

The Collective Intelligence as a Predictor of Team Success

March 26th, 2014

Darshita Shah: 210768422

Vishnu Ramgobind: 210402949

Ann Gill: 209884479

Osvaldo Santos: 213215124

Sheri Farid: 210817054

Joshua Zaretsky: 211904213

Aaron Kim: 210205862

Emotional Intelligence and Its Impact as a Predictor of Team Success

The investigation of emotional intelligence is a growing field as it has recently grabbed the attention of psychologists, researchers, theorists, writers, and even management about individual's responses through emotions. The purpose of this analysis is to explore to what extent can teams increase team performance by utilizing members' emotional intelligence in the most efficient manner. Most importantly, the essence of this phenomenon and its impact on teams, as well as the role of team leaders will be evaluated in order to validate emotional intelligence's importance as a predictor of overall team success.

Research in the field of emotional intelligence (EI) has gained momentum in business, various industries, as well as in educational sectors (Reyes-Dominguez, 2008). According to Whetten and Cameron (2011) emotional intelligence refers to the ability to diagnose, understand, and manage emotional cues. By now, most executives have accepted that emotional intelligence is as critical as intelligence quotient (IQ) to an individual's effectiveness (Druskat & Wolff, 2001). The use of emotion is critical for individuals as it allows for the disclosure of intrinsic responses. Emotional intelligence (EI) is fundamental for workgroups because it is the key ingredient that fosters a healthy and productive workgroup environment. Moreover, an emotionally intelligent group is also able to create an environment in which members value their membership, collaboratively focus on what needs to be done, and addresses issues that need to be dealt with (Dimock & Kass, 2011)

Why is Emotional Intelligence Necessary in Teams?

According to Druskat and Wolff (2001) emotionally intelligent "norms, attitudes and behaviours" can eventually become a habit. This would in turn support behaviours for constructing "trust, group identity, and group efficacy" (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001).

According to "A Model of Team Effectiveness,"¹ high productivity and team effectiveness come from high levels of participation, cooperation, and collaboration. In order to build these three components, three essential conditions have to be met in a group: trust, identity and efficacy. To reach these vital components, group emotional intelligence has to be well established as it makes handling individual emotions easier and eventually allows for higher levels of trust, identity and efficacy among group members (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001). This leads to team members being engaged in all tasks, which eventually leads to higher productivity and performance.

Ultimately, group emotional intelligence is at the heart and base in producing team effectiveness. It is less a matter of conscious effort than of one's unconscious processing of emotional information (Fiori, 2009, as cited in Myers (2013). Similarly, Gujral and Ahuja (2011) also explain that emotional intelligence aids in reducing conflicts, which can create a more comfortable and cooperative work environment (Gujral and Ahuja, 2011, p.2). Furthermore, team members play a key role in individual and team motivation. Empathetic team members foster a more accepting environment of diverse individuals. Although emotional intelligence may not affect team performance and effectiveness solely or directly, it assists and enhances fundamental factors that lead to high team performance and effectiveness.

How Can Teams Regulate their Emotions?

Teams suffer because they are not aware of emotions at the group level. Having norms for group self-awareness is a critical part of group emotional intelligence that

¹ Refer to Appendix A

facilitates group efficacy.² Teams gain this through self-evaluation and by soliciting feedback from others. Emotionally competent teams have the emotional capacity to face potentially difficult information and actively seek opinions on their task processes, progress, and performance from the outside. Some teams gain feedback directly from customers, and others look to colleagues within the company, to suppliers, or to professional peers (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001).

Many teams make conscious efforts to build team spirit by having team-building outings that give team members a sense of collective enthusiasm (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001). Teams and their leaders realize that by regulating group level emotions they can improve the overall attitude of the team. The most affective teams have established norms that strengthen their ability to respond effectively to the kind of emotional challenges a group confronts on a daily basis. The norms they favor accomplish three major factors: creating resources for working with emotions, fostering an affirmative environment, and encouraging proactive problem solving (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001). Every team needs resources that all members can rely on to deal with group emotions, and one important resource is a common vocabulary (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001). For example, a group member at the Veterans Health Administration picked up on another member's bad mood and told him that he was "cranky" today. The "cranky" term stuck and became the group's gentle way of letting someone know that their negativity was having a bad effect on the group (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001).

The most palpable way to build emotional capacity through regulating team-level emotions is to create an affirmative environment, as everyone values a team that when faced

² Refer to Appendix B

with a challenge, responds with a can-do attitude (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001). One of the most powerful norms for building a group's ability to respond to emotionally challenging situations is an emphasis on proactive problem solving (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001). This serves the company by removing an obstacle to profitability. It also shows a team in control of their own emotions that refused to feel powerless and was eager to take charge (Druskat, V. & Wolff, S. 2001).

Can Emotional Intelligence Improve Communication and Decision Making?

The effects of emotional intelligence on communication within team members and its positive impact on team decision-making is imperative to consider. Emotional intelligence within teams enhances key individual factors that have a direct influence on team performance. Recent work by Bell (2007) shows the value in conceptualizing how individual characteristics combine at the team level to have a direct influence on team performance outcomes. They also examine the impact of emotional skills on both team task and communication performance in teams. According to Arn (2013), highly emotionally intelligent individuals are more effective at expressing their emotions constructively, which leads to less relational conflict. In team-based organizations, effective communication is critical. Its level and effectiveness plays a key role in the outcome of interactions. Liu (2013) proposed and found three dimensions of quality of communication experienced (QCE); clarity, responsiveness, and comfort. The presence of these factors may actually improve decision-making.

Using emotions to facilitating thought, in particular, is relevant in its application to the team decision-making process. Troth et al. (2012) developed and tested a multi-level

model to explain how the emotional skills of individual team members influence their communication performance in a team. According to Light (2007) an individual's communication performance within teams corresponds with the quality of team outcomes. Scullen et al. (2003) also demonstrated the core role of communication in work performance at the individual level. They also included a human skills component in their conceptualization of performance in which the ability to communicate with others was strongly highlighted. Communication performance incorporates a fundamental outcome of effectiveness. Effective communication accomplishes the goals, the objectives, or the intended functions of the team member (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984). According to Troth et al. (2012), the understood assumption is that the most competent communication behaviors are effective.

Millar & Rogers (1976) further argue that effective communication is dependent on the emotional skills used by an individual. Berger (2005) mentions skills involving the elements of detecting, understanding, and regulating emotional displays, such as encoding and decoding skills. According to Burgoon & Bacue (2003) nonverbal communication skills and according to Dillard & Marshall (2003), persuading skills have been found to *directly* contribute to successful communication performance. Troth et al. (2012) assert that emotional skills contribute to better communication outcomes for individuals within teams. Significant relationships have been found between individual emotional skills and performance in communication-dependent activities such as decision-making (Lam & Kirby, 2002). Research examining the performance of individuals within teams suggests team members capable of recognizing and managing their own and others' emotions during interactions are *likely to make better decisions*.

According to Troth et al. (2012) Individuals with stronger emotional skills are more likely to detect counterproductive emotions within the team through awareness skills and have a greater capacity to deal with these emotions. Emotional skills are also more likely to have an impact on performance within a team when the performance goal involves communicating interdependently with others (Jordan & Troth, 2004). Troth et al. (2012) propose two hypotheses that suggest both emotional awareness and management skills will positively relate to communication performance.³

Can a Leader Guide the Team's Overall Emotional Intelligence?

In organizational settings, emotions are seen as a contagion process in which followers constantly interpret the leaders' emotional expression (Haver, Akerjordet, and Furunes (2013). Crawford (2009) sees "emotion as inherent to the practice of leadership rather than separate from it" (Cliffe, 2011, p. 4). Emotions, then, are central to the pattern of values (Barker, 2001, p. 473) that emerge with leadership (Drodge & Murphy, 2002). Leaders who are attuned to their own feelings and the feelings of others can use their understanding to enhance the organization, as well as teams (Daft, 2011). The better the leader can identify with this the more leaders can harness and direct the power of emotions to improve follower satisfaction, morale, and motivation, as well as to enhance overall team effectiveness (Daft, 2011).

According to Daniel Goleman, there are five main elements of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman 2006). A strong leader should be able to organize and manage these skills increasing their overall emotional intelligence. Self-awareness, empathy and social skills are the strongest of the five

³ Refer to Appendix C

factors. Self-awareness is necessary for leaders as it adds the ability to identify strengths and weaknesses in others as well as themselves. Strong empathy and social skills go hand in hand as they add great communication skills, as well as the ability to manage change and conflict. Empathy is critical to a successful team and organization, as it gives leaders the ability to put themselves in another person's situation. Understanding and implementing these five vital elements can help leaders guide the overall emotional intelligence of a team.

Can Team Members Learn Emotional Intelligence?

Daft (2011) suggests that "EI can be learned and developed" (p.147). Emotional intelligence can be enhanced with practice; with concerted effort, people can change their levels of emotional intelligence (Whetten & Cameron, 2011). While training team members' on the importance of emotional intelligence can be a difficult task, according to Bagshaw, there are a variety of questions that can help develop and recognize team member's emotional intelligence, making the attempt at this process easy.⁴

Bagshaw's research suggests that individuals who have high emotional intelligence will often answer yes to all of the posed questions. However, this is dependent on individuals who have high self-awareness. So, we can see that EI is very distinctive from the numerous types of training that individuals receive at work; one needs to have abilities that are related to EI to be able to understand their own EI. Training team members on the ability to understand and relate to emotions can be done in various ways. For example, when a leader trains members on building cohesiveness amongst the team, it is a factor of EI. When a bond exists among the team members, that too is part of having EI. Therefore, a strategy or a specific technique on how to train members to be emotionally intelligent may not be crucial.

⁴ Refer to Appendix D

However, the attempt to attain more *cohesiveness and sensitivity* towards team members is critical, as it will ultimately help an individual gain a higher level of emotional intelligence.

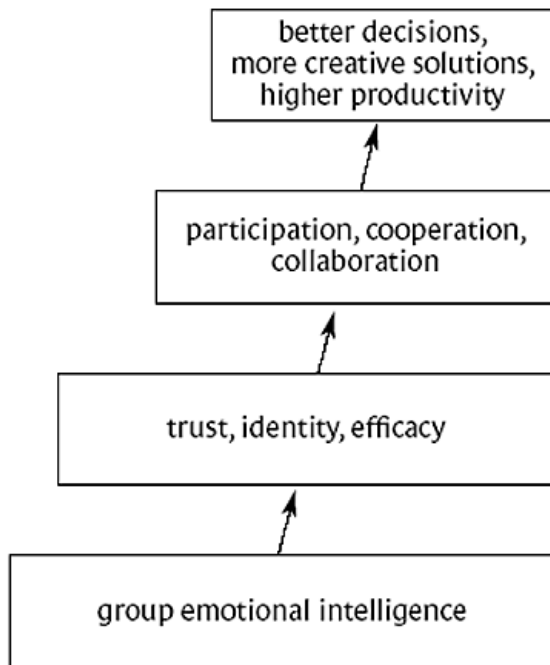
Through training, what individuals are able to exhibit are empathetic relationships, which involves “investing in understanding before being understood, communicating authentically and assertively, and being able to develop relationships of trust and credibility quickly” (Bagshaw, 3). According to Bagshaw, deciding on which useful EI elements that will impact the workplace beforehand is essential. This way training is planned out in an effective manner and allows team members to perform better and work collectively to meet desired goals.

Implications: Emotional Intelligence Predicting Team Success

Clearly, significant research has been made on the numerous benefits of individual emotional intelligence. Unfortunately, there has not been enough emphasis on a team’s collective emotional intelligence and how this can ultimately drive team success. Nonetheless, there is enough evidence to portray that an emotionally intelligent group is able to create an environment in which members value their membership, improve communication, collaboratively focus on required tasks, as well as address and resolve conflicts. A leader can also help guide a team’s EI by harnessing and directing the power of emotions to improve member’s satisfaction, morale, and motivation. More importantly, the ability to learn how to regulate one’s emotions and cooperatively set norms that *support* the behaviours of constructing trust, group identity, and group efficacy. This substantial evidence suggests that emotional intelligence assists and enhances fundamental factors that lead to high team performance and effectiveness.

Appendices

Appendix A: A Model of Team Effectiveness (Druskatt & Wolff)



Appendix B: Norms That Create Awareness of Group Emotions

Team Self-Evaluation

1. Schedule time to examine team effectiveness.
2. Create measurable task and process objectives and then measure them.
3. Acknowledge and discuss group moods.
4. Communicate your sense of what is transpiring in the team.
5. Allow members to call a “process check.”(For instance, a team member might say, “Process check: is this the most effective use of our time right now?”)

Seeking Feedback

1. Ask your “customers” how you are doing.
2. Post your work and invite comments.
3. Benchmark your processes.

Creating Resources for Working with Emotions

1. Make time to discuss difficult issues, and address the emotions that surround them.
2. Find creative, shorthand ways to acknowledge and express the emotion in the group.
3. Create fun ways to acknowledge and relieve stress and tension.
4. Express acceptance of members’ emotions.

Creating an Affirmative Environment

1. Reinforce that the team can meet a challenge. Be optimistic. For example, say things like, “We can get through this” or “Nothing will stop us.”
2. Focus on what you can control.
3. Remind members of the group’s important and positive mission.
4. Remind the group how it solved a similar problem before.
5. Focus on problem solving, not blaming.

Solving Problems Proactively

1. Anticipate problems and address them before they happen.
2. Take the initiative to understand and get what you need to be effective.
3. Do it yourself if others aren’t responding. Rely on yourself, not others.

Appendix C: Troth et al. (2012) Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

An individual team member's emotional awareness (own and others) skills will be positively related to the individual member's communication performance within the team.

Hypothesis 2

An individual team member's emotional management (own and others) skills will be positively related to the individual member's communication performance within the team.

Appendix D: Guiding Questions for Team's Emotional Intelligence

- 1) Are you aware of the subtleties of your own feelings?
- 2) Do you usually know what other people are feeling, even if they do not say so?
- 3) Does your awareness of what others are going through give you feelings of compassion for them?
- 4) Can you carry on doing the things you want to do under distressing circumstances, so they do not control your life?
- 5) When you are angry, can you still make your needs known in a way that resolves rather than exacerbates the situation?
- 6) Can you hang on to long-term goals, and avoid being too impulsive?
- 7) Do you keep trying to achieve what you want, even when it seems impossible and it is tempting to give up?
- 8) Can you use your feelings to help you to reach decision in your life?

Works Cited

- Arn, A. (2013). Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Satisfaction: The Emotional Quotient Inventory: Short Form and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test As Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction In Opposite and Same-Sex Couples. *Journal of Applied Psychology* , 150.
- Bagshaw, M. (2000). Emotional Intelligence– training people to be affective so they can be effective. *Industrial and Commerical Training*, 32 (2), 61-65.
- Barker, R. A. (2001). The nature of leadership. *Human Relations*, 54, 469-493.
- Berger, C. R. (2005). Interpersonal communication: Theoretical perspectives, future prospects. *Journal of Communication*, 55(3), 415-447.
- Bell, S. T. (2007). Deep-level composition variables as predictors of team performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 595–615.
- Cliffe, J. (2011). Emotional intelligence: A study of female secondary school headteachers. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 39(2), 205-218. doi: 10.1177/1741143210390057
- Crawford, M. (2009). *Getting to the heart of educational leadership: Emotion and educational leadership*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Daft, R. L. (2011). *The leadership experience* (5 ed.). Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Dimock, H. G., & Kass, R. (2011). *Making workgroups effective* (4 ed.). Concord, ON: Captus Press.
- Drodge, E. N., & Murphy, S. A. (2002). Interrogating emotions in police leadership. *Human Resource Development Review*, 1(4), 420-438. doi: 10.1177/1534484302238435
- Druskat, Vanessa U., and Steven B. Wolff. "Building the Emotioncil Intelligence of Groups." *Harvard Business Review* (2001): 12. Print.
- Erlbaum, Dillard J , Burgoon J. K. (2003). *Handbook of Communication and Social Interaction Skills*.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Emotional intelligence*. (10th ed.). New York: Bantam Dell, A Division of Random House Inc.
- Gujral, Harminder K., and Jaya Ahuja. "Impact of emotional intelligence on teamwork-A comparative study of self managed and cross functional teams." *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 1.6 (2011): 8. Print.

- Haver, A., Akerjordet, K., & Furunes, T. (2013). Emotion regulation and its implications for leadership: An integrative review and future research agenda. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 20(3), 287-303. doi: 10.1177/1548051813485438
- Jordan, P. J., & Troth, A. C. (2004). Managing emotions during team problem solving: Emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. *Human Performance*, 17, 195–218.
- Lam, L. T., & Kirby, S. L. (2002). Is emotional intelligence an advantage? An exploration of the impact of emotional and general intelligence on individual performance. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 142(1), 133-143.
- Light, W. H. (2007). Reframing presentation skills development for knowledge teams. *Organization Development Journal*, 25(1), 99-110.
- Liu, Leigh Anne, Chei Hwee Chua, and Günter K. Stahl. "Quality of Communication Experience: Definition, Measurement, and Implications for Intercultural Negotiations." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 95.3 (2010): 469-87. PsycARTICLES. Web. 18 Mar. 2014.
- Millar, F. E. & Rogers, L. E. (1976). A relational approach to interpersonal communication. In G. R. Miller (Ed.), *Explorations in interpersonal communication* (pp. 83–110). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Reyes-Dominguez, P. (2008). *The relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership on organizational excellence*. (3363978 Ed.D.), Texas A&M University - Kingsville, Ann Arbor. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Full Text database.
- Scullen, S. E., Mount, M. K., & Judge, T. A. (2003). Evidence of the construct validity of developmental ratings of managerial performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(1), 50-66. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.88.1.50
- Spitzberg, B. H., & Cupach, W. R. (1984). *Interpersonal communication competence*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Troth, A. C., Jordan, P. J., Lawrence, S. A., & Tse, H. H. M. (2012). A Multilevel Model of Emotional Skills, Communication Performance, and Task Performance in Teams. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 33(5), 700-722. doi:10.1002/job.785
- Whetten, D. A., & Cameron, K. S. (2011). *Developing management skills*. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.