EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEAM ROLES – ANALYSIS OF INTERDEPENDENCIES WITH REGARD TO TEAMWORK EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

Background. Analysis of the factors determining teamwork effectiveness as an important area in the science of management.
Research aims. The aim of the article is to describe the relationship between the concept of team roles and psychosocial factors, such as the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, which constitute important aspects of emotional intelligence.
Method. The paper presents the results of a pilot study (N = 42). Two research instruments were used: team roles scale – Self-Perception Inventory (SPI), and emotional intelligence scale – The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MCSEIT).
Key findings. The results of the analysis indicate a significant positive correlation ($p < 0.05$) between the ability to perceive emotions and managing emotions, and roles associated with the maintenance of the group. Analyses of theoretical concepts and research findings refine the relationship between emotional intelligence and team roles with team effectiveness, taking into account the nature of the tasks and the stage of group development. The article introduces the results of a Polish version of MSCEIT (N=118), suggesting acceptable internal consistency of this measure.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Team Roles, Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Teamwork and analysis of the factors contributing to teamwork effectiveness is one of the most important trends in management. The conditions of contemporary organizations defined by diversity, volatility and peak time pressure require specific requirements, which individuals can rarely meet. Effective and efficient teams are the foundation and the way to achieve organizational objectives.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the interdependencies between two constructs that describe team potential, and which are related to team results and performance – emotional intelligence and team roles. Some research data on the relations between team roles and emotional intelligence with team performance are presented.

Many studies have shown that there is a relationship between the results obtained by the team and the team members roles. Belbin (1981) describes the importance of team diversity in determining its potential.

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Despite the allegations concerning the weakness of Belbin's concepts as well as of the semantic issues and methodological concepts of emotional intelligence, the results seem to confirm the importance of these team characteristics in the organizational practice.

There are, however, some doubts as to how those two perspectives complement each other and how much they indicate some kind of inconsistency. A method of combining measurement tools of team roles and emotional intelligence was used very often to verify their psychometric properties (Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel, & Hooper, 2002), but it has not yet been discussed as to what extent combining some practical implications arising from these models is applicable in the organizational context.

The following article is an attempt to refer to the emerging simplifications. Presented here are the mutual relationships of the analyzed variables, as well as some discrepancies and the divergent nature of the practical conclusions.

Teamwork Dimensions and Team Effectiveness Indicators

While analyzing team work, two main dimensions may be described – "task dimension" connected with the focus on goals and specific activities that enable achieving them, and the "socio-emotional dimension" connected with group maintenance. One of the most important researches in this area is Bales' study (Borgatta & Bales, 1956; Beck & Fisch, 2005). Bales classified group behaviours into two main categories: task-related and socio-emotional.

For team performance it is important to focus not only on a task but also on developing proper interpersonal relations. Task-orientation is crucial in achieving goals and for the ability to develop a team and improve its effectiveness. Friendly relationships determine the integrity of the team, improve its consistency, attractiveness and facilitate communication in the team. They also launch some important social mechanisms, such as social support. One of the concepts well suited to that dualist view on team work characteristics is Belbin's model of team roles (1981).

Considering the social dimension and its influence on team effectiveness some psychological competences have been studied. According to most research, emotional competence contributes significantly to individual and team performance (Elfenbein, 2006; Offermann, Bailey, Vasilopoulos, Seal, & Sass, 2004). In some research, the authors try to specify what aspects of emotional abilities influence work team performance. For example, by analysing 13 competencies (clustered into 4 groups: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills) Rapisarda (2002) concludes, that only two competencies – achievement orientation and empathy, were positively correlated with performance, while ten of them revealed negative trends in relation to performance. This example

indicates that the results are not consistent and require further analysis and research.

Team Roles (TR)

It was indicated in some studies that the characteristics of team roles (TR) determine team performance (Aritzeta, Swailes & Senior, 2007). The model developed by Belbin (1981, 1993) derived from experimental studies on team effectiveness and has become very popular and widely used in organizational settings. However, the results of existing studies are inconclusive as many of them do not confirm their initial assumptions nor the model developed by Belbin (Furnham, Steele & Pendleton, 1993; Anderson & Sleap, 2004; McHarg, Kay & Coombes, 2012).

Belbin revealed that so called "genius teams" that consisted of members scoring highly on measures of mental ability, did not achieve such good results as could have been predicted. Belbin pointed to some weaknesses of those teams as difficulties in collaboration between team members, egocentric viewpoints and overcritical analysis of others' ideas. His observations and analyses led to a new term – "The Apollo Syndrome" – that describes groups with high levels of selected ability which do not attain high levels of performance.

The origin of Belbin's model was contextualized on role theory. The characteristics of personality, individual's attitudes, features, needs, values, ability to learn, as well as previous experiences, and the situational context – lead to a specific person's likely behaviour – team role. Belbin observed that a specific diversity of team members' characteristics resulted in the best team achievements. According to "balance hypothesis", if all team roles are present, there is more diversity in the team and it positively influences team potential and effectiveness. Each person may display two or three roles – even if one role is dominant, the other roles may describe "possible" behaviours that might appear under specific conditions.

Belbin described several roles that are crucial in achieving team goals effectively (e.g., Belbin, 1981, 1993). Among them there are clearly task-oriented roles (Plant – solves difficult problems, works out new solutions, Monitor Evaluator – looks for possible options, makes well-considered judgments, Completer – is concentrated on the best task performance, searches out errors, delivers on time, Shaper – influences the dynamics of action, finds ways around obstacles, Implementer – turns ideas into actions, and later added Specialist), and some that are noticeably closer to the social dimension (Team Worker – cares about interpersonal relationships and the atmosphere in the team, is prone to help if other team members need it, gives support, and solves conflicts, Resource Investigator – explores important contacts and opportunities, and Coordinator – clari-

fies goals, promotes decision making, ensures that all members of the team are able to contribute to discussions and decisions of the team).

The criticism and conflicting evidence of Belbin's model were analyzed by Aritzeta et al. (2007). Testing 43 empirical studies the authors concluded that although strong associations between some team roles were observed, Belbin's TR model and instrument to assess team roles have adequate convergent validity.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional intelligence (EI) was described formally by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as an ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem solve on the basis of them. EI is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The authors are proponents of the ability model and they measure EI with performance assessments.

The second scientific approach to EI has often been conceptualized as involving something more than the ability to perceive, assimilate, understand, and manage emotions. These alternative conceptions (called mixed models) include not only emotions and intelligence but also motivation, personality dispositions, personal and social functioning (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995).

There is an increasing interest, both in scientific and commercial literature, in the positive role of EI in educational, psychotherapeutic and finally organizational settings. EI is hypothesized to influence the success with which employees interact with colleagues, the strategies they use to manage conflict and stress, and the overall job performance (Brackett, Rivers & Salovey, 2011). EI also seems to be a facilitating factor for group cohesion. In this way, according to Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter, and Buckley (2003), team members who are emotionally intelligent form strong relationships and a solid team support system that may be essential for group performance.

Despite the huge amount of claims about EI's positive implication in the organizational environment, knowledge of whether EI is related to job performance and of the mechanisms that may underlie such a relation is limited and few empirical studies have examined this phenomenon. According to Cote and Miners (2006), past studies investigating relationships between EI and performance at an individual level suggest that the current excitement at the potential benefits from the use of EI in organizations may be exaggerated.

For example, Mulla (2010) investigated the moderating effect of job characteristics (such as extent of interpersonal interaction required on the job) on the relationship between EI and job performance. Data analysis

showed that EI did not show any significant influence on job performance for the entire sample of executives in pharmaceutical company. However, for individuals having high interpersonal interaction in their jobs, EI was significantly related to job performance, which was not noticed in the groups characterised by low interpersonal interaction in their jobs. Therefore, some employees may not need as much emotional support from their managers as others, just as some jobs may not require as much EI as others.

Few studies have empirically investigated the relationships between EI and performance at group level. Jordan and Troth (2004) have found a link between EI and performance on a cognitive task at a group level. According to the authors, EI, and particularly the ability to deal with one's own emotions, allowed team members to be more motivated to listen to different viewpoints and to look for solutions, without feeling threatened by the possibility of being wrong. Moreover, the authors reported that the mean level of EI in a team affected its conflict resolution style – highly emotionally intelligent teams preferred collaborative conflict resolution strategies, while teams with low EI preferred avoiding strategies (Jordan & Troth, 2002).

To sum up, there is still little empirical support for the claim that EI is a good predictor of performance, both on the individual as well as on a group level, and the provided results are often mixed. Moreover, a small amount of conducted research has used the ability-based measures of EI. Therefore, the aim of the present research was to examine the relationships between EI, measured with the ability-based scale, and team roles scale that refers to team performance.

The main goal of the study is to analyze the interdependencies between two constructs that are related to team performance. Taking into consideration theoretical bases of these constructs, socio-emotional oriented roles should positively correlate with the high scores of emotional intelligence while task oriented roles should not reveal any or should reveal only negative correlations with high scores of emotional intelligence. If these hypotheses are confirmed, it will be difficult to accept the assumptions derived from presented theories that the greater the diversity of the team and the higher the overall score on a scale of emotional intelligence, the greater the efficiency of the team.

METHOD

Sample

Participants in this study were 42 Polish students enrolled in an Introductory Cognitive Psychology Course at the Jagiellonian University. There were 9 males and 33 females. Subjects were between 18 and 22 years old

(M=20). Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. Because of the small sample of the study findings cannot be generalized and conclusions should be used with caution.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this study: (a) 1. Self-Perception Inventory (SPI), and (b) The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MCSEIT).

Self-Perception Inventory (SPI). To assess TR the Polish version of SPI was used (Kożusznik, 1994). Previous studies have confirmed the usefulness of the questionnaire to Polish conditions (Ilski, 2000).

The questionnaire's sub-scales are characterized by high autonomy, as evidenced by low scores of intercorrelations. Considering the construction principle of the instrument in which seven items contributing to the team role scale refer to different aspects of team behaviour (Beck & Fisch, 2005), the Spearman-Brown formula was used to estimate internal consistency and it is located within the range of 0.6 - 0.8 (Ilski, 2000).

This version of SPI diagnoses eight team roles: (a) implementer (IMP), (b) coordinator (CO), (c) shaper (SH), (d) team worker (TW), (e) plant (P), (f) resource investigator (RI), (g) monitor evaluator (ME), and (h) completer-finisher (CF).

The questionnaire consists of seven parts, each begins with an open sentence (e.g., Part I begins with the sentence: "I think that I personally bring to the group ..."). Each part of the questionnaire contains eight possible endings describing different behaviours – one statement per one team role. The subjects are asked to distribute 10 points among 8 items, assessing to what extent each description fits their usual behaviour in the group (from 0 to 10 points).

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MCSEIT). To assess EI the Polish version of MSCEIT was used (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2001). The original version was translated into Polish by 4 psychologists (including the authors of this paper). The technique of double translation was implemented and received with the acceptance of the publishers of the research tool.

The test contains 141 items grouped into eight tasks which are further divided into four branches of EI, each branch consists of two tasks:

1. Perceiving emotions: (a) describing emotions in photographs of faces (Faces task), and (b) describing designs and landscapes (Pictures task);
2. Using emotions: (a) describing emotions using non-emotional vocabulary (Sensations task), (b) indicating feelings that might facili-

tate or interfere with the successful performance of various cognitive and behavioural tasks (Facilitation task);

3. Understanding emotions: (a) describing the manner in which emotions evolve and transform over time (Changes task), and (b) describing how some feelings are produced by blends of emotions (Blends task);
4. Managing emotions: (a) identifying the most adaptive ways to regulate one's own feelings (Emotion Management task), and (b) identifying the feelings of others in social situations (Social Management task).

Answer sheets for the Polish version of MSCEIT were scored by the test's publishers, Multi-Health Systems (MHS), using consensus – scoring norms. Cronbach's alpha values for the total EI scores (in a larger sample of 118 participants) was 0.74, suggesting acceptable internal consistency.

RESULTS

Emotional Intelligence and Team Roles – the Pilot Study

Data was analyzed using Statistica 10 (StatSoft). Table 1 shows the zero-order correlations among the four branches of emotional intelligence and the eight team roles.

Table 1. Correlations Between TR and Selected Areas of EI (Branch Scores)

Team role	Perceiving Emotions	Using Emotions	Understanding Emotions	Managing Emotions	Overall Emotional Intelligence
Implementer	-0,01	0,00	-0,09	-0,13	-0,06
Coordinator	0,36*	0,09	0,17	0,24	0,32*
Shaper	-0,26	0,15	0,04	-0,25	-0,13
Team Worker	0,09	0,00	-0,05	0,42**	0,14
Plant	0,14	-0,05	0,02	-0,05	0,05
Resource Investigator	0,02	-0,13	-0,03	0,25	0,02
Monitor Evaluator	-0,06	-0,19	-0,01	-0,34*	-0,19
Completer-Finisher	-0,23	0,05	-0,06	-0,11	-0,14

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

Source: own research

The ability to perceive emotions and overall EI modestly correlated with the role of Coordinator (rs = .36, .32, respectively). The ability to manage emotions was positively correlated with the role of Team Worker (rs = .42) and negatively correlated with the role of Monitor Evaluator (rs.= -.34) (Figure 1).

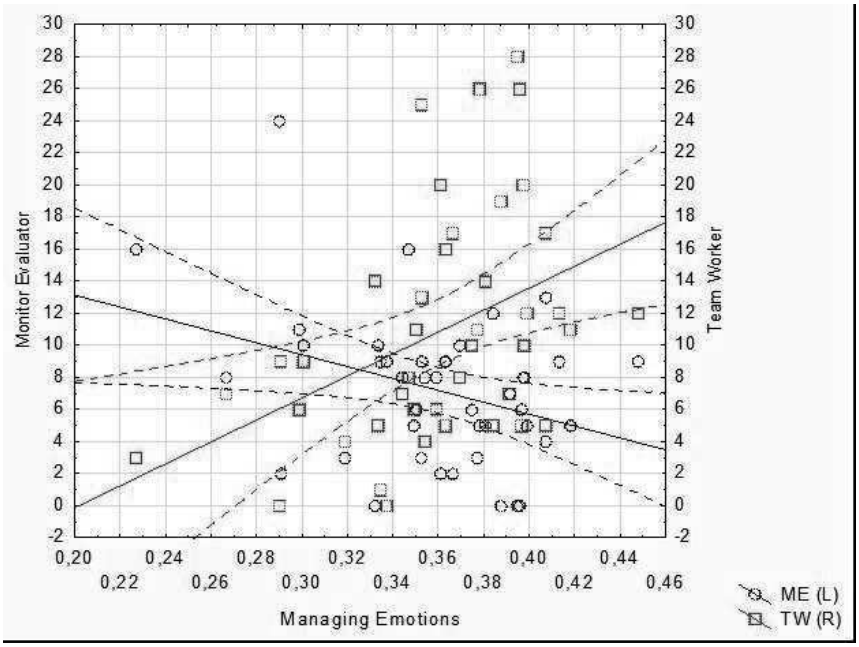

Figure 1. The Dispersion of Results of Monitor Evaluator and Team Worker in Relation to Managing Emotions Branch Scores

Source: own research

Table 2 shows the zero-order correlations among selected detailed tasks of EI and eight TR. The ability to perceive emotions (in the pictures task) correlated positively with the role of Coordinator (rs = .35) and negatively with Completer-Finisher (rs = -.34).

Table 2. Correlations Between Team Roles and Selected Areas of EI (Task Scores)

Team role	Perceiving emotions – pictures task	Emotion management task	Social management task
Implementer	-0,04	-0,11	-0,10
Coordinator	0,35*	0,19	0,19
Shaper	-0,27	-0,12	-0,25
Team Worker	0,18	0,30	0,35*
Plant	0,19	0,05	-0,11
Resource Investigator	0,06	0,08	0,29
Monitor Evaluator	-0,07	-0,45**	-0,13
Completer-Finisher	-0,34*	-0,04	-0,12

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

Source: own research

The emotion management task was negatively correlated with the role of Monitor Evaluator (rs = -.45), while social management task was positively correlated with the role of Team Worker (rs = .35).

The positive correlations were observed between specific areas and tasks of EI and socio-emotional TR (i.e. Team Worker and Coordinator), while negative correlations were noticed between EI and task-oriented roles (i.e. Monitor Evaluator and Completer-Finisher).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the presented study significant relations were observed between some EI aspects and selected team roles. It was revealed that task-oriented roles (i.e. Monitor Evaluator and Completer-Finisher) are correlated negatively with EI, while socio-emotional roles (i.e. Team Worker and Coordinator) show the opposite pattern.

In several researches corresponding relationships were observed. Dulewicz and Higgs (1999), who noted that the role of Coordinator correlated positively with some EI subscales while the role of Completer-Finisher correlated negatively with total EI.

Similarly, Aritzeta et al. (2007) presenting theoretical commonalities among team roles, linked Coordinator and Resource Investigator roles with high EI and Completer-Finisher and Shaper with low EI. The consistent pattern in several analyzed studies may provide some evidence for a stable pattern of relationships between TR and EI.

Jordan's et al. (2002) described one of the self-report instruments measuring EI, covering seven subscales: self-awareness, influence, decisive, interpersonal sensitivity, motivation, integrity, and resilience. In relation to Belbin TR, the authors observed significant correlations between the overall EI scores and some TR – participants with high EI were likely to have significantly higher scores on socio-emotional roles, and lower scores on task-oriented roles. These analyses show further proof of revealed associations between TR and EI, independently from differentiated approaches to measure EI (Table 3).

Considering the positive correlations between specific areas/tasks of emotional intelligence and socio-emotional team roles and negative correlations between emotional intelligence and task-oriented roles, it may be concluded that the results of the current study confirm many cited relationships and confirm to some extent the theoretical validity of the tested instruments. Even though the sample of this study was small, it was possible to find significant correlations that were consistent with relations described in the literature. Thus, it seems that the results support the usefulness of Polish versions of MSCEIT and SPI in organizational settings.

Table 3. Significant Correlations Between Team Roles and Selected Subscales of Emotional Intelligence in Two Independent Studies

TEAM ROLE	Significant correlations between Belbin team roles and some EI subscales	
	Jordan et al. (N=201)	Mojsa-Kaja, Golonka (N=42)
Implementer (IMP)	high self-awareness high resilience low decisiveness	-
Coordinator (CO)	high overall EI high self-awareness high resilience high motivation high influence	high overall EI high scores on overall perceiving emotions subscale (and in pictures task) high scores on emotional reasoning area
Shaper (SH)	low overall EI low conscientiousness low resilience low sensitivity	-
Team Worker (TW)	high resilience high sensitivity low decisiveness	high scores on managing emotions (in social management task)
Plant (P)	low resilience low motivation	-
Resource Investigator (RI)	high overall EI high self-awareness high resilience high motivation high influence	high scores on managing emotions (in social management task)
Monitor Evaluator (ME)	low influence low decisiveness high conscientiousness	low scores on managing emotions (in emotion management task) low scores on managing emotions
Completer-Finisher (CF)	low overall EI low self-awareness low resilience low influence low decisiveness	low scores on perceiving emotions (in pictures task)

Source: own research and results of Jordan et al. (2002).

The other aim of the study was to compare the two concepts analyzed – TR and EI, by trying to find conclusions that could help to define some practical implications on the theoretical level. Although, there are direct links between EI and TR theory, there are some points that are mutually exclusive. On the one hand there are examples describing a very positive influence of EI on team performance (e.g., Elfenbein, 2006). People with high EI seem to be more aware of emotion manifestations, and how those feelings can influence their behaviours and work outcomes and more

adept at managing their emotions in such a manner that they are aligned with the positive social atmosphere. On the other hand, some team roles, focused purely on task completion, may not require as much emotional abilities to fulfil the task requirements. It seems that the differences in EI levels in a group are in line with the idea of team role diversity. According to Belbin's model, the more diverse the team the greater its potentiality and possibility for achieving success. It cannot be assumed in general, that the higher the scores on EI, the better the team performance.

In the Jordan et al. (2002) experimental study two aspects of performance (goal focus and process effectiveness), and two levels of EI (high and low) were analyzed. They found that in a relatively short period of team work cooperation (2 weeks), high scores on EI determined better scores on performance, but over a longer period (9 weeks), scores on performance were similar in both groups – with high and low scores on EI. This may indicate that from a long term view, the level of EI in the group does not determine team effectiveness. Moreover, the group with low scores on EI demonstrated a significant improvement in the performance results comparing to the group with high scores, which reveals a constant level of performance.

These results remind us of the similar situation that Belbin described in "The Apollo Syndrome" – it may be concluded that for long-term goals, the processes of overcoming group limitations may significantly improve team potential to reach common goals and define team roles and responsibilities. Paradoxically, the team weakness may become its strength.

Summarizing, the EI of a team is especially important in groups that achieve short-term goals but for groups focused on achieving long-term goals this characteristic is not so evident for general team performance. Probably in such a context, more complex theories, such as Belbin's model of group roles, are more useful. Diversity in members' characteristics, the balance of different abilities involves social competences and emotional intelligence that may be helpful in maintaining group dynamics, but they are not the dominant features of effective teams. These conclusions may have practical implications for managing team works – they show which team characteristics managers should focus on, depending on the character of team goals and the stage of team development.

The limitation of the study, besides the small sample, is its correlation character. In the future research objective methods of group performance should be implemented. Experimental design with controlled configurations of team roles and team abilities in relation to different goals and phases of team development could provide more detailed determinants of team effectiveness.

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INTELIGENCJA EMOCJONALNA I ROLE ZESPOŁOWE – ANALIZA WSPÓŁZALEŻNOŚCI W ODNIESIENIU DO EFEKTYWNOŚCI PRACY ZESPOŁOWEJ

Abstrakt

Tło badań. Analiza czynników determinujących efektywność pracy zespołowej stanowi ważny nurt w nauce o zarządzaniu. W literaturze wyodrębnia się dwa podstawowe wymiary efektywnych zespołów – wymiar zadaniowy nastawiony na realizację celów i wymiar społeczny nastawiony na utrzymanie grupy.
Cele badań. Celem artykułu jest poznanie zależności pomiędzy rolami, jakie Belbin opisał w odniesieniu do efektywnych zespołów zadaniowych a czynnikami psychospołecznymi, takimi jak np. zdolność do rozpoznawania emocji, rozumienie emocji, zarządzanie emocjami, stanowiącymi ważne aspekty inteligencji emocjonalnej.
Metodyka. W artykule przedstawione są wyniki pilotażowego badania (N=42), w którym wykorzystane zostały: kwestionariusz do badania ról zespołowych Belbina i polska adaptacja skali inteligencji emocjonalnej - The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MCSEIT).
Kluczowe wnioski. Wyniki analizy korelacji wskazują na istotne ($p<0.05$) pozytywne współzależności między zdolnością do postrzegania emocji i zarządzania emocjami, a rolami związanymi z utrzymaniem grupy, takimi jak człowiek grupy i naturalny lider.
Dodatkowo, analiza koncepcji teoretycznych i wyników badań, pozwala uszczegółowić zależności między inteligencją emocjonalną i rolami zespołowymi a efektywnością zespołu, z uwzględnieniem charakteru zadań i etapu rozwoju grupy. Propozycja zintegrowania dwóch pozornie uzupełniających się koncepcji, stanowić może istotny wkład w zastosowaniu teorii ról w praktyce zarządzania zespołami zadaniowymi.

Słowa kluczowe: inteligencja emocjonalna, role zespołowe, efektywność