



Cultural Factors, Emotional Intelligence and Work Group Performance: A Case Study of Students from an Introductory Management Class

Tian Guang¹, Kathy Tian² and Guo Cui³

¹Huaihua University, China

²University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA

³Shantou University, China

E-mail: ¹<rgtian@yahoo.com>, ²<kathyt2@illinois.edu>, ³<cguo@stu.edu.cn>

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ABSTRACT One of the most meaningful skills employees should learn to develop a competitive advantage is understanding cultural differences. Individuals' emotional intelligence can be formatted through a learning process influenced by cultural factors. It is expected that groups with emotional intelligence will be more successful at identifying circumstances, which may generate the possibility for disagreement, and thus are ready to deal with these circumstances by ways that will maximum facilitate team performance. Data was mainly from 64 beginning learners enrolled in a principle of management course. A questionnaire with 72 items was administered and measured to assess eighteen competencies systematized into four clusters on a 7-point Likert scale. It used a Words-In-Sentences Company practice to assess group performance. The study concludes that it is harder to manage the performance with employees of more heterogeneous from different countries with various cultural backgrounds. For those who are responsible to develop leadership in a culturally diversified organization, emotional intelligence should be a top priority to consider for developing leaders.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural Factors and Communication

Cultural factors have long been known to influence the communication and success potential of competition (Hofstede 1991; Omura et al. 2018). Culture can be broadly defined as a body of shared knowledge and values which tell what appropriate behavior in certain conditions is. As with more mobility and globalization, cultural differences become more converging and emerging in the business world. Even at the same business firm, there would be considerably diverse cultures, each providing special rules of unspoken assumptions and suitable behavior in work performance. It is highly suggested that cultural awareness will shape how business organizations behave in cross-culturally reflected international markets (Hamada and Jordan 1990; Tian et al. 2015a). It is broadly recognized that cultural factors function

as invisible barriers in doing business international. Therefore, it is widely recognized that to be able to understand cultural differences is one of the most noteworthy skills for business organizations to build the competitive advantages in doing businesses globally (Emery and Tian 2003; Hall 1981).

Communication, in current environment, is termed as a most essential business function to be understood for any businesses to be successful in today's ever growing and highly competitive marketplaces, predominantly for those businesses that are evolved in international businesses. The profitability of a firm is determined in certain degree by its communication skills and strategies. Nonetheless, scholars found that many managers on the top in business organizations doing business internationally, from time to time, ignore the significance of the invisible barriers, namely cultural differences, create in business communication (Tian et al. 2015b). In fact, cultural factors have a key role to play and behave as unseen barriers for global business. Even though when the world is growing into global, there are some countries who have progressively spoken

Address for correspondence:
Guo Cui
E-mail: cguo@stu.edu.cn

their assertion to “a right to culture” when talking about doing business internationally. National culture, as predicted by some scholars, would become a decisive factor to affect social economic development, general business policies, and demographic behaviour worldwide (Tian 2000a).

These claims about cultural rights could overall be critical for guarding their rights to intellectual property, making trade policy, as well as originating resources for their national interests. At same time these claims could be undetectable blockades on micro level for business organizations to enter international markets micro level. It is notable that the francophone countries in the last summit of 20th century exclaimed a “cultural exception” in the implementation of WTO rules to govern the goods trading. In those nations the above claims would impact their public policies on international business rules. These claims might at same time instigate cultural protectionism on international business globally. Along with the increased expression of cultural rights, companies conducting international businesses must confront with more contests generated by other elements of culture. It is important for business leaders to understand that today’s markets are not only worldwide but also cross-cultural, as such, being sensitive to and aware of cultural variances is a key influence to be success in the world marketplace. Unsuccessfully implement marketing strategy to fit in cross-cultural context of the countries in where a firm is conducting business would create the disadvantage of business relationships (Emery and Tian 2002; Tian 2000b).

Cross-culturalization will be inevitable if the process of globalization is inevitable. The world market is turn out to be more homogeneous, and differences among individual country’s markets are diminishing and even disappearing altogether for some products, which indicates that the communication for business is becoming a global encompassing specialty. However, we need to realize that the differences in cultures among ethnic groups, regions, and nations are not being terminated, in certain areas they are becoming stronger. As such, being a cross-cultural process, the international business communication demands business leaders to be well updated about distinctions in cultures ethnically, locally, as well as nationally to be the winner in the inter-

national business world. Communication of international business for the profit purposes must crosses national geographic boundaries. It is often difficult to communicate among people with the same cultural background while to communicate between people from diverse cultural backgrounds in terms of values, language, customers and ways of thinking will be even more challenging, as such, certain degrees of miscommunication are somewhat unavoidable (Ferraro 2002). The literature of communication for business purpose focused on advertising maintains the proposition that advertising contents hold different views among nations. Research on international advertising has approved alterations in advertising contents among individual nationals. The ground based on which that these researches centered is that advertisements partially reflect social systems of individual countries (Culter and Javalgi 1992; McLeod and Kunita 1994; Ramaprasad and Hasegawa 1992; Tse et al. 1989).

Cultural Factor and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence consists of a series of abilities including the abilities to comprehend emotional knowledge and emotions, regulate and distinguish emotions in the self as well as in others, and use emotions to facilitate performance. Individuals’ emotional intelligence can be formatted through a learning process that is of course influenced by cultural factors (Fordjour et al. 2019; Mayer and Salovey 1997). Individual persons tend to universally have the idea that everybody holds the same worldviews as they individually do (Schmidt and Hunter 1998). Consequently, what looks like a straightforward intreat or collaboration could turn out to be convoluted and messy.

It is necessary to find a way to cut across cultural variance and appreciate one another on the same level. According to the studies previously conducted by scholars, such as Flowerdew (1998) and Sheinin (1996) among many others, fifteen variables in culture should bear in mind by business professionals from perspective that is cross-culturally oriented (see Table 1). If these variables were not properly considered when conduct EI analysis, serious errors in judgments can result. Analysis based on a lack of cultural awareness can misinterpret the information and thus affect the effectiveness of strategic decisions. A

key focal point of this type of analysis is on the role that emotional intelligence plays in people's comprehending the relationship between the performance of firm and the communications for international business.

It is assumed that emotional intelligence is culturally oriented, as such, some aspects of emotional intelligence are influenced by culture. Can business leaders use this knowledge to improve individual or group performance? Theoretically, emotional intelligence in such an environment, which is usually diverse culturally, can efficiently supplement cultural consciousness to foresee greater performance from beginning to end of the dimensions of social skills and empathy. With a sharp awareness and sensitivity to the culturally mind-set of diverse teams, hindrances to communication cross-culturally can be diminished thus growing the possibility of accomplishment in the international marketplace.

Objectives

Values, norms, and characteristics embedded in communicative messages appear in various cultures to a greater or lesser degree (Mueller 1992). Therefore, this study is to demonstrate that understanding the importance of cultural values has great practical value in communication. It is to expound that in the business field governing dissimilarities in cultural values ought to direct the construction of the strategies for transnational communications for business (Munson and McIntyre 1979). Disregarding the cultural significance entrenched in advertisement can guide to a misunderstanding of the company's intentional points (McCracken 1990). This type of miscommunication often leads to failing in international markets for many business firms.

Albeit a growing comprehension for its influence on practice of management, not much in-

Table 1: Cultural variables to consider

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Content</i>
Competitiveness	Is more emphasis placed on co-operation for the benefit of life and relationships, or competition for rewards?
Action	Is the culture relationship-centered, where stress is placed on working for the experience rather than the accomplishment? Or is it more task-oriented where stress is placed on actions that achieve the goal?
Communications	Is the preference for explicit one-to-one communications, or more of an implicit dialogue and avoidance of conflict? Are communications formal, where emphasis is placed on protocol and social customs, or informal, where restrictions are dispensed with?
Individualism	Is the individual more important than the group, or are the needs of the individual subordinated to the group interests? Loyalty to self or society?
Environment	Do they feel they can dominate it to fit their needs, should they live in harmony with it, or do they feel that their world is controlled by fate and chance?
Structure	Does the society lean towards order, with its predictability and rules, or flexibility, where tolerance of unpredictable situations and ambiguity are acceptable?
Time	Is there a concentration on one task at a time, with a commitment to schedules, or an emphasis on multiple tasks, with relationships being the most important? Is punctuality precise and fixed, or is it fluid and loose?
Thinking	Does the culture favor inductive reasoning based on experience and experimentation, or deductive reasoning based on theory and logic?
Power and authority	What are the dominant views of authority versus subordinates and the power distance between individuals?
Social values	What is the dominant view of wealth and material gain; the attitudes toward and the desire for material wealth versus religious satisfaction; the good life or other non-material stimuli found more in traditional societies?
Union and management	How much effect does union-management co-operation on achieving a successful company?
Gender	What is the degree of masculinity vs. femininity?
Change and innovation	Do people in a society embrace and adapt to change which promises to improve productivity or do they maintain their basic faith in traditions or old ways of doing things?
Ethical values	What is the prevailing view of ethical standards and moralities?
Risk view	Are they viewing risk taking as a gauged intention of expected accomplishment?

vestigations have been conducted to examine the correlation between job performance and emotional intelligence (Ashkanasy and Daus 2002; Cote and Miners 2006; Vratskikh et al. 2016). What interested the present researchers are the researches that examine the correlation between group performance and emotional intelligence. It is expected that groups who are emotionally intelligent would be more efficient at identifying situations that have the probable for divergence, and as such, these groups are better talented to take care of those situations in means to be best facilitate performance as group. Furthermore, because the possibility for divergence could be higher when team members are dissimilar, it can be predicted that teams that are heterogeneous would parade a bigger growth in performance compared with the homogeneous groups. Accordingly, it is expected that the effect of heterogeneity on team performance is weakened by emotional intelligence, and therefore the enhancements in emotional intelligence among homogeneous teams would generate less impacts on team performance than it would on diverse teams.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Sample

Data was collected from a convenient sample of 64 undergraduate students who registered in a management principles course at a small private college in Southern US. A total of 8 groups were characterized along with the sample. The convenient sample consisted 34 males and 30 females, the average age is 21.24-year-old, which include 3 percent Asians and 3 percent African Americans, the majority are Caucasian (94%). The subjects were randomly grouped to 6-9-person teams. For this investigation, projects were assigned to demonstrate the cross-functional concerns (accounting, marketing, engineering, operations management, finance and other) within each group with an equal dispersion. The subjects' demographic information was gathered, with the participants' permission, through the official records by the college.

Measures

Each subject was obligatory to complete a questionnaire developed from Boyatzis et al.'s (2000) Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) as

part of a course requirement. The questionnaire contains seventy-two-item which is evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale and assesses eighteen aptitudes organized into four constellations. The Social consciousness echoes empathy, organizational consciousness and service positioning. Self-awareness constellation includes aptitudes relating to emotional awareness of self, accurate self-confidence and self-assessment. The management of relationship is represented by developing others, inspirational leadership, catalyst change, influence, conflict managing and group work with good collaboration. The management of self is assessed in terms of transparency, emotional self-control, adaptability, conscientiousness, optimism, initiative and achievement orientation. Data gathered and analyzed for every of these eighteen aptitudes were exercised to attain the degree of emotional intelligence for individuals.

Although some scholars have proposed that group or collective EI is generated across the consequence of interactions among team members as a vibrant that in due course move toward to typify the group emotional intelligence to represent an individual-level characteristic (Yang and Mossholder 2004). Group level emotional intelligence, consistent with the above assumption, has been maneuvered in different ways, taking account of, for examples, Hackle et al. (2014) termed as a threshold above that group members have got to be scored; as aggregates that Rapisarda (2002) termed as the mean; or as the highest emotional intelligence score among a team members which Feyerherm and Rice (2002) termed as the team leader's emotional intelligence. However, the current researchers come to an agreement with Jordon et al. (2002) that it serves a practical indication that EI as a shared team asset is an average group emotional intelligence. In this study the groups whose EI scores were above the 50th percentile could be categorized as high in EI; all the others could be considered as low.

Groups perform an enormously significant role in business organizations as well as the personal lives. Groups are molded when persons with a common preference, taste, attitude and liking who get together and work for a universal goal. In a business firm, everyone is dependent on her or his fellow workers to work collectively and efficiently make her or his contributions to the firm. No single individual person can work alone; she

or he must get the help from her or his coworkers to efficiently complete the tasks she or he was assigned. The outcome of the work performance has been observed to be much better when individual employees work together as groups rather than individually work alone, because when working in groups every individual tend to contribute in his or her best conceivable way. In business firms, it is observed that usually those individuals who having a similar interest and specializations will come together on a common platform to form a team.

Various methods were developed to assess the effectiveness of group performance. However, due to limitations of the current research project, Marcic et al. (2005) developed Words-In-Sentences Company (WIS) exercise was applied to assess the group performance. Each group was requested, at the very beginning of the exercise, to denote a small firm that produces words and after that packs these words into evocative English sentences. The groups were provided a raw material expression, during every single manufacture turn, the letters of those expression served as fresh materials accessible to structure innovative words into meaningful sentences. To ensure that group yield could toe the line with certain manufacture criteria prior to start the exercise, production standards or specific rules were studied by individual groups. After individual groups studied the rules, a run-through production process was given to make sure that each group apprehended the exercise rules. After that the groups were given 10 minutes to produce as many words as they could and package the words into appropriate sentences in English. The outcome of individual WIS company was assessed by how many suitable words that could be included in every meaningful sentence.

In the current era of globalization, many business organizations are working hard to attain the diversity of employees, the purpose is to hire work forces from diverse backgrounds. It is widely agreed that diversity will grant intangible as well as tangible benefits to the business firms, for example, it can go in front to greater reach for the business if firms employing workers with language and cultural skills. Experts of diversity have confidence in that heterogeneous teams can provide more inspired ideas to the mix and give a speci-

fied company a competitive advantage. There are different criteria to define the workforce diversity, however due to constrains of the sample limitation, in this study the diversity was defined by variations in *gender* alone within each group. For conducting comparisons of heterogeneity and homogeneity, teams would be considered homogeneous if their team members were all the same gender, and teams would be considered heterogeneous mix with variations in gender among the membership.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There is a large literature body on how emotional intelligence contributes to the bottom line in any work organization and environment. For example, Aguilar-Luzón et al. (2014) applied the Trait Meta Mood Scale-24 (TMMS-24) and the New Environmental Paradigm scale to a sample of 184 male and female undergraduate students. Their findings demonstrate the interaction effects of the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the system of environmental beliefs on glass recycling behavior, intentions and attitudes. As indicated above, emotional intelligence concerns the capacity to identify one's own and others' emotions, as well as the ability to manage these emotions identified. Although psychologists do not agree on what makes up true emotional intelligence, there are at least three skills are generally agreed to include, namely: 1. the ability to identify and term one's own emotions, which is also termed as emotional awareness; 2. the ability to control the emotions identified and implement them to fulfill the tasks, which is also termed as

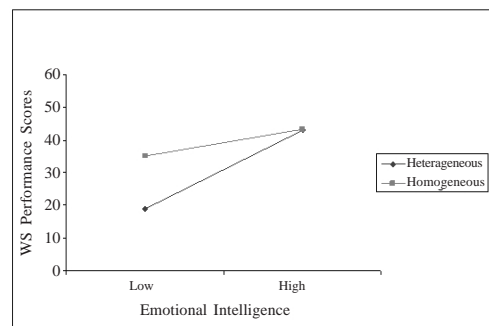


Fig. 1. Average scores for heterogeneous and homogeneous groups by low/high emotional intelligence

thinking and problem solving; and 3. the ability to manage emotions, which includes both cheering up or calming down other people as well as regulating one's own emotions when necessary.

Fordjour et al. (2019) revealed that individuals' emotional intelligence can be formatted through a learning process influenced by cultural factors. Schmidt and Hunter (1998) demonstrated that cognitive ability is the best predictor of job performance and accounts for 25 percent of the variance in measuring performance. Vratskikh et al. (2016) explored how emotional intelligence and adjustment differentially predict managerial job performance when moderated by emotional labor. This study assessed how likely that emotional intelligence will have emotional impact on the relationship between team work performance and team heterogeneity. As demonstrated in Figure 1, heterogeneous teams are tending to be more obviously obstructed by emotional intelligence. Precisely, when emotional intelligence upturns, compared with their homogeneous counterparts the heterogeneous teams encounter larger gains in their performance level. Therefore, heterogeneous teams tend to be more likely to gain benefits from higher levels of EI within the team.

To scrutinize this type of results further, the performance score differences were noticed cross-wise each of these eighteen competencies of emotional intelligence. Table 2 shows variations in the average number of words-in-sentences (WIS) competency levels for low and high team as well as between homogeneous and heterogeneous teams. As demonstrated in the table, surprisingly, some competencies generate negative impacts on performance of the teams, this is particularly true among homogeneous teams. Seven of the eighteen emotional intelligence competencies generate a negative impact on homogeneous teams' performance, it is suggested that more detailed research on this phenomenon should be conducted to clear the rationales. On the contrary, only two of the eighteen emotional intelligence competencies have generated negative impacts on performance level of the heterogeneous teams. It is speculated that heterogeneous teams that with high scores in emotional intelligence tend to get full benefit of the wide-ranging mixture of competencies along with the emotional intelligence construct, thus allowing them to take advantage of the various array of insights and proficiencies that inhabit inside the heterogeneous groups.

Table 2: WIS performance for high/low competency by heterogeneity

	<i>Homogeneous</i>			<i>Heterogeneous</i>		
	<i>High competence</i>	<i>Low competence</i>	<i>Diff</i>	<i>High competence</i>	<i>Low competence</i>	<i>Diff</i>
<i>Self-awareness</i>						
Emotional self	24.5	39.2	-14.7	40.67	40.33	0.33
Accurate self-assessment	44.83	33.45	11.38	41.2	40.1	1.1
Self-confidence	55	27.91	27.09	41	40.27	0.73
<i>Self-regulation</i>						
Emotional self-control	46.63	29.33	17.29	43.5	40	3.5
Transparency	54.25	22.56	31.69	43	39.83	3.17
Adaptability	43.92	22	21.92	39.67	40.67	-1
Achievement orientation	32.71	40.8	-8.09	42.5	39.373	2.77
Initiative	48.3	22	26.3	40	40.54	-0.54
Optimism	48.9	21.14	27.76	41.67	40.17	1.5
<i>Social Awareness</i>						
Empathy	32.57	40.9	-8.33	41	40.2	0.8
Organizational awareness	34.83	38.91	-4.08	42	39.7	2.3
Service orientation	49	32.67	16.33	43.8	38.8	5
<i>Relationship Management</i>						
Developing others	39.75	36.77	2.98	42.63	38	4.63
Inspirational leadership	36.8	37.75	-0.95	43.2	39.1	4.1
Change catalyst	36.2	39.29	-3.09	41.8	39.8	2
Influence	42	34.3	7.7	43	39.83	3.17
Conflict management	32.71	40.8	-8.09	43	39.83	3.17
Teamwork	41.86	34.4	7.46	40.67	40.42	0.25

To investigate the relationship between the group-based dependent variables and the eighteen emotional intelligence competencies more deeply, the current researchers observed correlations of the entire sample heterogeneity for both homogeneous/heterogeneous conditions. As shown in Table 3 emotional intelligence holds a stronger relationship by itself with the dependent variables than either the heterogeneous or homogeneous team independently, it is suggested that this phenomenon may owing to the limitations of sample size for the current study. Among the eighteen individual competencies, these two, namely conflict management and self-awareness are considerably related to heterogeneous teams' performance levels, which advocating that within these areas these heterogenous teams are most likely to have the advantages from their higher levels of competence.

Table 3: Correlations between group-based WIS performance measure and emotional intelligence

	All groups (n=7)	Homo- geneous groups (n=4)	Hetero- geneous groups (n=3)
<i>Self-awareness</i>	0.473	0.621	0.994
Self-awareness	0.189	0.171	.997*
Accurate self-assessment	0.575	0.61	0.695
Self-confidence	0.456	0.461	0.996
<i>Self-management</i>	0.545	0.846	.923*
Emotional self-control	0.38	0.546	0.731
Trustworthiness	0.729	0.728	0.972
Adaptability	0.402	0.748	0.903
Achievement orientation	0.09	0.12	0.199
Initiative	0.448	0.541	0.685
Optimism	0.62	0.639	0.854
<i>Social Awareness</i>	.788*	0.655	0.434
Empathy	-0.314	-0.399	-0.125
Organizational awareness	0.235	0.313	-0.322
Service orientation	0.347	0.344	0.946
<i>Relationship Management</i>	0.734	.936*	0.424
Developing others	0.227	0.191	0.871
Inspirational leadership	0.281	0.247	0.976
Change catalyst	0.044	0.071	0.994
Influence	0.126	0.145	0.791
Conflict management	0.016	-0.035	.996**
Teamwork	0.588	0.661	-0.664
<i>Overall Emotional Intelligence</i>	0.757	0.881	0.856

CONCLUSION

Culture shapes people's customs, language, values, and moreover the way they term accom-

plishment. Emotional intelligence is associated with culture and therefore holds a prevailing effect on management of workers' job performance. If it is tough to manage the performance with a homogeneous oriented workforce that the workers are mainly coming from the same nation, shared experiences, common language and similar backgrounds, then it would even harder to manage the job performance with a more heterogeneous workforce of workmen who are coming from different countries with various cultural backgrounds. The emotional intelligence with cross-cultural aspect is very significant in today's globalized economy given the facts that emotions are determined as a language universally applied and that people in varies places and cultures share a common view of traits, such as authenticity and integrity, the ability to understand emotional intelligence cross-culturally is an invaluable asset for firms in doing international business.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Business leadership need to realize the significant role that culture plays in an organization. For those managers who are charged with the tasks of developing leadership in a culturally diversified organization, emotional intelligence should be a top priority to consider for leadership development, it is also serves as an important role for nurturing an organizational climate with a durable mainstay of a shared vision and trust, so that even when employees do not well understand each other, they can still work together to overcome the difficulties.

Due to the sample constrains, this study is limited in scope of discussion and the findings are the subject to be further explored. More solid data need to be collected for comparative analysis purpose and should be examined through a cross-cultural perspective. It is suggested that the future research projects need to contain ability measures of emotional intelligence and other cognitive variables, such as rumination. The investigation of the cultural influence on the relation between emotional intelligence along with the hedonic balance or affective and life satisfaction or cognitive mechanisms of subjective well-being should be seriously considered as another important line of future research. The current research advocates that cultures can influence the

emotional intelligence of their members along with the implications of the adjustment of their emotional intelligence. Subsequently, the results of the current research started a new auspicious line of examination in that they begin a connection between people's cultural norms and the ability of individuals to understand, regulate and attend to their emotions along with the establishment of a new subject as emotional intelligence in its interpersonal and cultural context.

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