
SELF-LEADERSHIP

Eunice Fedha Daritsu

PhD Student, Cultivating Self Leadership, PAC University

Email Address: fedhaeunice@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: The document explores the concept of self-leadership, a powerful form of leadership where individuals exercise control and influence over themselves. It discusses the importance of self-leadership as the foundation for effective leadership practices, highlighting three key competencies: self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and self-management.

Methodology: The study is based on a literature review, drawing insights from various scholarly works and research studies on self-leadership, emotional intelligence, and related topics. However, a potential shortcoming is the lack of empirical data or case studies to support the claims made.

Findings of the Study: The findings from the reviewed literature suggest that self-awareness is crucial for individuals to perceive themselves clearly, enabling self-control and self-regulation. Emotional intelligence, which is enhanced through self-leadership practices, allows individuals to understand and manage their emotions, fostering better relationships and motivation. Additionally, self-management skills, such as personal accountability and time management, are developed through self-leadership, contributing to effective leadership practices.

Conclusion: The study concludes that self-leadership serves as the bedrock of effective leadership, emphasizing its role in cultivating self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and self-management. The principles of self-leadership not only contribute to personal development but also influence the broader organizational culture by promoting accountability, empathy, and a shared sense of purpose. Moreover, self-leadership is essential for developing emotionally intelligent and ethically grounded leaders capable of navigating the complexities of modern organizational landscapes.

Keywords: *Self-Leadership, Self-Awareness, Self-Awareness, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Management*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the most important topics in human sciences and historically, it is a topic that is poorly understood. One of the most fundamental affairs in the relationship between humans is who shall rule. Leadership is a critical topic as it can solve. Where organizing the collective effort is concerned, it is a significant aspect of organizational effectiveness. With good leadership, organizations and corporations thrive. This, therefore, implies that when organizations thrive, the financial and psychological well-being of all individuals within the system is enhanced. On the other hand, bad leaders perpetrate terrible misery on their subjects. Despite leaders having power over their subjects, there is always one form of leadership that is often ignored, describing the term leadership and its impact on individuals in an organization. This paper, therefore, seeks to explore a more powerful form of leadership: self-leadership. Self-leadership is a form of leadership that individuals exercise over themselves. Neck et al. (2020) indicate that if an individual is ever going to become a powerful leader toward other individuals, they have to be able to lead themselves effectively. As a result, self-leadership can be noted as the foundation of any leadership practice as individuals tend to learn different practices as well as themselves which is vital when it comes to leading other people.

What is Self-Leadership?

Neck and Houghton (2006) define self-leadership as the process through which individuals control their behavior, influence, and lead themselves while using cognitive and behavioral techniques. The concept was coined in the 1980s as an extension of self-management, which is rooted in the self-control theory. Neck et al. (2020) showcases how self-leadership functions in a normal workplace setting. Their work indicates that individuals always influence their behavior, even in the most highly controlled situations. For instance, if an individual is given work by their bosses who check on their progress, they still have a lot of discretion. The techniques individuals use to complete their work are still left to them. During this period, an individual can set their own goals, critique their performance, and feel good about themselves. Therefore, as much as there are leaders who guide and follow up individuals on their actions, an individual is usually their leader most of the time. How self-leadership works indicate that it greatly impacts the overall outcome of the leadership process. Self-leadership has three competencies that make an individual a great societal leader. The competencies include self-awareness, emotional intelligence and self-management.

Self-Awareness

Self-leadership entails that an individual has ultimate responsibility for directing their own actions. To effectively steer one's conduct, profound self-awareness is imperative. Self-awareness denotes the capacity to accurately perceive one's inner states through introspective attention. This mindful inward focus allows individuals to gain clear insight into their emotions, thought patterns, and behavioral triggers. Self-awareness establishes the groundwork for self-management competencies like self-control and self-regulation which leaders require to guide teams effectively. Self-control enables measured thinking before responding to situations. This restraint is a vital leadership skill for managing heavy responsibilities without reacting rashly (Duckworth et al., 2014). Composure despite uncertainty demonstrates confidence and garners respect. When facing intense pressure, emotions can overwhelm judgment if left unregulated. Self-control mitigates this impulse, creating space for rational deliberation (Xiao & Li, 2020). Of course, individuals have varying levels of innate self-control. However, self-awareness cultivates understanding of personal tendencies, allowing leaders to anticipate and address their typical reactions. Calmly navigating challenges requires leaders to communicate clearly with subordinates. Self-control prevents emotions from clouding this critical exchange.

In addition, self-regulation involves managing one's emotional responses and conduct to complete necessary tasks (Houghton et al., 2012). As the ultimate leader in self-leadership, individuals must ensure diligence regardless of circumstances. Self-regulation enables leaders to curb anger, sustain focus, redirect attention appropriately, refrain from outbursts, and progress through responsibilities (Taylor - Bianco & Schermerhorn, 2006). This competency is vital for harmonious, productive team leadership. Through self-awareness, leaders can preemptively apply self-regulatory strategies to interact positively despite personality differences. In practicing self-leadership, self-awareness arises from managing oneself. This illuminates individual strengths, weaknesses, priorities and values (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Understanding personal attributes allows leaders to tackle challenges strategically. Ultimately, the self-knowledge gained from self-leadership establishes the basis for effective regulation and growth.

Emotional Intelligence

Studies indicate that leadership is an emotion-laden process (Smollan & Parry, 2011; Torrence & Connelly, 2019; Venus et al., 2013). Thus, emotional intelligence matters when it comes to effective leadership. Different studies tend to document the relationship between EI and leaders' effectiveness in different organizational settings. EI has been studied in connection with organizational leadership, emotional leadership theory, and transformational leadership (Yusof et al., 2014). EI is a trait greatly enhanced through self-leadership and vital to producing a great societal leader. Emotional intelligence is an individual's capability to interpret, demonstrate, control and use their personal emotions when it comes to communicating and relating with other individuals in an effective as well as constructive manner. While working with other individuals the ability to express one's emotions is critical, however, so is the ability to interpret, understand as well as respond to the emotions of other individuals. As a result, some experts state that emotional intelligence is more important when compared to an individual's intelligence quotient when it comes to attaining success.

As noted, self-leadership tends to allow an individual to enhance their self-awareness to become effective. In turn, it increases an individual's emotional intelligence since it requires awareness, as through awareness, an individual can note their weakness and strengths, even involving their own emotions (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). When individuals can understand and control their emotions, they can comprehend the complex emotions that can affect their team members. For instance, while working under pressure, self-leadership would require an individual to make sure that they control their own emotions during difficult moments. The capability to manage one's emotions enhances an individual's emotional intelligence as they would not inappropriately treat other individuals when they have their emotions under control. This is because they can fully understand their emotions and the ripple effect they can have towards other individuals (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Thus, it can be suggested that through self-leadership, an individual attains qualities that make them effective leaders towards others.

A higher level of emotional intelligence (EI) is required for an individual to build great relationships as a leader (Phipps et al., 2014). From the definition of leadership, it is clear that an individual has to have the capability of working with other individuals appropriately. An individual has a higher emotional since they are self-aware, empathetic and authentic. A higher level of

emotional intelligence always comes with an individual being capable of understanding their own strength and weakness via practicing self-leadership as it always leads to reflection and self-assessment. As a result, while such an individual is interacting with other individuals, they can regulate their own emotions and respond in the correct manner towards the emotions of other individuals. This would come naturally to an individual with a higher level of EI as they can accurately perceive and understand other individuals' emotions. Hence, an individual can leverage self-leadership practices that they develop to ensure that they can enhance how they can enhance relationships.

In addition to allowing individuals to manage relationships with others appropriately, self-leadership practices result in a profound increase in a leader's motivation. There are numerous studies, which show that there is a positive correlation between an individual's emotional intelligence and motivation. Giao et al. (2020) study found that individuals with a higher level of emotional intelligence are usually more likely to be motivated and have a greater sense of initiative and drive. Through self-leadership, individuals tend to have a grasp over their emotions, contributing to their intrinsic motivation. Applying self-leadership practices results in an increase in the motivation aspects that arise from an individual's emotional intelligence. From the definition of self-leadership, it is a process in which individuals influence themselves to achieve their desired goals. Hence, it involves setting goals, self-monitoring as well as self-motivating strategies. Such activities allow individuals to actively regulate their behavior, thoughts and emotions actively, positively influencing their motivation. Stepanov et al. (2020) support the relationship between self-leadership and motivation, as individuals tend to set challenging goals, which fuels individuals' motivation. Thus, the evidence shows that in any instance an individual engages in self-leadership, their confidence is bound to increase.

Bratton et al. (2011) further showcase the relationship between transformational leaders and EI. Effective management practices such as impression management, mentoring, building trust and organizational commitment have been associated with the supervisor-subordinate agreement in transformation leadership. The researchers note that when an individual overestimate their capability, they tend to appear insincere, self-absorbed and cannot recognize their weakness. Thus, they would regard them as having hostile and resentful attitudes, which leads to negative outcomes when an individual practices transformational leadership. Emotional intelligence allows a leader

to understand their own emotions, allowing them to be more authentic towards their subordinates while applying transformational leadership. As noted, such a trait can be attained through self-leadership, which allows an individual to treat all individuals appropriately due to increased EI.

Self-Management

Self-management is a vital capability an individual enhances while practicing self-leadership (Drucker, 2008). It is a concept closely intertwined with self-management and provides individuals with strategies that allow them to manage their behaviors, emotions, and thoughts (Alisic & Wiese, 2020). Through self-leadership practices, individuals develop and enhance their capabilities to manage themselves. Thus, self-management can be defined as the ability of an individual to manage their own behavior thoughts as well as emotions in a productive manner. Effective self-management tends to lead to effective outcomes in all the activities an individual engages in.

Self-management results in personal accountability, a desirable trait for an effective leader. While individuals engage in self-leadership, they tend to be accountable for their actions to ensure they are effective and attain their goals (Casinillo & Suarez, 2022). Numerous studies indicate that personal accountability is significant when it comes to leadership. Research by Ram and Dolla (2023) emphasizes that leaders who showcase personal accountability via self-management practices tend to create a culture of responsibility and trust within their teams. By taking ownership of one's decisions and actions, a leader inspires other team members to do the same. In turn, this fosters a climate of accountability which results into an increase in the success of an organization. Through self-leadership individuals tend to note that they are responsible for their own actions which results into them developing accountability.

Additionally, through self-leadership, an individual can determine how they will complete their work, developing their time management skills (Goldsby et al., 2020). Time management is a form of self-management in which individuals are in control of how they use their time. Effective time management is crucial in allowing leaders to optimize their productivity and support their teams. A study by Sajeevanie (2020) highlights the importance of self-management when managing one's time and priorities. When a leader gains the ability to manage their own time, they can do it effectively without the need for external assistance. Thus, such an individual stay engaged while avoiding procrastination. It gives them enough time to stay on top of their own personal work and

empower others. Also, such a leader can easily create an environment that values and respects other members' time. Hence, in a workplace environment, the employees are more likely to have a great work-life balance as they can easily get things done on time, thus having enough time to address their hobbies, reducing their stress levels. Thus, such a capability allows a leader to thrive while dealing with individuals in the public as they would always ensure that they are on time and adhere to their schedule and plans as well as in the workplace.

The research conducted by multiple writers confirms that self-leadership is the fundamental basis for good leadership qualities. Self-leadership fosters the development of fundamental skills, namely self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and self-management. As explained in the conversation, leaders who are conscious of their own abilities may effectively manage their situation, strategically utilise their strengths, and minimise their shortcomings in order to succeed in the face of difficulties. Therefore, it is crucial for leaders to cultivate perceptive self-awareness in order to effectively manage their behaviour when leading teams. In the absence of engaging in self-reflection, leaders run the risk of underperforming and compromising relationships due to impulsive responses to intricate circumstances.

In conjunction with the development of self-awareness, individuals refine their emotional intelligence through the implementation of self-leadership strategies. Attuning to one's emotions cultivates the ability to see, understand, and establish meaningful relationships that are crucial for effective leadership. Leaders that possess a high level of emotional intelligence effectively traverse the complexities of interpersonal relationships, enabling them to effectively engage and inspire their followers. In addition, self-leadership enhances self-management skills, allowing leaders to effectively arrange their duties for maximum efficiency. The reinforcement of constructive behaviours in teams is facilitated by the conscientious modelling of diligence and prioritisation. Leaders establish a framework for structured performance standards by prioritising competent self-management.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the exploration of self-leadership within this paper underscores its pivotal role as the bedrock of effective leadership. The intricate tapestry of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and self-management, woven through the practice of self-leadership, serves not only

as a personal development tool but also as a critical component in the cultivation of influential and resilient leaders. By mastering self-leadership, individuals equip themselves with the necessary skills to navigate the complex dynamics of leading others, ensuring that they can maintain control over their actions and emotions, even in challenging situations. This self-governance fosters an environment where leaders can make informed, reflective decisions, thereby enhancing the overall efficacy and harmony within organizations. The principles of self-leadership, therefore, extend beyond the individual, influencing the broader organizational culture by promoting accountability, empathy, and a shared sense of purpose.

In addition, the significance of self-leadership in the development of emotional intelligence cannot be overstated. As leaders become more attuned to their own emotions and those of others, they are better positioned to foster strong, positive relationships within their teams. This heightened emotional acuity enables leaders to navigate the often emotionally charged landscape of organizational life with grace and effectiveness, thereby driving collective success. The ability to empathize, communicate effectively, and inspire others is directly linked to a leader's self-awareness and emotional regulation, illustrating how self-leadership serves as a catalyst for transformative leadership practices that resonate deeply within organizational settings.

Lastly, the practice of self-leadership underscores the importance of self-management in achieving personal and organizational goals. By cultivating discipline, time management, and personal accountability, leaders set a precedent for their teams, encouraging a culture of responsibility and efficiency. This disciplined approach not only enhances individual productivity but also contributes to the overall success of the organization. In essence, self-leadership empowers individuals to lead by example, demonstrating that effective leadership begins with the self. As we look to the future of leadership, the principles of self-leadership offer a promising pathway towards developing leaders who are not only competent and effective but also emotionally intelligent and ethically grounded, capable of navigating the complexities of the modern organizational landscape with integrity and vision.

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