Impact of Personality and Emotional Intelligence on Successful Training in Competences

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Many modern management theories and researches deriving therefrom seek those personality features and traits that ought to ensure the efficient development of an individual's competences. In my research we found out that managers are able to develop top quality management and top quality competences irrespective of their personality traits. Since there is no uniform method that would offer an explanation as to how individuals should develop their competences, we presented how an individual training programme and the development of competences should proceed. However, we can only attain optimum success in training needed competences if we take into consideration individual features of a person, his/her emotional intelligence and the requirements of his/her working environment. What the dynamic and variable working environment expects from a modern leader is a wide range of good or even perfect competences. The article at hand presents the importance of a long-term basis training that has a systematic influence on the improvement of management techniques.

Key Words: competences, training, personality traits, management, behaviour

JEL *Classification:* J24, M53, M54

Introduction

A leader in a modern company has, for quite some time now, not only played the role of a manager and director of activities in the narrower sense of the word but has also been more and more becoming a person who makes sure that the people for whom he/she is made responsible are able to reach and maintain optimum work performance. Therefore his/her interaction competences are gaining increasing importance. The changing conditions in the world of management have led to the situation where business knowledge, financial management, information technologies and other types of managerial expertise are generally accessible and commanded by the majority of managers or management teams in successful companies. Distinguishing successful leaders from

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unsuccessful ones today are their competences. However, I do not have in mind the competences in the sense of the scope of their responsibilities but in the sense of their ability to apply their knowledge in solution solving. Svetlik (2001) lists five groups of competences:

- *methodological competences* constitute the ability to perform time management, the ability to make decisions, the knowledge to deliver solutions to problems, communication skills;
- *social competences* are persuasive abilities, abilities to conduct negotiations, ability to manage people;
- *standpoint (value) competences* include the ability to establish values and positive standpoints;
- *learning competences* comprise the ability to learn, ability to assess what will bear crucial importance for an individual in the future, the ability to collect and process information;
- *specific work-related competences* are competences that distinguish one line of work from the other.

The world of modern management undoubtedly requires a new style of leadership and a new type of leader. The trend is shifting from leadership, characteristic of which was delegating and assigning orders or instructions (reactive leadership), towards the agenda-driven leadership based upon the formation of a company's visions and goals as well as the mobilisation of its employees with their participation (Svetlik 1996). An important role in this process is also attributed to interactive leadership, rendering the leader into an instructor who learns together with his colleagues in the processes of problem solving and developing new projects (Rasmunsson 1992). Furthermore, according to Svetlik (1996) the locus of leaders' activities is shifting from 'hard' to 'soft' factors, such as organisational culture, knowledge, communication, motivation through work and career, and so forth.

Even though leadership researchers (Hickman 1990; Kotter 1988; Yukl 1994) believe that it is reasonable to consider management and leadership as two distinct roles, they at the same time deem it inappropriate to view managers and leaders as two different types of people. While an individual may be both a leader and a manager, this does not necessarily mean that a good manager can also be a good leader. According to Conger and Kanungo (1998), the key distinction between a manager and a leader is provided in the book by Burns (1978). At that time, Burns was the author who first introduced a claim that the style of leadership may be defined

as transformational or transactional. In his opinion, both the leader and the led are in a position to offer each other certain advantages. Transformational leadership involves mutual encmyagement of the leader and the led, the inclusion of the led into the processes of creating new visions and establishing the processes of continuous changes. This results in the changes that occur in both, the leader and the led. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, involves a completely different process, since it is founded exclusively on a one-way influence that the leader has on the led. Burns' work bore a major influence on Bass. The latter claims that transformational leadership is that which has been subject to the most insightful research in the last decade (Bass 1998). The reasons for such an interest are most likely based on the findings that transformational leadership, in principle, delivers the greatest share of positive results (Barling, Weber, and Kelloway 1996).

With transformational leadership the leader stimulates the employees with ideals and values. He/she makes use of intrinsic motivation. Transformational leadership derives from my fundamental premises (Bass and Avolio 1993):

- *charisma:* the leader presents the vision and the meaning of the company's mission, instils pride, evokes respect and confidence;
- *inspiration:* motivates high expectations, makes use of symbols in effort-oriented guiding, expresses crucial intents in a simple manner;
- *intellectual stimulations:* develop creativity, rationality and systematic problem solving methods;
- *consideration of the interests of individual staff members:* invests personal interest in an individual's development, treats each individual as a respective personality, coaches, offers advice.

Transactional leadership is founded upon concertations between the leader and his/her subordinates concerning all kinds of material, personnel, social and other advantages that an employee may benefit from, insofar they comply with the rules or requirements stipulated by their superior. The transactional leader makes use of extrinsic motivation, and complies with rules and regulations. The transactional leader's work is based on (Bass and Avolio 1993):

- *rewarding:* negotiates rewards for accomplished tasks, promises rewards for future job performance, gives acknowledgements for achievements;

- *leadership-by-exception (active):* monitors ongoing activities, looks for divergences from the rules and standards, makes decisions on corrective actions;
- *leadership-by-exception (passive):* intervenes only in the event of the set standards not being met;
- *laissez faire leadership:* renounces the responsibility and avoids team-based decision-making.

Transformational leadership development programmes have proven to be very effective. Their purpose is to teach those techniques and methods of leadership that may be defined as transformational forms of leadership. The key conditions for efficient functioning of learning models for transformational leadership relate to appropriate feedback information. The employees improve their effectiveness if they can assess that their superiors apply those leadership techniques that may be classified as transformational. In order for this to happen we have to provide for a flow of information as direct as possible on the manner of leadership and reactions thereto (Kelloway, Barling, and Helleur 2000).

Is it Possible to Influence the Development of Competences?

Let us look at an example of competence development within the context of emotional intelligence. Among the authors dealing with and conducting research on this phenomenon there is a strong consensus that emotional intelligence may be developed through emotional competences (Goleman 1998; Steiner 1997; Höpfl and Linstead 1997; Cooper and Sawaf 1997; Martinez 1997). There is an enormous body of literature devoted exclusively to the development of emotional competences. Despite the indisputable fact that emotional competences are easiest to learn in childhood and that this form of learning poses greater problems at later stages of life, it also cannot be denied that high quality programmes can bear significant influence on the development of emotional competences in the desired direction.

The research conducted in management, sport and behavioural psychology shows that the competences may be enhanced, developed or acquired. In this case it is also necessary to take into account the fact that social and emotional learning differs from cognitive and technical learning. Therefore this type of learning requires a different approach. Managers are aware that competences constitute an important herald of success in work; however, it is in their interest to know how to ensure that

a maximum number of employees will develop their competences to the highest level possible. In order to facilitate my understanding of the likely influence on the improvement of competences, let us take a look at two types of learning.

There are two fundamental reasons as to why it is appropriate to strive for the on-the-job improvement of competences.

1. Competences constitute a crucial factor in work performance. The results obtained from various studies make it evident that more than two thirds of competences necessary for successful job performance are determined by emotional competences.

2. A vast majority of adults involved or introduced in the working process do not have the appropriate competences that are required by ever more demanding working environments. A particularly acute problem is posed by the lack of motivation and the absence thereof, respectively.

The Significance of Effective Training

With their roots in the early 1950's, trainings influencing the development of social skills present no novelty. The effectiveness of such trainings has been proven by objective criteria (reducing absenteeism and increasing profit). Even greater, however, was the subjective perception of the changes that were measured by means of various questionnaires. The results have shown an improved level of self-assurance, heightened sensitivity to other people's problems, increased confidence and so forth (Cherniss 2000).

Figure 1 shows the plan and implementation of the process for the development of competences. The learning process comprises fmy key phases. Figure 1 clearly demonstrates what approach has to be taken in education and competence training. The more defined the methodology is, the easier it is to follow the plan and the greater the opportunity is to succeed. The complexity of the scheme crucially relies on the essential differences between cognitive learning and competence learning.

Let us take a closer look at respective phases within the entire process of influencing the changes in organisations' competences. Applying the following rules it is possible to ensure an optimum systematic impact on the objectives concerning the development of employees' competences. Such guidelines can bear influence on the development of the widest scope of activities, including team work, leadership, conflict and stress

Preparing for changes   Training

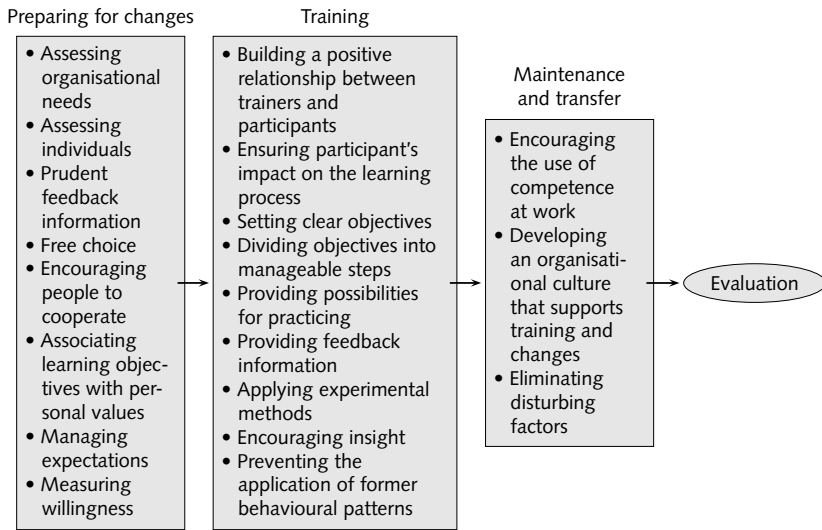| Assessing organisational needs · Assessing individuals · Prudent feedback information · Free choice · Encouraging people to cooperate · Associating learning objectives with personal values · Managing expectations · Measuring willingness |

FIGURE 1   Optimum process for the development of competences in organisations
(adapted from Cherniss and Goleman 1998)

management, as well as the enhancement of customer and buyer relations. The rules apply to the changes in an individual's behaviour; due to their synergic effect, they increase the chances of success, provided also that they are consistently implemented. The rules are grouped into the following fmy spheres of activities: preparation, training, maintenance and evaluation, with each of them being further subdivided (Cherniss and Goleman 1998).

Preparing for Changes. The initial period, which is critical to the success of the competence-developing process, comprises preparations for changes. Preparations are implemented on both levels, personal and organisational. Motivation of participants is of key importance to the success of training. Generally, adult people have deep-rooted behavioural patterns. Altering these patterns constitutes a rather difficult task.

Training. Training includes all the activities which allow for the introduction of changes. The quantity of time, energy and potential fear of change invested by individuals during the period of training in competences is so abundant that it may bear a significant impact on reducing the motivation for changes. For this reason, the trainers must be aware of such obstacles at all times and actively contribute to the reduction of their negative impacts on motivation.

TABLE 1 Average age and number of senior staff members included in the research

Gender	Average age	N
Women	40.08	10
Men	44.03	30
Total	43.22	40

Maintenance and Transfer. Maintenance and transfer relates to post-training phases and ensures that the acquired and trained competences will be transferred into all desired spheres of activities. When the training participant returns to his/her old working environment, he/she will most likely encounter numerous factors that will encourage the application of those former behavioural patterns which we have been trying to replace during the training process.

Evaluation. Evaluation[1] must at all times be an inherent part of the training process, since it is only in this way that the effectiveness of performed activities can be measured (Cherniss and Goleman 1998).

Research

The research was conducted on the sample of 40 managers and 154 persons who assessed the competences of participating managers. The article at hand will focus on the managers, their personality traits and emotional competence.

Let us first take a look at the tables containing basic socio-demographic variables for managerial staff. Since the numerus is below 100 I did not calculate percentage values. Despite the low numerus in the case of the experimental group I was able to apply classic statistical procedures, since on the other hand I had a group of 154 assessors. Their socio-demographic data were not statistically processed due to the fact that an appreciable number of them wished to remain anonymous, not only by virtue of their names but other personal data as well. Their wish, of cmyse, was respected.

The results obtained from the Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) show average values for fundamental personality traits. Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire is the most frequently used and quoted personality questionnaire in psychological practice (Musek 1993).

Table 2 compares the difference between the results obtained from my sample and the standardised results obtained from the sample of the Slovenian population. What can be noticed is that there is no signifi-

TABLE 2   Average values for my sample and standardised result obtained from
a sample of the Slovenian population that was subject to subtests contained
in the Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire for managerial staff

	Average value of the sample	Average value of the standardised result
EPQ P	5.45	4.27
EPQ E	16.55	15.84
EPQ N	7.28	5.05
EPQ L	10.50	13.84

cant difference between the results obtained from the first two subtests
and the standardised results. Slightly higher are the levels of psychoticism
(amounting to a little more than one point) and extraversion; the neu-
roticism/emotional stability dimension exhibits an average result that is
higher by two points; a little more than three points lower is the result
on the sincerity scale.

The result on the psychoticism scale (P) is somewhat higher than its
counterpart typical of the Slovenian population sample. With regard
to the fact that the psychoticism dimension at the higher end of the
continuum is determined by the characteristics of aggression, tough-
mindedness, inconsideration and so forth, I can claim that the slightly
higher result obtained for the group of leaders does not come as a sur-
prise. The characteristics of strictness in mutual relations are, as a rule,
fairly desirable. A somewhat higher result on the P scale for managerial
staff is expected and in agreement with the indications from the relevant
literature.

On the extraversion scale (E), the result exceeding the value of the
standardised result determines the typical characteristics of talkativeness,
outgoingness, sociableness, good communication skills and the ability to
establish social contacts. This result, as well, is expected in the case of
my experimental group. A good leader should have the communication
skills which will enable him/her to effectively manage the social network.
A good measure of extraversion will facilitate his/her achieving this goal.

With regard to the neuroticism/emotional stability dimension, the
above-average result means a higher level of emotional instability or neu-
roticism. The persons who attain an above-average number of points
are restless, moody and easily become anxious. This result serves as a
warning that the managerial staff has to be provided with the knowledge

and the means to help them tackle the major environment-induced stress factors. Since it is very difficult to bring influence to bear on the working environment, the main effort should be invested in people. One of the methods to reduce the impact of a stressful environment is training for the purposes of more efficient leadership that would ensure a higher quality fulfilment of needs and requirements. Or, in other words, stress constitutes nothing else than a very condensed series of unsatisfied needs (Glasser 1998).

Finally, there is also the sincerity dimension, which, according to Eysenck, does not constitute a real personality dimension, but a mere tool for measuring the tendency 'to pretend'. Measuring this personality characteristic is crucial when we wish to verify as to what extent an individual tends to opt for socially more acceptable answers[2] (i. e. tries to present himself/herself in a different light). According to Eysenck, the tendency to pretend is made more evident in certain situations when a person in question wishes to make a better impression (for example, when filling out the questionnaire accompanying the employment interview; Musek 1993). In addition to pretence, this scale also demonstrates the level of social naivety or conformism. The higher the result is, the more explicitly expressed the characteristics are. Persons included in my research on average achieved up to three points lower results on this scale. This means that we are dealing with people who convey a typically lower tendency to pretend, as well as a lower level of conformism. For senior managers such a result is as much expected as it is desirable.

In conducting my research I used the EPQ with a view to establishing whether the personality characteristics were in correlation with emotional competence.

The Association between Personality Traits and Emotional Competence

This part of the task will deliver answers to the questions of my research. I will establish in what way emotional competences are associated with personality traits and whether leaders with better evaluated emotional competences also work with subordinates who are more satisfied in terms of both their personal and the organisation's needs. Thus I will be able to set up the foundations to confirm or reject the hypothesis on the association between emotional competences and personality traits.

Table 3 presents calculated correlations between personality traits and the result from the personality questionnaire on emotional competences.

With regard to emotional competences and personality traits there are 80 calculated correlations and 16 with regard to the clusters of emotional competences and personality traits. According to Petz, in the event of a large number of calculated statistical values the amount of envisaged statistically characteristic correlations will depend on the height of the risk[3] (Musek 1993). In my case, where I am dealing with 96 calculated correlations, I may confirm the 'zero hypothesis' when we do not obtain more than five statistically characteristic correlations. It is also important to emphasise that such conclusions can be drawn only when we deal with large numbers.

In reviewing the correlation matrix, I conclude that among all calculated correlations there are three statistically characteristic correlations at the 5% risk level. The first is the correlation between the P dimension and organisational awareness, the second is the correlation between the E dimension and prudence, with the third being the correlation between the L scale and self-control. Since, owing to the large number of calculated correlations, I will accept the interpretation on accidental statistically characteristic correlations, I will not interpret these associations as substantial but accidental.

According to claims made in the relevant literature, emotional competences are not deemed to be in correlation with personality traits (Mayer and Salovey 1993; Goleman 1995). The results of my research confirm these claims. I can conclude that personal characteristics merely constitute a specific potential that acquires its substantial validity in association with competences and behaviour. Personal characteristics do not bear influence on the level of the possibility that someone will develop a certain emotional competence. Therefore, even though I can find differences in personal characteristics between 'normal'[4] population and managers, these characteristics do not constitute a factor that is crucial for a successful leadership.

Conclusion

My presupposition was that there was no statistically characteristic correlation between emotional competences and personality traits. The results of my research proved this hypothesis. My conclusions match with the results from the literature, which confirm that emotional intelligence is independent from fundamental personality traits (Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey 2000). How could we apply the acquired knowledge for a better understanding of leadership?

TABLE 3   Correlations between personality traits in the EPQ questionnaire
and emotional competences in the ECI questionnaire

	EPQ P		EPQ E		EPQ N		EPQ L	
	r	p	r	p	r	p	r	p
Self-acknowledgement	−0.01	0.962	0.06	0.723	0.00	0.986	0.02	0.883
Emotional self-acknowledgement	0.13	0.438	0.22	0.191	0.03	0.867	0.08	0.620
Self-assessment	0.02	0.885	−0.04	0.798	−0.04	0.827	−0.10	0.536
Self-confidence	−0.07	0.679	0.04	0.813	0.02	0.891	0.06	0.707
Self-control	−0.07	0.663	−0.11	0.499	−0.06	0.739	0.17	0.307
Self-supervision	−0.06	0.740	−0.14	0.400	−0.08	0.630	0.32	0.048*
Reliability	−0.09	0.608	0.04	0.813	−0.09	0.579	0.22	0.183
Prudence	−0.09	0.586	−0.35	0.034*	0.05	0.755	−0.05	0.765
Adaptability	0.09	0.604	0.04	0.823	0.01	0.976	0.17	0.314
Achievement-orientedness	0.00	0.992	−0.08	0.612	−0.19	0.242	−0.01	0.953
Initiative	0.04	0.818	0.03	0.836	0.01	0.965	0.18	0.274
Social awareness	0.01	0.929	−0.04	0.818	−0.14	0.395	0.13	0.449
Empathy	0.03	0.879	0.02	0.918	−0.23	0.163	0.19	0.263
Obligingness	−0.16	0.329	−0.13	0.436	−0.03	0.844	−0.14	0.401
Organisational awareness	0.34	0.038*	0.02	0.908	0.03	0.844	0.20	0.231
Social skills	−0.10	0.549	−0.01	0.975	−0.20	0.224	0.09	0.595
Developing others	−0.07	0.664	−0.12	0.475	−0.09	0.574	0.00	0.995
Leadership	−0.18	0.283	−0.11	0.530	−0.05	0.755	−0.02	0.920
Influence	−0.02	0.901	0.08	0.651	−0.13	0.447	0.23	0.160
Communication	0.08	0.624	0.14	0.410	−0.09	0.584	−0.01	0.948
Fostering changes	−0.24	0.150	−0.17	0.299	−0.23	0.164	0.10	0.567
Conflict management	−0.03	0.867	0.02	0.928	−0.26	0.109	0.16	0.333
Establishing contacts	0.02	0.884	0.21	0.209	−0.08	0.615	0.13	0.447
Team work and cooperation	−0.14	0.387	−0.01	0.969	−0.23	0.158	0.02	0.918

* Statistically characteristic correlations with less than 5% risk.

We often look for the differences between successful and unsuccessful people, between successful and unsuccessful leaders. In a similar vein, we also wonder whether leaders possess specific personal qualities that

other people do not. Since an appreciable number of researches deliver affirmative answers to these questions, we tend to make over-generalised statements based on the conclusions that these personality traits and differences are crucial for a successful performance in leadership. But this is far from true.

How is an individual, without any psychological education and psychological questionnaires, able to establish the type of personality traits of a person with whom he/she is in a certain relationship? By observing their behaviour. Personality traits are thus expressed through an individual's behaviour. Behaviour may be effective or ineffective, socially more or less acceptable, or more or less appropriate. But at all times, it is something that an individual has learnt (excluding instinctive and reflex behaviour). Personality and behaviour are interrelated only to the extent on the basis of which we are able to draw conclusions on the fundamental personality traits.

If we can define behaviour as good or bad, are we then, in a similar vein, also able to determine an individual's personality traits? No. Even though the general, non-professional opinion states otherwise, the quality of behaviour is completely independent from personality traits. The latter, more likely, constitute a potential. They represent the material that may be developed through learning into a certain type of personality which, in itself, cannot be deemed as good or bad.

Why did we claim that we can draw conclusions on personality traits on the basis of an individual's behaviour? Because the quantitative side of behaviour is, in fact, directly determined by personality traits, while the same does not apply to its qualitative side. An individual who has achieved a high result on the E scale (extraversion) will, undoubtedly, be more talkative than an individual who has attained a lower result. However, the quality of their respective communication behaviours will be determined by factors that are completely different from their personality traits.

Personality is a relatively permanent system of an individual's behavioural, emotional and physical characteristics (Musek 1993). Personality potentials are genetically determined. The way in which an individual realises his/her personality potential, however, is not completely defined in his/her genetic system. At least with regard to behaviour we can claim that it can be acquired through learning, subject to change or given up. Today we can also claim with certainty that it is also possible to improve competences that constitute a crucial factor for an individual's successful performance.

In principle, each individual has to accept his/her personality as a potential determining the quantity of his/her behaviour. The selected behaviour quality, conversely, will depend on other, situation-specific factors.

Competences are expressed through behaviour. I can conclude that leaders are able to develop high quality form of behaviour and thus also high quality competences, irrespective of their personality traits. Each individual has to be aware of his/her potentials and translate them into best possible practice. However, there is no single recipe for all. Within the process of training in competences we will be able to deliver optimum results only if we will take into consideration respective characteristics of each individual and the requirements posed by a specific working environment. Dynamic and variable working environments require from a modern leader a wide spectrum of good or even perfect competences. It is only in this manner that a leader can play his/her role successfully and efficiently.

Notes

1 Evaluation is a procedure used for the assessment of the current state or process. It does not present a critique, since it does not treat the personality traits of an individual but merely establishes the gap between the actual and the desired states.

2 The first three personal dimensions were proven by Eysenck also by human physiology studies. Eysenck discovered physiological correlants that confirmed the existence of three key personality traits. The fourth dimension is a type of a tool that helps us determine the level of reliability of the results obtained with regard to the first three scales. If the result on the L scale is too high, (above 17 points), Eysenck recommends that great care is taken in interpreting the other three dimensions (Musek 1993).

3 In adopting conclusions with a 5% risk, there is a possiblitiy of accidentally obtaining five statistically characteristic correlations in 100 calculated correlations. In accepting 1% risk, we would most probably accidentally obtain one statistically characteristic correlation.

4 In statistical terms, the word 'normal' means normal distribution.

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