

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: IMPLICATIONS ON IMPROVING TEAM PERFORMANCE AT EXACT HOLDINGS LOCATED IN KWAZULU-NATAL

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ABSTRACT

Historically it was believed that a high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was solely required for optimum performance as a leader and thus organisations focused on recruiting and promoting individuals with this attribute. Literature shows that a high IQ does not guarantee success as a leader and some studies postulate that Emotional Intelligence (EI) could be the element missing in unsuccessful leaders. This research aimed to determine if improvements in EI lead to subsequent improvements in leader and team performance. Two phases were conducted in an organisation in which a team had poorly performed in 2014. The pilot phase used Action Research, an investigative tool, to establish issues/ concerns identified by leaders. The study was then scaled up to include 200 team members, each of whom answered a baseline survey with questions grounded in aspects of EI, linked to the causes of poor performance. A control and intervention group was established based on survey results, and interventions linked to the EI construct were then used accordingly to address identified issues concerning building EI within leaders. Pilot results showed poor team leadership. This was attributed to a failure in key aspects which could be linked to EI. Results from the second phase survey showed that there were elements of leader inadequacies throughout the organisation. It was found that the EI of the leader could be increased through interventions that focused on the five components of EI. To solve problems through a structured methodology of diagnosis and identification of problems. The EI of leaders did improve and there was an associated increase from underperformance to acceptable performance in the leader and the team, whilst the control group showed no statistical difference. There was an increase in the exceeding performance categories of leaders and individuals, but the results were not statistically significant in this area.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, leadership, team performance, performance management, action research.