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What is This?

Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence

Jennifer M. George

ABSTRACT   This paper suggests that feelings (moods and emotions) play a central role in the leadership process. More specifically, it is proposed that emotional intelligence, the ability to understand and manage moods and emotions in the self and others, contributes to effective leadership in organizations. Four major aspects of emotional intelligence, the appraisal and expression of emotion, the use of emotion to enhance cognitive processes and decision making, knowledge about emotions, and management of emotions, are described. Then, I propose how emotional intelligence contributes to effective leadership by focusing on five essential elements of leader effectiveness: development of collective goals and objectives; instilling in others an appreciation of the importance of work activities; generating and maintaining enthusiasm, confidence, optimism, cooperation, and trust; encouraging flexibility in decision making and change; and establishing and maintaining a meaningful identity for an organization.

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By all counts, leadership ranks among the most researched and debated topics in the organizational sciences. A wide diversity of approaches to leadership has been proposed – researchers have analyzed what leaders are like, what they do, how they motivate their followers, how their styles interact with situational conditions, and how they can make major changes in their organizations, for example (for reviews of the leadership literature see Bass, 1990; Fiedler & House, 1994; Yukl, 1998; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). Researchers have also explored when leadership might not be important and some leadership experts have proposed that leadership is more a creation in the minds of followers than a characteristic of those who occupy leadership roles (e.g. Meindl, 1990). While we have learned much about leadership from this diversity of approaches, it still remains somewhat of an enigma. While research has been conducted which supports (and sometimes fails to support) currently popular theories, and these theories have increased our understanding of leadership, how and why leaders have (or fail to have) positive influences on their followers and organizations is still a compelling question for leadership researchers.

While existing studies detail what leaders are like, what they do, and how they make decisions, the effects of leaders' feelings or their moods and emotions and, more generally, the role of emotions in the leadership process, are often not explicitly considered in the leadership literature, with the notable exception of work on charisma (e.g. Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Lindholm, 1990). This relative neglect is not surprising as the organizational literature has been dominated by a cognitive orientation (Ilgen & Klein, 1989), with feelings being ignored or being seen as something that gets in the way of rationality and effective decision making (Albrow, 1992). Just as motivation theory and research have ignored how workers' moods and emotions influence their choice of work activities, levels of effort, and levels of persistence in the face of obstacles (George & Brief, 1996), leadership theory and research have not adequately considered how leaders' moods and emotions influence their effectiveness as leaders. Two preliminary studies suggest that leaders' feelings may play an important role in leadership. George and Bettenhausen (1990) found that the extent to which leaders of existing work groups experienced positive moods was positively related to levels of prosocial behavior performed by group members and negatively related to group turnover rates. George (1995) found that work groups led by sales managers who tended to experience positive moods at work provided higher quality customer service than groups led by managers who did not tend to experience positive moods at work. While these two studies help to fill a gap in the leadership literature, in and of themselves, they do not illuminate the role of moods and emotions in the

leadership process per se but rather suggest that feelings may be an important factor to consider.

The growing body of literature exploring the role of moods and emotions in human and organizational affairs (e.g. Fineman, 1993; Forgas, 1995) suggests that, rather than being simply an additional factor to consider, feelings play a much more central role in the leadership process. The purpose of this paper is to present a framework describing what that role might be. First, however, it is useful to sample the literature and research findings attesting to the central role of feelings in human affairs.

The role of feelings in human affairs

A growing body of literature suggests that moods and emotions play a central role in cognitive processes and behavior. What distinguishes moods from emotions is their intensity. Moods are pervasive and generalized feeling states that are not tied to the events or circumstances which may have caused the mood in the first place (Morris, 1989). Moods are relatively low intensity feelings which do not interrupt ongoing activities (Forgas, 1992a). Emotions are high intensity feelings that are triggered by specific stimuli (either internal or external to the individual), demand attention, and interrupt cognitive processes and behaviors (Forgas, 1992a; Morris, 1989; Simon, 1982). Emotions tend to be more fleeting than moods because of their intensity. Emotions often feed into moods so that, once the intensity of an emotion subsides because the individual has cognitively or behaviorally dealt with its cause, the emotion lingers on in the form of a less intense feeling or mood. Hence, for example, the intense anger that a leader might experience upon learning that he or she was deceived by a follower resulting in a lost opportunity subsides once the leader has recovered from the shock and decides how to deal with the situation. However, the anger lives on for the rest of the day in the form of a negative mood which colors the leader's interactions and thought processes.

Feelings have been shown to influence the judgments that people make, material recalled from memory, attributions for success and failure, creativity, and inductive and deductive reasoning. When people are in positive moods, for example, their perceptions and evaluations are likely to be more favorable, they are more prone to remember positive information, they are more self-assured, they are more likely to take credit for successes and avoid blame for failures, and they are more helpful to others (e.g. Bower, 1981; Cunningham et al., 1980; Forgas et al., 1984, 1990; George, 1991; Isen et al., 1976, 1978; Rosenhan et al., 1981). Positive moods have been found to

enhance flexibility on categorization tasks and facilitate creativity and induc-
tive reasoning (Isen et al., 1985, 1987). Conversely, negative moods may
foster deductive reasoning and more critical and comprehensive evaluations
(Salovey et al., 1993; Sinclair & Mark, 1992).

    While a stereotype of the 'rational' decision maker is a person who can
set aside their personal feelings and coolly calculate the best course of action
to deal with a problem or opportunity, neurological findings suggest that feel-
ings are necessary to make good decisions (Damasio, 1994; Goleman, 1995).
Neurological research on patients who have had brain tumors removed and
subsequent damage to sectors of the brain responsible for moods and emo-
tions has yielded a perplexing pattern of results. Some of these patients show
no deficits in memory, intelligence, verbal ability, and numerical ability. Given
the nature of their injuries, however, they tend to be emotionally flat. For
example, they don't seem upset when recounting their own personal injury,
problems, and disappointments or when viewing pictures that induce nega-
tive feelings in people without any brain injuries. Elliot, a former attorney,
seen by neurologist Damasio, was one such patient. After removal of his
brain tumor, Elliot continued to score either at average or above-average
levels on measures of intelligence and other cognitive abilities. However, his
life fell apart after his injury. He had trouble regularly attending work, when
at work had a hard time getting things done, and eventually lost his job and
got divorced. After much research and analysis and comparison with other
patients with similar kinds of injuries, Damasio concluded that Elliot's lack
of feeling left him unable to make decisions. On problem-solving tasks, for
example, Elliot could come up with multiple viable solutions and the pros
and cons for each, yet could not choose among them. Feelings help us to
make choices and decide among options and, once devoid of feelings, people
can 'rationally' assess pros and cons of choices ranging from what's the best
time to schedule a doctor's appointment to what type of career to pursue, yet
may never be able to make a wise choice from the alternatives generated
(Damasio, 1994; Goleman, 1995). While very intense emotions can certainly
interfere with effective decision making, as Damasio (1994: 53) suggests,
'reduction in emotion may constitute an equally important source of irra-
tional behavior.'

    This brief sampling of findings is indicative of a wider body of litera-
ture which, though in diverse areas such as neuropsychology, social psy-
chology, and organizational behavior, point to a consistent conclusion:
feelings are intimately connected to the human experience. Feelings are intri-
cately bound up in the ways that people think, behave, and make decisions.

    In this regard, Forgas' (1995) affect infusion model (AIM) provides a
useful framework for understanding the conditions under which affect is

most likely to influence cognition, judgment, and decision making. More specifically and counterintuitively, the AIM suggests that affect is particularly likely to influence judgments during substantive processing. Substantive processing occurs when decision makers are faced with a complex task in need of extensive and constructive information processing, and when ambiguity and uncertainty exist, new information needs to be assimilated, and decision makers desire to make accurate judgments and good decisions (Fiedler, 1991; Forgas, 1992b, 1993, 1994, 1995). Affect priming is an important mechanism through which affect infuses judgments during substantive processing. Affect priming refers to the selective attention to, encoding, and retrieval of information congruent with one's current affective state as well as the tendency to make mood-congruent interpretations and associations (e.g. Bower, 1981, 1991; Clark & Waddell, 1983; Forgas, 1995; Forgas & Bower, 1987; Isen, 1984, 1987; Singer & Salovey, 1988).

Additionally, the AIM model suggests that affect is likely to influence judgments when decision makers resort to a heuristic processing strategy. Heuristic processing tends to take place when decision makers are making judgments that are simple or commonplace and not very personally relevant, there is little pressure to be detailed or accurate, and there are other demands on current information processing (Forgas, 1995). Under these conditions, one's current affective state may be used as a heuristic such that decision makers deduce their judgment from their current affective state or how they feel at the time the judgment is being made (Clore & Parrott, 1991; Forgas, 1995; Schwarz & Bless, 1991).

Feelings and leadership

The literature briefly described above is representative of a much wider body of knowledge which suggests that feelings serve multiple purposes in human affairs. As will be demonstrated below, it is likely that feelings play an important role in leadership. While George and Bettenhausen (1990) and George (1995) investigated some of the potential beneficial consequences of leader positive mood, it is likely that a diversity of feelings (both emotions and moods) influences leadership effectiveness. Negative moods, for example, foster systematic and careful information processing (Sinclair, 1988; Sinclair & Mark, 1992) and may be advantageous when leaders are dealing with complex problems in which errors carry high risk. As another example, relatively intense negative emotions may appropriately redirect a leader's attention to an issue in need of immediate attention (Frigda, 1988). For example, a leader who experiences anger upon learning of a pattern of covert sexual

harassment in a department might be well served by this emotional response. The anger signals to the leader (Frigda, 1988) that his or her attention must be redirected from new product development to confronting the sexual harassment problem and improving the organization's efforts to eliminate harassment.

By now, it may be apparent that it is not too difficult to construct scenarios in which leaders would be well served by the experience of a variety of types of moods and emotions. Moreover, one can also construct scenarios in which a leader's effectiveness may be hampered by the experience of certain moods and emotions. Leaders who experience anger frequently may have a difficult time building good relationships with followers and engendering their trust (Jones & George, 1998). Similarly, a leader who frequently experiences positive moods on the job may fail to notice and attend to performance shortfalls that are less than apparent.

Hence, this inquiry into the role of feelings in leadership is not bent on determining the 'right' or 'effective' moods and emotions that facilitate leadership effectiveness. Leaders are obviously human beings with the full range of moods and emotions potentially available to them. Both positive and negative moods and emotions serve numerous functions in people's lives. Likewise, both positive and negative moods and emotions can sometimes be the cause of human dysfunctions.

This paper does seek to explore, however, whether effective leaders possess certain emotional capabilities just as they may possess certain cognitive capabilities (Bass, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Yukl, 1998). Moods and emotions play an extensive role in thought processes and behavior (Bower, 1981; Bower & Cohen, 1982; Clark & Isen, 1982; Forgas, 1995; George & Brief, 1992; Isen & Baron, 1991; Isen & Shalker, 1982; Isen et al., 1978; Leventhal & Tomarken, 1986; Rosenhan et al., 1981; Teasdale & Fogarty, 1979) and the same moods and emotions can result in both improved or impaired effectiveness depending upon multiple factors including the index of effectiveness (for example, a quick, heuristic-based response vs. a careful consideration of alternatives) (Salovey et al., 1993; Sinclair & Mark, 1992). Moreover, research suggests that people can and do take steps to manage their own and others' moods and emotions (Mayer et al., 1991; Salovey & Mayer, 1989–90). Might it be that some leaders have superior mood/emotion capabilities which allow them to use and benefit from the variety of feelings they experience on the job? Might it also be that these capabilities enable leaders to influence, and develop effective interpersonal relationships with, their followers? Interpersonal relationships are laden with moods and emotions as is effective social influence.

These mood/emotion capabilities have been addressed by emotional

intelligence theory and research. In the next section, I briefly describe emotional intelligence, and the theory and research which support its role in human affairs. Next, I describe how emotional intelligence may be a key contributor to leadership effectiveness and outline how different aspects of emotional intelligence facilitate the varied activities central to effective leadership. While emotional intelligence has been linked previously to specific leader behaviors (Megerian & Sosik, 1996), this paper adopts a broader approach and explores the multitude of ways in which emotional intelligence may contribute to leadership effectiveness.

Additionally, I would like to point out that earlier leadership approaches, and in particular the trait approach, also have described certain leadership skills or traits that may either be subsumed under or may partially overlap with emotional intelligence (for reviews, see Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1998). Moreover, while the term 'emotional intelligence' has been coined relatively recently, it bears some resemblance and partially overlaps with earlier concepts such as social intelligence (Legree, 1995; Sternberg & Smith, 1985; Wong et al., 1995). However, as Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (in press) suggest, emotional intelligence is theoretically preferable to earlier constructs such as social intelligence because it is more focused on affect per se. Emotional intelligence includes internal, private feelings that influence functioning which may not necessarily be linked to social skills and also focuses exclusively on emotional skills rather than confounding them with social or political knowledge (Mayer et al., in press). Hence, as will become clearer below, emotional intelligence captures capabilities and skills in the emotion domain to a greater extent than prior constructs.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is 'the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth' (Mayer & Salovey, 1997: 5). Prior to continuing, it should be pointed out that the term 'emotional' in emotional intelligence is used broadly to refer to moods as well as emotions. So as to be consistent with the emotional intelligence literature, in the remainder of this paper, 'emotions' will be used to refer to both emotions and moods.

Emotional intelligence essentially describes the ability to effectively join emotions and reasoning, using emotions to facilitate reasoning and reasoning intelligently about emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). In other words, emotional intelligence taps into the extent to which people's cognitive

capabilities are informed by emotions and the extent to which emotions are cognitively managed. Additionally, it should be pointed out that emotional intelligence is distinct from predispositions to experience certain kinds of emotions captured by the personality traits of positive and negative affectivity (George, 1996; Tellegen, 1985).

There are at least four major aspects of emotional intelligence: the appraisal and expression of emotion, the use of emotion to enhance cognitive processes and decision making, knowledge about emotions, and management of emotions (Table 1). While each of these aspects of emotional intelligence are quite involved, here I provide you with a brief overview of some of their key elements. This discussion draws from the work of Mayer, Salovey, and their colleagues (e.g. Mayer & Salovey, 1993, 1995, 1997; Mayer et al., 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1989–90, 1994; Salovey et al., 1993, 1995).

The appraisal and expression of emotion

Appraisal and expression of emotion pertain to both the self and other people. People differ in terms of the degree to which they are aware of the emotions they experience and the degree to which they can verbally and non-verbally express these emotions to others. Accurately appraising emotions facilitates the use of emotional input in forming judgments and making decisions. The accurate expression of emotion ensures that people are able to effectively communicate with others to meet their needs and accomplish their goals or objectives.

Some people are actually reluctant or ambivalent about expressing emotions. Two types of ambivalence have been identified (King & Emmons, 1991). Some ambivalent people actually want to express their emotions, agonize over doing it, and fail to (Emmons & Colby, 1995). Others do express their emotions but then regret doing so. Both types of ambivalence have been linked to anxiety, depression, some psychiatric disorders, lower well-being, and less social support (Emmons & Colby, 1995; Katz & Campbell, 1994; King & Emmons, 1990, 1991). At a general level, ambivalence over expression of emotions can hamper an individual from developing beneficial interpersonal relationships in life.

People also differ in terms of their ability to accurately express emotions. Some people, referred to as alexithymics, cannot appraise their own emotions and are unable to communicate their feelings using language (Apfel & Sifneos, 1979; Krystal et al., 1986; Sifneos, 1972, 1973; Taylor, 1984; Thayer-Singer, 1977). Alexithymics are vulnerable to a variety of psychological problems which may result from their inability to express their

Table 1 Aspects of emotional intelligence

Appraisal and expression of emotion	Use of emotions to enhance cognitive processes and decision making	Knowledge about emotions	Management of emotions
Aware of own emotions	Emotions direct attention and signal focus of attention	Knowing the causes of emotions	Meta-regulation of mood (reflection on the causes, appropriateness, and changeability of emotions)
Can accurately express own emotions	Emotions facilitate making choices	Knowing the consequences of emotions	
Aware of others' emotions	Use of specific emotions to enhance certain kinds of cognitive processes	Knowing how emotions progress over time	Positive mood maintenance
Can accurately express others' emotions	Use of shifts in emotions to promote flexibility		Negative mood repair or improvement
Empathy			Management of others' emotions

Based on the work of Mayer, Salovey, and colleagues (e.g. Mayer et al., 1990; Mayer & Salovey, 1993, 1995, 1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1989–90, 1994; Salovey et al., 1993, 1995).

feelings (Salovey et al., 1993). Individuals also differ in their ability to express emotions nonverbally with facial expressions and body language (Buck, 1979, 1984; Friedman et al., 1980).

Appraising and expressing the emotions of others is the ability to accurately determine the emotions other people are experiencing and the ability to accurately convey or communicate these feelings. Much of the appraisal of emotion in others comes from nonverbal cues. When people tell each other how they are feeling, appraisal is relatively straightforward. However, sometimes the emotions people claim to have are not actually the ones they are experiencing and at other times people are reluctant to express their emotions. People differ in the extent to which they can accurately appraise emotions in others, particularly from facial expressions (Buck, 1984; Campbell et al., 1971).

Related to the appraisal and expression of emotion in others is the concept of empathy, the ability to understand and experience another person's feelings or emotions (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972; Wispe, 1986). Empathy, a contributor to emotional intelligence, is an important skill which enables people to provide useful social support and maintain positive interpersonal relationships (Batson, 1987; Kessler et al., 1985; Thoits, 1986).

The use of emotion to enhance cognitive processes and decision making

Emotional intelligence does not only entail being aware of one's own emotions, but also using these emotions in functional ways. First, emotions can be useful in terms of directing attention to pressing concerns and signalling what should be the focus of attention (Frigda, 1988; George & Brief, 1996). Second, emotions can be used in choosing among options and making decisions; being able to anticipate how one would feel if certain events took place can help decision makers choose among multiple options (Damasio, 1994). Third, emotions can be used to facilitate certain kinds of cognitive processes. As mentioned earlier, positive moods can facilitate creativity, integrative thinking, and inductive reasoning, and negative moods can facilitate attention to detail, detection of errors and problems, and careful information processing (Isen et al., 1985, 1987; Salovey et al., 1993; Sinclair & Mark, 1992). Finally, shifts in emotions can lead to more flexible planning, the generation of multiple alternatives, and a broadened perspective on problems (Mayer, 1986; Salovey & Mayer, 1989–90). When people are in positive moods, for example, they tend to be more optimistic and perceive that positive events are more likely and negative events are less likely; when people are in negative moods they tend to be more pessimistic and perceive that

positive events are less likely and negative events are more likely (Bower, 1981; Salovey & Birnbaum, 1989). People in positive moods also tend to have heightened perceptions of their future success and self-efficacy (Forgas et al., 1990; Kavanagh & Bower, 1985). By evaluating the same opportunities and problems in varying mood states, a broad range of options will be brought to mind and considered. And, as you will see below, emotional intelligence entails using emotions for these purposes.

Knowledge about emotions

Emotional knowledge is concerned with understanding both the determinants and consequences of moods and emotions, and how they evolve and change over time. People differ in their awareness and understanding of how different situations, events, people, and other stimuli generate emotions. A leader who is surprised when followers' initial reaction to an announced restructuring (even with a guarantee of no layoffs) is fear and anxiety is not knowledgeable about the determinants of emotions. Over time, emotions and moods change – fear and anxiety might evolve into a negative mood and then to apathy or to a more intense state of agitation. While emotions can progress in different ways – enthusiasm can lead to further levels of excitation or to a less intense sense of general well-being – some people are especially attuned to these kinds of progressions and their causes.

Appreciation of the consequences of moods and emotions also varies across individuals. Some people have a rudimentary understanding of how they (and other people) are influenced by feelings and use this knowledge in functional ways. A leader in a negative mood who decides to delay meeting with followers to discuss upcoming changes in need of their support until they are feeling better intuitively realizes how their ability to enthusiastically communicate information about the changes and garner their followers' support is influenced by their current feelings. Similarly, a home buyer in a positive mood who sees a house they really like but forestalls making a final decision until they return to the house in a couple of days in a different 'frame of mind' possesses an understanding of how their appraisal of the house may be colored by their good mood. On the other hand, some people are oblivious to the effects of feelings. A stereotype of obliviousness to the effects of feelings is the family member who has had a hard day at work, comes home in a bad mood, and proceeds to get into arguments with spouse and children. This family member, however, never realizes how their bad mood is contributing to the disagreements and, instead, berates everyone else for their presumed failings, intensifying their own bad mood as well as the disagreements.

Management of emotions

Emotional intelligence also includes a more proactive dimension with regards to feelings: the management of one's own and other people's moods and emotions. Research has found that people strive to maintain positive moods and alleviate negative moods (e.g. Clark & Isen, 1982; Isen & Levin, 1972; Mayer et al., 1991; Mischel et al., 1973; Morris & Reilly, 1987); emotional intelligence captures individual differences in the extent to which one is able to successfully manage moods and emotions in these ways. Management of one's own moods and emotions also relies on knowledge and consideration of the determinants, appropriateness, and malleability of moods and emotions. This regulation entails a reflective process, which has been referred to as the meta-regulation of mood (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Essentially, emotional intelligence encompasses individual differences in the ability to accurately reflect on one's moods and manage them (Salovey et al., 1995).

Emotional intelligence entails not just being able to manage one's own feelings, but also being able to manage the moods and emotions of others. Being able to excite and enthuse other people or make them feel cautious and wary is an important interpersonal skill and vehicle of social influence (Wasielewski, 1985). In order to be able to manage the moods and emotions of others, people must be able to appraise and express emotions, effectively use emotions, and be knowledgeable about emotions. Hence, the other three dimensions of emotional intelligence described above contribute to leaders being able to influence and manage the emotions of their followers.[1]

Recap

These four aspects of emotional intelligence are related. For example, as mentioned above, awareness of emotions is necessary for their management. As another example, empathy may contribute to being able to manage emotions in others. Consistent with this reasoning, preliminary research suggests that the four aspects of emotional intelligence are positively correlated with each other (e.g. Mayer et al., 1990, in press; Mayer & Geher, 1996; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Additionally, and as mentioned earlier, while emotional intelligence is a relatively new construct, it has roots in other constructs such as social intelligence which have a relatively long history (Ford & Tisak, 1983; Sternberg & Smith, 1985; Walker & Foley, 1973). However, emotional intelligence captures more of the essence of the active and purposeful integration of feelings and thoughts for effective functioning than these earlier constructs.

Emotional intelligence and effective leadership

While emotional intelligence can lead to enhanced functioning in a variety of aspects of life such as achievement and close relationships (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1989–90), I propose that it may play a particularly important role in leadership effectiveness. To clarify this role, I propose how the four aspects of emotional intelligence described above – appraisal and expression of emotion, use of emotion to enhance cognitive processing and decision making, knowledge about emotions, and management of emotions – contribute to effective leadership.

In order to explore the implications of emotional intelligence for effective leadership, it is necessary to identify the fundamental nature of effective leadership. This is no easy task given the plethora of leadership theories, approaches, and empirical findings. Fortunately, several recent syntheses of the leadership literature have been offered which are consistent in terms of their descriptions of effective leadership. Based on the syntheses of Yukl (1998), Locke (1991), and Conger and Kanungo (1998), as well as the larger leadership literature, specific elements of leadership effectiveness can be identified. Note that, while no specific theory of leadership is entailed in these elements, the elements themselves have roots in a variety of theoretical traditions. As described by these authors (i.e. Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Locke, 1991; Yukl, 1998), effective leadership includes the following essential elements:[2]

- development of a collective sense of goals and objectives and how to go about achieving them;
- instilling in others knowledge and appreciation of the importance of work activities and behaviors;
- generating and maintaining excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, and optimism in an organization as well as cooperation and trust;
- encouraging flexibility in decision making and change;
- establishing and maintaining a meaningful identity for an organization.

Below, I consider how emotional intelligence may help leaders carry out these activities and therefore contribute to leader effectiveness.

Development of a collective sense of goals and objectives and how to go about achieving them

The goals and objectives considered here are major, overarching goals that are commonly referred to as the leader's vision for the organization (e.g.

Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Locke, 1991). Emotional intelligence may contribute to leaders developing a compelling vision for their groups or organizations in a number of ways. First, leaders may use their emotions to enhance their information processing of the challenges, threats, issues, and opportunities facing their organizations. Leaders are often faced with a large amount of information characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity; out of this information, they need to chart a course for their groups or organizations. In terms of the AIM model (Forgas, 1995), leaders are likely to engage in substantive processing as they seek to determine the direction for their organizations. They are dealing with complex information with high uncertainty and the desire to be accurate. Recall that the AIM model suggests that current affective state is likely to influence judgments resulting from substantive processing through the mechanism of affect priming.

Research linking positive moods to creativity suggests that when leaders are in positive moods they may be more creative (Isen et al., 1987) and, hence, more likely to come up with a compelling vision that contrasts with existing conditions. For example, people in positive moods have been found to be more integrative, use broader categories, and approach problems and categorization more flexibly (Isen & Baron, 1991; Isen & Daubman, 1984; Isen et al., 1985; Murray et al., 1990). Creating a compelling vision for an organization can be an exercise in creativity, positive thinking, and flexibility and such an exercise will be facilitated by positive moods (Isen et al., 1985; Murray et al., 1990). Leaders who are high on emotional intelligence will be better able to take advantage of and use their positive moods and emotions to envision major improvements in their organizations' functioning.

Leaders high on emotional intelligence also are likely to have knowledge about the fact that their positive moods may cause them to be overly optimistic. Hence, in order to ensure that they are being realistic and appropriately critical, they may be more likely to revisit their judgments when in a more neutral or negative mood to ensure a careful consideration of all the issues involved. Such leaders also are likely to be better able to repair negative moods arising from any number of sources that may limit flexibility and creativity, and, more generally, use meta-mood processes to manage their moods and emotions in functional ways (Mayer et al., 1991).

Importantly, leaders need not only to come up with a compelling vision, but also to effectively communicate it throughout the organization in such a way that it does come to be shared and is 'collective'. By accurately appraising how their followers currently feel, relying on their knowledge of emotions to understand why they feel this way, and influencing followers' emotions so that they are receptive to and supportive of the leader's goals or

objectives for the organization and proposed ways to achieve them, leaders may help to ensure that their vision is shared or collective. For example, a leader who is high on emotional intelligence may act on emotional knowledge which suggests that followers are more likely to experience positive emotions and be supportive of the leader's goals and objectives when the leader expresses confidence in followers and serves to elevate their levels of self-efficacy (Gardner & Avolio, 1998).

Instilling in others knowledge and appreciation of the importance of work activities and behaviors

In order to instill in others an appreciation of the importance of work activities, leaders need to ensure that followers are aware of problems and major issues facing an organization as well as potential opportunities while at the same time raising their confidence in their own abilities to successfully overcome problems, meet challenges, and seize opportunities. Leaders need to understand and influence followers' emotions such that they are aware of the serious nature of problems yet, given the leader's vision, are enthusiastic about resolving the problems and feel optimistic about personal contributions. Leaders who are high on emotional intelligence are more knowledgeable of, and adept at managing, emotions in these subtle kinds of ways. Moreover, they are more likely to intuitively possess and act on meta-mood regulation knowledge such as the fact that people feel better when gains or positive events are presented in terms of improvements over previous conditions (Aronson & Linder, 1965; Salovey et al., 1993).

Generating and maintaining excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, and optimism in an organization as well as cooperation and trust

In order for leaders to generate and maintain excitement and enthusiasm, they must be able to appraise how their followers feel, and be knowledgeable about how to influence these feelings. They must also be able to anticipate how followers will react to different circumstances, events, and changes, and effectively manage these reactions. Leaders need to manage emotions such that followers are aware of problems yet, given the collective vision, are confident about resolving problems and feel optimistic about the efficacy of their personal contributions.

Moreover, leaders need to be able to distinguish between the emotions their followers are actually experiencing, their 'real' feelings, and the emotions they express. Research on the expression of emotion has documented that people often deliberately control their expressed emotions for a variety

of reasons including the existence of display rules (Ekman, 1973) which dictate which emotions should and should not be expressed in a given social context (Hochschild, 1983; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987, 1989). Effective leaders need to be able to distinguish between, for example, excitement and enthusiasm that are faked versus excitement and enthusiasm that are genuinely felt. When the excitement and enthusiasm are faked, a leader needs to determine why as well as try to instill real feelings of excitement and enthusiasm. Through their ability to appraise other people's emotions, their knowledge of emotions, and their ability to manage emotions, leaders who are high on emotional intelligence are likely to be better able to decipher when expressed emotions are genuine, understand why they may be faked, and influence followers to experience genuine excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, and optimism rather than fake these feelings.

Leadership positions in organizations often entail a very hectic work pace with multiple and changing demands and high levels of stress (Kanter, 1983; Mintzberg, 1973). Not only do leaders have to meet these multiple demands, but they also have to constructively resolve conflicts, and generate and maintain a sense of cooperation and trust. Emotional intelligence contributes to what Epstein and colleagues refer to as constructive thinking or the ability to solve problems with a minimum of stress (Epstein, 1990; Katz & Epstein, 1991). While constructive thinking may facilitate problem solving in the workplace in general (Epstein & Meier, 1989), it may be especially important for leaders. Constructive thinking can lead to the generation of creative ideas to settle disagreements, arrive at win-win solutions to problems, and ensure cooperation and trust throughout an organization. Because leaders who are high on emotional intelligence are better able to understand and manage their own emotions, they may be more likely to engage in constructive thinking to build and maintain high levels of cooperation and trust.

Finally, leaders who are high on emotional intelligence may instill in their organizations a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, and optimism as well as an atmosphere of cooperation and trust through their being able to develop high quality interpersonal relationships with their followers. High quality interpersonal relationships between leaders and their followers have been documented to produce numerous advantages for organizations, leaders, and followers (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Recognizing, appropriately responding to, and influencing followers' emotions is necessary for leaders to develop high quality interpersonal relationships with them (Salovey & Mayer, 1989–90) and positive affect is a critical ingredient for high levels of trust (Jones & George, 1998).

Encouraging flexibility in decision making and change

When leaders know and manage their emotions, they may be able to use them to improve their decision making. First, they can use them as signals to direct their attention to pressing concerns in need of immediate attention, given the many demands they face (Easterbrook, 1959; Frigda, 1988; Mandler, 1975; Simon, 1982). Emotions (linked to their causes) can serve as important information to use in prioritizing these demands. Moreover, when a leader realizes that emotions generated by low priority demands are interfering with more pressing demands, the leader's ability to actively manage the emotions (part of emotional intelligence) will also facilitate effective decision making.

Second, emotions can provide leaders with information about problems and opportunities (Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1988). Leaders who accurately perceive their emotions and can determine their causes can determine when emotions are linked to opportunities, problems, or proposed courses of action, and use those emotions as information in the process of making decisions (Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1988). By knowing their emotions and their roots, leaders can effectively use emotional input in decision making. Additionally, when a leader identifies an experienced emotion as irrelevant to a decision, they can take steps to discount and manage the emotion so that it will not be a source of error in decision making. Emotional intelligence, therefore, enables leaders to both effectively use emotions in decision making and manage emotions which interfere with effective decision making.

When leaders know and manage their emotions, they may be better able to flexibly approach problems, consider alternative scenarios, and avoid rigidity effects in decision making. Intuitively, and through meta-mood regulation, they may realize that different moods and emotions cause them to view issues differently and consider different types of options or alternatives. As mentioned earlier, the generation of multiple points of view and options can be aided by changes in moods and emotions (Mayer, 1986). When leaders are experiencing positive moods and emotions, their cognitive processes and considered alternatives will be different than when they are experiencing negative moods and emotions. For example, when leaders realize, through meta-mood regulation (Salovey et al., 1995), that a current negative mood is causing them to be overly pessimistic, they may deliberately revisit a proposed course of action in a more positive mood state to gain a richer, more flexible point of view. Similarly, meta-mood regulation may cause leaders who are optimistic and excited about a course of action due, in part, to a more pervasive positive mood state, to reconsider the course of action in a

more neutral or negative mood state to more critically evaluate its pros and cons.

This increased flexibility deriving from emotional intelligence may also contribute to effective leadership in another way. Effective leaders are able to identify relationships among the many issues they are confronted with (Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992), enabling them to respond to multiple issues simultaneously (Isenberg, 1984; McCall & Kaplan, 1985; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). Flexible thinking arising out of emotional intelligence facilitates seeing connections among divergent information, and thus may help leaders see how issues are interrelated.

Additionally, emotional intelligence may contribute to a leader's ability to successfully implement changes in an organization. As Wasielewski (1985: 213) suggests, when leaders understand and are able to influence their followers' emotions, they may be able:

> to get followers to reassess the feelings they experience and the manner in which they display them. Based on the ability to do this, a leader may then be able to substitute an alternative view of the world that resolves this emotional ambiguity; for example, a leader may point out that anger is not an adequate emotional response to existing injustices if the group is interested in effecting real change. The leader might then propose an alternative view of the present situation, along with an appropriate set of alternative emotions more suitable to achieving the desired goal.

Emotional intelligence in general, and the extent to which a leader accurately perceives and is able to influence followers' emotions in particular, captures the emotion-related abilities or skills which Wasielewski (1985) suggests result in a leader's ability to make major changes. Some people have a difficult time determining how other people feel. Other people have a difficult time appropriately responding to others' feelings. Both types of people would be very unlikely to be able to spearhead major changes in an organization. On the other hand, people who can accurately assess how others feel and respond to, and sometimes alter, these feelings in productive ways are much more likely to be able to effectively overcome resistance to change and transform an organization in significant ways. Responding to and altering others' emotions necessitates that leaders possess accurate knowledge about the causes of emotions and their change over time, an important aspect of emotional intelligence.

Establishing and maintaining a meaningful identity for an organization

An organization's identity derives from and is a consequence of its culture (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Through an organization's culture, organizational members develop a collective identity embodied with meaning. In this regard, an increasingly important leadership activity pertains to the development and expression of organizational culture (e.g. Alvesson, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Organizational culture is embodied in relatively shared ideologies containing important beliefs, norms, and values (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Ongoing technological advances suggest that work, in general, will become less routine in the future (House, 1995). Less routine work is harder to monitor and control directly and, hence, organizations may be increasingly dependent upon culture as a mechanism of influence. The development and expression of culture and organizational identity is, thus, likely to only increase in importance for effective leadership.

Values, and to a lesser extent norms and beliefs, are emotion-laden. As conceptions of what is desirable or sought after (Rokeach, 1973), values evoke and appeal to emotions. As described earlier, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine what is desired or preferred in an emotional vacuum (Damasio, 1994; Goleman, 1995). Norms, especially internalized norms, are also value-laden in that positive feelings accompany conformity and negative feelings accompany deviance. Reaffirmations of norms also evoke emotions stemming from a feeling of 'rightness' of behavior. Beliefs about how things are also are intimately connected to emotions in that it is impossible to separate feelings from beliefs and both have the potential to influence each other. Firmly held beliefs are often firmly held because of their emotional content and appeal. Consistent with this analysis, Trice and Beyer (1993: 33) suggest that the content or substance of organizational culture resides in ideologies which are 'shared, relatively coherently interrelated sets of emotionally charged beliefs, values, and norms that bind some people together and help them to make sense of their worlds'.

Trice and Beyer (1993) suggest that cultures are infused with emotions and the allegiance to and identification with cultures stem from people's emotional needs rather than from a more 'rational' or instrumental perspective. Violation of norms and values in a culture results in strong emotional reactions and cultures actually provide organizational members with socially acceptable ways to express their emotions.

Management of organizational culture is thus, in a sense, management of emotions (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). It necessitates that leaders are able to instill in followers a collective sense of an organization's important

norms and values. In order to identify these norms and values, leaders must be attuned to their own and their followers' feelings, and express and embrace norms and values in a way that will appeal to and generate strong feelings. Norms and values must be infused with feelings and emotions that support them, and leaders can be instrumental in this process for their own motivation and sensemaking, for the motivation and sensemaking of their followers, and to build and maintain a meaningful collective identity for the organization.

Some of the major ways that culture is manifested in organizations is through cultural forms including symbols, language, narratives, and practices (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Cultural forms help organizational members to make sense of and identify with organizational reality, and to manage and regulate their emotions (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Cultural forms also are a means of expressing emotions in organizations and the effective use of cultural forms hinges on their ability to generate emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Harris & Sutton, 1986). As Ashforth and Humphrey (1995: 111) suggest, 'the success of symbolic management is largely dependent upon the evocation of emotion'.

Leaders' effective use of cultural forms is contingent upon many of the aforementioned aspects of emotional intelligence – being aware of feelings, knowing the causes of feelings and how they change over time, being able to express feelings, being able to induce feelings in others, and even having the tacit knowledge of how and why emotions are tied up with cultural forms. Whether in drama and literature or in organizations, symbols and stories appeal to and often operate through emotions.

Conclusions

The present analysis suggests that, at a minimum, emotions and emotional intelligence are worthy of consideration in the leadership domain. Emotional intelligence has the potential to contribute to effective leadership in multiple ways, some of which have been illuminated in this paper. At this point, a skeptic might ask, 'But why is this so relevant to leadership per se?'. The special relevance to leadership revolves around the fact that leadership is an emotion-laden process, both from a leader and a follower perspective.

Clearly, what is needed now is empirical research which tests the ideas proposed in this paper. Given the complexities of the issues involved, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies hold promise for exploring the ways in which emotional intelligence may contribute to leader effectiveness, as theorized in this paper. Meaningful quantitative investigations could take

place in both field and laboratory settings as well as through the use of management simulations. Additionally, given the stage of development of theorizing and research on emotional intelligence, I would like to point out that there are several measures of emotional intelligence that have been developed and could be used to measure the emotional intelligence levels of research participants (e.g. Mayer et al., 1997; Salovey et al., 1995).

A caveat concerning the current analysis is that it has focused primarily on leaders and it has been argued that leadership theory and research would benefit from consideration of a more follower-centered approach (e.g. Meindl, 1990, 1993; Meindl et al., 1985). In this regard, the study of emotional intelligence and leadership would benefit from the consideration of emotional intelligence in followers and its effects on the leadership process. Additionally, and from a symbolic interactionist perspective, it would be interesting to explore how interactions between leaders and followers result in the creation and management of emotions in a work setting.

All in all, investigating how leaders' capabilities in the emotion domain or their emotional intelligence contribute to their effectiveness certainly seems worthy of future empirical research and theorizing. Hopefully, the current analysis has provided researchers with some guidance in this regard.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1   In asserting that emotional intelligence contributes to leaders being able to manage the emotions of others, I by no means intend to imply that this is a manipulative act or some kind of overt control. Rather, all that is being suggested is that emotionally intelligent leaders are able to influence their followers' emotions in ways that are functional for the followers and the organization just as emotionally intelligent followers are able to influence their leaders' emotions. Emotions are multiply determined and effective leaders have some influence in this process. All kinds of people, situations, and events have the potential to influence how one feels. Leaders who are high on emotional intelligence understand this and also understand how to, for example, dissipate anger that is getting out of control or lift sagging spirits after a setback on an important project.

2   Importantly, I do not mean to imply that these are the *only* elements of effective leadership or that this is an exhaustive list. Rather, the elements that are focused on here figure prominently both in recent syntheses of the

leadership literature as well as in contemporary theorizing and research. However, other elements of effective leadership could be identified.

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