

Role of Emotional Intelligence in Developing Organizational Culture

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Abstract

Leaders try to build a healthy and positive Organizational Culture to share the Values, Mission and Vision with its employees. Organizations which try to develop their organizations as “Learning organizations” are aware of the potential that lies in human resources, and are prone to develop new concepts of leadership, where hierarchy and pyramid structured decision making no longer play the main role. Through this study, we suggest that emotional intelligence enhanced with new concepts of leadership increases generating and transfer of knowledge. Emotional intelligence, often measured as an emotional intelligence quotient, or EQ, is of high relevance to work-related outcomes such as individual performance, organizational productivity, and developing people because its principles provide a new way to understand and assess the behaviors, management styles, attitudes and interpersonal skills of people. This paper explores Emotional Intelligence in the context of Organizational Culture. Till now much of the emphasis in examining Emotional Intelligence has focused on Individual performance. Yet it is clear that individual success cannot be seen in isolation from the organization where they work, as organization may develop its own unique culture of shared values and understanding. The findings of this research paper substantiate the relationship between individual Emotional Intelligence and Organizational culture. They strengthen the past researches by indicating a positive relationship.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence Enhanced Individual Performance, Organizational Culture, Productivity, Shared Values.

Introduction

Since Daniel Goleman’s book about Emotional Intelligence (1996), there has been an explosion of interest in the subject (Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999). The most compelling theme was the proposition that higher EI leads to greater ‘life’ success (Goleman, 1996). Perhaps this is because measures of intelligence have been able to account for only around 20 to 25 percent of variances in success (Bahn, 1986; Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999).

Certainly in the corporate world the construct has been received with enthusiasm, which may seem a little surprising given the rational roots of business (Goffee & Jones, 1998). But in a world where the only certainty is uncertainty and the drive for innovation is relentless, the theme of Emotional Intelligence has clearly struck a chord.

Much of the emphasis in examining EI has focused on individual performance. Yet it is clear that individual success cannot be seen in isolation from the organization in which they work (Goffee & Jones, 1999; Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999). The research in this

paper sets out to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and organizational cultures. Whether high Emotional Intelligence does help create a more Positive Organizational Culture?

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence describes the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one’s self, of others, and of groups. People who possess a high degree of emotional intelligence know themselves very well and are also able to sense the emotions of others. They are affable, resilient, and optimistic.

Figure 1: Four domains of Emotional Intelligence

DOMAINS	INCLUDES CHARACTERISTICS
Self-Awareness	(i) Emotional awareness: Recognizing one’s emotions and their effects. (ii) Accurate self-assessment: Knowing one’s strengths and limits. (iii) Self-confidence: Sureness about one’s self-worth and capabilities.
Self-Regulation	(i) Self-control: Managing disruptive emotions and impulses. (ii) Trustworthiness: Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity. (iii) Conscientiousness: Taking responsibility for personal performance. (v) Innovativeness: Being comfortable with and open to novel ideas and new information.
Social Awareness	(i) Empathy: Sensing others’ feelings and perspective, and taking an active interest in their concerns. (ii) Service orientation: Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers’ needs. (iii) Developing others: Sensing what others need, to develop and bolstering their abilities. (iv) Leveraging diversity: Cultivating opportunities through diverse people.
Social/Relationship Skills	(i) Influence: Wielding effective tactics for persuasion. (ii) Communication: Sending clear and convincing messages. (iii) Leadership: Inspiring and guiding groups and people. (iv) Change catalyst: Initiating or managing change. (v) Conflict management: Negotiating and resolving disagreements. (vi) Building bonds: Nurturing instrumental relationships. (vii) Collaboration & cooperation: Working with others toward shared goals. (viii) Team capabilities: Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.

These four domains are related to knowing your emotions; managing your emotions; motivating yourself; recognizing and understanding other people’s emotions; and managing relationships, i.e., managing the emotions of others. Over the last decade, in response to the rapidly changing business environment, we see new concepts and metaphors entering our dialogue, as we see the importance of feelings, trust,

relationship building, knowledge sharing and cultural awareness taking centre stage (e.g. Fineman, 1993; Goffee & Jones, 1998; Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999).

Goleman (1996) proposed that IQ may help a person to access opportunities, but EQ helps them to capitalize on them. In the context of this paper, 'life' success refers to succeed in an organizational context, which is the context employed in much of the research from which Goleman drew his evidence.

Organizational Culture

“Organizational culture is the key to organizational excellence And the function of leadership is the creation and management of culture ...” Edgar Schein. These words have been written over a score of years ago. In the mid 1980's, organizational theorists stated bluntly that the ability for corporate leaders and human resource professionals to interpret and understand their organizational culture affected all strategic development.

Some of the issues facing the 21st century global business terrain are:

The need to form cohesive membership based on cross-generational team work and collaborative knowledge-sharing

- The determination of effective entry criteria to ensure optimum 'fit',
- The designing of internal career and succession planning that work and can change as needs and market opportunities shift,
- The focus on talent nurturing and retention,
- And the heightened awareness to increase productivity and learning at all levels.

In short, it is argued that the tools of cultural analysis, formation and change have never been more important. Organizational culture is described as potentially 'the truest competitive differentiator for businesses today' as well as being "the one most overlooked, it can be the deciding point for an employee who chooses to just show up at work – or to actually contribute to your organization (Scott Cawood, 2007). It is today's greatest business imperative. It requires leaders to leverage the talents of their people to grow a business by connecting their people to the heart of the business – all through the culture they have intentionally groomed. Connected people are motivated to be effective. They're willing to see the organization succeed because they are part of something special".

The real question becomes:

If theorists were stating this in the 80's, why hasn't the corporate world taken notice yet? The answer is very simple:

- Leadership didn't recognize how much culture affected their bottom line – that it was the substratum of their bottom line and
- They didn't know what to do.

With respect to the latter point, companies weren't on the same page with respect to realizing that the difference between their espoused values and behaviors and what they actually enacted on a daily basis mattered profoundly to their employees. They did not understand that organizational behavior was intrinsically linked to human emotions or that ***emotional intelligence was responsible for, at bare minimum, 85% of individual and social behavior i.e. what made their companies functioning or non-functioning organizations.*** Beginning with a sound

understanding as to what culture really means, which naturally incorporates the essential connection to behavior and emotional intelligence.

Cultural Concepts about Culture as a Dynamic Force

Professors Ken Thompson (DePaul University) and Fred Luthans (University of Nebraska) highlight the following characteristics of culture:

Culture = Behavior

Culture is a word used to describe the behaviors that represent the general operating norms in our environment. Aspects of our culture likely support our progress and success and other aspects impede our progress.

Culture is learned through Behavioral Interaction

Employees learn culture by interacting with other employees. Most behaviors and rewards in companies involve other employees. An applicant experiences a sense of your culture, and his or her fit within your culture, during the interview process.

Behavior is derived from Emotion

Emotions are indications of values. People do not get excited or upset about things that are unimportant to them. This is what they truly value; what they hold dear. This is the indicator of the integrity of the company as a productive community. Yet at the same time it is pivotal to remember that emotional interpretation is not fixed, although values are formed very early on in life. Emotions are always a choice. We respond to our environment because we choose to, as a result of our values in conjunction with previous conditioning. Emotional knowledge of the company tells much about the composition. If someone highly values their 'independence', it would be harder to integrate them into a 'we' culture. At the same time, emotions are shaped by life experience and associations, therefore the more you know about your employee's emotional make-up, the greater knowledge of their values, and insight into changing undesirable patterns of behavior while honoring their core, most deeply held values.

Behaviors can change. What must be in 'resonance' are the core values of the company's mission, vision and goals.

Emotions are the Generator of Human Functioning

As Daniel Goleman puts it, "the fact that a thinking brain grew from the emotional reveals much about the relationship of thought to feeling; there was an emotional brain long before there was a rational one." What does this mean? With over 150 000 bits of data per minute being processed by our limbic brain vs. the 36000 bits processed by our cognitive centers, we ignore vast quantities of information at our peril. It is information that largely determines the rational decisions we make, our morals, ethics, the values we adhere to and the ones we ignore; thus comprising our fundamental behaviors as individuals and in social collectives. And unlike cognitive conceptualization (IQ), the emotional brain can always be stimulated to learn. In short, the culture of an organization can only be shaped by understanding how the human brain works and how human beings truly function.

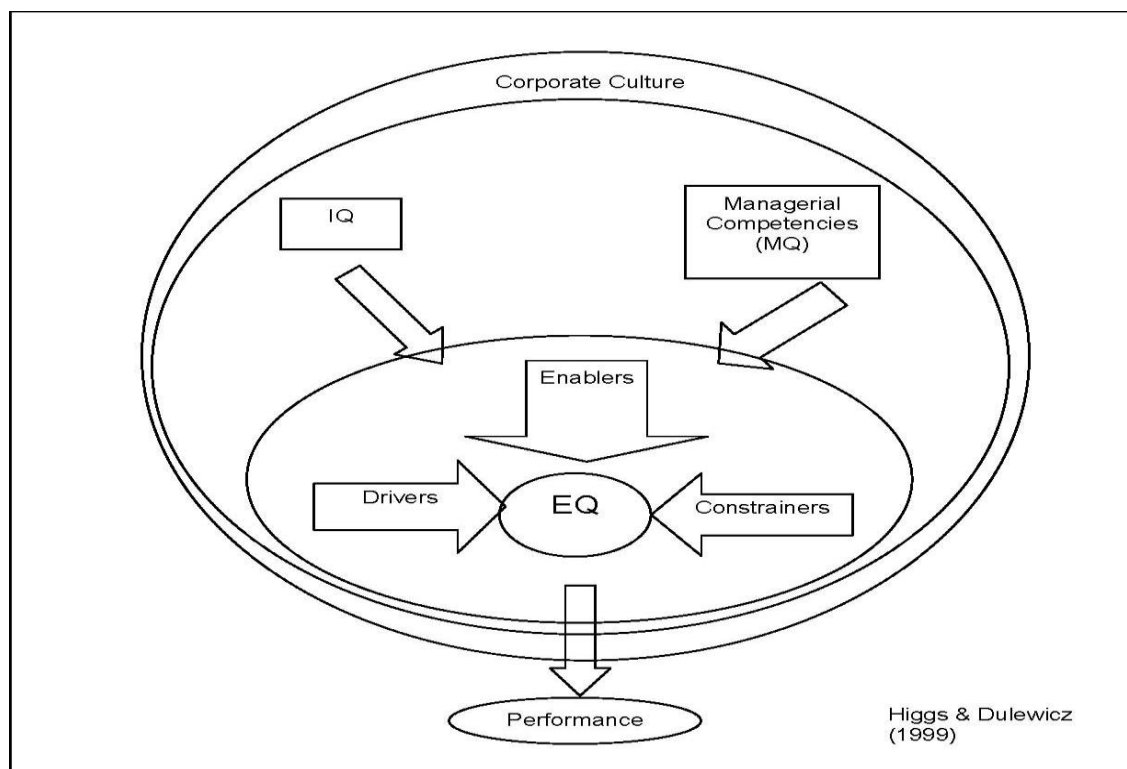
How important is Emotional Intelligence to a Healthy Organizational Culture?

- It enables an organization to hire capable people – no matter how talented someone is they are not 'capable' if they do not gravitate strongly to what they do, and contribute to the big picture. Cultural 'resonance' is now seen as being widely seen as even more important than 'competence'.

- It puts the focus where it should be on job satisfaction – recent studies have linked only 9% of organizational growth to “productivity” and from 58-70% to job satisfaction – where needs are fulfilled, where networking is encouraged as well as other learning opportunities, where individual growth and optimal fit are natural expectations.
- It ensures that your managers can manage. They can be empathetic and coach individuals during periods of low performance; they can delineate paths of employee growth, they can leverage talent; they can optimize diversity. EI created positive, productive companies by naturally instilling managerial recognition that the #1 reason people leave a position is their relationship with their immediate manager. Most importantly, good managers create trust, the highest form of cultural capital in any company.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence The research presented in this paper sets out to re-establish if a relationship exists between individual EI and organizational culture. However there has been some debate around the feasibility of measuring individual EI. Dulewicz & Higgs (1998) found that IQ accounted for 27% of the variance in organizational advancement, EQ a further 36% and MQ for 18%. Taken together these three, accounts for 71% of the variance that contributes to organizational advancement and therefore life success. Figure 2 represents an expanded model of Emotional Intelligence, developed by (Dulewicz & Higgs, 1999) which looks at the relationship that IQ & MQ and EQ have with individual’s performance. The model also looks at three key elements of EQ; Enablers; Drivers and Constrainers. The Enablers relate to the elements of Self-Awareness, Interpersonal Sensitivity and influence. The Drivers relate to Motivation and Intuitiveness and the Constrainers to Conscientiousness and Emotional Resilience.

Figure 2: Expanded Model of Emotional Intelligence



Source: Higgs & Dulewicz (1999)

In the overall model presented by Higgs and Dulewicz (1999) it is proposed that organizational culture has an impact on the relationship between individual competencies and performance. Indeed others working in this field have also alluded to such a relationship (e.g. Goleman, 1998). “If we want to be able to fully understand the significance of emotional intelligence we need to recognize that the relationship between it and performance is mediated by corporate culture.” (Higgs & Dulewicz (1999).

In much of the research and discussion on Emotional Intelligence to date, there is an implied understanding that an individual’s performance needs to be placed in the wider context of the organization. “At the individual level, elements of emotional intelligence can be identified, assessed and upgraded... At the organizational level, it means revising the value hierarchy to make emotional intelligence a priority – in the concrete terms of hiring, training and development, performance evaluation and promotions.” Goleman (1998). Thus the debate on Emotional Intelligence is moving beyond the context of individual performance.

“A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems that has worked well enough to be considered valid and is passed on to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 1992). The culture of an organization reflects all those elements which are held as norms, the dominant leadership style, the language and conventions, anything that is considered a success or makes the organization unique but is different from the norm preferences of the individual, or from the norms of a nation. Attempts to describe and operationalise corporate culture are diverse and often contradictory. For example Harrison (1972), expanded on by Handy (1985) outlines four cultures; Power, Role, Task and People. Implied within this framework, is an alignment between the People, and to a certain extent the Task, culture to the concepts relating to Emotional Intelligence as these are both concerned with relationships, communication and team working. Hofstede’s seminal work on culture (1999), based on research of IBM employees identified a number of aspects of international culture. Hofstede’s view that culture is mental programming, and therefore specific to the context of the individual, was not a new breakthrough, but the dimensions that were identified to explain cultural contexts continue to provide a comprehensive framework within which to interpret international cultures.

Schien (1985) describes culture in terms of basic assumptions that manifest in observable behaviors. This could be interpreted rather like an iceberg, where some aspects of culture are observable and tangible, but this is influenced by a range of other intangible factors, which lurk beneath the surface. What Hofstede, Schein and many other writers such as Trompenaars (1993) and Garrison (1996), encourage us to do is see Culture as a multi-dimensional concept, where inter-dependent components manifest themselves in an infinite variety of forms, to create the unique culture that is experienced and felt within organizations. From the above it is evident that culture is a diverse subject that can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. What is not disputed is the complex and multi-faceted nature of culture (Garrison, 1996; Schein, 1985). It is also clear that culture is the link between the individual’s experiences and values and how they are mediated by the expectations and value systems within their society (Schein, 1985; Deal & Kennedy, 1999). Culture cannot be viewed in absolute terms, there is no right or wrong culture, merely different manifestations, some of which closely match our own experiences and some of which is at odds with our own experience (e.g. Goffee & Jones, 1996; 1998).

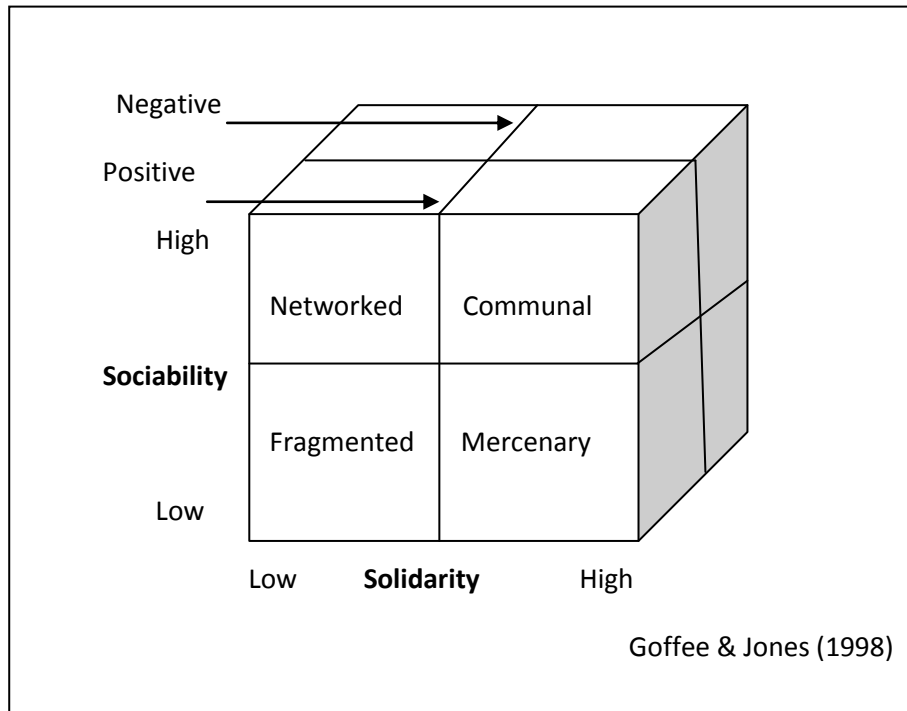
Towards a Three Dimensional Model of Culture

Since all culture is about the way that we relate to each other, the model that Goffee and Jones (1998), propose is compelling as it explores the social architecture of organizations, in relation to two conceptually distinct types of social relations – sociability and solidarity. Sociability for example refers to the networks we develop by choice or those we inherit such as family. These are natural networks where there is a sharing of values, backgrounds, interests, family ties etc. Solidarity describes relationships that exist in the public sphere. These will be based on common tasks, clear goals and shared functions. It would not be so important that people like one another, as long as they are working effectively towards their chosen goal. Both of these dimensions can be either positive or negative.

Mapping these dimensions onto a low to high range, four cultural forms emerge (Goffee & Jones, 1996; 1998). **High sociability and low solidarity is the Networked culture**, where as diametrically opposed to this is the **Mercenary culture characterized by Low Sociability and High Solidarity**. **If an organization is low on both counts, then we find a Fragmented culture** and finally, **the organization that is high on both sociability and solidarity is described as a Communal culture**. These are illustrated in the Double S cube, shown in Figure 4 below.

This framework, explains relationships as a complex mix of sociability and solidarity, which can also manifest itself positively and negatively. The corporate forms that emerge within this framework can also be positive or negative.

Figure 3: Double S Cube of Corporate Forms of Culture



Source: Goffee & Jones (1998)

According to Goffee and Jones (1998) there is no absolute correct, or ideal culture; only one appropriate to the business. However, they do point out that none of the forms on a negative state will be supportive of business performance.

Organizations with high **sociability** scores are characterized by long-term friendships, so Monday morning meetings start with a catch-up about the weekend and a lot of what's done is done out of goodwill and comradeliness. Organizations and people with high **solidarity** scores are characterized by a complete focus on the task in hand, social chit-chat is kept to a minimum, people are highly motivated by professional success and when they go the extra mile it's not for friendship. The four core cultures that they identify have distinctly different features which are described briefly in figure 4.

Figure 4: Goffee and Jones Culture Descriptions

<p>Networked Typically these organizations will have a friendly feel. Importance is placed on getting along together. Achieving results are important, but also of equal importance is how these are done, and how people have been treated along the way. Positively Networked-Empathic and supportive environment. High levels of Trust. Flexible Informal approach Negatively Networked- Hidden Agendas, Low Trust levels, Politicized communication, Risk avoidance.</p>
<p>Mercenary opposite of the Networked enterprise. In this type, function and purpose of the relationship is important, rather than the social nuances of interactions. Positively Mercenary Highly focused on Goals, Responsive, Conflicts addressed, Continuous improvement. Negatively Mercenary Poor co-operation, Focused on short term gains, Conflicts go underground, Poor loyalty to organization.</p>
<p>Fragmented In such organizations the individual freedom is important. Home working or outsourcing is heavily relied upon. Positively Fragmented Resources support individual creativity, Freedom to set pace and scope of work, Flexibility to organize resources to suit situation, High levels of creativity and innovation Negatively Fragmented Knowledge held by individuals rather than organization, Poor team communication, Creativity is undermined, Prima donnas destroy new stars before they develop</p>
<p>Communal With high levels of sociability and solidarity, this is an organization where relationships are important and teamwork is common Positively Communal Congruence between goals and behaviors Knowledge sharing Strong team working, Loyalty to organization Negatively Communal Over reliance on strong charismatic leaders Arrogance that no threats from external environment Tolerance of under-performance.</p>

Source: Goffee & Jones (1998)

Any process which can help an organization understand what is going on underneath the surface, and may be affecting performance (positively or negatively) can provide powerful insights (Goffee & Jones, 1996). It is tempting to ignore the significance of culture, since as an intangible concept; it can be quite difficult to get to grips with. However, culture will pervade everything we do and we don't do in our organizations.

Both EI and corporate culture are constructs which attempt to explain variation in performance. Whilst some have focused on demonstrating the links between organization culture and performance, others focus on the individual and, in particular their levels of EI, and performance (e.g. Goleman, 1998; Dulewicz & Higgs, 1999; 2000). However, it is clear from much of the work that whilst EI will account for some of the variations in performance of individuals, their performance does not occur in isolation from their environment, but is likely to be directly or indirectly influenced by the organization's culture (Deal & Dennedy, 1999; Senge, 1993; Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999). By placing EI and its effect on an individual's performance in the context of not only IQ & MQ, but also Corporate Culture, we can develop a contextual model of EI,

which can have an impact on performance at both individual and organizational level (Higgs & Dulewicz, 1999). However to further our understanding of the role that corporate culture may have on an individual's level of EI, we would need to explore what if any relationship exists between the two. Indeed Higgs & Dulewicz (1999) have developed this as a theoretical framework by looking at how cultures are likely to harness or punish components of Emotional Intelligence. They have related their hypothesized model to Goffee and Jones (1998) framework below

Figure 5: Cultural Components of Emotional Intelligence

Culture	EI Components		
	Likely to be rewarded	Likely to be 'punished'	Neutral
Networked	Interpersonal sensitivity Conscientiousness & Integrity Influence Self Awareness	Motivation	Decisiveness Emotional Resilience
Communal	Self Awareness Conscientiousness & Integrity Interpersonal Sensitivity Decisiveness Influence		Motivation Emotional Resilience
Mercenary	Motivation Emotional Resilience Decisiveness Influence	Interpersonal Sensitivity Conscientiousness & Integrity Self Awareness	
Fragmented	Decisiveness Motivation	Conscientiousness & Integrity Interpersonal Sensitivity Self Awareness	Emotional Resilience Influence

Source: Higgs & Dulewicz (1999)

From the foregoing summary of the literature on both EI and Organizational Culture it is evident that the two constructs are both concerned with exploring variations in both individual and organizational performance. However, research specifically designed to explore the combination of the two constructs is not evident. But there is a lot of research which proves that high Individual Emotional Intelligence does impact the organizational effectiveness and performance, thus proving that relationship may exist between individual Emotional Intelligence and organizational components of Emotional Intelligence.

Working from the basic proposition by Goleman (1996) and Dulewicz & Higgs (1998)

that EI plays a crucial role in determining higher performance and individual success in an organizational context, this study has also attempted to explore the impact of organizational culture on EI. In their study, Higgs and Dulewicz (1998) explained EI with reference to the culture as follows-

Emotional Intelligence Culture Element Descriptors

Self Awareness - The organization has processes in place which make it aware of how it feels about its business, products, markets and stakeholders at any time. This awareness is based on a clear self- image which is widely shared within the organization. It is aware of how these feelings impact on its decisions and behaviors and how stakeholders and other outsiders perceive the organization and its actions.

Emotional Resilience - The organization has processes in place which enable it to absorb attack and criticism (particularly if it is perceived as unfair or unjust). It is able to manage internal communications in a way which ensures that such attacks do not deflect if form its strategy. It recognizes potentially damaging shifts in its internal climate and has systems for controlling and managing these.

Motivation - There are clear, well understood and shared long term goals. Events which appear to threaten or deflect performance are responded to in a way which ensures that long term strategy remains intact. Business setbacks are seen as problems to be managed rather than leading to abandoning of long term goals.

Interpersonal Sensitivity- The organization has established processes which enable it to understand the feelings, needs and motivations of its stakeholders. It uses this information to underpin its strategies, actions and decisions. Processes are established to manage relationships with all stakeholder groups.

Influence - Structures are in place to ensure that in interactions with all stakeholder groups the organization is able to present persuasive arguments which will support the achievement of goals deemed to be aligned with the vision, values and business strategy.

Intuitiveness - Process which are in place to encourage individuals and teams to make decisions, which are perceived as essential to business performance when faced with ambiguous information. The extent to which the organization values and supports the use of individual experience and intuition, based on this experience, in the decision making process.

Conscientiousness - What the organization says in public, its advertising, PR and espoused values are consistent with how people experience the organization. In addition, the organization's behaviors are perceived to be in line with the prevailing ethical behavior that society expects.

Conclusion

Drawing on other work carried out by McGuire (2001) with the same sample of organizations using the Goffee and Jones framework, there is some support for the cultural linkages proposed by Higgs and Dulewicz (1999). The study was designed to explore the relationship between organizational culture and aggregate levels of individual Emotional Intelligence within an organization. Results have indicated the possibilities of such a relationship. Emotional Intelligence has been shown to be an important variable in accounting for variance in both advancement and performance in an organizational context (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000). Thus the significance of harnessing this capacity within an organization could be a crucial

differentiating factor in the struggle to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

The main limitation of this study is that it needs to be applied in an organizational setup by collecting data from the managers to understand its application and rationale more authentically.

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