

The Influence of Emotional Intelligence in Leadership. Case Study: Barack Obama

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Abstract: *Today's interest in personal development is growing. The influence of emotional intelligence on leadership is not a common topic, which is the reason for addressing this topic. This topic is categorised into the field of leadership and personal development. This paper presents both the theoretical and the practical part through which one of the most beloved leaders of our time was analysed. The theoretical part is based on the best possible definition of emotional intelligence and leadership, proving that leadership cannot be done effectively without emotional intelligence. The case study was based on Barack Obama's analysis in terms of emotional intelligence, as a methodology using articles from the American press with screenshots, interviews with Barack Obama and speeches given throughout his career. With their help, it was shown that Barack Obama has a high level of emotional intelligence by identifying the characteristics that demonstrate this.*

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, leadership, leader, media analysis, Barack Obama.*

1. Introduction

It is well-known that, in order to be successful in life, it is not enough to have a high level of mathematical intelligence or high IQ. Many times, we see that people who do not shine through the logical reasoning whom they achieve, or who have not been exceptional students, are good in the fields in which they work or are respected and loved by the people around them. But for a long time, the questions did not find their answers in a cohesive form until, in 1995, the author Daniel Goleman wrote the work whose subject made him famous, i.e. „Emotional Intelligence“.

Based on the information from his books and research from various studies, the characteristics of a leader with high emotional intelligence could be identified. These are the following: the leader is seen as empathetic by those around him, he is not afraid to say what he feels, even if this makes him vulnerable, he is a good listener, he can relate very well with various people in different contexts, he has the ability to solve problems quickly, he is not afraid to admit when he is wrong, is self-motivated, is able to set limits and is not afraid to refuse things, is able to overcome negative events, and he accepts constructive criticism without finding excuses or blaming those around him.

There are several methods of measuring emotional intelligence, e.g. the self-assessment method, the skill tests, the observer assessment, the Bar-On coefficient measurement of emotional intelligence inventory, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test and the 360 degree view of emotional intelligence. These methods are tools designed to help people to better understand their own emotions, strengths and weaknesses.

2. Research methods

For the application part, articles from the American press related to Barack Obama, his interviews and speeches he gave over the years have

been used. For these articles, speeches and interviews, sources from the specialized press such as The New York Times, NBC News, The Guardian and CNBC News have also been cited. This part of the case study has been divided into three parts so that they could be better identified, commenting on each article separately.

Barack Obama is a charismatic leader who proved that he has emotional intelligence through his spontaneity. Spontaneity is the strongest argument of emotional intelligence. In his election winning speech in 2008, Barack Obama showed his gratitude to the people and praised their efforts to vote. In this speech, he did not discriminate, trying to include all types of people when he thanked the American people for choosing him, which proves that he has diplomacy, kindness and emotional intelligence. Also, in the speech he gave on the election night, he showed that the American people mattered to him and that they would be informed of any situations that might arise in his election years.

Image 1 Screenshot of an excerpt from the victory night's speech

It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled – Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of Red States and Blue States: we are, and always will be, the United States of America.

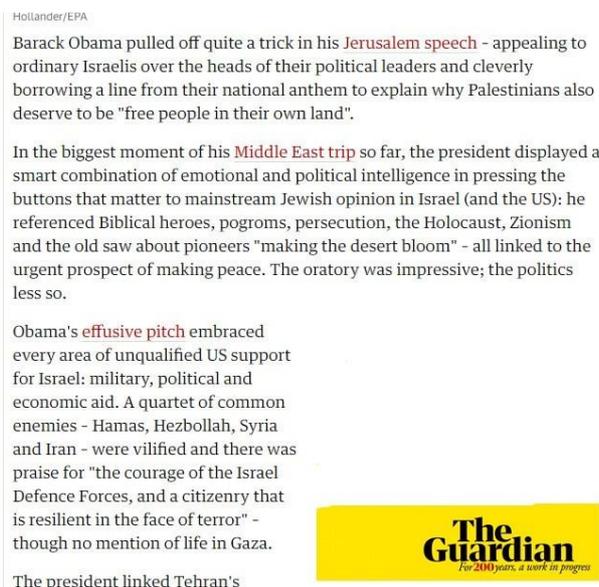
It's the answer that led those who have been told for so long by so many to be cynical, and fearful, and doubtful of what we can achieve to put their hands on the arc of history and bend it once more toward the hope of a better day.

At the same time, through this speech, Barack Obama tried to raise the mill of the people, promising them that he would make America great again. This proves that he is an assumed leader, who is not afraid to express his feelings in front of people. Concluding the speech, in which he uses the famous phrase "Yes, we can!", strengthens the idea of change, with his election as president. This message is also meant to reinforce the

idea that anything is possible, and you should not give up when times are difficult.

With the help of the article about Barack Obama, related to the event in Israel in 2013, it could be shown that he is a leader with a high level of emotional intelligence. He discussed an important issue, namely, the freedom of the Israelis, which disturbed the leaders of Israel, showing courage and care for the people. Offering political, military and economic help, he proves that he is a leader who believes in peace and wants to avoid wars at all costs, and even more, he comes to the rescue with solutions. Needless to say, he also attracted criticism, many people saying that the solutions he came up with were far too unrealistic, but a feature of emotional intelligence is that the leader expresses his opinion, without fear of criticism and this was shown by the former American president.

Image 2 Screenshot from the article about the event in Israel



Another important article that showed the level of emotional intelligence that Obama has is the article where he talked about the mistakes made by leaders. When you are able to admit your mistakes and reveal them to those around you, emotional intelligence comes to the surface. The former president has met some of the most powerful people in the world and has seen both good and bad people when it comes to leadership and he believes that one of the most common mistakes is the fact that leaders always think about how to dominate and stay in power in front of other people. According to him, if leaders have this type of approach, their organization will not be as good as it should be, because it will prevent the leader from building connections with employees and colleagues, which is necessary when things are not going well. This shows that Barack Obama has always had close ties with his employees and colleagues, in order to solve problems as efficiently as possible. In his book "A Promised Land", he talks about the White House gardener with whom he had daily conversations, which shows that he was close to his employees, even to those who did not have decision-making power in a critical situation.

Image 3 Barack Obama on the mistakes leaders made

Having a mindset to dominate will prevent any leader from creating tight bonds with employees and colleagues, which is needed when things go wrong, according to Obama.

Instead, the key to leadership, he said, is figuring out how to empower the people around you and to help them succeed. Their success is good for you, too.

Image 4 Barack Obama on teamwork

"Whether the team is a basketball team or a business or an administration. What are the values in which you are organizing yourselves?....Being clear about what your values are as an organization, that's part of leadership," he said.

The former president has revealed that he was not perfect as a leader either, but while in power he realized that the best thing you can do is to establish some values in terms of teamwork. From these statements written in the article, it can be seen that Barack Obama has always tried to involve his team in the decisions that were made, a thing that was obvious when he was president, thanking his team members for the winning. He was not afraid to give all this advice and make personal statements, even if this makes him vulnerable, proving his emotional intelligence. Most leaders do not acknowledge their mistakes, but Obama has talked about them on every occasion in order to teach others about what was wrong.

Conclusion

Analyzing, observing, and commenting on Barack Obama's articles, interviews and speeches, the conclusion that was drawn was that he has all the qualities necessary for a good leader, who leads the people and the team in the best possible way, without trying to put himself first. He is also a tall man, who demands respect, his education and the fact that he came from a poor family, helping him to empathize more with those around him. His experience as a senator and the volunteering he did for the less fortunate, helped him to always give the best emotional speeches, through which he made the people who listened to him feel heard and loved.

Obama is a charismatic man, who made people feel part of his team and journey, always being honest with them, even if some did not agree with him or criticized him. At the same time, his interviews show that he was aware of the opinion that some people had about him and the criticism that certain actions drew on him, but he assumed them as any leader should do. Obama is a spontaneous leader, who always gave answers based on feelings and did not try to learn a text, but he wanted to be honest. He was not afraid to show his feelings and did not hide anything from the world, that is why he was and still is so beloved.

All in all, Barack Obama showed amicability and diplomacy when he revealed that, although he often disagreed with his colleagues in the opposition, he wanted to respond to them on an impulse when he heard that they offended him, but he still treated them as he would have liked to be treated and always spoke respectfully to them, trying to solve problems without quarrelling. This thing shows that he has a high level of emotional intelligence, and these acts are the sheer proof of that.

Image 5 Obama dancing in Kenya



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