there is no way to determine their motivations. Due to this, their competence as leaders cannot be determined from this data but rather it will explore areas their attitudes towards 4 dimensions of emotional intelligence and what that may mean about how they interact in the workplace.

Two questions received the highest variation across the answers of leaders in Company X. "When my mood changes, I see new possibilities" which reflects the dimension Schutte and colleagues (1998) identified as Utilization of Emotions in Problem Solving. The second was, "I seek out activities that make me happy" which reflects the dimensions Schutte and colleagues (1998) identified as Emotional Regulation of the Self. The question that received the lowest mean score across all leaders that participated is "I like to share my emotions with others" which is a dimension of emotional expression. People differ in terms of the degree to which they can accurately appraise and express emotions. The accurate expression of emotions is an important skill that ensures that people are able to effectively communicate with others to meet their needs and accomplish their goals or objectives (George, 2000). Individually the two

leaders with the highest scores rates their agreement with this statement as disagree and neither agree or disagree, which shows a potential reluctance to outwardly express emotions.

Relationship between Employee Engagement and Leadership Emotional Intelligence. The data from the leadership emotional intelligence assessment and the employee engagement survey were not enough to draw a conclusion as to whether there is a directly linear relationship between them. Further information and date would need to be gathered in order to plot these measurements and come out with a consistent finding. Through the focus group however it was indicated that employees seem to believe that increased emotional intelligence of their leaders would positively impact their engagement and attitudes toward work. However, employees did not feel strongly that this increase in emotional intelligence was the most important factor that would increase their level of engagement.

As noted in analysis of the engagement survey many employees felt that they were not being recognized or praised for their efforts. This was shown in conversations within the focus group as well. Employees want their contributions to the company to be recognized in some way. It can be argued that this is in fact a factor that would be pushed forward by leadership however it was not something that employees felt was directly related to leadership emotional intelligence. Employees also noted that they would like to know that there is room for them to grow and advance in the organization. This directly relates the engagement survey questions regarding conversation about employees' progress. Again it can be argued that these conversations and the growth path of each employees is greatly controlled by their direct leader however again the employees did

not feel this was directly related to leadership emotional intelligence but rather managerial skills and time management. These issues closely align to Herzberg's motivators (1959). The founders of Company X have put a very strong emphasis on cultural areas like company events, snacks and fun workspaces while some more basic motivating factors have potentially been ignored.

The information gathered from the focus group suggests that the existence of a relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement is one that exists but does not necessarily have a direct correlation. Further it was evident from the focus group responses and the Q12 survey results that leadership plays a very large role in employee engagement and the areas of improvement found in Company X need to be specifically addressed by leadership. Many of these concerns and wants closely resemble Herzberg's motivators such as recognition, meaningfulness of work elements, advancement, increased responsibility and achievement. These motivators generate increased job satisfaction and higher productivity (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Recommendations to the Case Organization

1. Communication: It may be beneficial for Company X to implement a structured system for managers to regularly have regularly scheduled time to communicate with employees about their work and how they are progressing in their role. This would allow managers to focus on each employee and give praise and recognition for a job well done or to address any concerns that they make have about performance in order to make corrections early rather than at the point of serious performance issues.

2. Recognition: In addition to receiving praise for a job well done, employees want to know that their opinions are valued, that they have input into decisions, and that even when they make mistakes, they can count on the support and respect of their managers.

3. Leadership Development and Coaching: New leaders have a challenge to not only be leaders in their field but to inspire and encourage employees in a more complex business environment than ever. To give rise to higher levels of employee engagement, companies need to ensure that leaders are empowered to build a culture of employees who are motivated to achieve business goals (Wiley, 2010b). Company X should devote time and resources to making sure that they have leaders that are up to the challenge and in the roles that will lead to the engagement and business outcomes the founders' desire. There are many strategies for leadership development and further exploration can be taken to determine what approach would best suit the level of leaders the company has and wants.

4. Development of employee alignment to business vision and objectives: It is important for each and every employee to understand his or her contribution to the overall business goals. If employees don't know how their work affects the overall business it can be harder for them to be committed and engaged in their own work performance.

5. Involvement from founders: A charismatic leader serves as a beacon to employees, provides clarity when a situation is unclear, resolves deficiencies and motivates change by articulating a strategic vision

(Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). All of the above recommendations must be encouraged and championed by the founders of the organization. Without their unwavering support and conviction, no initiative will survive.

Limitations

Several limitations affected the study. First, the low level of senior management participation was a limiting factor of this study. Of the nine managers that were invited to complete the emotional intelligence survey there were five C-Suite executives. Of the five respondents to complete the emotional intelligence survey only two were these C-Suite executives. With the limited data points gathered it is not possible to make a definitely determination of the results only observations.

Another significant limitation and element to be considered for further exploration is that some of the teams studied have several levels of management layers, while others have less. For example the compilations team reports to a Manager who reports to Senior VP who them reports to the CEOs. The Engineering team reports to a CTO who reports to the CEOs. Due to this, determining which leader drives or is in any way involved in any individual part of the employees' Q12 survey responses is impossible to know. For the purpose of this study the employees direct manager was considered and studied for emotional intelligence but another leader at a higher ranking may potentially have more impact on the employee in some of these areas than their direct manager. There are also factors such as differences in age, years of management experience, personality traits and other variables that could play a role in the managers' effectiveness and their impact on their employees' level of engagement.

Third, the study relied on self-reported data, which are subject to many biases, such as socially desirable answering (answering to put oneself in a favorable light), hypothesis guessing (telling the researcher what they "want" to hear), or other personal distortions (Creswell, 2009). Researchers have identified two critical factors to examine when assessing the validity of self-reported data: cognitive issues and situational issues (e.g. (Biemer, 2004; Brener, Billy, & Grady, 2003; Cannell, Miller, & Oksenberg, 1981; Lessler, Tourangeau, & Salter, 1989)). Cognitive issues address whether the respondents understand the question and whether they have the knowledge or memory to answer it accurately. Survey designers carefully test language used on surveys and make sure respondents understand the terms. Since these two surveys were long-standing and widely used surveys the cognitive issues may not have been a limitation. Situational issues include the influence of the setting of the survey in this case an emailed survey to the respondents work email address. Certain questions may have a socially desirable response (which also may change based on the setting). Job-related interruptions could have influenced the quality of responses, as most leaders and employees completed questionnaires while at their place of employment.

Suggestion for Future Research

As business dynamics become more and more complex, strong leadership is necessary for companies to achieve and maintain long-term success. Faced with predicted labor shortages, companies must take a pro-active approach in the development and retention of leadership talent. There is a great opportunity for organizations to actively look at how leadership within their organization interacts with and influences employees and how they feel about their work and the organization as whole. There is also

opportunity to further understand how to develop such leadership talent, as a growing need for them is immanent.

While the purpose of this research study was aimed to determine if a relationship exists between leadership emotional intelligence and employee engagement using specific measurement tools, the same research question could be approached in several different ways using assorted measurement tools in order to uncover and further understand different layers of this relationship. To further understand the influence of leadership on employee engagement continued research could include multiple organizations and industries. Further research could also look at different factors that could be influenced by emotionally intelligent leaders like performance measurements or turnover rate. Employee engagement could also be related to other leadership factors or characteristic traits like self-assurance, decisiveness or communication skills.

Maximizing organizational effectiveness is an important concept for organizations and Organizational Development specialists that are engaged to work with these organizations. A company is only as strong as the quality and alignment of its talent. If leadership is tasked to create and foster this alignment, what factors of leadership lead to and are measures of organizational performance? Are there other measures of leadership that can more closely align and predict organizational effectiveness and success? Future research could expand upon the questions discussed here as well as many others and organizations will never stop striving to be better and more effective.

Summary

This study examined if a relationship exists between employee engagement and leadership emotional intelligence using self-assessment surveys in a Southern California

digital media company. Through the different aspects of the study, areas of consideration for Company X emerged to improve employee engagement and further understand the emotional intelligence and other driving factors affecting leadership. There wasn't sufficient data to make a determination as to the relationship between leader's emotional intelligence and their department's engagement scores; however through a focus group it was ascertained that increased emotional intelligence in leaders could positively affect engagement in the organization. There were other factors that were discovered that apply closely to Herzberg's motivation factors that can be explored by senior management in Company X, such as recognition, alignment of work components to company goals and strategy, advancement and responsibility.

References

Adkins, A. (2016). Employee engagement in U.S. stagnant in 2015. *Gallup Management Journal Online*, (January), 1–5. Retrieved from http://www.gallup.com/poll/188144/employee-engagement-stagnant-2015.aspx?version=print

Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International Journal of Productivity & Performance Management*, *63*(3), 308–323. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-01-2013-0008

Babcock-Roberson, M. E. (2010). Leadership , Work Engagement , and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors. *The Journal of Psychology*, *144*(3), 313–326.

Bar-On, R. (1997). *BarOn emotional quotient inventory : a measure of emotional intelligence*. North Tonawanda, NY: Multi-Health Systems Inc.

Biemer, P. P. (2004). *Measurement errors in survey*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Interscience.

Brener, N. D., Billy, J. O. G., & Grady, W. R. (2003). Assessment of factors affecting the validity of self-reported health-risk behavior among adolescents: Evidence from the scientific literature. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *33*(6), 436–457. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1054-139X(03)00052-1

Buchanan, L. (2004). The Things They Do for Love. *Harvard Business Review*, (December).

Cannell, C. F., Miller, P. V, & Oksenberg, L. (1981). Research on Interviewing Techniques. *Sociological Methodology*, *12*(1981), 389–437.

Corp, A. (2015). The greatness gap : The state of employee disengagement, 10.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. THousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Cullen, D. (1997). MAslow, Monkeys and Motivation Theory. *Organization*, *4*(3).

De Vita, E. (2007). Get Engaged. Retrieved from http://www.managementtoday.co.uk/engaged/article/645870

Drengler, K. A. (2001). the Design and Implementation of a Leadership Development Program for Greenheck Fan Corporation. *Thesis-University of Wisconsin-Stout*, (December).

Ehrhart, M. G., & Klein, K. J. (2001). Predicting followers' preferences for charismatic leadership: the influence of follower values and personality. *The Leadership*

Quarterly, *12*, 153–179.

Feldman, D. A. (1999). *The Handbook of Emotionally Intelligent LEadership: Inspiring others to Achieve Results*. Falls Church, VA: Leadership Performance Solutions.

Ferri-Reed, J. (2010). Get Your Employees Engaged. *Restaurant Hospitality*, *94*(9), 32–33.

Forbringer, L. R. (2002). Overview of the Gallup Organization's Q-12 survey. *O.E. Solutions*, 5. Retrieved from http://www.hr.com/portals/hrcom/events/ShanklandHandout_Gallup Q12 summary - what is engagement.pdf

Fulmer, I. S., Gerhart, B., & Scott, K. S. (2000). Are the 100 Best Better? An Empirical Investigation of the Relationship Between Being A "Great Place to Work" and Firm Performance. *Personnel Psychology*, (August), 965–993.

Garman, K. (2008). How to Tackle U . S . Employees ' Stagnating Engagement working to their full potential , and they ' re slowing. *Gallup Management Journal Online*, (June), 1–6.

George, J. M. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. *Human Relations*, *53*(8), 1027–1055. https://doi.org/0803973233

George, J. M. (2011). The wider context , costs , and benefits of work engagement engagement. *Eauropean Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *20*(July). https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2010.509924

Goffman, E. (1961). *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Goleman, D. (2013). The Focused Leader. *Harvard Business Review*, (December). Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2013/12/the-focused-leader

Goleman, D., Cherniss, C., & Gowing, M. K. (2001). Measurement of individual emotional competence. In *The emotionally intelligent workplace: How to select for, measure, and improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups, and organizations* (pp. 88–131). San Francisco, CA.

Harter, J. K., Ph, D., Schmidt, F. L., Ph, D., Killham, E. A., & Asplund, J. W. (2006). Gallup Meta-analysis.

Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Hayes, T. L. (2002). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: a meta-analysis. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(2), 268–279. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.2.268

Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The Motivation to Work*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Holbeche, L., & Springett, N. (2004). *In Search of Meaning at Work By With*. Roffey Park Institute.

Hsieh, C.-C., & Wang, D.-S. (2015). Does supervisor-perceived authentic leadership influence employee work engagement through employee-perceived authentic leadership and employee trust? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *26*(18), 2329–2348. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1025234

Hsieh, C.-C., & Wang, D. S. (2013). The Effect of Authentic Leadership on Employee Trust and Employee Engagement. *Social Behavior and Personality*, *41*(2), 613–624.

Hughes, M., Thompson, T. L., & Terrell, J. B. (2009). *Handbook for developing emotional and social intelligence : best practices, case studies, and strategies*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS OF PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT AND DISENGAGEMENT AT WORK, *33*(4), 692–724.

Kellett, J. B., Humphrey, R. H., & Sleeth, R. G. (2002). Empathy and complex task performance : two routes to leadership, *13*, 523–544.

Kraut, A. I. (1996). Organizational surveys : tools for assessment and change. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Langford, P. H. (2009). Measuring organisational climate and employee engagement: Evidence for a 7 Ps model of work practices and outcomes. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *61*(4), 185–198. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530802579481

Lawler III, E. E. (1986). *High-involvement management*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Lessler, J., Tourangeau, R., & Salter, W. (1989). Questionnaire design in the cognitive research laboratory. In *Vital and health statistics., Series 6,, Cognition and survey measurement ;, no. 1.; DHHS publication, no. (PHS) 89-1076.* (pp. 259–292). Hyattsville, MD: National Government Publications.

Luthans, F., & Peterson, S. J. (2002). Employee engagement and manager self-efficacy: implications for managerial effectiveness and development. *Journal of Management Development*, *21*(5), 376–387. https://doi.org/10.1108/02621710210426862

Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The Meaning of Employee Engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *1*(January), 3–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2007.0002.x

Macey, W. H., Schneider, B., & Barbera, K. M. (2009). *Employee Engagement: Tools for Analysis, Practice and Competitive Advantage*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. [US].

Malik, M. E., & Naeem, B. (2013). Towards understanding controversy on herzberg theory of motivation. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, *24*(8), 1031–1036. https://doi.org/10.5829/idosi.wasj.2013.24.08.2442

Markos, S., & Sridevi, S. (2010). Employee Engagement : The Key to Improving Performance. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *5*(12), 89–96. https://doi.org/E-ISSN 1833-8119

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., & Leiter, M. P. (1996). *MAslach Burnout Inventory* (3rd ed.). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). a Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, *50*(4), 370–396. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346

May, D. R., Gilson, R. L., & Harter, L. M. (2004). The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *77*(1), 11–37. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317904322915892

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2002). *Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test (MSCEIT)*. New York, NY: MHS.

Mayo, E. (1933). *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization*. Macmillan.

McGregor, D. (1960). *The Human Side of Enterprise*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Mester, C., Visser, D., Toodt, G., & Kellerman, R. (2003). Leadership Styles and its relation to employee attitudes and behaviour. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *29*(2), 72–82.

Nicola, S., Sanitaria, A., Teramo, L., & England, N. (2009). The Assessing Emotions Scale, (January). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-88370-0

Passmore, W. A., & Sherwood, J. J. (1978). *Sociotechnical systems : a sourcebook*. La Jolla, CA: University Associates.

Porter, L., Bigley, G., & Steers, R. M. (1996). *Motivation and Leadership at Work*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill/ Irwin.

Prati, L. M., Douglas, C., Ferris, G. R., Ammeter, A. P., & Buckley, M. R. (2003). Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Effectiveness, and Team Outcomes. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, *11*(1), 21–40. https://doi.org/10.1108/eb028961

Purcell, J. (2014). Disengaging from engagement. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *24*(3), 241–254. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12046

Robinson, D., Perryman, S., & Hayday, S. (2004). *The Drivers of Employee Engagement*. INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYMENT STUDIES.

Saks, A. M. (2006). *Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement*. *J. Manag. Psychol.* (Vol. 21). https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940610690169

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional Intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, *9*(3), 185–211.

Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., Gon Alez-ro, V. A., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). the Measurement of Engagement and Burnout: a Two Sample Confirmatory Factor Analytic Approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *3*, 71–92.

Schneider, B., Parkington, J. J., & Buxton, V. M. (1980). Employee and Customer Perceptions of Service in Banks. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *25*(June).

Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Hall, L. E., Haggerty, D. J., Cooper, J. T., Golden, C. J., & Dornheim, L. (1998). Development and validation of a measure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *25*(2), 167–177. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(98)00001-4

Shuck, B., & Herd, A. M. (2012). Employee Engagement and Leadership. *Human Resource Development Review*, *11*(2), 156–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484312438211

Sirota, D., Mischkind, L. A., & Meltzer, M. I. (2005). *The Entusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit By Giving Employee What They Want*. Indianapolic, IN: Wharton School Pub.

Smith, D., & Cantrell, S. M. (2011). The New Rules of Engagement: Treating your Workforce as a Workforce of One. *Strategic HR Review*, *10*(3), 5–11.

Sousa, M., & Dierendonck, D. Van. (2017). Servant Leadership and the Effect of the Interaction Between Humility , Action , and Hierarchical Power on Follower Engagement, 13–25. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2725-y

Teece, D., & Leih, S. (2016). Uncertainty, Innovation, and Dynamic Capabilities: *California Management Review*, *58*(4), 5–13.

Trist, E. L., Hugh, M., & Trist, B. (1990). *The social engagement of social science*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Wallace, L., & Trinka, J. (2009). Leadership and employee engagement. *Public Management*, *91*(5), 10–13.

Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S., & Peterson, S. J. (2008). Authentic Leadership : Development and Validation of a Theory-Based Measure †, *34*(1), 89–126. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206307308913

Wiley, W. J. (2010a). *Strategic Employee Surveys Evidence-Based Guidelines for driving organizational success*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. [US].

Wiley, W. J. (2010b). The Impact of Effective Leadership on Employee Engagment. *Fortune*, *145*(11), 36–46. https://doi.org/10.1002/ert

Wolff, S. B., Pescosolido, A. T., & Urch, V. (2002). Emotional intelligence as the basis of leadership emergence in self-managing teams $, *13*, 505–522.

Wollard, K. K., & Shuck, B. (2011). Antecedents to Employee Engagement. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *13*(4), 429–446. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422311431220

Wong, C. S., & Law, K. S. (2002). *The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude: An exploratory study*. *Leadership Quarterly* (Vol. 13). https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00099-1

Appendix A

Surveys

The Q12 Index

Below are 12 questions, please read each question carefully and choose the answer that corresponds to how much you agree with the statement. There are no right or wrong answers; this questionnaire is simply to seek your opinion on our work environment. All your responses will be kept confidential. The answer options for each question were Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1) and N/A.

1) Do you know what is expected of you at work?

2) Do you have the materials and equipment to do your work right?

3) At work, do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?

4) In the last seven days, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?

5) Does your supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about you as a person?

6) Is there someone at work who encourages your development?

7) At work, do your opinions seem to count?

8) Does the mission/purpose of your company make you feel your job is important?

9) Are your associates (fellow employees) committed to doing quality work?

10) Do you have a best friend at work?

11) In the last six months, has someone at work talked to you about your progress?

12) In the last year, have you had opportunities to learn and grow?

The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

Each of the following 33 items asks you about your emotions or reactions associated with emotions. After deciding whether a statement is generally true for you, use the 5 point scale to respond to the statement. There are no right or wrong answers. Please give the response that best describes you. All your responses will be kept confidential. The answer options for each question were Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

1) I know when to speak about my personal problems to others

2) When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them

3) I expect that I will do well on most things I try

4) Other people find it easy to confide in me

5) I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people*

6) Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important

7) When my mood changes, I see new possibilities

8) Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living

9) I am aware of my emotions as I experience them

10) I expect good things to happen

11) I like to share my emotions with others

12) When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last

13) I arrange events others enjoy

14) I seek out activities that make me happy

15) I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others

16) I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others

17) When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me

18) By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing

19) I know why my emotions change

20) When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas

21) I have control over my emotions

22) I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them

23) I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on

24) I compliment others when they have done something well

25) I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send

26) When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself

27) When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas

28) When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail *

29) I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them

30) I help other people feel better when they are down

31) I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles

32) I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice

33) It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do*

Focus Group

Emotional Intelligence- Emotional Intelligence is defined as the ability to: Recognize, understand and manage our own emotions. Recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others. This means being aware that emotions can drive our behavior and impact people (positively and negatively), and learning how to manage those emotions – both our own and others – especially when we are under pressure.

Questions

1) Do you think that increased emotional intelligence in your direct and/or indirect leaders would increase your level of engagement at work? Examples?

2) Are there other factors that would play a larger role increasing your level of engagement at work? If yes what might they be?