
Research Papers



The Contribution of Emotional Intelligence to MBA students by Imbibing better Leaders' Behavior

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze MBA students' genuine familiarities of both good and bad leadership and the consequential emotional reactions; to resolve which emotionally intelligent competencies, if any, have greater importance in times of change. The paper follows a deductive view: touching from the broad to the particular based within the phenomenological paradigm, extending Goleman's inductive research into emotional intelligence competencies. Goleman's framework was adopted because his research was based upon competency models from both private and public organizations, which matches the MBA students' experiences.

The inferences recommend that bad leadership associates to a lack of self-management and relationship management competencies; though good leadership is not the strict opposite to it. If a person has developed self-management competencies it does not follow that he/she will be considered a good leader. Leaders should aspire to have an apparent view on their followers; in other words, extremely developed relationship management competencies. It also shows that face-to-face communication is appropriate. This research is formulated to support HRD professionals in the plan of both selection and developmental programs for managers, including competency descriptions, introduction of testing and developmental activities. The paper discusses the function of emotions, by and large emotional intelligence in management and adds to the facts that the competencies contained by the relationship management quadrant could be used as selection and developmental criteria.

Key Words: Leadership, Emotional intelligence, Management development, Competences, Change management, Students

1. Introduction:

Since the publication of Goleman's seminal work on emotional intelligence, interest in this construct and its application to HRD has increased significantly. Emotional intelligence draws upon the idea that we respond to the behaviors of others; their behaviors affect our mood. It is the interpersonal nature of management and leadership that has ignited the interest of both researchers and practitioners in emotional intelligence. This paper analyses MBA student' actual experiences of both good and bad leadership and the resulting emotional responses; to determine which emotionally intelligent competencies, if any, have greater importance in times of change. This paper supports a link between managers' behaviors, a key component of emotional intelligence, and the ability of

employees to positively respond to the challenges organizations face in the twenty-first century. The findings suggest that HRD professionals should consider focusing on the self-management and relationship management competencies clusters when designing competency frameworks. These clusters and the use of tests for emotional intelligence may be particularly relevant to the design of assessment centers for new and existing managers.

2. Management of Change:

Lewin (1951) demonstrated the pivotal role of the manager/leader in interpreting challenges in the business environment in the development of his three-step change model. This idea was developed further by Kotter (1995) who identified common failures of managers, including lack of urgency, absence of a vision and an inability to effectively communicate with employees. The contemporary workplace is changing rapidly with the development of the knowledge economy, the move to a “24/7” working environment and the greater use of technologies such as email as a means of communication. According to Dressler (2002, p. 15) the drivers for change include “technology, globalization, deregulation and changing political systems. The speed and scale of the challenges organizations face today, the greater reliance on non-personal communication coupled with the acknowledged difficulties in responding to change (Deutschman, 2007), suggests that there should be an even greater focus on the interpersonal nature of management, leadership and managerial behaviors. Managers and leaders are responsible for creating an environment in which their followers are able to respond effectively to the demands of constant change.

3. Emotional Contagion:

Emotional contagion describes how we respond to the behaviors of others; their behaviors affect our mood (Hatfield et al., 1994 cited in Robbins and Judge, 2007; Boyatzis et al., 2002). It outlines how every day we interpret emotional cues to help us understand other people (Caruso and Salovey, 2004). Ekman (1999, p. 3) suggests that “emotional expressions are crucial to the development of interpersonal relationships”. However, it may also be possible to detect fabricated signs of emotion (Ekman et al., 1990 cited in Ekman, 1999). Ekman (1999) suggests there are 15 basic positive and negative emotions which humans experience, these being:

- Anger
- Fear
- Disgust
- Sadness
- Contempt
- Contentment
- Amusement
- Excitement
- Guilt
- Pride in achievement
- Embarrassment
- Relief
- Shame
- Sensory pleasure
- Satisfaction

This list has some overlap with a summary of the six emotions of anger, fear, sadness, happiness, disgust and surprise which can be universally observed in humans (Weiss and Corpanzano, 1996 cited in Robbins and Judge, 2007). Positive emotions – particularly a sense of new hope created by an emotional connection with other people – have been found to play a significant role in bringing about change in therapeutic settings (Frank, 1991, 1999 both cited in Deutschman, 2007). Also, positive relationships with others have been reported as having influence on our health, well being and happiness (Patzwald and Wildt, 2004; Seligman et al., 2005). This view is echoed in organizational settings by Kotter (1995). Although psychologists disagree on the precise list of emotions there is no doubt they are a fundamental part of what makes us human. Positive emotional connections with others are important in the context of change in all areas of our lives, including the workplace (Kramer and Hess, 2002 cited in Caruso and Salovey, 2004; Bower, 1991 cited in Boyatzis et al., 2002). This has further implications in today's workplace as managers and leaders may rely on technology to communication therefore potentially limiting their ability to make such important connections.

4. Neuroscience:

Understanding how the brain processes emotional data gives a further insight into why we respond to the behaviors of others and how that shapes our cognitive responses. Over 150 years ago the French neurologist Broca demonstrated in the case of Phineas Gage that if parts of the brain are damaged it impacts upon an individual's identity; in Gage's case he changed from a sober industrious individual to a drunkard and a failure

after a serious head injury (Carr, 2006). With the development of functional magnetic-resonance imaging neuroscientists have been able to map the activity of the brain. Emotions involve an orchestration of activity in circuits throughout the brain, particularly the frontal lobe, which houses the brain's executive facilities (such as planning); the amygdale, which is particularly active during the experience of negative emotions such as fear; and the hippocampus, which adjust actions to context. Damasio (1994, 2000) has carried out research among individuals with brain lesions, including the role of emotions during decision making when information can be incomplete and a high degree of uncertainty exists. He concludes that in addition to logic and knowledge we also use our memory of previous similar situations, in particular the emotions connected with those memories. Therefore, if faced with a similar situation, an individual may not choose a particular course of action if it resulted in producing a negative emotion, e.g. fear or embarrassment. This is supported by current research looking at how our expectations or predictions of what might happen to control our emotional and cognitive responses. Expectancy or predictions about future states (including emotional experiences) is an important factor in shaping experience. Expectations provide ways of controlling behavior without experiencing adverse consequences first. The concepts outlined briefly above only touch upon current research that could play a part in helping to develop the ability of managers and leaders to respond to the challenges outlined by Sach (2007). It is possible that the range, diversity and complexity of this research have contributed to the popularity of the emotional intelligence construct. Emotional intelligence attempts to bring together understanding emotion and how the brain works; as Gestalt psychology suggests: understanding is based upon insight, i.e. when an individual suddenly becomes aware of the relevance of behavior or learning

5. Emotional Intelligence:

Salovey et al. (2004) proposed one of the first comprehensive theories of emotional intelligence. They carried out comprehensive tests to establish the validity of emotional intelligence based on the theoretical concept of emotion and a definition of intelligence. They defined emotion as “an organized response system that coordinates experiences of moods and feelings, such as happiness, anger, sadness and surprise” and intelligence as “a primary emphasis on abstract

reasoning and secondarily, refer to adaptation”. They suggested that intellect and emotional intelligence are different and in fact use different parts of the brain. Goleman (1995, 1998) popularized this field. He adapted the Mayer and Salovey model, focusing on emotional intelligence as an array of competencies grouped around the management of our own feelings and our relationships with others. Goleman (1998, p. 82) defines emotional intelligence as, the capacity for understanding our own feelings and those of others, for motivating others and ourselves whilst using leadership, empathy and integrity. It is important to distinguish between two terms – emotional intelligence and emotional competencies. Emotional intelligence as proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1990) refers to a person's basic underlying capability to recognize and use emotion. Emotional competencies as proposed by Goleman (1998) refer to learned competencies or skills based on emotional intelligence with the explicit focus on the word learned, i.e. it is possible to develop emotional competencies. Since the publication of Goleman's (1995) seminal work on emotional intelligence interest in this construct and its application to HRD has been considerable (Higgs and Aitken, 2003; Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005). In recent years organizations as diverse as BT, American Express, Johnson and Johnson, British police forces and local authorities have incorporated elements of emotional intelligence within their competency frameworks (Passmore and Roberts, 2005; Kilgallon, 2005; Urch Druskat et al., 2006; Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations, 2007). Boyatzis (2008) suggests that almost every organization with more than 300 employees has adopted a competency-based framework for its human resource management. These competency frameworks influence both the selection and development of existing and future leaders. A study of local government managers supports the view that there are generic behaviors that are either “effective” or “ineffective” (Hamlin and Serventi, 2008). A review of these behavioral characteristics demonstrates congruence with the emotional intelligence competency descriptors developed by Goleman (1998, 2001). It appears that the major drive of interest from academic researchers has been “the failure of IQ tests, which can only test abstract reasoning, to account sufficiently for the variance in success both in an educational and organizational context” (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000, p. 346). The resulting focus by researchers

has been in part to develop additional definitions and tests of intelligence to account for this variance. Although this paper does not give in-depth consideration to the criticisms of the emotional intelligence construct, it should be noted that some writers suggest it is not new and is in fact a repackaging of personality theories (McCrae, 2000).

Competencies	Personal	Social
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self – Awareness • Emotional Self – Awareness • Accurate Self – Assessment • Self - Confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social – Awareness • Empathy • Service Orientation • Organizational Awareness
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self – Management • Emotional self-control • Trustworthiness • Conscientiousness • Adaptability • Achievement drive • Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship management • Developing others • Influence • Communication • Conflict management • Visionary leadership • Catalyzing change • Building bonds • Teamwork and collaboration

These groups are based upon his research into hundreds of competency models from both private and public organizations. The model breaks down each behavioral group into clusters of competencies, which make up the constituent parts of the complete “algorithm” as described by McClelland (1973). For example, to describe an individual is socially aware, they should fulfill the criteria for that cluster. These criteria could require the individual to demonstrate a certain level of mastery in all or only two of the three constituent parts: empathy, service orientation and organizational awareness. Working alongside Boyatzis and others, Goleman (1998) developed the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) testing instrument for emotional intelligence. It is based upon a 360-degree assessment that gathers self, subordinate, peer and supervisory ratings using the framework shown in Tabulation, above. The literature discussed underpins the proposition that in times of change it may be valuable for HRD professionals to understand why and how people respond the behavior of others and that in particular the value of indentifying the emotional intelligence competencies that create a positive emotional connection with others. This paper extends Goleman's (1995, 1998) inductive research into emotional intelligence competencies to consider which elements, if any, have greater importance for HRD practice in times of change. Goleman's framework was adopted as his research was based upon competency models from both private and public organizations which match the MBA students' experiences.

6.. Conclusion:

If we consider that the challenges identified by contemporary theories of HRD,

requires leaders to engage in double-loop learning and complex decision making, then the negative feelings created by a leader who lacks self-management and relationship management competences could be counterproductive. Equally, the positive feelings created by leaders who are high in relationship management and social awareness competences are likely to be productive. These negative and positive feelings may also have an impact on the health, wellbeing and happiness of individuals. It is perhaps surprising that self-awareness, which is considered the cornerstone of emotional intelligence, was not found to be a significant factor in this research. This may be because it is the perceptions of followers that create the impression of a leader's influence. The dimensions of relationship management and social awareness are more readily observable, and a perceived lack of competence in self-management may suggest a lack of self-awareness. Our findings suggest that the positive behaviors associated with relationship management competences enable individuals to deal more effectively with today's challenges. This research also implies that the emotional intelligence construct, which incorporates important research from the fields of psychology, positive psychology and neuroscience, may be useful in supporting the development of effective leaders. Competency frameworks form an important part of many organizations' HRD responsibilities. These frameworks are used as the basis for selection in terms of assessment centre design and other selection and testing methodologies. They will also influence appraisal and leadership development programs. This research suggests that HRD professionals when designing competency frameworks should consider a focus on the self-management and relationship management competencies clusters. They should also consider the design of assessment centers and if possible consider testing for emotional intelligence for new and existing managers because it appear these competency clusters are particularly relevant.

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