

Diversity of emotional intelligence and team performance

**The crippling effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance and the moderating role of a leader in managing emotions**

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### **Abstract**

Many researchers assert the importance of emotional intelligence on team performance, without actually hinting at the effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance. We develop a theoretical model which asserts that diversity of emotional intelligence within a team can have crippling effect on its performance, and a team leader can moderate this effect. Results of a laboratory experiment support the hypothesized effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance, such that homogeneous teams perform better than diverse teams, when there is no team leader. However, in presence of a team leader, the performance of the diverse teams increase, but there is no significant difference between homogeneous and diverse teams.

**Keywords: Diversity of Emotional Intelligence, Team Leader, Team Performance**

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## **The crippling effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance and the moderating role of a leader in managing emotions**

### **Introduction**

An underpaid coaching client once asked, “Why am I not getting paid what I am worth?” to which his manager answered, “Maybe it's because you aren't pleasant to work with.” The quote, though humorous, unfolds a deep truth. One’s value, worth, or importance is not always related with one’s cognitive intelligence or abilities rather it is related with something deeper and more meaningful. It’s been years researchers have debated about intelligence quotient and established its impact on one’s success and career, but in the past two decades researchers have conceived, believed and achieved in putting forward the concept of emotional intelligence and have endorsed the fact that what really matters for success, character, happiness and life-long achievements are not just purely cognitive abilities that are measured by conventional IQ tests, but in fact is a definite set of emotional skills –one’s Emotional Quotient (Goleman, 1995).

The importance of team processes and performance for organizations and their ability to innovate and adapt to changing environments is widely recognized (Allen and Hecht, 2004; George and Brief, 1996). Increased team-based structures in organizations have led to growing research that has aimed at improving team processes and performance (Allen and Hecht, 2004). However, due to the complexity of team dynamics and increasing work role specialization, organizations face challenge in optimizing team performances. Whenever the members of these teams differ in their overt and individual skills, both managerial wisdom (Egan, 2005) and more formal theorizing (Jackson, 1992) predict repercussions in team performance. Along with team processes, there has been an evident focus on the role of emotions in teams (Elfenbein, 2006) in

the recent studies. It has been posited in many studies that individual's capacity to be aware of and manage his emotions, plays an important role in team performance (Druskat and Wolff, 2001; Elfenbein, Polzer, and Ambady, 2007; Jordan and Troth, 2004). Although most of the research points out at direct link between emotional skills and team effectiveness, there is no research considering the diversity of emotional intelligence within a team. The notion of a consistent main effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance is not backed by any reliable set of empirical findings, thus highlighting the dearth of researches of diversity of emotional intelligence on team outcomes. Instead, the results of different studies fail to converge on a reliable effect of emotional intelligence diversity on team performance, thus raising the question of how do teams perform when there is a diversity of emotional intelligence among the members.

In the present study, we present the role of leadership directed at teammates as a potent tool that enables the team members with diverse levels of emotional intelligence to bring out the best while performing a team task. Taking the role of a leader necessitates the team member to take perspective of his fellow members and understand their thoughts, motives and feelings (Parker, Atkins, and Axtell, 2008), which is assumed to consequently affect conflict perceptions (Sessa, 1996) and implicit coordination in work groups (Rico, Sánchez-Manzanares, Gil, and Gibson, 2008). We propose that leading a team by actively being involved in taking perspective of fellow team members will help steer the team efforts and provide a path to realize the full potential of the team by smoothening the conversation-based team interaction, a group process that we argue is especially advantageous to maximized team performances.

Unlike high claims about emotional intelligence positively affecting team performance, diversity of emotional intelligence within a group does not naturally call for team interaction and

increased team performance. Instead, this often leads to situations wherein there are increased conflicts, friction and incompatibility of ideas and opinions. The presence of a leader in such a diverse team often helps smoothen the interaction by allowing the team leader give a vision to its team and making the team members invest their cognitive energy to understand their teammates' approaches to the given task. Presence of a leader helps initiate this cognitive process and facilitate information exchange (Krauss and Fussell, 1991), thus allowing for a more comprehensive evaluation of the suggested ideas and revealing opportunities to integrate different perspectives on the problem (Hoever, van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, and Barkema, 2012).

Presence of leaders in teams may create opportunities to take charge of the situation and provide path to the teams, wherein leaders can create opportunities to see things in a new light, which is quite valuable to increase team performance (Hargadon and Bechky, 2006). In other words, it may promote all aspects that jointly cultivate conversation-based team interaction and enhance the performance of emotionally diverse teams. Based on this reasoning, we propose and show that presence of leaders moderates the effect of diversity of emotional intelligence in teams on team performance (Figure 1). Our study adds an important aspect to the understanding of how diversity of emotional intelligence within a team may not always boost up its performance and how presence of a leader can influence the team level outcomes. Although the importance of emotional intelligence and leadership for intra and interpersonal outcomes is well established, little is existing in literature that describes the problem caused when individuals with diverse emotional intelligence get together in a team and how can that be handled. Individual level findings suggests that leaders inspire smoother interactions and team mechanisms, thus complementing this earlier research and extending it to the context of collaborative teamwork,

we argue and show that leading a diverse team by taking the perspective of fellow teammates may help increase a team's performance. In sum, our study yields valuable insights into how team composition and processes interact to bring about the important outcome of team performance.

### **Diversity of Emotional Intelligence and Team Performance**

In the recent times, there has been an increase in team-based structures in organizations which have led to mounting research aimed at improving team processes and performance (Allen and Hecht, 2004). Scholars examining specific links between team members' individual characteristics and team performance generally focus on overt demographic characteristics such as age, education, or tenure (Bunderson and Sutcliffe, 2002; Pelled, Eisenhardt, and Xin, 1999) or on individual difference variables such as attitudes, personality, values, and skills (e.g., Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, and Mount, 1998; Stewart, Fulmer, and Barrick, 2005).

In order to ensure better team performance, researchers have lately focused on the role of emotions in teams (Elfenbein, 2006) suggesting that emotional intelligence plays an instrumental role in team performance (Druskat and Wolff, 2001; Elfenbein et al. 2007). Due to its multi-dimensional attribute, emotional intelligence has interesting linkages which tends to improve human interactions. The ability of employees to regulate their own emotions and manage others' emotions foster more positive interactions, and thus contribute to increased performance (George and Brief, 1996, Mossholder, Bedian, and Armenakis, 1981; Wong and Law, 2002). EI has also been linked to improved workplace behavior and specifically team behavior and team performance (Jordan and Lawrence, 2009). Evidence demonstrates the relationship between individual emotional skills and individual team member performance (Elfenbein and Ambady,

2002) and also between team emotional skills and team performance (Bell, 2007). Recent research states that team performance is positively and significantly influenced if team is able to recognize emotions of teammates (Stough, Saklofske, and Parker, 2009). However, most of the research points out at direct link between emotional skills and team effectiveness, with no research considering the diversity of emotional intelligence within a team. Team goal-setting and problem-solving during task performance typically involves interaction, exchange of ideas, and some degree of individual compromise (Pelled et al., 1999), and this can be an emotional issue (Jordan and Troth, 2004). Individual emotional skills influence team behavior and thus can differentially impact team performances (Jordan and Troth, 2011, Cote 2007). We suggest that a team's ability to manage the diversity of high and low level of emotional skills during goal-setting and problem-solving may or may not facilitate an effective interaction by individual team members. Individuals within a team pool their emotional skills such that individuals with varying levels of emotional skills compensate for and facilitate the emotional skills of other team members (Jordan and Troth, 2011). This promotes other team members' effective and appropriate behavior and/or performance (despite their initial low emotional skills). However, we argue that higher the diversity of emotional intelligence within a team, more will be the team conflict, thus obstructing smooth team interaction, which will consequently bring down the team performance.

### **How can diversity of emotional intelligence be managed by leadership?**

#### **The moderating role of a leader**

As stated above, there has been an increase in research aiming at improving teams and team related processes. The concept of leadership, consequently, has become one of the most

circulated today in the disciplines of organizing economic activities. Despite being researched intensely, it still remains an open concept to be explored in multiple ways, depending on multiple interests and experience. Leadership involves power and ability to lead and exert one's influence on a group and "seems to be, like power, an essentially contested concept". In any context, wherein human resource is the main factor of development, the influence of the leader on his team members has a crucial significance as she is the one responsible for influencing and mobilizing people to achieve objectives.

In various team related processes, there is a direct connection between intelligence and the performance of a person, in the sense that a smarter worker will work better with the team than other less endowed. "The strength of the emotional qualities of the leader, the ability to communicate and to establish interpersonal relationships, the ability to create a friendly, motivating environment, are traits that distinguish leaders with outstanding economic performance (so-called "star-leaders") from leaders with mediocre results. There are many theories that suggest the impact that leaders have on their followers is influenced by the characteristics of the followers (Lord, Brown, and Frieberg, 1999). According to the Leader-Member Exchange theory, leadership is a process focusing on the dyadic relationship between the leader and follower (Northouse, 1997). A leader has different relationships with different subordinates (Graen and Wakabayashi, 1994; Greenberg et al., 2000) and thus it is important to focus on the dyadic relationship between leader and subordinate.

We assert that when members of diverse EI levels interact in a team, there is much friction and chaos that often leads to lost potential. Members low on EI are unable to manage their emotions; and when members high on EI try to manage the situation, the former do not find any reason behind it. It is during this turbulent interaction phase, the leader takes charge of the situation and



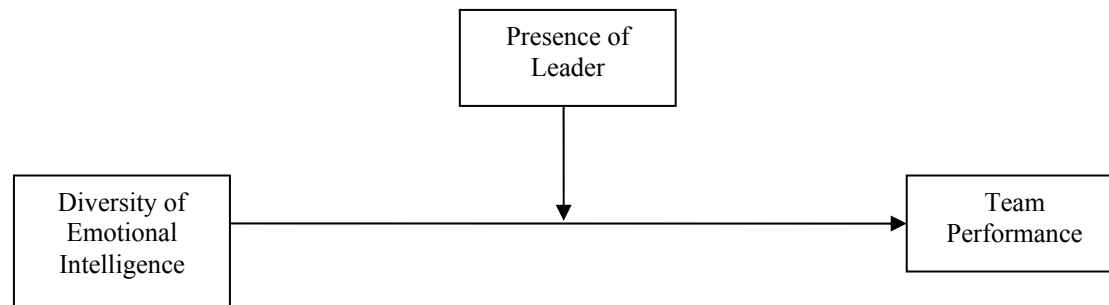
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manages the wide spectrum of EI levels by giving creating, communicating, and instilling commitment toward a common vision.

The presence of leader in a team helps pool the emotional intelligence of the members and manage the diversity between high and low EI. Bass (1985) noted that when in order to maximize team performance leaders take charge of the interaction among the members by being supportive, considerate, empathetic, caring, and by giving personalized attention. These requirements may be easier for an individual high in emotional intelligence, who is able to accurately perceive and understand others' emotions, while managing his or her own emotions. The emotional knowledge helps the leader become an effective mentor by modeling appropriate emotional responses. Thus leaders smoothen the interaction among the members; utilize the emotional intelligence of the members and contribute towards enhancing team performance.

### **Hypotheses Development**

This paper aims at assessing how diversity of emotional intelligence in a team affects the overall performance by affecting the team interaction. It further assesses how the presence of leader moderates the interaction and performance. Based on our aforementioned discussion of the potential and pitfalls of diversity of emotional intelligence for team performance, the processes needed to bring about these benefits, and the potential of the leader to smoothen team interaction in teams with diverse EI, we set our hypotheses.



Individual emotional skills influence team behavior and thus can differentially impact team performances (Jordan and Troth, 2011). We suggest that a team's ability to manage the diversity of high and low level of emotional skills during goal-setting and problem-solving may or may not facilitate an effective interaction by individual team members. Previous literature states that team goal-setting and problem-solving during task performance typically involves interaction, exchange of ideas, and some degree of individual compromise (Pelled et al., 1999), and this can be an emotional issue (Jordan and Troth, 2004). When a time oriented goal is set for a team, interaction happens among the members that focuses on problem-solving and performing within the stipulated time at an acceptable quality. Such an interaction among the team members can diverge from good to bad to terrible experience depending on the smoothness in the flow and exchange of ideas. It is not just the outcome that decides the overall experience of the team but also the emotional aspects of team interaction involving diverse individual personalities, different commitment levels of team members, and variation in individual emotional intelligence etc. In spite of timely completion of task at an acceptable quality, team members identify their team experience more with the emotional interactions they have with their team members rather than task-related interaction (Lingham et al. 2009). Management of emotions and smoothening the interaction is done effectively when there is a leader present in the team.

Individual emotional skills influence team behavior and thus can differentially impact team performances (Jordan and Troth, 2011). We suggest that a team's ability to manage the diversity of high and low level of emotional skills during goal-setting and problem-solving may or may not ensure enhanced team performance. When teams are formed for a specific task, individual members come together within a team and pool their emotional skills, such that individuals with varying levels of emotional skills compensate for and facilitate the emotional skills of other team members (Jordan and Troth, 2011), which promotes other team members' effective and appropriate behavior and/or performance, hence fostering enhanced performance. The presence of leader in teams with diverse EI, facilitates the exchange of ideas, stresses on goal achievement and ensures improved team performance.

Based on the above literature, we hypothesize the following two propositions:

*Hypothesis 1: Diversity of emotional intelligence has an inverse effect on team performance, such that homogeneous teams perform better than diverse teams*

*Hypothesis 2: Presence of leader moderates the effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance; such that diverse teams perform better in the presence of team leader*

## **Method**

### **Design**

We tested our hypotheses by an experiment conducted in laboratory that followed a 2 (diversity of emotional intelligence: diverse vs. homogeneous) x 2 (presence of leader: yes vs. no) between-groups design. 360 students (62.8% male; mean age = 22.3, minimum age = 18, maximum age = 35,  $SD = 11.20$ ) from a large university in Spain were assigned to 90 four-

person groups which were randomly assigned to conditions. Since the students were enrolled in the English version of the course, language was not a problem to communicate. Also, the class group consisted of 60% students who came through Erasmus program, 20% through student exchange program in the US and 10% from other universities in Europe and only 10% students belonged to the Spanish university, thus most of them were working together for the first time. The majority of participants were students of business administration (65.8%) or humanities (34.2%). In return for their participation, students received partial course credit.

As a first step, all 360 participants of the study were asked to fill the 33-item Schutte's Emotional Intelligence Scale a week before the experiment in the tutorial class took place. Individual emotional intelligence scores were thus obtained through the instrument. In order to form teams we strictly controlled for the team –level average of emotional intelligence, which we derived by taking an average value that aggregated individual-level scores into a single score of the group. The underlying assumption is that emotional intelligence is viewed as a resource that team members draw on and that members of the team can pool their abilities to share and compensate for one another (Elfenbein, 2006). All total 90 groups of 4 members each were formed, of which 45 groups were such that the standard deviation of emotional intelligence scores was low and rest 45 groups were such that there was high standard deviation of emotional intelligence within the groups. A group size of four was intentionally made to control for the effects of differential team size when comparing performance between teams. Same task was given to all groups and the experiment took place in different tutorial classes.

## **Experiment Task**

A task called “The New World Exercise” was used to assess group’s interactions, multiple intelligences, life skills, analyses and reactions. The task was given to all 90 groups, wherein the groups had to *“imagine that the world has suffered a catastrophic event like a meteor strike, plague or nuclear war, which has destroyed most human life and all of the developments of the past century. A mixed group (age, gender, ethnicity, religion) of a few hundred lucky people has survived (it's helpful to agree where - anywhere - because location will influence some aspects of the approach to the question). The groups had to come up with a leadership structure that could include some basic laws for the new world, their immediate aims, few challenges they might expect to face, how they would handle it, what will be their medium and long term aims, and their main values that would guide their restructuring of the new world.”* They were given 40 minutes to work in their groups, take each other’s perspective and come up with this plan. This task demanded intense discussions among the members owing to diversity of perspectives; diversity of personal values and opinions; clash of interests and priorities and regulation of emotions etc. For further motivation; it was told that their score in this plan would add up to the component of ‘class participation’ for the course. 1 mark was deducted for every five minutes they took beyond the given time. No submissions were accepted after 60 minutes. All the groups submitted their integrated plans, with 17 groups turning in their plans late. After the entire process, the participants were debriefed, and awarded their course credit. Altogether, the process lasted one and a half hour. The plans were assessed by 2 fellow professors independently, who were blind to the experimental condition. They were asked to evaluate the group performance on the basis of the plan submitted, taking care of concreteness of points, comprehensiveness of the plan, creativity and presentation of the write-up.

## **Experimental Manipulations**

### **Diversity of Emotional Intelligence**

Given our explanation for diversity of emotional intelligence as a group characteristic denoting the existence of differences in emotional intelligence level among group members in the way they interact, approach their task, and perform, we controlled for diversity of emotional intelligence scores by forming the groups on our own, so there was no manipulation required. Based on the EI scores of each individual we formed groups controlling for the diversity of EI. The groups in low diversity condition had the standard deviation of EI scores ranging from 0.5 to 2.75 within the groups; and groups in high diversity condition had the standard deviation of EI scores ranging from 30.00 to 42.25. Since the individual scores of EI varied between 98 and 152, standard deviations of 30 to 42.25, within groups qualified well for diverse groups. In order to ensure intense discussions among students, it was stressed upon them to hold strongly their individual opinions and convince the rest of it. In both the conditions, students were motivated to discuss passionately, consider different aspects of the solution and ensure that these aspects were realized in the group plan. Taken together, this manipulation focused on the distribution of different levels of diversity of emotional intelligence of the team members.

### **Presence of Leader**

Presence of leader in the groups was manipulated at the group level at the beginning of the group task. Groups assigned to “presence of leader” condition were verbally instructed to assign a team leader, who would control the entire group, regulate the interaction, and be responsible for the task. They were given 5 minutes to name their group leaders. The group was then asked to review a page of written instructions about the task and additionally, the leader read instructions

on what leading a group was all about. He/she was instructed to take into consideration his/her members' opinions, regulate the dynamics within the group, and lead the group functionality during the given task. As a further incentive to engage in the described behaviors, participants were informed that assigning a leader would help increase their performance. Groups in the "no presence of leader" condition received only the instructions for the group task.

## **Measures**

### **Individual Emotional Intelligence**

There are several measures available to assess EI (Bar-On 1997; Mayer Salovey, Caruso, and Sitarenios, 2003; Sala, 2002, Schutte et al. 1998), and of these, a widely used and researched measure was chosen. The Emotional Intelligence Scale is a unidimensional self-report measure of Emotional Intelligence based on Salovey and Mayers (1990) ability model of Emotional Intelligence, which has determined robust reliability in many previous occasions and has been used vastly in plenty of studies included in a recent meta-analytic review of this literature (Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, 2004). Of the 59 studies in their meta-analytic database, the EIS was the most commonly used (nearly 25% of the studies). The EIS also had a validity of 0.23, which was larger than several other measures assessed in the meta-analysis. Accordingly, the current study was designed to evaluate how different individuals would score on this popular and validated measure of trait EI. Thus, the 33-item emotional intelligence scale (Schutte et al., 1998) was chosen for measuring individual emotional intelligence in the study. There were 3 reverse coded items and the items were to be marked on a 5-point Likert scale. An individual could get a maximum score of 165; the higher the score, the higher is the EI of the individual. The sample items of the scale are: *When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar*

*obstacles and overcame them. I arrange events others enjoy. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.* Reliability analysis was conducted for this measure and it came out to be 0.91.

## **Team Performance**

In most of the research work that aims at studying team performance, a mix of performance attributes has been used. These attributes have included quantity or output performance measures such as goal achievement (DeShon, Kozlowski, Schmidt, Milner, and Wiechmann, 2004), task speed and accuracy (Bachrach, Powell, Collins, and Richey, 2006b), ratings of team final project reports (Jehn and Mannix, 2001), and team problem-solving outcomes (Jordan and Troth, 2004). In order to measure team performance in this research, the relationship between emotional intelligence and team task performance variable is considered to gain a more complete view of the influences of emotional skills on performance in teams. The performance task in this research required the team members to perform a given task in a stipulated time. The task was evaluated as a product of uniqueness and comprehensiveness of the plan.

Accordingly, the team performance was assessed by coding each proposal for both uniqueness and span of the aspects considered. Uniqueness was assessed by dividing each plan into its different ideas and coding each idea on the basis of how novel and distinctive it was. Two independent coders (blind to the experimental conditions) rated the ideas on a scale from 1 = not unique at all to 5 = very unique. Because groups were instructed to come up with one comprehensive plan which could consist of either one idea or of multiple, interrelated ideas, the uniqueness score was obtained by averaging the scores of the ideas within one plan.



Comprehensiveness was coded by the same set of coders in different random order than uniqueness. The coders rated each plan based on the number of aspects dealt with and concreteness of the points on a scale from 1 = few aspects, abstract points to 5 = all aspects, concrete points. Coders were instructed to assess the quality of the plans with regard to the main goals included in the instructions across conditions. Plans that met all major criteria received the maximum score of 5, plans that were short, incomplete, abstract received a score of 0 and plans that were concrete in some, but not in others received intermediate scores. The coders learned to use the coding scheme on the basis of 15 pilot groups (not included in the analysis). To adjust for scaling differences, we divided uniqueness and comprehensiveness by their standard deviations before calculating the overall performance score. The high intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) and rwg values indicate high interrater reliability and agreement (uniqueness:  $ICC(1) = .89$ ,  $ICC(2) = .82$ , average rwg = .92; comprehensiveness:  $ICC(1) = .92$ ,  $ICC(2) = .90$ ; average rwg = .91).

### **Manipulation check for presence of leader**

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the presence of leader manipulation, participants indicated the degree to which they felt the presence of leader on a five-item scale. We relied on participants' self-assessment because following a leader and conforming to its presence is a cognitive process. Example items included: "A distinct leader emerged during the task who took full charge." "We could feel the presence of our leader during interactions, physically, intellectually, and emotionally." Answers were given on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*. To avoid priming participants in the no presence of leader conditions with the concept of leadership, all the participants completed the manipulation check after the group task.

## **Procedure**

Upon arrival in the classroom, students were told that they were going to participate in an activity that studied how groups come up with creative ideas and were informed about their task. The students first read written task instructions which introduced them to the experimental setting and situation by means of a brief description of the “New World Exercise”. To ensure that participants studied the material and instructions carefully, they had to answer two open answer questions concerning (a) what was particularly important for them to consider and achieve during the group task and (b) their initial ideas for the group plan. After 10 minutes, participants were asked to work on the group task which required them to come up with a final, integrative creative action plan for the new world. Moreover, groups in the presence of leader condition received the leadership instructions whereas in the no presence of leader condition, group members were merely reminded of the action plan for restructuring the new world. The teachers also reminded them to come up with an integrative, creative action plan. Groups had 40 minutes to complete the group task, post which they submitted their write-ups. After the entire process, the participants were debriefed, and awarded their course credit. Altogether, the process lasted one and a half hour.

## **Results**

We analyzed the data using analysis of variance to establish the interaction effect of the two independent variables on team performance as a test of Hypothesis 1 and 2. We created two dummy variables to reflect the groups’ assignment to the diversity (homogeneous = 0) and presence of leader (no leader = 0) conditions.

## **Manipulation Check**

### **Presence of Leader**

We combined the five items of the presence of leader manipulation check into one scale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ). To form a team-level indicator of the extent of team members' opinion of leader, we followed an additive (Chan, 1998) or summary index model (Chen et al., 2004) and averaged the individual leadership scores for each team. An analysis of variance with diversity of EI and presence of leader as between-group factors yielded only the expected main effect of presence of leader. Teams in the presence of leader condition ( $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ) reported significantly higher average values about leaders than teams in the no presence of leader condition ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ;  $F(1,88) = 8.04$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 p = .42$ ). Neither the main effect for diversity nor the interaction effect was statistically significant. This finding points to a success of the perspective taking manipulation.

### **Test of Hypotheses**

***Hypothesis 1: Diversity of emotional intelligence has a negative effect on team performance, such that homogeneous teams perform better than diverse teams***

In order to test Hypothesis 1, we conducted an analysis of variance assessing the single effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance. As predicted, planned comparisons of the simple main effect of diversity indicated that diversity of emotional intelligence had a negative effect on team performance ( $F(1,176) = 11.88$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $\eta^2 p = .19$ ) with diverse EI groups performing less ( $M = 12.65$ ,  $SD = 3.59$ ) than homogeneous EI groups ( $M = 16.78$ ,  $SD = 3.67$ ).

***Hypothesis 2: Presence of leader moderates the effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance; such that diverse teams perform better in the presence of team leader***

To test the interaction between the experimentally manipulated factors proposed in Hypothesis 2, we conducted an analysis of variance testing the effects of diversity of emotional intelligence and presence of leader on the team's performance. Neither the main effect of diversity of emotional intelligence nor of presence of leader reached statistical significance. Diverse groups ( $M = 13.56$ ,  $SD = 3.29$ ) did not, on average, perform significantly less than homogeneous groups ( $M = 15.69$ ;  $SD = 2.46$ ;  $F(1,176) = 3.15$ ,  $p = .59$ ). Likewise, groups in the presence of leader condition ( $M = 14.82$ ,  $SD = 3.34$ ) did not perform much different from groups in the no leader condition ( $M = 12.14$ ,  $SD = 4.37$ ;  $F(1, 176) = 2.51$ ,  $p = .26$ ). More importantly, and in support of Hypothesis 2, there was a significant effect of the interaction of the two variables on the group performance ( $F(1,176) = 12.82$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $\eta^2 p = .21$ ). Planned comparisons of the simple main effects of diversity indicated that diversity of emotional intelligence had a negative effect on team performance in the no leader condition ( $F(1,176) = 11.88$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $\eta^2 p = .19$ ) with diverse EI groups performing less ( $M = 12.65$ ,  $SD = 3.59$ ) than homogeneous EI groups ( $M = 16.78$ ,  $SD = 3.67$ ). In contrast, in the leader condition, diverse EI groups ( $M = 13.58$ ,  $SD = 3.13$ ) did not differ significantly in their performance from homogeneous groups ( $M = 14.61$ ,  $SD = 4.65$ ;  $F(1,176) = 2.42$ ,  $p = .23$ ). Furthermore, the results indicate a simple main effect of leader in the diverse EI condition such that diverse groups performed better when they were led by a team leader than when they were not ( $F(1,176) = 13.05$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 p = .19$ ). Conversely, in the homogeneous condition, groups did not differ in their performance as a function of whether or not they were led by a team leader ( $F(1,176) = 3.30$ ,  $p = .12$ ). The significant interaction effect and the specific pattern of simple main effects support Hypothesis 2 and the theoretical reasoning behind it.

## **Discussions**

This study examines the effect of diversity of emotional intelligence on team performance and the moderating effect of leaders in managing the emotions. Past research has exaggerated the importance of emotional intelligence on team performance (Elfenbein, 2006; Jordan and Troth, 2004) but does not state anything of the group comprises of diverse levels of emotional intelligence. We focus on the diversity of emotional intelligence within a group and argue that the presence of leader in a group will smoothen the experience of managing emotions and will affect the team performance. Thus we point to the not-so-positive effect of diversity of emotional intelligence within a group and how it is moderated by team leaders. In line with our hypotheses, we find that diversity of emotional intelligence leads to reduced team performance as compared to homogeneous groups, as diverse groups fail to manage emotions of selves and others as smoothly as homogeneous groups. At the same time, when diverse groups are led by team leaders, they do better than diverse groups that are not led by team leaders. This result provides valuable theoretical insights and practical implications.

The findings limit the scope of previous literature on emotional intelligence by stating that diversity of emotional intelligence within a group leads to reduced performance. Many researchers have linked emotional intelligence to various cognitive, social and communication processes, but addressing whether its diversity is always welcome remains unexplored so far. By combining the existing literature on emotional intelligence and team performance, this study further extends the significance of emotional intelligence on team performance, by stating that teams should always ensure similar levels of emotional intelligence as diversity leads to rough interactions and thus reduces performance. Our study presents that the presence of leader in a team where there is diversity of emotional intelligence among team members helps in enhancing

the team performance by managing the emotions within the group and steering the interaction among the members which in turn affects team's enhanced performance. Communication among team members leads to idea generation in groups, which is widely studied (Paulus and Nijstad, 2003). And this study further states that with enhanced communication among team members due to the presence of leader, which essentially is interaction among them, the diversity of emotional intelligence is better managed and allows for more free flow of ideas, perspectives and information without leading to highly emotional outbursts. Thus, even if team members do not share the same levels of emotional intelligence, the leader among them is the captain of the group who steers the course of action. As the team leader makes the members involve in perspective taking, there is information elaboration (Hoever et al., 2012) which finally leads to better and enhanced team performance as compared to diverse groups without any team leader.

Our results offer important insights for the literatures on emotional intelligence and leadership. Prior findings on importance of emotional intelligence for teams and team-related processes have almost been consistent, with extravagant claims made about its positive effects and linking it to endless antecedents and consequences. Our findings here hint at a little inconsistent finding, in a way that teams may malfunction if there is high diversity of emotional intelligence among the members. However, this can be saved if such teams are properly led by team leaders. Emotional intelligence alone is not an asset to a team; rather it is the consistency in the levels that contribute positively to team processes. Our study looks at the effects of diversity of emotional intelligence on group processes and outcomes, for which the effects remain much less established. On the one hand, anticipating differences in opinion has been shown to lead to a more accurate understanding of the thoughts behind another person's reasoning, thus smoothening interaction within a team (Tjosvold and Johnson, 1977, 1978). On the other hand, it is likely that the

cognitive effort of managing each other's emotions rises and is less willingly extended when group members are increasingly dissimilar. Future research can focus on factors that can encourage better management of emotions in diverse levels of emotional intelligence within teams. Factors such as liking for team members, liking for team leader, focus of task achievement can help nullify the effect of diversity of emotional intelligence in teams.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of emotional intelligence is widely recognized, yet our understanding of how teams optimally use their pooled emotional intelligence for higher team performance is little limited. Our findings provide an important step towards improving our understanding of this important phenomenon. We demonstrate the importance of emotional intelligence in helping groups to interact and communicate about their perspectives to achieve enhanced team outcomes. Taken together, our results suggest both interesting avenues for further research and useful implications for practitioners who seek to improve the performance of teams via interaction among the team members.

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