Emotional intelligence in the workplace

Work environment has gone through a lot of significant changes worldwide. It is still evolving very rapidly and relatively unexpectedly. However, many people, especially researchers, still do not think that emotions do play a major role or are useful in managing a company. Emotional intelligence is still difficult to measure and measuring methods are fully confirmed in terms of theory (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000; MacCann & Roberts, 2008); even some confusion about measuring two distinct constructs resulted, because it has been measured " both as set of personality traits and behavioral tendencies and as a set of cognitive abilities" (MacCann & Roberts, 2008, p. 540). However, the concept of EI in a workplace (and in general) is not new, as some people may think, and as far as the research and available sources show it reaches the beginning of the 1920s when Edward Thorndike introduced the concept of social intelligence (which is the ability to cope with other individuals) while trying to reevaluate the predictability of IQ. His theory suggests that social intelligence is a factor that causes fluctuations in outcome measures which do not give reasons for IQ (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000). In other words, it does not depend on IQ. Hrand Saxenian (1958) wrote an article, in which he points out how emotional maturity is important for effective work and organizational success. Yet, at that time, managers and leaders have underestimated the value of emotions and emotional aspect had to give up place for technical competence (Grandey, 2000). Saxenian argues that an individual's emotional level shows how this person is able to cope with stressful situations and to work effectively facing different situations' demands which, consequently, become a fundamental requirement for a company's prosperity. A leader's obligation is not only to deal with administrative, financial, or technical issues. He or she, in order to

get all these problems resolved, needs to communicate with people successfully. This communication must be constructive and motivating. If people who work together communicate effectively and with understanding they get results they want to obtain. Many people, even today, think that IQ is what predicts success; however, even early literature suggests, that " the evidence is a whole less satisfactory than one would think it ought to be to justify such confidence" (McClelland. 1973, p. 3). Throughout his article, McClelland also points out how important communication skills are and that they are far more predictive of success rather than IQ tests (McClelland, 1973). Johnson (1978) in his book " Human Relations and Your Career: A Guide to Interpersonal Skills" stresses the importance of sensing, interpreting, feeling, intending, and expressing in the workplace; however, all these features must be honest in relation to a person who is experiencing those states at a given moment as well as in relation to those who surround this individual. Nowadays, more specifically at the end of the twentieth century, the popularity of emotional intelligence has risen thanks to several publications and changing trends in dealing with people in organizations. Since Howard Gardner in 1983 put forward his theory that humans possess multiple intelligences rather than one single general intelligence " g", the development of emotional intelligence began to flourish (Gardner, 2003) and in 1989, Gardner and Hatch found that there is " no significant correlation with IQ measures" (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000).

When it comes to the history of how the term emotional intelligence was first used there are different information as to when it actually has happened. There are different sources (although by the same authors); some of them

say that the term was first used in psychiatric literature in the 1960s (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004), and another source states that it first appeared in an unpublished essay written by Salovey and Mayer in 1986, but was officially placed in the field of scientific psychology only in 1990. With time this definition has evolved and in 1997 the model has broken down into four interrelated subdivisions, namely perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions (Caruso et al, 2002; Caruso, Bienn & Kornacki, 2006). Perceiving or identifying is about accurately recognizing emotions both of one's own and those of others. This requires picking up spoken and gestural cues and consequently distinguishing between an honest emotional expression and a simulated expression (Caruso et al. 2002; Caruso et al., 2006). The second branch, using emotions, from the organizational perspective is the ability to employ one's emotions to manipulate and redirect an employee's attention to important events, but also to create emotions that facilitate decision making (Caruso et al., 2002). People tend to think that emotions hinder and modify thoughts (Caruso et al., 2006), but the research shows that this is not true and the combination of both can give a productive outcome (Mayer et al., 2004). A leader who is emotionally intelligent and follows the approach of situational leadership by adjusting to a situation can use swings of mood in his or her employees as an opportunity rather than obstacle and view these moods as multiple perspectives and various points of view. Caruso et al. (2002) also suggest that leaders can develop different ways of problem solving adapted to a general given humor. Emotions give people an inner guidance and help communicate with others. The third branch is meant by capability to understand complicated emotions and how they are connected to other emotions and is referred to as

understanding emotions. Understanding helps people to realize how emotions are being transformed and modified as they develop and move through stages and how they are related to one another. It also means the ability to distinguish causes that give rise to particular emotions. The last fourth branch is managing emotions and is about being aware of all kinds of emotions both pleasant and unpleasant that occur within a person. This branch also concerns the ability to specify whether those emotions are true, typical or clear as well as the ability to solve emotions generating problems, but not necessarily by eliminating bad emotions (Caruso et al., 2002). This model is the one on which Mayer Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is based and is basically the only one which gained support from esteemed academic researchers; nevertheless, some still think that those who approve of it are to generous in assessing this test's reliability and validity (????)

How Emotions and EI Became Important in the Field of Organizational Behavior

First of all, according to Salovey and Grewal (2005), emotional intelligence is a set of abilities or skills and not personality traits. They also find that interrelated skills of which EI consists serve to emotionally calculate information at issue in an accurate and effective way. The model of EI was first proposed in order to provide a theoretical account for researchers investigating individual differences in terms of emotionally relevant content and its processing (Salovey & Grewald, 2005). The interest in emotional intelligence started growing after 1994 when a book entitled The Bell Curve by Herrnstein and Murray was published. It has influenced people's

perceptions and individual attitudes concerning IQ. In accordance with the authors of this book, IQ is the most significant predictor of success in every aspect of one's life. This was very disturbing for people who were told that their health, interpersonal relations, even the most intimate, earnings an so on depend on the level of IQ. Furthermore, the definition of IQ states that half of the population falls below the average score as well as it is hardly changeable throughout one's life. This is when people started to look for alternatives, some unconsciously and some not, because the message delivered was very pessimistic and negative (Grewal & Salovey, 2005). Even though, people still pay their attention to the logical-mathematical intelligence which may be measured with help of IQ tests (de Vries, 2008), IQ is not a predictor of success, because it accounts only for approximately 20% of being successful in the workplace. Obviously, someone who graduates from a university with outstanding grades may not in fact be able to manage real life situations (Goleman, 1995; de Vries, 2008). The old conviction that IQ is crucial is not valid anymore. First of all, IQ and leadership skills are very poorly correlated. What is more, people whose IQ is high tend to perform intellectual analysis on their decisions without engaging emotional aspects. Finally, people with high IQ also tend to criticize others; criticizing absorbs their time which could be as well consecrated to other productive activities. In terms of organizations, EI (an equivalent of Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence) is at least as significant as IQ and EQ can easily suppress IQ's importance (de Vries, 2008). EI's strength lies in that its concept is rooted in the fact that reason and emotions are linked and intellectual as well as emotional reasoning are essential to success (Harvey & Dasborough, 2006).

The very first conviction about emotional intelligence and emotions in general placed in the context of workplace was that it has to be ignored because of the importance of cognition and rationality and one concept excludes the other. Therefore, emotions and their influence on behaviors and decision making were neglected. However, certain literary works especially on leadership demonstrate some changes in perception of emotions in the workplace and interestingly number of these sources increases rapidly (Bachkirova & Cox, 2007). The attitude towards the organizational behavior field has been transformed – the developing interest in emotional intelligence caused that emotions have became recognized in organizational functioning and its various contexts with an emphasis on interpersonal relations between people within groups as well as organizations (Hareli, Rafaeli & Parkinson, 2008). In other words, people do not only create private, intimate, and personal emotions. Also, because they are social creatures, emotions will most likely emerge during interactions with others, through participation in group interactions (Rafaeli & Worman, 2001). The simplest reason why people started growing interest in EI and its impact on productivity is that emotions influence behavior. In other words, an individual while performing a task will most likely be influenced by emotions. Individual affect may impact not only behavior but also such issues as motivation, creativity, attitudes, and judgments (Hareli et al., 2008).

Also, after Daniel Goleman's book many managers started recognizing emotions as a part of correct functioning of organizations and began to think about how to take advantage of emotional aspects. Rafaeli and Worline (2001) have outline two waves of nowadays' research focusing on

organizational life. According to them, first wave focused its research on the way emotions affect organizations and what are the relationships between individual emotions and such factors as motivation or performance. These studies also touched upon stress, satisfaction, and leadership. People started to " think of emotion as a new organizational variable" (Rafaeli & Worline, 2001, p. 102). Emotion is also one of dependent variables in the research among many independent ones that are associated with organizations, and those independent can explain emotions in organizational context. This first movement classified to contemporary or current research tries to give reasons for the importance of emotions in organizational context. Second wave aims its attention at culture and recognition of emotion being part of different organizational cultures. In this case, some emotions are expected and wanted. What is more, certain organizational goals require these emotions to be promoted, and an organization may be designed in a way focusing on this kind of promotion. In other words, emotions are both attributes of an individual as well as those of organizational culture and the organization as a whole (Rafaeli & Worline, 2001). This dissertation's focus, however, is mainly on the first wave research for the reason that the is on leadership which is one of branches embraced by the concept of emotions' contribution to the organizational life. Nevertheless, the second wave's issues are also included periodically.

The Role of Emotions and EI in the Workplace

Various theories concerning emotions in organizations present that emotional states in the workplace are crucial determinants of performance and satisfaction (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008); and so in conformity with

Affective Events Theory (AET) depending on demand for emotional intelligence in a given job various behaviors are being created and, in consequence, both positive and negative events arise (e. g. hassles, demands, tasks, autonomy, and emotional labor). Simultaneously, these experiences result in different kinds of emotions at work which affect employees' attitudes (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008), like for example impulsive actions or spontaneous help. This experience is influenced by individual tendencies such as emotional intelligence, positive and negative moods (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002). In other words, emotions regulate one's life and, more specifically, attitudes concerning motivation and satisfaction, loyalty and commitment, but also decision about quitting. Because emotions are certain reactions to many surrounding stimuli and are composed of both environmental and personal factors (Lord & Kanfer, 2002), they set people's thoughts about their co-workers, subordinates, and managers and satisfy demands of one's social system. Finally, they affect our actions and performance in consecutive tasks (Hareli et al, 2008). " Emotions in organizational settings and the events that cause them are not to be ignored, even if they appear to be relatively minor" (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002, p. 78).

Lord and Kanfer (2002), argue also that emotional aspect in humans separates stimuli from responses; and therefore, allows individuals to be more adaptive and to adjust to various environments. The researchers distinguish two ways of influencing behavior by emotions, direct and indirect. The former is inducement of behaviors through emotions, and the latter is when emotions affect behaviors by the means of cognition and motivation, in

other words, there is some inner negotiation process (Lord & Kanfer, 2002). To sum up, the kind of events and emotions one accumulates influences the way one thinks and feels in a particular workplace (Ashkanasy & Darus, 2002). Of course, the intensity of emotions vary according to a situation and people that are involved in this event, more precisely by their reactions (like calm which is likely to reduce stress and is expected from leaders as a sign of having an issue under control and reassuring his or her subordinates or panic which maximizes intensity).

Now, there is a question whether emotions in the workplace should be disclosed or not. Certainly, communication between people in an organization is likely to be highly affected by the extent to which they disclose and share information concerning not only ideas but also emotions, influencing, therefore, an organization's climate (Steele & Jenks, 1977), more specifically trust, support, and encouragement. People within an organization are likely to chose and decide what thoughts and feelings they want to share with others. It is always done at some point and results from human nature, because as a coworker one is obliged to somehow participate in the organizational life and interact with people precisely through disclosure. However, lack of distinction between what one wants to share and what one does not want to share (in other words revealing whatever comes to one's mind) will likely result in overwhelming not only this individual, but also those who surround him or her (Steele & Jenks, 1977). Furthermore, if work atmosphere does not allow to trust others and especially a group leader who is responsible not only for his teams outcomes, but also for its attitudes, people will not express how they feel about certain issues and may be only

obediently accomplish their tasks. Emotions resulting from such a situation will contribute to creating dissatisfaction and decrease in motivation level.

One aspect of emotional disclosure, including both an employer and employees, is letting others to get to know a person better as well as to understand him or her. This means that an employee reveals both strengths and developmental areas in order to facilitate the cooperation process, meaning let others know what kind of assistance is needed in his or her case. This is applicable to inexperienced as well as professionally advanced employees and is a useful indicator for a situational leader in terms of spreading out supervision, assistance, and monitoring development. As Steele and Jenks (1977) state, a company in which disclosure is low eventually may be in need of the information, including emotional cues, that may not be available at a given moment. Furthermore, low disclosure level does not serve well in terms of adaptation and adjustment process and may disturb efficient functioning of a team or a company. According to Johnson (1978), in some cases, emotions and feelings need to be stated explicitly. An individual has to be aware of and accept them. However, it is important to remember that people cannot express all their emotions freely in their workplace, especially those that are not connected to the professional life; they also have to be kept within an individual if this has been stated during selection or training materials (Grandey, 2000). So an important thing is that an individual has to have a control over his or her emotions and these emotions have to be communicated in a way they are going to be useful in the work environment (Johnson, 1978).

It is important to mention, introduced by Lester Luborsky in 1977, the core conflictual relationship theme (CCRT) which is " a central relationship pattern or schema composed of the most pervasive types of components that reappear across a person's set of relationship narratives" (). So people's emotional life creates conflicting forces such as impulses and defense mechanisms which further interact with the rational part creating an inner dialogue. It is important to look inside and understand this dialogue. The same issue is observable within organizations. There are leaders and managers who look at what is going on only superficially. They do not pay their attention to the internal dynamics and analyze only what seems to be obvious like the organization's mission, goals, strategy. They look at jobs, tasks, selection processes and so on. In other words, they focus on what is rational. Informal aspects like values of the corporate culture, models of power and influences, group dynamics as well as interpersonal relations and reactions to different events and CCRT are equally significant. Furthermore, the CRRT influences people's personal life and may become a central aspect of all recurring difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, the CCRT may also impact people's professional life and in case of people in high positions it determines (apart from the purely interpersonal aspect) the quality of the organization's culture and decision making (De Vries, 2008). That means that emotions, either negative or positive that appear as an outcome of the inner conflict will very much influence the team's or organization's performance and that brings us to the point that emotions are very powerful and according to some research they are contagious. Emotional intelligence being a the ability not only to supervise emotions of oneself and others but also to apply information to direct one's thinking

allow people to use emotions accurately and control themselves and others in a way which will result in positive outcome (for the purpose of this dissertation that would be a leader and his/her followers). The useful reference help people to make sense of and direct the social environment.

A person who is emotionally intelligent is likely to benefit fully from a situation by adjusting his or her moods to a task at hand (Salovey & Grewal, 2005). And although no significant number of research has been done, emotions as a form of influencing organizational behavior enjoy greater and greater interest of scientists (Levine, 2010). Leaders can increase an organization's performance not only through adjusting to a situation but also through displaying adequate emotions influencing their subordinates and the way they think, feel, and act. The research shows that people have innate capacity to display their emotional states and are able to determine these states in others. Even some cross-cultural reports state that individuals accurately recognize affective states of others. People communicate their moods through so called mood contagion or emotional contagion that is a process in which a person's mood is activated through the observation of a different person's demonstration of a similar mood. This mechanism is two-staged: the first is when a person mimics others' moods, and in the second stage, a feedback in terms of mimics both verbal and nonverbal is sent and finally results in matching mood reaction (Sy, Côté & Saavendra, 2005). This means that " mimicking facial, vocal, or postural behaviors leads one to experience the moods that are associated with those behaviors" (Sy et al., 2005, p. 296). This is also true for organizational behavior (Sy et al., 2005).

Critiques

There are also some opponents who criticize the concept of emotional intelligence, because the EI is very successful in organizational behavior and the rapidly growing interest in developing measures of EI results in several different definitions and enormous number of intervention schemes that are being developed. Another issue is that EI and its development is a highly commercialized and profitable area. Moreover, in his paper, Dirk Lindebaum (2009) points out that, first of all, there are two groups which do not entirely agree on issues concerning emotional intelligence. First group are theorists who expand exaggerated claims involving both emotional intelligence and organizational performance; on the other hand, there are practitioners who corroborate the evidence through empirical work. Secondly Lindebaum suggests that there are some barriers causing the lack of empirical evidence and inhibiting the development of EI and therefore its contribution to performance and effectiveness. First, there is an interindustry barrier of which characteristics have been neglected by those who have contributed to the discipline of EI and therefore hindered organizational efforts to develop emotional intelligence. According to some researchers, unique for a given industry idiosyncrasies have to be taken into account in order to examine effectiveness and work performance of crucial employees. Further, for the purpose of precise design of an EI intervention scheme it is a key factor to identify exactly what are fundamental concepts, needs and goals of an industry. As Lindebaum (2009) points out, there are some studies indicating that industries oppose to " the use of many proven techniques and approaches in human resources management" (p. 229) and suggests that in

some industries an emotionally intelligent person may be not as advantageous as in others.

Secondly, there is an intraorganizational barrier which is defined by a lack of discrimination between various levels that exist in the organizational hierarchy.