THE LINK BETWEEN GROUP EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AND GROUP

EFFECTIVENESS

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In a period of about fifteen years, participation in work teams has become a standard in most U.S. organizations (Lawler, 1998). In fact, the Wall Street Journal's rank of the criteria used by recruiters seeking to hire MBAs placed "the ability to work well within a team" second; it was right behind "communication and interpersonal skills" (Wall Street Journal, Wednesday, September 16, 2003).

The speed with which the "team revolution" took over the workplace is one way to explain the results of a recent survey that asked the leaders of 100 of the most innovative companies in the United States (as defined by the *Work In America Institute*) to name the workplace challenges they most wanted researchers to address. Ninety-five percent of the respondents identified -- creating and sustaining effective work teams -- as their #1 challenge (Farren, 1999).

Yet, group dynamics and group effectiveness have been studied by academics for over six decades. Some scholars argue that existing theory and research are not behaviorally specific enough to be useful for practicing managers searching for the best way to develop and sustain effective work groups (Cannon-Bowers, Tannenbaum, Salas, & Volpe, 1995; Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Others have argued that scholars can increase understanding of team dynamics and team effectiveness through research and theory on the roles of emotion and relationships in teams (Edmondson, 1999; George, 2002; Keyton, 1999).

We agree with both arguments. Thus, this chapter is about a behaviorally specific model of team effectiveness that emphasizes the role of emotion and relationships on team effectiveness. It is built on our knowledge that social interactions create emotion and that the

frequency of required interactions in a group amplifies the need for emotional intelligence in a group setting. It is also built on our understanding of groups as social systems in which *interactions* among members are the basic building blocks (Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999). This means that group outcomes are determined not by the competence of individual group members, but by the competence evident in the patterns of interactions among all members (Poole, 1999; Weick & Roberts, 1993). Therefore, we argue that to be most useful in a group setting, behaviors consistent with emotional intelligence must be manifested at the group level. In other words, a group must have norms or informal rules that support actions and behaviors that acknowledge, recognize, monitor, discriminate, and attend to emotion, and that respond constructively to emotional challenge (see Holmer, 1994; Huy, 1999). We refer to these as *emotionally competent* norms. We refer to groups that hold such norms as *emotionally competent groups.*

In this chapter, we will define and discuss our theory of group emotional competence and present our research journey as we test the theory, refine our measure and work to refine the theory. Specifically, we present the results of on-going research being conducted to test parts of our theory and research begun by Christina Hamme (2003) to develop a reliable and valid survey to measure group emotional competence. Finally, we discuss the implications of our theory for addressing five critical gaps in current knowledge about how to build and sustain group effectiveness.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Before we begin we need to define a few terms we use consistently throughout this chapter. We use the terms group and team interchangeably. We define a group or team as "made up of individuals who see themselves and who are seen by others as a social entity, who are interdependent because of the tasks they perform as members of a group, who are embedded in one

or more larger social systems (e.g., community, organization), and who perform tasks that affect others (such as customers or coworkers)" (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996: 308). Emotion is defined as the personal display of affected states or emotional arousal (e.g., joy, love, contentment, fear, anger, or embarrassment), and is differentiated from feelings, which involve awareness of the arousal (Fineman, 1991). Group norms are defined as standards or informal rules that groups adopt to regulate and regularize member behavior (Feldman, 1984). As will be discussed, norms grow out of repeated interactions through which members come to an implicit agreement about the unique values and expectations by which members of this particular group will operate (i.e., appropriate behaviors).

THE CORE OF THE THEORY:

LINKING EMOTION-FOCUSED AND TASK-FOCUSED NORMS

Despite decades of theory and research suggesting the importance of the role of emotion focused norms and processes to group outcomes, (e.g., Bales, 1950; Homans, 1950; Tuckman, 1965) current theories of group effectiveness (see, Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Guzzo & Dickson, 1996; Hackman, 1987) emphasize the rational task-focused processes and strategies associated with effective work groups (e.g., coordination). They give little explicit attention to the emotional and social norms and rules that must underlie the effective execution of task-focused activities. The following two examples of teams we have studied provide an illustration of the relevance of both emotion-focused and task-focused norms in work groups and show how tightly they are coupled. In one high technology company, the teams devised an effective task process strategy in which teams would work together to ensure on-time delivery. When one team fell behind schedule, those teams who were ahead of schedule helped it to catch up -- without

managerial intervention. This strategy required task-focused norms such as managing the task boundary (i.e., who does what) and pooling knowledge and resources. It also required a parallel set of emotion-focused norms. As one team lagged behind and had to request help from another, it had to develop norms for managing the emotion team members felt when it had to admit it had fallen behind by requesting help. Similarly, those teams providing help had to manage their own displeasure and emotion at having to work harder and longer to lend a hand.

In a second manufacturing firm, self-managing teams decided that to improve their effectiveness all team members would have to become multi-skilled enough to complete all tasks conducted by a team. This required members to learn new skills through training sessions, peer coaching, and the giving and receiving of feedback. In most situations, learning new skills, especially from peers, is known to involve feelings of vulnerability and the fear of evaluation (Schein, 1993), therefore, the groups had to build a sense of trust and safety (see Edmondson, 1999) to enable members to admit mistakes and to feel comfortable providing and receiving honest feedback. In sum, group task and emotional norms were tightly connected.

Our theory of group emotional competence (Druskat & Wolff, 2001a, 2001b; Wolff & Druskat, 2004) contributes to current knowledge on team effectiveness by clarifying how emotion and relationships underlie engagement in effective task-focused processes (e.g., cooperation, effort; boundary management). Specifically, we argue that engagement in effective task-focused processes is facilitated by constructive group member relationships (i.e., social capital: trust and safety, efficacy, networks), which are supported by a set of emotionally competent group norms (ECG norms) (See Figure 1). We elaborate on our theory below.

Insert Figure 1 about here

GROUP EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

An Emotional Structure

Behavior in groups is not random; it is structured through norms defined as standards or informal rules adopted by group members to ensure predictability in member behavior (Feldman, 1984). The interpersonal interactions and behaviors necessary for group work are the source of many emotions, e.g., joy, contentment, fear, anger, and embarrassment (Kemper, 1978). This means that emotions have an unavoidable and pervasive effect in groups (Barsade, 2002). In group settings, just as patterns of behavior and interactions are labeled group dynamics; patterns of behavior and interactions that arouse, display, or address emotion are labeled emotional dynamics (Huy, 1999). Like all behavior in groups, emotional dynamics are not random, they emerge through member interactions, which are restricted by the social context and the range of actions considered admissible by contextual and cultural factors (Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999). Over time, group member back-and-forth interactions, actions, and reactions cause certain emotional dynamics to become routine and to emerge as a collective emotional structure or a set of rules and resources that influence the experience of emotion in the group.

To define the specific norms or rules within a group emotional structure, we draw from two relevant theories. The first is the cognitive appraisal theory of emotion, which delineates the process through which emotion influences behavior (referred to as the emotional process) (Lazarus, 1991). The second theory is the complex systems theory of small group dynamics, which suggests that dynamics within groups occur at multiple levels including the individual member-level, the group-level, and the cross-boundary level because groups are open systems (Arrow, McGrath, & Berdahl, 2000).

The cognitive appraisal theory of emotion, (see Plutchik, 2003) suggests that there are two phases in the emotion-to-behavior process. Phase one of the emotional process begins with an event that stirs emotion and ends with the arousal of specific emotion(s), e.g., anxiety and excitement. The link between the event and the arousal is moderated by *awareness and interpretation* of the context surrounding the event, which enables the individual to label the emotion (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979). Phase two consists of the choice of a response to the emotion. This response is moderated by one's *belief* about the appropriate action in that situation (Levy, 1984).

Anthropologists and organizational scholars have found that cultural norms influence: 1) an individual's interpretation and awareness of emotion and 2) the individual's belief about the appropriate response to specific emotions (see Ekman, 1980; Martin, Knopoff, & Beckman, 1998). For example, in Tahiti the emotion interpreted as sadness by Western cultures is interpreted as fatigue and the expected appropriate response to this emotion differs (Levy, 1984). Also, research on culture in organizations has shown that newly hired employees watch interpersonal interactions to learn how to interpret emotion-eliciting events and to learn the norms and "display rules" that define socially acceptable responses to specific emotions in that organization (e.g. Louis, 1980; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

Group cultural norms also influence individual awareness and response to emotion in groups. We label the aspect of group culture that influences *awareness* of emotion and *response* to emotion-- the emotional structure. Furthermore, because dynamics in a group occur at multiple levels including individual, group, and cross-boundary, (Arrow et al., 2000) the emotional structure contains norms that influence awareness and response to emotion at each level. In sum, we propose that the emotional structure has six categories of norms. Each category

influences either: (1) awareness of emotion or (2) response to emotion at one of three levels: (a) individual, (b) group, or (c) cross-boundary.

Emotionally Competent Group Norms

The emotional structure a group adopts determines a group's level of emotional competence, which has been defined as the willingness to acknowledge, recognize, monitor, discriminate, and attend to emotion and the ability to respond constructively to emotional challenge (see Holmer, 1994; Huy, 1999). As part of a collective emotional structure, emotional competence exists in the behaviors and interactions among group members and in those between members and relevant individuals outside the group.

Emotionally competent norms are rules and expectations within the group emotional structure that have beneficial emotional consequences through their positive influence on the development of group emotional competence and social capital (see Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Below we will define specific ECG norms in each of the six categories of norms we use to define an emotional structure (that is, (1) *awareness of emotion* and (2) *response to emotion* --at each of three levels: (a) individual, (b) group, or (c) cross-boundary). Our theory proposes that these ECG norms are linked to group effectiveness through their positive influence on the development of group social capital and effective task processes. Thus, before we present the specific ECG norms in our theory, we present a brief explanation of social capital and our definition of group effectiveness.

Social Capital

Social capital represents the value added by the structure and quality of social relationships (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Unlike other forms of capital (e.g., financial or human), social capital is jointly held by the parties in relationship, (Burt, 1992) yet, "like other

forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible" (Coleman, 1988: 98). For example, a group within which there exists a psychological sense of safety (an element of social capital) is able to accomplish more than a comparable group in which safety does not exist.

Nahapiet and Goshal (1998) organize the elements of social capital into three dimensions: (1) structural, (2), relational, and (3) cognitive. The structural dimension represents networks of connections; for example, network ties and the configuration of those ties. The relational dimension represents factors related to the quality of relationships. An example is group psychological safety, defined as the degree to which the social climate in the group is conducive to interpersonal risk (Edmondson, 1999). The cognitive dimension refers to "resources providing shared representations, interpretations, and systems of meaning" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). An example is group efficacy, defined as the collective belief that a group can be effective (Lindsley, Brass, & Thomas, 1995). Two features are common across all three dimensions of social capital: (1) each constitutes some aspect of the social structure, and (2) each facilitates interactions that lead to desirable outcomes (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

Group Effectiveness

Measures of group effectiveness should consider both current and future performance (Sundstrom, De Meuse, & Futrell, 1990). Groups focused exclusively on current performance run the risk of ignoring team and member well-being and development, which in the long-run can impair a group's viability and performance (Hackman, 1987). Hackman (1987) proposed a multidimensional definition that defines team effectiveness as considering both customer satisfaction and a team's ability to continue working together effectively. In the studies reported here, we define group effectiveness as a multidimensional composite of productivity, work

quality, performance compared to other groups, the group's ability to be self-directed, and the group's ability to continue working together effectively in the future.

THE LINK BETWEEN EMOTIONALLY COMPETENT NORMS AND GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

In the early conceptualization of our theory of ECG norms, we define thirteen norms that fit into the six categories of behaviors that represent an emotional structure (see Druskat & Wolff, 2001a, 2001b). However, our research, thus far, has examined six norms – one from each of the six categories. Thus, below we define more clearly these six emotionally competent group norms that influence awareness and response to emotion at the individual, group, and cross-boundary levels (interpersonal understanding, confronting members who break norms, team self-evaluation, proactive problem solving, and organizational understanding). We discuss why we believe each norm will be directly associated with group effectiveness.

Group Awareness of Members' Emotion

Interpersonal understanding. A group norm of interpersonal understanding promotes group awareness of emotions at the individual member level. It encourages behavior that seeks awareness of individual member talents, preferences, needs, and feelings. Research has found that team members who feel their teammates know and understand them receive higher supervisor ratings of creativity and self-report lower levels of absenteeism than members who feel they are not known or understood (Thatcher, 2000). Another recent study found that interpersonal congruence, defined as the degree to which team members feel other members accurately know and understand them personally, was linked to high levels of social integration and group identification within the team, and low levels of emotional conflict (Polzer, Milton, &

Swann, In press). The same study also found that in teams with high levels of interpersonal congruence, team member diversity enhanced creative task performance. McAllister, (1995) showed that interpersonally attentive behavior within a group helps build interpersonal trust and safety, which have been found to trigger the cooperation and knowledge sharing (Larkey, 1996; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998) that increase group effectiveness (Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993).

Group Management of Members' Emotion

Confronting members who break norms. A group norm of confronting members who break norms promotes group management of emotion (i.e., response to emotion) at the individual level. It encourages constructive feedback and the candid confrontation of individuals whose actions disturb group operations. The norm helps build the emotional competence and capacity (i.e., the willingness to deal with difficult emotion, see Holmer, 1994) to cope with the difficult feelings that might result from candid feedback. Groups that ignore inappropriate member behavior in an attempt to avoid conflict decrease their ability to solve problems that are often conspicuous. Avoiding conflict frequently results in hostility and reduced performance (Nemeth & Staw, 1989). Murnighan and Conlon, (1991) found that members of successful string quartets confronted rather than avoided problematic member behavior. When done skillfully, confronting members who break norms builds trust and safety in the team by promoting honest, trustworthy, predictable behavior, which increases group effectiveness (Campion et al., 1993).

Awareness of Group-level Emotion

Team self-evaluation. A group norm of team self-evaluation promotes group awareness of emotions and issues at the group level. It encourages behavior that seeks awareness of group-level strengths, needs, preferences, and resources. It helps build the emotional competence to

address the discomfort or anxiety that often accompanies self-evaluation. A norm of team self-evaluation encourages the surfacing and evaluation of routines or habits that may be compromising team effectiveness. Evaluating the "status quo" is a prerequisite for positive team development and team effectiveness (Gersick & Hackman, 1990; Louis & Sutton, 1991). The self-correction and improvement that can come out of a norm of team self-evaluation also helps build a group's sense of efficacy and stimulates group effectiveness by encouraging behavior that makes group efficacy self-fulfilling (Lindsley et al., 1995; Shea & Guzzo, 1987).

Management of Group-level Emotion

Proactive problem solving. A group norm of proactive problem solving promotes group management of emotion (i.e., response to emotion) at the group level. It encourages coping with problems, potential problems, or impending difficulties in a "can-do" way. It helps build the emotional competence and capacity to address potentially tough situations proactively, rather than rigidly or reactively as often seen in human systems (Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981). Research has demonstrated a link between proactive behavior in teams and team effectiveness (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Proactive problem solving contributes to a group's sense of control over its future and its sense of efficacy, thereby facilitating group effectiveness (Campion et al., 1993; Shea & Guzzo, 1987).

Awareness of Emotion in the External Boundary

Organizational understanding. A group norm of organizational understanding promotes group awareness of emotions and issues at the cross-boundary level. It encourages behavior that seeks information from the larger organization and that attempts to understand the needs, preferences, perspectives, and behaviors of important individuals and groups outside of the group's boundary. These preferences and feelings may be very different from the group's needs

and concerns. Therefore, such behavior helps the group learn the conceptual frameworks and language used by important organizational members, a crucial step toward building networks of external relationships (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981) that can provide information, resources, and support from the larger organization (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Yan & Louis, 1999). Theory building research with self-managing manufacturing teams found that the highest performing teams exhibited a norm of organizational understanding (Druskat, 1996).

Management of Emotion in the External Boundary

Building external relationships.   A group norm of building external relationships takes the awareness gained as a result of organizational understanding and promotes management of emotion when dealing with individuals and groups outside of the group's boundary. Specifically, it encourages emotionally sensitive actions that build relationships with individuals and groups that can help the group achieve its goals. Such actions have been directly linked to team effectiveness (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Yan & Louis, 1999). Research reveals that team effectiveness is highest in teams with strategies that involve engaging and working with colleagues in the larger organization to acquire information, resources, and support; effectiveness is lowest in teams with non-aggressive and non-existent external boundary strategies (Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992).

TESTING OUR THEORY

We conducted two studies designed to test our theory. The first study was conducted using three hundred and eighty-two full-time Masters of Business Association (MBA) students, comprising 48 groups. This study tested the relationship between team effectiveness and the six ECG norms discussed above (that is, Interpersonal Understanding, Confronting Members who

Break Norms, Team Self-Evaluation, Proactive Problem Solving, Organizational Understanding, and Building External Relationships). The norms were measured with a questionnaire we developed, piloted and revised with two previous classes of MBA students. Performance was rated by the instructor one month after the norm data was collected and again six months after the norm data was collected. The performance rating form asked five questions about the quality of the team's work, its performance relative to teams doing similar work, and the team's ability to continue working together effectively in the future.

The results revealed that all ECG norms except Confronting Members who Break Norms were correlated with team effectiveness ratings at Time 1 (one month after the norm measurements were taken). Correlations between ECG norms and team effectiveness ratings ranged from .36 for Team Self-Evaluation to .56 for Organizational Understanding. Correlations between ECG norms and team effectiveness ratings at Time 2 (six months after the norm measurements were taken) showed similar results except that Team Self-Evaluation was no longer significantly correlated with performance at Time 2.

In the second study we examined the influence of ECG norms in 119 teams in six organizations located in the Midwestern United States, including four Fortune 1000 firms. The sample represented diverse industries including industrial and consumer goods manufacturers, financial services, transportation, and product design and development. The average number of teams per organization was 20.7 with a range of 8-40. Teams had a mean of 11.95 team members (Range = 4-29; Median = 8).

In this study, we examined the second step of our theory. That is, we examined whether group social capital would mediate the relationship between the ECG norms and team effectiveness. Specifically, we examined a structural equation model that included 5 ECG norms

(the same as study 1, but Building Relationships was not included) leading to a latent variable of social capital, that predicts the observed social capital components (trust/safety, group efficacy, and networks) and team effectiveness. The norms were measured using the same scales used in Study 1 and team effectiveness was measured using two measures: 1) the subjective performance rating scale used in Study 1 was completed by team managers two levels above the teams, and 2) objective performance scores (e.g., percentages of team goals met). The model was a good fit. All ECG norms predicted social capital, except Confronting Members who Break Norms had a negative relation to social capital. Social capital predicted team effectiveness. The squared multiple correlation for performance was .25, indicating that a quarter of the variance in performance was explained by the model.

The results of these two studies partially support our group emotional competence theory, with the exception of Confronting Members who Break Norms. However, we are not yet willing to give up on this hypothesis. We believe that Confronting Members effectively may require training that was not provided to the teams in either of our sample. In the absence of such training group members may have instinctively avoided confrontation or may have inappropriately confronted members.

REFINING THE THEORY AND ITS MEASUREMENT

Since conducting the research discussed above, we have worked to refine our theory and to improve and validate a survey to measure Group Emotional Competence. Although our chapter has, thus far, discussed our examination of six specific ECG norms (that is, Interpersonal Understanding, Confronting Members who Break Norms, Team Self-Evaluation, Proactive Problem Solving, Organizational Understanding, and Building External Relationships), as

discussed above, our original theory proposed thirteen ECG norms (see Druskat & Wolff, 2001a). The additional seven norms include: perspective taking and caring behavior (individual level), seeking feedback, creating resources for working with emotion, and creating an optimistic environment (group level), and inter-group awareness and ambassadorial orientation (cross-boundary level). Thus, our first step toward theory refinement was to develop a questionnaire to measure the thirteen norms and to determine, through factor analytic methods, whether they fit within the six proposed categories of norms, that is: (1) *awareness of emotion* and (2) *response to emotion* --at each of three levels: (a) individual, (b) group, or (c) cross-boundary.

The survey development and validation was carried out by a graduate student from Rutgers University, Christina Hamme Peterson, under the supervision of her Dissertation Chair, Cary Cherniss (Hamme, 2003). To develop the survey, Christina began with the items we had used in the two studies discussed earlier. Then, in close collaboration with us to ensure uniformity with the theory, she developed items to test all thirteen norms. Factor analytic methods confirmed that, as expected, each of the thirteen norms fit within their appropriate category. Again, these categories were composed of (1) *awareness of emotion* and (2) *response to emotion* --at each of three levels: (a) individual, (b) group, or (c) cross-boundary. Eight of the thirteen scales were found to be reliable. The statistics suggested that we should collapse the thirteen norms into nine clear and reliable norms. These nine scales also passed tests of convergent and discriminant validity when compared to other already validated scales examining similar and different team norms and processes. In other words, the ECG norm scales were moderately correlated with scales measuring similar but different group-level constructs, thus confirming the convergent validity of the scales. They also were weakly correlated with scales measuring very different group-level constructs, thus confirming the discriminant validity of the

scales. Figure 2 presents the nine norms emerging from Christina's analyses (Hamme, 2003).

More recently, we have further refined and tested the nine ECG norm scales. Those interested in

the survey should contact the first or second authors of this chapter.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Three Additional ECG Norms

Thus, three ECG norms have been added to the original six ECG norms defined earlier in

this chapter and examined in the studies presented above: Caring behavior, creating resources for

working with emotion, and creating an optimistic environment.

Caring behavior. Caring behavior is defined as communicating positive regard,

appreciation, and respect to group members. Through a caring orientation, team

members communicate that the team values the presence and contributions of the

recipient member. In a study of 67 work groups, Wolff (1998) found that norms of

caring behavior in a team contributed to team effectiveness by increasing members'

sense of safety, cohesion and satisfaction, which in turn, facilitated member engagement

in the task. Kahn (1998) argues that a caring orientation builds workplace relationships

that provide a "secure base" for individuals, which allows them to take risks that

facilitate personal learning and development. Both Wolff (1998) and Kahn (1998)

indicate that caring does not necessitate close personal relationships. It requires member

validation and respect.

Creating resources for working with emotion. A group can facilitate effective

interpretation and response to emotional stimuli by providing resources that legitimize

the recognition of emotional stimuli and that help members to discuss feelings (e.g., tools, time, clear mechanisms such as open discussion periods) (Levy, 1984). Levy (1984) argues that individuals draw upon cultural resources for their ability to process feelings -- without such resources the emotion is likely to be ignored or suppressed. In individuals, suppressed emotions lead to dysfunctions such as depression (Kleinman, 1988). In groups, suppressed emotion manifests itself as apathy or lack of motivation. An emotionally competent group accepts emotions as an inherent part of group life. It legitimizes discussion of emotional issues and creates a vocabulary for discussing them.

Creating an optimistic environment. Once a team has created resources for accessing and working with emotion, it must channel its energy to create an optimistic and affirmative environment. Emotions are contagious in a group setting (Barsade, 2002). Thus, constructive, positive images can have an important impact on how emotions are experienced in a group setting. Optimistic environments are defined as those who favor positive images over negative ones, which according to Cooperrider, (1990) can result in positive affect, positive behavior, and positive outcomes. For example, in an optimistic environment team members are likely to interpret an unexpected obstacle as a challenge rather than a difficulty and, thus, are likely to mobilize positive energy to manage the obstacle. For example, research by Isen and her colleagues shows that a sense of optimism toward the future predisposes people toward acts that would likely support continued positive affect, e.g., helping (Isen & Baron, 1991).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE: HELPING TEAMS DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN EFFECTIVENESS

We now examine six major outcomes of augmenting current perspectives on team effectiveness and development with an understanding of group emotional competence. These outcomes include: 1) reducing dependence on a manager for health of the team; 2) reducing dependence on a facilitator for development of the team; 3) interventions that are better able to integrate task processes and emotional processes; which leads to both 4) reducing the time teams must devote to interventions, and the degree to which the interventions artificially separate task work from emotional work, 5) the degree to which a team focuses on symptoms of problems, (e.g., resolving conflict) rather than building a sound emotional foundation that naturally results in the group's ability to effectively address problems, and finally --the last outcome, 6) enhanced long-term sustainability of the benefits from interventions i.e., as the proverb goes, the degree to which they will be able to fish rather than rely on outsiders to throw them a fish when they are in need. We examine each of these outcomes below.

Dependence on a manager

The current paradigm of team effectiveness focuses primarily on the role of an external manager or team leader for maintaining the health of the team. Certainly, an external manager or team leader has a large impact on the team; however, team's must realize that every team member has the responsibility for his or her team's effectiveness. Knowledge about how a manager can create effective teams is vitally important, however, when this is augmented with an understanding of how every team member can help guide his or her team toward greater effectiveness, the leadership ability and energy of every team member is augmented. Group emotional competence theory provides a framework that guides the behavior of every team

member including the team leader. When an understanding of group emotional competence is integrated with our understanding of the role of managers and team leaders, we reduce the team's dependency on the leaders for its effectiveness. The behavior of each member contributes to building a set of norms that influence the emotional dynamics in the group, and thus, the ability of the team to effectively accomplish its task.

Dependence on a facilitator for team development

When a team encounters a problem or becomes dysfunctional, the predominant paradigm places an external facilitator at the center of the process of bringing the team back towards health. Certainly there are many cases where issues are so difficult and team members so personally involved, that it takes a neutral third party to help the team through its problems. Even small issues may require a neutral facilitator when the team does not have the emotional competence to address them. For example, small differences can get blown out of proportion when the team has not developed the emotionally competent norms of caring and respect. On the other hand, a team that has developed its emotional competence could work through many issues on its own, and thus be much less dependent on an outside facilitator to resolve its problems.

Integrating task processes and emotional processes

In today's extremely fast-paced business environment, we have repeatedly seen that teams are not willing to devote time to team interventions that are not directly related to task accomplishment. The current paradigm of teambuilding generally separates team development from task accomplishment. In other words, teams learn "soft" skills such as conflict resolution or giving feedback in isolation from their actual task. Such skill building is certainly important;

however, when isolated from actual task performance, team members may not fully grasp the

relevance and may not be able to transfer the skills to actual task performance. Group emotional

competence theory provides a perspective that suggests that behavior in pursuit of the task

influences the development of norms that guide emotional experience. The results of building

emotionally competent norms are similar to the outcome of "soft" skills training, i.e., more

effective interaction and stronger relationships but they are achieved by focusing team members

on behavior that occurs during task accomplishment rather than developing them in isolation

from the task. Thus, interventions are better able to integrate task and emotional processes.

Focusing on the task not the intervention

One result of integrating task and emotional processes is that improving task

effectiveness becomes synonymous with improving emotional processes. It is not necessary, nor

desirable, to divert the team's attention from the task to teach them "soft" skills. Instead, we can

teach them task behaviors that simultaneously help them build group emotional competence.

This is not necessarily different from current perspectives of teambuilding, however, group

emotional competence theory more strongly highlights and reinforces the importance of focusing

on the task.

Getting below the surface

Many current teambuilding interventions focus on helping a team improve task processes

such as decision-making or problem-solving. In the process, teams may be taught skills in

conflict resolution, negotiation, and integrating diverse perspectives. The current paradigm for

building team task skills is useful; however, it must be complemented with an understanding that

a team first needs to build an emotional foundation. Current interventions, although helpful, tend

to focus on the mechanics of task processes but tend to ignore the underlying emotional

processes that form the foundation required for a team to use them effectively. For example, a team can be taught the mechanics of decision-making and the importance of openly sharing information; however, the effectiveness with which they can carry out these processes depends on their emotional competence. Sharing information requires a degree of trust and safety that results from emotional processes in the group. We believe much training is not sustainable and fails to meet its potential because the group does not have the emotional competence necessary to make it successful over the long run. Group emotional competence theory helps us understand that we must first build the necessary foundation that task processes need to take hold.

Teaching teams to fish

When we create dependence on a manager, team leader, or facilitator and teach task processes without providing the emotional foundation, we fail to provide the team the tools it needs to sustain an ability to continually learn, improve, and address obstacles that get in its way. We also fail to harness the responsibility of all team members to move the team in an effective direction. When something goes wrong, a leader or facilitator is expected to provide an intervention. It is a reactive process rather than a proactive one. A proactive process would expect the team to be responsible for understanding and working through its issues. It would teach the team the skills to understand its obstacles and move through them on its own. It would teach the team to take responsibility for its own effectiveness. In essence, when the team is emotionally hungry, our current perspectives lead to the proverbial equivalent of throwing it a fish. The theory of group emotional competence helps us understand how to focus the team such that it can satiate its own emotional hunger, i.e., it helps us understand how to teach them to fish in the emotional waters inherent in group life and become self-sufficient in meeting its emotional

needs. We teach them to recognize their emotional processes and how to build norms that help them build effective task processes and deal with obstacles that hinder performance.

CONCLUSION

We believe our theory takes knowledge of group effectiveness one step closer toward explaining how to build and sustain effective teams. Although several current theories describe the kind of behaviors a group needs to display to be effective, they have not been fully useful for practicing managers interested in knowing how to build those behaviors (Cannon-Bowers et al., 1995; Cohen & Bailey, 1997). We propose that building effective groups requires building group trust/safety, group efficacy, and group networks. We further suggest that the emotional structure a group produces is critical to building these effective emergent states.

Our theory of group emotional competence has clear implications for team development. We define a set of norms that form an emotional structure to guide behavior such that the emotional experience of the group builds social capital. Norms are developed through the behavior and interaction of each and every group member. This implies that every member has a responsibility for the health of his or her team.

Our theory and research suggest that understanding the mechanics of task processes may not be sufficient for developing and sustaining team effectiveness. We reveal that social capital (group trust/safety, group efficacy, and group networks), underlies the ability of the team to efficiently perform the task. Since ECG norms facilitate the emergence of social capital, the interventions required to build team effectiveness become clear. Specifically, our theory and research suggest that before training a team in the mechanical processes necessary for task

completion, team members must understand how to build an emotional structure conducive to task accomplishment.

Training a group to develop ECG norms involves training team members to influence group norms. As discussed throughout this chapter, norms represent a habitual way of operating in a team. This means that training should focus on helping teams build effective habits. One means of doing this is to provide them with tools that capture attention and focus behavior on desired patterns of behavior.

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FIGURE 1
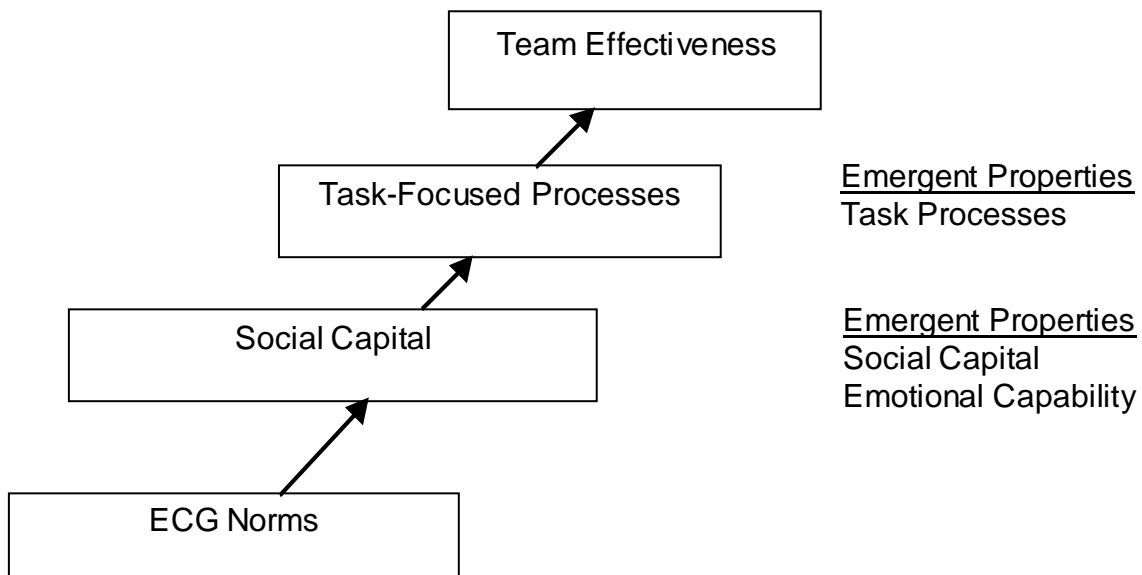**Simplified Socio-emotional Model of Group Effectiveness (Druskat & Wolff, 2001)**

FIGURE 2: Dimensions of Group Emotional Competence

EMOTIONALLY COMPETENT NORMS	→	DIMENSIONS OF GROUP EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE	→	GROUP EMERGENT STATES

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

• Interpersonal Understanding → Group Awareness of Members

• Confronting Members Who Break Norms
• Caring Orientation → Group Regulation of Members

GROUP-LEVEL

• Team Self-Evaluation → Group Self-Awareness

• Creating Resources for Working with Emotion
• Creating an Optimistic Env.
• Proactive Problem Solving → Group Self-Regulation

CROSS-BOUNDARY LEVEL

• Organizational Awareness → Group Social Awareness

• Building External Relationships → Group Social Skills

• TRUST
• GROUP EFFICACY
• GROUP NETWORKS