

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF PORTUGUESE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: THE CASE OF A MILITARY ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

The interest it the subject of Emotional Intelligence has been growing over the past few years, forcing an extension of its scope to many social and organizational sectors, including the command functions of police forces. However, the literature on the use of Emotional Intelligence in leadership roles, especially in the military context, is still very scarce.

That said, this article has the general objective of analyzing the impact of Emotional Intelligence on Leadership. To this end, a Case Study was carried out at the Military Organization, where questionnaire inquiries were implemented, listening to 53 Officers and Sergeants Commanders of Detachment.

Through the results obtained it is possible to verify that Emotional Intelligence influences the performance of the Officers and Sergeants Commanders of Detachment as leaders. Bearing this in mind and the general objective of the present article in account, it is possible to state that Emotional Intelligence has a great impact on Leadership.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Leadership; Public Administration



1. Introduction

Nowadays, our society is characterized by cultural and social changes, which are emerging at a breakneck pace, and make organizations find in the processes of change the only way to survive. Because of this, the individual is increasingly seen as a decisive factor in organizational success.

The Military Organization, for being an organization and for still being an integral part of society, is not excluded from these changes. Such changes turn out to be more at the level of human resources, in areas such as Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Leadership, because the complexity and violence of crimes, in the context of police activity, requires that police officers have a high emotional self-control in the exercise of its functions, mainly of leadership.

That said, the present article aims to analyze the impact of Emotional Intelligence in the Leadership of a Territorial Detachment of the Military Organization. We also propose to identify and analyze the EI skills and leadership dimensions of the Detachment Officers and Sergeants Commanders, and, finally, to identify and analyze the EI dimensions that enhance and/or condition the leadership of the same Officers and Sergeants Detachment Commanders.

The interest in the theme of Leadership began to emerge from the Second World War due to the emergence of very strong leaders, both politicians and soldiers [26]. More recently, as this phenomenon of Leadership has acquired great weight, it has thus become the most studied subject by behavior experts [28].

There isn't a single and universally accepted concept of Leadership, but a set of diverse concepts that are connected to different theories, which coexist, and which are adapted according to what is intended to be proven in the organizational approach that takes place [4].

It is the way in which a particular member of a group stands in front of other members, exercising influence, that determines Leadership, inasmuch as the person who is exercising influence is the so-called "leader" and the others are the led ones [4]. Leadership only exists if there are "followers", because the main question regarding Leadership is the establishment of relationships within a group [4].

Although the term Leadership is not presented in the Dictionary of Military Terms, there are several definitions in which it is expressed, namely the definition of "command", which is the authority conferred by law and regulations to an individual to direct, control and coordinate military forces [14]. Leadership is inserted in the exercise of command as a way of complementing it [21].



The way in which command is to be exercised is not defined by any law or regulation. That said, the responsibility remains on each commander to understand how best to motivate his subordinates to adopt a behavior that they would not otherwise adopt, with the aim of improving their actions at work [14].

Emotional Intelligence is a "sine qua non" condition of Leadership – if there is no EI, there is no good Leadership [11].

The EI theme has aroused more and more interest, not only from psychologists and sociologists, but also from society in general [2]. However, the definition of this concept is far from reaching consensus among researchers who study this topic.

Although it was only in 1995 that this topic gained popularity, the term "Emotional Intelligence" was used for the first time in an international scientific journal of Psychology written by Peter Salovey and John Mayer in 1990 [28]. In the survey, the same authors cite EI as a subclass of Social Intelligence (SI) and further state that EI involves the accurate assessment and accurate expression of emotions, in themselves and in others, and the regulation of emotions in a way that improves life [22].

In 1993, there were some criticisms related to EI, which pointed to the fact that this theme is an "inappropriate and misleading metaphor", in which the authors are rewriting the IS, which appeared for the first time in 1920, as the "ability to deal with men and women, acting wisely in human relationships", and stated that there was no important component linked to emotion [2]. In the face of these criticisms, Salovey and Mayer discussed these issues and concluded that EI must be conceived as a new intelligence capable of making individuals more gifted with tools, making them use reason to understand both their own emotions and those of others, and at the same time dealing with them [2].

Another author well known for his work on this subject is Daniel Goleman who, in 1995 in the first edition of his book "*Emotional Intelligence*", defines EI as "the person's ability to motivate himself and persist despite frustrations; to control impulses and postpone the reward; to regulate your own state of mind and prevent discouragement from overwhelming the faculty of thinking; to feel empathy and to have hope" [10]. Later, in 1998, the author published another book with the title "*Working with Emotional Intelligence*", where he redefines his own concept of IE as "(...) the ability to recognize our feelings and those of others, of ourselves. motivate and manage emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships." based on five dimensions, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills [9].



Again, in 2002, Goleman together with Boyatzis and Mckee presented in a work the reduction of the five essential elements of Goleman to four main domains, each providing a set of fundamental competences for a high EI: self-awareness, self-control, social awareness and relationship management [10].

In 2007, Bar-On et al approach EI through another definition, which includes a kind of multiple levels of competences that, in turn, are related to the individual's own emotions and the social context in which he/she is inserted [24].

Through the exposure of the different concepts and definitions of EI, it is possible to verify the importance that this theme has in the scientific domain. The EI is a transversal characteristic in the human being, which is present in its different capacities, especially in the "awareness of the feelings when they occur in a certain environment, so that an emotionally intelligent person takes the most advantage possible of the situation" and that continues to develop throughout life as we learn from our experiences [9] [5].

Chi-Sum Wong and Kenneth S. Law, argued that, from the moment that there is interaction between individuals, the management and recognition of emotions become crucial factors for the quality of these same interactions; and also affirm that the emotionally more intelligent subjects are able to use their emotion regulation mechanisms in order to create positive emotions, thus promoting intellectual and emotional growth [18].

The new challenges for today's leaders is to successfully guide their organizations through unstable economic times and deal with the subject of sustainability [7]. That said, it is important that this article presents a definition of sustainable leadership, although there is no universal definition.

The topic of sustainable leadership is becoming more powerful in business today, and it reflects and emerging determined consciousness among people who are deciding to live their lives and lead organizations in ways that account for their footprint on the Earth, society and the health of a global economy [16] [8]. Taking this into account, we can say that "sustainable leadership is concerned with creating current and future profits for an organization while improving the lives of all concerned" [16].

To quote Simanskiené and Zuperkiené (2014), sustainable leadership retains the knowledge of anything that spreads and lasts without doing any damage and assures a positive impact on everything that surrounds us at present and will surround us in the future [25]. Sus-



SBIJ94 – ABRIL – MAIO – JUNHO DE 2021 - ISSN 1807-5908 tainable leadership means "shared responsibility with the aim of prevention of unjustified undermining of financial and human resources or violation of the environment [12].

Visser and Courtice (2017) offer the following simple definition of a sustainability leader: "A sustainability leader is someone who inspires and supports action towards a better world." [29]. On the other hand, the Sustainability Leadership Institute (2021) suggest that sustainability leaders are "individuals who are compelled to make a difference by deepening their awareness of themselves in relation to the world around them. In doing so, they adopt new ways of seeing, thinking and interacting that result in innovative, sustainable solutions." [27].

The sustainability requires leaders that can develop approaches, policies and programs to promote sustainable practices at social and organizational level and induce economic success [17]. Sustainability and sustainable leadership can be used interchangeably to connect sustainable practices with leadership [6]. "Sustainable leadership is a source of competitive advantages for organizations." [13]. Sustainable leadership gives opportunities to the organizations in the form of continuous improvement, innovation, sustained competitive advantage and long-term success [16]. Sustainable leaders are focused on achieving optimum performance for both society and environment [3].

This work is overall innovative and relevant because the context of Military Institutions is not very well studied in Portugal. Indeed, it is very difficult to do in-depth studies, and to reach the middle and top leaders of this type of institutions. In this regard the interest in this topic is mainly related to the need to identify the competences that a military leader have to develop for a good performance, and because the most part of the contexts are very complex and related to human emotions, the link with emotional intelligence is of upmost importance. Another factor of interest is the fact that little has been developed on this theme, and the literature found is very scarce, which makes all this a challenge.

2. Materials and Methods

The method of approaching the problem used in this investigation is the Case Study. A case study aims to know a well-defined entity such as a person, an institution, a course, an educational system, a policy or any other social unit [19]. This type of investigation is assumed to be particularistic in that it deliberately focuses on a specific situation that is supposed to be unique, aiming to discover what is essential and characteristic of it and, thus, contribute to the global understanding of a certain phenomenon of interest [19].



Regarding the investigation approach, we are dealing with a type of mixed investigation, as a questionnaire survey was carried out to the Officers and Sergeants of Detachment of the Santarém (Portugal) Territorial Command, as a data collection tool, and several document analyses were also carried out.

The research hypothesis reflects the spirit of discovery that characterizes any scientific work and provides research with a particularly effective guiding thread [20]. That said, the following research hypotheses were raised:

Hypothesis 1: There are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants Commanding Secondment considering the following dimensions associated with EI:

Hypothesis 1.1: Evaluation of own emotions.

Hypothesis 1.2: Evaluation of the emotion of others.

Hypothesis 1.3: Use of emotions.

Hypothesis 1.4: Regulation of emotions.

Hypothesis 2: There are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants Commanding Secondment regarding the following dimensions associated with Leadership:

Hypothesis 2.1: Mission guidelines by example.

Hypothesis 2.2: Decision making and planning.

Hypothesis 2.3: Vision and external and internal environment.

Hypothesis 2.4: Cohesion, teamwork and cooperation.

Hypothesis 2.5: Conflict management through transparency.

Hypothesis 2.6: Participatory leadership and involvement.

Hypothesis 3: There are significant correlations between the dimensions associated with EI and dimensions associated with Leadership.

The investigation has a total of 53 respondents, 38 of whom are Sergeants and 15 are Officials, thus representing 91% of the study population. To check the normality of the sample, the internal consistency was also calculated using Cronbach's Alpha (α) using the IBM SPSS Statistic 27 (SPSS), to assess the degree of reliability of the used scale. The value obtained was α =0,992, which indicates a very good degree of consistency [15].



3. Results

3.1. Analysis of Emotional Intelligence dimensions

In hypothesis no.1 'There are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants Commanding Secondment considering the following dimensions associated with EI: (1.1) Evaluation of own emotions (EOE); (1.2) Evaluation of the emotions of others (EEO); (1.3) Use of emotions (UE); (1.4) Regulation of emotions (RE)', we propose to check if, among the answers provided, there are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants Commanders of Detachment in the dimensions associated with the EI.

In order to answer the hypothesis, Table 1 was prepared.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of EI dimensions.

EI Dimen-	Offi	cers	Sergeants		
sions	Xm	S	Xm	S	
(N=53)					
EOE	4,27	0,94	4,32	0,70	
EEO	3,65	0,97	3,91	0,77	
UE	3,72	1,04	4,21	0,83	
RE	3,45	0,93	4,04	0,68	

Legend: Xm – Mean; S – Standard deviation

Comparing the arithmetic averages for each of the EI dimensions, it is possible to verify that the Officers present the worst averages in all dimensions, thus standing out for the negative. We can also verify that the dispersion in the relation to the averages is high, which means that there were great differences in the responses of the respondents.

This descriptive analysis allows verifying that the Officers and Sergeants Commanders of Detachment present different values in the dimensions of EI. However, to understand and analyze whether these values are significant, a t-test was used, since it is widely used to compare means of independent groups [1]. Associated with the t-test, the Levene test also appears with the objective of evaluating the equality of variances of the two groups (Officers and Sergeants) [18].



		Levene for Eq of Var	uality	T-test Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2 ext)	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	95% Dif Confiden va	ce Inter- al		
	T	1							Superior	Inferior		
	Assumed equal variances	,162	,689	-,550	51	,585	-,389	,724	-1,851	1,055		
EOE	Equal variances not as- sumed			-,487	20,583	,632	-,398	,818	-2,102	1,306		
	Assumed equal variances	,160	,690	-1,174	51	,246	-1,163	,991	-3,152	,826		
EEO	Equal variances not as- sumed			-1,104	22,834	,281	-1,163	1,054	-3,344	1,018		
	Assumed equal variances	,410	,525	-2,537	51	,014	-1,975	,779	-3,539	-,412		
UE	Equal variances not as- sumed			-2,312	21,640	,031	-1,975	,854	-3,749	-,202		
	Assumed equal variances	2,574	,115	-2,742	51	,008	-2,358	,860	-4,084	-,632		
RE	Equal variances not as- sumed			-3,317	19,229	,032	-2,358	,018	-4,486	-,230		

SBIJ94 – ABRIL – MAIO – JUNHO DE 2021 - ISSN 1807-5908 **Table 2.** T-test among the group of Officers and Sergeants of the EI dimensions

Legend: F – Levene test statistics; Sig – significance of the Levene test; t – t-test value; df – degrees of freedom; Sig (2ext) – proof value

When analyzing Table 2, we find that the significance of the Levene test is high in all dimensions of EI, so it is possible to state that there is a homogeneity of variances, considering that, for this, the significance associated with the test must be greater than 0,05, which, as we have already seen, happens in every dimension of EI.

In turn, in the t-test, it is possible to verify the existence of two significant differences, namely in the UE dimension and in the RE dimension, considering that both dimensions contain a significance level below 0,05.

3.2. Leadership dimensions analysis

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Regarding hypothesis no.2 'There are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants Commanding Secondment regarding the following dimensions associated with Leadership: (2.1) Mission guidelines by example (MGE); (2.2) Decision making and planning (DMP); (2.3) Vision and external and internal environment (VE); (2.4) Cohesion, teamwork and cooperation (CTC); (2.5) Conflict management through transparency (CMT); (2.6) Participatory leadership and involvement (PLI)', we propose to verify if, among the answers provided, there are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants Commanders of Detachment in the dimensions associated with leadership.

To this end, a method similar to that of hypothesis no.1 was chosen, analyzing first in a descriptive manner to verify whether there are differences, followed by an inductive statistical analysis in order to verify whether or not these differences are significant.

Leadership	Offi	cers	Serge	rgeants	
Dimensions	Xm	S	Xm	S	
(N=53)					
MGE	7,57	1,93	8,78	1,14	
DMP	7,23	2,15	8,32	1,45	
VE	7,27	2,06	8,34	1,18	
CTC	7,5	2,02	8,73	1,09	
CMT	7,74	2,04	8,89	0,93	
PLI	7,46	1,98	8,64	1,17	

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of Leadership dimensions

Legend: Xm - Mean; S - Standard deviation

Comparing the arithmetic averages for each of the Leadership dimensions, we see, again, that the Officers are the group that stands out for the negative, taking into account that they have the lowest averages. We were also able to verify that the dispersion in relation to the averages is low.

As in hypothesis no.1, we will now present Table 4 with the t-test between the group of Officers and Sergeants, of the Leadership dimensions, since the descriptive analysis allows us to verify that the Officers and Sergeants Commanders of Detachment present different values in the dimensions of EI, however, it does not reveal the significance of these values.



Table 4. T-test between the group of Officers and Sergeants of Leadership dimensions										
		Leve Test Equal Varia	for ity of nces				Г-test Equalit	-		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2 ext)	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	95% Dif Confiden	ce Inter- al
	Assumed equal	,382	,539	-1,991	51	,052	-12,930	6,493	Superior -25,966	Inferior ,106
MGE	variances Equal variances not as-			-1,896	23,366	,070	-12,930	6,820	-27,025	1,166
	sumed Assumed equal	4,780	,033	-2,618	51	,012	-8,660	3,308	-15,300	-2,019
DMP	variances Equal variances not as-			-2,062	17,529	,054	-8,660	4,200	-17,501	,182
	sumed Assumed equal	1,828	,182	-3,006	51	,004	-5,377	1,789	-8,968	-1,786
VE	variances Equal variances not as-			-2,415	17,972	,027	-5,377	2,226	-10,055	-,700
	sumed Assumed equal variances	4,030	,050	-3,269	51	,002	-10,442	3,194	-16,855	-4,029
CTC	Equal variances not as-			-2,485	16,821	,024	-10,442	4,203	-19,316	-1,568
	sumed Assumed equal variances	8,228	,006	-3,049	51	,004	-6,875	2,255	-11,402	-2,349
CMT	Equal variances not as-			-2,219	16,063	,041	-6,875	3,098	-13,441	-,310
	sumed Assumed equal variances	2,828	,099	-3,134	51	,003	-8,407	2,682	-13,792	-3,022
PLI	Equal variances not as- sumed			-2,461	17,464	,025	-8,407	3,417	-15,601	-1,213

Legend: F – Levene test statistics; Sig – significance of the Levene test; t – t-test value; df – degree of freedom; Sig (2ext) – proof value



When analyzing Table 4, we find that the significance of the Levene test is high in the dimensions MGE, VE, CTC and PLI (ρ >0,05), and low in the dimensions DMP and CMT (ρ <0,05), so it is not possible to completely reject the hypothesis of having different variables. In the t-test, we can see that there are significant differences in all dimensions of leadership (ρ <0,05).

3.3. Analysis of relationships between the dimensions of Emotionl Intelligence and Leadership

In hypothesis no.3 'There are significant correlations between the dimensions associated with EI and dimensions associated with Leadership', we propose to check if there are significant correlations between the answers provided on the dimensions of the EI and Leadership, namely if there is any relationship between the change between the intensity variables. To make this possible, a Bravis-Pearson correlation was used, shown in Table 5, since the Pearson's correlation measures the existence and strength of the degree of correlation between two variables [23].



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Tab	le 5. De	escriptiv	e statistic	s and Pear	rson's cor	relation be	etween EI	and Lead	lership dir	nensions		
Dimen-	Xm	S	EOE	EEO	UE	RE	MGE	DMP	VE	СТС	СМТ	PLI
sions												
(N=53)												
EOE	4,30	0,77	1									
EEO	3,84	0,84	,649**	1								
UE	4,07	0,92	,516**	,508**	1							
RE	3,87	0,80	,544**	,561**	,691**	1						
MGE	8,44	1,51	,537**	,493**	,719**	,589**	1					
DMP	8,01	1,75	,653**	,579**	,806**	,752**	,760**	1				
VE	8,04	1,56	,621**	,615**	,760**	,690**	,746**	,911**	1			
СТС	8,38	1,52	,717**	,652**	,768**	,728**	,721**	,917**	,912**	1		
CMT	8,57	1,43	,685**	,657**	,749**	,765**	,712**	,951**	,908**	,962**	1	
PLI	8,30	1,54	,661**	,654**	,759**	,747**	,739**	,938**	,933**	,960**	,954**	1

Legend: Xm – Mean; S – Standard deviation; ** - The correlation is significant at the level $\rho < 0,01$ (bilateral)

When analyzing table 5, we find that the correlation between the dimensions associated with EI and leadership has a significant correlation of p<0,01. It is also possible to verify that, among the Pearson correlation values, the relation that presents a higher value is the relation between the UE dimension and the DMP dimension with r=0,806, and that the relation that presents a lower value is the relation between the dimension EEO and the MGE dimension with r=0,493. That said, what this Pearson correlation proves is that when the dimensions associated with EI change, the dimensions associated with leadership also change.

3.4. Discussion of the Results

This discussion of the results aims to verify whether the hypothesis designed for the present investigation were or were not verified, considering the collected data that were presented in the previous points. That said, the procedures presented in Table 6 were adopted.



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Table 6. Hypothesis Verification	

Variable Value	Hypothesis
x=100%	Totally verified
$80\% \le x < 100\%$	Verified
$50\% \le x < 80\%$	Partially verified
0% < x < 50%	Not verified
x=0%	Totally unverified

Regarding Hypothesis no.1: There are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants Commanding Secondment considering the following dimensions associated with EI: (1.1) Evaluation of own emotions (EOE); (1.2) Evaluation of the emotions of others (EEO); (1.3) Use of emotions (UE); (1.4) Regulation of emotions (RE), we are then in a position to affirm that, since there are significant differences between the Officers and Sergeants only in two of the four dimensions associated with the EI, namely in the UE and RE dimensions, the hypothesis is considered partially verified.

Regarding Hypothesis no.2: The are significant differences between Officers and Sergeants Commanding Secondment regarding the following dimensions associates with Leadership: (2.1) Mission guidelines by example (MGE); (2.2) Decision making and planning (DMP); (2.3) Vision and external and internal environment (VE); (2.4) Cohesion, teamwork and cooperation (CTC); (2.5) Conflict management through transparency (CMT); (2.6) Participatory leadership and involvement (PLI), it can be seen in the t-test presented above that there are significant differences in all dimensions associated with Leadership. Taking this into account, we can say that the hypothesis is considered fully verified.

Finally, regarding Hypothesis no.3: There are significant correlations between the dimensions associated with EI and the dimensions associated with Leadership, it was possible to verify, through Pearson's correlation, that there are significant correlations between all dimensions associated with EI and all dimensions associated with Leadership, thus, it is possible to affirm that the hypothesis is considered fully verified.

4. Conclusions

In this phase of the article, the final considerations arising from the present investigation are presented, bringing together the results, obtained through the case study and the theoretical



SBIJ94 – ABRIL – MAIO – JUNHO DE 2021 - ISSN 1807-5908 framework, in order to achieve the proposed objectives and verify the formulated hypothesis. Subsequently, the recommendations, limitations of the investigation and challenges for future investigations will also be presented.

As a result of Hypothesis no.1, it is possible to verify that there are differences in all dimensions associated with EI, however, these differences are only significant regarding the dimensions 'use of emotions' and 'regulation of emotions', since they are very personal dimensions and tend to differ greatly from individual to individual.

In turn, in the Hypothesis no.2, when analyzing the arithmetic averages for each of the Leadership dimensions, we can verify the existence of similarities, since the dispersion in relation to the averages is low. When analyzing the Military Organization missions and considering the length of service of all respondents, it is possible to see that these similarities are expected as the adaptability to which they were subject in performance their functions are similar [14].

During this investigation, and as a result of Hypothesis no.3, it was also possible to verify that the intensities of the dimensions of EI accompany the intensities of the dimensions associated with Leadership, which demonstrates the importance of the relationship established between both. We can also see that the highest correlation is established between the dimension 'use of emotions' and the dimension 'decision making and planning'.

Taking all this into account and considering the general objective of analyzing the impact of Emotion Intelligence on Leadership, we verify, as already mentioned above, that the skills associated with EI are strongly linked competencies associated with Leadership, since the increase in some accompanies the increase in others.

This study becomes necessary to the extent that it can be used for the development of skills of the Officers and Sergeants of the Military Organization, necessary to obtain a good performance of their leadership functions.

One of the limitations of this investigations, refers to the fact that the bibliography about EI in a police and military context is reduced. Another limitation concerns the fact that it was impossible to carry out hetero-assessment questionnaires. As for the objectives for future investigations, it is proposed the investigation and development of programs with a view to emotional and, thus, leadership capacities.

This investigation aims, above all, to sensitize Military Organization Officers and Sergeants, and all those interested in this theme, to the importance of issues related to emotions,



considering that these must be taken very seriously, especially when we exercise function professionally important, as is the role of leading someone.

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