

IMPACT OF TEAM LEADERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCE ON TEAMS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract This paper intends to examine the relationship between team leaders' Emotional Intelligence competence and their teams' emotional intelligence. Based on existing literature reviews, it is assumed that a team leader's Emotional Intelligence (EI) will influence the development of Group Emotional Intelligence (GEI). The primary data was collected for this study by using two instruments. The emotional intelligence of the team leaders was assessed using Emotional Social Competency Inventory (ESCI). The permission for using Emotional Social Competency Inventory was obtained from the Hay Group (Boston). The group Emotional Intelligence was measured using the inventory Emotional Competent Group Norms (ECGNs). The Emotional Intelligence of the teams was measured as norms instead of competency. The instrument was designed and tested by Druskat, Wolff, Koman and Messer. All participants in this study were team leaders, members, managers or supervisors for a particular team in the call centre. The data was collected from over 100 teams from call centers in Sutherland, Jeppiaar Technologies, Airnos, Ael Data, FSS, Mobinus, Infoflex & Quiescent technologies. The relationship between the team leaders' Emotional Intelligence and the emotional competent group norms of the teams was analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. This analysis indicates both individual and collective impacts of both ESCI and ECGNs inventory. The proposed model establishes the relationship between and among the team leaders' emotional intelligence competencies and emotional competent group norms of the teams.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Team Effectiveness, Group Emotional Intelligence, Call Centres, and Intelligent Quotient.

INTRODUCTION

The study on emotions in organizations is a new area of research. Mostly, researchers have studied the influence of emotions on individual performance in an organization. Individual emotional intelligence competencies are shown to be significantly related to individual performance. However, the study of emotions within a team and the effects of team leaders' emotions on teams' emotional competencies is a new area of research. This study intends to study the relationship between an individual team leader's emotional intelligence and group emotional intelligence in and around the environment of a call centre

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The earliest academic concern with emotional intelligence can be traced back to Darwin's work on the importance of emotional expression for survival and adaptation. During

the early Twentieth century, even though traditional definitions of intelligence emphasized cognitive aspects such as memory and problem-solving, several influential researchers in the intelligence field of study had begun to recognize the importance of non-cognitive aspects. In 1975, Howard Gardner's "Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences" introduced the idea of Multiple Intelligences which included both interpersonal intelligence (the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people) and intrapersonal intelligence (the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations). As a result of the growing acknowledgement among professionals of the importance and relevance of emotions to work outcomes, research on the topic continued to gain momentum, but it was not until the publication of Daniel Goleman's book titled "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ?" that the term became popular. Nancy Gibbs' 1995 Time magazine article highlighted Goleman's book and was the first in a string of mainstream media interest in emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Within call centers in particular, leadership is considered to be a core competence. However, applying emotional intelligence to a call centre presents some significant challenges, given the prevailing notions that a call centre's leadership induces more task-related behavior than relationship-focused behavior. Because of the unique framework of the call centre's environment and the challenging nature of many associated tasks, there is perhaps greater applicability for EI skills in the daily functions of leaders. Leaders can use emotions to generate enthusiasm towards a task, as well as use them to direct, energize and motivate the group as well as themselves. Team building is critical in a call centre, as the tenure of the teams and team members' is quite temporary. While seldom recognized, emotions play a frequent role in harnessing the energy of call centers, motivating groups or teams to accomplish assigned tasks, supporting critical decision making, and solving problems at hand.

Group Emotional Intelligence

Group Emotional Intelligence (GEI) is defined as the ability of a group to generate a shared set of norms that shape how members interpret and respond to their own emotions and to those exhibited by members and individuals outside of the group. In any situation, the expression of behavior is moderated by cultural norms. Norms have been defined as the "ideas or expectations about appropriate behavior for system members". The norms within a group can act as forces to control or constrain members' behaviors. This view is derived from the emotion management perspective, which was examined at the organizational level by Rafaeli and Sutton, Van Maanen & Kunda (1989) and Kunda (1992). It represents the group's ability to create norms that encourage awareness and regulation of the emotional process to build social capital.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research intends to contribute to two existing approaches. While an individual's emotional intelligence has been shown to be an important variable in their performance, it has not been assessed for its effect on the development of a team's climate. Conversely, this research contributes to the field of team emotional intelligence by providing a better understanding of the context in which the emotionally competent group norms emerge, as well as what influences their emergence.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

India has been regarded as the 'world's back office' with a huge call center boom for the past ten years. The call center industry has been growing at a consistent rate of 25-30 percent annually. The call centers primarily incorporate team culture into their functioning, and the management has to evaluate and improve the performance of teams. This research will help to improve team performance to their desired level. The knowledge of the study will help the call centers to improve performance by developing emotionally competent work group.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this research includes the following:

- A comparison of the call centre scenario with established norms.
- The impact of the team leaders' emotional intelligence on the teams' emotional competent group norms.
- The paper concludes with recommendations for further research and implications for the recruitment, selection, accession, training, and evaluation in call centers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To establish the parametric relationship between leaders' emotional intelligence competencies and teams' emotional competent norms.

HYPOTHESES FRAMED

- There is no significant positive linear relationship between a team leader's emotional intelligence competencies score and their teams' emotional competent group norms score.

FRAMEWORK OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The primary data for this study was collected from team leaders, team members and team managers, using two different types of questionnaires. Both contain three sections; the first section has questions about team leaders' demographic details, and the second section contains the ESCI inventory, which measures team leaders' emotional intelligence. The last section contains ECGNs inventory, which measures the teams' emotional intelligence.

Table 1

Variable		ESA	ACO	ADA	ESC	PO	EMP	OA	CM	CON	IF	IL	TW
ECGN SCORE	Pearson Correlation	.834 (**)	.817 (**)	.886 (**)	.859 (**)	.814 (**)	.841 (**)	.855 (**)	.848 (**)	.829 (**)	.818 (**)	.841 (**)	.833 (**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Number	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source : Primary Data , December 2008 –June 2009

Significance $p < 0.01$ **, $p < 0.05$ *

SAMPLING DESIGN

The city of Chennai comprises nearly 100 call centers with various levels of seat capacity and range of services offered. Among these companies about 10 companies were chosen to obtain the primary data. Selecting 10 out of 100 is done randomly by generating random numbers through simulation process. The randomly generated numbers in the domain of 1-100 are used to select the companies, which are already assigned. The sampling unit covers 10% of the total population, which is a significant size to reflect the population parameter. The sampling technique adopted in this study is Random Sampling.

SAMPLE UNITS

Out of ten call centers, this researcher was able to get permission from only eight call centers (two call centers rejected the request due to security issues and company policy). The sample units for this study are therefore, teams existing only in eight call centers in Chennai city. More than 1000 team leaders exist in these eight call centers. Hence, the sample size of the study is 100 teams. The sample of 100 teams from all call centers was selected through Convenience Sampling method. The researcher placed certain requirements on the human resource department to consider while selecting the team. Firstly, the team leader should have a minimum of one year experience as a leader and the team members have to be the subordinates of the sampled leaders and the manager/supervisor should be responsible for the team's performance. Secondly, there had to be a minimum of five raters per leader to qualify the data for inclusion in the statistical analysis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited geographically to the call centers in Chennai city only. The study uses self, subordinate and top level rating. Peer group perception was not collected. The instrument used in this survey was indigenous. Even though the reliability and validity of the instrument was

tested for this environment before it was used, the Indian origin instrument may give a different result. The results of the study cannot be generalized; it will be limited because the research samples were drawn from a single industry.

DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Through correlation analysis, it is very clear that emotional competent group norms were found to have a statistically significant relationship with the team leaders' emotional intelligence competencies. Among the 12 competencies, the adaptability, emotional self control and empathy parameters predict the emotional competent group norms of a team better.

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence Competence of the Team Leaders and

Emotional Competent Group Norms of their teams

Among the 12 competencies, the adaptability (.886) competency has shown a very significant correlation with the emotional competent group norm scores. These competencies, namely emotional self control (.859), organizational awareness (.855) and conflict management (.848) also have a high correlation. Since the p values in the above table are less than 0.05, it can be inferred that the 12 competencies have a significant relationship with the overall score of the emotional competent group norm of the teams. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the team leaders' emotional intelligence competencies score and the teams' overall emotional competent group norm scores.

Emotional Competent Group Norms of Teams which were best predicted by the

Leaders' Emotional Intelligence Competency norms

The following table explains that the nine norms of the teams' ECGNs which were found to have a statistically significant

Table 2

Variable		IP	CMWBN	CB	TS	CRFWWE	CB	PPS	OU	BER
ESCI SCORE	Pearson Correlation	.825 (**)	.948 (**)	.954 (**)	.932 (**)	.960 (**)	.947 (**)	.790 (**)	.782 (**)	.776 (**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	54.49	63.484	68.7	65.7	63.309	62.42	47.55	49.094	49.81
	No.	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source : Primary Data , December 2008 –June 2009

Significance $p < 0.01$ **, < 0.05 *

relationship with the overall ESCI. As shown in the table given below, all emotional competent group norms were found to have a statistically significant relationship with the overall ESCI score. However, the norms like creating resources for working with emotion (0.960), caring behavior (0.954), confronting members who break norms (0.948), team evaluation (0.932) have much stronger correlations with the emotional intelligence competency score of team leaders.

Norms like proactive problem solving (0.79), organizational understanding (0.78) and building external relationships (0.776) have less correlation comparatively. The team leaders' emotional intelligence predict the team's emotional competent norms such as creating resources for working with emotion, caring behavior and confronting members who break norms.

Regression Model summary to test the positive linear relationship between

Emotionally Intelligent Team Leader and their Team's Emotional Competent Group Norms

The regression analysis becomes the indispensable multivariate tool to verify the nature of the relationship between a unique variable as well as multiple variables. As this study was intended to look into the relationship between the emotional social competencies of the team leaders and emotional competent group norms of the teams, the emotional social competencies and emotional competent group norms are considered as the factors that determine the relationship, if there exists one. The two factors, emotional social competency inventory and emotional competent group norms average scores that are continuous in nature. This continuous variable was converted into a categorical

Table 3

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.865(a)	.748	.745	.36458	.748	290.670	1	98	.000

Source : Primary Data , December 2008 –June 2009 ,Significance $p < 0.01$ **, < 0.05 *

a Predictors: (Constant), ESCIScore , b Dependent Variable: ECGNScore

Table 4: Coefficients(a)

Model	Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.687	.135		5.073	.000
	ESCIScore	.770	.045	.865	17.049	.000

Source : Primary Data , December 2008 –June 2009

Significance $p < 0.01$ **, < 0.05 *, a Dependent Variable: ECGNScore

variable through a clustering of high, moderate, low mean value into categories. The influence of the categorical variable establishes profound regression analysis.

From the above regression summary table, it is clear that this model has A very high correlation as the adjusted R² is 0.745 and only 3% of the variation was observed in this model. This model is significant ($F(1,98) = 290.670$, $p = 0.000$). Hence, this researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is sufficient evidence, at a 5% level of significance, that there is a linear relationship between emotionally intelligent team leaders and the emotional competent group norms of the team. The significant parameters are the constant ($B = 0.687$ degrees of freedom ($df = 289$), $p < 0.000$) and the emotional intelligence competency parameter is the variable ($t = 17.049$, $df = 289$, $p = 0.000$) in this model. This implies that emotional intelligence of team leaders is having a significant effect on the teams' emotional competent group norms. Hence it is implied that there is significant linear relationship between emotional intelligent leader and emotional competent group norms of their team.

SUGGESTIONS

The findings can be used by academics in management level training programs in providing excellent learning situations for their participants. With these findings, program designers may be able to make program enhancements in order to encourage the development of emotional intelligence competencies, such as emotional self awareness, empathy and achievement orientation among the management graduates. The implications of this investigation are particularly important to human resource professionals, especially to those who manage employees in the service and BPO sector. As call centers mostly create a team culture for carrying out jobs, there comes a need for creating an effective team. They have to regularly involve themselves in team evaluation in order to sustain their performance at the workplace. Several areas where this research may have a significant impact include selection, training, and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The results are both consistent with and extend back to previous studies that have shown a relationship between team leaders' emotional intelligence and teams' emotional competent norms on team effectiveness. This study on Emotional Intelligence is a relatively new area of study. This study extends the knowledge of emotions, emotions of a leader and emotions of team at the work place. This study shows how the leader's behavior is significant for a good performance at the team level. It proves that team climate and culture affects team performance. It can be concluded

that team leader emotional intelligence will create and affect the emotional competencies group norms development in a team. The presence of these norms in a team will affect team performance. The findings of this study emphasize the necessity of developing an emotionally competent leader as well as emotionally competent norms in their teams.

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