

Emotional intelligence  
and team  
performance  
psychology essay



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Claims about the positive influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on work team performance are very numerous, both in commercial and scientific literature. In this study, EI was assessed using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS). Paper examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance of 15 teams selected from telecom organizations of Islamabad/ Rawalpindi. A single questionnaire was used to gather data from the teams, each consisting of 5-15 members. Simple and multiple regression was applied to investigate the relationships between emotional intelligence as a whole and team performance and then between EI's dimensions which includes ' Self Emotion Appraisal', ' Other Emotion Appraisal', ' Use of Emotion' and ' Regulation of Emotion' and teams performance. Results show a positive relationship among emotional intelligence and its dimensions and performance of teams. The limitations which holds for the study includes issue of one-shot study, limited sample size and non generalisability. The study will be beneficial for future researchers and organizations.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; appraisal and expression of emotion; team performance

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, emotions in the workplace, and especially emotional intelligence, have become an amazingly hot topic in management. The topic of research is " Impact of Emotional Intelligence on teams' performance". Employees go through different emotions which are most likely to affect the way they behave at their workplaces. It is important for the team leaders as

well as members to understand, act on and manage the emotions of other members to have a healthy environment at workplace and to increase the performance of the team as a whole.

### Background of the Study

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) was first proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1990) which was then popularized by Goleman in his book “Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ”. Since then, this area has got much attention in the field of leadership, Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior. Researchers have defined EI as a distinct psychological skill that can be consistently gauged.

Mayer and Salovey’s ideas on EI came up from the work of Social Intelligence by Thorndike (1920) and Gardner’s (1983) concept of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. In 1927, Thorndike classified Intelligence into three types: Abstract Intelligence which is related to verbal concepts, Concrete Intelligence which is related to shapes and matter and thirdly Social Intelligence now termed as Emotional Intelligence. It shows that it is not a new concept.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined emotional intelligence as “ the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (p. 189). Their model includes features of intelligence, adjustability and encouragement.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) stated four skills of EI which includes emotional awareness of own and others, emotional management of own and others, emotional understanding i. e. recognizes the emotional series and cycle, and emotional facilitation i. e. creating emotions. To measure EI, MSCEIT (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, 2002) was developed on the basis of these four elements.

Goleman (1998) stated that EI play a major role in improving performance at work as well as achievements in personal life. He claimed that approximately 90 % of the performance between high and average individuals at senior leader positions was due to EI features rather than cognitive ones (Cichy, Kim and Cha, 2009).

Researchers define teams miscellaneously. Ayoko and Callan (2009) defined teams as groups composed of autonomous individuals who are wholly identified as team, having a shared liability and are together accountable for the accomplishment of tasks identified by the organization. Ayoko and Callan argue that the leaders who adopt emotional and transformational leadership behavior probably generate positive team results.

As now, there are many instruments or ways to measure EI, it is time to move forward and increase our knowledge regarding the relationship between EI and performance (Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel, Hooper, 2002). The focus of this research is to investigate the relationship among the emotional intelligence of team members on their overall performance as a team.

Significance of the Study

This study will prove to be a source of understanding the benefits of using emotional intelligence in context of realizing team performance. This research will prove to be an important tool for managers and employees which will as a result awaken the need for emotional training of employees.

## **Problem Statement**

What is the impact of emotional intelligence on team performance?

### Research Objectives

To investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence that is the dependent variable and team performance, the independent variable.

To identify the dimensions of emotional intelligence and their magnitude on the performance of teams.

To measure the emotional intelligence level of the team members and its overall impact on their team performance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Importance of teams

With the passage of time focus of organizations is shifting from individual job to team based work units. Teams are said to be necessary for organizational effectiveness. To extract maximum performance from team it requires the selection of people with suitable and adequate skills and knowledge who can understand and cater to team needs These required skills must include the

El skill set because EI accounts for eighty percent of success of an individual (Goleman, 1995).

For a large part of work done in the organizations, teams are responsible for carrying it out. Nowadays every employee or employer is a part of a team. Apart from teams being dominant in different kind of settings, they are of hypothetical importance to the scholars. Teams have been analyzed from many viewpoints i. e. analyzing the team members working in a team from a psychological view, the processes within the team, and the background in which the team is formed. With Ancona's idea of 'boundary management' activities, relations of teams with the outside parties have also been studied in which activities across the team boundary which include representing the team to outside parties, defending the team from outside pressures, and obtaining information and providing it to the team (Ancona, 1990).

#### Importance of EI in workplaces

Before the importance of EI was realized in organizations IQ was supposed to be sufficient for good human performance. Workers were indeed advised to put away their emotions at their homes before coming to work. But it is unrealistic to suppose that emotions can be left home or set aside when you arrive at work. Some people may assume, for a variety of reasons, that emotional neutrality is an ideal, but it is usually not good for an organization for it can hinder people to move into management roles. As, emotional intelligence is critical to high performance, a person who knows how to stay motivated under stress, motivate others, manage complex interpersonal relationships, inspire others and build teams who are recognized specialists

on a product or service are likely to get will get better results (Goleman, 2005)

The significance of emotions in work settings has been well-known.

Emotional intelligence is a multi-dimensional concept that links emotion and cognition to improve human interactions. It has been linked to improved workplace behaviour and specifically team behaviour and team performance. (Jordan, Peter, Lawrence, Sandra, 2009).

### Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence comprises four abilities, Appraisal and Expression of Emotion (own and others), Use of Emotions and Emotional Management (own and others) (Wong and Law, 2002).

#### Appraisal and expression of emotion

The first factor of EI is the ability to properly determine and express one's own emotions as well as to be sympathetic, appraise and express emotions of others. Every individual's ability varies in precisely identifying, appraising and expressing his own emotions as well as the emotions experienced by others. Some people are attentive of their feelings they experience and can express their emotions whereas, some people cannot express their feelings and emotions or they are unaware of their emotions (Zhou, George, 2003).

There is a positive relationship between job performance and team members having high EI because they are highly proficient at appraising and

regulating their own emotions which results in a higher level of faith in

themselves and have power over them which lead them to make realistic  
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actions resulting in high performance and less supervisory interference. But where team members have low EI, they are less proficient at appraising and regulating their emotions, so they have to get assistance from their managers in helping them to better manage and control their emotions which lead to teamwork, coordination, creativity and adaptability (Sy, Tram, O'Hara, 2006).

### Use of emotions

The second factor includes the ability of the individual to use emotions to aid the cognitive processes. Emotions and cognitions are highly interconnected and EI allows people with the ability to use emotions to aid the effective cognitive processing of information. Emotions can be used to emphasize on important matters like selecting among competing and similar options, increase the flexibility of information processing, and engage in certain kinds of information processing (Mayer, 1986; Salovey & Mayer, 1989-1990). Therefore, individuals vary not only in awareness, appraisal and expression of emotions but also in their ability to use emotions in collaboration with their cognitive processes to enhance effective functioning. For adjusting in changing situations, emotions play an important role in the effective development of information for the individuals who are high on EI. On the contrary, individuals with low EI cannot effectively use their emotions to aid cognitive processes and may find it difficult to coordinate among how they feel and what are they doing (Zhou, George, 2003).

### Regulation of emotions



The fourth element of EI is about the regulation of emotions of the people. People not only understand the emotions of others but also make an effort to manage these emotions. Some individuals are much competent in managing emotional management process for themselves as well as for other, as compared to other people. For example, if there occurs any breach in quality, it may raise up a negative emotional reaction when the manager tries to determine the reason of the problem i. e. anger. Though the manager, instead of being obsessed with blaming others and seeking revenge, he should manage his anger to effectively solve the problem. It is significantly important for leaders to manage the emotions of others. Emotional reactions provide a useful insight of where interest should be focused, whereas unmanaged emotions can hinder the effective information processing. So to avoid this unduly hindrance, EI allows managers to not only use emotions but also to manage them effectively (Zhou, George, 2003).

The management of emotion enables an individual to join or unjoin himself from an emotion in a given situation depending on its utility at that given time. This is apparent in the individual's ability to have control on his immediate reactions and postpone his judgment and then to communicate them in a measured and careful manner. The suggestion to ' think and then act', caution to ' count to 10 before replying' and listening practice like ' pause, breathe and relax then respond' are all efforts for managing emotions by conveying your feelings and emotions in a proper way when communicating. Even small children are often taught to " count to 10" before getting mad or to " smile for Grandpa". Delaying instantaneous responses clearly indicates it is as emotional management ability.

## Link of EI with team performance

Various models of team development note that to resolve differences between team members, it is important for teams to develop and progress. Emotional intelligence, when linked with group performance, helps in constructing useful group interactions and aids individuals to deal with and resolve emotional issues to facilitate high performance. In recent research, it was found that team performance is positively and significantly influenced if team is able to recognize emotions of teammates. (Stough, Saklofske, Parker, 2009)

Until now, research has paid attention to emotional intelligence as an individual difference, something similar to intellectual intelligence and associated with personal ability. The notion of emotional intelligence, however, is wider in scope and application than its intellectual intelligence. Studies show that trained teams consisting of members with high emotional intelligence perform as well on measures of team performance as the trained teams consisting of members with low levels of emotional intelligence. Many researchers have anticipated that proper training could be provided to develop the 'emotionally intelligent team' to craft it beyond just a collection of emotionally intelligent individuals but which jointly demonstrate the positive characteristics of emotional intelligence (Daus and Ashkanasy, 1993).

Though there are many claims regarding the positive impact of EI on job performance, but the studies examining the relationship between EI and

individual level performance show that the perceived potential benefits of using EI in the workplace may be absent.

A small number of studies have examined the relationships between EI and performance at group level. (Quoidbach, Hansenne, 2009). Jordan and Troth (2004) have found a link between EI and performance on a purely cognitive task at group level, although this relationship did not appear at individual level.

A number of researchers have hypothesized that job performance is influenced by employees' ability to use emotions to facilitate performance, one of the four defining dimensions of EI. Employees could employ both positive as well as negative emotions to their benefit to improve performance. For example, positive emotions, such as excitement or enthusiasm, could motivate employees to provide better customer service, complete their work assignments, or contribute to the organization. Conversely, negative emotions, such as anxiety, could aid employees' ability to focus on their work tasks. (Sy, Tram, O'Hara, 2006)

#### Relationship of high EI individuals with better performance

The employees having high emotional intelligence are more skilled to regulate their own as well as manage others' emotions to promote positive interactions which would lead to higher performance through organizational citizenship behavior. Latest research has revealed that managers having high EI exhibit produce optimistic work attitudes and unselfish behaviors which resultantly lead to employees' higher satisfaction and performance at job (Sy, Tram, O'Hara, 2006)

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The high EI individual, most centrally, can better perceive emotions, use them in thought, understand their meanings, and manage emotions better than others. Solving emotional problems likely requires less cognitive effort for this individual. The person also tends to be somewhat higher in verbal, social, and their intelligence particularly if the individual scored higher in the understanding emotions portion of EI. The individual tends to be more open and agreeable than others. The high EI person is drawn to occupations involving social interactions such as teaching and counseling more so than to occupations involving clerical or administrative tasks. The high EI individual, relative to others, is less apt to engage in problem behaviors and avoids self-destructive, negative behaviors such as smoking, excessive drinking, drug abuse, or violent episodes with others. The high EI person is more likely to have possessions of sentimental attachment around the home and to have more positive social interactions, particularly if the individual scored highly on emotional management. Such individuals may also be more adept at describing motivational goals, aims, and missions (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, 2004).

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) claim that emotional elements have a lasting impact on team performance though are not instantly evident. Pate, Watson and Johnson (1998) have revealed that decisions made by the whole group are a better predictor of performance than the decisions made by the best decision-maker in the group. In majority of teams, the role of leadership is revolved so it is predicted that teams with EI will perform well. (Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel, Hooper, 2002)

Due to an increased use of teams in organizations since past several years, it has resulted in a productive research literature on what makes teams effective. This question has recognized various important aspects. It has been found through studies that team performance is affected by several factors like communication, team climate, shared mental models, leadership and size. Yet other studies showed a relationship between team performance and individual factors which includes skills, knowledge and abilities of team members, age and tenure of team member, his openness to variety and equilibrium of his role preferences (Pirola-Merlo, Hartel, Mann, Hirst, 2002).

### Components of Team Performance

Dependability among team members have an influence on how well teams can rely on one another as well as on the organization. It is determined greatly by the extent of how much information is being shared and level of openness among teams, and among organization and team. It also includes consistency of teams in terms of them doing what they say they will do, they remain stick to their commitments to each other and to the organization.

### Information Sharing

The basis of trust among team members lies in effective sharing of important information. Teams cannot perform effectively unless they don't have proper information. When the organization keeps the information secret from the team members that may be useful for them, the members may lose confidence in the organization. Nor organizations can trust on teams that are secretive and are not open.

### Clear Direction

A clear direction is needed to point teams to go in the direction in which the organization wants to go. It is important to become clear about the vision and then communicate the vision to the teams. The organization, by setting a clear direction, set the boundaries within which the teams work.

### Aimlessness

Without having clear goals and an apparent direction, teams are likely to become unstable. Their actions are inefficient because they are not aimed. They keep on shifting to other thing after starting on one thing. Although they move in a same general direction but without any accuracy due to absence of clear goals.

### Alienation

The teams which are not involved in decision making of the organization are more likely to deny it, they may consider the path on which they are moving as not of their own, and they may hold themselves less accountable for the results. Teams may engage in disruption to declare their opposition from the direction inn which they are moving.

### Operational Planning

The organization has to create processes to accomplish work once their goals are set, and overall plan has to be set up to fit plans of individual units. In the planning process, they need to plan for teams giving them the clarity

and structure and flexibility to gain benefit from unexpected opportunities and deal with unpredicted events.

### Communications

Teams have to communicate with each other as well as to the organization to stay aligned. So, a medium and practices through which communications can flow freely must be built up. Team based organizations need to create effective modes of communication, to identify the information requirements of all parts of organization, and examine levels of communication and noise level.

### Innovation

The benchmark of high performing organizations is that they outperform what is already known and done earlier. They are innovative, work with their own fashion, and generate new products and services. Innovative organizations believe in challenging the status quo and they have the structure that supports new projects. Teams in these organizations are less liable to remain on past success.

### Connecting Values

Where teams have the freedom to act and the resources to be productive, they will tend to buy into the organization's enterprise when one other condition applies: that the organization's work taps a deeply held value or set of values. This connection to what is most important or meaningful to teams and their members creates a sense of mission and an esprit de corps that bonds teams together and to the organization as a whole.

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## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research study has following variables:

Emotional Intelligence: Independent variable

Team Performance: Dependent variable

Other Emotional Appraisal

Use of Emotion

Regulation of Emotion

## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

## **TEAM PERFORMANCE**

Self-Emotional Appraisal

Independent Variable Dependent Variable

The study shows a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and team performance. Based on the researches of many researchers like (e. g. Qquoidbach & Hansenne, 2009; Jordan, Ashkanasy, Härtel & Hooper 2002), the research shows that team performance is dependent upon emotional intelligence. The employees having high levels of emotional intelligence will perform better in teams which will increase the overall performance of the teams.

Hypotheses



The aim of this study is to prove the relation between emotional intelligence and team performance. Therefore, hypothesis related with four dimensions of emotional intelligence are developed as follows:

Hypothesis1: Emotional Intelligence has a significantly positive relationship with team performance.

Hypothesis 2: Self emotion Appraisal (SOE) has a significant positive relationship with team performance.

Hypothesis 3: Other Emotion Appraisal (OEA) has a significant positive relationship with team performance.

Hypothesis 4: Using of Emotion (UE) has a significant positive relationship with team performance.

Hypothesis 5: Regulation of Emotion (RE) has a significant positive relationship with team performance.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was relational for exploring relationship among Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self Emotion Appraisal (SEA), Other Emotion Appraisal (OEA), Using Emotions (UE) and Regulation of Emotions (RE). These variables are tested.

#### Purpose of the Study

Hypothesis testing was done in order to test the relationship between variables which were emotional intelligence, SEA, OEA, UE, RE and team performance.

#### Type of Investigation

A causal study was conducted to explore the association among EI, its dimensions and team performance.

#### Extent of Researcher Interference

The data was collected with minimum interference by the researcher from different organizations.

#### Study Settings

Data was collected in noncontrived settings.

#### Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is teams as the research questions are focused on impact of emotional intelligence of teams on their performance.

#### Time Horizon

The data was gathered just once from different telecom companies therefore the study was one-shot study.

#### Sampling Design

The sample was chosen by using convenience sampling where the data was collected from the employees of telecom companies who were easily available to provide it.

### Sample

The targeted population for this research is the telecom sector of Pakistan. The sample conducting this research was selected from the organizations located in Islamabad/Rawalpindi. Total number of teams among which questionnaires were distributed was 35 teams out of only 29 teams returned back the filled questionnaires. Those 15 work teams comprised of 5-15 members. The respondents working in a team currently were included. 72% of the participants in teams were male and 28% were female.

### Instrument

Primary data was gathered through questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of 32 items (see Appendix). All the items related to emotional intelligence as well as team performance were measured on a 7-point likert scale (7 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree). The reliability test was applied to the questionnaire which showed 0.934 cronbach alpha.

It consisted of two parts. First part consists of 16 items used to measure the emotional intelligence of the members of the team. Second part also consists of 16 items which were used to measure the performance of team.

### Measures

#### Emotional Intelligence

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Emotional Intelligence was assessed using Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) (2002). This scale consists of 16 items. The WLEIS was designed as a short measure of EI for use in organizational research. It comprises of 16 items, responded to on a 7-point Likert scale and measuring four dimensions: ' Self-Emotion Appraisal', ' Emotion Appraisal of Others', ' Use of Emotion', and ' Regulation of Emotion'. Wong and Law (2002) report good internal consistency reliabilities for their measure. In terms of validity, they present data showing that scores on the WLEIS are related to job performance and job satisfaction.

### Team Performance

The performance of team was measured by 16 items, adopted from Senior, B. (1996). This was measured on a 7-point likert scale.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Data was collected from 15 different teams of telecom organizations from Islamabad/Rawalpindi. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS Version 18. The linear regression was run on the data. By running reliability analysis to the data, Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0. 934 which shows that our instrument is 93 % reliable.

The reliability test was applied on this questionnaire and the results are as follows:

**Table 1:**

Data were collected from fifteen teams from telecom companies of Islamabad/Rawalpindi. First, the reliability of the questionnaire was checked through Cronbach's Alpha reliability test. Cronbach's Alpha measures how well a set of items measures a single undimensional latent construct. The calculated Cronbach's Alpha was 0.934 for 32 items which is presented in Table 1. This value shows that there was consistency among the items and the questionnaire was reliable.

**Table 2:**

Table 2 indicates that the mean score of emotional intelligence of the employees was 5.43 which means that the teams had somewhat high level of correlation. A maximum of 7 shows that some of the respondents had very high levels of emotional intelligence and a minimum of 3 shows that some of the team members did not possess high level of emotional intelligence.

**Table 3:**

Table 3 indicates that the overall teams were performing well. A maximum of 7 shows that some teams' performance was very good and a minimum of 2 shows that some teams were performing not very well.

**Table 4:**

Correlation finds the connection between two variables and determines the extent to which values of two variables are proportional to each other. (Carver & Nash, 2006). The above table shows that the self emotion appraisal and use of emotion are highly correlated with team performance,

whereas other emotion appraisal and regulation of emotion were although positively correlated but having weak relationship with team performance.

### **Table 5:**

As in the above table sig. value is less than .05 so we have a significant linear regression. ( $F(1) = 71.715, p < 0.05$ )

### **Table 6:**

Regression equation can be formed as follows:

$$TP = 1.915 + 0.671EI$$

With 1% change in independent variable, it will cause dependent variable to change by 67%. From the above table and the formed equation we can conclude that Emotional Intelligence is the significantly influencing variable. It means that Emotional Intelligence plays a significant role in the performance of the team.

### **Table 7:**

Model Summary reports a statistics that measures 'goodness of fit'. R is measuring the simple relation between independent variables and dependent variable. R<sup>2</sup> measures the variation of dependent variable by independent variables. It can range from 0 to 1 and indicates the extent to which the line fits the points. The R Square value shows that 65% of the variation in the team performance can be explained by the difference in the value of emotional intelligence.

## **Regression Analysis of Relation between Sub-Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence & Team Performance (Dependent Variable: Team Performance)**

### **Table 8:**

The model summary table 11 measures “goodness of fit”. This table includes the multiple correlation coefficients  $R$ , its square  $R^2$ , and an adjusted version of this coefficient. The multiple correlation coefficient,  $R = .719$ , indicates that there was a moderate correlation between dimensions of emotional intelligence and team performance. In terms of variability, observed team performance accounted for the fitted model, this amounts to a proportion of  $R^2 = 0.518$ , or 51.8%. It means that there was 51.8% of the variation in team performance (dependent variable) was explained by the dimensions of EI (independent variable). This shows a strong relationship between the two variables (emotional intelligence and team performance). The value of Durbin Watson value should range from 1.5-2.5. Our value of Durbin Watson is 1.684 which means there is no issue of multicollinearity.

### **Table 9:**

From ‘ANOVA’ table, it is evident that Sig (p value) = 0.000 which is less than 0.05 so the model fits the data properly. The F-test for the null hypothesis, that the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (EI) does not have positive relation with team’s performance, or in other words, that  $R^2$  is zero. Here the null hypothesis is rejected ( $F(4) = 25.478$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), so it was concluded that SEA, OEA, UE and RE were positively related to team performance.

**Table 10:**

The above given 'coefficients' table provides regression coefficients, standard errors of the estimates, t-tests and tolerance and VIF values. The estimated regression coefficients are given under the heading 'Standardized Coefficients B', these give, for each of the independent variables, the predicted change in the dependent variable when the independent variable is increased by one unit based on a condition that all the other variables in the model will remain constant. For example, here we estimate that team's performance increases by 17 % with a one unit change in team member's self emotion appraisal assuming that there is no change in the rest of variables. One unit increase in others' emotion appraisal brings a 3.8% change in the performance of teams. Similarly, one unit increase in the use of emotion of an employee brings a 41% variation in teams' performance. At the end, a unit change in the team me