

# Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Empowerment of Business Leaders in Zimbabwe

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**Abstract:** *This paper investigated the effect of Emotional Intelligence on empowerment of Business leaders in Zimbabwe. This paper adopted a quantitative descriptive research design, the study used a systematic probability sampling method and 262 business leaders participated in the study. To test for relationships between the main variable, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were computed using SPSS. Findings revealed a significant relationship with most of the components of emotional intelligence while weak relationships were found in others. The findings also show that there is not much difference between male and female leaders in the Emotional Intelligence and social intelligence competencies. According to age, results indicate that Emotional Intelligence increases as one gets older. This led to the conclusion that Emotional Intelligence can empower business leaders to positively apply social skills to influence others, create strong relationships and effectively motivate others by controlling their emotions and understanding their weaknesses. It is recommended that business leaders could be made aware of this intelligence so that they can improve their competencies.*

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Empowerment Competencies

## 1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence has been defined as “the ability to perceive emotions to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” [1] Mayer and Salovey, (1997:5) emotions can also be regarded as the body’s energy source, as they motivate an individual to respond to situations. [2] Bourne (2000:260) discusses the importance of being ‘in touch’ with one’s emotions in order to mobilize and drive oneself. Suppressing one’s emotions could lead to lethargy, numbness and tiredness which could in turn result in depression or anxiety, or both. According to [3] Smith (2002:95) emotions are internally manifested and may include perceptual, psychological and cognitive complements existing simultaneously at different levels. According to [4] P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (1997:170), emotions have three components and an awareness of these components can ensure that emotional information is better harnessed to action. The first is cognitive-experiential, which refers to our thoughts and awareness of our emotional states. The second is behavioral-expressive, referring to the recognition of verbal and non-verbal emotional information which allows for better interpretation of emotions; the last is the physiological-biochemical component, which refers to physical states such as heart rate and hormone levels which accompany emotional states. It is therefore seen that recognizing and understanding one’s own emotions assist in reasoning and provide valuable internal and external information to the individual. It is clear that emotions play an important part in our reactions or responses to daily situations. Thus the individual’s state affects those around them. When individuals can understand their own emotions and those of the people around them, they can fine tune their own responses to get the best out of a situation [5] Goleman (1998:167); [6] Singh, Manser & Mestry (2007:542). This

may illustrate the fact that business leaders face daily challenges with their colleagues and subordinates. It is therefore imperative that leaders understand their own emotional ‘make-up’ to be able to respond positively to those around them. This research is aimed at assessing the Emotional Intelligence competencies of business leaders and to see if these competencies empower leaders to secure sustainable development and survival of their organizations.

## 2. Need for Study

The study was motivated by the situation observed in Zimbabwe, like the collapse of corporations; financial sector, manufacturing and retail outlets; as evidenced by the closure of some banks; (Trust Bank, Time Bank, Barbican Bank, Intermarket, Renaissance, Royal Bank. The fall of manufacturing giants like Cone Textiles, Cold Storage Commission; and many other retail outlets. According to Transparency International Corruption perceptions Index, Zimbabwe ranged 163 out of 176 countries. On a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean) Zimbabwe was ranked 2 in 2012. The Zimbabwean Anti-Corruption Commission was established after the passing of the Anti-Corruption Commission Bill in June 2004. According to a [7] (2009) Global Integrity report, the Commission was found to be highly inefficient and that it has very little authority to take steps to stop corruption in Zimbabwe. The researcher then is of the view that Emotional Intelligence can positively influence business leaders in Zimbabwe so that they can become Change Agents in order to cope with the challenges in business in Zimbabwe.

## 3. Research Objectives

The study looked at three specific objectives. The first looked at the importance of Emotional Intelligence on business leaders and the second looked at evaluating the

effect of Emotional Intelligence on the business leaders while the third looked at how emotional intelligence competencies varies with demographic variables of business leaders.

- To assess the importance of Emotional Intelligence on business leaders in Zimbabwe
- To ascertain the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Empowerment of business leaders in Zimbabwe.
- Establish if emotional intelligence competencies varies with demographic variables of business leaders

#### **4. Assumption**

Emotional Intelligence empowers business leaders in Zimbabwe to create environments where people feel connected to a higher purpose and to rise together to achieve audacious business goals.

#### **5. Literature Review**

[8] Boyatzis and Ratti (2009) in their study identified competencies that distinguished effective managers and leaders. Performance measures were collected as nominations from superiors and subordinates. Results revealed that emotional, cognitive and intelligence competencies predict performance. They also found out that in the Emotional Intelligence competency cluster, effective executives who were more initiative than their less effective counterparts. The main theme which came out in this study is that competencies needed for managers to be effective can be identified. In another study by [9] Bal Subramanian, Ghatala and Nair (2008) where they investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational leadership, as well as the impact of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness, the findings suggested that management functions have undermined the importance of individual development, at the cost of technology and modernization. [10] Rego, Sousa, Cunha, Correia, and Saur (2007) examined the relationship between leaders' emotional intelligence and creativity of their teams. The results revealed that emotionally intelligent leaders behave in ways that stimulate the creativity of their teams. [11] Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) established a link between emotional intelligence and workplace measures of leadership effectiveness, using an objective measure of performance and a 360° assessment tool. The research results showed that executives higher on emotional intelligence are more likely to achieve organizational outcomes and be considered as effective leaders by their subordinates and direct manager. [12] Punia (2005) conducted a study and found that leaders with higher emotional intelligence see changes as opportunities for betterment, and they cherish not stability but ongoing development of individual workers and of the organization itself. [13] Srivastva and Bharamanaikar (2004) examined the relationship of emotional intelligence with leadership excellence, success and job satisfaction. The results showed that emotional intelligence significantly correlates with transformational leadership and success.

[14] Webb (2004) examined the extent to which emotional intelligence is related to transformational leadership within mentoring relationships. The results indicated that emotional intelligence can predict several aspects of transformational leadership, including charisma and inspirational motivation. [15] Elias, Arnold and Hussey (2003) claim effective leadership is a combination of traditional intelligence (intelligence quotient) and emotional intelligence. Those leaders who possess a strong set of interpersonal skills and can distinguish what approach is best to use for any given situation are most likely to be successful in their positions [16] Dyer, (2001). Such skills needed for effective leadership include empathy, heightened awareness, insight, and the ability to give feedback [17] Bass and Avolio, (1993).

All these studies made no reference to study on emotional intelligence as a tool for empowerment of business leaders in Zimbabwe and no reference is made about Zimbabwean academics having researched about empowerment of business leaders through emotional intelligence hence the need for the current study.

#### **6. Methodology**

The objectives of this study required an accurate assessment of two important elements of the research. The first element is who was included in this study and the second element is how the data was collected for the study. This study follows a quantitative descriptive survey research design. Data was collected from 212 business leaders that were selected from 50 companies using systematic probability sampling method. The participants consisted of the three levels of business leadership, lower level, middle level and top level managers. Emotional intelligence was evaluated using the EQ evaluation model which was adapted from [1] Mayer and Salovey (1997) and a multifactor leadership scale developed by [18] Strydom (1999) these models were adapted with variations to suit the Zimbabwean context. The data was collected through a pilot tested structured questionnaire with Likert type of response format. The instrument was validated using expert opinion and a pilot test was conducted to measure the internal consistency. After instrument validation, the questionnaire was administered in person to the respondents to improve response rate and to ensure that all questions were answered. Data collected was analyzed statistically using SPSS version 16.0. Descriptive methods were used to summarize the results. In order to test for relationship between the main variables (emotional intelligence and empowerment) of business leaders, Pearson product moment correlation coefficients were computed. For reasons of consistency, descriptions of correlations were based on the guidelines for conventional practice outline by [19] Cohen and Cohen (1983). According to these guidelines sized for correlations are  $r = .10$  (classified as weak),  $r = .30$  (classified as moderate) and  $r > .50$  (classified as strong).

#### **7. Findings and Discussion**

An indication of internal consistency reliability can be ascertained from the Cronbach alpha coefficient which is calculated in scale reliability testing. A Cronbach alpha value in the region of 0.7 or greater is usually regarded as a

good indicator of internal consistency reliability. In this study Cronbach alpha value was 0.933 which confirms that scores calculated for various dimensions of emotional intelligence represented true measures of the emotional intelligence competencies.

### 7.1 Emotional Intelligence Profile

Most of the respondents (75.5 Male, 24.5 Female) agree with the assertion that emotional intelligence can empower business leaders to become effective leaders. Table 1 summarizes the emotional intelligence profile of respondents.

**Table 1: Emotional Intelligence Profile**

Emotional Intelligence Profile	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very High	70	33.02	33.02
High	94	44.34	77.36
Fair	38	17.92	95.28
Low	6	2.83	98.11
Very Low	4	1.89	100
	112	100%	

The results indicate that 77.36% of the respondents have high emotional intelligence while only 4.72% have high emotional intelligence and 17.92% had fair to average emotional intelligence. These results indicate that business leaders value emotional intelligence competencies.

### 7.2 Emotional Intelligence Factors

One of the key questions of the study was to find out the critical elements of emotional intelligence, which enable business leaders to become change agents. The factors under scrutiny were eight and these are depicted in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Emotional Intelligence Factors**

EQ Factors	1	2	3	4	5
Empathy with others	19.81	45.28	28.30	4.72	1.89
Level of trust	16.04	40.57	30.19	5.66	7.55
Integrity	19.81	36.79	20.75	8.49	14.15
Focus on the vision	44.34	43.40	11.32	0.94	0
Value management	12.26	39.62	48.11	0	0
Focus on development & empowerment of subordinates	42.45	46.23	10.38	0.94	0
The leader's awareness of the characteristics of subordinates	31.13	45.28	22.64	0.94	0
The leader's situational awareness	34.91	49.06	15.09	0.94	0

1=Always True; 2=True; 3=Sometimes True; 4=Rarely True; 5=Never True

The factor which scored the highest 88.68% was, *Focus on Development and Empowerment of Subordinates*. The elements in this factor are; encouraging subordinates to participate in developing themselves, encouraging subordinates to participate in decision making, supporting new ways of doing things and getting subordinates to feel a sense of ownership about the activities that they engage in. The second factor with high score 87.74% was *Focus on Vision*. The elements in this factor include, having a clear vision of the future of one's organization, ensuring that subordinates have a clear understanding of the vision and goals of the organization. This also include having a deep commitment to realizing the vision of one's organization,

actively endeavoring to inspire one's subordinates' confidence in the future of the organization and showing subordinates that sharing a common vision can serve their long-term interest while stressing the importance of leading by example. The third factor with 83.96% was *Leader's Situational Awareness*. The elements include regarding failure as a learning opportunity, going beyond self-interest for the good of the group, expressing confidence in subordinates' abilities to meet the vision of the organization. Other factors which scored high 76.42 % was *Leader's Awareness of the Characteristics of Subordinates* with elements like knowing the talents of subordinates, being aware of the level of motivation of subordinates, encouraging subordinates to excel, treating subordinates as unique individuals rather than as were members of a group, being sensitive to the stress experienced by subordinates and finally understanding the level of emotional maturity of one's subordinates. *Empathy with Others* scored a positive response of 65.09%. elements in this factor are, being able to read people's emotions by looking at their body language, behaving in trustworthy manner when dealing with other people's emotions, going out of one's way to support someone experiencing an emotional problem or trauma. As well as putting oneself in other people's shoes, finding it easy to forgive others, supportive towards people who are experiencing embarrassing situations and being sensitive to possible harmful effects which one's own emotional shortcomings may have on other people. *Level of Trust* had surprising low positive response rate that of 56.60% as compared with factors with above 80%. Elements in this factor include being able to trust friends or other people that one associates with until the trust is broken, taking people at face value, not being judgmental and trusting people even if one does not know them well. The last factor was *Integrity* with 56.6% also very low. The elements are, being able to own up to one's mistakes, taking work as an extension of one's value system, valuing honest approach towards people and being able to tell the truth regardless of any consequences.

### 7.3 Demographic Variables

One of the objectives of this paper was to find out if emotional intelligence varied with gender and level of leadership in business setting Table 3 below refers.

**Table 3: Analysis by Gender**

	1	2	3	4	5
Male	32.5	45	17.5	2.5	2.5
Female	34.62	42.31	19.23	-	3.85

1=Always True; 2=True; 3=Sometimes True; 4=Rarely True; 5=Never True

The results indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female in emotional intelligent competencies as can be seen in the above table. 77.5% of males and 76.72% of females agree that emotional intelligence empower business leaders in Zimbabwe.



**Table 4:** Analysis by Level of Leadership in an Organization

	1	2	3	4	5
Lower Level	35.71	42.86	14.29	-	7.14
Middle Level	30.77	46.15	16.92	3.08	3.08
Top Level	29.63	44.44	22.22	-	3.7

1=Always True; 2=True; 3=Sometimes True; 4=Rarely True; 5=Never True

According to leadership levels, lower level leaders or managers have the highest emotional intelligence (78.57%) followed by middle level with (76.92%) and top level was the least with (74.07%). This seems to indicate that emotional intelligence decreases as one moves from lower level to top leadership level.

#### 7.4 Objective 1: To assess the importance of Emotional Intelligence on business leaders

The following table shows the relationship between six dimensions of emotional intelligence and their relevance to business leaders.

**Table 5:** Correlations Empowerment & Emotional Intelligence elements

Empowerment	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Sig.
Emotional Literacy (Empathy with others)	5.135	0.105	1.097	0.378
Emotional Values & Beliefs (Level of Trust) (Integrity)	13.990	0.286	1.329	0.168
	10.028	0.205	1.127	0.344
Leadership Competencies (Focus on Vision)	8.897	0.182	0.721	0.868
Leadership Values & Beliefs (Value Management)(Focus on development & empowerment of subordinates)(Leader's awareness of characteristics of subordinates)(Leader's situational awareness)	10.032	0.223	1.489	0.089
	0.547	0.011	0.418	0.998
	12.407	0.253	0.819	0.753
	11.340	0.231	0.819	0.753
Total EQ	9.159	0.187	0.995	0.519

Computed using alpha = .05 N = 212 Note: EQ – Emotional Intelligence

Table 5 shows the correlations between empowerment and the six dimensions of emotional intelligence. As outlined in this table, all factors except (Value Management) under Leadership Values and Beliefs correlate very strongly with empowerment while Emotional Literacy and Emotional Values and Beliefs moderately correlated with empowerment except one element which is (Level of Trust), which had a weak relationship.

These results were supported by a study carried out by [20] Goleman, D, R.Boyatzis, and A. McKee (2002), where four main elements of Emotional Intelligence were found to be important in their diversity. However if was found that Relationship management ranked the most significant. Relationship management incorporates inspirational leadership where a leader guides and motivates his subordinates with a compelling vision. The leader also

bolsters other's abilities through feedback and guidance. This enables the leader to be a change catalyst, initiating and leading in a new direction, encouraging teamwork and collaborations.

Relationship management incorporates inspirational leadership where a leader guides and motivates his subordinates with a compelling vision. The leader also bolsters other's abilities through feedback and guidance. This enables the leader to be a change catalyst, initiating and According to [20] Goleman (2002) Social awareness is a very important factor of Emotional Intelligence. Social awareness has factors like empathy – which means sensing others' emotions and taking an active interest in their concerns. For a leader to be effective, they need to be able to read the patterns and decision network and politics of the organization. They are then able to recognize and meet the needs of the subordinates, clients and all stakeholders.

The Bivariate analysis shows that  $r = 0.168$  for *Level of Trust* which is a weak correlation and  $r = 0.089$  for *Value Management* which means that there is no correlation at all.

The results did not collaborate with [21](George,(2000;1029) who proposed that emotional intelligence, particularly the ability to understand and manage moods in the self and others, contributes to effective leadership in organizations. [22] Singh, Manser and Mestry (2006:545) also agreed with [21] George (1995) that leaders should match their thinking style to their emotions and situations in order to develop and maintain sound interpersonal relationships. Trust is at the core as a negative mood would influence the leader's trust in another subordinate. However the current studies indicate that business leaders in Zimbabwe are judgmental and think that trust is earned and not just given. This is in divergence with what emotional intelligence leaders should behave.

Value Management is a factor which was expected to correlate with empowerment of business leaders; however the study showed that business leaders in Zimbabwe are more conscious of achievement of goals. According to [23] Mussig, (2003:74), demonstrated that a traditional control-based model of leadership with goals at the core, is a Goal Driven leadership style. He also demonstrated a more value driven leadership style which He termed Value Driven Leadership Model. Value management entails, creating an atmosphere of mutual trust, trustworthiness, and compassion with emotional feelings of co- workers.

#### 7.5 Objective 2: To ascertain the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Empowerment of business leaders in Zimbabwe.

**Table 6:** Correlations between Emotional Intelligence and Empowerment

Empowerment	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence EQ	9.159	0.187	0.995	0.519

Computed using Alpha = .05 N = 212

Table 6 shows a strong relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Empowerment which implies that that higher scores on EQ and related to empowerment of business leaders. These results were also collaborated by many authors among them [24]Gardner and Stough (2002) [25]Barling (2000)[26]Godse and Thingujam (2010) agree that there is a strong relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict resolution and effective management. [27]Carmeli (2003) states that high levels of emotional intelligence results in high level of organisational commitment.

### **7.6 Objective 3: To establish if Emotional Intelligence components varies with demographic variables**

#### **7.6.1 Gender**

Results indicate that there is no significant difference between males and females in their Emotional Intelligence. This was corroborated by a study undertaken by [28] Hopkins & Bilimoria (2008) which supported the findings that there is not much difference between male and female leaders in the EQ and social intelligence competences.

#### **7.6.2 Level of Leadership**

These results indicate that EQ decreases as one move from lower level to top level leadership. These results are in direct conflict with the literature. [29]Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) found out that directors had higher levels of emotional intelligence than managers. This also supports the claim by [20]Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) that, "Emotional intelligence is twice as important as IQ and technical skills, therefore, the higher up the organization one goes, the more important emotional intelligence becomes" The conflict with the current study could be a limitation which calls for further study.

### **7.7 Proposition**

Emotional Intelligence empowers business leaders in Zimbabwe to create environments where people feel connected to a higher purpose and to rise together to achieve audacious business goals. This proposition for this study was disapproved but not in totality. What came up was that business leaders in Zimbabwe created their own leadership model which suited the environment they are operating in. The businesses which managed to survive under an inflation regime of 200 million percentage points should be congratulated. They could have used unorthodox means to survive, but they survived. These leaders have enough Emotional Intelligence to run their organizations well but they also have Intellectual Intelligence. The researcher therefore believes that there is need for further study to ascertain the relationship with Spiritual Intelligence and empowerment of business leaders.

## **8. Discussion and Conclusion**

The researcher's assertion is that Zimbabwe is in a post-crisis period (2009 – 2013) whereby the business environment was forced to survive by unconventional means where shortages of basic commodities was the order of day, shortage of raw materials and shortage of money.

Companies were shrinking, workers were retrenched and others had to go on forced leave. Some companies were operating three days a week and others completely shut down. Some companies have in the last decade been subjected to liquidations, sequestration, judicial management and even foreclosures – the gap is the role of leadership in corporate failures.

The overall aim of this study was to explore whether Emotional Intelligence, empowers leaders of companies and industries in Zimbabwe to secure long-term sustainable development and survival of their companies and industry in Zimbabwe. The results indicate that emotional intelligence empowers business leaders in Zimbabwe to become effective business leaders. It also emerged that Intellectual intelligence is also critical, so as to make a leader who is both emotionally intelligent and technically capable.

## **9. Recommendations**

The study has revealed that Emotional Intelligence can empower business leaders to be effective leaders therefore the researcher recommends that leaders need to be made aware of what this intelligence imply so that they can improve their competences. Self administered competence tests in EQ could be introduced in organizations and implemented at a national level. In school curriculum this could be introduced at an early age so that children would grow up appreciating these competences of leadership skills like:-Team building, Sharing, Delaying gratification for future consumption thereby encouraging saving. In leadership seminars, talks could be given on emotional intelligence so as to raise awareness in business leaders.

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