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A Qualitative Exploratory Observational Study: An Entrepreneurship Managers' Emotional Intelligence and Impact on the Financial Organization's Success in the United States

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Abstract

This paper summarizes the arguments and counterarguments within the scientific discussion on emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is an essential trait for managers to possess to be effective and successful in organizations. Soft skills are becoming as crucial as making quotas. Scholarly literature lacks research on emotional intelligence and employee engagement in retail in St. Lucia. Engaged employees could stay motivated during adversity and help maintain an organization's culture. This exploratory observational study's primary purpose was to examine how retail store managers in St. Lucia perceived their emotional intelligence influences employee engagement. The conceptual framework that grounded the study was emotional intelligence and employee engagement from an organizational performance perspective. The data collection process included reviewing archival data. The paper presents empirical analysis results; several patterns and themes emerged from the data analysis, including emotional intelligence, controlling emotions, coaching, legacy, training, hiring well, communication, and personalized relationships. Increased emotional intelligence training emerged as useful in the St. Lucian business landscape and the Caribbean by extension. The research empirically confirms and theoretically proves that researching other sectors at varying levels may give a broader understanding of how emotional intelligence is perceived. This study's findings may be useful to stakeholders and organizational leaders to allow developing strategies to build more emotionally intelligent and engaged organizations and positively affect social change.

Introduction

The concepts that guided this exploratory case study were rooted in how emotional intelligence and employee engagement are viewed in organizational performance in general. Kahn's (1990) theory of personal engagement and disengagement serves as a foundation for employee engagement. Kahn highlighted that when employees are personally engaged, they express themselves cognitively, emotionally, and physically when they involve themselves in activities to which they ascribe meaning. Adkins (2016) noted that in December 2015, 50.3% of U.S. workers surveyed were not engaged, and 16.8% were actively disengaged. The numbers were similar to the prior 11 months of the year. Further, Effectory International (2018) in the Global Employee Engagement Index (2018) noted that from 56 countries surveyed, there was less than 30% engagement. Wisker and Poulis (2015) researched emotional intelligence and sales performance, and they found that consistent with prior research, the effects of emotional intelligence on job performance is not always linear in effect. Wisker

and Poulis supported the concept of emotional intelligence and the sales associate's ability to manage their own emotions and those of others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), and Wisker and Poulis suggested that researchers and practitioners not discount the concept of emotional intelligence as one of the potential factors that contribute to sales performance. Balanescu (2018) noted that although emotional intelligence could not predict success, a satisfactory career or efficient leadership, it is one of the important components.

In some organizations, employees are required to act in a specified manner toward customers. The actions require employees to change their outward appearance such as facial gestures, motions, and voice intonation. This is known as surface acting. Lee et al. (2019) noted that surface acting could have negative effects on employee job satisfaction, the disconnect between their true feelings and the surface acting to lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. One instance where surface acting is necessary and almost unavoidable is where language and cultural barriers exist. Surface acting is used to show empathy (Feyerabend et al., 2018). In cases where there is a disconnect between the employee and the customer, the interaction could be frustrating for both involved. In the service industry, where employees are sometimes exposed to less than favorable interactions from customers, having organizational stressors such policies, systems, and structure leads to emotional exhaustion. (Kashif et al., 2017)

Schneider et al. (2018) discussed potential drivers for employee engagement at the organizational level, although there is not a lot of research on the drivers, organizational practices, supervisory support, and attributes of the work itself were found to be three main ones. Consistent with Kahn (1990), Schneider et al. (2018) argued that when people can be more engaged in their work, engagement will be positive and yield the kinds of behaviors that ultimately produce organizational success. Jena et al. (2018) and Meintjes and Hofmeyr (2018) noted that employee engagement is a driver of business success and connects employees to their organizations. Meintjes and Hofmeyr (2018) found that a sense of being valued and appreciated is a key driver of positive organizational outcomes such as engagement. Milhem et al. (2019) noted that employee engagement is a dyadic relationship. Employee engagement is not independent of organizational work conditions. Ethical leadership also affects the level of employee engagement. In conditions where there is a relationship between ethical leadership and employee engagement or between employee engagement and employee performance, employee engagement has the potential to mediate ethical leadership and employee performance relationship (Sugianingrat et al., 2019).

Research conducted by Kahn (1990), Adkins (2016), and Jena et al. (2018) helped define employee engagement and situate it within the context of organizational success. Although more than 50% of the U.S. workforce is not engaged, it is important to explore what the antecedents of employee engagement are.

Emotional Intelligence

The rational component of human behavior (eg. intelligence) has long been given priority over the irrational or emotional component, and consequently, the role of emotion has been less understood. (Cho, Drasgow et al., 2015). Emotional Intelligence first appeared as a concept in the 1990's after being coined by Salovey and Mayer. Emotional intelligence includes the ability to understand behaviors in social settings, to identify the subtleties of emotional responses, and to utilize that information to touch others as is seen fit, in a controlled manner. (Mayer, Caruso et al., 2016). Utilizing a definition from Salovey and Mayer (1990), Clark and Polesello (2017) referred to emotional intelligence as a subset of social intelligence that represents three individual level abilities related to feelings: appraisal and expression of emotions of self and others, regulation of emotions for adaptive and reinforcing mood states, and utilizations of emotions for solving problems. (Clark & Polesello, 2017). Staub (2016) believed that the history of emotional intelligence is not to be separated from the history of race and class in the United States. One dimension that is common through them all is self-control, it is a key component of emotional intelligence. Fayombo, (2012) conducted research among University of the West Indies students in Barbados, and noted the emergence of a model using emotional intelligence components as predictors suggesting training of university students in appropriate emotional intelligence skills to enhance the university students' academic achievement, career success and fulfilment.

Emotional Intelligence was broken down into four constructs as follows by Goleman (1995); self-awareness (knowing one's own emotions better); self-management (emotional control); social awareness (being aware of others' emotions); and relationship management (the ability of motivating and inspiring others by using emotions).

According to Goleman (1995), the constructs exist in a hierarchy. Each one must be mastered before advancing to the next. It is necessary to identify emotions before they can be managed. Similarly, it is necessary to be

able to manage emotions before being aware of emotions in others. After a person has mastered the social awareness necessary to recognize emotions in others, they can use that along with the previous two, they work together to motivate and inspire others. Goleman (1998) indicated that unlike IQ which is stable and relatively unchangeable, emotional intelligence can be improved through learning and practice (Delanoy and Kasztelnik, 2020).

Figure 1. Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Source: Retrieved from https://www.educba.com

Emotional Intelligence Models

While the literature does not provide consensus on the definition of emotional intelligence, there are models with constructs that have been in use and help to guide the application and research of emotional intelligence. Understanding of the concept can be gained by following the way it evolved. There are three models of emotional intelligence - the ability model, the trait model and mixed models that consist of both trait and ability. The ability model is the Mayer-Salovey (1990) Model. The trait model is the Petrides Model (2009) and the mixed models are comprised of two, Goleman (1998) Model and Bar-On Model, (Bar-On, 2010).

Mayer-Salovey Model

The Mayer-Salovey (1990) model of emotional intelligence utilizes a four-branch approach. The four branches are recognize emotions; manage emotions; use emotions; and comprehend emotions. (Mayer, DiPaolo et al., 1990). In research designed to examine characteristics of perception of emotion in visual stimuli in adults, Mayer, Di Paolo et al. (1990) noted that in healthy people, the ability to appraise and express emotions, and use them for motivational decision-making were all related skills. The researchers also found that emotional perception extended beyond facial expressions and included colors and novel graphics. The results of the research were suggestive of the fact that aspects of emotional intelligence appear to be abilities that can be measured. Mayer et al. (1990) also noted that the fact that qualities like empathy, involve clearly defined skills, as opposed to attitudes alone, individuals with interpersonal problems may have a skills deficit that can be improved through training.

Mayer et al. (2016) revisited the previous work and revised the four branches of their model to enhance its usefulness. Additionally, emotional intelligence has been positioned among social and personal intelligences. The authors highlighted seven principles that shaped their thinking on emotional intelligence. Some of the principles included the fact that emotional intelligence is an ability and is best measured as such; emotional intelligence is a broad intelligence; it is a member of the class of broad intelligences focused on hot information processing. Hot intelligences involve reasoning with information of significance to an individual—matters that may chill our hearts or make our blood boil. People use these hot intelligences to manage what matters most to them: their senses of social acceptance, identity coherence, and emotional well-being. (Mayer et al., 2016)

The fourth branch of emotional intelligence according to Mayer et al. (2016) is managing one's emotions. The types of reasoning included are effectively manage others' emotion for a desired outcome; effectively manage one' emotions for a desired outcome; evaluate strategies to maintain, reduce or intensify an emotional response. Monitor emotional reactions to determine reasonableness; engage with emotions if they are helpful; disengage if they aren't; stay open to pleasant and unpleasant feelings as needed and to the information they convey, complete the fourth branch (Kasztelnik, K, 2020).

The third branch of the Mayer, Caruso et al. (2016) model, is to understand emotions. The types of reasoning contained therein are recognize cultural differences in the evaluation of emotions; understand how a person might feel in the future; recognize likely transitions among emotions; understand complex and mixed emotions; differentiate between moods and emotions. Appraise the situations that are likely to elicit emotions, determine the antecedents of emotions; and label emotions and recognize relations among them; complete the third branch.

The second branch of Mayer, Caruso et al. (2016) is facilitating thought using emotion. The types of reasoning include selecting problems based on how one's ongoing emotional state may facilitate cognition; leveraging mood swings; prioritizing thinking by directing attention based on feelings; generating emotions to relate to others; and generating emotions to help judgement and memory.

The first branch of Mayer, Caruso et al. (2016) emotional intelligence is perceiving emotion. The types of reasoning expected include identifying deceptive or dishonest expressions; the ability to accurately discriminate emotional expressions; understand emotions in the context of culture; express emotions accurately when desired. Perceive emotions in others accurately through vocal, facial or behavior cues; and identify one's own physical state, feelings and thoughts; complete the list of types of reasoning.

The branches were from the original Mayer and Salovey (1990) research but were modified in 2016. The four-branch model shows problem-solving areas of emotional intelligence. The authors noted that areas could be further sub-divided into areas of generating emotions. This revision of the four-branch model has allowed the inclusion of more problem-solving instances than before.

Figure 2. Mayer-Salovey Model

Source: MSCEIT.

The Bar-On Model

Trait emotional intelligence models refer to the self-reported perception of emotional and social abilities. The Bar-On model (2010) is the most widely used and examines a cross section of emotional and social competencies. (Bar-On, 2010). Bar-On (2010) described them as non-cognitive capabilities. As a distinction, Rastogi et al. (2015) noted that cognitive capabilities are involved in the act or process of knowing. They include the capabilities of perceiving, recognizing, conceiving and reasoning. Dippenaar and Schaap (2017) used the Bar-On model in research on coaching intervention on the emotional and social intelligence competencies of leaders in a financial services company. The Bar-On model includes five areas, intra-personal competency, which allows for self-expression of thoughts and feelings constructively. Interpersonal skills are another included competency, which refer to how people relate to each other. Stress management, adaptability, and general mood are the remaining competencies.

The Petrides Model

The Petrides Model (2009) is the second model built on trait emotional intelligence. Di Fabio and Palazzeschi (2015) utilized the Petrides model (2009) for research among students where they examined scholastic success beyond that attributable to fluid intelligence and personality traits. The Petrides Model (2009) appeared more promising because it was more comprehensive than the Bar-On Model (2010). Bhalerao and Kumar (2016) studied the role of trait-based emotional intelligence of leaders in cultivating the attitude of commitment amongst subordinates. The study conducted in the information technology sector in India found that the nature and manifestation of emotional competencies differed across hierarchies. Trait-based emotional intelligence in leaders was not potent in fostering higher levels of continuance commitment or normative commitment. The nature of the job designation could be crucial to the organizational commitment affected by emotional intelligence. Bhalerao and Kumar (2016) found that the mode of communication between leader and follower in the information technology sector is predominately impersonal and dominated by emails, not leaving much room for emotions.

Goleman Model

Much of what is commonly known about emotional intelligence has been popularized by Goleman. Utilizing the mixed model of emotional intelligence, the components are (1) self-awareness, this refers to recognition of one's own emotions; (2) self-management, the management of one's own emotions; (3) social awareness, understanding how to interact with others; and (4) relationship management, managing one's emotions as well as others. (Goleman, 1995). An emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance. (Rastogi et al., 2015). Goleman (1995) noted that emotional competencies build on each other in a hierarchical manner, one must be mastered before moving on to another.

Figure 3. Goleman Model

Source: Retrieved from Slide Team.

Emotional Intelligence and Sales

Delpechitre et al. (2019) highlighted that the salesperson is the life blood of the organization because of his contact with customers, despite being at the bottom of the organizational chart. The retail sales process entails interacting with different types of customers, making sales presentations, handling their objections and

complaints, negotiating, solving their problems, and finally closing the sale. The process requires self-awareness, being adaptive, empathetic, maintaining a calm demeanor and remaining stress free. These attributes constitute emotional intelligence and indicate that salespeople's emotional intelligence influences their sales performance. A salesperson with high emotional intelligence should be resilient and able to handle the emotionally threatening consequences of failure which is common in the life of the salesperson. (AlDosiry et al., 2016). Gardner and Lambert (2019) conducted a study among adolescents in Jamaica to examine age differences between self-esteem and trait emotional intelligence as predictive of depressive symptoms. Perceived emotional intelligence, can allow an individual to utilize emotional information to aid in problem solving. (Gardner & Lambert, 2019)

Studies conducted by Wisker and Poulis (2015), and Zehetner and Zehetner (2019), specifically with salespeople found that emotional intelligence was positively related to sales revenues. In the research conducted, the enhanced sales results were not merely market influences. AlDosiry et al. (2016) examined data where Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MSCEIT v2) was used as the instrument with car and consulting services salespeople from 17 automotive retail stores in Denver, Colorado, and found no relationship between EI and objective sales performance. AlDosiry et al. (2016) recommended that future researchers investigate a broader performance model or evaluate the nature of the emotional intelligence construct at the definitional stage (Kasztelnik, K, 2015).

Shukla and Srivastava (2016) noted that organizations that offer training in emotional intelligence combined with stress management training tailored to their employees provide them opportunity to acquire necessary skills, in order to deal with the customer service in retail businesses. Organizations are now looking to the sales function not only to generate new sources of business but to build and maintain relationships with customers. (Ogilvie et al., 2017). This relational value will bring future business and retain existing customers. Further, it is important to note that considering the stereotype associated with an overly eager salesperson, elevated employee contact (i.e., high levels of effort) can make customers feel overwhelmed or think of the salesperson as being too pushy if effort is not regulated well. Adversely, the customer can feel frustrated and dissatisfied when contact becomes too frequent, with repeated phone calls, emails, texts, and visits. The customer may be less likely to proceed or continue with salespersons perceived as overly aggressive or encroaching in their approach.

Delpechitre et al. (2018) noted that when salespeople possess the ability to perceive their customers' emotions, evaluate their own and customers' emotions accurately, and utilize this knowledge to regulate relevant and suitable emotional responses, customers are more likely to exhibit customer value co-creation behaviors. Delpechitre et al. (2018) highlighted that the three outlined dimensions of emotional intelligence influence customer outcomes at varying levels. Two of the dimensions of emotional intelligence, using emotions and perceiving emotions, were found to positively impact customer value co-creation behaviors. All three dimensions of emotional intelligence influence the customer's commitment to the salesperson but at different degrees. (Delpechitre et al., 2018)

Briggs et al. (2018) proposed that sales managers implement training programs to help salespeople overcome the negative effects of emotion appraisal ability and help them strengthen the positive effects, which will fundamentally improve sales performance. Self-regulation training can help do both. The dual positive effects of self-regulation training can help salespeople effectively manage customer exchanges by analyzing the emotions of self and others in a healthy manner that reduces exhaustion and increases customer service. (Briggs et al., 2018)

Li, Feng et al. (2019) examined retail network firms in the virtual e-commerce market and noted that if a retail network firm ceases to meet the needs of customers because of a low level of emotional intelligence, it will lose ground to competitors. Retail network firms can evaluate their emotional intelligence abilities and attempt to improve those abilities. The results of improvements in firm emotional intelligence are increased customer satisfaction, competitive advantage gains, and more e-commerce sales. The components of emotional intelligence that the retail network forms need to master are the ability to emotionally perceive and analyze, emotional generalizing and expression, emotional coordination and leading, emotional control, and adjustment. (Li, Feng, & Zhai, 2019)

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has been described using different phrases within the literature. It is sometimes referred to as work engagement, or job satisfaction. Various factors could drive employee engagement. (Jiang & Men,

2017). Employee engagement is the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of business context and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. It is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values. (Salimath & Kavitha, 2015). Engagement is about motivating employees to go a little further for the organization. They have a passion for their work and see the organization as more than just a paycheck (Umadia & Kasztelnik, 2020).

One of the earliest works on engagement examined the idea of people being members of groups and how they work to protect themselves from isolation and engulfment. Kahn (1990) described those roles as personal engagement and personal disengagement. Personal engagement was defined 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. (Kahn, 1990). The definition of engagement by Kahn (1990) was subsequently described by Saks and Gruman (2014) as deep and substantial. Engagement involves a rational choice in which individuals make decisions about the extent to which they will bring their true selves into the performance of a role. Most distal to an understanding of engagement is the experience of the individual employee, thus positioning engagement as an individual-level variable that influences and is also influenced by external and broader forces such as organizational alignment. (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Combining organizational alignment and employee engagement allows the human resources department to enhance the employee's performance through training and gives the opportunity to focus organizational development and changes.

In an effort to streamline the definition of employee engagement, Shuck and Wollard (2010) reviewed existing literature. One of the main issues noted was the inconsistencies in the language describing the concept. It is one thing to get the conceptualization correct and another thing to get the operationalization correct (Macey & Schneider, 2008). A measure of how satisfied an employee is with conditions of work may not be reflective of the constructs that constitute employee engagement and could be employee opinions. Employee engagement concerns the individual, not the masses, and is a personal decision that cannot be mandated or forced. Engagement in work is a personal experience inseparable from the individualistic nature of being human. (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Employee engagement is a long-term and on-going process that requires continued interactions over time in developing a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind. (Singh, 2019).

Macey and Schneider (2008) characterized employee engagement as positive feelings a person has towards their job. They noted that engagement comprises trait, state, and behavioral constructs, in addition to the work and organizational conditions that could facilitate them. When those traits and personality attributes combine, there is the inclination to experience work in positive and active ways that allow for going beyond what is necessary and initiating change to facilitate organizationally relevant outcomes.

Work engagement is a theoretical construct proposed by Maslach and Leiter (1997, 1999) that combatted the prior defined Maslach Burnout Inventory (1981). As opposed to looking at the high negative scores associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, the opposite pattern of high positive scores was now representative of engagement. An interesting concept that Leiter and Maslach (2017) highlighted was that engagement fluctuates. An employee could therefore move between different levels of engagement, for different tasks, at different times, instead of always being fully engaged. Macey and Schneider (2008) thought of engagement as having some cost in the form of risk to the employee. In that regard, they felt that organizations ought to promote a sense of trust that employees will benefit from the psychological and behavioral relational contracts that are a part of employment. The way in which employee engagement is viewed by both the organization and the employee could affect productivity, loyalty and profitability. Potdar et al. (2018) noted that employee engagement is a strong dynamic for organizational success that differs from commitment and involvement. Jiang and Men (2017) noted that besides financial incentives and working conditions, employee engagement can also be impacted by social contextual factors, socio-demographic, and job characteristic variables.

Dagher et al. (2015) used an amalgamation approach. Employee engagement was described as promoting integration of a satisfied individual with commitment to the company who continuously improves, possibly reinforced by financial rewards, thereby increasing job satisfaction and repeating the cycle. Not only is this employee engaged but they are also emotionally attached to the organization. Dagher et al. (2015) argued that self-efficacy has a positive influence on employee engagement, via its three dimensions which are vigor, dedication, and absorption. When an individual believes that they possess what it takes to make a difference,

they pursue those tasks with a singular focus and often do not stop until they are complete. In this regard, they may appear more motivated and could potentially work longer hours without realizing it, or without complaining. The results of the study by Dagher et al. (2015) supported findings of prior research. Employee engagement could be increased when an employee believes in their capability to successfully fulfill the requirements of the job. On the contrary, Slack et al. (2015) noted that impediments to employee engagement were communication at the organizational level, culture, and shared values. The research specifically reviewed Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and how that could increase employee engagement if employees feel involved. Poor communication about the activities, the tone of the organization that perpetuates the culture, and a sense of shared values could all adversely affect efforts. Similarly, Jiang and Men, (2017) pointed out that transparent organizational communication is useful when employees feel that they can participate in meaningful way.

Dagher et al. (2015) suggested that future research be conducted through a global lens to identify similarities and differences, especially in Arab countries since there was a gap in knowledge. Additionally, it was suggested that research be conducted to examine the climate for engagement. Jiang and Men (2017) proposed that authentic leadership, transparent organizational communication, and work-life enrichment are three important contextual factors associated with employee engagement. While the direct effect of authentic leadership on employee engagement was not found, but the mediation effects from authentic leadership to employee engagement via transparent organizational communication and work-life enrichment were strong and significant.

Suhartanto and Brien (2018) studied multidimensional engagement on retail store performance directly and indirectly through job performance and job satisfaction. Suhartanto and Brien (2018) suggested that a practical implication of their research was to improve the store performance, managers should first focus on building employee engagement toward their job, then second toward the organization. Suhartanto and Brien (2018) noted that engaged employees regard their job as important to the store's performance; store managers should frequently underscore the importance of the employees' roles.

Employee engagement extends to leadership. Carasco-Saul et al. (2015) noted that among other things, there remains a gap in understanding what leadership behaviors could affect engagement-encouraging cultures. Given that leadership is perceived differently by cultures, the researchers suggested future work be done to understand what leadership style is effective for employee engagement by specific culture. This type of research could be useful in a diversified world. This concept was supported by Miao et al. (2016) who believed that cross-cultural similarities and variations require more exploration. On the contrary, Li et al. (2018) noted that existing literature showed that trait emotional intelligence of leaders has a positive effect on employees. However, they were unable to find research to support it where teachers and principals are concerned. This indicates that further research is still necessary as it is not generalized across sectors.

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Engagement

Akhtar et al. (2015) conducted a study that investigated the effects of the Big Five personality traits, work-specific personality, and trait emotional intelligence, on work engagement among working adults. The results showed that among the hypothesized predictor variables, emotional intelligence had the strongest correlation with work engagement. Based on the results, the incremental validity of trait emotional intelligence in the prediction of engagement beyond personality variables was tested. Previous studies have identified personality as a determinant of engagement. There have been mixed findings about which dimensions best predict engagement because most research examined extraversion, emotional stability and conscientiousness as related to engagement. Openness to experience that had been omitted in other research, and seen as a weak predictor, was the second strongest predictor in this study. To follow emotional intelligence, openness to experience is linked to resiliency. It is a key component of work engagement as resilient employees successfully control their environment, giving them motivation to pursue their goals. The relationship between openness to experience and resiliency, easily facilitates employees being engaged at work if they score high on those two.

Bande et al. (2015) noted that while it is generally accepted that emotions are a fundamental part of the workplace, job-related emotions are an under-developed area of study, specifically in sales. Resilience provides not only the ability to cope with a current situation but equips the employee for the future, should similar challenges occur.

Devonish (2016) tested the mediating roles of two dimensions of job satisfaction and work-related depression in the relationship between emotional intelligence and task performance. The cross-sectional study was

conducted in the Caribbean. The implications of the findings suggested the importance of emotional intelligence should be emphasized in hiring decisions, training and development planning efforts and activities, if there is a need to optimize employee performance.

Han et al. (2017) highlighted that employees' motivation differs. Some are internally motivated, meaning they are driven from within to perform their tasks, while others need extrinsic motivation that could come in the form incentives or rewards. In the food service industry, or other retail environment, a manager's level of emotional intelligence can affect their employees' performance. Leaders who experience positive emotions and moods are more likely to influence their employees to give good service.

Sarangi and Vats, (2015) noted that there are always firms that endeavor to find and strengthen the drivers of employee engagement. In research conducted using 182 respondents from various Indian organizations it was found that there was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. The study does not list emotional intelligence as a direct antecedent of employee engagement but establishes that emotionally intelligent people are capable of showing vigor and dedication. This is consistent with prior research where emotional intelligence positively impacted job satisfaction.

It is important to note that Karim et al. (2015) found that counter-productive work behaviors could affect employee engagement. In cases where there is workplace incivility, employees who are made to feel unwelcome or uncomfortable as a result of the behavior of others, could have negative job satisfaction, up to and including the intention to quit. Some of the impactful attitudes or behaviors could include bullying, stealing, absenteeism, and workplace aggression. In highlighting the negative aspects of incivility, Harold and Holtz (2015) noted that a person who feels they may have been the recipient of uncivil behavior, could retaliate and redirect that behavior to the instigator or towards an innocent party. The behavior could escalate quickly and affect the organization's culture negatively. Similarly, Miao et al. (2016) noted that leaders' emotional intelligence is more strongly related to subordinates' job satisfaction in low in-group collectivistic and low humane oriented cultures. This highlights the fact that emotional intelligence is often context-based. In high humane oriented cultures, leaders display care about followers irrespective of their emotional intelligence. The social norms obligate them to do so. The followers in these societies may not be moved by the displays. (Miao et al., 2016).

Mishra and Kodwani (2019) examined employee engagement and conflict politics as it related to the allocation resources within the organization. In the descriptive study, conducted in public sector organizations, Mishra and Kodwani (2019) confirmed a negative effect of employee engagement. In instances where employees understood that resource allocation was closely related to being engaged in organizational politics, they get engaged in the organization. Decisions taken within an environment that favor the in-group helps to develop positive emotions. The employees in the in-group do not perceive those decisions to be influenced by organizational politics. Mishra and Kodwani (2019) found that while the out-group gets less organizational resources, possessing high emotional intelligence, enabled the out-group to deal with conflict and remain engaged. Those who are emotionally intelligent do not develop negative emotions even when the environment is negative. In the influence of positive emotions, they stay engaged and do not perceive organizational politics. (Mishra & Kodwani, 2019).

Eldor (2017) recognized a positive aspect of organizational politics and employee engagement. In highly politicized environments, engaged employees reshape their work environment, giving them the opportunity to obtain additional resources that allow them to be more effective and improve their performance. Eldor (2017) noted that the engaged employees, are inclined to view organizational politics as a positive, challenging demand or even an opportunity. Those who adopt this perspective may be more willing to invest effort in meeting these challenges.

Measuring Employee Engagement

The existing inconsistencies in defining employee engagement contribute to some of the challenges with its measurement. Saks and Gruman (2014) noted that a number of instruments were created to measure employee engagement. There are still questions on how to measure employee engagement and the validity of measurement tools.

Joubert and Roodt (2019) conducted research that investigated employee engagement on both the team and individual levels. Most research that uses the JD-R Model is done only at the individual level. The fact that

there are multiple roles that individuals, specifically managers, occupy across an organization encouraged the research as a multi-level construct. Joubert and Roodt (2019) utilized testing push and pull factors as well as the UWES-9 (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale). The results confirmed significance between individual engagement and the pull factors of social support, work overload, autonomy and performance feedback tested in the study. Emotional demands was the only push factor that showed a negative relation to individual engagement. The results supported their first hypothesis: The selected pull and push factors were predictors of individual work engagement. Physical demands were found to be unrelated to individual engagement and were omitted from the study conducted by Joubert and Roodt (2019). While the study was only conducted using three organizations, it was done over different inductees with significant sample sizes to make a contribution to the literature. Joubert and Roodt, (2019) suggested replicating the study across more industries in different countries to see if it yields different results. Kulikowski (2017) offered support for the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by conducting a single study that summarized all of the existing findings on the UWES factorial validity. After reviewing the literature, the results were ambiguous and did not definitively resolve the issue of the most valid UWES factorial structure. Kulikowski (2017) found that it is still one of the most commonly used work engagement measures and it is applied almost invariably as a standard measurement tool in work engagement research.

Tomás et al. (2018) utilized the UWES to measure vigor, dedication, and absorption in teachers in the Dominican Republic. The three-factor structure was found to be a good fit for the data being studied. Tomás et al. (2018) noted extremely large correlations among the three dimensions, the correlations provided evidence of overlapping among the engagement factors. Tomás et al. (2018) suggested more research is needed to generalize of the results in other working populations in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere.

Greenidge et al. (2014) utilized Counterproductive Work Behavior Check (CWB-C), across five Caribbean organizations to assess employee intentional behaviors that harm organizations and people therein. Greenidge et al. (2014) suggested that employees who have affective or emotional regulation processes and strategies tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement. Those employees are less likely to engage in counterproductive work behavior.

Shuck and Wollard (2010) noted that in practice, employee engagement has traditionally been approached from the organizational level. The individuals who comprise the organization are the ones affected and are not all the same. They do not move at the same pace and have differences. Engagement occurs at a personal level before moving to the team level. Similarly, while Jiang and Men (2017) did not find a direct correlation between authentic leadership and employee engagement, there were mediation effects via strong organizational communication that positively impacted employee engagement. When organizations openly share substantial, timely, complete, relevant, and truthful information, encourage employee participation, and convey balanced information that is open to scrutiny and holds the organization accountable, employees are more likely to feel engaged. (Jiang & Men, 2017).

Employee Engagement and Sales

Anel and Karl (2018) explored the relationship between resilience and employee engagement in a competitive sales environment. Existing sales structure within an organization, involves dealing with competitors, meeting sales targets, and handling rejection. These tasks and interactions can be viewed as emotional exhaustion and serve to disengage the employee. Employee engagement has been found to be a positive outcome of resilience. (King et al., 2016) The current climate of the business environment demands an employee who is not resistant to change and can adapt as the organization needs and can succeed in a chaotic environment. The research was conducted by Anel and Karl (2018) at a pharmaceutical sales company in South Africa. Employee engagement, resilience and perceived organizational support were measured using different scales. While it has been found that in a sales situation, resilience influences a salesperson's performance through engagement; in this study resilience did not predict employee engagement. It is plausible that the relationship between resilience and employee engagement goes beyond the simplicity of the prediction model that was employed. Jiang and Men, (2017) noted that employee engagement has become a centrally desired outcome for organizational success. After assessing perceived organizational support on employee engagement, it was clear that the relationship between them can also be defined beyond the simple prediction. (Anel & Karl, 2018) Similarly, in examining the relationship between corporate social responsibility and employee engagement, Potdar et al. (2018) found that engaged employees are self-motivated. They are prepared to promote their company's products and services and are prepared to participate in corporate social responsibility activities initiated by the company for the community. Barreiro and Treglown (2020) noted that employees who tend to be good at influencing

how other people feel (emotion management) experience higher levels of engagement.

Albrecht et al. (2015) found that employee engagement can be facilitated through training. Systematic focus on training needs, training delivery, training transfer and training effectiveness should be an integral focus of effective performance management and development processes. Barreiro and Treglown (2020) noted that if managers are trained to be capable at influencing others' emotions, they might make others in the organization more engaged. Raemah, and Mohamad Azlan (2018) suggested that retail organizations may consider human resource applications or strategy to leverage the employee engagement in either retaining the employees, recruiting the best talent, and reducing turnover rates or other motivating factors like benefits. By developing a strong value proposition and positioning the employer branding central to the organization it may lead to a high level of employee engagement.

Kearney et al. (2017) advised customer-centric companies that view recruitment as a strategic activity, to screen to select for emotional intelligence as a key competence when hiring new employees. Companies could consider using an emotional intelligence test and exclude candidates who are poorly suited to customer contact jobs. Administering these tests early in the selection process could prevent unsuitable candidates from going through to the more difficult, expensive stages of the recruitment process. (Kearney et al., 2017)

Greenidge and Coyne (2014) investigated the mediating effect of positive emotion on the relationship between job stressors and citizenship behaviors, and emotional intelligence on relations between job stressors and emotions, among workers in Barbados. Work conditions as perceived by employees lead to emotional reactions, and an employee's negative appraisal of the work environment induces negative emotion, this can consequently increase the likelihood of the employee to engage in counterproductive work behavior. (Greenidge & Coyne, 2014)

Strobel et al. (2017) reviewed an organizational approach that involved proactive strategic scanning of organizational members at all levels. The intention of the review was to foster discretionary involvement of employees in strategy and in turn help boost employee engagement and add value to the human resources management process. Strobel et al. (2017) noted that the market environment, makes it important for organizations to have employees who act proactively and strategically. The use of future-oriented messages in the recruitment phase could allow potential employees to assess the culture of the organization and become engaged early in the process.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence

According to El Ghoudani et al. (2018), there are two main models of studying emotional intelligence - ability and mixed models. Assessment instruments have been developed to measure emotional intelligence, they also have predictive ability, and ensure validity and reliability. The ability model utilizes a self-report instrument known as Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002). WLEIS includes items that refer to the perception, understanding and regulation of one's own and others' emotions.

The Mixed Model or Trait Emotional Intelligence model (2007) differs from the Ability Model. A questionnaire is utilized to assess tendencies rather than performance tasks. (El Ghoudani et al., 2018). There is also a self-report measure that forms a part of the assessment. El Ghoudani et al. (2018) noted that WLEIS was developed in Asia with English as the official language. There has been interest in using it in different countries. There must be adaptations to allow for the difference in culture and to ensure validity based on the original intention of the instrument.

In another study that examined team emotional intelligence, Wei et al. (2016) noted that team emotional intelligence is different from finding the team's mean. The variable could be team EI diversity conceptualized as team EI separation, as team EI variety, or as team EI disparity. To facilitate collecting multiple types of data, in the individual-referent EI models, Wei et al. (2016) first collected either individual referent subjective or performance EI data and then aggregate these individual level data to the team level by averaging them. In the team referent models, prior to aggregating the team level construct, the referent of the individual subjective EI measure was shifted to the team. (Wei et al., 2016)

Krishnakumar et al. (2016) highlighted that existing measures of emotional intelligence were ineffective because they were not measuring emotions at work within the correct context. These instruments did not target workplace events or decision making. A new instrument was developed that focused on the

abilities that should matter in the workplace, the Salovey and Mayer (1997) framework was followed in creating subscales for emotional perception, understanding and management. To model the workplace domain, Krishnakumar et al. (2016) followed the situational judgement test method. A large pool of forty-six workplace scenarios, was tested over a number of studies, to cross-validate them. The measure termed NEAT (North Dakota Emotional Abilities Test) was developed. After five studies by Krishnakumar et al. (2016) to rationalize abilities, some limitations noted were the use of self-reporting in instances of job stress, which may be appropriate, but job performance could be reported by someone else.

In an effort to garner a deeper understanding of how emotional intelligence affects leadership, Segon and Booth, (2015) measured emotional competency using the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI). Their intention was to test for ethical management and to ascertain whether a manager could be emotionally intelligent but morally incompetent. At the center of the framework that was utilized was ethical management, which comprised ethical knowledge, virtuous behavior and genuineness. Within the framework of emotional intelligence competencies - self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management, each competency now included an ethical component. After reviewing a number of cases, Segon and Booth (2015) found that it was possible for individuals to display emotional intelligence competencies and behave unethically. They proposed a variation of the Emotional Competency Inventory framework. Ethical Management should be a mandatory competency cluster at the heart of the framework. If there is a conceptual understanding of ethics, it would inform intra- and inter-personal practice, this would in turn be manifested in virtues like integrity, and trustworthiness.

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

The leader's mood and behaviors drive the moods and behaviors of everyone else. (Goleman et al., 2001). That is why emotional intelligence matters so much for a leader. An emotionally intelligent leader can monitor their moods through self-awareness, use self-management to change them for the better, understand their impact through empathy, then act in ways to boost the mood of those around them through relationship management.

The ability to read one's own emotions accurately facilitates emotional self-control. Leaders who are aware of their own emotions are better placed to control their emotions and subsequently consider the emotional needs of followers. (Zhidong et al., 2016). Edelman and van Knippenberg (2018) noted that the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness is important, but surprisingly understudied. Longenecker and Mallin (2019) noted that great sales leaders possess tremendous interpersonal skills and the ability to connect with their people through their emotional intelligence.

The success of an organization is often tied to the intelligence of its leaders. According to Ramanauskas (2016), emotional intelligence has also been found to be a key factor in the success. In research conducted where the Balanced Scorecard was used to assess organizational effectiveness, emotional intelligence also had a strong correlation with individual performance. Organizations are assessed using quantitative means to determine growth year over year, adding social-cultural and environmental protection instruments to supplement the Balanced Scorecard could be impactful. Similarly, Leskin and Conine, (2016) found that in organizations where the culture supports and values skills assessment, a 360 assessment which would include emotional intelligence and general business acumen, is a useful tool to identify and groom managerial candidates.

Wang (2015) examined emotional intelligence in a team setting, not just from the leader-follower dyad but how sharing of information throughout the team allows for greater cohesion. The mechanisms through which emotional intelligence works are interpersonal. Understanding a combination of emotional abilities is the best predictor of outcomes in an organization. An individual can be high on managing emotions but low on perceiving them, creating a situation whereby this person is managing his or her emotions inappropriately (e.g., managing them unnecessarily, managing the wrong emotions or at the wrong time (Wang, 2015).

Edelman and van Knippenberg (2018) addressed the conceptualization and assessment of emotional intelligence as an ability influence for leadership effectiveness. The self-assessment ratings utilized in prior research were found to be a cause for concern, and appeared to be subjective. They proposed that the benefits of emotional intelligence could be understood as important in response to follower emotional expression, as well as using affective displays to influence those followers. Leaders with high emotional intelligence would use that ability to recognize and understand follower emotions to more effectively respond to them.

Nowlin et al. (2018) argued that a salesperson's reliance on affective orientation diminishes with time and training and feedback from the manager should reflect salespeople's changing needs. Specifically, at some

point at around a year into the job, salespeople will not need as much training and support as it comes to understanding customers emotionally. The manager should not stop providing it all together. (Nowlin et al., 2018)

Emotional and social competencies derived from emotional intelligence training using a spaced out coaching intervention was studied in research by Dippenaar and Schaap, (2017). Leaders practiced the new behaviors regularly with the support of their supervisors. Bar-On EQ-i assessment and interviews with the supervisors were used to evaluate the programme. Training in intervals using goalsetting was found to be more effective than longer infrequent sessions. Participants reported improved self-confidence and expression of emotions.

Joseph et al. (2015) summarized prior research on the relationship between leader trait affect and leadership. Some of the work examined emotions with a view to determining the degree to which a happy leader was a good leader. This provides credence to the notion that trait affectivity can motivate a person towards a desired state. Mukonoweshuro et al. (2016) highlighted the complementary nature of the constructs of servant leadership and emotional intelligence, and noted that soft skills like influencing ability, and relationship management competencies are built using those constructs. Mukonoweshuro et al. (2016) found that leaders endowed with servant leadership and emotional intelligence competencies were better equipped to harness the energies of their teams towards attainment of the vision and create high trust and integrity.

A key component of emotional intelligence is the ability to manage one's emotions. (Mayer, Caruso et al., 2016). In a study that examined the regulation of emotions in leaders, Arnold et al. (2015) noted that it may affect leaders in a different manner from employees who serve customers. Factors like frequency of interaction, and the routine nature of the interactions, may allow leaders to regulate their emotions and have genuine reactions. The emotions displayed by leaders with their employees would require deep acting as opposed to regulating surface emotions from random encounters. While it is important to note that the results found positive association between transformational leadership and genuine emotion, Arnold et al. (2015) suggested future qualitative research be done to support the theory between transformational leadership and the forms of emotional regulation.

Kim and Kim (2017) highlighted that given the association of emotional intelligence with leadership, emotional intelligence-related aspects warrant inclusion in the selection and promotion process, as well as in the regular evaluation process. If the organization prefers transformational leaders over transactional or laissez-faire leaders, the emotional intelligence of emerging leaders could be examined, or their social relationships with their protégés could be observed. Kim and Kim (2017) noted that emotional intelligence, despite widespread awareness, still seems to be viewed as good-to-have in practice, as opposed to must-have, in a performance-centered, result-based organizational setting.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Yin (2009) offered several ways to ensure that a case study establishes quality as a piece of empirical social research. Tai and Ajjawi (2016) noted that credibility refers to the confidence or believability of the study's findings. While interviews were the main source of data collection for this exploratory case study, notes from the archival data, and transcripts of the audio recording provided an opportunity for triangulation by using various strategies of analysis. I ensured credibility by allowing the participants to review the transcripts via email to check for accuracy and make any amendments necessary to clarify the intent of their answers if they seemed unclear. At the end of the research they were presented with a two-page summary of the findings. This constituted member checking. Keeping a reflective journal during the data collection process helped to establish credibility.

Transferability

Marshall and Rossman, 2016 argued that transferability is an essential component for establishing quality in qualitative research. Transferability is achieved when the results can be transferred to other contexts. In the case of this study, the findings may be applicable to similar retail organization, if the sampling framework is similar. It is the readers' responsibility to evaluate and examine research findings and determine whether they are applicable to other situations. The researcher achieved this by providing thick, rich descriptions of the participants, methodology, and the results.

Dependability

Yin (2009) established the concept of dependability by explaining that a later researcher should be able to conduct the same study and achieve the same results. A study can claim dependability when it can be replicated. I achieved dependability by providing an audit trail from data collected during the research study. There was also transcription of the audio from interviews. The ability to follow that audit trail and conduct similar research to achieve similar results constitutes dependability.

Confirmability

According to Alase (2017), confirmability of the study is achieved when the researcher can demonstrate that the data and its interpretation are beyond reproach. As the researcher, I did not discuss my experiences with the topic being researched. I reported only on data collected from the participants and did not introduce my opinions. Keeping an audit trail and reflective journal served to provide confirmability.

Ethical Procedures

Participants for the study were invited to do so via email. Their email addresses were provided by the St. Lucia Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture. They received a written informed consent form from the researcher via email. The informed consent form was prepared by the researcher and approved by the IRB and serves to ensure that the research would have been conducted under the rules that govern human participants. After IRB approval was granted, the approval number was issued and is recorded in Appendix D. Data collection began after the approval. Participants were reminded verbally before the start of the interview that their participation was voluntary, and they could have withdrawn if they did not feel comfortable.

Data was kept confidential. There was no mention of organization names, individual names, or any form of organization identifiers. Data was identified by codes that I created to distinguish the participants because names were not used. They were alphanumeric in nature. Raw data was kept on my personal laptop in a document protected with a passcode. The password-protected folder with the raw audio data from the interviews will be kept on my personal laptop and will be deleted after five years.

No identifiable information was written on physical documents. Any physical documents, including signed consent forms, will be kept at my house in a locked filing cabinet and will be shredded after five years.

Summary and Conclusions

The major themes in the literature connect emotional intelligence to employee engagement and both relate to leadership and sales. Researchers have found that the success of organizations depends on employee engagement. In the retail environment, that role falls mainly on the sales associates who interact with the customers. Emotional intelligence too, especially in leaders, has become a determining factor for success. To understand emotional intelligence, researchers have conducted studies to enhance their understanding of personality traits and employee emotions. Emotional Intelligence was broken down into four constructs by Goleman (1998) - (1) self-awareness; (2) self-management; (3) social awareness; and (4) relationship management.

Studies on the effects of employee engagement in organizations showed a direct connection to the concept of emotional intelligence and leadership. Salimath and Kavitha (2015) described employee engagement as a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its values. Other themes that appeared in relation to emotional intelligence and employee engagement were: (a) measuring emotional intelligence, (b) leadership, (c) measuring employee engagement, (d) sales, and (e) organizational success.

We provide a detailed description of the research methodology that was used for the research. An exploratory single case study design was chosen to examine the impact of retail store managers' emotional intelligence on employee engagement in St. Lucia. Recruitment was conducted via emails, and the participants included between fifteen to twenty retail store managers, who had been in their position for over a year. The primary objective of the study was to gain information about the topic from the participants' perspectives.

The general problem is that there is an issue identifying, acquiring, and retaining top sales talent in organizations. The specific problem is that the manager's direct role in employee engagement through an organizational culture of caring may be lacking. In cases where the organization's objectives are profit-centered, the manager may place more emphasis on the customer than the employee. Without emotional intelligence, the manager may lack the capacity to lead, which could result in turnover in the organization.

Even though there is existing research on emotional intelligence and employee engagement, there is still a gap in knowledge from the retail perspective as well as in the Caribbean. The research in this study may contribute to the body of knowledge on emotional intelligence and employee engagement from the retail store managers' perspective.

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