

Influence of Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence on The Performance of Sales Managers: A Case of a FMCG in Nairobi, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between Sales Performance and Emotional intelligence has been a thoroughly researched construct. This study was undertaken to examine the influence of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on the performance of sales leaders of a FMCG in Nairobi, Kenya. The independent constructs were Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Self-efficacy, and the dependent construct was Sales Performance. The research was a qualitative survey with data collected from sales managers of a bottling company in the non-alcoholic-ready-to-drink (NARTD) industry. Purposive sampling was used to select five Area Sales Managers from the five regional markets which formed the company's total universe. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with the five selected managers. The study found that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy indeed influenced the level of sales performance among the sales leaders of the company. It concluded that sales leaders with a higher EI and self-efficacy demonstrated good leadership traits and consequently exhibited high sales performance. The study, therefore, advocates for the development of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in sales leaders as key enablers to sales excellence.

Keywords: Sales Performance, Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy, Sales Excellence

INTRODUCTION

The issue of sales team performance is of great concern in sales-driven organizations and especially at a time when companies are facing immense competition both locally and globally. Coupled with this competition is the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) atmosphere that has made the marketing environment even more intricate. Companies are consequently looking for effective sales leaders who will not only steer their teams into a citadel of sales excellence but also attain a competitive edge in the VUCA setting. Emotional Intelligence (EI) and self-efficacy which play a vital role in an employee's job performance become a crucial competence in improving an individual's job performance and minimizing workplace deviant behavior.

The construct of Emotional intelligence (EI) has generated a significant deal of curiosity among researchers and academicians since it provides fresh viewpoints on the study of emotions (Rahman et al.,2012). EI has sparked extensive interest and a lot of research as a potential source of knowledge about what constitutes outstanding performance in the workplace (Ashworth,2013; Pillay et, al., 2013). Indeed, as Olanye (2013) posits, the moral leadership needed in today's business environment is one that can read the emotions of its people and improve their attitudes and performance at work. This is affirmed by Goleman, et al. (2002) as cited in Weinberger's (2004) assertion that:

Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas.

But the reality is much more primal: Great leadership works through the emotions (p 1151).

This study therefore aimed at studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on the sales performance of sales leaders of a non-alcoholic-ready-to-drink company.

Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence on the sales performance of sales managers.

Specifically, the study sought:

1. To examine how self-regulation among sales managers influences the level of sales performance.
2. To establish how self-appraisal in sales managers influences the level of sales performance.
3. To find out how self-awareness in sales managers inherently influences the level of their performance.
4. To establish how social awareness in sales managers influences the level of sales performance
5. To examine how self-management among sales managers influences the level of their sales performance and
6. To find out how relationship management in sales managers inherently influences the level of their performance.

Research Questions

The research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. How does self-regulation in a sales manager influence the level of sales performance?
2. To what extent does self-appraisal in a sales manager influence the level of sales performance?
3. How does self-awareness influence the level of performance of a sales manager?
4. To what extent does social awareness influence the level of sales performance of a sales manager?
5. To what extent does self-management influence the level of sales performance of a sales leader?
6. How does relationship management influence the level of sales performance of a sales leader?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence

Research on Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the context of leadership has remained a recurring area of interest for more than 10 years (Pillay et al.,2013). The concept has thus been given various definitions, a pointer to some degree of the elusiveness of the concept in terms of its definitions. However, broad scrutiny of the definitions promulgates central pointers that reflect the tenets of the construct. Mayer et al. (2004) define EI as competencies that enable one to “engage in sophisticated information processing about one’s own and other’s emotions and the ability to use the information as a guide to thinking and behavior” (p 507). To Brackett and Salovey (2006) EI refers to the mental forms tangled within the control, utilization, understanding, and administration of one’s claims and other’s passionate states to illuminate emotion-laden issues and to create behavior. Similarly, Cooper and Sawaf (1998) see EI as the capacity to sense, get, and viably apply the control and insight of feelings as a source of human vitality, data, association, and impact. This resonates with Goleman’s (1998) assertion that EI is “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (p 317). Goleman (2001) later modified his definition of EI as the capacity to recognize and direct feelings in us and others, which is learned; and comes about in exceptional execution. The term,

therefore, revolves around the balance of one's emotions and that of others to secure a state of effectiveness in our interactions.

Emotional intelligence is critical to a leader and more so when dealing with followers. Cook and Macaulay (2004) point out that EI underpins the transformation in oneself and others by recognizing responses to alter and make an environment where others feel persuaded to go along with them. The sales environment is usually relationally based, and results are enabled through collaborative discourses with customers on one hand and sales leaders on the other hand, who motivate the teams to undertake such noble undertakings. Sales leaders with high EI are better placed to do this because they have the capacity to motivate using people's feelings and dispositions. As Prati, et al. (2003) note, emotional intelligence reflects the capacity to peruse and decipher others in social settings, to distinguish the nuances of enthusiastic responses, and to utilize such information to impact others through enthusiastic control and regulation. This kind of regulation is *sin quo non* to sales leaders since they work in a volatile environment receiving and directing commands for sales excellence. Without such balance, a leader may be thrown off balance, and driving sales goals becomes an uphill task. Goleman, as cited in Batool (2013) speculates that those leaders with elevated emotional intelligence are significant in organizations and as such, they must have the competence to discern workers' feelings as exhibited in the work environment. Similarly, they should arbitrate when a crisis arises and balance their own emotions in a bid to earn employee trust and comprehend the social as well as political climate in those organizations. This tallies with Glinow's (2009) assertion that EI can amazingly heighten individual, group, and company effectiveness. Emotional intelligence thus becomes a key enabler to the effectiveness and overall success of an organization since it is pegged on leadership which ultimately determines success.

Emotional intelligence has five dimensions. To Goleman (2003), these are self-awareness, self-motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships. These pillars determine one's ability to exercise EI and the more one has, the higher the level of EI displayed as Goleman alludes.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness refers to having a profound understanding of one's claimed feelings as well as qualities, values, and thought processes (Glinow, 2009). According to Grayson (2013), self-awareness is the capacity to recognize one's sentiments or feelings, separate between them, understand what one is feeling and why, and decode what triggered the emotions. This definition tallies with Baale's (2010) assertion that self-awareness is being cognizant of what one is best at, while at the same time recognizing that they still have more to learn, and this incorporates conceding when they do not have answers and owning up to failures. This awareness is crucial in interpersonal relations since it helps one to flex to align with those they interact with. According to Glinow, self-aware individuals are way better able to listen in on their emotional reactions to circumstances and utilize this mindfulness as conscious intelligence. Indeed, to Mohamad and Jais (2016), self-awareness is the most significant competency related to workplace emotional intelligence. Sometimes people assume their feelings are obvious, but the truth is that feelings can and are commonly hidden from us. However, as Goleman (2009) observes, being self-conscious entails being aware of one's feelings as well as feelings about that disposition. This enhances interactions with others and how to cope with different personalities. Such leaders are more useful to organizations because they bring cohesion and motivation to their followers. Feldman (1999) claims that although self-awareness is one of the key competencies required of a leader, it is unfortunately a rare discourse in many organizations. Nevertheless, it is an asset for effective leaders who want to rally their followers around them. This is because self-awareness enables people to prioritize their worries, allowing them to focus on more important or pressing issues rather than minor ones (Prati, et al.2003). This is especially useful for team interactions. As Prati and other notes, if team members maintain a high level of self-awareness, more significant issues are likely to be addressed and minor conflicts can be easily resolved by emotionally intelligent people so that project-related

issues can take precedence. As such, leaders with higher self-awareness perform better as opposed to those with lesser self-awareness.

Social-Awareness

Social awareness is mainly about empathy and having knowledge and sensitivity to the feelings, considerations, and situations of others (Glinow, 2009). According to the scholar, social awareness includes conceptualization of other people's circumstances, undergoing their feelings, and being aware of their needs even when they aren't spoken about. To Goleman (1995), social awareness involves understanding other people's emotional states and knowing how to interact with them appropriately. He linked the construct to six competencies namely, empathy, organizational awareness, capacity to build and retain talent, intra-cultural sensitivity, diversity appreciation, and customer service. All these are constituents of an effective or challenger sales associate. Baale (2010) asserts, "This dimension includes sensing others' feelings; being concerned (empathy); possessing a service orientation, organizational awareness, and group dynamics; developing others (sensing others' needs and bolstering their abilities)" (p38). Feldman's (1999) illustration of an emotionally intelligent leader depicts one who develops and uses social skills to influence others' actions in a favorable way. He further contends that these skills are *sin quo non* to effective leadership. This resonates with Baale's proposition that leaders with superior EI inspire enthusiasm, stimulation, and optimism in their organizations while creating an environment where trust and collaboration thrive by inculcating superior interrelationships with their dependents (Baale,2010). These are the significant attributes in a sales leader that drive their teams to sales excellence. The same qualities are authenticated by Bass (1990) when he asserts that the interpersonal skills crucial for leadership are "empathy, insight, heightened awareness, and the capacity to give and receive feedback.

Self-Management

Self-management represents how well we control or redirect our internal states, impulses, and resources (Glinow, 2009). In other words, self-management implies the ability to control our own emotions. This to Glinow includes containing disruptive urges, exhibiting integrity and truthfulness, having the drive to effectiveness, seizing opportunities whenever they occur, change-flexibility, and having an optimistic disposition even after failure. These are closely related to Armstrong's (2009) traits of self-management which include self-control, reliability and honesty, initiative, flexibility, and a strong desire to succeed. Batool (2013) with reference to self-management which is akin to self-regulation notes, "Leaders who regulate themselves effectively rarely verbally attack others, make rushed or emotional decisions, stereotype people or compromise their values" (p88). He observes that self-regulation is all about staying in control. To Goleman (1995), emotional self-motivation involves the capacity to control the emotive tendencies of others to accomplish one's goals. This in retrospect collates all abilities that start with goal setting, cultivating an environment of success even amidst all odds, and remaining focused all through. McPheat (2010) summarizes this when he defines self-management as the regulation of our own emotions, so they don't get in the way but rather help; the capacity to postpone pleasure in order to achieve a goal; overcoming emotional anguish well; putting our most genuine, deepest desires into practice in order to advance and be successful. Bourdon (2010) on the other hand describes self-management as the capacity to direct or control the focus of erratic motivations or mental states. According to the scholar, self-management competency enables people to show dominance over challenging conditions, adjust to change, and be ardent in tackling problems. The self-management competence is very important for sales leaders, as they need to understand and comply with the responsibilities that apply to their own role in leading sales teams and service to customers.

Social skills (Relationship management)

Social skills, also known as people skills, are the ability to manage relationships with others and create

systems that uphold such relationships (Mohamad & Jais, 2016). Healthy social relationships at work call for paying attention to others' needs, communicating positively, working together on projects, and supporting their ideas and initiatives (Ivancevich et al., 2014). Indeed, to the scholar's assertion, a sense of connectivity at work promotes a respectful and effective work environment. These social skills include among others respect for others, mutual regard, dedication, honesty, tolerance, empathy, cooperation, and communication as Mohamad and Jais allude. The entire process however entails the capacity for attending to one another's needs, developing a lasting relationship, and discussing details of one's feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Armstrong (2009) describes self-management as expertise in managing connections and forming networks to achieve personal goals and elicit the appropriate response from others, as well as the capacity to establish common ground and forge rapport. Similarly, he identifies the five components of self-management as; leadership efficacy, success in driving change, conflict resolution, ability to influence and lead others, and team building and managerial expertise. By and large relationship management can be summed as the capacity to use emotional intelligence when interacting with others (Hay Group, 2011) by using social cognizance and self-management skills to influence others' performance and inspire them (Bourdon, 2010; Hay Group, 2011; Sen, 2008). Social skills when used appropriately can and are essential for enhancing cohesiveness in teams and hence performance.

Social skills as Goleman (1995) assert are effective in motivating others, influencing people, and creating and managing teams. All these skills are a prerequisite for sales excellence and a must-have for sales leaders. As Mullins (2010) postulates, developing people, inspiring leadership, being a change catalyst, influencing, managing conflict, and working in a team environment with collaboration are all aspects of relational management. In sales, there is a need for the leader to inspire his/her team because the nature of their work is such that there are days of highs and days of lows. A sales leader, therefore, uses inspiration appropriately to achieve his/her goals regardless of the season. As a matter of fact, the leader must be a catalyst that through inspiration will drive confidence in the team that will make them believe in themselves, something needed by salespeople. To Goleman, social collaboration has many benefits.

It gives self-confidence and social tolerance. It can help managers in many ways including doing many things which cannot be completed in solitary. For example, it can help galvanize support from a team or in completing a project. Salovey and Mayer (1993) assert that someone with strong social skills would be able to deal with people easily, convince, lead, negotiate, and resolve conflicts or complaints. Additionally, they contend that emotional intelligence is a key indicator of leadership performance and fosters long-lasting relationships with clients, partners, and staff. These are the key competencies required of a salesperson that drive sales excellence and performance.

Self- Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy was advanced by Albert Bandura in his social cognitive theory that was published in the year 1986. This has been viewed as one of the most theoretically developed and practically applicable notions in modern psychology (Cherian & Jacob, 2013). Self-efficacy is portrayed as a result of self-beliefs that people use to achieve a task (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura, self-efficacy is the degree to which a person has confidence in their ability to carry out a particular behavior. These ideas affect what challenges to take on, how much effort to put into the attempt, (and) how long to endure in the face of setbacks (Bandura, 1989). To Shyamalendu and Swati (2017), self-efficacy can be defined as people's assessments of their capacity to plan and carry out the actions necessary to achieve a specific type of performance. Bandura looks at it also as a person's talent combined with a judgment of how it can be used in a specific context. As such, the higher a person's self-efficacy is, the more self-assured they are about accomplishment in a particular task realm.

Lent et al. (1996) on the other hand state that self-efficacy is an individual's assessment of their capacity to plan and carry out courses of action for performance. Moreover, Cherian and Jacob (2013) note that

achieving specific sorts of performance, personal well-being, and individual impetus are bestowed by self-efficacy. Ultimately, Bandura (1977) esteems the rationale of self-efficacy in human functioning as an individual's level of inspiration, emotional states, and people's decisions driven more by their beliefs than by what is true.

Self-efficacy influences an individual's emotional reactions and thought patterns. Thus, it can be said that self-efficacy-related persistence will almost certainly result in higher performance and productivity (Cherian & Jacob, 2013). Self-efficacy is also linked to measurements of job success, including new hire adaptability in organizations, skill learning, managing performance, and career-related events (Luthans, 1998). As a salesperson, there is a need for elevated perseverance because there is no guarantee that every move will make a sale. Many a time, customers object to their propositions and closing sales depends on the persistent calls they make and their ability to handle these objections. Therefore, a high degree of perseverance that emanates from self-efficacy is required. According to Cherian and Jacob, people's perceptions of their own efficacy are reflected in their self-concept. There are therefore a number of factors that influence a person's overall view on life, including ideas of self-worth and self-esteem. Moreover, another study revealed a link between task-based self-esteem and self-efficacy (Carson et al., 1997). Employees can strengthen their resilience in the face of difficulties by growing and enhancing their sense of self-worth (Tjosvold et al., 2012). Thus, self-efficacy plays an important role in changing and affecting an individual's behavior which consequently has an impact on their interactions with others.

According to Shyamalendu and Swati (2017), self-efficacy helps people become more motivated and knowledgeable so they can work harder and achieve better. He notes that self-efficacy is regarded theoretically and psychologically, and it has been found that it is accountable for the improvement of people's performance in both domains. Lane et al (2004), assert that the level of confidence of an individual determines their self-efficacy factor. If the performance is high, then the level of self-efficacy is also high. Conversely, if performance is low self-efficacy is low. Consequently, self-efficacy is directly related to motivation and self-assurance.

Leadership Effectiveness/Performance

In all organizations, the need for effective leaders who can drive teams into a citadel of excellence can never be overemphasized. Similarly, in sales-driven organizations, the need for sales leaders who are effective is equally essential. Shyamalendu and Swati (2017) describe leadership effectiveness as the process of collaborating with others to influence and agree on what is required to be performed, not forgetting the manner it will be performed effectively. In this context, the role of a leader is that of a facilitator to his followers and how well he could apply collective efforts to achieve the shared goals. Still, leadership effectiveness can be described as the realization of collective objectives through the influence of people who are able and convinced to work toward the goals as Shyamalendu observes. He further notes that leadership effectiveness focuses on the ability to measure productivity and the accomplishment of common objectives.

Organizations are looking for leaders who can perform. Indeed, leadership is results and an organization's success is based on the caliber of its leadership (Nandasinghe, 2020). Leaders who exhibit high performance while at the same time nurturing healthy relationships with their teams and customers are therefore highly preferred. High-performing Sales leaders just like their frontline sales play a crucial part in customer relationships as well as in comprehending, generating, conveying, and delivering values to customers, which helps the company's sales performance (Paparoidamis & Guenzi, 2009). To Jones (2004), such leaders respond rapidly to change, handle ambiguity, give direction, work within restrictions, and make use of the support and intellectual capital of others around them.

Consequently, an environment of stellar performance is created when this capacity is cultivated in an organization. Such leaders, therefore, know that results are key to an organization and results are generated

by committed and empowered people. Their task subsequently becomes influencing positively the people who work along with them.

Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, and Sales performance

Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy have been greatly linked to job performance (Ganji (2011); Hasanzadeh & Shahmohamadi(2011); Shahhosseini et al., (2012)). Indeed, as Shahhossein et al. postulate, emotional intelligence fosters individual invention and originality, which helps to enhance people’s performance at work. To Ganji, the facilitation of internal communication within an organization, which is one function of emotional intelligence, is crucial to the process of work performance. Emotional intelligence can more effectively explain how individuals behave at work. Its job is to influence managerial effectiveness, training, and organizational performance inside the organization as Shahhosseini et al. note. To Law et al., (2008), emotions like enthusiasm, anger, and fear are indispensable in promoting cooperation for as long as the nature of the activity necessitates interactions among people. As they allude, some emotions are necessary for the workplace in specific situations; common examples include enthusiasm in salespeople, tenacity in bill collectors, and empathy in social workers. Workers who are “intelligent” about their emotions will, therefore, be more efficient and effective in their exchanges with the work environment and with their co-workers. Referring to the importance of EI on salespeople, Wisker and Poulis (2015) submit that the ability to comprehend the particular needs and difficulties of the consumer increases as a salesman actively listens and becomes sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others, which may result in adaptive selling behavior.

Salespeople with heightened Emotional intelligence have better interactions with their customers and hence perform better than those with a lower EI. Brown and Moshavi (2005) do relate emotional intelligence with performance by stating that there is a direct correlation between the two. As Wisker and Poulis (2015) observe, Emotional intelligence is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own feelings and emotions as well as those of others. Consequently, a salesperson with high emotional intelligence (EI) is expected to be able to modify his or her selling behavior to tailor solutions to each potential customer’s needs from the scholar’s point of view. Indeed, those salespeople with a higher EI have resilience, are able to have self-control, and can deal with difficult situations. This is in tandem with Goleman’s (1998) proposition that Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social competence are among the emotional intelligence characteristics that most successful leaders excel in. EI thus becomes a critical competence in sales performance just like other forms of leadership.

From the above expositions of Emotional intelligence, Self-efficacy, and Sales effectiveness/ performance, it can be deduced that the first two constructs (EI and Self-efficacy) do have a direct influence on the sales performance of sales leaders as illustrated in Figure (1) below.

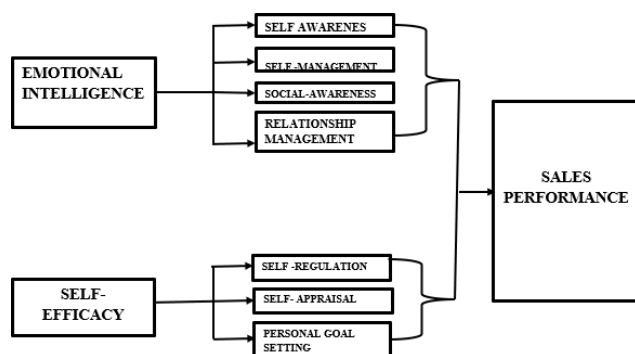


Figure 1. Relationship between EI, Self-efficacy, and Sales Performance

METHODOLOGY

The research was a qualitative survey with data collected from sales managers of a bottling company in the non-alcoholic-ready-to-drink (NARTD) industry in Nairobi, Kenya.

The company was chosen because it is a leading manufacturer and distributor of carbonated soft drinks (CSDs), Water brands, Juice, and energy drinks. The company also has a vigorous route-to-market strategy that embraces both the direct sales delivery (DSD) model and the use of third-party distributors. As a market leader, the company employs effective leaders to fortress its market shares in all its categories and to attain a competitive edge over its competitors. The sales team is responsible for both sell-in (order generation from plant to distributors) and sell-out (order generation from distributor to retail). The structure of the sales team is such that we have frontline sales (sales representatives and distributor representatives) and sales managers who supervise the frontlines sales. They are responsible for sales execution in demarcated sales districts and customer collaboration.

Purposive sampling and random sampling were used to select five Area Sales Managers from the five regional markets which formed the company's total universe. Purposive sampling ensured total representation of all the sales regions and random sampling ensured at least each sales manager had a chance of being picked. Simple random sampling provides equal opportunity and an unbiased representation of the population (Kothari, 2014).

Further, the study focused on area sales managers who are the majority and have a direct influence on sales representatives as opposed to their regional sales managers who were only five and have limited interface with front sales executives. It was noted that the general performance of the entire commercial team depended on the area sales managers who communicated most of the strategies as well as ensured the implementation through direct supervision.

Data was gathered using open-ended questions in Face-to-face interviews. The data was assembled and examined to find recurring themes and ideas among the five interviewees. These were then coded and grouped into broad categories of EI and self-efficacy concepts arising from the four interview questions as described below.

The research question was framed as: Is there any relationship between Leadership Emotional Intelligence, Self-efficacy, and overall sales performance?

To examine the research question, four core interview questions were used but augmented with probing questions where needed:

1. How would you define sales excellence performance?
2. Think of a successful sales leader, what qualities stand out about them?
3. What would you say you like most about your current leader?
4. Think of any ineffective sales leader you have ever had, what qualities did they have?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sales Excellence Performance

Each interviewee was asked to give a definition of sales excellence performance and the summary of responses is as in Table 1 below:

Table 1: How Would You define sales excellence performance

INTERVIEWEE	DEFINITION OF SALES EXCELLENCE PERFORMANCE
Interviewee 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Deliverance of sales Volume * · Target Achievements * · Meeting customer needs **
Interviewee 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Achieving set targets * · Always closing on set KPIs * · Customer satisfaction **
Interviewee 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Exceeds customer expectations ** · Achieves set goals * · Attains minimum KPIs *
Interviewee 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Delivers commitments (sales volumes) * · Persistently closes on target * · Delivers regardless of circumstances · Meets customer needs **
Interviewee 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Delivers sales volume without hurting others * · Exceeds customer expectations ** · Meets and exceeds sales KPIs * · Always on target *

Emerging themes:

*Attainment of sales targets (sales volumes, or KPIs) and

** Meeting and exceeding customer expectations

As evident from Table 1, the interviewees' definitions of sales excellence in performance fell into two main categories namely attainment of sales targets and meeting customer needs. Yukl (2002) as cited in Shyamalendu and Swati (2017) describe leadership effectiveness as the process of interaction with others to influence them and agree about what is required to be performed and in what manner it can be performed effectively. As mentioned earlier, the role of a leader is that of a facilitator to his followers and how well he could apply collective efforts to achieve the shared goals. The respondents in the current study, pursuant to

their definitions, thus expected a leader who mobilizes and communicates effectively to lead their teams in superior performance while at the same time being customer-centric. Sales leaders who communicate well have social skills which help them galvanize their teams toward a certain goal. This is in sync with Mohamad and Jais (2016) when they assert that social skills, also known as people skills, are the ability to manage relationships with others and create systems that uphold such relationships. In addition, customer-centric organizations perform better because their customers are happy with their services and hence remain loyal. Sales leaders with social skills that include among others respect for others, mutual regard, dedication, honesty, tolerance, empathy, cooperation, and communication are good at superior customer service. These are the attributes that Mohamad and Jais point to social skills.

Effective Sales Leader.

On the second question, the interviewees were asked to give their own characteristics of a good sales leader. A summary of their responses is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: What comes to your mind when you think of an effective sales leader?

INTERVIEWEE	QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE LEADER
Interviewee 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Not relying on information from other people · Always on the ground ** · Concerned with the needs of his or her direct reports *
Interviewee 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Very committed ** · People person * · An inspiring leader + · Trust in their teams · Nurturing
Interviewee 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Motivational + · Self-controlled especially in moods *** · Not insecure but believe in themselves***
Interviewee 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Easily accessible · Problem solver ** · Down to earth when being talked to *** · Cares for the needs of the team *
Interviewee 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fearless · Inspirational at times of uncertainty + · Bold and hopeful · Respects our needs *

Emerging themes:

* Motivational, Inspirational

* Caring

** Committed, on the ground

*** Secure, Self-controlled

As evident from Table 2, the interviewees’ definitions of a good sales leader fell into four main categories. These were namely motivational or inspiring, caring, committed, and self-controlled. All these are attributes of emotional intelligence. As Goleman (2003) asserts, “Our Emotional Intelligence determines our potential for learning the practical skills that are based on its five elements: self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships” (p3). Indeed, a person who exhibits commitment in a job displays self-efficacy because the belief that one can achieve something precedes commitment. Bandura (1986) opines that self-efficacy is portrayed as a result of self-beliefs that people use to achieve a task.

Commitment also in sales includes being persistent and inspirational even at odd times. Sales leaders with this commitment have learned self-management skills that make them always thrive. This to Glinow (2009) includes containing disruptive urges, exhibiting integrity and truthfulness, having the drive to effectiveness, seizing opportunities whenever they occur, having change-flexibility, and having an optimistic disposition even after failure.

Current Leader Exposition

On the third question, the interviewees were asked to describe the positive attributes of their then-leaders. The assumption was that they would describe what they liked about their leaders which could be a pointer to their outlook on effective leaders. Their responses are summed up in Table 3 below.

Table 3: What would you say you like most about your current sales leader?

INTERVIEWEE	MOST LIKED SALES LEADER
Interviewee 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · People-minded * · He’s Mentoring · He’s a team player *** · Disciplined **
Interviewee 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The leader is bold and takes risks · Very focused · Has high energy

Interviewee 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The leader is result oriented · She's soft on people but tough on results * · Very welcoming *** · She has morals **
Interviewee 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · He's a problem solver · Has Integrity ** · Very accessible & accommodative *** · Very Caring *
Interviewee 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Does not micromanage · He guides and gives relevant instructions · He appreciates everyone in the team * · Does not corrupt **

Emerging themes:

*People-minded, caring

** Disciplined, Integrity, Morals

*** Team Player, welcoming

As evident from Table 3, the interviewees' description of what they liked most in their then-leaders fell into three main categories namely people minded, disciplined, and a team player. A person who is people-minded has emotional intelligence because first and foremost he or she understands that people are different and need to be treated differently. Secondly, they can discern their emotions and those of other people to be able to strike a balance in their relations. According to Wisker and Poulis (2015), "Employees who are 'intelligent' about their emotions will, therefore, be more efficient and effective in their interactions with the work environment and with their co-workers" (p189). As such sales leaders who were adored by the respondents exhibited emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. This resonates with Shah Hosseini et al., (2012)) when they postulate that, emotional intelligence fosters individual invention and originality, which helps to enhance people's performance at work. This again is not far from Ganji's (2011) proclamation that, the facilitation of internal communication within an organization, which is one function of emotional intelligence, is crucial to the process of work performance.

Ineffective Sales Leaders

The fourth question was based on the attributes of ineffective or toxic sales leaders and the interviewees were asked to describe the qualities of an effective leader from their standpoint. The following is a summary

of their responses as tabulated in Table 4.

Table 4: Think of any ineffective sales leader you have ever had, what qualities did they have?

INTERVIEWEE	INEFFECTIVE LEADER TRAITS
Interviewee 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Blames others when things go wrong * · Not self-trusting ** · Very insecure ** · Lacked integrity *** · Was a loner *
Interviewee 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lazy · Loved money *** · Takes credit for everything* · Micromanages their team
Interviewee 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Always moody especially when things are not well ** · Blamed us for failure * · Had informers in the group ** · Easily angered **
Interviewee 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Frightening · Not stable- always had side issues ** · Pressurizing · Very corrupt ***
Interviewee 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Didn't care about us * · Always thought we were the problem* · Easily angered · Moody ** · Threatening

Emerging themes:

*Selfish

** Unstable, lack of control

*** Lacked integrity

As evident from Table 4, the interviewees' description of an ineffective sales leader fell into three main categories namely selfish, unstable, and lack of integrity. A person who is selfish, unstable, and has no integrity lacks self-awareness, self-control, and social awareness. Such people lack confidence in themselves and sometimes their instability stems from self-doubt. This agrees with Ahmed et al. (2020) assertion that success is based on confidence and being confident in one's abilities keeps one going even under challenging circumstances. Consequently, those leaders who believe in themselves (self-efficacious) are stable and can take risks and influence others to do so. Similarly, Wisker and Poulis (2015) submit that the ability to comprehend the particular needs and difficulties of the consumer increases as a salesman actively listens and becomes sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others, which may result in adaptive selling behavior. In retrospect, those sales leaders who are selfish, uncaring, and lack integrity can be seen to lack the basic tenets of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

CONCLUSION

This study was done to investigate the research question: Is there a relationship between Emotional intelligence, Self-Efficacy, and Leadership Performance? Drawing from the research, the themes, and perceptions of the respondents from the interview regarding sales excellence may be summarized as follows:

1. Meeting Sales targets
2. Superior Customer Service
3. High performance under all circumstances

Similarly, the themes and concepts from the respondents on superior sales Leaders may be summarized as follows:

1. Commitment
2. Nurturing/caring
3. People-centered
4. Motivational
5. Self-controlled
6. Fearless/secure
7. Inspirational
8. Bold and hopeful
9. Respect for other people's needs
10. Disciplined
11. Integrity.

It appears that these salespeople's expectations of a performing sales leader are consistent with concepts and theories already in use. Of these, respondents appeared to have the most admiration for leaders who cared for their needs, were people-centered, disciplined, and self-controlled, were secure, and hopeful. As a result, salespeople seek leaders who are sensitive to their unique wants and problems. They anticipate the inspiration and motivation of their leaders to help them accomplish their goals. All these are qualities attributed to emotional intelligence and self-efficacy.

Even though the extent of the interviews and the organizational setting do obviously limit the findings' generalizability, they nonetheless reflect current thinking and appear to support most of the existing

leadership theories. Organizations should therefore look for leaders who have higher emotional intelligence and are self-efficacious if they care about performance. These leaders can and do drive organizations into citadels of excellence. Such a relationship can be summarized in the following diagram as the study concludes.

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