



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND
INSTITUTES OF ADMINISTRATION

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES ECOLES ET
INSTITUTS D'ADMINISTRATION

GT-WG III

**Public Administration:
Challenges of Inequality and Exclusion
Miami (USA), 14-18 September 2003**

**L'Administration publique
Face aux défis de l'Inégalité et de l'Exclusion
Miami (Etats-Unis), 14-18 Septembre 2003**

***EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR PUBLIC
MANAGERS/ADMINISTRATORS TO MEET THE
CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE***

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Introduction

As diversity, collaboration, co-operation and teamwork become increasingly important issues for management and leadership in South Africa, and elsewhere, so too has interest in “soft” corporate skills. In this regard, the role that interpersonal skills play in raising individual and team performance has been rightly recognized.

Central to interpersonal skills is Emotional Intelligence (EQ). Emotional Intelligence generally has to do with the ability to connect with people and understand their emotions for harmonious co-existence.

The notion that high emotional intelligence may lead to personal and professional success has generated considerable enthusiasm, among others, academics, managers, and the general public. According to popular opinion and work-place testimonials, emotional intelligence positively influences individual performance. Proponents claim that increasing emotional intelligence can do everything from improving the general quality of work life to enhancing career success (Awe:2003:65).

As South Africa is busy transforming itself, both public and private sector organizations are required to be led and managed in an innovative way. Goleman (1998:286) a pioneer on EQ asserts that one largely ignored pulse of an organization’s viability can be read in the typical emotional states of those who work there. He adds that systems theory tells us that to ignore any significant category of data is to limit understanding and response, from the perspective of work, feelings matter to the extent that they facilitate or interfere with the shared goal (Goleman:1998:286).

The quest to make public managers/administrators and leaders, and, consequently, organizations more emotionally intelligent is key to success and needs to be actively pursued and embarked on.

The objective of this paper is to, *inter alia*, provide an understanding of the concept of emotional intelligence; examine EQ in the workplace; probe the link between EQ and leadership; and examine what it takes to be an emotionally competent leader to meet the myriad challenges of the future.

What is Emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to assess and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997 – <http://www.emotionaliq.com/>)

According to Goleman (1998:317) “emotional intelligence” refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions, well in ourselves and in our relationships.

Ryback cited in Wolmarans (2001:35) describes “emotional intelligence” as the ability to use our awareness and sensitivity to discern the feelings underlying interpersonal communication, and to resist the temptation to respond impulsively and thoughtlessly, but instead to act from receptivity, authenticity and candour.

From the above exposition it is clear that emotional intelligence refers to attributes such as understanding one’s feeling, empathy for others, and the regulation of emotions to enhance one’s life. That is, EQ can lead one to healthy relationships and to have the ability to respond to the challenges of one’s life and career in a positive manner.

Background to Emotional Intelligence

Aristotle wrote about *emotional intelligence* in 350BC, centuries before the term became popular (McMullen:2003:1). Although the concept was first proposed by two colleagues from Yale University, Peter Salovey and John Mayer, Daniel Goleman is responsible for the current popularity of the subject, with his groundbreaking bestseller in 1995, *Emotional Intelligence – Why it can matter more than IQ*.

Among the most influential theorists of intelligence to point out the distinction between intellectual and emotional capacities was Howard Gardner who proposed a widely regarded model of “multiple intelligence”. Seven kinds of intelligence were identified – not just the familiar verbal and mathematics abilities, but also two “personal” varieties: knowing one’s inner world and social adeptness (Goleman: 1995:40-42). Social adeptness includes emotional intelligence. Unlike most of the other intelligences, Goleman (1995:301-302) states that emotional intelligence can be learnt and improved at any age by acquiring the skills and applying them to social situations.

Moreover, Goleman (1995:48) asserts that it is important to recognize that intelligence quotient (IQ) and EQ are not opposing competencies, but rather separate ones and that we all mix intellect and emotional acuity. Hence, our level of emotional intelligence is not fixed genetically, nor does it develop only in early childhood. Unlike IQ, which changes little after our teen years, emotional intelligence seems to be largely learned, and it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experiences – our competence in it can keep growing. Studies that have tracked people’s level of emotional intelligence through the years show that people get better in these capabilities as they grow more adept at handling their

own emotions and impulses, at motivating themselves, and at honing their empathy and social adroitness (Goleman:1995:48).

Le Roux and De Klerk (2001:9) contend that one can reach one's full potential by improving ones emotional intelligence, that is, EQ may assist one to use one's brain (intellect) more effectively.

Emotional Intelligence in the workplace

Work rules are in a constant state of flux with new yardsticks by which workers are being evaluated. In today's corporate world it is increasingly being recognised that an impressive curriculum vitae, good credentials and technical expertise does not have the desired impact in someone with low emotional intelligence (EQ). The workplace is about people and relationships, and an employee with a high EQ as opposed to only a high IQ should be seen as a valuable asset.

Mayer and Salovey (1990) assert that general intelligence accounts for approximately ten to twenty per cent of life success, defined as academic achievement and occupational status.

In a similar vein, in "Emotional Intelligence" (1995), Goleman made strong claims about the contribution of emotional intelligence to individual success, and specifically to success in the workplace. He identified intellectual intelligence as contributing 20 per cent towards life success and intimated that the remaining 80 per cent may be attributable to emotional intelligence.

The advent of the emotional intelligence phenomenon over the last ten years has shaken traditional views of what it takes to be, for example, an effective leader. Since then, interest in emotional intelligence has increased rapidly, with several popular books being written on the topic describing what it is and how it can impact organizational effectiveness and its relevance to leadership development. For instance, Daniel Goleman has authored and co-authored *Emotional Intelligence, Working with Emotional Intelligence, and Primal Leadership*. The empirical data, actual case studies, and relevant examples cited in each of these books makes a strong case for the critical importance and *potential* for nurturing the emotional competencies we all possess (Dearborn:2002:524).

According to Goleman (1998:7) more and more companies are realizing that encouraging emotional intelligence skills is a vital component of an organization's management philosophy.

Emotional intelligence is indeed significant in the workplace and is not only limited to it being a desirable quality in employees. Its uses are varied. Other examples of using EQ include the following (Foote:2001:28):

- **Recruitment.** EQ measurement is invaluable in selecting and recruiting “desirable, high-performance workers”
- **Predicting performance.** Some companies are blending IQ testing with scientific measurement of EQ to predict job performance and direct workers to jobs where they are most likely to succeed
- **Negotiation.** Whether you’re dealing with a trading partner, competitor, customer or colleague, being able to empathize and be creative in finding win-win solutions will consistently pay off
- **Performance management.** 360-degree feedback is a common tool for assessing EQ. Knowing how your self-perception compares with others’ views about your performance provides focus for career development and positive behavioural changes
- **Peer relationships.** Good networking skills are a staple of job effectiveness for the average worker. Networking has too often been associated with “using” other people, but a heightened EQ ensures a mutually beneficial approach to others.

A survey of benchmark practices among major corporations, undertaken by the American Society for Training and Development taken in 1997, found that four out of five companies were trying to promote emotional intelligence in their employees through training and development, when evaluating performance, and in hiring.

In South Africa, however, employers are, albeit slowly, finding that they cannot afford to ignore the emotional side of the workforce. Organizations both in the private and public sectors are sending employees on courses to develop people skills or running their own (Daily News, April 2003).

Wolmarans is of the view that the power of emotional energy in South Africa has been under-estimated and that we tend to think what we can’t see doesn’t exist. She adds that at the root of day-to-day organizational problems, such as low productivity, absenteeism, staff turnover, company politics, strikes and stayaways, is an inability to optimise our own and other people’s emotional energy (Daily News, April 2003).

Given the above claims, it may certainly be worth the time and effort of the corporate world, both public and private, to actively explore the emotional side of employees.

Leadership qualities and competencies

The traditional view of the leader as unemotional, supremely rational and essentially mechanistic is based on the vertically integrated, hierarchical Industrial Age organisation. The leader does things; he or she makes plans and instructs others to carry them out (Davidson : 2002:17).

Good leadership will be less about what the leader does, and more about what the leader *is*.

According to Davidson (2002:17-18), chief executive officers have always worked to understand others, but in the future, effective leaders will devote the same kind of effort to understanding themselves – that is, to personal leadership. Personal leadership essentially means having a heightened self-awareness – a deep understanding of one's own behaviour, motivators and competencies – and having 'emotional intelligence' that allows them to accept, manage and use, rather than simply control or suppress, their emotional state.

Davidson (2002:18) affirms that ultimately, self-awareness will make tomorrow's leaders more adaptable and that it will give them the flexibility to work across cultures, and the flexibility to deal with uncertainty, ambiguity and change.

Self-awareness will be key to effective leadership because it can have a strong impact on the perceptions of others in the organization and their willingness to follow the leader.

Dearborn (2002:525) suggests that Goleman's work asks us to reassess what it means to be "smart", and examine what EQ competencies are possessed by the resonant versus dissonant leader. In *Working with Emotional Intelligence (1998)* we learn that:

- All individuals have a profile of strengths and development areas in the emotional intelligence competencies
- The emotional intelligence capacities uniquely contribute to performance, and certain capacities may strongly interact
- The capacities build upon one another
- Possessing underlying emotional intelligence capacities does not guarantee the competencies will be demonstrated; however, the organizational climate and stimulation derived from the work does encourage the manifestation of the competencies

- Each organisation has its own emotional intelligence reality or ecology, so different jobs may require strengths in different competencies (Dearborn:2002:525).

In *Primal Leadership*, Goleman's most recent book, the authors contend that there are four emotional intelligence domains, simplified from the formerly listed five domains in previous publications. Exhibit 1 identified the four domains and clusters of competencies that are linked to the underlying neurology (Dearborn:2002:

Exhibit 1 Emotional Intelligence Competencies

Self-Awareness

- Emotional self-awareness. Reading one's own emotions and recognizing their impact; using 'gut sense' to guide decision
- Accurate self-assessment; knowing one's strengths and limits
- Self-confidence; a sound sense of one's self-worth and capabilities

Self-Management

- Emotional self-control: Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control
- Transparency: Displaying honesty and integrity; trustworthiness
- Adaptability: Flexibility in adapting to changing situations or overcoming obstacles
- Achievement: The drive to improve performance to meet inner standards of excellence
- Initiative: Readiness to act and seize opportunities
- Optimism: Seeing the upside in events

Social Awareness

- Empathy: Sensing other's emotions, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns
- Organizational awareness: Reading the currents, decision networks, and politics at the organizational level
- Service: Recognizing and meeting follower, client, or customer needs

Relationship Management

- Inspirational leadership: Guiding and motivating with a compelling vision

- Influence: Wielding a range of tactics for persuasion
 - Developing others: Bolstering others' abilities through feedback and guidance
 - Change catalyst: Initiating, managing, and leading in a new direction
 - Conflict management: Resolving disagreements
 - Building bonds: Cultivating and maintaining a web of relationships
 - Teamwork and collaboration: Cooperation and team building
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Dearborn (2002:526) suggests that the resonant leader, one who can inspire, motivate, arouse commitment and sustain it, will constantly strengthen and fine tune his/her EQ competencies and move fluidly between different leadership styles, flexing to meet the needs of the situation.

Exhibit 2 reveals the six distinct leadership styles that tap into an individual's EQ competence. The *science* in the *art* is the consideration of the outcomes of each leadership style, recognizing how it affects organizational climate and, ultimately, performance (Dearborn:2002:527).

Exhibit 2. The Leadership Repertoire

Visionary

- How it builds resonance: Moves people toward shared dreams
- Impact on climate: Most strongly positive
- When appropriate: When changes require a new vision

Coaching

- How its builds resonance: Connects what a person wants with the organization's goals
- Impact on climate: Highly positive
- When appropriate: To help an employee improve performance by building long-term capabilities

Affiliative

- How it builds resonance: Creates harmony by connecting people to each other
- Impact on climate: Positive
- When appropriate: To heal rifts in a team, motivate during stressful times, or strengthen connections

Democratic

- How it builds resonance: Values people's input and gets commitment through participation
- Impact on climate: Positive
- When appropriate: To build buy-in or consensus, or to get valuable input from employees

Pacesetting

- How it builds resonance: Meets challenging and exciting goals
- Impact on climate: Because too frequently poorly executed, often highly negative
- When appropriate: To get high-quality results from a motivated and competent team

Commanding

- How its builds resonance. Soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency
 - Impact on climate: Because so often misused, highly negative
 - When appropriate: In a crisis, to kick-start a turnaround, or with problem employees
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As the central thesis of many of the authors on the subject is that EQ is learnt behaviour or learnt competence, it follows that one's EQ can continually be improved to meet the challenges of a changing workplace.

Linking Emotional Intelligence to Leadership

Increasingly, it is noted that basic management and leadership skills are no longer enough to successfully lead organizations. Emotional intelligence is recognised as having an important role to play in management and leadership positions where differences in technical skills are of negligible importance. Consequently, emotional intelligence is becoming a sought-after quality. Some authors on emotional intelligence are of the view that emotional competencies are twice as likely to contribute to organizational success and excellence than pure intellect and/or technical expertise alone. Accordingly, being aware of our emotions and how to manage them in ways that are appropriate and effective is an important skill for leadership, the organization, the team and the individual.

A case in point is the example of Rudy Giuliani. For the better part of eight years, as Mayor, he ruled New York with an iron fist. The result was a city

that was cleaner, safer, and better governed – but also more polarized. In the eyes of many, something important was missing from his leadership (U.S. News and World Report:2002:1). That something, his critics acknowledged, emerged as the World Trade Centre collapsed. It was a newfound compassion to complement his command: a mix of resolve, empathy, and inspiration that brought comfort to millions. What is this trait Giuliani acquired that so many great leaders possess? German sociologist Max Weber called it “the firm taming of the soul”. Psychologists call it “emotional intelligence” – the capacity to handle your own emotions and your relationships with others (U.S. News and World Report:2002:1).

While the claims about the link between intellectual intelligence and performance have been researched using empirical studies, research into the link between emotional intelligence and performance has been sporadic. This may be the result, until recently, due to a lack of adequate techniques to measure emotional intelligence. Now, like its counterpart, IQ, EQ can be tested, measured and incorporated into the workplace in productive ways. For example, with the recent development of a comprehensive emotional intelligence scale, the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), it is possible to investigate more thoroughly the relationship between emotional intelligence and individual performance (Lam and Kriby:2002:133).

Over the last decade, ambitious claims have been made in management literature about the contribution of emotional intelligence to success and performance of organizations. Writers in this field assert that individuals with high emotional intelligence perform better in all aspects of management and leadership. In this regard, Jordan et al (2002:1) state that Salovey and Mayer’s original construct of emotional intelligence included the ability to deal with ones own and others’ emotions and to use this information to assist individuals in problem solving and decision-making.

More recent books have focussed on the contribution of emotional intelligence to management in organizational settings. Jordan et al (2002:1) argue that largely as a result of this popularisation, there are an increasing number of management consultants promoting emotional intelligence interventions in organizations. They add that an unfortunate consequence of this profusion, however, has been a propensity for the authors and consultants involved to make exaggerated claims about the contribution of emotional intelligence to performance and success. Moreover, they state that a more scientific approach is needed if the emotional construct is to achieve credibility (Jordan et al (unpublished paper 2002).

Along similar lines, the US News and World Report:2002:2) state that not everyone is on board with the premise that EQ is integral to success. Despite the appeal of *emotional intelligence* countries worldwide continue

to base their educational system on the teaching of traditional cognitive skills – the stuff that IQ is made of. Very little time is spent in areas of self-awareness or social skills. Moreover, some academics still believe that IQ is the best indicator of how far someone will go in life (US News and World Report:2002:2).

Notwithstanding the above contentions, research indicates that the most effective leaders have a commonality, that is, they all tend to exhibit a high degree of emotional intelligence. However, general intelligence (IQ) and technical skills are considered threshold capabilities for success in executive positions. In this regard, a study monitoring a group of 100 British managers on courses at Henley Management College showed a strong correlation between rapid career progression and a combination of high emotional intelligence and high IQ (Management Today, London, May 2000).

To scientifically link emotional intelligence to leadership, Goleman (1998:33) cites the study undertaken by Robert Worden where hundred of companies were studied. The data clearly suggested that as the importance of emotional intelligence increases, the higher one goes in the organization. To support his findings – a systematic study was done on the US government, with more than two million employees. It is one of the few organizations anywhere to have a detailed assessment of the competencies necessary for effective performance in virtually every job. It was found that the higher the level of the job, the less important technical skills and cognitive abilities were, and the more important competence in emotional intelligence became (Goleman:1998:33). The study was replicated using executive and leadership positions in business. The results were astounding – there was no difference. In other words it did not matter whether the sample used was from the public or the private sector. The bottom line is that we are dealing with human beings.

However, the study found that one cognitive ability distinguished star performers from average: pattern recognition, the “big-picture” thinking that allows leaders to pick out the meaningful trends from the welter of information around them and to think strategically far into the future. With this one exception, intellectual or technical superiority played no role in leadership success. As re-iterated earlier - at the top executive levels, everyone needs cognitive skills, to a certain extent, but being better at them does not make them a star leader (Goleman:1998:34).

Goleman (1998:34) adds that emotional competence made the crucial difference between mediocre leaders and the best. The stars showed significantly greater strengths in a range of emotional competencies, among them influence, team leadership, political awareness, self-confidence, and achievement drive. On average, close to 90 per cent of their success in leadership was attributable to emotional intelligence.

Leadership in South Africa

With the transformation in South Africa – the question of leadership is often the subject under discussion in many circles and in the media. A question that is often posed is “can leadership be learned? According to Taffinder:2002:21) leadership is best developed within a context and suggests that the South African context offers unique opportunities and challenges for leadership development. He asserts that unlike management where one can be trained to be a manager because it’s about skills – leadership has to be developed through experiences. Taffinder (2002:21) asserts that leadership is full of battles and dilemmas that test your conviction and help you to develop.

Today, globalisation is compelling organizations to become competitive and to operate according to international standards. To be relevant in a global environment, a new type of leader is required. The leadership traits that worked previously may no longer be appropriate. To evaluate the strengths and development areas of leadership, a management development questionnaire was developed in South Africa.

The Life Path Insight (LifePi) is a unique management development questionnaire that identifies individual and team behavioural patterns at work and offers insights to change these patterns. Thirty top leaders - representing the highest level of organizational leadership in South Africa completed the questionnaire. The LifePi Leadership Report contains valuable insights and information about these top leaders (Yudelowitz:2002:23).

LifePi assesses four areas for each person : triggers, feelings and behavioural responses. It also assesses other people’s responses to those responses. The LifePi team did a frequency count of the triggers, feelings, and responses (and other’s responses) for the entire sample. The scores were as follows (Yudelowitz:2002:23):

- 53% of leaders in the study need to feel that they are adding value to others and the organization. They are highly intelligent and need to be intellectually stretched. Solving complex and challenging problems is enjoyable to them and they are able to be highly creative and innovative.
- 76% of the leaders in the study strive to meet their objectives. They are highly motivated. Their sense of accomplishment is derived from meeting the expectations that they and others have.
- 87% of leaders had the principle of respect for others and a need for honesty and openness.

- 73% of the leaders described a need for connection and close relationships with people who they are close to.

The study found that the South African leaders of today seem different to those of the past as they appear to be more sensitive than their predecessors. Yudelowitz (2002:23) asserts that their sensitivity is valuable and needs to be nurtured as it is the "raw material" needed for the development of emotional maturity. He suggests that in order for this to happen, these leaders need to move into closer collegiate relationships with people with whom they can develop close, trusting, inter-dependent relationships. Within the safety of close relationships, they will encourage one another to move out of their reflexive patterns, and as a result, begin to realise their true potential (Yudelowitz:2002:23).

However, the drawback is that the study was confined to leadership in the private sector. Notwithstanding that, it is almost certain that should the study be replicated using a public sector sample the results would be no different (see sub-heading Linking Emotional Intelligence to Leadership).

From the above discussion it is evident that emotional intelligence is key to interpersonal skills and plays an integral role for effective leadership.

Developing emotionally competent leaders

Since entering the "global village" South Africa, now more than ever, is in need of leaders who can both deal with domestic complexities and take advantage of global opportunities. This will require leaders to enlarge their conceptual frameworks – intellectual, emotional and spiritual – of what their organizations are and how they add value, in both financial and socio-economic terms.

Individuals and organisations are recognising that the leadership style that worked previously to bring success is no longer effective. This is evident from the literature that is available – pointing in a new direction for achieving personal and organizational success. Interestingly, they cover areas that were unheard of in the past, for example, bringing heart, soul, and spirit into the workplace. It is therefore time to balance our rational "head intelligence" (IQ) and our emotional "heart wisdom" (EQ).

Accordingly, leaders will be required to have a heightened sense of self-awareness – a deep understanding of one's own behaviour, motivators and competencies – and having "emotional intelligence" that allows them to accept, manage and use, rather than simply control or suppress, their emotional state (Davidson:2002:18). As part of this self-awareness, effective leaders will be proficient at listening to other viewpoints, rather than simply defending their own, and at not having to 'win' whenever there is a difference of opinion.

To be recognised as being effective, leaders should develop a range of EQ competencies, be able to assess situations intuitively and make sound choices about what is most needed by individuals and the group in a multitude of situations, and then deliver.

In a multi-ethnic or multi-cultural setting such as South Africa, leadership will also have to deal with the complexities of the various cultures involved and be able to shift their behaviour to be effective in a variety of cultural models.

Central to or transcending all cultures is humanism. The concept of *Ubuntu* – African humanism, is generally regarded as the foundation of sound human relations in African societies. The *ubuntu* philosophy and the community concept of co-operation have significant practical implications for corporate life. Among these is the fact that they provide a cultural hot-bed for such important values as creative co-operation, empathetic communication and team work (Vinassa:2002:15). In simple terms this translates to being emotional intelligent.

Leadership models and development should encompass a range of EQ competencies, which will be valuable in a transforming multicultural society, viz.:

- Interpersonal skills, team work, negotiation, networking and other critical social skills
- People-oriented characteristics with a high sensitivity to diversity
- Value system that elevates the interest of the organization above those of the individual
- Attuned to cultural sensitivities and behavioural norms
- Integrity, honesty and trustworthiness
- Credibility and reliability rating in terms of commitments and pledges
- Personal learning skills, especially the ability to learn from, and help others learn from, experience.

In a changing environment, whether global or local, the leaders who develop these traits and abilities will find success – for themselves and their organizations.

Conclusion

The transformation process in South Africa calls for organizations both in the public and private sectors to be led and managed in an innovative manner. The leadership traits that worked previously may no longer be appropriate. There are strong claims about the contribution of EQ to individual and organizational performance and success. There is consensus among authors on the subject that EQ is learnt behaviour and it follows that one's EQ can continually be improved to meet the challenges of a changing workplace. Hence, to be recognised as being effective, leaders should develop a range of EQ competencies, be able to assess situations intuitively and make sound choices about what is most needed by individuals and the group in a multitude of situations, and then deliver. Put simply, to be relevant in a global environment, a new type of leader is required.

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