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UNCERTAIN TIMES: EMOTIONAL-SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Over the past year, our World has experienced vast and uncertain change due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. With this rise in uncertainty, all areas of our diverse society have felt emotional stress which has impacted how manage the daily stressors of life in a pandemic are managed. Research shows that increasing Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI) improves an individual's ability to adapt and adjust during uncertain and difficult times. One area that has been impacted significantly is work environments and cultures. Organizational and team leadership plays a significant role in the emotional climate in the workplace. Emotionally-Socially Intelligent leaders who apply relational leadership practices influence their team and organizational culture and help to create stability and confidence during uncertain times. Growing and developing leaders with increased levels of Emotional-Social Intelligence is essential for long-term success in life and in the workplace. This manuscript is an exploration of Emotional-Social Intelligence and Relational Leadership and identifies some of the basic constructs that are important in the growth and development of leadership in organizations.

Keywords: uncertainty, COVID-19, emotional Intelligence, emotional-social Intelligence, relational leadership, leadership, emotional intelligence and leadership, change theory, resiliency, leading by example.

INTRODUCTION

Our world continues to become increasingly uncertain and the problems we are facing are progressively complex and intertwined (Drysdale & Gurr, 2017). Often times, the solutions we attempt to use to fix global, societal, workplace, and organizational problems cause an unforeseen change or problem

somewhere else in their respective systems. The onset of the COVID-19 crisis has had global impacts that are so complex that our national and international experts and politicians are stuck with “best guess” responses. As a result, our business and organizational leaders and teams are then stuck with “best guess” responses, as well. The complexity of this global pandemic is so unique that a clear “blueprint” on how to respond does not exist. Like so many of our modern societal and workplace problems, COVID-19 is what Rittel and Webber, 1973, would describe as, “Wicked!”

Wicked Problems

In their 1973 article, Rittel and Webber theorized and described “Wicked” problems as problems that: (1.) are so complex that they are impossible to clearly define; (2.) because of their complex nature, have no clearly definable solution; (3.) reach across a wide-range of societal and organizational sectors that elicit a wide varieties of often times conflicting opinions of what is bad or good or true or false in defining the solution; (4.) are characterized as difficult to accurately measure the effectiveness of one solution over another; (5.) possess significant rippling consequences regardless of solution; (6.) do not come with a previously prescribe set of problem solving blueprints with which to build a solution off of; (7.) are unique or unprecedented in a historical perspective; (8.) are intertwined or interconnected with other existing problems which adds to their complexity; (9.) involve multiple different stakeholders that often assert numerous and competing solutions; and finally (10.) allow no margin of error or leeway for the person or persons making the decisions, because the risk and impact are so great. Their assertion was that “Wicked” problems are not solvable through traditional and scientific means of problems-solving and planning.

Emotional-Social Intelligence and Uncertainty

The COVID-19 crisis is yet another example of the demands and pressures facing contemporary organizations. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) explained that, “leaders everywhere confront a set of irrevocable imperatives, changing realities driven by profound social, political, economic, and technological changes. Our world ... is in the midst of transformational change, calling for new leadership” (p. 246). During this chaos, it is most important for organizational leaders to stay attuned to their own emotional reactions to pressures, as well as how those environmental pressures affect their constituents. Therefore, research has focused on the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in relation to leadership effectiveness (Dabke, D., 2016; Goleman et al., 2002; Stein & Book, 2000; Higgs, 2002). The concepts and theoretical frameworks associated with EI have gained popularity and support, as well as academic inquiry in the United States and around the world. Researchers generally agree that EI addresses one’s ability to identify, interpret, and control his or her own emotions, as well as stay in tune with, understand, and relate to the emotions of groups and individuals (Dabke, D., 2016; Goleman et al., 2002; Bar-On, 2002; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Additionally, EI stems from one’s ability to utilize emotional information to appropriately solve problems and make environmentally savvy decisions. This article explores how emotional intelligence and relational leadership practices can help leaders and organizations address the uncertain and complex nature of problems-solving and decision making in the midst of a global pandemic and its rippling effect on other societal systems. The assertion of this article is that Emotional-Social Intelligence and Relational Leadership practices can serve as a platform for more coping with daily demands and pressures associated with COVID-19 and help team and

organizational leaders more accurately problems-solve and making decisions on how to react to uncertainty and change.

LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

A central theme discussed over and over in this present research study is “change” and its impact on society and organizational and leadership success, as well as a number of other social constructs. Change leadership is a research area that developed out of the necessity for determining leadership competencies that manage and promote change throughout an organization (Kotter, 1995; Higgs, 2002). To stay current with environmental conditions, researchers have focused on leaders’ abilities to stay flexible and adaptable in ways that meet both the personal and professional needs of their constituents, as well as help them balance their lives on and off the job (Dabke, D., 2016; Komives, Lucas, & McMahan, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004). Komives, Lucas, and McMahan (1998) explained that the rapid, confusing and unpredictable nature of change in our world requires a leadership paradigm shift from a more egocentric style to an inclusive style. They describe this as a relational leadership style that nurtures a problem-solving atmosphere within the organization and a willingness to adapt and evolve with changing social and organizational situations. Additionally, they added that the rapidly changing world has evolved from an industrial perspective of leadership to a post-industrial perspective of leadership. The industrial perspective of the leadership environment was characterized as more controlled, stable, balanced, and permanent. In contrast, the post-industrial perspective was characterized as chaotic, with increased change and risk, a higher level of disequilibrium or confusion, and temporary (p. 48). Cherniss (2000) explained, “as the pace of change increases and the world of work makes ever greater demands on a person’s cognitive, emotional, and physical resources, this particular set of abilities will become increasingly important” (p. 10). In Kouzes and Posner’s third edition of *The Leadership Challenge* (2002), they assert that in light of rapid change, the “leadership content” has not changed, but the “leadership context” has changed dramatically in recent years. They further explain that post-September 11, 2001, leaders have been called upon to lead in chaotic and uncertain times, which increases the need to develop leaders who:

1. are exemplary coaches and team players that are more collaborative and value people first over profit (p. XIX)
2. can harness the value of a connected planet while appreciating the importance of face-to-face interaction
3. can generate and encourage a human network or “social capital – the collective value of people who know each other and what they’ll do for each other” (p. XX)
4. have a global understanding and show respect for people from many different cultural backgrounds
5. can balance our “hurry up culture” with slowing down long enough to cultivate and build-in “quality time” for indispensable human relationships (p. XXI)
6. are willing to create commitment by delivering “on the promise of offering exciting and meaningful work and treating even the most temporary of workers with dignity and respect” (p. XXII) and
7. can create an environment that “provides a climate for people to bring their souls to work, not just their heads and hands,” and one that offers more hope in an increasingly cynical world (XXIII).

In review of Kouzes and Posner’s description of what it takes to be a leader in society today, it is easy to see that the modern definition of leadership is more than influencing others toward accomplishing organizational goals; it is about actively participating and developing healthy relationships that create a balance between personal and organizational success. These established relationships will help the organization, the leader, and the constituents make it through even the most challenging and chaotic of times. Leaders who are most successful at building relationships are referred to as “Relational Leaders and the next few paragraphs will illustrate the relational leadership construct and fully describe a prominent relational leadership model created by Kouzes and Posner (1997).

EMOTIONAL-SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE DEFINATION AND MODEL

Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI) is a “cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate with them, and cope with daily demands” (Bar-On, 2005, p. 3). Table 1 lists the components and subscales of the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory, followed by a brief description of each component and subscale.

Table 1

Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory Components and Subscales

Subscales	Components
Intrapersonal	1. Emotional Self-Awareness
	2. Assertiveness
	3. Self-Regard
	4. Self-Actualization
	5. Independence
Interpersonal	6. Empathy
	7. Interpersonal Relationship
	8. Social Responsibility
Adaptability	9. Problem Solving
	10. Reality Testing
	11. Flexibility
Stress Management	12. Stress Tolerance
	13. Impulse Control
General Mood	14. Happiness
	15. Optimism

Bar-On’s (EQ-i): The Intrapersonal Subscale Components

Emotional Self-Awareness (ES) - “Ability to recognize one’s feelings.” ES is a person’s ability to (a) be aware of his or her feelings and emotions, (b) differentiate between them, (c) identify what one feels and why, and (d) to be aware of what caused the feelings or emotions (Bar-On, 2002, p. 15).

Assertiveness (AS) - “Ability to express feelings, beliefs, and thoughts and defend one’s rights in a nondestructive manner.” There are three main components of AS: (a) the ability to express feelings, (b) the ability to openly express thoughts and beliefs, and (c) the ability to support and stand up for personal rights. Assertiveness is the balance between shyness and overbearing, or the ability to express beliefs without being aggressive or insulting (Bar-On, 2002, p. 15).

Self-Regard (SR) - “Ability to respect and accept oneself as basically good.” Relates to a person’s ability to feel fulfilled and satisfied with oneself regardless of perceived strengths and weaknesses. SR relates greatly to a person’s levels of self-assuredness, self-esteem, and self-respect (Bar-On, 2002, p. 15).

Self-Actualization (SA) - “Ability to realize one’s potential capabilities.” Involving one in pursuits that lead to a rich, meaningful, and full life. SA is one’s ability to strive toward continual improvement of one’s abilities, capabilities, and talents (Bar-On, 2002, p. 16).

Independence (IN) - “Ability to be self-directed and self-controlled in one’s thinking actions and to be free of emotional dependency.” Independent people are self-reliant planners and decision makers who are able to work autonomously without overly relying on the opinion, protection and support of others (Bar-On, 2002, p. 16).

BAR-ON (EQ-i): THE INTERPERSONAL SUBSCALE COMPONENTS

Empathy (EM) - “Ability to be aware of, to understand, and to appreciate the feelings of others.” EM is a person’s ability to be on the same wavelength with people and to diagnose, and truly understand how and why they feel the way they do (Bar-On, 2002, p. 16).

Interpersonal Relationships (IR) - “Ability to establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships that are characterized by intimacy and by giving and receiving affection.” One’s ability to establish and maintain positive and satisfying relationships with others (Bar-On, 2002, p. 16).

Social Responsibility (RE) - “Ability to demonstrate oneself as a cooperative, contributing, and constructive member of one’s social group.” RE relates to taking responsibility for doing good things for and with people. Ability to accept people in one’s group and “use their talents for the good of the collective” (Bar-On, 2002, p. 16).

BAR-ON (EQ-i): THE ADAPTABILITY SUBSCALE COMPONENTS

Problem Solving (PS) - “Ability to identify and define problems as well as to generate and implement potentially effective solutions.” PS relates to one’s ability to confront problems rather than avoid them (Bar-On, 2002, p. 17).

Reality Testing (RT) - “Ability to assess the correspondence between what is experienced and what objectively exists.” RT is one’s ability to gather objective evidence about a current situation, accurately assess the evidence and determine ways to cope with the situation (Bar-On, 2002, p. 17).

Flexibility (FL) - “Ability to adjust one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to changing situations and conditions.” FL refers to one’s “overall ability to adapt to unfamiliar, unpredictable, and dynamic circumstances” (Bar-On, 2002, p. 17).

BAR-ON (EQ-i): THE STRESS MANAGEMENT SUBSCALE COMPONENTS

Stress Tolerance (ST) - “Ability to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without ‘falling apart’ by actively and positively coping with stress.” ST is having the capacity to choose how

you react to stress, maintain a level of optimism that stress won't last, and to feel that one can control or influence the stressful situation (Bar-On, 2002, p. 17).

Impulse Control (IC) - "Ability to resist or delay an impulse, drive, or temptation to act." IC is the capacity to accept one's aggressive impulses, maintain composure, and control aggressive and irresponsible behaviors (Bar-On, 2002, p. 18).

BAR-ON (EQ-i): THE GENERAL MOOD SUBSCALE COMPONENTS

Happiness (HA) - "Ability to feel satisfied with one's life, to enjoy oneself and others, and to have fun." HA relates to one's ability to feel generally cheerful and enthusiastic about life (Bar-On, 2002, p. 18).

Optimism (OP) - "Ability to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude, even in the face of adversity." OP is one's ability to approach life in a hopeful and positive manner (Bar-On, 2002, p. 18).

KOUZES AND POSNER FIVE PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP

Kouzes and Posner, 2002, in their research on effective leadership, have identified five key leadership practices of exemplary leadership: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. Below is a brief description of each leadership practice.

Modeling the way- A leader's ability to role model a set of principles and values, as well as encourage individuals within the organization to accept those principles and values as their own. Additionally, this subscale relates to a leader's ability to plan incremental accomplishments that set the stage for future success and goal attainment (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, pp. 14).

Inspiring a shared vision- A leader's ability to envision an uplifting and better future for him/herself and his/her organization. Additionally, a leader's capacity to encourage, motivate, and generate excitement in others about a united goal or future (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 15-16).

Challenging the process - A leader's ability to search and identify opportunities for change and to experiment and take risks to bring about change. Leaders also create environments that both generate and support innovation within themselves and their organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, pp. 16-17).

Enabling others to act- A leader's ability to generate an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect within the organization. It is also a leader's capability to create a team environment that feels like a collaborative family where members feel like they own a part of the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 18-19).

Encouraging the heart- A leader's ability to recognize individual contributions and demonstrate pride in team accomplishments. This is characterized by concise directions, considerable encouragement, personalized attention, and constructive feedback (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 19-20).

RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership is about creating reciprocal relationships between the leader and followers, subordinates, or constituents that in turn creates the foundation for organizational and group success (Bass, 1985; Chemers, 1993; Komives, Lucas, & McMahan, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Potter, Rosenbach & Pittman, 2001). Yukl (1998) described a relationship between leaders and constituents that promoted a shared view of leadership and empowered members within a team or organization, regardless of hierarchical status, to demonstrate leadership behaviors when pragmatic situations dictate the need (p. 3). The Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership Model has been noted for its contributions to the Relational Leadership paradigm (Komives, Lucas, & McMahan, 1998; Welch, 2014).

Sashkin and Rosenbach (2001) explained that there has been a paradigm shift in leadership theory and practice in recent decades. They purported that many of the contemporary models of leadership, including Kouzes and Posner's, are rooted in Burns' (1978) comparison between transformational and transactional views of leadership. The concept of transformational leadership was founded on the increased importance placed on followers within the leadership paradigm. Burns (1978) explained that leaders employ both traditional "transactional" practices such as, creating goals, delegating tasks, and managing goal attainment, as well as "transformational" practices that empower, educate, encourage, and eventually transform constituents (p. 39). Burns' view of transactional and transformational leadership placed the two concepts on a continuum, whereby a leader's style fit some point along the continuum between transactional and transformational. Bass (1985) later identified the two leadership approaches as two separate leadership dimensions and he created the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) The MLQ measured both transactional leadership, as well as transformational leadership. The transactional aspect of the MLQ measured three subcategories: laissez-faire, contingent reward and management by exception. The transformational leadership aspects measured by the MLQ included charisma, inspiration, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Sashkin and Rosenbach (2001) explained that even though Bass's theory of transformational leadership helped to expand Burns' works, it lacked both the study of "personal" leadership characteristics and the impact of culture within an organization. Kouzes and Posner (1987) followed the works of Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) and created a model of transformational leadership that considered personal leadership behaviors used during times of leadership effectiveness and organizational success.

Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders

Kouzes and Posner (1987) expanded Bass's theory by conducting research in the area of "personal best" leadership experiences. They developed a "Personal-Best Leadership Experience" questionnaire, asked thousands of managers to complete the questionnaire, and conducted many follow-up interviews to gather additional information. The personal-best questionnaire asked managers to pick a project, program, or event that they characterized as their "personal-best" leadership experience. After analyzing the data collected from questionnaires and interviews, Kouzes and Posner found that despite the variety in situations and types of leadership experiences, similar patterns were identified related to actions taken by the leaders during the experience. Through the analysis process they identified "Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership" that contributed to "getting extraordinary things done in organizations": (a) Modeling the Way, (b) Inspiring a Shared Vision, (c) Challenging the Process, (d) Enabling Others to Act, and (e) Encouraging the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 13). In their third edition of *The Leadership Challenge* (2002) Kouzes and Posner outlined two "commitments" of leadership for each of the five leadership practices.

The first practice is “*Modeling the Way*,” in which leaders role model the behaviors they want to see in their constituents. Through action and involvement, leaders earn the right to lead and the respect of their followers. Kouzes and Posner (2002) explained that there are two courses of action, or commitments, that a leader needs to consider when improving the practice of *Modeling the Way*. First, leaders need to reflect on and clarify personal values, which will in turn build confidence in and guide personal decisions and thoughts. The second commitment is setting the example, and it involves generating shared values within the organization and basing organization decisions and practices around those established values. In many ways, *Modeling the Way* is about fostering common practices within the organization and then encouraging, motivating, and role-modeling those practices throughout the organization (pp. 43-105).

The second leadership practice is “Inspiring a Shared Vision.” This is when the leader imagines what the organization could be and then creates a vision that is attainable and attractive. The leader connects this new vision to the hopes and dreams of his or her constituents to generate passion and enthusiasm for realizing the vision. To do this, a leader must first commit to the charge of exploring exciting and courageous new opportunities assertively. Second, the leader must be committed to breathing life into the vision by encouraging shared aspiration. This commitment is accomplished by relationship building, and it is about aligning a shared vision that promotes both organizational and constituent success (pp. 109-170).

The third leadership practice is “*Challenging the Process*.” Exemplary leaders are pioneers who know that innovation and change involves “experimentation, risk, and failure” (p. 17). A leader understands that change can feel uncomfortable and then builds constituent confidence by pursuing change incrementally and by accomplishing small victories. In this practice, leaders are proactive, not reactive, and they are committed to seeking out innovation that will change and help the organization grow and improve. The second commitment in this area has to do with the leader’s ability to take calculated risks and to experiment with ideas and organizational practices to improve and grow (pp. 173-237).

The fourth leadership practice involves “*Enabling Others to Act*.” Successful leaders understand that leadership is a team effort and are not afraid to share the leadership process. Leaders foster collaboration and build trust by supporting and encouraging their constituents to do good work. Leaders who are able to build trusting and collaborative relationships find that their constituents are higher performers and even exceed their own personal expectations (p. 19). The first commitment in this category is a leader’s commitment to creating and encouraging cooperative goals and building trust within the organization. A leader can accomplish this by generating positive and healthy relationships in the work environment. The second commitment is relative to the leader’s willingness to empower and support opportunities for constituents to share leadership and make discretionary decisions. In *Enabling Others to Act*, leaders demonstrate their trust and commitment to the growth and development of their constituents (pp. 241-311).

Finally, exemplary leaders “*Encourage the Hearts*” of their constituents to help them carry on in the face of challenge, frustration, and discouragement. Leaders know that “celebrations and rituals, when done with authenticity and from the heart, build a strong sense of collective identity and community spirit that can carry a group through extraordinarily tough times” (p. 21). Encouraging leaders have high expectations of themselves, as well as their constituents and they are committed to rewarding and providing the support to help constituents meet expectation. Leaders provide clear direction, encouragement, and feedback and stay actively aware of the motivational climate within the

organization. Additionally, encouraging leaders create a spirit of community by scheduling and planning opportunities for celebrating organizational values and accomplishments. These leaders generate communal relationships by staying positive, being compassionate and caring, and generating an atmosphere of fun and excitement about the future direction of the organization (pp. 315-380).

Underlying Kouzes and Posner's Model of Exemplary Leadership Practices is the leader's ability to generate, encourage, and promote healthy, reciprocal, and collaborative relationships. This interpersonal or relational aspect of leadership has recently been connected to the emotional intelligence constructs that have gained popularity in recent decades (Dabke, D., 2016; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Bar-On, 2002; Goleman, 1995). Higgs (2002) explained that leadership has evolved from a personality or trait based leadership paradigm, through a behavioral and contextual (or situational) period and more recently the transformational/transactional models. He also purported that "the transformational model [of leadership] has come close to identifying the boundaries of leadership thinking in today's organizations" (p. 203). Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) also demonstrated that Kouzes and Posner's model, which typifies transformational/transactional models, focuses more thinking on the emotional aspects of leadership. Additionally, Dulewicz and Higgs explained that a leader's ability to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships that embrace and enhance the personal feelings and well-being of constituents requires emotional intelligence. Before reviewing literature that has studied and compared the connection between relational leadership models and emotional intelligence, it is important to review general aspects of emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence

Concepts of emotional intelligence have gained popularity in recent decades; however, the characteristics and concepts associated with EI are rooted in research conducted throughout the twentieth century. Earlier works identified competencies, other than general intelligence, that contributed to life success. Thorndike & Stein (1937) reported the concept of "social intelligence." Wechsler (1940) fought for the addition of "non-intellective aspects" as a measure of general intelligence. Likewise, Leeper (1948) purported that "emotional thought" should be considered when reviewing the concept of "logical thought." However, it was not until the 1980s that the current concepts related to emotional intelligence started to emerge.

Gardner (1983) shared a theory of multiple intelligences that encouraged researchers to step outside the notion that human beings are confined to a singular or plural view of intelligence. Gardner also explained that there were other areas of human intelligence that were traditionally ignored or overlooked by academic institutions, as well as society. Gardner (1983) explained that there are two types of intelligence that have held the focus and emphasis of traditional academic thought in institutions of higher education: language intelligence and logical-mathematical intelligence. Nevertheless, Gardner purported that there were five more intelligences that were equally important to collective human intelligence: musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, and intrapersonal intelligence (p. 8). Within these multiple levels of human development or intelligences, a movement evolved that expanded two particular areas of Gardner's approach (i.e., interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences). According to Bar-On (2002), several researchers expanded Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences into six primary components of emotional intelligence: emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, empathy, interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance, and impulse control (p. 2). Several definitions of EI emerged through the advanced

study of these six components. Recently, Bar-On (2005) explained that the multiplicity of definitions that came out of Gardner's approach has plagued this line of research with confusion, controversy, and angst surrounding the best approach, definition, and measure of emotional and social intelligence. Since that point of advancement and divergence, from Gardner's view of the construct, some researchers, (Goleman, 1998; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017; Mayer & Salovey, 1997), for example named this construct "Emotional Intelligence" while Bar-On, 1997 chose to name it Emotional and Social Intelligence, and recently Bar-On (2005) abbreviated the concept to Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI). Likewise for the purpose of this study and for the sake of the simplification, the researcher encourages the reader to interpret, emotional intelligence, emotional and social intelligence, and emotional-social intelligence as the same concept. The reader should also note that the purpose of this study was not to dispute or support one definition or theory over another.

DEFINATIONS AND MEASURES OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Dr. Reuven Bar-On followed the works of Thorndike (1920) in the area of "social intelligence," Wechsler's (1958) concept of "general intelligence," and Gardner's (1993) "multiple intelligences" and he defined EI as "an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (Bar-On, 2002, p. 14). Bar-On (1997) described his theory of emotional intelligence as "Emotional and Social Intelligence" and more recently (2005) abbreviated the name of the construct to Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI). In the 1980s, Bar-On originally developed an instrument designed to measure major components of emotional and social performance that led to psychological health, and he eventually published the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) in 1997 (Bar-On, 2000, p. 364). The EQ-i renders a total emotional quotient (EQ) score, and the following five composite subscale scores and fifteen component scores:

- (1) Intrapersonal EQ (Self-Regard, Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Independence, and Self-Actualization), (2) Interpersonal EQ (Empathy, Social Responsibility, and Interpersonal Relationship), (3) Stress Management EQ (Stress Tolerance and Impulse Control), (4) Adaptability EQ (Reality Testing, Flexibility, and Problem Solving), and (5) General Mood EQ (Optimism and Happiness).
- (2) Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000b) call Bar-On's model a mixed model, and other researchers describe the model as "trait emotional intelligence."

Goleman (1998) defined emotional competence as a "learned capability based on emotional intelligence that result in outstanding performance at work" (p. 24). Through research and analysis, Goleman developed a model of EI that included twenty-five competencies that were divided into five clusters: (1) the self-awareness cluster that included emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence; (2) the self-regulation cluster that included self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, and innovation; (3) that motivation cluster that included achievement drive, commitment, initiative, and optimism; (4) the social competence cluster that included understanding others, developing others, service orientation, leveraging diversity, and political awareness; and (5) the social skills cluster that included influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation, and team capabilities (Goleman, 2019). Using Goleman's definition and framework as a guide, Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee (1999) developed the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) to measure the corresponding skills mentioned above. The ECI was designed to collect data from both the target individual, through a self-assessment, and from people in

that target individual's social or work environment (Salovey, Mayer, Caruso, & Lopes, 2003). This method is referred to as 360-degree assessment in which comparisons are made between the individual assessment and the assessment of others (Chappelow, 1998; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2001; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017).

The assessment of emotional intelligence is continuing to expand in both definition and research. Currently, there are more self-assessment, trait emotional intelligence instruments than there are ability measures of EI and there exists considerable controversy regarding which measure is most reliable and valid (Antonakis, 2003; Judge, Colbert, & Ilies, 2004; and Salovey, Mayer, Caruso, & Lopes, 2003). Regardless of some researchers' views of trait-based emotional intelligence, several studies have yielded interesting results through the application of the more personality-based emotional competency models.

Leadership and Emotional Intelligence

This portion of the literature review examines the idea that effective leadership is paramount in meeting the challenges and changes facing modern times. To embrace the rapid change that exists in society today, studies in the area of leadership effectiveness demonstrate the importance of collaborative, caring, empathetic, people-centered, and motivational leadership skills (Higgs, 2002; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001). Transformational leadership models, i.e., relational leadership, are considered effective models for change environments, primarily because of the leader's ability to create and manage strong relationships that hold the organization together in times of uncertainty (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998; Yukl, 1999; Higgs, 2002; Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & Spangler, 2004). When discussing change and the benefits of transformational leadership, Goleman (1998) explained that transformational leadership "goes beyond management as usual; such leaders are able to rouse people through sheer power of their own enthusiasm" (p. 196). Goleman went on to explain that effective leaders do not bark out orders or direct their constituents; they inspire. Similarly, emotional intelligence has been widely defined as one's ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as to understand and empathize with the emotions of others (Cherniss, 2000; Bar-On, 2002; Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

Researchers agree that there is considerable overlap between relational leadership and EI competencies in both content analysis and empirical evidence (Higgs, 2002; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003). Goleman (1998) made connections between emotional intelligence and leadership practices in which he boldly claimed that highly emotionally intelligent leaders and work teams contribute significantly to the overall success and "bottom line" of the organization (p. 315). Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) explained that great leaders inspire their constituents best through emotions, and that regardless of task, goal, or assignment, it is the leader's primal duty to drive the emotional climate of the team or organization in a positive and productive direction. Likewise, Goleman, et al. purported that if a leader fails to create a positive emotional climate within their organization, "nothing they do will work as well as it could or should" (p. 3). Positive emotional leadership is a necessity in times of chaos and change because constituents closely examine and then emulate or "mirror" their leaders' behaviors and actions (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). In other words, constituents, either consciously or unconsciously, react to a leader's verbal and non-verbal responses to a specific crisis or challenge (Caruso & Salovey, 2004). Likewise, when a leader effectively manages his or her own reactions and maintains a positive emotional state, organizational members are more likely to follow the leader's emotional response (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Researchers have drawn parallels between EI and leadership and have identified specific challenges wherein emotional understanding and control can provide assistance

and guidance.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

Emotional intelligence skills provide developing leaders with an increased understanding of the impacts of emotions within a team or organization. Caruso and Salovey (2004) demonstrated the advantages EI has with respect to six common challenges in leadership: (a) building effective teams, (b) planning and deciding effectively, (c) motivating people, (d) communicating a vision, (e) promoting change, and (f) creating effective interpersonal relationships (p. 196). Throughout Caruso and Salovey's descriptions of the six challenges, they cited a connection with Kouzes and Posner's Effective Leadership Practices Model.

The first challenge was building an effective team. Caruso and Salovey discussed the need for clarifying personal values before attempting to formulate team values. Like Kouzes and Posner's model, Caruso and Salovey explained that leaders must identify their own values before clarifying team values. A significant level of trust is important for leading teams, and a leader must generate positive opportunities for meaningful team communication and interaction. Additionally, a leader must have significant self-confidence to give team members credit for accomplishments and not blame them when shortfalls occur (p. 197).

Caruso and Salovey went on to explain that even though planning and decision-making can seem cognitive and practical, emotions contribute significantly to these activities. Emotionally intelligent leaders possess the ability to remain flexible and open to other alternatives. Additionally, EI leaders take into account how their team members may react to a decision, and then attempt to make decisions that will fit in with the shared values of the team. In the end, this type of flexible decision-making will contribute to the successful implementation of the decision (p. 201).

Every leader at one point or another is faced with the question of how to motivate a team. Caruso and Salovey cited Kouzes and Posner's (2002) "encouraging the heart" model as a significant contribution to motivating a team. When a leader expresses appreciation for the accomplishments of team members, they are in many ways providing that added incentive for future successes. Caruso and Salovey also explained that it is important for a leader to celebrate team member successes without promoting or encouraging envy throughout the team (p. 202).

Furthermore, communication is among the most difficult challenges to leadership. EI leaders base their communication efforts "on delivering a message [they] want to deliver and delivering it in such a way that is heard and understood by others" (p. 205). Communication also entails a leader's vision for the future. Caruso and Salovey emphasized that because an EI leader has the ability to understand and empathize with group feelings, he or she will be successful in encouraging team members to buy into their vision of the future.

In light of rapid worldly changes, a leader's ability to facilitate and encourage change has been a hot topic recently (e.g., Kotter, 1995; Higgs & Rowland, 2001). Caruso and Salovey (2004) explained that EI leaders challenge the status quo through innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking. They further explained that most people are resistant to change; however, EI leaders identify, empathize with, and

acknowledge resistance and then communicate the need for change and clarify a road map toward successful implementation (p. 208).

Building effective interpersonal relationships is the foundation of the emotionally intelligent leader. Caruso and Salovey (2004) explained that effective interpersonal relationships include both “positive feedback and sincere criticism” (p. 209). EI leaders are able to generate relationships that are healthy and mature enough for members to express honest and tactful reactions with other members. Caruso and Salovey explained that “emotions contain data and [those] data are primarily communicating information about people and relationships. Being accurately aware of emotions and their meaning provides the emotional intelligent manager with a solid base of understanding of themselves and of others” (p. 210). Along with understanding and interpreting emotions, it is equally important for leaders to understand the impact of emotions on individual and organizational performance.

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) shared two leadership styles that relate both positively and negatively to emotional intelligence and contribute significantly to productivity and work satisfaction: dissonance and resonance. Goleman, et al. explained that a dissonant leadership style demonstrated characteristics that are not emotionally effective or supportive within an organization. A dissonant leader is one who offends constituents and creates an unhealthy and unproductive emotional environment within the organization. They described dissonant leaders as leaders who are so out of touch with the feelings of their constituents that they create a negative environment, which in turn moves the organization’s attitude toward that leader on a “downward spiral from frustration to resentment, rancor to rage” (p. 19) Dissonant leaders were also described as authoritarian, untrustworthy, uncooperative with constituents, unharmonious with the group, abusive, and humiliating.

Resonant leaders, on the other hand, project an emotional atmosphere that is comfortable, cooperative, supportive, and enthusiastic. They inspire shared values and “rally people around a worthy goal” (p. 25). Goleman, et al. described four leadership styles that build resonance within the organization: (a) visionary – “moves people towards a shared dream,” (b) coaching – connects personal desires with organizational goals, (c) affiliative – “creates harmony by connecting people to each other,” and (d) democratic – values input and builds commitment through participation (p. 55).

As mentioned earlier within the area of modeling, the concept of *mirroring* in relationship to resonance and dissonance within the organization is very important when a leader reacts to both positive and negative situations. When a leader reacts to a negative situation in a concerned but positive fashion, his or her behavior becomes a model which the rest of the organization can follow. Goleman, et al. explained that leaders within organizations are observed for acceptance or rejection to thoughts, projects, or ideas. If a leader shows any nonverbal or verbal gestures, constituents quickly notice and react to those gestures. Emotionally intelligent leaders realize and understand how their emotional reaction can guide and steer the emotions of the entire organization. This concept of resonant and dissonant leadership styles is one example of the power of the emotional climate within an organization. Emotional intelligence has been linked to a number of additional factors associated with effective leadership (Goleman, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003).

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Goleman (1998) conducted a study that assessed emotional intelligence levels of leaders throughout the

organization, and he found that “emotional intelligence played an increasingly important role at the highest levels of the company, where technical skills are of negligible importance” (p. 94). In other words, the highest-ranking leaders within an organization often had higher levels of emotional intelligence. More importantly, the research found that successful organizations had CEOs and organizational leaders that possessed strong emotional intelligence. Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) conducted a similar study that observed leadership rank within the organization and found support for Goleman’s (1998) assertion that the higher one’s leadership rank, the higher the emotional intelligence scores. In addition to EI and leadership rank, researchers identified that self-awareness is the building block for both emotional intelligence and leadership development (Goleman, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

Sosik and Megerian (1999) found that increased levels of self-awareness determined the predictability of leadership behavior and emotional intelligence. Leaders who were categorized by their subordinates as self-aware demonstrated transformational and emotional quotient behaviors that related positively with the following scales: (a) purpose-in-life (PIL) scores, (b) personal efficacy, (c) interpersonal control, and (d) social self-confidence (p. 384). Additionally, their findings contribute to the understanding that self-awareness is the foundation upon which both transformational leadership and EI are developed.

Other researchers have explored the relationships between organizational change, emotional intelligence, and effective leadership (Kotter, 1995, Mumford, et al., 2000; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2003; Higgs & Rowland, 2001; Higgs, 2002). Furthermore, Higgs (2002) found that the EI factors of interpersonal sensitivity and self-awareness were significantly related to five change leadership competencies: (a) creating the case, (b) structuring change, (c) engagement, (d) implementation, and (e) facilitation. Vakola, Tsaouss, and Nikolaou (2004) found that attitude for organizational change could be predicted by an employee’s use of emotions for *Problem Solving*. Respondents who were strong in the *Problem Solving* dimension were described as “optimistic, energetic, hopeful people who trust their abilities and prepare well-organized plans using and assessing their own emotions appropriately” (p. 104).

Ruderman, et al. (2001) conducted a study that measured the emotional intelligence (Bar-On EQ-i) and leadership skills (Benchmark 360) of 302 managers who participated in a Leadership Development Program sponsored by the Center for Creative Leadership. They found that higher levels of EI were associated with increased performance in each area of the Benchmarks 360 leadership feedback instrument: (a) participative management, (b) putting people at ease, (c) self-awareness, (d) balance, (e) straightforwardness and composure, (f) building and mending relationships, (g) doing whatever it takes, and (h) resourcefulness. Additionally, four themes stood out from their study. First, a participative management style was central to the connection between EI and leadership in that managers who have high levels of EI found it easier to demonstrate cooperation, interpersonal sensitivity, and awareness and control of personal emotions (p. 11). The second theme identified in the study had to do with self-awareness and the ability to balance one’s personal and professional life. Additionally, with this theme, a leader’s ability to demonstrate stress management, tolerance, and impulse control was equally apparent. The third theme highlighted the importance of assertiveness and meeting on-the-job challenges. In this area, independence, self-directedness, self-reliance, and perseverance were key factors. Finally, the fourth theme of this study observed how the lack of EI can influence the work environment and explained that the lack of EI involves problems with the interpersonal relationships. Ruderman, et al. explained that “organizations today are putting more value on interpersonal relationships” (p. 12).

With the identified benefits of emotional intelligence related to creating and developing positive relationships, combined with the understanding that positive relationships are the core of effective leadership, the idea of emotional intelligence and effective leadership is one that has been well established in the literature. Researchers have started to develop and assess developmental programs for emotional intelligence that coincide with leadership development programs and initiatives (Cherniss & Adler, 2000; Cherniss & Goleman, 2001; Day, 2001).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

After a review of the literature, along with practical evaluation of emotional intelligence, leadership practices, and observations of the current global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher utilized a clinical approach to develop a conceptual framework for applying social-emotional intelligence into leadership practices, during this global crisis.

The clinical approach in develop of a conceptual framework provides a perspective that is developed through practical observations of individual performance over time. The quality of the data, from a clinical perspective, depends on the experiential base of the researcher doing the observations and his/her abilities to digest and interpret observations. This qualitative technique depends upon an extensive literature review and an understanding of emotional intelligence, leadership practices, and the impacts of global crisis. It also depends directly upon the individuals continual reviewing of research in connecting findings to a real-world application. As with any conceptual framework develop through the clinical approach it must be tested. This test can be empirical or can be implemented in terms of a clinical setting to determine its potential application through the impacts of the treatment applies.

The following conceptual framework was developed using the aforementioned clinical approach. The constructs identified through the literature review, the researcher's previous works, and the a continual analysis of practical observations of successful leaders, five key areas of Emotional-Social Intelligence that predict successful leadership performance during times of uncertainty. The five areas of Emotional-Social Intelligence include (1.) Self-Actualization, (2.) Social Responsibility, (3.) Stress Tolerance, (4.) Problem Solving, and (5.) Optimism. There is debate on the sequence, flow and importance of these five dimensions.

Self-Actualization

During times of uncertainty, leaders who have a general sense that they are in the right place and moving in the right direction in their life are more likely to effectively manage the adversity confronting themselves and their teams. The degree, in which a leader interprets their level of self-actualization, provides a foundation for meeting the demands and pressures of uncertainty. Additionally, the nature of this dimension is one of being comfortable in one's own skin, or said differently, leaders are accurately aware of both their strengths and weakness and develop a personal belief that no matter what happens both the leader and their team will get through it successfully together. The nature of a leader's comfortability with both self and uncertainty increases motivation to take responsibility for serving teams and society.

Social Responsibility

The more clearly a leader sees themselves as moving in a positive direction towards “Self-Actualization” the greater the likelihood for being socially responsible. The highest level of leadership occurs when a leader realizes that true success is achieved when constituents and team members are achieving success in conjunction with the leader. Social Responsibility is about being an active, “cooperative and contributing member of a team, social group and society at large” (Stein, 2017). In times of uncertainty, individuals may unconsciously go into survival mode by focusing internally for safety and solutions. However, in the face of adversity and uncertainty, it is the opposite approach that will bring about personal and organizational success. Leaders that demonstrate caring and concern for the health and well-being of team members create a foundation of caring and concern for the whole team. Socially responsible leaders open up opportunities for team member communication and connection. The more connected a team becomes, the greater potential for supporting each other and building a collective optimism for the future.

Optimism

At the core of leadership in adverse and challenging times is the leader’s level of optimism. Do they have a positive attitude even in the face of adversity? Great leaders from our past, lead the charge through adversity with a relentless optimism. Never has there been a greater need for optimism than when faced with a global pandemic that has no clear solution or path forward. Human nature has genetically coded us to look at what is wrong and might harm us, but successful leaders of times of uncertainty motivate us to look at what is right and might help us. Leaders are at the core of the level of organizational and team optimism. If the leader is pessimistic, then it is likely that the team will be pessimistic, and vice versa. At the core of this dimension is resilience. It is about realistically interpreting where the organization and team is, creating a vision for where the organization and team can be, and optimistically believing that you and the team can get there.

Stress Tolerance

Leading by example with optimism by actively communicating and connecting with team members around a shared vision help to reduce the impact of stress on the entire team. Stress tolerance is about withstanding and coping with adverse events and stressful situations. Environments of uncertainty, like a global pandemic, create high levels of emotional concern and stress. The foundation of stress tolerance lies in a leader ability to face adversity without succumbing to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. When it comes to managing stress, leaders must focus on what they can control, or their sphere of influence. Much of this influence starts with self-care and creating habits to insure optimal exercise, nutrition, mental well-being, and scheduling quality time with loved ones. Leaders can’t lead teams through adversity if they are not physically and emotionally ready for the challenge. Another area of control and influence that leaders can cultivate to manage stress in themselves and on the team is flexibility. Adversity and uncertainty, especially when dealing with “wicked problems” requires flexibility to seek out solutions that have never been attempted. The leader’s willingness to remain

flexible and motivate the team to seek innovative alternatives opens the door for successful problem solving.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is at the heart of human existence and innovation. A primary function of leaders today, particularly as we work through the global impacts of a pandemic, is problem solving. The emotional impacts of the stress of uncertainty can negatively impact the identification of optimal solutions, so a leader's ability to personally manage stress and serve as an example for reacting to stressful situations, will serve as an example for the team. Every dimension of this model has led up to successful problem solving skills and abilities. With "Self-Actualization" a leader is secure and confident in the course of their lives and comfortable that they will personally get through the uncertainty. Likewise, problem solving comes by taking "Social Responsibility" for motivating others to participate in the problem solving process. Leaders lead by being the first to contribute and collaborate with others to identify, analyze and select solutions to resolve a problem. In the process of collaborating with others, leaders maintain a level of realistic "Optimism" to encourage and motivate team members to be persistent and enthusiastic about finding a solution. Finally, it is certain that mistakes and new challenges will occur during times of uncertainty, and as challenges occur, leaders manage the stress of the situation and control their own reactions to model resilience and appropriate ways to react to stress.

SUMMARY

There are other variables other than those in this construct that have been identified, but these five dimensions have been identified as significant in developing leadership skills for adverse and uncertain times. Emotional-Social Intelligence continues to be an important part in leadership skills and abilities. The five elements discussed in the model provides the key ingredients for achieving long-term success in uncertain times. The primary unanswered research question is: "what are the various programs that can help the individual to achieve greater emotional intelligence"?

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